Adding Value: Principals' Perceptions of the Role of the Teacher-Librarian

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This paper reports on a study into principals' perceptions of the role of the teacher-librarian. Nine principals in Australia were interviewed about the role of the teacher-librarian and library in their school. The findings indicated a range of ways in which the teacher-librarian adds value to the school, including in their role as teacher, providing the principal with a broad perspective on the workings of the school, providing advice and ideas, and providing leadership in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) at the school. It also identified a number of personal qualities valued by principals.

Introduction

In Australia, teacher-librarianship is in a period of transition. As we move into a new era of implementing a national curriculum (ACARA, 2014) in many cases teacher-librarians have found themselves marginalised by the school community. Indeed, an Australian Government Senate inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011) into school libraries and teacher-librarianship was established partly as a response to the situation the Australian Government found when it created a national school library building program only to discover that there were not enough qualified teacher-librarians to staff the new library buildings, nor the funds to build collections for them. Follow-up research to the Inquiry has confirmed that there are a number of school libraries in Australia not staffed by qualified teacher-librarians (Hughes et al., 2013), i.e. staff who are both qualified teachers and qualified librarians.

The Australian Senate inquiry found that the role of the teacher-librarian has been problematic. There were suggestions that the teacher-librarian was seen as a poor performing teacher who had been placed in the Library to remove them from the classroom. The Inquiry also revealed the stereotype that is inflicted on all librarians, of a 'dragon in pearls' – an elderly woman in a 'twin-set' and pearls who guards books and shushes people (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011, p. 65).

Internationally, the role of the teacher-librarian is influenced by differences in title, qualifications, perceptions and expectations (Barnett, 2015). Titles used include 'school librarian', 'school library media specialist' (American Library Association, 2010) and more recently, 'media and educational technology instructor' (Cooper, 2015; Easley & Yelvingtom, 2015). Only some jurisdictions require dual qualifications in teaching and librarianship (Ash-Argyle & Shoham, 2012; Church, Dickinson, Everhart, & Howard, 2012; Lo et al., 2014; Shu, 2014). Furthermore, not all countries and jurisdictions have school libraries as is the norm in Australia (Campello, 2014; Kachel, 2015). The differing qualification requirements and status of teacher-librarians, school librarians and school library media specialists around the world has meant that research into the role is highly dependent on the jurisdiction. As such, the findings reported in this paper cannot be necessarily generalised to other jurisdictions.

Research into principals' perceptions of the role of the teacher-librarian

The principal's perception of the role of the teacher-librarian is crucial to the way that the school library and teacher-librarian is supported (or not) in the school. There are two distinct bodies of research into the principal's perceptions of the role of the teacher-librarian, the first drawing on quantitative survey data, and the second drawing on interviews. Nearly all of the research has been undertaken in the U.S.

Much of the existing research on principals' perceptions has been based on responses to questionnaire items where the role is predefined by an existing framework such as the US national school library guidelines (American Association of School Librarians & Association for Communications and Technology, 1988) and guidelines on collaborative partnerships in school libraries (American Association of School Librarians & Association for Communications and Technology, 1998). For instance, principals in Arizona (1989) and Missouri (Dorrell & Lawson, 1995) valued collection development, library management, reference services and promotion of reading. Teaching (i.e. the instructional role of the school librarian) was not valued in either study. In Kentucky (Alexander, Smith, & Carey, 2003) a study into the value of the role of the school library media specialist in relation to information literacy, collaboration/leadership/technology, learning/teaching, information access/delivery and program administration found that the rating for all categories as only moderate, with principals in different sectors weighting the role differently, for instance high school principals weighting information literacy more highly than elementary principals.   In South Carolina, Shannon (2009) found that principals ranked collaboration, collection development and promoting reading and literacy as the most important aspects of the role. More recently, Gavigan and Curry Lance (2015) found that principals in South Carolina ranked the value of the school librarian respectively as a reading motivator, instructional resources manager, co-teacher, provider of staff professional development, leader, teacher and technology instructor. In Virginia, elementary (Church, 2008) and secondary (Church, 2010) principals were asked about the instructional role of the school library media specialist. Both sets of principals valued the school library media specialist as information literacy instructor, instructional partner and provider of information literacy professional development, while the elementary principals were critical of the school library media specialist who confined their role to promotion of reading and did not have technology expertise (Church, 2008, 2010).

Some of these studies included a qualitative element that also explored the attributes valued by principals. Shannon (2009) found that interpersonal skills such as being welcoming, approachable, flexible, and a team player were viewed as desirable. Likewise, Church (2007) found that elementary school principals valued a welcoming, collaborative, life-long learner and team player who created a fun, exciting and inviting library whereas secondary school principals (Church, 2010) valued a school librarian who was approachable, customer-service orientated, enthusiastic, friendly and innovative.

One of the weaknesses of the studies discussed above is that they were designed using a set of predetermined roles and thus did not necessarily allow for emergent roles as perceived by principals. A recent qualitative study by Krueger (2015) on the perceptions of principals in Minnesota has addressed this issue. Krueger interviewed six principals from elementary and secondary schools, asking them how they valued their media specialists. He found that they valued their media specialist as a provider of staff development, particularly in relation to technology development; as a school leader in terms of technology, events planning, curriculum integration, and communication; and as a teacher working with individuals and class groups.

There has been little previous empirical research into principals' perceptions of the role of the teacher-librarian in Australia. An exception is a qualitative, exploratory study (Henri & Boyd, 2002) that investigated the level of influence of teacher-librarians as perceived by themselves and

their principals. The teacher-librarians in the study were identified as those who were already known in their professional community as having a strong level of professional influence. The four principals who participated in the study 'held both the person and the position in high esteem' (p. 12). However, as this study was based around the level of influence the teacher-librarian wielded in the school, there was no explicit analysis of the principal's perceptions of the role of the teacher-librarian. Furthermore, the study predated the extensive technological developments that have transformed the role of the teacher-librarian. A more recent survey-based study investigated how teacher-librarians in contributed to student literacy development in 27 schools in Queensland (Hughes, et al., 2013). A component of this study used open-ended questions to elicit principals' perceptions of the impact of the teacher-librarian. The study found that principals saw their teacher-librarian as a pedagogical and curriculum leader, literacy leader, collaborative literacy teacher, promoter of information and digital/ICT literacy, promoter of reading, peer educator, resource expert, learning space creator and researcher.

Given the findings of the Australian Government Senate Inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011), and the lack of research into principals' perceptions of the role of the teacher-librarian in Australia, it is clear that more research is needed. The study reported in this paper has been designed to fill the gap in this body of research.

Investigating Principal's Perceptions of the Teacher-Librarian's Role

This study investigated the question 'What are principals' perceptions of the role of the teacher-librarian?' Nine principals of state schools (N=5) and private schools (N=4) from the state of Queensland, Australia, volunteered as participants in the study. The schools ranged in size from approximately 500 to 1800 students with a diversity of year groupings: three K-7, three K-12, two 8-12 and one 10-12. The principals were recruited via their teacher-librarian. Because the principal was approached by their teacher-librarian it is likely that this study is skewed towards those who would be supportive of their teacher-librarian.

Semi-structured interviews of approximately 30 minutes duration were conducted (one interview was cut short at 15 minutes due to the principal's schedule). The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Principals were asked the following questions:

1. Could you explain the role of the teacher-librarian at this school?
2. What is the role of the school library?
3. How have you influenced the role of the teacher-librarian?
4. What developments would you like to see in the role of the teacher-librarian in the future?
5. How does the role of the teacher-librarian relate to the role of head of curriculum, and ICT coordinator?
6. How does the teacher-librarian assist you in your role as principal?
7. If you were able to recruit a new teacher-librarian, what would you look for?

The data were analysed using a qualitative, interpretative approach. Thematic analysis was undertaken looking for patterns of similarity and difference. Frequency of particular roles mentioned across the transcripts was seen as an indicator of foundational aspects of the teacher-librarian role. A range of common elements emerged from the data rather than being pre-specified. These were:

- students – what the principal perceives the teacher-librarian does for students
- teachers - what the principal perceives the teacher-librarian does for teachers
- leadership & management – the leadership and management role of the teacher-librarian
- principal – the way the teacher-librarian assists the principal
- qualities - the qualities that the principal looks for in a teacher-librarian

Individual profiles were constructed using the common elements. This enabled the respective roles to be compared and contrasted across schools. The profiles were given a

descriptive title illustrating the way that the principal described the role of their respective teacher-librarian e.g. Expert Teacher, Connector, Curriculum Leader. These titles have been used as codes distinguishing the quotations below. The individual profiles have been summarised in the table featured in the Appendix.

A number of themes were also identified in the data. These were based around the value that the teacher-librarian provided to the principal and the school:

1. Value for money – teacher first, librarian second
2. Value in providing a broad perspective
3. Value in giving advice and providing ideas
4. Value in providing leadership in ICT
5. Value in the teacher-librarian's qualities

Principals' Perceptions of the Teacher-Librarian Role

Each of the nine principals viewed the role of the teacher-librarian (TL) quite differently. This was due to a range of factors including the personality and expertise of the individual teacher-librarian, the role of the library within the school, and the existence of leadership and management roles of other staff in the school including the head of curriculum and ICT coordinator. In some schools the teacher-librarian performed parts of each of these roles, while in other schools the teacher-librarian was restricted to the role of library manager. The commonalities between the principals' perceptions of the role were that the teacher-librarian needed to be an expert teacher, manager of resources, and someone who is a good collaborator. The similarities and differences are illustrated below in a description of the themes. The themes are presented in detail in the Appendix.

Theme 1: Value for Money: Teacher First, Librarian Second

Several principals were emphatic that the teacher-librarian is a teacher first and librarian second. (It should be noted that 'teaching' in this context was seen as formally working with classes in the library rather than necessarily being assigned to a class group.) They explained that the teacher-librarian needed to be an experienced, expert teacher.

> I think the emphasis is on the word 'teacher'. **I think the teacher-librarian needs to be the teacher first and the librarian second**…I think that the teacher-librarian should spend the majority of their time with classes, probably 60 to 70% on average…if teacher-librarians are being phased out, I think it's because they're not doing that, and the school community is not really sensing that there's much value. I think it's the educative function that's critical. (Teacher)

> A good TL has got to be a good teacher, in my eyes. (Superperson)

> The teachers here will tell you that probably our greatest resource is the TL…**she sees herself as very much a teacher and a teacher attached to every classroom**. (Curriculum Leader)

> **They have to see themselves as a high-quality teacher first.** If they come in as a high-quality teacher, I can train them to do the other things if I need to, but it's very difficult to have a trained librarian that isn't great at teaching. (Expert Teacher)

Principals said that they needed the funding invested in the teacher-librarian to be used for teaching. They pointed out that they could hire a library assistant to undertake the library functions.

*I'd have to see their role a way more broadly than a manager of a library, than a librarian, that **the big function would be on teacher, the small function would be on librarian**, because I can provide the librarian service with trained, good quality teacher-aides, to a large extent. There are some things I can't do, because I need somebody with a teacher's eye to look at how a resource will be used.* (Expert Teacher)

One principal had already decided to replace his teacher-librarian with a lower-paid library assistant as he didn't feel he was getting the 'teacher' part of the teacher-librarian.

My biggest beef is you pay for the 'T' part of the TL and you don't get any 'T' from the TL. That's an issue with me…So my difficulty is a teacher-librarian is employed under the same conditions as other teachers but doesn't do anywhere near the contact and face-to-face and, if you like to use a crude term, the billable hours that a teacher does of 6 hours a day standing in front of 25 kids…You're paying $90,000 for a teacher-librarian. I don't mind if I'm getting $90,000 worth of value, but in my experience you rarely are. (Not-Teacher)

Some principals could not explicitly see the relationship between the work a teacher-librarian does and improving scores for Australia's standardised testing regime, the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). For instance, Expert Teacher's principal explained that he needed to allocate staffing based on improving NAPLAN scores, but he wasn't sure if the teacher-librarian had an effect on the improvement of scores.

*When I look across all of the resources I have at hand, a teacher-librarian is seen as one full-time equivalent teacher, which is a cost of about $90,000 of resources. If I have any discretion over $90,000 of resources and I have an absolute focus to improve my reading, writing and spelling NAPLAN scores, **would using the $90,000 and employing a teacher-librarian be my number one preference if my outcome is going to be measured in NAPLAN scores and those sorts of things?** That's what principals are being faced with, certainly around Queensland. If I was to put it to somebody and say, 'You've got $90,000. You are absolutely obligated to improve your NAPLAN scores. What do you want to buy with that? I'm not sure how many would come up and say, 'Well, I think I need a TL. That's my number one priority.' They may likely say things like, 'I want 3,600 hours of teacher-aide time per year, ' I want $90,000 worth of reading materials,' or 'I want a literacy coach', or 'I want a mentor, a teaching mentor, a pedagogy guide', or something like that. That's more likely going to be on my wish list. I'm fortunate here to have a very good TL. Having said that, I'm still not thinking that that would equate to $90,000 towards my NAPLAN improve. That's the dilemma.* (Expert Teacher)

Theme 2: Value in Providing a Broad Perspective

Principals commented that the value the teacher-librarians brought to their role and to the whole school was their broad perspective. This included understanding the big picture on what was happening in the school in terms of staff and student progress and a whole school view on curriculum and pedagogy. This is exemplified by comments from Superperson's principal who relied on the teacher-librarian to have their 'ear to the ground'.

*Because of their perspective in a school, position in a school, they have **a perspective which is very broad. They do have reasonably good strategic oversight and vision for what's happening**… I rely on the TL fairly heavily for broad conversations which I can pick important bits of information from, well beyond what you would think the TL would advise on. **I try to include***

the TL in, again, broader budgetary discussions, helping us set the priorities of the school, in general, because they talk to a lot of people. They talk to a lot of people on the basis that the conversation might be different if I'm having the conversation, because people talk differently with the head of the school than they might to their TL because they see their TL as a colleague. Because they work with every year level, they hear what's bothering the prep year teachers, they hear what the year sixes are wanting to do. So the knock on the door from the TL that says, 'Look, I was having a conversation with Year 5 and they were talking about this, which links very close into what Year 3 were doing. We don't actually have the facilities to manage that. Is that something that we can put into budget'. So I rely on them pretty heavily, I think. **They usually have their ear to the ground, they pick up the feel of the school**, and that can be both from the staff, the parents, the students. You get some good advice from the TL, if you listen. (Superperson)

Another principal explained that because the teacher-librarian interacted with all the staff and students in the school they were able to see alignment or lack of alignment throughout the school. They are also able to identify the staff and students who may need assistance and/or intervention. As such they are the 'canary in the coal mine'.

> **They do have a finger on the pulse of where the staff are.** *The TL is a person that I've relied on quite heavily in terms of - I have this thing as a metaphor, the canaries? The canaries in the mine?... [she is able to] give you a really, fairly accurate view of where people are at because she interacts with so many staff.* (Connector)

> **I have a teacher librarian who is across the bigger picture, around resourcing, often around students, because they see them in a different capacity**. *So alerting me to student groups or students that might need some sort of intervention is part of that. Quite often needs to have the bigger picture around resources and what one group wants and how another group might benefit from that particular resource. Highly valuable to keeping the administration informed around a whole range of issues.* (Manager)

Theme 3: Value in Giving Advice and Providing Ideas

The broad perspective held by the teacher-librarian provided principals with advice on a range of matters including ideas and knowledge of what was happening across the sector. This included curriculum and pedagogy (Curriculum leader, Expert Teacher, Challenger) resources, (Manager, Digital Information Leader), staff and students (Connector, Manager, Superperson) and designing learning spaces (Superperson, Digital Information Leader).

> **I like listening to her ideas.** *So she'll say, "I read this thing on –"She throws books sometimes into my tray…Or she'll say "I saw this great thing at the library I was at on the weekend"…She's very good with coming up with, "hey, have you heard? Are you thinking about? This is where we could go with that." So I guess she does influence my thinking around resourcing across the school.* (Digital Information Leader)

> *I rely on the TL fairly heavily for broad conversations which I can pick important bits of information from, well beyond what you would think the TL would advise on… You get some good advice from the TL, if you listen.* (Superperson)

*She certainly has a view on how you would best teach something, and that helps her make informed advice to me…**She brings ideas that I may not have even considered and then makes them happen.*** (Expert Teacher)

Theme 4: Value in Providing Leadership in ICT

Many principals valued their teacher-librarian as someone who went beyond books and had expertise in ICT for teaching and learning (Superperson, Expert Teacher, Challenger, Connector, Digital Information Leader, Manager). This included the teacher-librarian providing professional development and coaching for staff, for instance in implementing a new learning management system (Challenger), use of digital technologies available in the library (Manager), embedding ICT in learning and managing a system-wide ICT certificate credential for staff (Expert teacher). In some cases (Expert Teacher, Superperson), the teacher-librarian played the dual role of TL and ICT coordinator.

*Our TL has a huge role to play in the IT program at the school…**Our TL probably does fulfill a lot of the responsibilities of the IT mentor teacher or the IT coordinator** …I think there are going to be increasing demands for out TL to take up more and more of the leadership in the whole IT area.* (Superperson)

The teacher-librarian was valued as someone who is up-to-date with ICT developments.

She knows what's coming so that she can inform the rest of the team around changes in digital pedagogies, digital information…and to keep ahead of the kids, with things like the iPad, all that digital technology that kids are just so familiar with. Her job is to basically keep up-to-date and almost ahead of where the kids are at with the technology. (Digital Information Leader)

Theme 5: Value in the Teacher-Librarian's Qualities

A common thread in principals' responses was the relationship between the teacher-librarian as an individual and the teacher-librarian as a role. The teacher-librarian was valued as an individual, that is, it was the person who made the role valuable, not the role per se. In the main, when the principals described the qualities they would be looking for if they were to recruit a new teacher-librarian, they generally listed and explained these qualities with reference to the qualities of their current teacher-librarian (a notable exception was the principal of Not Teacher). These qualities include personal qualities and leadership qualities. They are underpinned by being an experienced and expert teacher.

*We're looking for people who have demonstrated good, effective teaching. They have a love of literature. They see technology as being critical to learning. **They see their role as being the person who works with, not for, or over, or around teachers.** And I think that's a critical thing. That they are able to contribute to the conversation about pedagogy, contribute to the way that people find credible and useful. So, they need to be able to, challenge us, and they do. They challenge and to lead and advocate.* (Connector)

Some of the principals explained that although a love of literature was important, the qualities they wanted in a teacher-librarian went beyond the traditional role.

*I wouldn't even be advertising your stock standard, what a teacher-librarian does. I think that gives the wrong impression about what a teacher-librarian does these days. **I'd be advertising for a curriculum leader**…is able to work within teams, is able to take on additional curriculum enhancement activities.* (Curriculum Leader)

In listing the range of qualities they were looking for, some principals admitted that they were asking a lot of one person. For instance Superperson's principal started their list of qualities with the statement 'We want a sort of Superman or Superwoman'. They listed a wide range of qualities and then exclaimed ' I've described the impossible person!' A range of personal and leadership qualities is seen this description:

I want someone who sees the Library, so to speak, as being the technology space to actually break down the barriers and get people together. Someone who is open to new ideas and new ways of thinking. Someone who is naturally curious. Someone's who's a researcher, who wants to research, read, learn. Someone who's a coach and a mentor, not afraid to learn from other people as well. And someone who can communicate with influence, someone who has the political smarts, who can go out there and bring people on board. (Digital Information Leader)

Personal qualities listed were varied and numerous. They included interpersonal skills such as being collaborative, collegial and a 'people person'. Dispositions included a sense of humour, flexible, organised, open, curious, adaptable and willingness to learn and to go above and beyond.

A people person connecting people to pedagogy. (Connector)

They need to have high levels of interpersonal skills and be able to adapt to different people's needs and styles. (Expert Teacher)

Leadership qualities included vision, influencing, challenging, proactive, advocate, politically smart, 'pushes boundaries', 'mover and shaker', strong management skills and preparedness to lead.

Strong management skills, coupled with good leadership and influencing skills around what a modern [resource] centre needs to look like, and just continual pushing boundaries on what's possible. Don't know whether you can write that into a position description! (Manager)

They need to be good teachers, number one, they need to be well organised, number two, and number three they need to be prepared to lead the way. (Expert Teacher)

The Principal's Support and Influence

One of the interview questions explored the ways in which the principal supported and influenced the role of the teacher-librarian. Responses included visiting the library frequently, encouraging other staff to consult the teacher-librarian, publically promoting the library, providing an adequate budget, being responsive and encouraging of the teacher-librarians' ideas and suggestions, allowing time for the teacher-librarian to do curriculum planning with year groups and inviting the teacher-librarian to be involved on school-wide projects and committees.

The expertise of the individual teacher-librarian seemed to be crucial to the level of support and influence provided by their principal. Several of the principals in the study compared their current

teacher-librarian favourably with former colleagues. Those with a high performing teacher-librarian mentioned being 'lucky'. In several cases the teacher-librarian was praised as being highly proactive. Indeed, when asked how they had influenced the role of the teacher-librarian at the school Connector's principal responded 'I think they do a lot of the influencing'. A common reply was to trust in the teacher-librarian's expertise.

I try to support her by not getting in her way. (Digital Information Leader)

Having the trust to let them get on with the job. (Superperson)

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a number of aspects that reinforce the Australian Senate Inquiry's (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011) findings about the current state of the profession. The role of the teacher-librarian in each school was idiosyncratic due to the nature of the school and the individual qualities of the teacher-librarian. The contextualised nature of the role points to one of the problems with the profession, that is that the value of the teacher-librarian as an individual seemed to outweigh the value of the role per se. In the past, a teacher-librarian was a mandated specialist member of staff, however, in Queensland explicit mention of the position is in the process of being removed from industrial awards and enterprise agreements. The removal of the mandated position and the implementation of school autonomy in Queensland in the form of "independent public schools" (Queensland Department of Education and and Training, 2014) has meant that the position is a tenuous one. This situation is not unique to the Australian content, as it is seen in other jurisdictions such as the US states of Wisconsin (Klais & Bugher, 2010) and Illinois (VanTuyle & Watkins, 2012).

The findings of this study emphasise how the support provided by the principal impacts upon the role of the teacher-librarian. These support activities were also noted by Oberg and Henri (2005) in their study of the leadership role of the principal in relation to the information literate school. As Church (2009, p. 40) argued, "The principal can 'make or break the library program." Likewise, Kaplan (2006, p. xi) relayed the comments of a school library media specialist who said "she is always a heartbeat away from a good school library media program because as soon as she 'trains' one principal, that principal moves on and she has to 'train' another one."   Support from the principal is more likely to be forthcoming there is a strong collaborative partnership between the principal and the teacher-librarian (Shannon, 2012).

The findings confirm that the role of the teacher-librarian has expanded from the traditional role of resourcing the curriculum, promotion of reading and development of information literacy. The development of ICT skills and ICT pedagogical leadership was the most prevalent addition, and in some cases the teacher-librarian played a dual role as ICT coordinator. The common ground between the teacher-librarian and ICT coordinator/technology coach has been noted by others (Bibbo & d'Erizans, 2013; Cooper, 2015). Furthermore, several teacher-librarians had a strong role in curriculum development across the school, with one teacher-librarian taking the role as head of curriculum. The importance of ICT and curriculum expertise was also noted by Church (2010) and Kruger (2015).

Another aspect highlighted in the findings is the wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that principals value in their teacher-librarian. It is difficult to imagine another teaching position in the school that requires the sort of breadth and depth expected by these principals of their teacher-librarian. Even though the position is not a formal leadership position in the school, many principals expected the teacher-librarian to have the qualities and influence of a leader. These qualities were also found in Henri and Boyd's (2002) Australian study of principals' perceptions of the influence of the teacher-librarian in the school and in Church's (2008, 2010)

studies of school library media specialists in Virginia. Furthermore, both Kaplan (2006) and Shannon (2009) found that principals highly valued interpersonal skills.

Conclusion

The findings from this study emphasise that principals valued the teaching role of the teacher-librarian, and saw their teacher-librarian as a teacher first and librarian second. This has a number of implications for teacher-librarians. In Australia, teachers are evaluated against the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014). These Standards are generic, and do not take into account teachers with specialist roles in the school such as the teacher-librarian, school guidance counsellor and careers counsellor. This means that teacher-librarians need to translate their practice to meet the Standards. It also means that any teacher-librarian whose role is mainly library manager may find themselves redundant if they do not weight their activities towards teaching and curriculum integration.

The challenge then, is for teacher-librarians to address the range of factors that influence the vulnerability of the teacher-librarian position and role. The findings of this study confirm that teacher-librarians add value to their school in a myriad ways. Their position can be shored up by a good relationship with the principal, being proactive, demonstrating a range of inter-personal skills and innovative practices, demonstrating ICT expertise, participating in curriculum development and by being an expert teacher.

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Appendix. Summary of Roles and General Elements

	Students	Teachers	Leadership & management	Help principal	Qualities
Superperson	• Provides pastoral care • Develops reading • Develops research skills • Teaches students how libraries work	• Co-teaches • Curriculum planning • ICT mentor • Inquiry-learning pedagogy expert • Provides professional development	• Strategic insight • Broad perspective • Overview of the Australian Curriculum • Building projects • IT coordinator • Manages resources	• 'Ear to the ground' • Broad perspective • Provides good advice	• Vision • Broad teaching experience, experienced teacher and TL • Good understanding of the Australian Curriculum • Strong ICT skills & pedagogical knowledge • Multitasker • Flexible • Organised • Sense of humour • Enjoys working with children • Collaborative & collegial Highly rounded individual
Expert Teacher	• Improves NAPLAN scores • Develops reading • Develops literacy & numeracy	• Co-teaches • Develops ICT skills • Develops ICT pedagogy	• ICT pedagogy • ICT coordinator • Literacy initiatives • Manages Library	• Provides good advice • Helps with decision-making • Provides ideas	• Teacher first, librarian second • Expert, experienced teacher • Knows the curriculum • Interpersonal skills • Prepared to lead the way • Can adapt to teacher's needs & styles • Proactive
Challenger	• Develops information literacy • Develops digital citizenship	• Collaborates & co-learns • Develops ICTs	• Implementing school pedagogical framework • Facilitates change	• Helps implement vision • Helps staff to move forward • Knowledge of school pedagogical framework	• No response due to short interview
Connector	• Develops literacy • Develops ICT • Connects students to ideas, resources & literature	• Pedagogy mentor • Curriculum expert • Connects teachers with resources • Develops ICT • Models	• Alignment across the school • Connecting with students & teachers across the school • Advocates change	• 'Canary in the coalmine' • Staff wellbeing • Provides links & connections	• Expert teacher • Flexible • 'People person' • ICT pedagogical expertise • Love of literature • Vision for learning

					• Researcher & learner • Political smarts • Connects people with technology
Curriculum Leader	• Provides engaging lessons • Develops literacy • Runs co-curricular & extra-curricular activities	• Co-teaches & collaborates & • Collaborates with curriculum planning • Provides resources • Curriculum mentor • Pedagogical coach	• Leads curriculum development • Leads pedagogy development	• Provides links with the classroom • Discusses curriculum & pedagogy • Provides ideas	• Curriculum leader • Utilises new technologies • Goes above & beyond • Constantly renews professionally • At the forefront
Manager	• Develops information literacy • Coordinates student research projects • Connects students with experts • Provides access to information	• Co-teaches • Provides ICT professional development • Provides professional advice • Provides resources	• Influences staff • Pushes boundaries • Manages library	• Provides the big picture • Provides information on staff & students • Provides ideas & implements changes • Provides information on professional practice in the sector	• Strong management skills • Pushes boundaries • Undertakes personal PD • Actively networks • Proactive • Leads & influences
Teacher	• Develops information literacy • Develops digital citizenship • Develops a love of reading & ideas	• Co-teaches & collaborates • Collaborates with curriculum planning		• Improves student learning	• Excellent teacher • Team player • Proactive
Not Teacher	• Waits to be asked a question	• Doesn't interact with staff	• Doesn't exhibit leadership or management functions or qualities	• Costs resources that could be used elsewhere	• Proactive • Willingness to learn • Bright & keen • Strong ICT skills