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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the financial value of the teacher librarian, outlines areas in which this value can be identified, and indicates measures that can be used to demonstrate this value. The four major financial areas in which the value of the teacher librarian can be assessed are: (1) capital investment, made up of the building, stock, and equipment--the teacher librarian maximizes capital investment by organizing the physical facility and resources to gain the maximum use by the school community; (2) recurrent operating costs, including site (cleaning, power, and telephone), acquisition of new library materials, maintenance of equipment, and staff salary costs; (3) cost benefit, the benefit derived by the school by hiring a teacher librarian, as determined by the teacher librarian's ability to save the school time and therefore money through their knowledge of the curriculum, the teachers' requirements and style, the students' learning patterns, and the resources in the library, other areas of the school, and the wider community; and (4) cost effectiveness, demonstrated by the teacher librarian showing that the cost of the current means of provision is more effective than an alternate model or source. As schools are forced to examine the possible alternatives for allocation of their funds, teacher librarians must be prepared to demonstrate the value of the cost of operating the library and the contribution that is made to the educational program. (SWC)

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# The Financial Value of the Teacher Librarian

by

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The value of the teacher librarian to a school program has been well documented in the area of educational contribution. However, with the increased devolution of decision making to the school level, with the increased pressure to allocate scarce resources to gain the best outcomes, and with the need to account for finances to the school community, school councils and principals are closely examining the contribution of staff in financial terms.

With the emphasis in educational philosophy on individual learning and the development of the ability of each student to locate, select, and use information, the school library is an essential component of the education program of each school. This paper, therefore, will not address the issue of whether a school requires financial commitment to a library but considers the value of the teacher librarian.

The teacher librarian is employed as a teacher in the school but brings additional skills to those of education. Qualifications in librarianship as well as education equip the teacher librarian with skills in selection, acquisition and organization, and the use of resources. Combined with education, knowledge, and experience, the teacher librarian is equipped to assess teacher and student needs and to match them with appropriate resources to achieve the required educational outcomes.

This paper, however, addresses the financial value of the teacher librarian and outlines areas in which this can be identified and indicates measures that can be used to demonstrate this value.

There are four major financial areas in which the value of the teacher librarian can be examined. These are:

- capital investment
- recurrent costs
- cost benefit
- cost effectiveness

For the purposes of this paper, and given the time constraints, depreciation is not included in cost examples. The school bursar can advise how depreciation is calculated in a particular school. Costing of staff also varies from one authority to another. In calculating staff costs, on costs should be included. These cover

superannuation, work cover, and sick leave which are additional costs to the employer to the staff salary. For the purpose of this paper on costs of 50% are used as an example only.

## Capital Investment

The school has considerable financial investment in the school library. This is made up of the building, stock, and equipment. This investment represents choice by the school to invest money in this area rather than another area of the school. As it represents commitment over many years, it is important to the school to maximize these spent funds as well as current spending.

The capital investment in each school can be calculated. For example:

Building	\$300,000
Book stock	
10,000 X \$25	\$250,000
Equipment	\$ 50,000
Total	<u>\$600,000</u>

How does the teacher librarian maximize capital investment? By organizing the physical facility and resources to gain the maximum use by the school community. This is achieved by efficient operation of the facility and by the organization of the collection and stock to provide maximum exposure

How do teacher librarians demonstrate their efficient use of this financial investment?

Organization of the physical facility is undertaken by layout of the interior to match educational needs, e.g., individual study, small group, or class use. This can be demonstrated by records of use of these areas matched with the demand. For example, a primary teacher librarian can demonstrate that class use of the facility is maximized when each class has a regular weekly period in the library.

Use of the collection and equipment is recorded by booking sheets for classes and loan records. These statistics will not only record use within the facility itself, but external in the classrooms. Other records will demonstrate video showings, class sets, topic borrowing, etc.

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The value of this use can then be demonstrated and assessed when measured against the school program as a whole.

Many schools have invested in library management systems at considerable cost. The benefits of these systems to the school program can be demonstrated in terms of increased use, most effective access to information, and saving of clerical time by staff.

### Recurrent Costs

There are several areas of recurring operating costs. These can be divided into site, acquisition, maintenance, and salary costs.

Site costs include cleaning, power, and telephone. Cleaning costs are assessed in the time taken for the cleaner in that area. This is estimated on space and difficulty of cleaning. The teacher librarian can demonstrate that cleaning time is minimized by the monitoring of use, and regular maintenance of the area such as reshelving and relocating materials by the end of each day.

The cost of maintaining the collection by the acquisition of new materials has also to be justified in terms of the total school budget. The teacher librarian can demonstrate the need for current and new materials by showing requests for resources by teachers, unfilled demand by teachers and students, and the matching of new resources with curriculum requirements.

Maintenance of equipment is important to maximize investment and use. If equipment is not maintained, it cannot be used effectively. This, of course, also includes maintenance of computer systems. A maintenance and depreciation schedule is therefore useful in demonstrating value, particularly if linked to use of the equipment.

Cost of telecommunications is becoming more important as teachers and students increasingly access external databases. Teacher librarians act as intermediaries for such access and through their expertise maximize search success and minimize time and frustration.

Staff costs are also part of recurrent costs and should be included. The school or educational authority will provide information on staff costs, and how they calculate on costs, i.e. the cost of superannuation, leave loading, etc.

Recurrent cost example:

Building (power, cleaning, telephone)	\$20,000
Acquisitions	6,000
Maintenance (service, etc.)	5,000
Salary \$40,000 + on costs (50%)	60,000
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	\$91,000

### Cost Benefit

The school investment in a teacher librarian is also one of choice. The school must decide whether the greater benefit is gained by allocation of a teacher librarian or a teacher.

The benefit teacher librarians can demonstrate is based on their knowledge of the curriculum, the teachers' requirements and style, the students learning patterns, and the resources in the library, other areas of the school, and the wider community. This knowledge means that they will save the school time which in turn means money and provide access not otherwise available. Indeed most teachers would not be able to operate most library interface situations due to lack of knowledge and expertise.

The value of a teacher librarian compared to a teacher in time saved can be shown. For example:

Provision of specialist services saving teacher time 10 X 1 hr @ \$5.00 per week for 30 weeks per year	\$7500
Greater efficiency in Purchasing	500
Incidental expenses	<u>500</u>
Total	\$8500

What is the benefit to the school in other areas? The teacher librarian adds value to the provision of resources by quality and accuracy as well as speed. For teachers, this will be the ease and effectiveness of the provision of resources for their teaching preparation and implementation. For students, who increasingly rely on resources, access and use of resources will be essential. Students views are important, as resource provision may be an element in their choice of school, and of subjects.

Benefit of the teacher librarian to teachers can be shown by records of consultation and provision, and particularly of the time saved for the teacher. If there is no teacher librarian, the teacher has to undertake some of the tasks themselves, e.g. selecting, previewing, and setting up a video, while other tasks would not be undertaken. If the teacher librarian saves

ten teachers one hour a week, this is one third of a teacher that has been saved in terms of the school.

Benefits to the students who are after all the only reason the school exists, can be demonstrated by records of use of the facility, of instruction and of borrowing. Use by students can be linked to the education program, and benefit to that demonstrated. For example, if the objective of the school is to provide a strong VCE program, student use of the library can be linked to VCE requirements. Students need to use the facility when they are able to, so hours of access are important to them. Provision of sufficient relevant resources is important to them. Provision of sufficient relevant resources is essential to complete teachers' requirements and the ability to use them efficiently. This means that the number of items and borrowing rules become very important to students. The teacher librarian can demonstrate benefit of the school investment by showing use statistics, ratio of resources in a subject area per student, borrowing statistics by subject and enrollment. Cost of provision of a service to a class can be calculated. For example:

Say an American history class at year 11 has enrollment of twenty-five students. This is a new subject, and the school has agreed to place priority on its development. The teaching method is based on a research approach which involves heavy use of resources in the library and additional expenditures. The cost of provision to that class can be calculated:

Resources	\$1000
Research support 1 hour per week for 10 weeks plus 50% on costs	250 125 <u>\$1375</u>

Cost of provision per student is \$55.00.

If the school places high priority on this area, the cost of this provision can be shown. The school can then decide the value of this cost to their educational objectives.

Cost of a particular service can also be calculated. To calculate the cost of video recording one hundred programs per year for example:

Cost of tapes @ \$10	\$1000
3 hours per week consulting and taping for 48 weeks of the year	\$5760

plus on costs (50%)	<u>\$2880</u>
	\$9600

The cost of each tape to the school is \$96.00. The value of this service can then be assessed.

### Cost Effectiveness

Cost effectiveness is demonstrated by the teacher librarian showing that the cost of the current means of provision is more effective than an alternate model or source. The alternative possibilities are different levels of allocation of staff, e.g. teacher or librarian or library technician or external provision, e.g. use of CD ROMS through links to the public library rather than internal provision.

Staff effectiveness can be demonstrated by showing levels of provision. If only a part-time teacher librarian is allocated, the result to the school can be calculated, and this can then be related to the educational program as a whole. For example, in a primary school each child may only visit the library once a fortnight and the exposure to the literacy or research program could be very limited.

The effectiveness of a teacher librarian can be shown by examples of use of their skill, e.g. selection of appropriate resources on the basis of curriculum, teaching and learning styles and levels. A library technician can demonstrate excellent system operation skills, but no or limited educational skills. A teacher can demonstrate excellent educational skills but no or limited resource skill.

Cost effectiveness of internal or external provision can be demonstrated in financial terms. For example, to provide CD ROM will require investment in equipment, staff time to train users, and operation of the area. External provision, e.g. the local public library will also require telecommunication costs and staff time, but may provide a wider range of choice of databases than the school can afford.

If a service is not provided in the school, the cost of external provision plus the time of the teacher concerned must be calculated. For example:

1 CD search	\$50.00
3 hours teacher-- 1 hour travel 1 hour search definition 1 hour obtaining resources	\$75.00
	<u>\$125.00</u>

It is important that the teacher librarian can identify the cost of provision of a particular service or product and can then compare the cost provision from another source. It may be cost effective for the school to provide the service as this provision may be more efficient and effective. However, the school may decide to outsource the service; that is, buy the service from an external source if it is seen to be cost effective and maximize the contribution of the teacher librarian. A current example of outsourcing is that of cataloguing where the school buys catalog records from ASCIS. This is seen as being more cost effective than using the time of the teacher librarian in cataloging.

### **Conclusion**

To demonstrate the financial value of the teacher librarian to the school requires particular knowledge and skill. The teacher librarian must have detailed knowledge of the curriculum, of subject enrollments, of teaching requirements, and learning requirements. This knowledge must be in a form that can be reported, not just in general knowledge. For example, the subjects taught at each level, enrollment numbers, number of teachers and their allocation weighting to the subject, and the background of the students. In addition, the requirements of that subject for resources--class use, individual projects, etc. should also be re-corded.

The teacher librarian must also have a good understanding of the costs involved in operating the library--cleaning, power, telecommunication and maintenance costs, materials costs, and salary costs.

Teacher librarians are no strangers to finance. In most schools they are responsible for the largest budget allocated to a particular staff member. However, as schools are forced to examine the possible alternatives for allocation of their funds, teacher librarians must be prepared to demonstrate the value of the cost of operating the library and the contribution that is made to the educational program. This in turn will require sophistication of report and presentation skills.

Teacher librarians are well placed to argue their financial value. They have access to valuable statistical information, particularly through automated systems which enable them to have good knowledge of the school and can place their contribution in context of the total educational program. As a group they are also confident of their role and have the great

advantage of a profession which shares information and assists each other. However, teacher librarians must also be prepared to demonstrate their value in other terms, not their own. These terms increasingly are financial. With deliberate research, preparation and presentation, the teacher librarian can demonstrate their contribution in an impressive manner.



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