

Literacy Matters! Literacy, Advocacy and the Teacher-Librarian

By Dr Barbara Combes

At least several times a year reports from a variety of organisations indicate that there is a continuing decline in the literacy levels of young people across Australia. Parents, business leaders, politicians and educators are worried and at a loss to understand why this is happening, especially when we consider how much Commonwealth money has been put into schools for technology (DET, 2016) and infrastructure, including the BER scheme for libraries under the Gillard/Rudd government (Education HQ, 2010). A major issue highlighted by personnel working in school libraries at the time of the BER funding was the lack of commitment to resourcing and staffing of these libraries. As a result we have lots of new buildings, but no funding to take these libraries to the next level. Commonwealth money has not been so forthcoming during the last 3 years and schools in most states have experienced funding cuts, most notably in Western Australia. This has resulted in the steady decline of professional library personnel in Government schools, a move to online resources of varying quality, and in some cases the closure of the library.

The devaluing of print resources and the misconceptions surrounding the value of print, especially print fiction, and the part these resources play in the acquisition and maintenance of foundational literacy skills (reading, writing, listening, viewing, speaking and understanding) has occurred alongside the myth that the Internet (actually the World Wide Web – the Internet is much larger) and a search engine like Google will provide access to all information everywhere. The idea that the Internet is a one-stop-shop for all information that is easy to find, and the user has no need of a mediator (aka Librarian) to help them, began in the late 1990s at the same time that the status of libraries, especially school libraries, began to decline. It is interesting that the decline of professional staff in school libraries also aligns with reports of lower literacy levels (noted in earlier PISA reports since 2000). Are the two factors linked? Does a professionally staffed, well-resourced library where the library is the hub of teaching and learning in the school, make a difference? The annual Softlink survey data certainly suggests this is the case (Softlink, 2015).

Literacy matters! You cannot function in our society with poor literacy skills, a fact explored in the Insight program, *Reading Between the Lines* (SBS [videorecording], 2016). As information professionals, teacher-librarians have not been very good at getting these messages out to the wider community, politicians and systemic education administrators such as Principals. How do we advocate, not just for our libraries and our positions and status, but for our students who are being disenfranchised and disempowered before they have even left the school yard? There are certain things we can do and should be doing as the resident information specialist in the school to inform change and encourage new perceptions of the teacher librarian's role in the school.

Does a professionally staffed, well-resourced library where the library is the hub of teaching and learning in the school, make a difference?

Bridging the disconnect between research and practice

As the information specialist in the school we should regard ourselves as a conduit between the school and the outside world. TLs should be providing their senior Executive with information about current reports and research that examine ICT in schools, literacy and reading, information literacy, and teaching and learning. There are a number of ongoing research studies that go beyond the library and are perhaps more convincing because they don't have the word library in them!

International research studies

OECD and PISA

The Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) PISA (Program for International Assessment) reports indicate a steady decline in reading and literacy rankings for Australia (Ricci, 2015). At the *2016 Global Education and Skills Forum* (2016), Australia's performance was described as a high equity issue. Australia had fewer top achievers and there were concerns that the education system is failing many in the lowest achievement bands (Thomson, 2016).

The PISA report for Australia (2012) indicated that the difference in reading literacy between students from schools in the highest and the lowest socioeconomic areas equated to approximately two-and-a-half years of schooling. There was a 31% variance between schools, indicating that it really matters which school you attend. Students from independent schools, followed by Catholic schools, performed much better than government schools, with government rural and remote schools, particularly in the Northern Territory, amongst the lowest ranked. The difference between highest and lowest ranked schools in NSW for literacy was equivalent to a staggering three years of schooling! Another rather disturbing finding was that over 20% of Australian students were not happy at school or disliked school (Thomson et al., 2013). The PISA data is collected every few years. Here is our international report card for reading literacy.

Year 4, Country ranking = 21/45

From Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), first participated by Australia, 2011. Outperformed by all Asian countries and most *like* countries ie. the US, Canada, Ireland, Northern Ireland – equal to New Zealand.

18 year olds, Country ranking = 10/65

Decline of 16 score points since 2000 (Equivalent to losing about ½ a year of schooling). 11 countries that performed at the same level or below Australia in previous cycles outperformed Australia in 2012. Population of high achievers has also decreased, from 17% to 12%. (Thomson, 2016)

Another report from the OECD, Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), conducted a survey of Australians between the ages of 15-74 and rated them 1-5 for literacy proficiency, with level 3 being proficient. The survey found that 43.7% had below proficient level literacy or 7.3 million people (more than one third of a population of 20 million) (OECD, 2013). Results for numeracy were much higher with 53.5% of the population below proficiency levels. These results match those from the ABS below.

Trend Report 2014 – International Federation of Library Associations

This is an international report produced by IFLA and is a window into projected global issues in information. The update of the report is currently available (IFLA, 2016). The report is the result of collaboration from a range of agencies, not just libraries. The report contains regional summaries:

In 2013, the IFLA Trend Report identified five high level trends which are in the process of transforming our global information environment. These evolving developments spanned access to information, education, privacy, new forms of digital engagement and technological transformation (IFLA, 2016).

The five global trends identified when the report was released in 2013 are:

- Trend 1 – new technologies will both expand and limit who has access to information.
- Trend 2 – online education will democratise and disrupt global learning.
- Trend 3 – The boundaries of privacy and data protection will be redefined.
- Trend 4 – hyper-connected societies will listen to and empower new voices and groups.
- Trend 5 – the global information environment will be transformed by new technologies.

UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals 2030

For the first time UNESCO has released a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) that apply to all countries, not just developing countries. This change is in recognition that even in the so-called developed countries like Australia, there are large numbers of people who are considered illiterate and borderline illiterate. Goal 4 is about quality education and includes:

- universal primary and secondary education;
- early childhood development and universal pre-primary education;
- equal access to technical/vocational and higher education;
- relevant skills for decent work;
- gender equality and inclusion;
- universal youth literacy; and
- education for sustainable development and global citizenship (IFLA, 2016).

For the first time ICT and libraries are also mentioned. The SDG for education aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (IFLA, 2016), a goal that has direct connections with the National Curriculum and all Australian state education departments' policy documents. These reports are important because they:

- provide an international perspective on the importance of libraries and literacy;
- link in with national statistics about the health of Australian students' literacy (ABS, 2015);
- link to similar Australian education policy goals; and
- demonstrate that you are an information professional whose role is to keep your Principal and the Senior Executive team in your school informed.

National studies

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

The last report from the ABS indicates that many Australian citizens struggle to operate in society at a basic level due to poor literacy and numeracy (ABS, 2013) with 44% operating at level 2 and below (level 3 is considered proficient to graduate from high school) (King, 2016). These results reflect the fact that reading is not an intuitive skill (Combes, 2016), but to remain literate requires maintenance, ie. literacy skills require practice and the development of a reading habit. Other reports highlight the importance of literacy in education and the workplace.

... literacy skills require practice and the development of a reading habit.

- The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC, 2015) found that 1 in 5 children were developmentally vulnerable and at risk in their language and cognitive skills, while 6 in 10 indigenous children fell in this category (down 5% from 2009 results). These students begin their school life behind, and in many cases this is where they remain.
- The National Workforce Literacy Project (ALG, 2010) in 2010 found that 75% of employers indicated that their business was adversely affected by low levels of literacy and numeracy of employees.

Another general education report that attempts to analyse current and future trends for emerging technologies and their potential impact on and use in teaching, learning, and creative inquiry in schools is the annual Horizon Report (NMC/CoSN, 2016). Bear in mind that these reports are being compiled by a range of groups that have a vested interest in the investment of technology in schools. However, they do add to the body of information about current and predicted developments in schools (US).

Studies on the importance of libraries

While arguments about the vendor being the researcher and the surveys being limited to certain schools, Softlink's annual national survey which now includes New Zealand data, is now in its 6th year and provides a snapshot of what is happening in school libraries across Australia. Trends and future directions are summarised in a report (Softlink, 2015b) and the 2015 annual report of the data (Softlink, 2015a). Findings include the following.

- There was a positive correlation between annual Australian school library budgets and NAPLAN Reading Literacy results.
- There was a positive correlation between the number of school librarians employed in Australian school libraries and NAPLAN Reading Literacy results.
- Overall, fewer schools reported a budget decrease 2014/2015 compared to the percentage of schools that reported a budget decrease between 2013/2014.
- Catholic schools had the highest percentage of budget decreases in the 2014/2015 comparison.
- Overall, 52% of respondents indicated that they felt that their school library was adequately funded, 48% of respondents felt that the opposite was true. This statistic reflects a similar split to the 2014 survey.
- The majority of school libraries had no change to their staffing levels.

Another Australian study between researchers at QUT and the Queensland School Library Association (Hughes, 2013) reported results similar to the PISA report discussed earlier. Non-government schools tended to do better in the provision of professional staff in their school libraries; school libraries with a TL provided more literacy and reading activities for students; and schools with higher levels of professional staff tended to score higher than the NAPLAN national mean score for reading and writing. In 50% of schools with a qualified TL, NAPLAN scores were higher

than the national mean scores for reading and writing, while schools without a TL were consistently below the national mean score for NAPLAN (Hughes, 2013).

A report by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) commissioned by ALIA and the Australian School Library Associations Alliance in 2016 using the Staff in Australia's Schools (SIAS) survey data, also reported some interesting findings. Note these survey results only include responses for teachers and not TLs as this data is not collected by any agency at this time. Over the period from 2007-2013:

- 4-5% of primary and 2-3% of secondary teachers are working in a library role and there is evidence of a slight decline in teachers working in the library during this time;
- there appears to be more teachers working in secondary school libraries in the government sector;
- evidence of a greater number of teachers in library roles in high socio-economic (SES) schools and correspondingly fewer in low SES schools;
- evidence that the population of teachers in a library role is aging;
- 6-8% of primary and 3-4% of secondary teachers have undertaken some tertiary study in library studies;
- about one third of primary and a quarter of secondary teachers in a library role are part-time (compared to one-quarter of the general primary teacher population and 18 per cent in the general secondary teacher population); and
- teachers currently in a library role are considered to be out-of-field if they have not undertaken any tertiary study in the field. In 2013 over one-third of primary teachers and one-quarter of secondary teachers in a library role were out-of-field (Weldon, 2016).

Earlier research conducted by Edith Cowan University, ASLA and ALIA in 2007-2008 indicated that school libraries across Australia, especially in government schools were housed in buildings 20+ years old, staffed by TLs who were much older than the average teacher population, under-resourced with average budgets between \$500 and \$1000, and staffing levels per student ratio that were much higher than classroom teachers. Again government schools appeared to be better off than non-government and results for indigenous and rural remote area schools in the Northern Territory indicated extremely poor investment in literacy and school libraries (Combes, 2008a, 2008b). These surveys targeted and were answered by TLs and school library staff at the time.

Overseas school library impact studies

There are also many other studies from overseas that have conducted research into the importance of school libraries. While you probably won't have time to read these in depth, it is a good idea to read the executive summaries and to have them on hand when you are asked to justify the library and your position. A sample of reports for your reference is below.

- The Library Research Service (LRS) – This website (US) contains links to a number of school library impact studies. The latest is the School Libraries and Student Achievement (LRS, 2013) study.
- School libraries work! – A Compendium of Research Supporting the Effectiveness of School Libraries (Scholastic, 2016).
- How Libraries Transform Schools by Contributing to Student Success: Evidence linking South Carolina School Libraries and PASS & HSAP Results, phases I & II – by the RSL Research group (Lance, et al. 2014) (US).
- The Washington State School Library Impact Study – by the Washington Library Association (WLA)/ Washington Library Media Association. (Coker, 2015) (US).
- The Beating Heart of the School: Improving Educational Attainment through School Libraries and Librarians – A report from the UK and the result of a parliamentary inquiry (APPG, 2014) (UK).

Reports about literacy and reading

There are also a number of reports about reading and literacy that you should have at your fingertips. When teachers and Principals ask you to justify the library and the role it plays in the development of student reading and literacy outcomes, it is always good to have some of these on hand with some salient quotes from the reports. Use the Executive summary for these to provide ready ammunition for advocacy. It also demonstrates your professional knowledge. A selection of these are listed below.

- *PISA 2000 Reading for Change: Performance and Engagement Across Countries* (OECD, 2002) – a seminal research project. Findings include the fact that reading fiction widely has a major positive impact on student academic success which overcomes economic disadvantage.
- National Literacy Trust – On this website (NLT, 2016) there are a number of research reports conducted by the trust. Of particular interest is a report commissioned by the APPG (above) on *Boys Reading* (NLT, 2014) and *Reading for Pleasure* (Clark & Rumbold, 2006) (UK).
- The Reading Agency – *A Literature Review on the Impact of Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment* (BOP Consulting, 2015) (UK).
- Literate Nation Science Core Group – *How the Reading Brain Resolves the Reading Wars* (White paper) from reading researcher Maryanne Wolf (Wolf, 2015).
- ACER – *She Knows What I Like* by Margaret Merga. An article that examines best-practice statements for encouraging recreational book reading in adolescents (Aust.).
- Centre for Longitudinal Studies – Research on how reading for pleasure puts children ahead in the classroom, where findings support the PISA 2000 results (Battye & Budge, 2013).
- Other research considers social inequality and the role of reading (Sullivan & Brown, 2013) (UK).
- Stephen Krashen: *The Power of Reading* – eminent researcher in reading for over 40 years (Krashen, 2015).

eBooks and reading from the screen

As noted in the previous article about digital literacy, there are some concerns about reading from the screen and the effect this has on comprehension, eye fatigue and the capability of students to focus on what is being read. Below are a selection of articles on this topic.

- *Does the Brain Like eBooks?* (New York Times, 2009) – An early article that explores the reading process, includes interviews with respected researchers and links to other research.
- *How the Internet Makes us Stupid* (Carr, 2010) – This article by Nicholas Carr discusses how the stimulation of the digital age affects our brains. While this may be true, we also need to consider how technology has changed and continues to change how we access, decode and re-use information.
- Julie Coiro is a researcher who first examined the way students make meaning from information presented in a screen in 2003. Her research in this area is ongoing (Coiro, 2016).

- *The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: The Science of Paper Versus Screens* (Jabr, 2013) – This article explores how we read and why reading from the screen may be problematic.
- *Reading Linear Texts on Paper Versus Computer Screen: Effects on Reading Comprehension* (Mangen et al., 2013).
- *Do eBooks Make it Harder to Remember What you Just Read?* (Szalavitz, 2012).
- *Books Still Cool for Teens* (King, 2014).

The articles above have been included here because they are readily available on the Web and not locked behind a publisher's database. There are plenty of other examples being reported in the media, especially on research about reading preferences. Contrary to the picture painted by many, young people actually prefer reading print and will photocopy texts. Research conducted by Hanho Jeong found that fatigue was a significant factor to explain this behaviour (Jeong, 2012). Recent research by academics at Charles Sturt (CSU) and the Australian National University (ANU) using eye-tracking software have confirmed earlier observational studies that everyone scans and reads from the screen differently to how they read print texts.

As teacher-librarians, our role as a literacy educator includes the provision of a range of resource formats and delivery modes, so students are encouraged to develop their reading skills in all resource types. Teacher-librarians should also be working with teachers to create digital resources such as digital pathfinders and LibGuides that also consider students' reading and cognitive levels in the selection of resources. These resources also provide visibility for the library, especially if you badge the resource back to you, ie. have a link such as ask@yourlibrary on every page that goes to your email.

Getting rid of the school library

Some articles about the consequences of closing a school library:

- UK – 'School Libraries Face a Bleak Future as Leaders try to Balance the Books' (Bradley, 2016).
- UK/US – 'Tablets Out, Imagination In: The Schools that Shun Technology' (Jenkin, 2015).
- NZ – School Libraries the Poor Relation (Neale, 2011).
- US – 'Checking Out: Budget Hawks see Library Programs as an Easy Out, but What's the Cost to Student Achievement?' (Rosales, 2011).
- US – 'How Cuts and Closures of Elementary School Libraries are Hurting our Kids' (Schou, 2014).
- Aust. – 'The Reality is that Technology is Doing More Harm than Good in our Schools says Education Chief' (Bagshaw, 2016).
- Aust. – 'The Calamity of the Disappearing School Libraries' (Kachel, 2015).

Conclusion

Recent reports across my desk during the last two weeks of October indicate that the Tasmanian Education Department has just sent out a 200 page document on literacy in schools. Sections on reading strategies for teachers suggest that teachers choose books for recreational reading, create worksheets and photocopy entire texts so students don't have to buy them. Libraries are not mentioned in the document. Developments like these indicate that we have a long way to go before the message that *Literacy Matters!* and that school libraries are part of the solution to Australia's falling literacy levels is taken up by systemic educators, Principals and teachers.

This article has been designed to assist teacher-librarians in the creation of a literacy resource professional portfolio to enable maximum advocacy for school libraries. Next time your Principal asks why the school should have a teacher-librarian or spend money on print fiction and/or nonfiction books, use these resources to inform, educate and support your school community, because Literacy Matters!

References

- All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) (2014) *The Beating Heart of the School: Improving Educational Attainment through School Libraries and Librarians*,
 Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/BeatingHeartoftheSchool.pdf>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2013) *Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, Australia 2011-2012*.
 Accessed Oct. 2016 at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4228.0Main+Features202011-12>
- Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) *AEDC National Report 2015*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: <http://www.aedc.gov.au/>
- Australian Government, Department of Education and Training (DET) (2016) *Technology in Schools*.
 Accessed October 2016 at: <https://www.education.gov.au/technology-schools>
- Australian Industry Group (AIG) (2010) *National Workforce Literacy Project: Report on Employers Views on Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Skills*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at:
http://www.vocationalliteracy.com.au/8783_Workforce_Literacy_Project_Report.pdf
- Bagshaw, E. (2016) 'The Reality is that Technology is Doing more Harm than Good in Our Schools says Education Chief' in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at:
<http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/the-reality-is-that-technology-is-doing-more-harm-than-good-in-our-schools-says-education-chief-20160330-gnu370.html>
- Battye, C. & Budge, D. (2013) 'Reading for Pleasure puts Children Ahead in the Classroom, Study Finds', *Centre for Longitudinal Studies, IOE University of London*.
 Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/news.aspx?itemid=2740&itemTitle=Reading+for+pleasure+puts+children+ahead+in+the+classroom%2C+study+finds&siteid=27&siteTitle=News>
- BOP Consulting (2015) Literature Review: The Impact of Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment, *The Reading Agency*.
 Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <https://readingagency.org.uk/news/The%20Impact%20of%20Reading%20for%20Pleasure%20and%20Empowerment.pdf>

- Bradley, A. (2016) 'School Libraries Face a Bleak Future as Leaders try to Balance the Books' in *The Guardian*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2016/apr/06/school-libraries-bleak-future-leaders-balance-books>
- Carr, N. (2010) 'How the Internet Makes us Stupid' in *The Age*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://www.theage.com.au/technology/technology-news/how-the-internet-makes-us-stupid-20100909-15383.html>
- Clark, C. & Rumbold, K. (2006) *Reading for Pleasure: A Research Overview*. National Literacy Trust. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt_research/271_reading_for_pleasure_a_research_overview
- Coiro, J. (2016) *Julie Coiro, Academia.edu*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://uri.academia.edu/JulieCoiro>
- Coker, E. (2015) *The Washington State School Library Impact Study*. Washington Library Association (WLA)/ Washington Library Media Association. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: https://wala.memberclicks.net/assets/WLMA/Advocacy/wslitreport_final%20revised7_14_15.pdf
- Combes, B. (2008a) *Australian School Libraries Research Project: A Snapshot of Australian School Libraries*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: http://www.academia.edu/10355844/Australian_School_Library_Research_Project_A_snapshot_of_Australian_school_libraries
- Combes, B. (2008b) *Australian School Libraries research Project: A Snapshot of Australian teacher librarians*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/aslrp_a_snapshot_of_australian_teacher_librarians.pdf
- Combes, B. (2016) 'Digital Literacy: A New Flavour of Literacy or Something Different?' in *Synergy*, 14 (1).
- Education HQ. (2010) 'FED: BER Taskforce Estimates Waste' in *Education HQ Australia*. Accessed October 2016 at: <http://au.educationhq.com/news/15629/fed-ber-taskforce-estimates-waste/#>
- IFLA (2016) *IFLA Trend Report 2016 Update*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: <http://trends.ifla.org/files/trends/assets/trend-report-2016-update.pdf>
- Hughes, H. (2013) *School Libraries, Teacher-Librarians and Their Contribution to Student Literacy Development in Gold Coast Schools*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/60260/37/60260a.pdf>
- Jabr, F. (2013) 'The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: The Science of Paper Versus Screens' in *Scientific American*. Accessed June 3, 2013 at: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=reading-paper-screens>
- Jenkin, M. (2015) 'Tablets Out, Imagination In: The Schools that Shun Technology' in *The Guardian*, Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/dec/02/schools-that-ban-tablets-traditional-education-silicon-valley-london>
- Jeong, H. (2012) 'A Comparison of the Influence of Electronic Books and Paper Books on Reading Comprehension, Eye Fatigue, and Perception' in *The Electronic Library*, 30 (3), pp. 390-408.
- Kachel, D. (2015) 'The Calamity of the Disappearing School Libraries' in *The Conversation*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: <https://theconversation.com/the-calamity-of-the-disappearing-school-libraries-44498>
- King, M. (2016) 'The Hidden Costs of Low Literacy in Australia' in *SBS Explainer*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/insight/explainer/hidden-costs-low-literacy-australia>
- King, R. (2014) 'Books Still Cool for teens' in *West Australian*. Accessed March 2014 at: <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/wa/a/21951724/books-still-cool-for-teens/>
- Krashen, S. (2015) *The Power of Reading*. [video, audio, transcript]. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://singjupost.com/the-power-of-reading-by-stephen-krashen-full-transcript/>
- Lance, K.C., Schwarz, B. & Rodney, M.J. (2014) *How Libraries Transform Schools by Contributing to Student Success: Evidence Linking South Carolina School Libraries and PASS & HSAP Results, Phases I & II* by the RSL Research group. Accessed Nov. 2016 from at: <http://www.scasl.net/the-south-carolina-impact-study>
- Library Research Service (LRS). (2013) *School Libraries Impact Studies*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <https://www.lrs.org/data-tools/school-libraries/impact-studies/>
- Mangen, A.; Walgermo, B.R.; Bronnck, K. (2013) 'Reading Linear Texts on Paper Versus Computer Screen: Effects on Reading Comprehension' in *International Journal of Educational Research*, 58, pp. 61-68. Accessed Nov, 2016 at: http://www.academia.edu/3055159/Mangen_A._Walgermo_B._and_Bronnck_K._2013._Reading_linear_texts_on_paper_versus_computer_screen_Effects_on_reading_comprehension
- National Literacy Trust. (NLT) (2014) *Boys' Reading Commission*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: https://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/4056/Boys_Commission_Report.pdf
- National Literacy Trust (NLT). (2016) *Research Reports*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt_research
- Neale, I. (2011) *School Libraries the Poor Relation*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/5602314/School-libraries-the-poor-relation>
- New Media Consortium/Consortium for School Networking (NMC/CoSN) (2016) *NMC/CoSN Horizon Report, 2016 k-12 Edition*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://cdn.nmc.org/media/2016-nmc-cosn-horizon-report-k12-EN.pdf>

New York Times (2009) 'Does the Brain Like e-Books?' in *New York Times*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/10/14/does-the-brain-like-e-books/>

OECD (2002) *Reading for Change: Performance and Engagement Across Countries. Executive Summary*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <https://www.oecd.org/edu/school/programmeforminternationalstudentassessmentpisa/33690986.pdf>

OECD (2013) *Survey of Adult Skills First Results: Australia*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Country%20note%20-%20Australia_final.pdf

Ricci, C. (2015) 'OECD Education Rankings Show Australia Slipping, Asian Countries in the Lead' in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Accessed October 2016 at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/oecd-education-rankings-show-australia-slipping-asian-countries-in-the-lead-20150525-gh94eu.html>

Rosales, J. (2011) 'Checking Out: Budget Hawks See Library Programs as an Easy Cut, but What's the Cost to Student Achievement?' in *NEA Magazine*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://www.nea.org/home/43952.htm>

SBS. (2016) 'Reading Between the Lines. Why Do so many Australians Have Poor Literacy?' [video recording]. *Insight*. Accessed October 2016 at: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/insight/tvepisode/reading-between-lines>

Scholastic. (2016) *School Libraries Work! A Compendium of Research Supporting the Effectiveness of School Libraries*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://www.scholastic.com/slw2016/>

Schou, S. (2014) 'How Cuts and Closures of Elementary School Libraries are Hurting our Kids' in *Takepart*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: <http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/02/28/read-public-school-libraries-suffer-staff-cuts-and-closures>

Softlink. (2015a) *2015 Australian and New Zealand School Library Survey*. Accessed October 2016 at: <http://www.softlinkint.com/news/softlink-presented-the-australian-school-library-survey-trends-and-future-d>

Softlink. (2015b) *The Softlink Australian School Library Survey: Trends and Future Directions*. Accessed October 2016 at: <http://www.softlinkint.com/news/softlink-presented-the-australian-school-library-survey-trends-and-future-d>

Sullivan, A. & Brown, M. (2013) 'Social Inequalities in Cognitive Scores at age 16: The Role of Reading' in *Centre for Longitudinal Studies, IOE University of London*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?itemtype=document&id=1719

Szalavitz, M. (2012) 'Do e-Books Make it Harder to Remember What You Just Read?' in *Time*. Accessed Nov 2016 at: <http://healthland.time.com/2012/03/14/do-e-books-impair-memory/>

Thomson, S. (2016) 'Ideas for Australia: Why is Australia Falling Behind in Maths Science and Literacy – And What Can be Done About It?' in *The Conversation*. Accessed October 2016 at: <https://theconversation.com/ideas-for-australia-why-is-australia-falling-behind-in-maths-science-and-literacy-and-what-can-be-done-about-it-56267>

Thomson, S. De Bortoli, L. & Buckley, S. (2013) *PISA 2012: How Australia Measures Up*, Camberwell, Vic.: ACER. Accessed October 2016 at: <https://www.acer.edu.au/ozpisa/>

UNESCO (2015) *UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: <http://en.unesco.org/sdgs>

Weldon, P. (2016) *What the SiAS Schools Surveys Tell us About Teachers Working in School Libraries*. Accessed Oct. 2016 at: http://research.acer.edu.au/tll_misc/25/

Wolf, M. (2013) 'How the Reading Brain Resolves the Reading Wars' in *A Literate Nation White Paper*. Accessed Nov. 2016 at: https://www.liaustralia.org/client/documents/Wolf_How_the_Reading_Brain_Resolves_the_Reading_Wars_2013.pdf

Dr Barbara Combes (PhD, MA Internet Studies, Grad Dip Internet Studies, Grad Dip App Sc (Teacher Librarianship), Grad Dip Ed, BA) is President of the Western Australian School Library Association (WASLA), Secretary of the Literacy and Reading Section of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and a corresponding member of the Information Literacy Section of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and the Professional Teachers Association WA (PTCWA). She is also a lecturer at Charles Sturt University.
Email: bcombes@csu.edu.au