

## Reviews

### The Many Faces of School Library Leadership

Coatney, Sharon & Harada, Violet H. (Editors) (2017)

Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO,

LLC (Libraries Unlimited imprint)

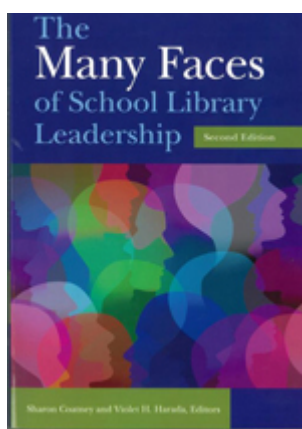
Second Edition

184 pages

Available as eBook

ISBN 9781440448971

Associated webpage: <http://www.librariesunlimited.com/ManyFaces>



This relatively slender volume is an expansion of the first edition (published in 2010) with detailed individual chapters written by experienced U.S. practitioners and academics.

The book is intended to be both inspirational and practical, and while the examples are American in nature they are applicable to an Australian context. Each chapter is extensively referenced with a combination of recent publications and seminal works.

In her introduction, Sharon Coatney articulates the complexities of leading a school library team: "running a school library well means not only seeing every tree in the forest but also seeing the forest" (p. viii). The book examines just 'a few of the trees'.

The first chapter is entitled 'Leadership from the middle: building influence for change' (the writing of Ken Haycock reprinted from the first edition). Subsequent chapters cover leadership in the following areas:

- The critical place of an inquiry model for learning in a post print age
- The challenges of advocacy, including the requirement for vision, planning and continual leadership
- Intellectual freedom and the essential requirement to preserve it in Library programs, with an extensive list of how this might be achieved
- Literacy and the critical goal of students able to make meaning built on 'a foundation and reading and writing' (p. 87). A strong link is made between reading and writing
- Ensuring awareness of the place and contribution of the school library to curriculum development.
- Meeting the particular challenges of technology leadership, through interdependence, the locking of hands with teachers, as well as keeping the big picture in sight and taking time to reflect
- Professional learning, described as a continuum involving growth and change
- Final chapter on the future, recognising that the landscape has changed and the focus is on quality teaching and learning (p. 172), producing successful readers and successful inquirers. The chapter

concludes with a list of transformations of library leadership; exciting opportunities exist

Australian school library leaders will find much of value and relevance in this detailed, well written and accessible publication. This will particularly be the case if they are keen to embrace the challenges and carry "the banner of best practice" (Coatney, p. ix).

**Reviewed by Dr Rosemary Abbott**  
**Director of Library**  
**Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak**  
**Member of the Synergy Board**

## **New Beginnings: A Practical Guide to Taking Charge of a Secondary School Library (Guidelines series)**

**Taylor, Laura (2018)**  
**Geoff Dubber (Series Editor)**  
**Kembrey Park, Swindon, UK**  
**School Library Association (SLA)**  
**74 pages**  
**ISBN 978-1-911222-10-1 (pbk)**  
**Available from: [info@sla.org.uk](mailto:info@sla.org.uk)**



Although UK based, *New Beginnings: A Practical Guide to Taking Charge of a Secondary School Library* is relevant and helpful to school libraries in any country. Taking over the running of a school library has many challenges and tasks but in what order should these be managed, in the initial weeks and months? These challenges and their order are carefully and logically outlined under main headings. The main strategies needed to progress with the large workload are clarified and presented as a checklist of tasks, all of which need to be undertaken and completed for success of the school library within the parent organisation.

The book begins with the key roles of the school library and the qualities and skills of an effective school librarian. The steps to take in the first days, week one and the first month are presented in a checklist. Emphasis is given to examining the questions related to the job description, line management followed by an assessment or audit of the school library according to a SWOT analysis. This will assist in writing any library policy and development plan. A useful list of goals to be achieved by the end of the first term can act as a guide for new library leaders.

The education purpose of the library is covered well with practical suggestions from practitioners. All topics, such as, library management systems, curriculum and information literacy, reading for pleasure, student inductions, publications, professional development and information technology are covered in a concise, accurate and useful manner.

Two case studies of employment opportunities in school libraries draw attention to initial challenges and decision-making. There are useful websites and various appendices: checklists of tasks by date, audit of the school library in a valuable table format, a lesson plan guide and excellent learning plans for information skills, library induction and group reading. These templates can be used frequently and can assist the new teacher-librarian in his/her teaching commitments.

*New Beginnings: A Practical Guide to Taking Charge of a Secondary School Library* is an excellent outline and checklist of the sequence or order of steps for teacher-librarians starting in a new school setting. This title is a most valuable addition to the literature in school librarianship, filling a gap in publications in this profession.

**Reviewed by Dr Robin Zeidler**  
**Director of Library Services**  
**The Nigel Peck Centre for Learning and Leadership**  
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## Joy and Data: Creating Success for Every Student

**Australian Learning Lecture**  
**State Library of Victoria, 2018**  
**ISBN: 978-0-9585959-2-6**  
**Available from:** <http://www.all-learning.org.au/>



In the light of recent discussions regarding the Gonski Report and its calls for greater emphasis on creativity and the relevance and future of NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) *Joy and Data: Creating Success for Every Student*, is both timely and, might I say, inspirational. Congratulations to the partners in the Australian Learning Lectures (ALL), the Koshland Innovation Fund and State Library of Victoria who are responsible for this multimedia publication.

ALL is a decade-long project that aims to bring big ideas in education to national attention and this publication provides the text of the inaugural lecture, Joy and Data, delivered in 2015 by distinguished British thinker, Sir Michael Barber, together with six case studies that are practical examples of how joy and data can come together in learning.

Linking joy and data could be seen to be a very bold idea as we would normally see them as opposites. However as Barber points out, 'if, instead of judgment, data can be used to enable us to understand where the problems are and inform the way we address them, it can serve an invaluable positive role.'

Ellen Koshland, founder of the Koshland Innovation Fund, when introducing the lecture and case studies indicates the following: 'What each case study also demonstrates is that if data is the answer for education, what is the question?' How appealing is this statement for teacher-librarians who have long argued that 'the question is the answer'. Exploring this publication which includes case study videos and related resources in a [supporting website](#), facilitates our own reflection on the sorts of questions that we should be asking of our own practice.

I am sure that the following brief snippets from the various elements of the publication will tempt you to delve further into the ideas and impressive programs on offer. In his lecture, Sir Michael Barber argues against what he describes as the common misconceptions about data:

- data undermines creativity,
- data tells you what to do (replacing human judgment),
- data replaces professional judgment, and
- personal data will be abused.

On the contrary, he talks about the joy of deeper understanding and the way in which data can inform the way in which we can bring joy to learning design and implementation. I find his equation regarding data and learning to be most reassuring:

### **DATA X ANALYSIS X ETHICS X JUDGMENT = GOOD DECISIONS**

The diagnostic tools used by the six case study schools and the data gained offer valuable food for thought.

*The Taranganba Way of Reading* uses the High Reliability Literacy Procedures introduced by Associate Professor John Munro. Using the data generated, teachers work together to look at the next steps to improve their practice and student outcomes. Teachers feel that they now own the data and see it as a way to celebrate student growth. Similarly students feel very positive about the program and talk about their love of reading, words and making connections.

*Maths Success and Joy at Bacchus Marsh College* aims to extend the knowledge and skills of every student regardless of their starting point. Using the Maths Pathway package, teachers have been able to differentiate and track individual progress. The comments in relation to the growth mindset of students and their active participation in their own learning is most encouraging.

*Collaborative Problem Solving* at Eltham High School uses an assessment tool that captures the sequence of actions and chat while students are working together online. The data for each student is summarized into a social and cognitive report for each student. Students definitely enjoy learning about how they think as opposed to what they know.

*Creative Inquiry Cycle: Building Critical Skills at Rooty Hill High School*. The school developed this inquiry cycle as a model for project, problem and inquiry learning. Students have digital portfolios to which they upload examples of their work which they assess and map against the capabilities. This enables self, peer and teacher assessment. Students have become more collaborative, imaginative and curious and are certainly greatly engaged in the process. The video that accompanies this case study is also both engaging and inspiring.

*Positive Education – Using Data to Bring Joy at Mt Barker High School*. This is a most interesting study in that focuses on student wellbeing. Mt Barker began the Positive Education Program in 2012 after being invited by the South Australian Department of Education to work with Martin Seligman, Thinker in Residence. Inspired by Seligman's book, *Flourish*, the teaching staff worked to devise a model that could be used across the school community. In this program the decision was made to 'measure first and then learn' so that the areas of concern and growth are analysed. The school community has found the program to provide a powerful experience.

*Creating Active Learners: Visible Learning and Seesaw at Hilltop Road Public School*. Assisting students to articulate their learning was the motivator here. Using John Hattie's work and strategies, teachers worked with parents

to assist them to have conversations with their children about their learning and in relation to their own practice they have found that focusing specifically on learning intentions and success criteria has proved valuable.

Reading through the text of the lecture, *Joy and Data*, and the written reports on the case studies in conjunction with the range of supporting videos available is a fascinating and most informative exercise. I can see the total package, or elements of it, providing an excellent basis to staff discussion as well as personal professional development and reflection. The ALL project is most impressive and deserves the attention of all in the education community. Not only are they tackling the big ideas in education in Australia but are ensuring that adapting these ideas to our own schools is made easier (and more joyful) with the exemplar case studies and the resources and links provided.

Highly recommended.

**Reviewed by Mary Manning**  
**School Library Consultant and member of Synergy Board**