

## The School Library - #1 resource



We all try to start the new school year with the best of practice as well as the best of intentions.

We know that teaching in 2019 is going to take an enormous amount of our time and energy. We need to be fit, focused and prepared to commit a large proportion of our lives to our students, our teaching, and our passion for learning.

This last few days before we head back to the classroom is when to finalise those plans that are going to work strategically for us. It is worth considering what is on offer.

One of our greatest resources is our school library. The attention we give to how we use the library and all its resources can make a massive difference to our first few weeks, and to the school year, and particularly to our students' learning.

A school library contributes to enhanced student learning by providing innovative programs and services which support teaching and learning in the school. ... Activities which centre around teaching and learning are central to the school library's purpose.

Handbook for School Libraries p.2

So we need to get to know our school librarian – well.

Librarians provide and manage the best educational, social and recreational resource we have in our schools. They are involved in the school program planning, and are integral to innovative learning practices. And their role in learning for the future is increasingly being developed.

Librarians have as integral components of their work, the requirements of:

- Cooperative planning, teaching and evaluation of information and digital literacies within the context of classroom programs, linked to syllabus outcomes and supporting Quality Teaching
- Encouraging the development of discerning reading, viewing, listening skills
- Providing innovative technology and supporting its effective use across learning areas

Handbook for School Libraries p.2



But wait! There's more!

Librarians are tasked with supporting the development of 'information literacy' through actively working with, and managing, the information process in the context of syllabus outcomes and content.

The six elements of the process and their accompanying questions guide and support students to apply their literacy and investigative skills to active learning:

- Defining - What do I really want to find out?
- Locating - Where can I find the information I need?
- Selecting - What information do I really need to use?
- Organising - How can I best use this information?
- Presenting - How can I present this information?
- Assessing - What did I learn from this?

Handbook for School Libraries p.3

The elements of this process that librarians know well can directly inform and support our work in the classroom.

And on top of all this, librarians are required to promote enjoyment of all receptive learning skills, and to create an environment that encourages learning.

School libraries have maximum impact when they:

- Provide collaborative programs for reading instruction
- Select and provide resources to meet the learning needs of all students
- Assure seamless integration of technology, teaching, and learning
- Provide resources to support state and national standards
- Encourage students to independently seek, access, and use information

from *School Libraries Work* (2016)

That just about covers everything you could ask for in a resource, and it is there for the asking.

In the wider context, the importance of libraries and librarians is expanding and ever-developing.

Many have found creative answers, developing spaces that allow children to make discoveries, put technology to imaginative use, learn, perform, and relax – as well as to read. In the process, libraries have often come to be the school's focal point.

Swain 2015



Check out these:

- [Tūranga](#) and the amazing [Imagination Station](#). This collaboration between an independent charity and Christchurch, New Zealand, City Libraries is astonishing. Spaces for children of all ages to play and explore, spaces for parents to share the adventures, spaces for quiet time, a café, handy and well-signed drinking water stations, and hundreds of books displayed to allow children and adults to access



easily. Of particular interest was the obvious availability of bi-lingual books, and the availability of old favourites that may not be as popular as they were, but can still have a place in a reader's life.

- Article in The Conversation, 19 August 2015 <https://theconversation.com/who-says-libraries-are-dying-they-are-evolving-into-spaces-for-innovation-44820>
- [Street Libraries](#) are one great idea that has taken off. This volunteer organisation is aiming to establish over 5000 street libraries by 2021. This may be something you could initiate in your neighbourhood.
- Article in 'The Conversation, Friday 18 January 2019 [Ten ways teacher librarians improve literacy](#)

While the ten points made in this article are valid, there are so many more aspects to what a librarian can do.

The potential for libraries is only just beginning.

Have a wonderful 2019.

## References

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