

Reviews

Great school libraries in Aotearoa: a qualitative study (2022)

A report by the Ministry of Education and the School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa. Published in March 2022.

<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/great-school-libraries-in-aotearoa-a-qualitative-study>

Reviewed by Nell Day, Teacher Librarian, University High School

This study of school libraries in Aotearoa New Zealand is a collaboration between SLANZA (the national association of school libraries) and the Ministry of Education and uses interviews with principals, librarians* and students from thirteen different state schools identified by SLANZA as having successful library programs. The paper showcases a variety of best practice school libraries across the country, highlighting the mana (influence, status, or power) of the school library within the school and the positive impacts of a great school library.

The study identifies four key outcomes of a successful school library program: improved literacy; development of research and digital literacy skills; extra-curricular learning (leadership, mentorship and other skills); and student well-being and connectedness. The authors then spend time unpacking what it is that libraries actually do to create these impacts: many of the elements of best practice look very similar to those of Australian school libraries but there are also some interesting differences across the Tasman.

From an Australian perspective, when reading about the promotion of literacy, it is particularly interesting to learn of the ways that indigenous language and culture are foregrounded in school libraries in Aotearoa New Zealand, with most of the libraries in the study collecting materials in te reo Maori (Maori language) as well as having a strong collection focus on Maori and Pasifika stories, culture and histories as part of the larger goal of being a library that reflects the cultures and identities of its users. In some schools there is also a strong sense of connection between the school and the larger community, with school librarians facilitating student access to public libraries, leading excursions to the local library, and engaging with the parent community.

In terms of research skills and information literacy, there are again many elements of practice that would be familiar to Australian teacher librarians but the role of the National Library stands out, as this is a place where librarians from around the country can source curriculum materials for free including loans of physical books and access to digital resources. This serves to promote equity across state school libraries as any library may request access to these resources, and the librarian manages this process, collaborating with classroom teachers to select appropriate materials for upcoming curriculum topics. The National Library may also send staff to visit individual school libraries to provide support and advice.

Successful school libraries in Aotearoa New Zealand also have an emphasis on supporting students to develop skills outside the classroom curriculum: this may involve initiatives like student librarian or library committee programs as well as a general responsiveness to student needs in terms of things like facilitating clubs, developing students' interests or encouraging self-directed learning. The importance of the library as a space of well-being and community connectedness is also found to be significant in this study, with many participants citing the safe and welcoming nature of the library as a space where students felt accepted and supported at school.

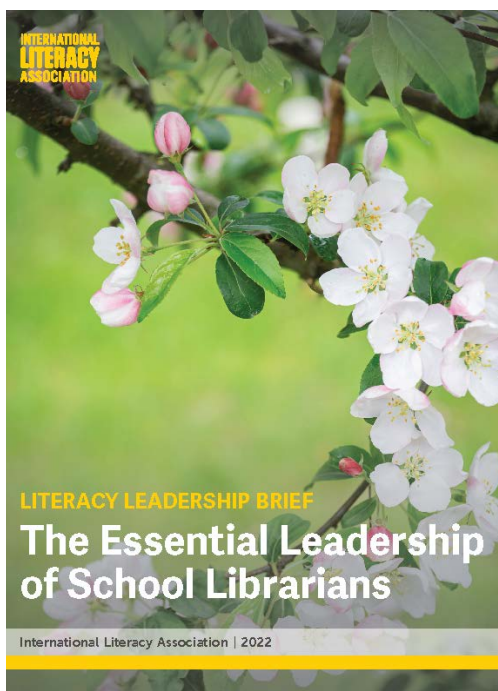
This study also explores the institutional factors that allow a school library program to thrive within the school, and the discussions with principals shed light on the ways in which the support of the school administration can help to create an effective and well-integrated library program that is embedded at multiple levels in teaching and learning. This report, while relatively short and easy to read, is a great insight into how our neighbours across the Tasman are running excellent school library programs and both the similarities and differences between their work and ours make for an engaging and enlightening read.

***A note on language: while in Australia we may be more used to seeing staff working in school libraries referred to as teacher librarians, this study refers to these staff 'librarians' throughout regardless of whether or not they also hold teacher qualifications.**

International Literacy Association (2022). The Essential Leadership of School Librarians

(Literacy Leadership Brief)

<https://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/the-essential-leadership-of-school-librarians.pdf>



Reviewed by Margaret Sinnott, Library Coordinator, Emmanuel College, Warrnambool.

The article, The Essential Leadership of School Librarians is an eleven page document that details many of the roles and responsibilities of a Library staff member, in particular, for those leading a Library.

The work of a library leader is written about with such roles and areas of expertise mentioned as: school media specialist, literacy partner, information skills presenter, collection development leader, classroom teacher collaborator, encourager of leisure reading. These roles are important for schools to consider when looking at the library and the role it plays in a school.

Mention is made of the valuable impact school library staff made during the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for library staff to be qualified and valued in schools. With acknowledgement of a wide range of references, the article forcefully presents the case for school libraries to be well funded and staffed with qualified library staff. The bibliography gives a comprehensive list of references that library, literacy and school leadership staff could make use of to investigate further.

'All students deserve the right to a well-funded school library staffed with full-time certified school librarians. Equitable access to school libraries and librarians is an issue of social justice...' (page 7).

The link being made between libraries, library staff and literacy is to be commended and library staff working in school libraries should be aware of the important role they play in school wide literacy improvement. The article, a literacy article, would be useful for school boards, leadership teams and literacy and library staff to begin conversations about how literacy can be improved in partnership with library programs.

Designing Libraries

(Website)

<https://designinglibraries.org.uk/>

Reviewed by Margaret Sinnott, Library Coordinator, Emmanuel College, Warrnambool.

The Designing Libraries site presents an immediate visual of unique library spaces, catching the eye of the viewer with large, colourful images on the first opening of the site.

The site is well constructed, easy to use and is visually clearly able to be navigated with clear headings and links. It is a free website, offering a gathered collection of information for those designing libraries from a team of four people with diverse links to working with libraries: an author of a designing libraries book, a library building consultant with a background in academic libraries, a writer and communicator and technical support.

The Library projects listed are from England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, with an ability to filter for country or type of library e.g. Public libraries and academic libraries. The database doesn't include school libraries. The information presented for each library includes photographs and detailed descriptions including the size of the building, the architect, the building contractor, the spaces, accessibility, the seating and the stock. Anyone looking to change up their library space or looking for libraries to visit, would be able to easily use this site.

There is another tab at the top of the site called Featured Libraries, which features libraries from across the globe, many being able to be viewed by video.

School libraries are included in the Case Studies tab, along with academic libraries and public libraries and archives. Another section includes Marketplace, where viewers can search for places to purchase resources. Sponsors of the site are listed on the first page of the website.

A good site that has links with current professional organisations including IFLA. The site provides plenty of inspirational photos and information for anyone to use.

At a Glance

Brief listings, with both a local and global focus.

Branch-Mueller, Jennifer L. & Rodger, Joanne (2021). *Single Threads Woven Together In A Tapestry: Dispositions of Teacher Librarian Leaders*. Paper presented at the 49th Annual IASL Conference, July 12-16, 2021.

<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/slw/index.php/iasl/article/view/8274/5108>

This paper discusses the dispositions teacher librarians bring to a leadership role and the evolution of those dispositions as they experience the role

ENGAGEMENT

Barron, Laurie & Kinney, Patti (2022). *The Power of Belonging*

<https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/laurie-barron-and-patti-kinney-on-the-power-of-belonging> [Interview]

Barron and Kinney are the authors of *We Belong: 50 Strategies to Create Community and Revolutionize Classroom Management*, dealing with social and emotional learning and engagement.

<https://www.ascd.org/books/we-belong?variant=122002>

Berry, Amy (2022). *Reimagining Student Engagement: From Disrupting to Driving*

<https://au.sagepub.com/en-gb/oce/reimagining-student-engagement/book279459#contents>

Due for Publication in October

This Sage title considers the continuum of engagement. If students have the skills to drive their own learning, they are able to become active agents in their education.

Amy Berry is a research fellow at ACER and an honorary fellow at the University of Melbourne.

Greener, Sue (2022). The Tensions of Student Engagement with Technology, in *Interactive Learning Environment*, 30 (3), pp.397-399

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10494820.2022.2048550>

Brief discussion of research in this area.

DATA AND DATA LITERACY

Knips, Andrew and others (2022) *Equity in Data: A Framework for What Counts in Schools*. To be released in October

From the Archives

Some excellent resources of continuing relevance:

Fontichiaro, Kristen (2016). Why Data Literacy Matters

Downloadable from ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1099487>

Fontichiaro, Kristen and others [eds] (2017). *Data Literacy in the Real World: Conversations and Case Studies*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan

<https://www.fulcrum.org/concern/monographs/z603r076x>

Jefferson, Charissa and others (2020). Considering data literacy using Kuhlthau's Information Search Process: Implications for librarians and data providers, in *Journal of Business and Finance Librarianship*. 25 (3-4), published online: 19 Nov 2020.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08963568.2020.1847556>

Abstract freely available. Online article may be purchased.

Online panel discussion of the above sponsored by ACRL, University Libraries section of the ALA.

<https://www.acrl.ala.org/ULS/considering-data-literacy-using-kuhlthaus-information-search-process-implications-for-librarians-and-data-providers-video-replay/>

Visible Learning Updated

This database covers the most up to date research on visible learning, and provides interpretation and analysis. It aims to close the gap between research and practice.

<https://www.visiblelearningmetax.com/>

Contributions to this section are warmly welcomed, so please let us know if you discover a wonderful new resource you wish to share with your colleagues. Your review only needs to be a couple of lines.

Rosemary Abbott

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