

---

# FORGING STRONG LINKS: STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE INFORMATION LITERATE LEARNING COMMUNITY THROUGH THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

**Elizabeth Greef**

*Head of Library Services*

*St Andrew's Cathedral School*

*Sydney Square, Sydney NSW 2000*

**AUSTRALIA**

**PH: +61 2 9286 9551**

**FAX: +61 2 9286 9550**

**E-Mail: [egreef@sacs.nsw.edu.au](mailto:egreef@sacs.nsw.edu.au)**

---

## *Abstract*

*Integrating information skills into the school curriculum is one of the prime focus areas of the teacher librarian and strong collaboration is a key to the library becoming a vital cog in the teaching and learning mission of a school. This is easily said, but how do we make it happen? What strategies can we use for building information literacy and effecting change?*

*This paper will briefly consider definitions and models of information literacy and collaboration, particularly Montiel-Overall's work, including the theoretical and pedagogical underpinning of these ideas. As well as reflecting on the role and the mindset of the teacher librarian, a range of practical macro- and micro-strategies for effectively developing information literacy in collaboration with teaching staff will be presented, including technology, special learning needs, building a reading culture, literacy and instructional design. A self-diagnostic tool developed from this paper will be offered to enable each teacher librarian to evaluate opportunities for further developing information literacy through his/her library.*

## **Introduction**

*We must raise the bar in our thinking; libraries and librarians enhance the total development of our society. If we do not seek to strengthen the link between libraries and the classrooms, the real losers will continue to be our students who miss access to current materials for information, recreational reading and team teaching by the class teacher and the*

*librarians.*

*We are also aware that we are living in an information-driven age where we must be on the cutting edge of technology. In light of this there must be a major paradigm shift by administrators, classroom teachers and librarians especially those who are of the view that libraries and librarians are not as important as other educational institutions.*

*The library should be an integral part of the school's reading programme and ... collaboration should exist between the classroom teacher and the librarian for the creation of units and lessons that link content, information literacy and technology literacy.*

Quoting Mrs Ellen Grant (2006) Coordinator, Teachers Resource Unit in the Department of Education on Nevis in the article “Libraries critical to development says education official”

We as teacher librarians are link people, connectors to making the paradigm shift towards an integrated curriculum and deeper learning happen for our students, our colleagues and our schools. We have influence but change is achieved through the support of the school principal, collaboration with others, belief in ourselves and a vision for the future.

The substantial body of recent research on the relationship between effective school libraries and student academic performance has validated significant factors, including collaboration between teacher librarians and classroom teachers (Lance, 2002, p. 2; *School libraries work!*, 2008). (Appendix 1). Collaboration is a prime means of facilitating ongoing personal professional development; we learn from each other. It is also the key for a teacher librarian to bring about change, to work successfully in integrating information skills into the school curriculum and to become a vital cog in the teaching and learning and professional development (PD) cycles within the school. Teacher collective learning and shared work have a powerful impact on student learning (Leonard, 2002, p.3). What strategies can we use to change our schools and develop opportunities for collaboration with teaching staff? This paper examines definitions of collaborative practice, relevant research, the critical role of the teacher librarian, the underpinning pedagogy of learning communities, information literacy and constructivist learning and presents a range of macro-strategies for developing collaboration to build information literacy and deeper student learning, and micro-strategies to enable the collaboration to occur in an effective and integrated way, arising from my professional practice and experience.

### **A definition of collaboration and how innovation develops through it**

The American Information Power initiative emphasises the purpose of collaboration through its significant results: “Effective collaboration with teachers helps to create a vibrant and engaged community of learners, strengthens the whole school program as well as the library media program, and develops support for the school library media program

throughout the whole school” (Information Power, 1998, quoted in Small, 2002) and can become contagious.

Collaboration is based on “shared goals, a shared vision and a climate of trust and respect” (Muronago and Harada, quoted in Russell, 2001; Small, 2002, p. 2). It is a strong 21<sup>st</sup> century trend and a vehicle for school renewal. Collaboration is embedded within the social constructivist learning theories of educators such as John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky (Montiel-Overall, 2005, p. 3). In particular Vygotsky’s concept of the “zone of proximal development” where more mature and capable people like teachers guide those who are less advanced within a socially constructed learning experience is significant (Montiel-Overall, 2005, p. 3) and has been employed by Carol Kuhlthau in her Zones of Intervention within the Guided Inquiry process (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2007). Collaboration creates a third space between people, a space from which creative synergy and ongoing professional development flows. Montiel-Overall’s definition (2005, pp. 5-6) encapsulates educational collaboration well: “Collaboration is a trusting, working relationship between two or more equal participants involved in *shared thinking, shared planning and shared creation of integrated instruction*. Through a shared vision and shared objectives, student learning opportunities are created that integrate subject content and information literacy by co-planning, co-implementing, and co-evaluating students’ progress throughout the instructional process in order to improve student learning in all areas of the curriculum”.

### ***Facets of collaboration***

Collaboration is a complex concept as well as a process where we learn from each other. Montiel-Overall (2005, pp. 9-14) developed four models or facets to describe collaborative relationships:

**Facet A: Coordination** involves people exchanging information, sharing time, resources or students to help one another.

**Facet B: Cooperation/Partnership** requires more commitment, responsibility and intensity; underpinned by a philosophy of teamwork and cooperation it may involve the school library in gathering resources to support the classroom or some joint instruction.

**Facet C: Integrated Instruction** involves “*shared thinking, shared planning and shared creation of integrated instruction*”, an integration of both content and information skills instruction. Responsibility is shared in the creation of a meaningful learning experience and synergy develops, resulting in a richer learning activity.

**Facet D: Integrated Curriculum**, where the process of Facet C is implemented across the entire curriculum with all teachers in the school planning, teaching and assessing a unit of work integrating subject content with library information literacy instruction (Montiel-Overall, 2005, pp. 13-14; 2007).

## **Pedagogy underpinning collaboration in support of information literacy**

### ***A. Learning communities***

Henri (in Henri & Asselin, 2005, p. 12) clarifies the significance of the learning community in relation to collaboration: “Community is something that transforms thinking within the school... Collaboration and collegiality are key measures of community well-being and are partial indicators of the existence of an information literate school community... In essence the information literate school community... places a significant priority on transforming information into knowledge and in turning knowledge into information...” The effective principal is a critical factor in the learning community, inspiring the school with a common vision and promoting a consistent philosophy of education, encouraging collaborative partnerships and the sharing of expertise to enrich and optimise student learning (Henri 1988, pp.35, 42; Hay & Henri, 1995, pp. 1, 5; Oberg & Henri, 2005, p. 88). Recent research also validates the school library as an important instrument of school improvement (Hartzell, 2003, p. 22).

Six hallmarks of a learning community which dovetail well with the work of the school libraries are that, “the principal and teachers...:

- Create continuous learning opportunities
- Promote inquiry and dialogue
- Encourage collaboration and team learning
- Establish systems to capture and share learning
- Empower people towards a collective vision
- Connect the organisation to its environment” (Watkins & Marsick, 1993, cited in Henri & Asselin, 2005, p. 14).

However, collaboration is neither valued nor sought by all teachers; it can even be seen as a threat.

### ***B. Constructivist pedagogy and resource-based learning***

Teacher librarians work within a constructivist framework in the belief that students learn best when they construct their own knowledge, creating new learning experiences which allow students to extend themselves and create and transform knowledge. Constructivism is a highly influential theory of cognitive growth and learning (Bartlett, 2005, p. 56). The library is an environment that allows more independence and self-directed learning, and certain student-centred constructivist pedagogical strategies marry well with information skills such as problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning and project-based learning, optimised by collaborative practice (Robins et al, 2005, pp. 1-2).

### ***C. Information literacy and deeper student learning***

Information literacy is foundational to the concept of lifelong learning. An information age school needs “to be built on the centrality of information literacy” (Mackey & Jacobson, 2005, p. 1) because “information literacy is a meta-outcome in the learning

process” (Ratteray, quoted in Mackey & Jacobson, 2005, p. 2). For years teacher librarians have used information literacy frameworks such as Kuhlthau’s Guided Inquiry and Eisenberg & Berkowitz’s Big Six to help students and colleagues understand the research process. However, the professional thinking is shifting to see this generic approach as often too limited and limiting for developing deep thinking and critical engagement with information (Todd, 2007). Todd (2007) encourages school libraries to become “intellectual hotbeds of discontent”, places where debates can rage and active exploration of and deep engagement with ideas takes place, promoting the synthesis and transformation of ideas and knowledge.

It is vital that the teacher librarian’s work meets the students’ understandings and their needs in order to support deep and active learning (Limberg, 2005, p. 39). Deeper student learning involves critical literacy skills of perceiving, interpreting, examining and critiquing information and using higher order thinking skills - connecting pieces of information, transforming and creating new knowledge and to engaging in meaningful reflection. Limberg’s research noted concerns in the study of information seeking which were not addressed explicitly by teachers through instruction, particularly critical reflection, formulation of questions, time management, critical evaluation of sources, analysis of information and synthesis of material (Limberg, 2005, pp.45-46). Teacher librarians clearly need collaboratively to address students’ deeper cognitive needs and higher order thinking skills (Todd, 2007).

#### ***D. Technology***

Technology has transformed schools and opportunities for learning. Lee (Henri & Asselin, 2005, p. 15) asserts that the “key feature of a learning community is that it is networked” and knowledge sharing is “the key force behind the learning organisation” (Hawamdeh, cited in Henri & Asselin, 2005, p. 15) but the factor which transforms and empowers the school as an online community is really “the way that schools use an educational rationale to drive that objectivity” (Henri & Asselin, 2005, p. 15); then the educational value of technology will be realised. Increasingly, Web 2.0 technologies facilitate collaborative knowledge construction and development of online communities and teacher librarians can guide and influence here.

### **Mindset and role of the teacher librarian**

#### ***Information specialist***

Teacher librarians are a critical factor within a collaborative school as they have a comprehensive umbrella view of teaching and learning because of their whole school focus and highly developed information skills. Teacher librarians need to be “Renaissance” men and women with multiple skills bridging both arts and sciences. Despite all the evidence linking school libraries to raised student achievement, Todd believes that the primary underpinning factor in this process is the “transformational actions of the school librarian” (Todd, quoted in Kenney, 2006, p. 3).

### ***Self-belief and readiness to meet the challenge***

We must believe in ourselves and our professional value to our schools. Our role also demands humility because so much of what we do is in partnership and in support of others to propel the educational vision of our schools. We collaborate in equal partnerships with subject content experts to provide the best learning environment for all our students. We want to see positive change in our schools, intellectual growth in our students and increasing sophistication in their ability to access, organise, evaluate and transform information and to drive improvement. Valenza (2002, p. 2) argues that “a good librarian is one of the best educational bargains around”. Flexibility, a willingness to take risks and a commitment to personal lifelong learning are fundamental to success.

### ***Change agents to drive the paradigm shift***

Teacher librarians need to be prepared to be change agents. Gandhi put it this way: “We must be the change we want to see in the world” (quoted in Rosenfeld, 2006, p. 63). We need to take on the risk ourselves, have a vision for change, look for strategic opportunities and negotiate and alleviate concerns of others in the process of changing the school culture to bring others along with us. We need to identify the inhibitors or barriers to change and the enablers in order to move forward. The enablers need to be in place in each school and the inhibitors need to be addressed.

*Table 1: Inhibitors and enablers in collaboration*

<b>INHIBITORS TO COLLABORATION</b>	<b>ENABLERS IN COLLABORATION</b>
Lack of time	Team approach to teaching
Confusion of roles	Shared constructivist approach to learning
Poorly designed assignments	Shared commitment to lifelong learning
<i>Kuhlthau, (1993, cited in Henri &amp; Asselin, 2005, pp. 17-18)</i>	Competence in developing learning strategies and activities
Resistance to moving beyond traditional roles	Flexible timetable
Lack of awareness of students' information needs	Principal support
Lack of institutional support for collaboration and information literacy	
Belief that teaching information literacy is the job of library staff	<i>Montiel-Overall (2005, p. 15)</i> <i>Mackey &amp; Jacobson (2005, p. 4)</i>

### ***Advocacy***

Related to the notion of being a change agent is that of advocacy. We need to “sell” the ideas of collaboration and information literacy, including promoting research linking effective school libraries and student academic improvement. (Appendix 1).

### ***Transformational leadership***

A transformational leader is relationship-oriented, enlisting others in a vision for learning and travelling on with them in the process, working from within and alongside in a positive, motivational and participatory way (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989, p. 106). Research relating to teacher librarian leadership indicates that positive effects of library programs increase significantly if the role is expanded to include curriculum and leadership involvement well beyond the library (Lance, 2002, p. 2). Harada (2002, pp. 3-4, 6) also notes integral links between collaboration and leadership.

### ***Manager and program administrator***

A major role of the teacher librarian is the responsible management of a large whole school facility, a visible metaphor for the school’s existence as a learning community, as well as the delivery of services and the development of effective reading and information literacy instructional programs.

### ***Vital attributes***

A collaborative mindset requires the teacher librarian to be eminently approachable, willing to forge links and connections between people and with resources, and flexible application of a range of teaching and learning strategies to help cement the library’s ability to make a difference in the school. Oberg (1999) regards vital qualities of the teacher librarian to be excellent communication skills, willingness to take initiative, confidence, leadership qualities, and being a risk taker. Montiel-Overall (2005, pp. 5-7) believes a willingness to share and establishing collegial and trusting relationships are very important.

### ***Instructional partners with knowledge of our school’s culture***

Collaborative teaching can be seen as both expensive and high risk in terms of time, effort and changing one’s practices; integrating technology increases the price and risk factor (Oberg, 1995, pp. 1, 3). Oberg advises that teacher librarians develop knowledge of the current teaching practices of their schools, the school’s culture and also the skills, knowledge and attitudes teachers bring to the collaborative table, to help make the process more painless (Oberg, 1995, p. 4).

### ***Teachers with commitment to authentic student learning***

We must consider our students and reinvent ourselves to meet the needs of the new generation. We need to see teaching as a political activity where we empower our students to become critically-informed, perceive underlying agendas and address issues such as “social justice, globalisation and ethical use of information” (Henri & Asselin, 2005, p. 5), transforming the school learning community into *collaboratories* (Lunsford & Bruce, quoted in Henri & Asselin, 2005, p. 5) which exhibit “values and practices already held by teacher librarians: shared inquiry, intentionality, active participation and contribution, access to shared resources, technologies and boundary crossings” (Henri & Asselin, 2005, p. 5).

### ***Mastery of technology***

Use of information and communication technologies is central to this concept and requires strong ICT skills. In schools teacher librarians are often the “human link between technology and knowledge” (Valenza, 2002, p. 3); therefore, we must be informed and up-to-date with both technology and pedagogical thinking to assist in technology integration.

### ***Professional development and networking***

Collaboration with library colleagues is vital for professional development, providing encouragement and advice, helping us remain up-to-date and informed. Participating in active teacher librarian listservs like OZTL\_NET (Australia) and LM\_NET (USA) allows cross-pollination of ideas and offers enormous professional wisdom and insight. Professional development including conferences, one day events, reading professional journals, sharing ideas at a regional or local level, are useful for learning and keeping up with research findings. Collaboration can be taken to a higher level where a district group or school team sets up a common resource bank on a website or DVD. Teacher librarians are in a powerful position to provide PD to the school community especially on ICTs and information literacy.

## **Macro-strategies to create opportunities for collaboration**

### ***Inspecting the architecture of our learning community***

Firstly, in creating opportunities for collaboration and building information literacy we need to know our teaching staff and their perceived needs, understand our school’s culture and map the inhibitors and enablers to collaboration. Then we can attempt to address these, lobbying for the enabling aspects to be in place such as principal support and flexible scheduling and addressing the concerns recognised as inhibitors. If the school situation is already collaborative, we can offer our help as an instructional partner with a difficult topic or curriculum area by suggesting ideas and resources and planning and teaching a unit of work together. We need to take risks.



### ***Connecting strategically with school priority areas***

Strategic thinking is needed around integrating the library into the heart of the school. Identify the unique priorities and educational emphases of your school and think how the library can help meet these needs, improving the community for all its members. Priority areas may be integrating technology, differentiating the classroom, changing low literacy levels and lack of reading, addressing plagiarism, racial minorities, gender education, assessment, curriculum design, collaboration and information literacy.

### ***Building collaboration around technology***

All schools are becoming more technology-focused. A teacher librarian can be influential here. Set up or join the Technology Committee of your school; be a voice in a technology vision for the future. If appropriate, the committee could audit staff technology skills to gauge training needs across school faculties and create a training plan. Develop a three year plan including acquisition of technology, training and maintenance strategies. Investigate potential learning and content management systems and databases. Be informed; liaise with others to learn about useful new technology and integrating it. Develop competence in software applications; write or find simple instructions for students. Help integrate technology into teaching and learning. Take risks! Be the bridge/moral support/technology coach in the class to help teachers develop comfort and confidence in using new technology such as:

- Blogs as reading journals – Class Blogmeister
- Forums, discussions on class-related issues
- Wikis; for notes, meetings, ideas and minutes
- Digital streaming software (ClickView)
- Subscription databases
- E-journals and E-books.

Work collaboratively with the subject teacher to design and teach units of work incorporating ICTs; for example, a year-long program with our English faculty in which we build information literacy skills integrated with ICTs around a reading program on historical fiction.

Provide an electronic “toolbox” for the school community – PDF files with instructions on skills like citation, PowerPoint tips, developing a website, mind-mapping and using online databases.

Learning management systems such as Moodle or Edmodo help in managing a digital learning environment (Terry & Spear, 2003, p. 7), offering an online classroom to manage web-based projects, upload assignments, link websites, send messages, include instructional tutorials and integrate calendars with access from anywhere. Googlesites and LibGuides can facilitate building a library website.

### ***Developing a library website to centralise access to information resources***

A school library website is a powerful tool for students and staff and also acts as an online advocate for the library and its services and can be a vehicle for PD. It offers centralised access to library resources such as the library catalogue, databases, instructional tutorials, reading lists, website hotlists and pathfinders, and can generate new interest in and enthusiasm for the wealth of resources available (Terry & Spear, 2003, p. 3). The library becomes one without walls, with access from anywhere.

### ***Building collaboration around curriculum***

A curriculum committee which is a visionary think tank about the nature of teaching and learning, assessment for learning, professional development and strategies for dealing with plagiarism and fostering higher order information skills, is a rich and worthwhile forum for teacher librarian involvement. With our unique perspective we can share our insights and contribute to cutting-edge thinking in the school.

### ***Building collaboration around special needs***

We can help differentiate the curriculum for gifted learners by individual support and resource provision for extension and personal interest projects. Useful generic types of modifications such as templates and scaffolds can be put on the library website or staff material area for all teachers to access, to help them cater for the needs of those in their classes who need extension or modification. In collaborative instruction modifications can be more explicit scaffolding, simplified instructions, vocabulary, and employing lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy oriented more towards fact-finding.

### ***Building collaboration around reading culture***

Reading is a foundational skill for all students. Negotiate the introduction of a reading program such as Literature Circles, Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) or a Wide Reading Challenge. Literature Circles, cycling through silent sustained reading, discussion groups and writing reflective responses, can result in substantive conversation and sets up a powerful ongoing dialogue about reading. Teacher librarians can create blogs for students to write their reading responses, develop book lists for levels and genres, promote reading through displays, competitions and book club websites and support "literary learning".

### ***Building collaboration around literacy***

Literacy is also a critical issue in schools. Rosenfeld (2006, p. 63) affirms the need for teacher librarians to be "literacy advocates". Join the Literacy Committee and integrate

information literacy and digital literacy instruction. Develop publications with models - text types, citation, the information skills process, evaluating resources. At St Andrew's we developed several literacy programs including a PD file of strategies for teachers, *The L-Files*. *WOW (Working on writing)* targeted writing improvement across Year 9 (a collaboration of the Geography Department and the Library). A publication for Seniors is *CARS (Citation and Referencing Skills)*. The *RAW (Research and writing)* booklet uses the NSW Information Process as a scaffold, with strategies to assist guided inquiry across the curriculum:

DEFINING	concept maps, questions, understanding instructional words
LOCATING	list of library and other general resources, access points, pathfinder
SELECTING/ ORGANISING	note-making and organisational strategies, evaluating websites
PRESENTING	PowerPoint and presentation tips; language use, essay writing, scaffolds
EVALUATING	self-evaluation

For years *RAW* became the foundation for collaboratively taught units of work in the library in Year 8.

### ***Building influence around professional development***

The literacy booklets provide PD in information and literacy skills for teachers and extend the library's influence in the school. The work of the school library often results in providing PD for teachers through collaboration. Teacher librarians are in a strong position to provide PD programs in areas of literacy and technology, e.g. *Let's play* program at St Andrew's (exploration of Web 2.0 for teachers), based on Helene Blowers' 23 things: <http://sacsnet.sacs.nsw.edu.au/library/Teaching/SACSPDWeb2.0courseLetsplay.htm>

### ***Developing an information literacy continuum and collecting evidence***

A graded continuum of information and technology skills lends credibility to the process of collaboration and demonstrates clearly the intentional and incremental nature of the teacher librarian's interventions in developing skills in students. It provides substantial justification for the collaborative process and also provides a helpful guideline for teacher librarians and teachers in staging the introduction and consolidation of particular skills. It demonstrates that we as teacher librarians have a clear direction and mandate for developing information skills in students especially if integrated with syllabus documents. Library staff can also use curriculum mapping to keep a record of the collaboration that occurs with classroom teachers and the skills taught. Evidence-based practice is useful for

collecting one's own evidence of differences the library may have made in teaching and learning (Todd, 2003, p. 1).

### ***Building collaboration around reducing plagiarism***

We need to promote ethical scholarship and make it clear to students that they need to write in their own words. It is best to reduce plagiarism at the stage of instructional design. We can offer suggestions and interventions for rich tasks and construction of questions that allow little scope for plagiarism such as comparison/contrasting, taking an unusual angle on the question, group work, and explicit instruction in reference and citation skills, to foster more independent thinking and deeper learning.

### ***Building collaboration through designing integrated units of work***

Loertscher (2003, p.9) suggests that in planning units of work we use the relevant outcomes/state standards to set clear goals for students about what they need to learn, then draw upon resources and technology of the library and beyond, collaborate with other staff and expect this will lead to a flow-on of collaborative experiences across the school; also the assessment of learning should take into account both product and process. Collaboration with teaching staff to create meaningful resource-based units of work provides the opportunity for a successful and graduated research experience, integrating information skills and technology, eliciting higher order thinking skills, minimising the opportunity for plagiarism and allowing students to embed and refine transferable purposeful skills – thinking, information skills, problem-solving and critical evaluation of resources. The classroom teacher brings understanding of students' abilities and weaknesses and expertise in the content to the partnership; the teacher librarian brings a thorough understanding of the information process and a variety of resources and strategies to help construct a successful research experience. Over time a whole arsenal of instructional strategies, templates and scaffolds are developed and can employ a variety of approaches: information process units, Blooms-based units, stations, the /Jigsaw / Expert groups approach, web-based units such as VoiceThreads and PowerPoint/Prezi units. Developing collaborative instruction around assessments is particularly helpful because this approach allows all students in the school to be taught information skills embedded in their subject content and staff to be mentored in these approaches. It also challenges the teacher librarian professionally to develop and communicate information skills.

### **Micro-strategies to support collaboration**

#### ***The shape of the collaborative instruction process***

Typical stages of collaborative planning involve discussion about the outcomes of the task, type, length, due date, areas of research, possible questions, and the model that will suit the task and maximize the achievement of the outcomes. A library impact statement can help to initiate this discussion.

Formulation of the draft task with library staff ensuring sufficient resources at appropriate levels to meet the task requirements happens next; the draft unit is sent between the faculty and the library until it satisfies all stakeholders. The library staff assemble resources, copy worksheets, upload the task, electronic resources and links to the online class space, and book the library.

The teaching phase works as a partnership with the librarian usually explaining the task, the location of the resources and strategies for approaching aspects of the task and the teacher adding whatever is needed to clarify. The introduction to the topic is essentially a motivational talk to inspire students to explore the ideas, to feel excited about investigating and to link it to prior learning and the larger context. Narrative, interesting trivia or setting the task up as a mystery to be solved can heighten motivation. Reassuring students about the cyclic nature of the research process and universal feelings of uncertainty is helpful. Instructional interventions will be needed at times using modelling, guidance, explicit instruction, demonstration and questioning. Assessment and a final debrief, incorporating improvements for next time, are conducted together.

### ***Useful idea prompts for planning***

A planning folder with idea prompts - sample units, Blooms Taxonomy wheel, continuum of information literacy and digital skills, syllabus documents, critical thinking strategies and multiple intelligence matrixes as prompts to help us think more creatively and from a broader pedagogical standpoint - is useful.

### ***Useful equipment resources for the library involved in collaborative instruction***

A set of assignment shelves with relevant labels, e.g. Year 7 Middle Ages, is helpful for easy location of resources on closed reserve. Spare book trolleys are also desirable for moving relevant resources quickly to the allocated teaching area.

### ***Ambience of the library***

The school community needs to see the library and its services as useful and responsive, a means to success and higher achievement, with a welcoming, positive and stimulating ambience, which develops the whole person.

## **Conclusion**

All that we do is for our students and our colleagues; we ourselves must continue to grow and “raise the bar” through refining our collaborative instruction to facilitate deeper learning. To reiterate:

*We must raise the bar in our thinking; libraries and librarians enhance the total development of our society. If we do not seek to strengthen the*

*link between libraries and the classrooms, the real losers will continue to be our students...* (Grant, 2006)

Appendix 1 provides a summary of research into how school libraries make a difference; it may be used to support advocacy.

Appendix 2 offers a self-diagnostic tool based around the strategies in this paper to evaluate potential areas for development to bring about change.

## References

- Bartlett, J. (2005). Curriculum integration and information literacy: Developing independent learners. In *The information literate school community 2: Issues of leadership*, J. Henri & M. Asselin (eds). Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies.
- Beare, H., Caldwell, B.J. & Millikan, R.H. (1989). *Creating an excellent school*. London: Routledge.
- Harada, V.H. (2002). Taking the lead in developing learning communities. *Knowledge Quest*, 11-01-2002. Retrieved 23 March, 2007, ProQuest E-Library.
- Hartzell, G. (2003). Why should principals support school libraries? *Teacher Librarian*. 31(2), 21. Retrieved 23 March, 2007, ProQuest E-Library. Also available ERIC Digest. Syracuse, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, ED470034. Retrieved 4 March 2007  
[http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content\\_storage\\_01/0000000b/80/2a/37/88.pdf](http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/2a/37/88.pdf).
- Hay, L. & Henri, J. (1995). Leadership for collaboration: Making vision work. *61<sup>st</sup> IFLA General Conference – Conference Proceedings*, August 20-25, 1995. Retrieved 4 March, 2007, [www.ifla.org/IV/ifla61/61-hayl.htm](http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla61/61-hayl.htm).
- Henri, J. (1988). *The school curriculum: A collaborative approach to learning*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Library Studies.
- Henri, J. & Asselin, M. (eds) (2005). *The information literate school community 2: Issues of leadership*. Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies.
- Kenney, B. (2006). Ross to the rescue! *School Library Journal*, 04-01-2006. Retrieved 23 March, 2007, ProQuest E-Library.
- Kuhlthau, C.C., Maniotes, L.K. & Caspari, A.K. (2007). *Guided inquiry: learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Lance, K.C. (2002). What research tells us about the importance of school libraries, *Knowledge Quest*, 09-01-2002. Retrieved 23 March, 2007, ProQuest E-Library.
- Leonard, L. (2002). Schools as professional communities: Addressing the collaborative challenge. *International Electronic Journal of Leadership in Learning*. 7(1). Retrieved 23 March, 2007, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~iejll/volume6/leonard.html>.
- Libraries critical to development says education official. (2006). *SKNVibes*. Retrieved 26 December, 2006, <http://www.skNVibes.com/News/NewsDetails.cfm/2301>.
- Limberg, L. (2005). Informing information literacy education through empirical research. In *The information literate school community 2: Issues of leadership*, J. Henri & M. Asselin (eds). Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies.
- Loertscher, D. (2003). *Project Achievement: Brief guide and handout*. Salt Lake City, UT: Hi Willow. Retrieved 21 February, 2007, <http://www.txla.org/conference/SLSS/ProjectAchievement.pdf>.
- Mackey, T.P. & Jacobson, T.E. (2005). Information literacy: A collaborative endeavour. *College Teaching*, 53(4), 140. Retrieved 23 March, 2007, ProQuest E-Library.

- Montiel-Overall, P. (2005). Toward a theory of collaboration for teachers and librarians, *School Library Media Research*, 8. Retrieved 20 January, 2007, <http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume82005/theory.htm>.
- Montiel-Overall, P. (2007). Mixed methods research: developing a deeper understanding of teacher and librarian collaboration. [PowerPoint]. Presentation at CISSL-ILILE Research Symposium, "Multiple Faces of Collaboration", May 17-18, 2007, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio. Retrieved 20 May, 2011, <http://www.libros.arizona.edu/TLClogo/TLCLOGO.htm>
- Oberg, D. (1995). High stakes: Technology and collaborative teaching. Information Technology Education Connection (ITEC) conference on schooling and the information super highway. Paper presented in *Cooperative planning and teaching model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?* K. Strand (ed.). Wagga Wagga, NSW: Charles Sturt University, Centre for Teacher Librarianship, June 3-15.
- Oberg, D. (1999). Teaching the research process – for discovery and personal growth. *IFLA Bangkok 1999 Conference Proceedings*. Paper presented at 65<sup>th</sup> IFLA Council and General Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, 20-28 August. Retrieved 4 March, 2007, [www.ifla.org/IV/ifla65/papers/078-119e.htm](http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla65/papers/078-119e.htm).
- Oberg, D. & Henri, J. (2005). The leadership role of the principal in the information literate school community. In *The information literate school community 2: Issues of leadership*, J. Henri & M. Asselin (eds). Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies.
- Robins, J. et al. (2005). Beyond the bird unit. *Teacher Librarian*, 33(2), 8. Retrieved 23 March, 2007, ProQuest E-Library.
- Rosenfeld, E. (2006). Teacher-librarians supporting student learning. *Teacher Librarian*, 33(3) 63. Retrieved 23 March, 2007, ProQuest E-Library. Also available [http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/397057/teacherlibrarians\\_supporting\\_student\\_learning/index.html](http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/397057/teacherlibrarians_supporting_student_learning/index.html)
- Russell, S. (2002). Teachers and library media specialists: Collaborative relationships. *Teacher Library Media Specialist*, 29(5), 35–38. Also ERIC Digest. Syracuse, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information and Technology, ED444605. Retrieved 4 March, 2007, <http://www.ericdigests.org/2001-2/librarians.html>.
- School libraries work!* 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (2008). Scholastic. Retrieved 20 May, 2011, [http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral\\_resources/pdf/s/slw3\\_2008.pdf](http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/s/slw3_2008.pdf)
- Small, R. (2002). Developing a collaborative culture. *The best of ERIC, ALA*. Retrieved 14 March, 2007, <http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/editorschoiceb/bestoferic/besteric.htm#developing>.
- Small, R. (2002). Collaboration: Where does it begin? *Teacher Librarian*, 29(5). Retrieved 21 February, 2007, [http://www.teacherlibrarian.com/tlmag/v\\_29/v\\_29\\_5\\_feature.html](http://www.teacherlibrarian.com/tlmag/v_29/v_29_5_feature.html).
- Terry, M. & Spear, D. (2003). Connecting the classroom and the library. *MultiMedia Schools*, 09-01-2003. Retrieved 23 March, 2007, ProQuest E-Library. Also available, [http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/sep03/terry\\_spear.shtml](http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/sep03/terry_spear.shtml).
- Todd, R. (2003). Irrefutable evidence, *School Library Journal*. 49(4), 51. Retrieved 25 March, 2007, ProQuest E-Library.
- Todd, R. (2007). Leading learning through the school library: A guided inquiry approach. Seminar at Cockle Bay, Darling Harbour, Sydney, 2 March.



Valenza, J.K. (2002). School librarians: A field guide to an evolving species. *Classroom Connect Newsletter*, 8(7). Retrieved 21 February, 2007, <http://www.classroom.com/community/connection/connectednewsletter/librarians.jhtml>.

### ***Author Note***

Elizabeth Greef is the Head Librarian of St Andrew's Cathedral School in Sydney, Australia, a Kindergarten to Year 12 library serving 1200+ people alongside an excellent library team. She is Australian but has lived in Africa, the Middle East and Europe. She has served IASL as Director for Oceania for five years and has presented at several conferences and written for professional journals. Elizabeth was NSW Teacher Librarian of the Year in 2010. Elizabeth enjoys reading, genealogy and travelling and likes to share good food and conversation with friends and family.

## **Appendix 1: RESEARCH EVIDENCE – SCHOOL LIBRARIES DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE - KEITH CURRY LANCE ET AL**

### **Research across 19 American states validates these findings.**

Lance: Students demonstrate higher levels of academic performance where library staff:

- Are qualified
- Plan and teach collaboratively with the classroom teacher
- Teach information literacy
- Provide one-to-one tutoring for students in need
- Develop a quality and varied collection of resources
- Integrate up-to-date technology into teaching and learning
- Co-operate with other libraries
- Provide inservice programs for teachers on information literacy, resource-based learning and integrating technology
- Have support staff
- Receive the support of the principal
- Manage networked technology
- Raise funds successfully

The second Colorado study has identified four major direct library predictors of academic achievement:

- School library program development
- Collaboration work of library staff
  - Co-operative planning with teachers
  - Teaching of information literacy skills
  - Provision of inservice training to teachers
  - Identification of relevant and useful materials for teachers
  - Support of networking linking library to classrooms
- Technology
- Flexible scheduling

An indirect predictor is the extent to which the school librarian is involved in whole school leadership activities outside the library

In summary, the better funded, the better-resourced and the better-qualified the library and its staff, the better the results for student academic achievement.

These results are reinforced by many other studies covered in *School libraries work!* including the Indiana Study in 2007 by Keith Curry Lance, Marcia Rodney and Becky Russell and the Ohio Study by Ross Todd, Carol Kuhlthau and OELMA in 2004 at <http://www.oelma.org/OhResearchFindings.htm> .

Lance, K.C. (2001). *Proof of the power: Recent research on the impact of school library media programs on the academic achievement of US public school students*, ERIC Digest ED456861.

Retrieved 14 March, 2007, [www.ericdigests.org/2002-2/proof.htm](http://www.ericdigests.org/2002-2/proof.htm)

For current state of research in 2008, see *School libraries work!* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. (2008). Scholastic. Retrieved 20 May, 2011,

[http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral\\_resouces/pdf/s/slw3\\_2008.pdf](http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resouces/pdf/s/slw3_2008.pdf)

**Appendix 2: SELF-DIAGNOSTIC TOOL TO EVALUATE AREAS OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE - E. Greef 2009, updated 2012**

<b>MODEL – Current library operating model (See pp. 4 - 5 of paper)</b>				
Co-ordination <input type="checkbox"/>	Co-operation/Partnership <input type="checkbox"/>			
Integrated instruction <input type="checkbox"/>	Integrated Curriculum <input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>PEDAGOGY IN THE SCHOOL</b>	Excellent	Good	Developing	Basic
Principal support for the library and its mission				
A collective vision incorporating information literacy as a “meta-outcome”				
Collaborative ethos in the learning community				
Environment of mutual trust and respect				
Support for a constructivist learning framework				
Focus on resource-based learning (RBL) and collaborative planning and teaching (CPT)				
Team approach to teaching				
Networked school where technology is driven by the educational rationale				
Openness to change				
<b>SCHOOL CONDITIONS</b>				
Sufficient time and staffing				
Flexible timetable				
<b>TEACHER LIBRARIAN MINDSET</b>				
Trained information specialist				
Self-belief/confidence				
Readiness to meet the challenge				
Flexible approach				
Willingness to take risks				
Approachable manner				
Excellent communication skills				
High expectations				
Willingness to build working relationships for collaboration				
Awareness of students’ information needs				
Willingness to share				
Willingness to develop shared goals with classroom teachers				
Clear understanding of one’s school culture				
Sensitivity towards reservations of teachers about the				

perceived high risk nature of collaboration				
Understanding of the skills, knowledge and abilities that teachers bring				
Commitment to personal lifelong learning				
Competence in instructional design				
Strong grasp of pedagogical strategies				
Transformational leader				
Competency in a range of multi-literacies, eg visual, digital				
Commitment to developing critically-informed students who can perceive underlying agendas and are aware of social justice issues				
Willingness to integrate technology into teaching and learning & assistance to classroom teachers in this area				
<b>TEACHER LIBRARIAN ROLE</b>				
Change agent driving the paradigm shift				
Advocate for collaboration/promote research into benefits				
Involvement in curriculum and leadership beyond the library, eg curriculum, technology, literacy (committees)				
Effective manager of people eg conflict resolution				
Effective manager of resources				
Diagnosis of school priority areas & level of library connection with/support of these: *Literacy *Technology *Academic success *Differentiation *Plagiarism prevention *Minority groups *Gender education *Assessment *Curriculum design *Collaboration *Information literacy	Tick focus areas			
Inspiring the reading culture in your school through active promotion of reading through displays, literary learning, book lists and other means				
Running an effective reading program across year groups				
Excellent fiction collection to inspire reading				
Liaison with classroom teachers regarding collaborative work				
Liaison with Heads of Department regarding collaboration				
Collaborative design and teaching of integrated units of work				
Collaborative design and teaching of an assessment task across a year group				
Design of templates and scaffolds to support students with special needs - differentiation				

Supporting gifted learners				
Excellent non-fiction collection to support the curriculum				
Promotion of ethical scholarship /plagiarism prevention				
Assistance to classroom teachers in instructional design, teaching, support and strategies to deter plagiarism				
Explicit instruction in reference and citation skills				
Involvement in school vision for IT implementation				
Centralisation of access to library resources through a library website				
Mastery of technology: *Office – Word, Excel *Email *Presentation software – PPT, Prezi, Voicethread *Data projectors *Clickview/AV database *Online databases *Content management system (eg Moodle) *Wikis *Blogs *Web design				
Networking with other library colleagues *Professional development *Listserv, eg OZTL_NET, LM_NET *reading of professional journals				
Resource folder to support planning and generate ideas				
Method of planning or mapping the continuum of information literacy skills				
Collect evidence				