

Future of the book

Much has been written about the future of the book. Opinions expressed fall at both ends of a continuum and in between: the book is already obsolete; the book will always be with us. Developments with e-books are happening as I write. Teacher librarians have already been involved in trials of e-books and have had to negotiate licenses with a range of publishers. Are e-books the future of school set texts? How long will e-books and books co-exist? A fascinating issue for teacher librarians to contemplate.

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School libraries hovering on the poverty line

Two new research studies show that Australia's school children are in danger of not getting what they need to support development of critical skills in information and reading literacy.

The studies, *Snapshot of Australian School Libraries* and *Snapshot of Australian Teacher Librarians*, completed by Edith Cowan University, reveal that 50% of Australian school libraries surveyed are trying to do their job on an annual materials budget of under \$10 000 per year, while teacher librarians are under pressure to spend more and more time outside the school library.

The studies show that Australian teacher librarians are highly committed, with over half actively involved in further professional development, but infrastructure is failing to cope with issues as basic as adequate seating for the student population, let alone access to information and communication technologies.

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It's the first time there has been reliable national data to work with. The overall picture is one of very dedicated staff playing a critical role in teaching our children the information literacy skills that will last them a lifetime, but the pressure on those libraries and teacher librarians to perform with the resources they have is enormous.

In a 2007 study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Australia had slipped from second to sixth place in reading literacy, out-performed by Finland, South Korea, Hong Kong, Canada, and New Zealand.

Visit <http://www.alia.org.au/media.room/2009.05.09.html>, and <http://www.asla.org.au/policy/standards.htm>.

A new online community helps teach with TV

School librarians and teachers, TAFEs, and universities now have access to an online community to help them get more out broadcast material.

EnhanceTV's Community (<http://community.enhancetv.com.au>) has been set up to help educators share information, lesson plans, and teaching tips for using film and television in the classroom.

Filmmakers are also part of the community, giving teachers insider tips about their programs, and helping bring them to life in the classroom. For example, experienced television director Kay Pavlou talks about the work she has done on 'reality' docs and what goes on behind the scenes, along with useful class exercises.

EnhanceTV Manager, Jamie LeHurray said the community was established as a free resource to enable a dynamic exchange of information and ideas. The shared knowledge will help educators make better decisions in choosing programs for their libraries and classrooms, save them time with lesson planning, and expand their networks within the education community.

EnhanceTV (www.enhancetv.com.au) was developed by Screenrights, the non-profit organisation that licenses educational institutions to copy from TV. Nearly all schools, TAFEs, and universities in Australia have a Screenrights licence. For more information on the licence, visit www.screenrights.org.

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Library literacy for adults

We saw an opportunity to promote library literacy, and we grabbed it! The library team at the Elizabeth Campus (TAFE SA) developed a Moodle for two student groups. Our targets were English as a second language students and native English speakers with literacy difficulties. Our Moodle – Library Snapshots – introduces these adult students to library jargon and skills.

Our Snapshots Moodle is organised into e-books, each taking five to 15 minutes to browse. Topics cover what's in the library, finding things, using the internet, and glossary games.

Library staff are well aware of the library skills needed by ESL and Vocational Preparation students: they make up a large proportion of our patrons. Our Moodle's contents were inspired by the University of Ballarat – School of Mines' Library's *ESL Library Skills* project (2007). Project leader Katrina Macdonald convinced us that there was a market for freely accessible, adult-oriented, web-based material. Our 24/7 Library Snapshots Moodle is just that.

It's easy to find us! Start at <http://moodle.tafesa.edu.au/> and then follow this pathway: under Course Categories, click Resources > Library > Library Snapshots > click YES > and off you go! You may want to start with the word-for-the-day or with a glossary



game. Choose from hangman, matching, or quiz show formats. Alternatively, sample the cartoon books, filmclips, document downloads, flowchart, and tips lists. All are Australian-produced and adult-oriented. The Elizabeth Campus Library team (Dianne, Geoff, Lisa, Susan, and Valerie) look forward to your comments.

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TLs, literacy, and the curriculum

Teacher librarians hold recognised teaching qualifications and qualifications in librarianship, defined as eligibility for Associate membership of ALIA. This makes teacher librarians uniquely qualified within the fields of education and librarianship. Their role is also unique as they combine knowledge about curriculum and pedagogy with information management knowledge and skills.

TLs make a contribution to the development of literacy through:

- nurturing an information-rich learning environment to support the needs of the users,
- building a collection of resources, print and electronic, to support and enhance the curriculum,
- designing sequential programs in collaboration with subject teachers, so that students can acquire information literacy and literature skills in the context of the curriculum. The appropriate and relevant use of ICTs and information resources is incorporated in these programs.
- evaluating student learning programs and library services to inform and shape practice.

Thus the curriculum is central to the teacher librarian's role in literacy promotion and development.

Within Australian schools, national and state authorities mandate the curriculum. In response to a perceived need, the Education Ministers from the states issue joint statements about the educational agenda for the nation, often in the form of a declaration. The *Hobart Declaration on Schooling* was made in 1989. This was superseded in 1999 by the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*.

The most recent statement was made on December 5, 2008 when the Australian Education Ministers launched *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (Melbourne Declaration)*. The *Melbourne Declaration* sets two goals for education in Australia over the next decade.

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence.

Goal 2: All young Australians become

- successful learners,
- confident and creative individuals,
- active and informed citizens.

Each of the two goals is elaborated more fully in the *Melbourne Declaration* and the full text can be accessed at http://www.mceetya/melbourne_declaration,25979.html

For the purposes of this discussion, a few relevant points from the *Melbourne Declaration* have been chosen for further exploration.

Regarding Goal 1

Promote a culture of excellence in all schools, by supporting them to provide challenging and stimulating learning experiences and opportunities that enable all students to explore and build on their gifts and talents.



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