

I trained as a Teacher Librarian in the late 70's and took my first position with the NSW Department of Education in 1980. At that time there were very few trained TL's as most did a two week training course during the May school holidays. At the annual North West Teacher Librarians conference in Tamworth in 1980, of the 50 plus who attended there were only three fully trained TL's.

Over the years it seemed as if the Department was starting to realise the value of having a fully trained TL in school libraries. They started to insist that as new positions became available that staff had to do a retraining course to become permanent in the job. In fact in the last few years, the Department has in fact paid for teachers to train to become TL's. It is obvious from this fact that the Department recognised the value of having a trained TL in their schools. That these TL's added a unique, useful and much needed role to the successful learning of all students in their schools.

TL's are in a unique position within a school. They are involved with all KLA's within the school. They are the hub of learning which contains both technology and print resources and the TL who can assist the students in gaining access to the information they provide. Few people in the school have knowledge of what is taught in the other KLA's and therefore TL's can encourage the sharing of resources and knowledge.

The School Library and the TL often provide pastoral care to a specific group of students who tend to seek the security of the Library Staff. In fact without a TL in the Library staff cannot send small groups down to the Library or Senior students cannot access the Library as there must be a teacher in attendance to supervise these students. It is not the roll of the SASS to supervise students or to be responsible for students if a teacher is not present.

In a time when Literacy skills are acknowledged as being so important, TL's offer a depth of knowledge in this area. They can help to develop these skills, plus research skills with small or large groups, especially in Years 11 and 12.

School Libraries also provide access to current recreational reading for both staff and students. A lot of students would not have access to these resources in their homes. Recreational reading provides another way of improving their literacy skills.

TL's tend to be among the first to take up new technologies, as we are always adapting our Libraries to suit the needs of our clientele. Technology like IWB's simply offer another way to bring resources to the staff and students.

TL's provide a valuable service to their school community that is not available anywhere else. To deprive the school of their knowledge and skills would lessen the educational opportunities available to all students.

TL's make a difference by:

1. Influencing the literacy of students - both in educational and recreational reading
2. Facilitating the resourcing of all KLA's with digital and print resources
3. Providing knowledge, experience and assistance to a students and staff when they are researching and writing assignments and lessons
4. Having a holistic knowledge of the school and its resources