

# Evidence of a role for teacher librarians

ALIA Schools Victoria

Teacher librarians are making a demonstrable difference to positive student learning outcomes. By using evidence-based practices and gathering data before and after implementing programs, teacher librarians are able to demonstrate that information literacy programs, when fully integrated with the curriculum, allow students to make real gains in improving their learning skills. *Evidence based practice* was the focus of two of the professional development sessions organised by ALIA Schools Victoria this year. The spaced learning modules were held in July and August: the July session provided participants with the opportunity to examine evidence based practice as it is operating in two Victorian Secondary Colleges and to consider the principles underpinning the practice. With the assistance of their peers, participants then outlined projects that they wanted to implement before the August session. The August seminar gave teacher librarians the opportunity to report back on their progress and gain the benefits of collegial support. The facilitators for this process were Vicki Hudson from Santa Maria College in Northcote and Fran Dorgan from Star of the Sea College, Gardenvale. The evaluation of the sessions was extremely positive and acknowledged Vicki and Fran's great expertise in this area.

Professional development sessions conducted earlier in the year provided an excellent backdrop for *Evidence based practice*. One of these titled *Leadership, information literacy*

and *lifelong learning* held in March, gave participants the opportunity to explore the theory and practice of leadership and its application to information literacy programs. Prue Mercer, convener of the ALIA Information Literacy Forum was one of the speakers and the emphasis was on policy development and accountability. This theme of accountability was highlighted by the international speakers' conference jointly hosted with the School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV). *Assessing the evidence, assessing the learning* was held in early August and the guest speakers were Dr Ross Todd and Dr Sheila Offman Gersh. Ross Todd spoke about the need for teacher librarians to develop evidence of the value of what they do, to make concrete the links between libraries and learning and to focus on practices that demonstrate the power of teacher librarians' contribution. Sheila Offman Gersh looked at practical strategies available from the internet that could be used to enhance the practice of teacher librarians.

Other activities of the group included the School Libraries Day dinner on 21 October, co-hosted with SLAV and representation on both the joint ALIA/ASLA Task Force and policy committees. Teacher librarians can look back at 2002 as being one where great advances were made in both collegiality and professional practice.

Sandra Ryan, co-convenor, ALIA Schools Victoria

## *Your time, your place, your off campus library service*

Off Campus Library Services conference 4-5 February 2002

Swedish librarians were among the seventy-five delegates who attended this conference, held at the Caulfield campus of Monash University. Other delegates came from most Australian states and New Zealand.

Included in the keynote papers was a presentation by Nick Smith (copyright officer for the National Library of Australia and Adviser to the Australian Libraries Copyright Committee) on 'Copyright in the electronic age'. The other keynote speaker was Ron Sawyer (Flexible Learning and Teaching Program manager, Information Technology Services, Monash University) who spoke on the development of the my.Monash portal, including the strategies developed and the issues arising.

The first day of the conference included excellent papers covering such diverse topics as digitisation and copyright compliance; electronic delivery of

materials and services; and the importance of the human element in service delivery. A focus on strategic issues was of particular interest to delegates.

On the second day, papers covered topics such as information literacy; and service delivery to unique groups including offshore students, secondary students, prisoners and specialist researchers. There was also a practical emphasis on how technology can be used to reach out to our users.

The annual meeting of the Off Campus Library Services Group was held at the end of presentations on the first day of the conference. During the meeting the *Guidelines for services to offshore students* were approved by attendees to be presented to ALIA for endorsement.

Kevin Dudeney presented the results of his research into library services for prisoners. It was proposed that the next conference include an imbedded

stream covering his issue. A report on issues discussed at the National Policy Congress was also presented.

Thanks go to all presenters and delegates for helping to make this such an informative and friendly conference. Evaluation forms rated the conference as good to excellent. Delegates were appreciative of the feeling of collegiality at the conference and welcomed the opportunity to network with other practitioners in the field of providing library services to users who were not able to be seen on a face-to-face basis. Special thanks also to the sponsors of morning tea — Warner Books on the first day and divine on the second day.

The conference was formally closed with an address by Dr Alan Bundy, ALIA president.

Kay Steel, treasurer, ALIA Off Campus Library Services Group