

Under-recognised, underused, and undervalued: School libraries and librarians in New Zealand secondary school curriculum planning and delivery

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The school library is the soul, the core, the pivot around which academic life in the school revolves. —Variously attributed

The library/information centre represents the largest investment in teaching and learning resources in any school. —Selby (2000, cited in Ministry of Education and National Library of New Zealand, 2002)

Abstract

Multiple international studies have confirmed the positive impact of library services and teacher–librarian partnerships on delivering curriculum outcomes and quality student learning in secondary schools. Despite this, there are indications internationally that school libraries are in decline. This article uses qualitative data from a national survey of teachers and librarians in New Zealand secondary schools to investigate teacher and librarian attitudes and beliefs about the role of library services as a space to help develop *The New Zealand Curriculum's* (Ministry of Education, 2007) (NZC) future-focused vision of knowledgeable, critically and creatively engaged citizens, and the teaching of its attendant competencies. Our findings suggest that teachers' and librarians' beliefs and attitudes towards the library and to each other differ significantly, leading to an underutilisation of library services as a central resource for effective curriculum implementation. We conclude by arguing for a systemic revision of how libraries are positioned, staffed, and resourced in schools, that will change teacher and management beliefs to more closely align with the espoused pedagogical position of NZC and, ultimately, and most importantly, to engender sustained gains in student learning.

Introduction

The perception of library services as central to curriculum planning and delivery, and student learning, in secondary schools is hardly new. The Libraries All Party Parliamentary Group (2014) in the UK describes the school library as “the beating heart of the school”. *The School Library and Learning in the Information Landscape: Guidelines for New Zealand Schools* conceptualises the library as the centre of “school life and learning programmes” (Ministry of Education and National Library of New Zealand, 2002, p. 4).

Numerous international studies have linked aspects of student success with the provision of a well-resourced school library and qualified and engaged library staff. Williams, Wavell, and Coles (2001) and Williams, Wavell, and Morrison (2013), for example, note that school libraries positively impact curriculum delivery through improved student learning of subject content, higher quality assessments, and the achievement of curriculum-based learning outcomes, including improved information literacy and disciplinary literacy skills, and more positive attitudes to learning. In Australia, Lonsdale’s (2003) and Hughes, Bozorgian, and Allan’s (2014) studies of the literature and Hay’s (2006) examination of student perceptions of the impact of the library on their learning, confirm the significance of the library on the basis of multiple measures of student achievement. In the US, the Colorado Studies (Lance, Rodway, & Hamilton-Pennell, 2000; 2010), Lance and Loertscher (2003), Lance, Rodway, and Russell (2007), and Scholastic Research and Results (2008) provide statistical studies of the impact of highly functioning school libraries in secondary schools:

The school library is one of the few factors whose contribution to academic achievement has been documented empirically, and it is a contribution that cannot be explained away by other powerful influences on student performance. (Lance, 2002, p. 78)

In the UK, Gildersleeves (2012) observes that:

Ofsted (2006) has shown a positive link between the school library and pupil skills and a research study of 17,089 school pupils carried out in 2009 by the National Literacy Trust found that a correlation could be traced between library use and pupil achievement and interest in reading and writing. (pp. 125–126)

Findings about these curricular achievements have at their centre the significance of librarian–teacher partnerships. The research consensus suggests that teacher–librarian collaboration has a verifiable track record of raising student achievement in disciplinary content learning, and enhancing those cognitive skills students need to be literate, critical thinkers in an information-saturated world (Whitehead, 2009). As early as 1999, UNESCO was observing that:

It has been demonstrated that, when librarians and teachers work together, students achieve higher levels of literacy, reading, learning, problem-solving and information and communication technology skills. (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 1999, para. 4)

The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) (*NZC*) articulates these sentiments within its “front half” as it variously talks of confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners, who are skilled individuals able to engage collectively in ways that engender a cohesive, diverse, tolerant, and inclusive society (Ministry of Education, 2007, pp. 8–13). And the “back half”, the learning areas, interpret these elements as disciplinary (or subject-specific) achievement objectives and learning indicators, skills (not least of which is information handling and communication), and knowledge to be learnt.

These observations are confirmed by multiple studies internationally (Kachel et al., 2011; Lonsdale, 2003; Moreillon, 2013; Moreillon & Ballard, 2012; Williams et al., 2013). A controlled study of 12 schools (Loertscher, 2014, 2017) showed that co-teaching between a teacher and a librarian improved student learning outcomes from 50% to over 70%. Within New Zealand, the 2002 Ministry of Education Guidelines cite librarian–teacher partnerships as a critical success factor for student learning, while the Education Review Office’s (2005) extensive review of (among other things) school libraries argues that when “school library staff have the qualifications and expertise to work effectively in partnership with teaching staff, they can make a positive contribution to achieving student learning outcomes” (p. 13).

But to what extent are these perceptions of the centrality of the library, and the value of librarian–teacher partnerships to support student success, currently at play in New Zealand secondary schools? This article uses

qualitative data from a national survey of teachers and librarians in New Zealand secondary schools to investigate both the positioning of the library in New Zealand secondary schools and the teacher–librarian relationship. It examines the tensions between the contention in the literature about the central role of the school library to quality curricular delivery on the one hand, and, on the other, the at-times conflicting beliefs and attitudes teachers and librarians hold about that role and function. It considers how such opposing attitudes and beliefs may be affecting how teachers, librarians, and educational managers and leaders see the role of the library in New Zealand secondary schools.

Background

For as many studies that show positive outcomes from teacher–librarian collaboration, there are multiple international studies that show that, far from being considered the centre of teaching and learning, secondary-school libraries are increasingly under threat, with school librarians in many schools being replaced by a focused investment in technology (Everhart, 2014; Mahwasane, 2016; Mokhtar & Majid, 2005). In the UK, there are signs of significant decline. Streatfield, Shaper, and Rae-Scott (2010) comment, “there are many people working in schools who regard libraries as important” (p. 3), as evidenced by the public support for the Libraries All Party Parliamentary Group (LAPPG) report (2014). However, the Schools Library Services and the number of secondary school librarians across the UK have declined in the last decade (LAPPG, 2014), at least in part due to leadership failures, where principals fail to promote and resource the library as an integral part of the school’s curriculum and its teaching and learning culture (School Library Association, 2012).

Ascertaining whether a similar scenario is playing out in New Zealand schools is problematic. The only relatively recent comprehensive survey of school libraries and their role in supporting student learning is the 2005 Education Review Office (ERO) report, predating *NZC*. Although the ERO document is 13 years old, it does provide a context from which to determine if any progress has been made and what it might look like. The study reported that approximately 30% of secondary schools at that time had a library that was “not effective in enabling the students to connect with the information landscape”

(p. 43), or that was not set up to foster positive student attitudes towards reading, both of which are either explicitly, or by implication, invoked in both “halves” of *NZC*. Further, in almost half (47%) of secondary schools in New Zealand “the school library was not set up effectively to support information literacy development” (p. 51) which surely impedes the actualisation of the curriculum statements paraphrased above. The report identifies a series of causes for these weaknesses in library and information resource provision including patterns of poor staffing, lack of role clarity, poor planning (lack of vision and strategic direction) for the library (an irony given its long-term presence in most secondary schools), poor environment and management, and a disconnect between teachers (and their literacy aims and curriculum-based learning programmes) and the library. Further, the report comments: “in many of the secondary schools where the library infrastructure and resources were set up to support information literacy, effective links were not being made between the library and the school’s teaching and learning programmes” (p. 66), that is, between what schools espouse as their curriculum and what actually happens as teaching and learning in classrooms.

Recommendations in the report that related to the library included assessing school libraries’ impact on student learning outcomes, staffing the library to ensure it is central to student learning, and linking the library to schools’ strategic direction and vision for which, today, *NZC* must act as the strategic reference and framework. However, to date, no large-scale follow-up studies have been commissioned which might examine, on a national scale, the impact of these recommendations. If we are to establish what has happened subsequently with respect to the use and role of New Zealand secondary school libraries in curriculum delivery, then we are forced to piece together small studies predominantly placed in the professional librarians’ literature. And what we hear expressed in this professional literature is a persistent frustration with librarians’ continued marginalisation (e.g., Hutchinson, 2017; White 2012). This is supported by our earlier research into student transition (Emerson, Kilpin, & Feekery, 2014, 2015) which highlighted problems with school libraries and teacher understanding and capacity to engage with library resources and the librarians’ information skills.

Despite pockets of optimism, it seems clear from the literature that, internationally, school libraries are under pressure from a variety of

directions, not least of which is cost cutting that creates insufficient, underacknowledged, or inappropriate use of librarians and their libraries' potential to contribute to quality curriculum outcomes for teachers and students. Indeed, the literature suggests a cumulative and worrying erosion of the presence of libraries in schools. Domestically, any argument that a similar trend exists in New Zealand schools depends largely on anecdotal evidence. This leaves unresolved the puzzle about why, given the volume of international research that clearly establishes the positive impact of the library and library on student achievement, especially when the library is fully integrated into teaching and learning, school libraries seem to be in a position of stasis, unsure or unable to develop a new role based on teacher–librarian partnerships and their meaningful integration into their schools' curricular instruction. The following section provides a theoretical framework for considering this question.

A model for examining the question

One way to consider the question of why the research on the impact of the library and librarians on student outcomes is not translating into schools is to consider the literature on attitudes, beliefs, and identity as drivers of practice. While attitudes and beliefs relating to the library have not been examined directly, they nevertheless appear as a sub-text in discussions of conflict or tension relating to the role of school libraries. Todd (2012, p. 9), for example, in discussing the underuse of library services in schools, mentions teachers' and administrators' "lack of exposure to the value of libraries ... lack of understanding of the role of school librarians"—which we might interpret as a series of beliefs about the library and librarians. Likewise, Sally Dring (2014, para. 10) makes an impassioned plea to use the school library and see it differently: "many librarians are seen as minders of a spare IT space or as date label stampers"—again, a comment on teachers' beliefs about the library. Both Todd and Dring, in commenting on the librarians' responses to such beliefs (Todd talks about the librarians' sense of invisibility, their learned helplessness; Dring about librarians as "enormously, depressingly, frustratedly underused" (para. 10)) focus on librarians' attitudes. If this hypothesis speaks some truth, it implies that the range of expertise now required to deliver contemporary curriculum outcomes may be neither sufficiently understood nor acknowledged by school curriculum leaders. That is, those who have

oversight of and responsibility for nurturing their schools' effective teaching and learning culture don't understand what librarians and libraries may offer to that culture and its potential for success.

In shaping this study, then, we set out to investigate the possibility that teachers and librarians have fundamentally different beliefs and attitudes about the role of the library and the work of librarians in the context of a school's learning programmes, and that these attitudes and beliefs may be undermining the potential of library services in schools to impact positively on student learning and curriculum implementation.

In any investigation of attitudes and beliefs, we are first faced with the challenge of definitions. Research into attitudes and beliefs is a large and highly contested field that straddles a range of disciplines, and a full discussion is beyond the scope of this article. However, Jones and Leagon's (2014) review of teacher attitudes and beliefs provides a useful framework within which to examine teacher and librarian approaches to the role of the library. Observing that the terms "attitudes" and "beliefs" are often used loosely and interchangeably in the literature, they nevertheless provide the distinction that beliefs incorporate cognitive and affective factors that include notions of self-efficacy, identity, and role, while attitudes are largely affective, including an inclination to respond positively or negatively to a situation or concept. In simple terms, beliefs relate to cognitive factors (e.g., "I think that the librarian is there to issue books when I request them"), while attitudes relate to affect, including enjoyment, motivation, and interest (e.g., "I love working with our librarian").

Two aspects of the literature on attitudes and beliefs are especially significant to this discussion. First, the literature on teacher attitudes and beliefs shows that both have a significant impact on both professional practice and on the level of trust within collaborative relationships. Michelle Gregoire, reviewing how teacher beliefs relate to the implementation of educational (including curricular) reforms, argues that "understanding how teachers' beliefs relate to their practice as well as to student outcomes may be the missing link between calls for school reform and teachers' implementation of that reform" (2003, p. 149). Both Jones and Leagon (2014) and Gregoire cite multiple studies that confirm the impact of beliefs on teacher practice and their readiness to adopt curricula and pedagogical reforms. Amato (2004), for example, shows that teachers with negative attitudes to a topic are likely to avoid teaching that

topic, while Eagly and Chaiken's (1995) research suggests that people tend to ignore or discount information that does not support their own attitudes and beliefs. Further, Kelly and Cherkowski (2015) note the significance of shared beliefs and attitudes to enable collaboration that is truly transformative (Timperley, 2011) within an educational setting. We may speculate, therefore, that, based on these findings, the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and librarians are likely to impact on their practice (including curriculum delivery) and how they interact in relation both to one another and to students.

Secondly, research shows that attitudes and beliefs are resistant to change. Martinez, Saulea, and Huber (2001), for example, found that, even when a particular approach to teaching and learning was both taught and modelled in a teacher education course, trainee teachers with different beliefs and attitudes about the nature of teaching and learning persisted in practices that aligned with their previous attitudes and beliefs. Similarly, Herckis' work (cited in Matthews, 2017) demonstrates that, even when presented with evidence of more effective teaching methods, teachers will persist in old beliefs and attitudes about the nature of teaching that have accrued, often without conscious awareness, through multiple factors such as past experiences and education and the culture of the school. This can be understood as belief preservation—a tendency to make our beliefs dominate evidence by either seeking an alternative evidential narrative to support our beliefs, or steadfastly retaining them even when the evidence for change is overwhelming. Changing beliefs is cognitively demanding, and risky, because it disrupts our equilibrium and requires us to make the cognitive effort to readjust (Earl & Timperley, 2009; Eggen & Kauchak, 2007).

If belief preservation underpins teacher practice, then this suggests attitudes and beliefs are well worth examining in the light of library and librarian experiences in New Zealand secondary schools.

Method

The data for this study comprised answers to two open-ended questions in two nationwide 2017 surveys of New Zealand secondary schools (one of teachers; the other of librarians) which were designed to establish a comprehensive view of how the school library and library services are understood and positioned within the senior secondary school. Surveys were

sent to the office email address of all New Zealand schools on the Ministry of Education's downloadable directory (<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/data-services/directories/list-of-nz-schools>) with a request to forward the survey to all teachers and librarians in their school. Two reminders were sent, and the survey was also promoted through discipline-specific interest groups, the School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (SLANZA), and the school library list-serv. At the time of analysis for this article, 73 school librarians and 69 teachers had completed the survey. The teachers who responded to the survey were experienced (mean years working 17.7) and skewed towards English (55%) and the social sciences (29%)—subjects that traditionally have a stronger relationship with library services. The librarians, too, were experienced (mean years working 10), and a high proportion had a library qualification (70.5%). Because multiple distribution methods were used, the response rate cannot be established, and the demographic factors suggest that the sample is not fully representative of teachers and librarians as a whole in New Zealand secondary schools. Hence, any findings must be treated with caution and suggest the need for further research.

The survey designed for librarians included two questions designed to elicit qualitative data:

- Thinking about how you work with teachers at your school, what are the things that currently work well, and what factors support these successes?
- Thinking about how you work with teachers at your school, what are areas for improvement, and what barriers make it harder to make those improvements?

The teacher survey asked two complementary questions about working with librarians and the library. The aim of these questions was to identify beliefs about what made a school library successful or unsuccessful.

The data were collated and hand-coded to identify a series of themes about beliefs, including teacher and librarian attitudes, librarian identity, teacher beliefs, time pressures, resourcing, integration/collaboration, communication, and support from senior management/institutional policy. The responses in each category were quantified and each theme then analysed in further depth.

Findings

Teachers and librarians define library “success” differently

The data from the librarian and teacher surveys suggested different beliefs about the role of the library and library services across the two groups. Asked what went well in the library and what the factors supporting success were, the librarians focused primarily on communication, including building relationships and trust with specific teachers or departments (see Table 1).

	Librarian survey %	Teacher survey %
Resources	16.5	44
Teacher attitudes	15	
Librarian attitudes	29	43.5
Time	4	
Collaboration/integration	20	6
Senior management engagement/whole of institution policy	8.5	12
Teacher beliefs	2.5	
Librarian identity	22	
Communication/Relationships	44.5	

Table 1. Things that work well and factors supporting success

In order to build these relationships, many of the librarians were proactive, reaching out intentionally to build trust:

We make sure we get to the staff room for morning tea twice a week. This sounds insignificant, but it is the time for casual conversation about new resources we have, what staff would like us to get, what topics they have coming up. I try to sit with different groups of people. If you get to know them, they trust you, want to work with you.

I have found that if teachers/classes won't come to the library, then the library must come to them.

Demonstrating value by taking initiatives, and showing a “can-do” attitude, were seen by many librarians as important aspects of building trust and relationships. The librarians outlined successful initiatives that demonstrated skills, knowledge, and the value of their qualifications and experience, to give them “a way in” to the classroom:

Some of our librarians are also qualified teachers—I think this gives those people an extra edge when working with classes. Some library staff are writers—so they take creative writing classes with students. All this serves to break down barriers with classroom teachers—they see us as co-professionals, because we are professional.

Others demonstrated a willingness to think laterally about resourcing as a way of building relationships and changing attitudes:

When I came here, I applied successfully for grants from PubCharity and the school's Past Pupils' Association and [was] able to update lots of resources. When our teachers and management team looked at the new books and the rising patronage, they increased our budget and that has been a real help in working with teachers—we could really help them.

Building effective relationships through initiating communication was seen as the key to collaboration:

We have worked well with a couple of learning areas (English and History) for the last few years. We have developed great working relationships with these departments and most of the teachers within them are happy to work collaboratively with us and trust our professional skills.

These relationships were primarily built around individual teachers or departments, rather than a whole-of-institution approach, which was sometimes seen as frustrating:

We take a lot of time investing in building trust with teachers and it can be quite frustrating when a staff member leaves and you have to start all over again.

Overall, the librarians demonstrated a multifaceted approach to success, often citing multiple factors including positive individual teacher attitudes and teachers attributing value to the identity of the librarian.

The teachers' perspectives about what worked well in the library, by contrast, focused on just two factors: resources (the library lay-out and size, computers, book selection, database access, wi-fi, staffing, and budget); and the positive attitude of the librarian(s) towards students and staff (e.g., helpfulness, being proactive, thinking ahead, and engaging with staff and students). Typical comments that incorporated both factors were:

I like working in the library. It is a big space, light and airy and there are a number of spaces to work, research and use the computers. Our librarian will do anything asked of her if possible and is very keen to be involved in supporting our curriculum.

The librarian is extremely proactive in running programmes for students ... when students approach her for help to find specific information, she is always willing to help them and to empower them to find sources for themselves. The library is not a 'silent space'. There are tables and seating for about forty students and they both work independently and collaboratively. It is also a space for relaxing on cushions and chatting. Students enjoy being in the comfortable and inclusive library space.

The teachers, unlike the librarians who prioritised professionalism and expertise, tended to conceptualise the librarian as "helpful", "friendly", and "responsive"—essentially an assistance position. Very few described the librarian outside the role of support service (e.g., as a collaborator or peer in relation to their planning for teaching and learning, or actually co-teaching classes).

Librarian and teacher survey: Teachers and librarians perceive barriers to library engagement differently.

In terms of barriers and areas for improvement, the librarians wrote far lengthier responses compared with the teachers: one participant wrote three pages of detailed response. Most librarians listed multiple barriers and areas for improvement (see Table 2), and their frustration was evident in many responses, especially around beliefs about the librarian's identity. One librarian, who had been a teacher for 13 years and retrained as a librarian wrote:

I was astonished by what I encountered. I was regarded with hostility and suspicion and it was made very clear to me that I was 'support staff', not professional staff. I moved to another school ... hoping for a different attitude and was emphatically told that I was overstepping my boundaries ... as I was 'support staff'.

Another recounted a salutary experience:

Another barrier is the senior management team that place librarians as 'support staff' and don't see us as contributors to the curriculum. I went to an internal review led by CORE staff and as I walked in the DP said 'Why are you here—this is about the curriculum.' What do they think we are doing!!!!

	Librarian survey %	Teacher survey %
Resources	35	62
Teacher attitudes	27	7
Librarian attitudes		4.5
Time	35	10.5
Collaboration/integration	26	10.5
Senior management engagement/whole of institution policy	30	12
Teacher beliefs	19	
Librarian identity	30	
Communication	42.5	

Table 2. Areas for improvement, and barriers

While positive communication with individual teachers or departments was seen by librarians as a key factor in success, lack of communication between themselves and the rest of the school was their primary frustration. They listed lack of involvement in planning (many were unable to attend staff meetings because of either their limited hours or the fact they were at their busiest during lunch breaks when relevant meetings were held; others felt deliberately excluded); teachers arriving with their classes and expecting support without prior communication about what was needed; and no effective forums for them to communicate with staff. Many attributed this lack of communication to the extreme busyness of teaching staff combined with conservative attitudes and beliefs about the role of the library and the lesser identity/status of the librarian. The results suggested that many librarians were experiencing an eroded professional identity and a sense of profound isolation: “we operate on the fringes of the school”; “we are like a satellite to the system rather than a part of it”.

Resourcing was seen as a problem by a little over a third of the librarians but almost entirely in relation to staffing. And while this was, in terms of number of comments, a significant concern, resourcing was given far less space in the comments than issues of communication and lack of support from senior management or the existence (or adherence to) a whole-of-institution information literacy plan. While the librarians spoke at length about cultivating relationships with individual teachers or departments, the disappointments generated by initiatives they had championed or

institutional planning that was never completed or implemented seemed far more significant:

I struggle to get all teachers to collaborate in this school. Some do collaborate but others don't and senior management doesn't get involved enough. We have been unable to get a senior manager to be the library spokesperson for many years... I do feel that I'm seen as the book issuing person by some staff and maybe some students... I do my best, but sometimes it's very exhausting. We do have a school-wide information literacy model, but it isn't always followed... this year our Year 9s did an inquiry on sustaining our seas in social studies to set them up to follow up for a practical action to be taken in science. This was a fantastic cross curricular learning experience for them. The library was not involved in the planning. I had no idea about it until I heard the teachers talking... I feel like I'm hitting my head against a brick wall.

The teachers, by contrast, showed little awareness of the frustrations experienced by librarians. As with their comments about success factors, the teachers' comments on barriers and areas for improvement focused far more narrowly, with over 60% focusing on a single factor: resources. Teachers commented on a decreasing budget, insufficient or poorly trained staff, lack of computers or poor wi-fi, poor selection of books, insufficient quiet space for study, inadequate working/teaching spaces, and the quality of the building/decor. Typical comments on resources were:

More money needs to be spent redesigning the space and employing more staff. As an ex TLR it concerns me libraries are staffed with non-teachers... more computers are also needed.

While the librarians had seen intense time pressures experienced by teachers and lack of support from senior management or a whole-of-institution information literacy policy as significant barriers to collaboration and effective professional relationships, these factors were given far less emphasis (just over 10%) by the teachers. And, where teachers' attitudes/beliefs and beliefs about the role/identity of the library and librarian were seen by the librarians as impediments to effective collaboration, only two teachers commented directly on these factors:

I am quite independent, providing a huge range of appropriate research resources in my classroom... [It's] hard to let go of control...

These findings, then, confirm librarians' perceptions that teachers see the library and its role differently to the way they themselves conceptualise it. Where the teachers see a useful physical resource and teaching and learning "support", the librarians see complementary teaching and learning expertise that is undervalued and underutilised, despite their very best efforts to shift teaching colleagues' attitudes and beliefs. While many of the librarians could point to positive, individual relationships between teachers and librarians, they saw the institution as a whole as marginalising their role within the process of curriculum planning and delivery. Far from being "the beating heart of the school", librarians saw themselves as outliers, de-professionalised by being relegated by others to lesser roles in school life.

Discussion

Reading through the librarians' often passionate and lengthy discussions of the barriers they face feels like reading a cry for help. Yet, we must be careful not be drawn into a simple binary perspective (e.g., negative vs. positive attitudes, conservative vs. progressive beliefs) of what is actually a complex and nuanced situation. These findings in no way suggest that teachers do not value the library. Quite the contrary: the teachers who responded to this survey demonstrated, almost without exception, positive attitudes towards the library and the librarian, placing considerable value on supportive, helpful librarians; teachers' negative attitudes instead related to a considerable frustration at what they saw as underfunding of a significant teaching and learning resource/space.

And therein lies an important finding: teachers' beliefs positioned the library and librarian as a supportive resource (space, IT services, staffing) rather than as an integral part of teaching and learning culture.

Do these differences in beliefs about the role of the library matter? We would argue that they do. As we discussed earlier, the research shows overwhelmingly that engagement with library services, particularly when teachers and librarians work as collaborative partners, has a positive impact on the trajectories of student success. Yet teachers' beliefs about the library and the librarian position the latter as tangential to teaching and learning, or as a source of assistance (often opportunistic) for the teaching expert. Given such beliefs, it is hardly surprising, as the librarians told us, that

they are excluded from participating in the planning of innovative learning experiences/curriculum design, and, what's more, no one will notice if their presence remains unacknowledged by schools' curriculum leaders, including influential middle management heads of departments/faculties/learning areas. This "present but not here" status perpetuates librarians' professional and personal absence from the forums and relationships that significantly shape a school's curricular thinking and their subsequent teaching and learning decisions. Because of this, we argue that teachers are missing valuable opportunities and avenues for librarians and libraries to contribute to their teaching effectiveness and learners' progress—and this at a time when the information literacy and critical thinking skills of our students have never been more important for NCEA achievement, let alone for the "fake news world" into which they are shifting as young adults. *NZC* aspirations we cited above risk being lost to these students, as teachers' (perhaps unconscious and therefore unacknowledged) beliefs and attitudes about who has the "proper" curricular credentials and expertise limit the opportunities for meaningful librarian input.

What then needs to happen? At the moment, efforts to change beliefs about the role of the librarian seem to fall to the librarians themselves, an approach that our research suggests is not successful. This is not unexpected, given both the current status of librarians in schools and the clear indication from the literature that beliefs are resistant to change (Matthews, 2017; Eggen & Kauchak, 2007; Martinez et al., 2001).

For beliefs to change, for librarians to be respected as professional contributors to the school's curricular responsibilities and aspirations, we need to address change not at the individual (librarian/teacher/principal) or even school level; more radical, systemic change is required. We would start by suggesting that, given the compelling evidence on the impact of library services on student learning, it should be a statutory requirement for all secondary schools in New Zealand to have a working library, which is funded, resourced (digitally and physically), and staffed to a standard similar to that demanded for teaching staff (Allen-Kinross, 2018). In addition, policy around school libraries needs to be reviewed and updated. We need to intensify research opportunities into libraries, librarians, learning, and achievement. We need to reconceptualise what the New Zealand secondary school library could be—an immediately

recognisable, well used, and seriously valued curriculum-enhancing resource at the centre of the school.

However, reconceptualising is merely an academic exercise if it is not supported by action: it is quite disconcerting, in a time when information is growing and changing exponentially, that the last comprehensive national review of school libraries took place in 2005. An obvious practical start is to review school librarian qualifications—no specific school librarian or teacher librarian qualifications are currently available through any New Zealand private or publicly funded tertiary provider, and it has been many years since teacher librarians were a recognised position. Secondly, existing librarians need to be funded to qualify or further qualify, to increase perceptions of their professionalism and to retain and validate the quality of their experience and institutional knowledge. The librarian's position should be stabilised by being funded out of the government's centralised education salary budget, not the individual school's operations grant (where it is always vulnerable to reduced allocation as other resourcing needs are reprioritised). We need to strengthen library organisations such as the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) and SLANZA by recognising school librarians with professional registration, and we need to revisit the work of the National Library School Services, whose services were deliberately reduced and under-resourced by recent governments to prepare for its radical restructuring. To change beliefs about what the library is and could be, we need to take care of "the big stuff". Then we can change the local and individual circumstances of schools and their librarians.

These suggestions may appear extreme, but changing attitudes and beliefs requires more than cosmetic or individual change. Changes on this scale have occurred in other areas of the education system, leading to widespread revisions of both beliefs and practice: the early childhood sector is an outstanding example. If we accept the research outlined earlier in this article about the importance of the school library and teacher-librarian partnerships to student learning, then changing beliefs about the professionalism of our librarians, resourcing their services more effectively, and re-creating their role in schools is not indulgent sentimentality or luxury spending. Rather, these are vital steps in promoting student success. Against a background of "fake news" and "alternative facts", NZC's directive to teach our students to engage

intentionally and critically with a wide range of resources at local, national, and global levels should be more sharply present in our classrooms as a feature of learning, where librarians and libraries have a natural, important, and strategic presence.

For our teachers, driving change through such systemic reform could offer a strategic pathway to promote real change in the way they perceive and use a valuable resource which currently seems hidden in plain sight. And finally, for our librarians, shifts in teacher and management beliefs and practices are an opportunity to acknowledge their value in the context of skills- and information-based learning, and place the library back where it belongs: integral to the delivery of the curriculum, in the beating heart of the school.

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