An introduction to school librarianship

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Head of Intellectual Property, The Open University

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Introduction and guidance

Introduction and guidance

This free badged course, *An introduction to school librarianship*, aims to develop learners' confidence and skills in delivering a library service in schools. It could be of use to librarians with little or no knowledge, as well as those with experience who are looking to upskill.

The course lasts 24 hours, with 8 'sessions'. You can work through the course at your own pace, so if you have more time one week there is no problem with pushing on to complete a further study session. The eight sessions are linked to ensure a logical flow through the course. They are:

- Session 1: A librarian's role in the school
- Session 2: Equality and diversity in your school
- Session 3: The best use of technology
- Session 4: Creating a reading-rich culture
- Session 5: Embedding literacy in your school
- Session 6: Independent study and information literacy
- Session 7: Championing the library
- Session 8: Reflection and review

Topics covered in the course include the library's role in the school, legal requirements, and how best to use technology. There is an emphasis on developing an effective practice to meet stakeholders' needs, and the course also encompasses the overarching principles necessary to support research, literacy, and reading.

Throughout the course you will follow two library professionals, Sarah and Nick. Although their backgrounds differ, they both have vast experience and share the same school library goals.

There will be numerous opportunities to check your learning. This includes interactive quizzes, of which Sessions 4 and 8 will provide you with an opportunity to earn a badge to demonstrate your new skills. You can read more on how to study the course and about badges in the next sections.

Learning outcomes

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- recognise the ways the library can support whole-school reading literacy, information literacy and research skills
- identify and use the appropriate strategies to deliver a service in the library
- use resources, confidently and critically, to meet library stakeholders' needs and fulfil an agreed development plan
- reflect proactively on performance levels and identify steps for further development.

Moving around the course

In the 'Summary' at the end of each session, you will find a link to the next session. If at any time you want to return to the start of the course, click on 'Full course description'. From here you can navigate to any part of the course.

It's also good practice, if you access a link from within a course page (including links to the quizzes), to open it in a new window or tab. That way you can easily return to where you've come from without having to use the back button on your browser.

There are text boxes within the activities for you to make notes where it would be helpful. This saves for you to refer back to, and only you can access these notes, noone else is able to see them. Alternatively, you are welcome to make notes offline instead, for example in a notebook.

The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations for the course before you begin, in our optional start-of-course survey. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

What is a badged course?

While studying *An introduction to school librarianship* you have the option to work towards gaining a digital badge.

Badged courses are a key part of The Open University's mission *to promote the educational wellbeing of the community*. The courses also provide another way of helping you to progress from informal to formal learning.

Completing a course will require about 24 hours of study time. However, you can study the course at any time and at a pace to suit you.

Badged courses are available on The Open University's OpenLearn website and do not cost anything to study. They differ from Open University courses because you do not receive support from a tutor, but you do get useful feedback from the interactive quizzes.

What is a badge?

Digital badges are a new way of demonstrating online that you have gained a skill. Colleges and universities are working with employers and other organisations to develop open badges that help learners gain recognition for their skills, and support employers to identify the right candidate for a job.

Badges demonstrate your work and achievement on the course. You can share your achievement with friends, family and employers, and on social media. Badges are a great motivation, helping you to reach the end of the course. Gaining a badge often boosts confidence in the skills and abilities that underpin successful study. So, completing this course could encourage you to think about taking other courses.

How to get a badge

Getting a badge is straightforward! Here's what you have to do:

- read each session of the course
- score 50% or more in the two badge quizzes in Session 4 and Session 8.

For all the quizzes, you can have three attempts at most of the questions (for true or false type questions you usually only get one attempt). If you get the answer right first time you will get more marks than for a correct answer the second or third time. Therefore, please be aware that for the two badge quizzes it is possible to get all the questions right but not score 50% and be eligible for the badge on that attempt. If one of your answers is incorrect you will often receive helpful feedback and suggestions about how to work out the correct answer.

For the badge quizzes, if you're not successful in getting 50% the first time, after 24 hours you can attempt the whole quiz, and come back as many times as you like.

We hope that as many people as possible will gain an Open University badge – so you should see getting a badge as an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned rather than as a test.

If you need more guidance on getting a badge and what you can do with it, take a look at the OpenLearn FAQs. When you gain your badge you will receive an email to notify you and you will be able to view and manage all your badges in My OpenLearn within 24 hours of completing the criteria to gain a badge.

Get started with Session 1.

Session 1: A librarian's role in the school

Introduction

The educational landscape is subject to constant change. Being aware of this and responding accordingly is, therefore, key to the success of the librarian's role and their library. All who work in school libraries, whatever their level of qualification, will benefit from learning about ways in which they can ensure their library provision is current and relevant.

By ensuring your library's strategies and policies are aligned with those of the school itself, you will be better placed to support your school, your colleagues, and your stakeholders' needs effectively. In this first session, by referring to your school's strategies and policies, you will learn how to maximise the potential of your library provision and shape your role in the school. To help you achieve this, you will need a library development plan. This will form the focus of the first part of this session.

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

* understand how your library development plan can support your school
* recognise the ways in which the library can support teaching colleagues and the curriculum
* identify stakeholders and their needs.

Before you start, The Open University would really appreciate a few minutes of your time to tell us about yourself and your expectations of the course. Your input will help to further improve the online learning experience. If you'd like to help, and if you haven't done so already, please fill in this optional start-of-course survey. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

1 Supporting your school with a library development plan

Libraries play a key role in schools. They are places where students come together and different interests overlap. For this reason, libraries are essential for the encouragement of learning and curiosity. Although such environments should naturally expose students to new perspectives and concepts, it's also important that the library reflects and supports the unique policies, demographics and mission aims of your school. Whether a primary or secondary, state or independent, the location, size, demographic and nature of your school will shape its strategic direction. If your library is to be an integral part of your school, its provision must likewise be tailored to the school itself. Creating a library

development plan will help you to stay aligned to your school's mission and set out your vision for the library based on that.

A library development plan strategically outlines your priorities to raise standards and identifies the measures to achieve your goals. A typical library development plan will include a short introduction that summarises your previous year's evaluation and sets out a rationale for any changes you intend to implement. This is usually followed by a table which presents a simplified outline of what you intend to achieve in the future, your strategies, the resources you'll need, and the criteria by which you will judge your success. This should be presented in a simple format so it is easy to read and relevant parties, including senior leadership and school managers, can be made aware of the strategic direction of your library.

It is important not to be too ambitious when creating your development plan. You should set targets that are realistic and which provide motivation to staff. You may also wish to limit yourself to no more than three or four goals. If possible, it is preferable for your goals to be linked to your school's overarching policies or strategies. However, this may not always be possible.

Watch school library professional, Nick, discuss some of the specific considerations to be accounted for when creating your library development plan in Video 1.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

As Nick mentioned, understanding your school's policies and familiarising yourself with their mission statement – a formal summary of its aims and values – is instrumental in creating a focused library plan which truly reflects your school's values. Referring to the school's teaching and learning policy, the literacy policy and, of course, the school's wider development plan will help you do this. Thinking about the profile of the school community and the diversity of students, in terms of, for example, ethnicity and gender, as well the differing needs for those with English as a Second Language or with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is another important consideration.

It is usual, but by no means obligatory, for your development plan to cover a 12-month period. It is equally credible to have a two, three, of five-year development plan as some things will inevitably take longer to achieve. To begin considering how to approach a library development plan in your own school, take a look at this example template of a library development plan. After this, complete Activity 1.

[An example template of a library development plan can be viewed here.](#)

Activity 1

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Referring to the template library development plan for guidance, identify a goal for your library for the upcoming year. Then, using the prompt questions given below, explain how you will achieve your goal, what resources will be necessary, and how you will determine success.

What is your goal? Visualise and describe as precisely as possible what has to be achieved.

> *Provide your answer...*

Strategies: what specific actions will you need to do in order to achieve your goal?

> *Provide your answer...*

Resources: what is required to implement your strategies?

> *Provide your answer...*

Indicators of success/monitoring: how will you check progress so you know you are on track?

> *Provide your answer...*

....

Discussion

If you found this activity useful, you may like to use it as a starting point for your own development plan, considering other goals you have identified for your library.

The advantages of a development plan include:

- it can help you to identify your goals, organise your thoughts, and think strategically
- when you come to evaluate your performance, the development plan can act as a point of reference, helping you assess which goals have been met and what still needs to be achieved

- it can be used as an 'at a glance' synopsis of your intentions and goals for any interested parties, e.g., your line manager.

In this section, you have explored some of the considerations involved in putting together a library development plan. This will form the base of your own plan. You will build on this base in future sessions, covering a range of topics which will influence your approach. Amongst other topics, you will consider how stakeholders influence collection management and the design of your library, how you can embed literacy in your school, and how to choose software which meets your requirements and budget. First, however, you will look in more detail at how legislation will influence your approach to your role.

2 Legislation to be aware of

Legislation is an important area for librarians to be aware of because people working in the educational sector have a duty of care to their students and are obliged to comply with safeguarding legislation. This is especially important for librarians, who are often lone workers and, as such, are responsible for the welfare of students at that time. However, the importance of abiding by legislation is not limited to safeguarding. Depending on the country in which you work, there may be a wide range of legislation which you should familiarise yourself with, including, for example, data protection, equality, health and safety, or copyright.

As a librarian, you have a responsibility to engage with and understand the policies and legislation surrounding your role. For example, in the case of safeguarding, if a pupil were to tell you something in confidence, you would have a duty of care to inform appropriate members of staff; not only is this important for safeguarding reasons, but to keep the secret would also represent an inappropriate blurring of the boundary between teacher and student.

As far as data protection is concerned, GDPR legislation in the UK dictates that it is illegal to store a pupil's data and images indefinitely. Similarly, you must give pupils and parents the right to opt out if you wish to share their name, photo, or other information which can identify them in your promotional materials.

In the case of copyright, UK schools are granted licenses by the copyright Licensing Authority and Printed Music Licensing Ltd which permit them to make copies of books and printed music. However, these licenses may set limits on the amount of a work that can be copied. With books you are only allowed to copy one chapter or 5% of the total work, whichever is greater. Conversely, with music you can make full copies and upload them to your Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) but you can't make more copies than the number of students in the class. You also can't reproduce more than 10% of items in an anthology or large vocal score.

Having a knowledge of different legislation and policies, especially when they have a direct impact on your library or your role, and demonstrating an awareness of these in your library development plan will enhance the potential of your library provision and shape your role in the school. However, if you are unaware of them, you may inadvertently find yourself breaking the law or contravening internal school policies.

To think further about this, in the next activity, you will reflect on how legislation, such as data protection (e.g. the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) and equality, diversity and inclusion (e.g. the Equality Act) may apply to you.

Activity 2

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Part 1

Complete Table 1 by filling in the right-hand column with an example of how you make your library compliant in the areas of legislation given.

Table 1 Legislation compliance

Legislation	How you make your library compliant in this area
GDPR	Provide your answer...
Safeguarding & child protection	Provide your answer...
Equality Act	Provide your answer...
Occupational Safety and Health Act	Provide your answer...

Discussion

Below is an example of how you may have filled out Table 1. However, there are many ways you might make your library compliant and the way you approach the matter in your own library may differ from this suggestion.

Table 2 An example of how you may have completed Table 1

Legislation	How you make your library compliant in this area
GDPR	Don't store images and data beyond the period of retention as set out in your school policy
Safeguarding & child protection	Use appropriate signposting to make students aware of points of contact if they wish to raise concerns
Equality Act	Ensure aisles are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs
Occupational Safety and Health Act	Provide kick stools to reach top shelves

Part 2

Now you have identified ways in which you currently make your library compliant in different areas of legislation, in this next part of this activity you should identify which policies and documents you might refer to, to help shape your library development plan. You should include information on where the policies and documents are located, and the key personnel who can assist you with each. Each school and library will be different so there are no right and wrong answers to this activity. You may choose to focus on areas of legislation you are already compliant with, areas you are yet to apporach, or, if you prefer, both.

In Table 3 below, identify which policies and documents you might refer to, to help shape your library development plan. You should include information on where the policies and documents are located, and the key personnel who can assist you with each. Each school and library will be different so there are no right and wrong answers to this activity.

Table 3 Documents or policies you might refer to

Document/policy	Accessed/located	Key personnel to help
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

What you have added into Table 3 will be personal to you and your library development plan. There are no right or wrong answers to this task, but below are some suggestions which you might have considered.

Table 4 An example of how you may have completed Table 3

Document/policy	Accessed/located	Key personnel to help
School improvement plan	Principal/Headteacher's office or staff area of VLE	Principal/Headteacher's PA
Literacy development plan	Staff area of VLE	Literacy co-ordinator
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	Staff area of VLE	Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

In this section, you have begun to think about the importance of legislation to your role. As part of this, you have considered how to make your library compliant with such legislation as well as some of the policies you may need to refer to when creating your library development plan. In the next section, you will explore how working collaboratively with colleagues can help you tailor your collection management and support the curriculum.

3 Supporting teaching colleagues and the curriculum

As you saw in the previous sections, a one-size-fits-all approach across the school library profession is unrealistic as no two schools are the same. Demonstrating an awareness of this in your collection management is key and allows you to more effectively support teachers and the specific educational process in your school.

By working collaboratively with teaching colleagues from across your school, you will be better able to identify which resources to invest in as part of your collection management, allowing you to tailor your provision to the educational needs of students in your school. For example, by consulting with teachers and other colleagues, such as the head of special educational needs, you can gain a deeper understanding of the teaching process and better support teaching and learning across the curriculum for those with special educational needs. Demonstrating an awareness of syllabi and topics of study can help your meetings with colleagues to be more profitable. Showing other teaching staff that you are interested in their subject is also likely to lead reciprocal support for you.

To reflect further on these issues, watch Video 2 below where Sarah offers her own thoughts on the ways in which libraries can support staff and the curriculum. As you watch, consider your experiences and think about how your own library offers support to teachers and other school colleagues.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

In the video, Sarah stressed the importance of 'doing your homework'. By becoming knowledgeable on the exam syllabus or the scheme of work being studied it ensures you are able to give relevant support and become an integral part of the school. The relationship between librarian and teacher, however, is two-way and so, as Sarah suggests, you should look to work with teaching staff who are keen to collaborate.

Working together, you can plan lessons with clear direction so the library can help learning objectives be met.

Now you have heard how Sarah supports staff and the curriculum, have a go at Activity 3 which will provide you with an opportunity to develop your ideas, by considering the benefits of your current approach and how it might be improved.

Activity 3

🕐 *Allow approximately 15 minutes*

In Table 5, provide three examples of how you currently assist teaching colleagues and the benefits of this. Then in Table 6 provide an additional three examples of things you don't currently do but would like to introduce.

Table 5 Current ways I provide support for teaching colleagues

Ways in which I currently assist teaching colleagues	Benefits
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*

Table 6 Possible new ways of providing support for teaching colleagues

Additional ways in which I would like to assist teaching colleagues	Benefits
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*

This activity should have made you think about the way you work with colleagues. One of the greatest benefits of working with colleagues is that it provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate the value and the breadth of services you and your library can offer. It also

helps to forge relationships and helps you both understand what areas you need to develop. If enhancing curriculum-led usage of the library is a goal you've highlighted for your library development plan, you might consider building up relationships with teaching colleagues in specific subject areas as a strategy to achieve this.

Teaching colleagues are just one stakeholder you will work with as a school librarian. In the next section, you will identify others and learn how to support their needs.

4 Identifying stakeholders and their needs

A stakeholder is someone who has an interest in an organisation and who can either affect or be affected by the activities of that organisation. As such, a library's stakeholders can range from students and teaching colleagues to governors and parents. Developing an appreciation of these different groups and their needs will enable you to tailor your library provision accordingly. It is, therefore, crucial that you acknowledge your stakeholders in your library development plan and ascertain whether you are meeting their requirements. If not, you should consider how to implement any necessary changes in the future.

Activity 4

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Create a list of your library's stakeholders and consider the wide range of expectations they will have of your library provision and how you can fulfil their requirements. When doing this, it is of particular relevance to consider how students with differing abilities, skills and expectations, experience and access your library's resources.

Table 8 Library stakeholders and their expectations

Stakeholders	Their expectations
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

When considering your stakeholders, it is important to be specific. For example, for students with dyslexia, you can support them by being aware of specialist publishers that use dyslexia friendly fonts, layouts and paper so you can provide them with alternative formats such as audiobooks or large print versions. Alternatively, a tinted film to overlay on each page may work for some dyslexic students. Similarly, your library can support those with English as a Second Language (EASL) by providing resources in their primary language. However, many stakeholders will have needs which cannot be so easily categorised. For this reason, it is important to be observant and draw on the expertise of specialists within your school wherever necessary. This is where building up relationships with colleagues, as discussed in Section 3, can be hugely beneficial.

Although it's not possible for you or your team to address all of your stakeholder's needs or solve all of their problems, you can nevertheless be prepared and learn how to handle situations with sensitivity.

Now watch Video 3 before moving on to Activity 5. In this video, Sarah talks about the various key personal to liaise with to help identify various stakeholders and provides examples of some of the library resources they may need.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 3

Activity 5

Part 1

Interactive content is not available in this format.

Part 2

Using the examples of different students given in Part 1 as a starting point, list some of the learning needs you have encountered whilst working as a librarian in your school. Beside each, note down the resources that your library currently provides for them. If there are any learning needs that you don't think you quite cater for at the moment, list these too along with the resources you would need. You can then

return to these notes to help you build on your library's provision. The first row has been done for you as an example.

Table 9 Resources for learners' different needs

Learners' needs	Appropriate resources
Dyslexia	Dyslexia friendly books from specialist publishers
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*

In these activities, you have spent some time considering the ways you can address the needs of stakeholders and make the library an inclusive and welcoming environment for all. This is a theme you will return to at greater length in Session 2.

5 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 1, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 1 quiz](#).

6 Summary of Session 1

In this session, you have looked at how to tailor your library provision to your school, creating a unique library development plan which supports the educational and recreational requirements of your stakeholders. You have also explored the importance of legislation to your role and learned how working collaboratively with colleagues can help you gain insight into the teaching process and target your provision more effectively to support learning outcomes.

Finally, you have thought about how to identify library stakeholders and attend to their various needs, being observant and liaising with specialists wherever necessary. Continuing on this theme, in the next session you will explore the relationship between stakeholders' needs and the physical environment of your library. You will also learn about collection management and consider how to balance the different types of library resources you have.

You should now go to Session 2.

Session 2: Equality and diversity in your school

Introduction

Schools and libraries are expected to strive to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion. This should be evident in your library's practice and policies to guarantee fair treatment and opportunity for all. It is essential to acknowledge that each individual and their needs are unique. Only once these needs are known can you begin to effectively manage your library's resources and help to address prejudice, unconscious bias and discrimination.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- design a physical environment that is safe, accessible and appropriate
- adapt your collection management to ensure it is socially inclusive and representative of your entire school community
- ensure accessibility of physical and digital resources and, if required, provide alternative formats and web accessibility.

1 Designing a safe, accessible library

When considering how to meet your stakeholders' needs, it is important to think about the physical aspects of your library and how they affect access to its resources. This includes everything from shelf heights and aisle widths to the hearing-loop system and Wi-Fi. However, not all libraries are purpose-built, many having evolved through an amalgamation of classrooms, inherited resources and restrained budgets. In such situations it is inevitable that compromises will be made. Even if this is the case, it is advantageous to be aware of what is ideal, what standards are acceptable, and what to aim for. For example, obstacles such as narrow aisles may act as barriers to wheelchair users, preventing them from having full access to your library or, if already in the library, fire exits. Similarly, students with hearing difficulties may require the assistance of hearing-loop technology and visually impaired students may require carpet lines showing pathways, large print displays, good lighting, as well as print magnifiers. When designing your library, it's essential to keep such considerations at the forefront of your mind, ensuring the library is an accessible, welcoming, and inclusive environment for the entire school community. Liaising with colleagues who are aware of students' specific needs is, therefore, of key importance to understanding how your library can cater for everyone.

To encourage you to think about some of the considerations involved in designing your own library, watch the video below where Nick discusses the physical aspects of a library, what constitutes good library design, and ways in which you can configure your library so that it best meets your stakeholders' needs.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

As well as considering aisle widths and assistive technology such as hearing loops to create an accessible library, Nick also highlights how the layout of furniture, by using zones with different lighting and colour schemes to suit both independent and collaborative work, can help create a welcoming environment for students to visit. Additionally, by making use of mobile fixtures and fittings you can create a flexible space, which can adapt to stakeholder needs as they change over time.

With Nick's suggestions in mind, complete Activity 1 to reflect on your current practices and how they might be improved.

Activity 1

⏱ *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Table 1 lists some of the design elements that should be taken into consideration when setting out your library. In the second column, note down which aspects of your library you feel are satisfactory and how you meet requirements.

Then, identify aspects of your library that you feel could be improved and in the third column provide suggestions on ways you think this might be achieved

Table 1 Library design

	Examples of how your library meets stakeholder needs	Examples of how you could improve your library design
Access to library (ground or first floor), location in the school, door and aisle widths	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Lighting, sound and the use of colour, décor, furniture and walls	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Wi-Fi and access to Internet and devices; PCs and tablets	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Height of the furniture: library counter, tables and shelving	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Assistive technology – software on PCs, the 'loop' system	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Signposting, displays and plasma TV screens	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Layout: zoning, seating, shelving and furniture	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Now that you have identified which areas of your library's design are satisfactory and which need improvement, you will be better placed to formulate an improved approach moving forward. Your library development plan will provide you with an excellent opportunity to reflect further on the practicalities involved. What, for example, are the cost implications? Could any of the changes be implemented straightaway? How might you prioritise any changes? These are just some of the questions you may wish to consider further.

In the next section, you will think about how stakeholder demographics can also influence your collection management.

2 Building your collection management

The layout and design of your library is crucial for making a safe and accessible environment that is welcoming to everyone. However, in order to truly fulfil your duty as a school librarian, it is necessary that your collection is representative of your entire school community. An ability to cater to their unique needs is a fundamental aspect of good collection management. In order to demonstrate an understanding of these needs, it is wise to consider the society in which your school exists. This will help you identify relevant factors such as multiculturalism, a higher prevalence of a particular faith, or students for whom English is a second language. You should try to cater for such needs by stocking specific resources, for example foreign-language books for those with English as a second language. This will also help other students find out more about other cultures. Similarly, you may also seek to offer resources which address private or personal issues such as sexual orientation and mental health and wellbeing. These can help students explore sensitive topics and find answers to questions they may otherwise be afraid to broach with others, fostering a sense of inclusivity and demonstrating your awareness of their needs.

Another major factor which might influence your collection management is the socio-economic background of students; students from economically disadvantaged back-grounds may have fewer books in their home due to financial restrictions, a factor which can have far reaching consequences on student's literacy levels and educational outcomes. One study has found that fourteen-year-olds from homes with very few books knew 42% fewer words than those from homes with lots of books (UCL Institute of Education, 2017). This example demonstrates just one of the ways socio-economic status can impact on students' literacy levels and interest in reading. Thinking of ways to engage these students and target their interests should, therefore, be of key importance in your collection management and including resources requested by students can be one way of doing this. Indeed, it is only by looking at your school from this broader perspective that you can focus your resources appropriately and reassure students that your collection management reflects the full diversity of their communities.

To explore further the intersection between collection management and the needs of stakeholders, watch the video below. Then, considering the demographics of your own school, complete the activity and reflect on how your collection management can help meet their needs.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

As mentioned in Session 1, Sarah suggests reviewing the school's mission statement and the wider aims of the school (including the school's policy on equality and diversity) when thinking about your library's collection. A general approach is helpful for this, such as when thinking about the age of the students in the school, however it is also important to encompass all students when considering the resources your library provides, including those with special educational needs, those with English as a second language and those part of the LGBTQ+ community, for example. These groups may or may not form a large proportion of the students at your school, but having resources that represent and cater for them will help you to build an inclusive environment that everyone feels welcome in.

Keeping on top of your resources, so they do not become outdated and continue to be relevant, appropriate and reflective of your school community means you need to regularly review your collection.

Activity 2

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

In the box below, describe your school in terms of its size, age group, type (e.g. private secondary school), demographic, etc.

Provide your answer...

Then, in the table below, list three different stakeholders your library caters for and give an example of a resource you provide for them.

Table 2 Stakeholders your library caters for

Stakeholder	Library resource
Example: Primary school students	Picture books, large format books
Example: Students with low reading-age	Books which acknowledge the students' reading ages whilst still being appropriate to their 'interest-ages' (i.e. age-appropriate content but low reading-age language)
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

If doing this activity has helped you identify any gaps in your resources, you should make a note of these and incorporate them into your library development plan. Similarly, if it has highlighted that you need to communicate more with other colleagues to build a more comprehensive profile of students' needs, it may be helpful to create a list of who you need to speak to, and prioritise who you should approach first.

Now that you have completed the activity, you can proceed to the next section where you will explore how modern libraries balance their physical and digital resources to maximise accessibility and optimise their offering.

3 Physical and digital resources

Having identified your stakeholders and their needs, it is important that the resources you provide – whether to support research, reading for pleasure, or teaching and learning – are relevant, current and accessible. Modern libraries offer a mix of book and non-book media in both physical and digital formats, including CDs and DVDs. Watch the video below in which Nick discusses the print versus digital debate and why both play an important role.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 3

It is essential that all resources offered through the library are accessible and, if possible, available in alternative formats. This is one of the major benefits of digital and online resources, which allow the use of a screen reader if needed. Making sure you have screen reader technology, as well as other assistive technologies, such as voice recognition software, available for students to use is an important consideration when looking at how to make your resources both accessible and inclusive. Some online and digital resources will be more accessible and user-friendly than others, so it is important to check before investing in them.

Digital resources are also beneficial because they provide 24/7 access and the ability to search for key words or phrases. Both of these elements make digital resources very convenient. However, many of them may not be affordable to all; as with all resources, the extent of your investment will be determined by your budget. Since you may not be able to purchase every resource on your wish list, it is important to think strategically about which resources offer the best value and provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people. You may also wish to use open-source resources to supplement your offering. These can be found freely available online and, when combined with podcasts and audio-visual materials, can help you create a wealth of digital resources, whatever your budget. For example, free e-books and audiobooks can be obtained from public libraries or websites such as Librivox and Project Gutenberg. Links to these resources can be

embedded into your LMS or the school's VLE. If you require help you should seek assistance from your school's network manager.

It is usual for your library's digital resources, whether for remote learning or reading for pleasure, to be accessed through your Library Management System (LMS) or your school's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). You will explore the subject of LMSs in greater detail in Session 3.

Activity 3

⏱ *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

In the table below, note down examples of the various types of physical and digital resources your library provides, as well as a wish list of resources you don't currently have but would like to offer.

Table 3 Your library resources

Physical resources	Digital resources	Wish list
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*

. . . .

Discussion

When you are creating your library development plan, having a wish list similar to this can help you determine any changes you may wish to make to your collection management in the future. It helps when considering these matters to identify which stakeholders your new resources might benefit, what cost implications could be involved, and which changes need to be prioritised.

4 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 2, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 2 quiz](#).

5 Summary of Session 2

In this session, you have thought about what makes a physical library environment accessible to stakeholders. You may not be able to design your library from scratch, but by carefully considering your library and how users interact with it, you can maximise its potential as a welcoming place for all.

You also discussed the importance of considering your entire school community in your collection management. A wide range of factors may influence the resources you purchase and the materials you stock, so being aware of your school's demographics can help you target your provision efficiently. Finally, you explored how modern libraries balance the types of resources they offer. For example, maintaining a range of online resources alongside your print media and audiobooks is important in encouraging remote learning and accessibility. Although online resources can often be expensive, using open-source materials or joining a consortium where neighbouring schools join together to purchase subscriptions at cheaper prices can help libraries of all budgets maximise their offering.

In the next session, you will consider the relationship between technology and your library. In particular, you will look at the importance of Library Management Systems (LMS) and explore their potential to optimise your service. You will also look in more detail at digital resources and touch upon how social media can help you promote reading and, therefore, embed literacy.

You should now go to Session 3.

Session 3: The best use of technology

Introduction

As a librarian, Information Technology (IT) will form a large part of your work and your library's provision. This will typically include a Library Management System (LMS), a security system, Personal Computers (PCs) and other electronic devices, Wi-Fi, and various digital resources, databases and e-book platforms. It's likely you will also manage a library area on your school's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) on which you can embed resources.

The growth in the accessibility of digital resources can be used to your library's advantage to support learning and research. For example, a VLE can be accessed remotely and, therefore, helps support blended learning and provides for your students at their point of need. One significant example of this was during the COVID-19 pandemic when all teaching went online. Despite the significant struggles encountered by students and staff alike during this period, the availability of technology (although notably not for all) was a huge factor in allowing teaching to continue. Although your school will have a member of staff who is responsible for IT and who be able to help you install hardware and software, it will be useful if you are aware of innovative technological developments and how they can be used to help you get the most out of your library.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- show an awareness of LMSs and their many functions
- manage digital resources, negotiate discounts and arrange access for remote learning using referring URLs
- understand the advantages and challenges of using blogs and social media to promote libraries, literacy, and reading.

1 Library management systems and their many functions

An online Library Management System (LMS) is central to the management of your library. LMSs are sophisticated tools which can help you carry out a range of important tasks such as creating reading lists, generating citations, cataloguing new resources and circulating books. They can also issue personalised reports to help you gain a deeper understanding of how your resources are used. For example, if your LMS has access to your school's Management of Information System (MIS), such as SIMS, Arbor or iSAMS, it can drill the data to scrutinise your students' borrowing habits and identify trends. This insight into the usage of your library resources can help you evaluate the impact of your

collection management and identify areas for development. As a result, the data you gather can be used to great effect when writing reports or reviewing your performance, topics you will explore further in a later session.

The sophistication of your LMS is often dependent on its cost and, therefore, the budget you have available for it. Predictably, the more sophisticated the system the costlier it will be. It's therefore useful to decide exactly what functions you want it to perform before investing. Watch the video below in which Sarah discusses this in more detail and suggests considerations you should take into account when deciding what you need from your LMS.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1

LMSs can also perform federated searches, which means they can combine search results from multiple information sources. Furthermore, they can be connected to various other software packages, enabling you to perform tasks such as generating text messages and emails to students when running overdue reports. Similarly, if students have ID cards, they can be linked to your LMS, thereby removing the need to enter students' details manually when issuing books.

The LMS should also be considered a whole school resource which can be accessed through the school website or intranet. By making it accessible outside the library, students can search its catalogue remotely, discover book classifications to identify where items are held in the library, view reading lists, and gain access to any resources that your library has subscriptions to. You may also wish to customise your LMS's homepage, uploading useful documents and guides to help students with research, or sharing links to external websites such as referencing generators. These will not only help students in their studies and add value to your LMS, they will also encourage broader engagement with your library and its resources.

In this section, you have looked at some of the ways your LMS can play a key part in your role as librarian. In the next activity, you will think about the current functions your LMS has and the reports it can generate. You might then want to reflect on what has been

discussed in this first section and video to see if there are any other new ways you think you could make use of your LMS.

Activity 1

⏱ *Allow approximately 25 minutes*

LMS reports are your biggest source of data when identifying your library's strengths, weaknesses and areas for development. You should, therefore, be familiar with the range of reports your LMS can generate. In the box below, provide an example of a report you are currently familiar with and explain how you use the data it produces.

> A report I am familiar with is…I use the data in this report to…

. . . .

Discussion

There are no right or wrong answers to this task, but below is one suggestion which you might have considered.

- A report I am familiar with is... How much non-fiction was borrowed compared to fiction
- I use the data in this report... to see if I need to adjust the proportion of budget set aside for non-fiction.

Now in the table below, describe the LMS you use and provide an example of a function you use it for. Then consider how you might use it in new ways moving forward.

Table 1 LMS usage

Describe the type of LMS you have in your library:	*Provide your answer...*
What tasks do you currently use your LMS for?	*Provide your answer...*
Moving forward, what new tasks might you use your LMS for?	*Provide your answer...*

. . . .

Discussion

Now that you have completed this activity, you should have a greater appreciation of the value and versatility of your LMS and why it is the most important tool at your disposal as a librarian. By reflecting on your current practice and identifying different tasks you might use your LMS for in future, you should be able to identify areas for improvement moving forward.

Optional reading: you may be interested in the School Libraries Group (SLG) 'Key Issues' series and specifically their booklet on
'Choosing a Library Management System (LMS)'

In the next section you will be shown some of the different ways digital resources can be accessed and managed, as well as be given tips on how to encourage their usage.

2 Managing digital resources

IT provision and the availability of digital resources are central to the functioning of a modern school library. Although some resources may be free (open source), the majority will incur a fee or be subject to an annual subscription. It's important, therefore, to be aware of renewal dates for digital resources and to consider how often they are used. For example, if a digital resource is hardly or never used, you may find it a better use of funds to invest in a different resource rather than renewing the license for one that is not needed.

Licenses may either have a fixed price or be calculated on the number of students in your school. If you are a long-term customer or if you are purchasing more than one resource from the same provider, you will be in a stronger position to negotiate a discount. You may also wish to use a consortium service such as JCS Online Resources where you can get a discount by encouraging other schools in your area to purchase the same product. It is vital to make your databases as accessible as possible on the school network. However, it is also essential that you ensure the method by which the resources are accessed and used comply with the terms and conditions of your license.
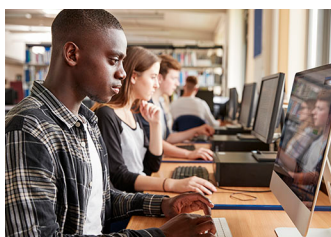
It is usual for digital resources to be accessed by staff and students in more than one way, for example through your school's intranet, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Learning Management System (LMS), or via the Internet. Since the intranet and VLE are secure environments, which require users to login before viewing them, it is possible for students to access the resources you subscribe to without a password using a weblink known as a referring URL. Some LMSs also require users to login in order to view their catalogue, thereby allowing the use of referring URLs. However, most are OPAC: Online Public Access Catalogues. These allow guests to browse the LMS database without logging in. In these instances, as with access to other publicly available sites such as your school website, staff and students would need to be supplied with log-in details for digital resources in order to prevent members of the public gaining unauthorised access to them. Your IT department should be able to help you with this, but having an awareness of how these resources are accessed is essential to comply with the terms and conditions of the license.

To think further about this topic, watch the video below where Sarah discusses various digital resources school libraries can subscribe to, the procurement process, and explains how to implement them.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

Now complete Activity 2 to reflect on your current digital provision and its accessibility. As Sarah commented, making sure databases and resources are visible and accessible is crucial.

Activity 2

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

In the table below, provide three examples of digital resources you subscribe or signpost to, and indicate how you access them.

Table 2 Your digital resources

Digital resource	How it's accessed
Example: Local, public library catalogue	A link on the LMS Homepage
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Now that you have completed this activity, you should be familiar with the resources in your collection and the ways they are accessed (for instance, via your LMS homepage, the intranet, or shared file areas such as your school's VLE). If you reflect on these resources, can you spot any patterns such as an overemphasis on a specific subject area? If so, you may wish to think about whether you need to invest in others areas. Similarly, if you have several paid resources but not any free ones, it may be helpful to consider other open-source resources available to you. By reflecting on your digital resources in these ways, you can ensure that your digital collection is as good as it possibly can be.

In general, digital resources encourage inclusivity, as they allow students to view resources in different formats, for example, by providing the option to change type size, language, or even have the content read aloud or relayed by screen reading software, which can be installed on the computers in your library or on individual student's devices. Digital resources, such as online picture folders, audiobooks and databases, also have the benefit of offering flexibility for independent research and study, and can aid and assist with remote learning. For this reason, it's important that both staff and students are aware of how to use and access different databases and resources. In the next activity you will think further about how your own digital resources support remote learning.

Activity 3

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes*

In the box below, list some digital resources your library provides that support remote learning.

> *Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Demand for digital resources is increasingly driven by the number of devices students have at home and the ease with which they can access the internet remotely. One benefit of this is that students increasingly have the capability to learn remotely to an extent that was not previously possible. The use of digital resources to support learning in this way is, therefore, a growth area which is being driven by stakeholder demand. This has coincided with a shift in the educational sector towards a greater emphasis on blended learning, a hybrid form of teaching which combines traditional classroom learning with the use of digital resources and independent study. Consequently, it is of particular value to consider – as you have done in this activity– how your digital resources support remote learning and how you can make improvements in the future. It might be helpful, therefore, to reflect on what your choices say about the composition of your digital resources provision. If, for example, you don't have many resources that support remote learning, you might wish to consider how you can improve your provision in the future. Similarly, if your digital resources cater to certain stakeholders but not others, you may conclude that there is more that you could be doing to support them moving forward.

Considering your answers in these ways can, therefore, help you identify areas for further investment and highlight ways you can improve your collection. You might consider including the conclusions you draw in your library development plan.

Now that you have learned about the management of digital resources and considered their key role in supporting remote learning, in the next section you will explore how social media and blogs can be used in different ways to engage with a range of library stakeholders and help promote your library, literacy, and reading.

3 Promoting libraries, literacy and reading on social media

Whether marketing your library or promoting reading for pleasure, social media has the potential to widen your library's reach and help you engage with those who may not be traditional library users. Having a presence on different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok can be beneficial as the different platforms tend to attract a different demographic and means you can engage with all of your stakeholders including colleagues, students, parents and school governors. For example, Facebook and Twitter tend to be used more by parents, whilst Instagram has a younger audience and may typically be used more by your students. That being said, there are no set rules. Providing it is used constructively, and in accordance with your school's policies, social media can be used to your advantage. For example, you can promote new books and library campaigns, take advantage of the visual nature of the medium to share photos and videos, and encourage engagement with your library whenever possible.

It's useful when implementing your approach to social media to consider what you want to achieve with your posts. Twitter and Facebook, for example, may be useful for brief announcements and updates. Instagram, on the other hand, is better suited to eye-catching posts where images are the main attraction. Similarly, if you wish to share lengthier and more reflective posts, you might favour a blog. Blogs can give you the space to explore your ideas, free from the constraints of other social media which place such emphasis on immediacy. Sites like Kahoot can also be used to conduct competitions and quizzes, which can help you if you want to encourage engagement and interaction amongst students. Equally, you could use platforms like Zoom to host virtual author visits. Whether you originally post an image on Instagram or an article on your blog, you should also share links to them on your other social media to increase their reach and encourage greater engagement.

No matter which platform you use, you should always strive to make your posts creative, using bold colours and concise language to ensure they stand out from the crowd. After your post has been uploaded, you can then use social media analytics to judge how it is doing. This can help you identify what works when planning future posts or campaigns to promote the library.

Of course, there will always be challenges when using social media and blogs. Policies on the use of phones during school hours may mean that students cannot access their social media accounts and even if they can, access to social media is likely to be blocked or restricted. On top of this, younger students may be unable to access your content due to age limitations, thereby excluding a vital demographic from viewing your posts. On a related note, managing a social media page or blog comes with associated safeguarding responsibilities and you will need to be aware of the relevant school policies surrounding their usage. However, provided you are willing to navigate these barriers, social media can be a powerful tool in the librarian's arsenal.

For more tips and advice on how to use social media and blogs to your advantage, watch the video below. You'll then reflect on your current approach and consider how it can be improved in Activity 4.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 3

Activity 4

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

In the table below, state your position regarding your library's use of social media. Briefly explain why this is so and whether you have any plans to make any changes.

Table 3 Social media use

My library's position regarding the use of social media	Why this is so	Any plans I may have
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*

Now, find two examples of innovative ways other school libraries are using social media. You will be able to do this by searching online.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Looking at other school libraries' social media pages is a brilliant way to improve your own. The ability to view likes, retweets, shares and comments provides you with an excellent way to assess engagement and identify successful strategies that you can implement when creating your own posts. There is always something you can learn from others and staying up-to-date with what your peers are doing is an excellent way to improve your own approach.

4 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 3, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 3 quiz.

5 Summary of Session 3

In this session, you looked at how LMSs are central to effective library management and explored their benefits and range of possible applications. The functionality of a LMS typically corresponds with its cost, so considering the type of school you're in and its requirements may influence how much you wish to invest.

You also examined some of the different ways digital resources can be accessed and their usage encouraged. In addition, you have looked at some of the considerations that may need to be made when purchasing digital resources for your library. Finally, you looked at the potential of social media for promoting reading, as well as some of its limitations and how these might impact your approach. In the next session, you will return to the theme of literacy, considering its importance and discussing strategies for embedding it in your school.

You should now go to Session 4.

Session 4: Creating a reading-rich culture

Introduction

Encouraging students to enjoy reading is central to you and your library's role. Ultimately, the challenge is to create a whole-school mindset where reading is embraced by both staff and students as a rewarding part of their daily lives. To achieve this, as well as procuring and promoting resources, you will need to consider how to tackle negative reading habits and bring about attitudinal change. Through devising and implementing creative and practical strategies, you can then influence students' perceptions so that books, reading and the library are seen in a positive light. It is this positive mindset upon which a reading-rich culture is built.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- appreciate the importance of reading for pleasure
- adopt a range of strategies which help promote reading
- understand how to elevate reading to a special status.

1 Promoting reading for pleasure

There is a plethora of research demonstrating the countless benefits of reading. Studies have shown, for example, that book ownership can reduce stress and have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing (Yulia et al., 2021). Reading has also been linked to the development of empathy and plays a key role in the personal development of children and teenagers (Wilkinson et al., 2020). A report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has also found that fifteen-year-old students from lower socio-economic backgrounds who read frequently scored significantly higher on reading-literacy tests than peers from higher socio-economic backgrounds who had little interest in reading (OECD, 2002). In short, when it comes to educational success, the OECD's findings tell us that reading gives students the opportunity to transcend their socio-economic background.

For many students, a love of reading will most likely stem from engagement with fiction. A report on children's reading choices by The Open University found that 74% of children between the ages of 8 and 11 in UK reported reading fiction compared with just 30% who reported reading non-fiction (Cremin and Coles, 2022). This finding is consistent with survey data amongst older readers, both in the UK and abroad: for example, the Reading Agency reported that 7 in 10 18–24-year-olds in the UK prefer reading fiction (Reading Agency, 2020) whilst a study of university students in Malaysia found that 68% preferred reading fiction compared to just 32% who preferred reading non-fiction (Yusof, 2021). It follows, therefore, that to foster a reading-rich culture where students are instilled with a positive and enthusiastic attitude to reading, a great starting point is encouraging students to read fiction.

Many of the main approaches you can adopt will rely heavily on an element of marketing. For example, it is important to raise awareness of your collection within the library itself, as students will be more predisposed to pick up a book that piques their curiosity if they're already in the building than if they have to seek it out from the other side of the school. To increase the likelihood that they find such a book, you can use posters, leaflets, wall displays and tables displaying books dedicated to different genres – similar to what you might find in a book shop. Labelling books with stickers identifying the genre can be another helpful way of encouraging students to pick up a book and read by signposting them to what interests them.

You should not, however, focus all your efforts within the walls of the library alone; it is also essential to take your library 'out of the library' where you can reach a wider audience and engage with those who visit infrequently or not at all. In addition to posters, displays and networked TV screens around the school, you can also maintain a profile in pupil and staff bulletins, school newsletters, and on your school's website and social media. The more you make your library's presence known, the better you can champion literacy. In the video below, Nick gives some examples of how to promote what you are doing in the library, around the school.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

As we saw in the video, themes and events such as weeks focusing on a specific genre or topic can help to engage students by piquing their curiosity. For example, you may wish to follow Nick's lead and host a 'banned books week' where students are encouraged to read books that have been banned or censored at some point in their history. These could include anything from *Brave New World* and *Oliver Twist* to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Frankenstein*. Not only is the idea of banned knowledge inherently appealing, but it also encourages students to think about the changing nature of attitudes and morals.

Now you have heard how Nick promotes reading for pleasure in and beyond his library, you should reflect on the approach you take in your own library in Activity 1. Then, in the next section, you will explore some of the other strategies you can employ to encourage good reading habits and engagement with your library's offering amongst reluctant readers.

Activity 1

🕐 *Allow approximately 15 minutes*

Note down the ways in which you promote reading for pleasure at present, and also some examples of what you plan to do in the future.

> Some of the ways I currently promote reading for pleasure:Examples of what I plan to do in the future:

. . . .

Discussion

When considering your future plans for promoting reading pleasure, it helps to consider the impact of your endeavours. For example, following an event or promotion, some of the things you can look out for are increases in visitors to your library, in books borrowed, and requests made. This will help you to identify which of your strategies are best for promoting reading for pleasure.

2 Other strategies to encourage reading

As you saw in the previous section, reading is key to helping students gain knowledge, nurture empathy, develop ideas, and understand the world in which we live. While some students need no encouragement to read, others may need to be guided, nudged and coaxed away from distractions such as social media, gaming and socialising. Boys, in particular, read less than girls and are less likely to enjoy reading, a gap which has widened during the COVID-19 pandemic (Clark and Picton, 2021; Department for Education, 2012). It is essential, therefore, to adopt strategies that encourage students, especially those who are reluctant readers, to develop good reading habits, which they can sustain. Previously, you considered how marketing in your library and around your school can help you achieve this. It is key, however, to recognise that marketing is not the only way you can encourage reading. There are various other strategies you may wish to adopt which can be implemented in various ways.

You may wish to approach matters from a broad perspective, ensuring your library stocks an inclusive and diverse range of books which allows all your library's users to find something they enjoy. Alternatively, you may wish to adopt more focused methods, such as group work, structured reading schemes, author visits, or static displays. While some of these suggestions might be appropriate to use with all the students in your school, there may be some which are more suited to a particular demographic of student. Therefore, before implementing any of them you should identify the strategies that best suit you and your school's needs. For example, according to he National Literacy Trust , boys were more likely than girls to report that listening to audiobooks had increased their interest in reading with more than 1 in 2 agreeing with the statement (Clark and Picton, 2020). Therefore, if you work in an all-boys school, placing an emphasis on audiobooks may be a useful way of encouraging the development of a reading-rich culture.

Getting to know students, their reading ability, and what motivates and interests them can also help you encourage reading for pleasure as you will be better able to direct students to resources which suit them. For example, for those with a low reading-age but a higher interest-age, using young adult books with limited vocabulary will be beneficial. Likewise, directing students with English as a Second Language (EASL) to a graphic version of a story can be a great way to maintain their engagement.

For students who are best motivated by rewards, a points-based reading scheme may be best suited. Reading schemes that allocate reading levels can be particularly helpful for helping students quickly and easily find books themselves, preventing them from walking around the library aimlessly or asking you to choose for them. Clearly marking the reading level can also help students pick books appropriate to their needs, rather than choosing books which may discourage them or make them feel stigmatised. Similarly, providing a set reading list can be a really helpful way of directing students who are overwhelmed by choice to books they might enjoy. Reading lists needn't just include fiction books intended to be read in students' spare time. They can also include useful subject-related content such as lists of useful websites, non-fiction books, DVDs and videos, as well as links to areas on your LMS, to exemplar work, and to research guides.

In the video below, Nick gives some examples of how he has encouraged reading at his school and offers some tips and advice based on his approach. After you have watched video, complete the activity to reflect on your current strategies and assess their strengths.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

Session 4: Creating a reading-rich culture
2 Other strategies to encourage reading
10/01/23

Activity 2

🕐 *Allow approximately 15 minutes*

Describe two of your most successful reading strategies. Why do you think these strategies are successful? Then think about any other strategies you could employ.

> *Provide your answer...*

....

Discussion

Your answer to this question will be personal to you. There are no right or wrong answers to this task, but one strategy you might choose to employ is to use pupil review bookmarks. These are custom made bookmarks which are given to students when a book is issued. After completing the book, students are encouraged to shade-in a star rating, write a brief comment about the book, and add their name. The bookmark is then inserted into the book before being returned to the shelf. This, in turn, serves to influence other students when browsing the shelves.

Some other initiatives you might consider adopting include Drop Everything and Read (D. E.A.R.), buddy schemes with older students, and the use of celebrity reading-role-models to help children find pleasure in reading. Making the most of events such as World Book Day and linking reading events to important social matters such as Black History Month and Pride can also help to promote books that students might otherwise not come across. Furthermore, schemes such the Oxford Reading Tree and Accelerated Reader are also useful as they provide an incremental framework that contributes to raising students' reading ages and confidence in their reading ability. Getting all staff on board with your initiatives can help to build a whole school environment which supports reading for pleasure.

You may wish to set out new initiatives you plan to adopt in your library development plan. When doing so, it can also be helpful to consider any current or previous strategies you may have adopted and assess their success. To get you thinking about how you might approach this attempt the activity below.

Activity 3

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes*

If applicable, are there any strategies you have tried previously which have not had the intended outcome? If so, why do you think that was?

Provide your answer...

3 Elevating reading to a special status

It is understandable if students, amid the expectation of daily reading in lessons, occasionally perceive the activity in a negative way. However, by elevating it to a special status – that is to say, encouraging students to view the activity in a new exciting light – you can generate interest and help create a reading-rich culture in your school. Author events are a prime example of how to stimulate such interest in books, especially amongst younger readers, many of whom may never have encountered anyone famous before. Although these events may be infrequent, perhaps taking place just twice a year, they never fail to create a buzz throughout the year groups present.

Throughout the rest of the year, you may wish to focus your efforts on projects of a smaller scale. For example, you can share authors' blogs, podcasts, or YouTube interviews, all of which offer quick and inexpensive ways of lending books a bit of celebrity cachet. In the same way, hosting themed library events to complement book launches or using signed books as competition prizes all help make reading that little bit more special. You may even wish to promote books that have been adapted into movies or TV shows, taking advantage of their popularity and spotting trends amongst your students. Associating books with their film and TV counterparts reminds children that reading is not a chore, but an activity which has the potential to open up new worlds of their imagination.

To think more about this topic, watch the video below where Nick offers further thoughts on how you can give reading a special status throughout your school. After you have done this, complete the activity, reflecting on some of the events you have held in your library and how they have elevated the status of reading.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 3

Activity 4

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Consider some of the events you have arranged to promote your library and its collections.

Provide your answer...

Now that you have chosen some examples, pick one to evaluate. For example, was it a success? If so, why? If not, why not? Would you do anything differently next time?

Provide your answer...

4 This session's quiz

It's now time to take the Session 4 badge quiz. It's similar to previous quizzes but this time, instead of answering five questions, there will be 15.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 4 compulsory badge quiz.

Remember, this quiz counts towards your badge. If you're not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

5 Summary of Session 4

In this session, you have explored the importance of reading for pleasure and how you can foster a reading-rich culture in your school. In particular, you have considered the importance of fiction as a gateway to reading enjoyment and seen some of the ways you can use marketing and promotion to encourage reading. You have also thought about other strategies you can adopt to further this aim such as reading schemes and a considered approach to collection management, both of which can help drive engagement with your library.

Continuing on a similar theme, you also explored the importance of elevating reading to a special status, distinguishing it from schoolwork, and dispelling negative associations in students' minds. This can be achieved through a variety of means such as competitions and special events which create a buzz throughout school, and book clubs structured around students' own interests.

In the next session, you will further develop these themes discovering how creatively marketing your library's offering, enlisting role models to your cause, and encouraging non-fiction reading can all help you embed literacy in your school.

You are now halfway through the course. The Open University would really appreciate your feedback and suggestions for future improvement in our optional end-of-course survey, which you will also have an opportunity to complete at the end of Session 8. Participation will be completely confidential and we will not pass on your details to others.

You should now go to Session 5.

Session 5: Embedding literacy in your school

Introduction

Literacy is, in the words of the National Literacy Trust, 'the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world' (2017). Reading plays a particularly key role in the development of these skills: by being exposed to new words, ideas and concepts, reading encourages you to develop your vocabulary, think creatively and improve your comprehension. One study which analysed data from 370,000 UK secondary students found a significant link between reading ability and achievement in all GCSEs subjects including maths and science (GL Assessment, 2020). Literacy rates have also been shown to positively correlate with greater earnings and employability (Demos, 2018). The OECD has even gone so far as to argue that literacy is a *prerequisite* for achievement in life (OECD, 2002).

Although libraries support literacy in all its forms, it is with reading that librarians have an opportunity to make a real difference. Reading falls into two areas: academic study and reading for pleasure, both of which are central to your role. When building your academic collection, resources will be influenced by the curriculum and recommendations made by your teaching colleagues. Reading for pleasure is where you will have greater freedom to exercise control and demonstrate an awareness of your students' preferences, current trends, new releases and emerging authors. However, whether supporting academic study or reading for pleasure, your library is key to embedding literacy in your school.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- recognise the importance of literacy and the library's role in embedding it in your school
- appreciate how marketing and role models can be used to promote your resources, encourage reading and embed literacy in your school
- understand the role of non-fiction in the development of literacy and how teachers can help you create subject-specific resources which support the curriculum.

1 Marketing your library's offering to embed literacy

In the previous session, you considered the benefits of reading for pleasure. As fiction plays a particularly key role in fostering reading for pleasure and, consequently, literacy, you explored various ways in which fiction books can be promoted in your school. However, although fiction acts as a gateway to literacy, your library will also contain various other resources that have the potential to enrich students' studies and further

develop their literacy skills. It's important, therefore, to focus attention in your marketing on the other benefits your library offers, for example, its digital resources, non-fiction collection, and other educational resources. By adopting a holistic approach to marketing that goes beyond just your latest fiction releases, you can maximise engagement with the different aspects of your library provision and encourage the development of literacy in your school. For this reason, this section will return to the topic of marketing, thinking in broader terms about the ways it can be used in your library to promote resources which help embed literacy in your school.

To promote your library and embed literacy, you don't have to be an expert in marketing, nor must your initiatives and campaigns take up lots of time, materials and money. All that matters is that you keep your ideas fresh and ensure reading is actively encouraged, thereby helping to promote literacy. Making your library's presence known throughout the school can entice students and encourage them to explore the wealth of opportunities it contains. Although some will need little encouragement to take full advantage of what your library has to offer, many students in your school may be reluctant to read or make full use of the library. Therefore, you must champion your library's offering and engage stakeholders through creative marketing, for example, by creating reading lists, customised bookmarks, posters and displays, or even encouraging students to put brief book reviews on a feedback wall using sticky notes. You shouldn't be shy about explicitly marketing the importance of literacy and the benefits of reading.

As you saw in the previous session, it's good to run week-long book campaigns throughout the year. These can be themed around genres or cultural events such as Black History Month, Women's History Month, or major sporting events such as the Olympics. During these weeks, you can encourage students to engage with your offering by promoting relevant books, hosting events such as library readings and author visits, or even sharing podcasts and encouraging form tutors to get involved. Campaigns such as these are a particularly useful way to encourage students to explore non-fiction resources. As you will see later in this session, non-fiction books are equally key to literacy as they expose students to new concepts and ways of interpreting the world around them.

Reminding students of the wealth of digital resources available to assist their studies by placing posters near computers or in classrooms is a particularly helpful way of encouraging them to take advantage of your resources. It also shows that the library is not just a place for issuing and returning books, but an environment conducive to learning and the development of literacy.

You can also draw attention to new books and resources to promote literacy. By marketing your new resources, you can demonstrate that your library is dynamic, keeping up to date with current trends and responding to students' interests. In this respect, it can be helpful to advertise new books which were requested by students, or put stickers on their cover saying who requested them. This can really emphasise to students that the library is a place which strives to meet their needs and support their interests.

However, it is not only new resources and collections you should actively promote. Where some books or resources have fallen through the cracks, innovative marketing and novel techniques can be used to generate interest and give them a new lease of life. This could

involve a 'Book in a Jar' – a glass jar that contains objects related to a book's storyline or title. You can encourage students to create them by offering prizes such as book vouchers to those whose clues lead to the most correct guesses. Other initiatives could include creating a vending machine for books or simply concealing their covers and encouraging children to choose one at random. Initiatives like these invite students to connect with books that they might not have otherwise explored and is an subtle way of promoting literacy. Once you put your mind to it, the possibilities are endless. In the video below, Sarah discusses her own approach to marketing and offers tips on how you can develop your own.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1

As Sarah mentioned in the video, incentives and rewards can be a helpful way to motivate students. However, is it important to be mindful that such schemes may de-motivate less established readers if they think they have no chance of completing the task or if a leaderboard is displayed. Equally some students may just read to gain points rather than to form a reading habit. It is therefore important to always combine any promotional schemes with verbal and written praise and encouragement.

Having listened to Sarah's suggestions on how to market your library complete Activity 1. This activity will get you to consider how you currently market your library's offering and think about the steps you have already taken to develop a reading-rich culture.

Activity 1

🕐 *Allow approximately 15 minutes*

How much time do you devote to marketing your library and its resources?

Interactive content is not available in this format.

Now, provide an example of how you have marketed your library's offering to each of the following target audiences.

Table 1 Marketing your library to different target audiences

Students	*Provide your answer...*
Colleagues	*Provide your answer...*
Parents	*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Now that you have completed this activity, consider whether you have favoured one target audience more than another? If so, is there a benefit to this? Could you perhaps be doing more to market your offering to a wider range of audiences?

Having a marketing strategy which targets students, parents and colleagues is desirable and although students are naturally your key audience, it might be advantageous to also involve parents and colleagues as they can endorse your message.

Now have a go at Activity 2.

Activity 2

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes*

How do you help to embed the reading aspect of literacy throughout your school?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Your answer to this question will be personal to you. There are no right or wrong answers to this activity, but below are some examples of the ways you may have contributed to literacy across your school:

- liaising with the literacy co-ordinator
- liaising with the heads of departments
- liaising with the head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- liaising with the admissions officer to ensure you cater for any students in the incoming cohort for whom English is a second language.

Organising author visits can be a really effective way of engaging your students and helping them to develop a love of reading. For example, by recounting their career, an author may be able to inspire and raise the aspirations of the students in the audience. This power of role models to influence behaviour and inspire students is a theme you will explore further in the next section where you will consider how to take advantage of the popularity of certain teachers and celebrities to help promote and champion reading.

2 Reading role models

Some students need persuading to pick up a book and read. So far in Sessions 4 and 5, you have considered some of the strategies you can employ to encourage reading and literacy in your school. In this section, you will focus on one strategy in particular, namely, the enlistment of role models to your cause. Positive role models have the power to influence, motivate and inspire and as such, they can help elevate the status of reading. This makes them valuable assets in your mission to create a reading-rich culture in your school.

The use of role models is especially important for boys, particularly those from single-parent households. Not only are single-parent households more likely to face economic hardship (IFS, 2022, pp. 41–3), but according to recent data, 88% are headed by a woman (ONS, 2021). This is significant, as for many boys reading is seen as a feminine activity (Cho, 2020). Even for boys with fathers in the household, research has shown that those whose fathers don't read to them are significantly less likely to read for pleasure than those whose fathers read to them for 30 minutes a day (Mullan, 2010). However, where fathers do indeed read, the positive impact on the child actually increases as the child gets older (Toivonen, 2018). Such is the transformative potential of male role-models that in 2012, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Literacy recommended that weekly support from a male reading role-model should be essential for all school boys (National Literacy Trust, 2012). An acknowledgement of socio-economic status is, therefore, crucial to understanding and addressing the inequalities of male reading.

Celebrity role models can be particularly useful to librarians as their reading habits can be something students look up to and try to emulate. Some celebrities such as Zoella and Reese Witherspoon even have their own book clubs, which can be a useful tool for encouraging students to read. This trend of sharing what you read is also popular amongst YouTubers and social media influencers on Instagram, many of whom may already be familiar to students in your school. Footballers can also make useful reading champions. Marcus Rashford's Book Club is worthy of special note for teenagers; and for younger students there are plenty of football-related reading resources on the Premier League Primary Stars website.

Equally, including books in your collection that have been written by celebrities can draw students in, whilst posters displaying their favourite books can be used as both a talking point and a source of inspiration. Even a quick search on the internet can provide you with endless quotes and inspiration from famous people, which you can use to create bookmarks and posters to engage reluctant readers. Collectively, these have the potential to make a huge contribution to raising literacy.

You needn't stop at celebrities though; you can readily find reading champions within the walls of your own school. By identifying who's highly regarded in your school's community and associating them with reading, you can exploit their appeal to promote your library and its resources. Teachers who are held in high esteem, for example, can infect others with their love of books, offering book recommendations, writing book reviews and inspiring students to broaden their reading. It is especially useful to use male role models who have enormous potential to engage boys who are reluctant to read. Whether they're featured reading a book in your poster campaigns or invited to read book excerpts in your library during breaks, popular teachers are a valuable commodity you should routinely take advantage of.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

As well as celebrities and teachers, peers can also be excellent reading role models, as Nick suggested in Video 2. Sports captains and students with special educational needs, for example, can help to build a whole community ethos around reading and using the library. Do you have any role models in your school?

Activity 3

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes*

Provide two examples of potential reading role models you can use in your school. Why have you chosen them?

Provide your answer...

....

Discussion

There are no right or wrong answers to this task, but below are two examples of role models you may have chosen.

- Colleagues' partners who do jobs all students can relate to. Getting a fireman, police officer, nurse or farmer, for example, to discuss their reading habits and its importance to their jobs, provides students with real life context for reading beyond school.
- A local celebrity, for example a politician, successful business person, or athlete. Visits by celebrities, no matter how minor, will always cause a stir so getting them to endorse reading can change attitudes and give books wider appeal.

In the next section, you will discuss the importance of promoting non-fiction resources, as well as look at how working collaboratively with colleagues can ensure that your collection management is relevant, supports the curriculum and helps satisfy students' intellectual curiosity.

3 Promoting non-fiction and subject-specific reading

For lots of teenagers, reading for pleasure is a concept associated with fiction rather than non-fiction. Indeed, it may not even occur to many of them that reading non-fiction has the potential to be enjoyable. Instead, the idea of reading around a subject can seem little different from doing extra homework. However, doing so can help broaden student's knowledge and give them a deeper appreciation for their subject. It is therefore important that as a librarian you encourage students to engage with non-fiction and extra-curricular reading as much as possible, helping them to see it not as a chore, but an opportunity to satisfy their curiosity and push the boundaries of their knowledge. To repurpose a metaphor by Cressida Cowell, the author of the *How to Train Your Dragon* series, we should be aiming for students to view non-fiction books as sweets rather than brussels sprouts (Cowell, 2018). By encouraging students to engage with reading in this way, you can help them develop lasting habits which will stand them in good stead for success in later life.

It's important to recognise that many students will already engage daily with non-fiction content online so encouraging them to make a connection between their digital reading and the physical books in your library can help make non-fiction books less daunting. However, online reading should still be encouraged as much as possible, as students who read extensively online, whether that be emails, chat messengers, the news, or online discussions 'are generally more proficient readers than students who do little online reading' (OECD, 2010, p. 12). Recent studies have also shown that reading e-books supports children's vocabulary, spelling, and reading comprehension skills, and is just as effective in the development of literacy as reading traditional print books (López-Escribano et al., 2021)

Additional resources

If you are interested in looking at the differing roles of digital and physical books in encouraging reading for pleasure you may find the following OpenLearn badged course of use: *Developing Reading for Pleasure: engaging young readers*

For students who struggle to devote their attention to books, non-fiction and reference books are perfect for dipping in and out of. Encouraging an avid sports fan to pick up a non-fiction book about the Olympics, for example, can act as a gateway to further reading. Building a collection of books and resources which not only reflects the subjects and topics taught in your school, but also evokes curiosity amongst students is, therefore, an important part of your job as a librarian.

Having a pupil suggestion box, making notes of any informal conversations of note, and liaising with the student council, are all ways you can maximise the likelihood that your resources reflect what students want. However, it is crucial that your collection is primarily

influenced by the curriculum. As we discussed previously in Session 1, it is, therefore, particularly beneficial for you to develop close working relationships with your colleagues who can guide you to useful resources and help you decide which to invest in. These resources might support specific topics taught within the classroom or provide broader subject-related materials to aid students' research and wider reading. Whether it's a simple email, an informal conversation, a scheduled meeting or a formal presentation, liaising with colleagues from across the school can only have a positive influence on your library and its contribution to teaching and learning. Developing these close working relationships can be symbiotic in providing opportunities for you to find new and helpful resources for your colleagues.

To explore this subject further, watch the video below where Sarah discusses the ways you can maintain a high profile amongst your colleagues and identify opportunities for collaboration. After you have done this, complete the activity, reflecting on your current approach to collaborative collection management.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 3

Attending training days, assemblies and departmental meetings are a good way to develop a high profile in your school community. Approaching and building a relationship with the school governor who is responsible for the library can also help to ensure your position is well represented in decision-making.

Activity 4

🕒 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

In the table below, note down two colleagues you liaise with and how they have influenced which resources you have invested in.

Table 2 Influence of colleagues on resources

Colleague	Influence on resources invested in
EXAMPLE: Admissions officer	Books in foreign languages for students with English as their second language
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*

Now that you have completed Table 2, note down two colleagues you don't yet interact with and explain why it would be beneficial to do so.

Table 3 Colleagues you haven't interacted with before

Colleague	Benefit
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*
Provide your answer...	*Provide your answer...*

Session 5: Embedding literacy in your school
4 This session's quiz
10/01/23

4 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 5, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 5 quiz.

5 Summary of Session 5

In this session, you have a gained an understanding of the library's major contribution towards literacy and considered how it can be embedded in your school through a variety of methods, both inside and outside the library. In particular, marketing your resources is key to maintaining your library's profile and championing reading. This can be achieved through a variety of means including posters, assemblies, and displays around school. Author visits, reading schemes, and the promotion of topical or themed books are also brilliant ways to encourage good reading habits and engagement with your library's offering, especially amongst reluctant readers.

In this session, you have also examined the power of role models such as celebrities, respected teachers and popular students to influence behaviour. This is something you can harness to encourage good reading habits in your school, particularly amongst those who are more likely to be reluctant readers, for example, teenage boys. Finally, you explored the crucial importance of non-fiction resources, which can help support the curriculum, advance learning and embed literacy in your school.

In the next session, you will learn how to encourage independent learning, raise awareness of plagiarism, and teach students how to navigate both physical and digital resources.

You should now go to Session 6.

Session 6: Independent study and information literacy

Introduction

Having the ability to seek, evaluate and use information effectively, as well as a capacity for carrying out self-directed study, are all valuable life skills. Although your students will be accustomed to undertaking some form of independent study such as homework, they may not be as familiar with the ability to learn for themselves. To encourage greater independence, you can inspire your students to be self-motivated and develop their concentration, organise their work and prioritise their time. By helping them gain control over their studies in ways such as these, you can exercise an important influence over the intellectual development of your students.

Although students will be familiar with using IT to conduct research, the concept of Information Literacy (IL) may be new to them. However, knowing how to locate and identify the most appropriate information — what to search for, what resources to use, how to evaluate information, etc. — plays an essential role in both academic and professional success. This is also true of daily life where the skills associated with information literacy are vital. For example, as the information landscape rapidly changes in relation to fake news and social media, being able to recognise the integrity of resources and discern truth from falsehood is an important skill to have.

The extent to which you can shape students' understanding of these life skills will depend on your role in your school. However, whether you contribute to lessons, help students with research and homework, or produce leaflets and displays, having a personal understanding of information literacy can only be an advantage.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- familiarise students with the skills necessary to identify and retrieve information
- support students in their independent learning
- teach students about plagiarism and basic referencing techniques.

1 Identifying and retrieving information

To begin this section, listen to Nick in Video 1 talk about information literacy as an important life skill, which you as a librarian can help to develop in your students.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

Although the internet now means that there is wealth of information available at our fingertips at all times of the day, it is important that users are proficient and effective in finding the information that they want. To do this, as Nick suggested, students need a good vocabulary. Knowing where to source information from is another key component of information literacy. To help with this, people and institutions typically seek to organise and order information. Internet search engines, for example, 'crawl' the web for new pages, analysing their content, and adding them to their searchable indexes, which allows users to locate information using keywords and phrases. Similarly, books are indexed to allow users to find specific passages or themes, whilst libraries categorise their books into different classifications. Although the sophistication and scope of different ordering methods may vary, what they all have in common is the aim of making the recovery of information easier, helping users to identify connections and make sense of information that would otherwise be overwhelming.

To be able to take full advantage of your library, students will, therefore, benefit from understanding how its resources are classified. By giving them the appropriate knowledge for navigating your library and by teaching them the skills they need to use an index or select the appropriate keywords for searching online, you will equip them with the skills necessary to identify and retrieve information effectively. For example, in schools or smaller libraries, fiction is often simply shelved in alphabetical order or by genre. When organising larger collections, particularly non-fiction, librarians often use more sophisticated classification systems, the most common being the Dewey Decimal System. This Dewey Decimal system is used in schools, universities and public libraries worldwide and categorises subjects into ten broad groups shown in Box 1.

The Dewey Decimal System

000 – Computer science, information and general works
100 – Philosophy and psychology
200 – Religion
300 – Social sciences
400 – Language

500 – Science
600 – Technology
700 – Arts and recreation
800 – Literature
900 – History and geography

These groups are then sub-divided into more specific categories which are, in turn, sometimes followed by the first three letters of the author's surname. This group of numbers and letters is known as a 'call number' and allows library users to locate books with precision.

To understand how this works in practice, take a look at the following two examples:

- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen is a work of 'literature' (800). A subdivision of 'literature' is 'English literature' (820). Within 'English literature' is 'English fiction' (823). This is refined further by period: since *Pride and Prejudice* is a work of 'early 19th century fiction' (823.7) you can deduce that *Pride and Prejudice's* full call number would be 823.7AUS.
- *The Roman Revolution* by Ronald Syme is a work of 'history' (900). A subdivision of 'history' is 'ancient history' (930). Within 'ancient history' is the classification 'Italian Peninsula and adjacent territories to 467AD' (937). Since the Roman Revolution falls within the period 'Civil strife, 146–31BC'(937.05) you can deduce that the Roman Revolution's full call number is 937.05SYM.

As well as having a knowledge of how the library resources are classified, students should also be encouraged to think about how to navigate digital resources. They can be taught about these matters through the use of leaflets, posters, or guides on shared file areas such as the school's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Alternatively, if a class in your school has an upcoming project where they would benefit from having an understanding of handling resources, you may choose to take part in a lesson where you can engage with students directly. Whichever way you approach it, familiarising students with these skills will help them in their studies and equip them with lasting knowledge for life beyond the classroom.

Of particular use are Boolean searches. By using Boolean operators in their searches ('AND', 'OR, and 'NOT'), students can refine their results and locate information more efficiently. For example, the search 'cats AND dogs' would only bring up results that mentions both search terms. Similarly, when using Google, putting quotation marks around your search term (e.g. "cats and dogs") will only bring up results that contain that exact same wording. Other useful ways of refining searches include the use of keywords, specifying the date so only the most recent articles are retrieved, or including the domain name so only content published by a specific source is returned. For further tips on how to improve search results,
Google has put together a handy guide which you can access here.

Activity 1

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes*

How confident do you feel personally about information literacy?

Interactive content is not available in this format.

Now, irrespective of how you rated your level of confidence, identify one way in which you can further develop your knowledge and skills and in this subject.

Provide your answer...

Irrespective of your perceived level of confidence, one way you can develop your knowledge of information literacy is by engaging with professional library organsiations. In particular, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) has an Information Literacy Group which caters to those of all confidence levels by organising meetings, seminars and training events; maintaining the Information Literacy website; publishing the Journal of Information Literacy (JIL); as well as organising the Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC). More recently, CILIP and the Information Literacy Group have also co-sponsored the creation of the Media and Information Literacy Alliance (MILA), which aims to champion media and information literacy in the UK.

In the next section, you will explore the related theme of independent learning and discuss how it can be encouraged amongst your students.

2 Supporting independent learning

In the previous section, you looked at the importance of teaching students to navigate and retrieve information. This ability to 'search and find' is just one component of information literacy. Other key elements include 'subject-specific learning', where students are equipped with the skills appropriate to their subjects of study, and 'enquiry-based learning', a student-led form of education where students are encouraged to adopt an active and independent approach to their studies. These aspects of information literacy all have complementary roles to play in students' educational achievement. For example, the ability of students to 'search and find' appropriate information efficiently is essential if they are to learn independently. This skill, in turn, is crucial to future success: by adopting an active approach to work, as well as learning to analyse and synthesise information in a sophisticated way, a student will develop skills which are highly valued by employers and of great use in daily life. The ability to learn independently also enables students to satisfy their intellectual curiosity, thereby offering great potential for personal enrichment.

As librarians, you can help students develop the skill set necessary for independent learning by encouraging them to adopt a strategic approach when approaching research. Whether using the internet or traditional resources such as books and journals, drafting a search plan, identifying sources of information, and carefully considering keywords or terms, such as the subject, title or author of the resource, can all help guide students towards a successful outcome. They may also find it profitable to maintain a search record and structured notes. By introducing them to these practices, you will enhance their ability to undertake effective research and, consequently, prepare them to approach learning independently.

For further tips and ideas about how to encourage independent learning amongst your students, watch the video below. Then, complete Activity 2, reflecting on the current habits of your students.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 2

Activity 2

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Indicate whether or not your students are familiar with the examples of independent learning that appear in the table below.

For those practices that you've marked as unfamiliar, how do you think you could help students become more familiar? What activities could you set up?

Table 1 Students' familiarity with independent learning practices

Students who use my library				How you could help students become more familiar
Practice	**Familiar**	**Unfamiliar**	**Unsure**	
Devising a search plan/ strategy	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Identifying information sources	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Considering keywords, terms and phrases	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Evaluating and selecting results	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*
Keeping a diary to record sources and results	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*

Discussion

Now that you have completed the activity, consider whether there are any areas for improvement. If there are practices which you feel your students are unfamiliar with, you can raise awareness through leaflets, posters, and study guides. Alternatively, you could adopt a more targeted approach and contribute to lessons where you can engage directly with students and answer their questions.

So far in this session, you have seen how effective research not only involves identifying relevant sources of information, it also includes using that information appropriately. This includes referencing correctly. Therefore, in the next section, you will focus on the concepts of plagiarism and citation and look at ways to educate students on the importance of academic integrity.

3 Plagiarism and basic referencing techniques

When students find information relevant to their work, they may not appreciate the necessity of acknowledging their sources. By providing references, readers can assess the foundations upon which the work is built. This enables them to judge the arguments, determine which thoughts are original, and explore the topic in greater depth. Most crucially, it acts as a deterrent against plagiarism and the theft of ideas.
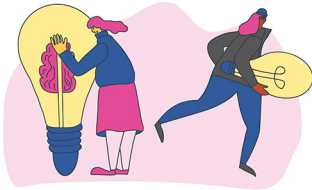
Whether intentional or not, a failure to cite your sources can be considered a form of intellectual dishonesty. This can have serious real-life consequences. For example, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), the organisation which represents the eight largest examining bodies in the UK, considers plagiarism a form of malpractice. In the most serious cases, the awarding body reserves the right to bar students from entering exams for a set period of time. Similarly, students applying to University will find that their personal statements are scanned by plagiarism detection software. Once at university, students found guilty of plagiarism can even be expelled from their courses.

It's therefore prudent to familiarise students with the concepts of plagiarism and referencing whilst at school. Although plagiarism – the act of passing other's work off as one's own – is a concept which can be easily be explained, the methods of citation will require more in-depth instruction.

There are several main ways to reference information. The most popular method used in UK universities is the Harvard style (Caulfield, 2022), but other common examples include the Modern Language Association (MLA) style, the American Psychological Association (APA) style, and the Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA) style. Whichever method is used, students should recognise that the source of their information, be it an idea, image or direct quotation, must be cited, even if it's been paraphrased. To do otherwise is plagiarism. Although younger students don't need to be taught how to cite and reference, it's still wise to stress the principle of not passing others' work off as your own. To this end, it may be helpful to encourage teachers of as many subjects as possible to include references in their handouts and presentations. In turn, teachers could get their students to list the books and websites they've used at the end of their own work. You may also wish to go a step further and collaborate with staff on an academic integrity policy which can be used to promote referencing throughout the school.

For older students, it may be instructive to look at examples of real academic citation, consult university plagiarism guides, assess their peers' work, or complete activities where they have to identify which elements of a text should be referenced.

To think further about this topic, watch the video below where Sarah discusses the importance of acknowledging sources and sets out strategies for educating students about plagiarism.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 3

Activity 3

🕐 *Allow approximately 25 minutes*

How confident do you feel about avoiding plagiarism yourself and explain why you made that choice. Do you think there's room for improvement? If so, how?

> Interactive content is not available in this format.
>
>

Now indicate whether or not your students are familiar with the concepts that appear in the below.

Table 2 Familiarity with important concepts

Practice	Familiar	Unfamiliar	Unsure
Plagiarism	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*	*Provide your answer...*

| How to cite | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |

| How to reference | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* | *Provide your answer...* |

If you have answered 'Unfamiliar' or 'Unsure' to any of the practices above, what methods or activities could you use to get your students to feel more confident? As you saw earlier in the section, for example, you could encourage younger students to list websites they use in their homework. Likewise, could any of the methods Sarah suggested be useful to you?

Table 3 Activities to encourage students to feel more confident on referencing practices

Practice	Methods/activities
Plagiarism	*Provide your answer...*
How to cite	*Provide your answer...*
How to reference	*Provide your answer...*

4 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 6, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

[Session 6 quiz](#).

5 Summary of Session 6

In this session, you have looked at the significance of fostering information literacy in a world where students have greater access to information than ever before. Whether teaching them about your library's classification system or how to use the internet for research, furnishing students with the skills necessary to navigate, retrieve, and critically assess information has never been more important.

This session also looked at how to support independent learning and reasoning amongst students. For example, this may involve providing students with a template for approaching research methodically and analytically. Finally, you discussed the importance of acknowledging one's sources, the potential consequences of plagiarism, and some of the ways in which you can encourage best practices amongst students of all ages.

In the next session, you will explore the theme of advocacy. In particular, you will learn why it is important, how you can advocate for your own library, and more broadly, how networking and awareness of new developments in the field can make you a better advocate for the profession as a whole.

You should now go to Session 7.

Session 7: Championing the library

Introduction

In previous sessions, you have looked at how, as a school librarian, it is beneficial to promote your library and embed literacy through marketing and public relations. This can raise the profile of your library throughout the school and remind both colleagues and students of your offering and the work you do. More widely, you should also look to promote the library profession as a whole, as this provides support to other librarians who often work alone or in small teams.

By gaining membership of professional organisations such as CILIP, attending events, and following blogs or social media profiles, you will be able to network with fellow librarians and keep abreast of developments in the field. These organisations will, in turn, promote the benefits of libraries on your behalf through professional events and campaigns, such as the Great School Libraries campaign.

To raise your libraries profile and the library profession as a whole, the professional organisation of which you are a member may send representatives to a conference targeted at, for example, teachers; whether this involves manning stands in the main conference area or taking part in fringe events, these representatives can advocate for the profession in settings librarians may not ordinarily find themselves in. In turn, you yourself can give back by speaking at conferences, serving on committees, writing articles, or delivering training to fellow librarians and colleagues within your school. These present the perfect opportunity to develop professionally and share your ideas amongst your peers.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- understand why championing the library is important and how it can help you establish and sustain your library's goals
- develop effective channels of communication
- keep abreast of new developments in the library sector and know where to find support.

1 Raising your library's profile

Raising your library's profile is something that brings numerous benefits. In Session 4, you looked at how everything from posters and displays to social media and author events have a role to play in encouraging students to read. Promoting the library is not only beneficial to your students though; it is beneficial for you as a librarian as it helps to give you the recognition you deserve by enlightening parents and the wider school community

about the work you do. It also serves as a reminder that your library is not just a place that houses books, but rather a facility fully integrated into the teaching and learning process. This can help you to transform the image of a librarian to one of dynamism and digital expertise. It's essential, therefore, that you actively find practical ways to lend your library a bold voice, which may at times involve questioning the status quo.

In Session 1, you looked at how a library development plan can help you to set out your vision for the library that aligns with your school's mission statement. To expand on this, you could, in collaboration with your manager, devise a strategy to raise the profile of your library and generate awareness of the benefits it offers to the entire school community. For example, creating a strong library brand, contributing to staff training days, and hosting library events will all ensure you raise the profile of your library. Whatever you do, being explicit about your achievements and your integral role in the school will help your library fulfil its potential. It will also help you achieve the goals you've set out in your library development plan, for example embedding literacy in your school or increasing usage of digital resources to support blended learning.

To think further about this theme, watch the video below where Sarah explores the benefits of championing your library. After this, consider how you currently promote your library and the work you do, and then complete Activity 1. Then, in the next section, you will discuss how developing effective channels of communication can help increase the impact of your library advocacy.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 1

Activity 1

⏱ *Allow approximately 15 minutes*

In the box below provide three examples of ways you will advocate for your library and the wider profession. Provide a brief explanation of the benefits each brings.

> *Provide your answer...*
>
> ....
>
> **Discussion**
>
> There are no right or wrong answers to this task, but below are some suggestions which you might have considered:
>
> - Maintain a presence at parents' evenings – maintaining a presence at parents' evening allows you to engage with parents in person and showcase the range of benefits your library can offer their children.
> - Offer to support and work with other librarians in your local area – by supporting and working with other librarians in your area, you can exchange ideas, develop your personal and professional skills, and establish beneficial working-relationships with your peers. Even if you are relatively new to the profession, what you have learnt can be of benefit to others. As you develop as a librarian and gain more knowledge, your role can even develop into that of mentor.
> - Contribute to school newsletters – school newsletters are an opportunity for you to provide updates to staff, students, and parents, and be explicit about the library's key importance in the educational process.

2 Developing effective channels of communication

Advocating for your library will inevitably involve an element of crossover with other work you do. Your blog, social media, website, or newsletter, as well as the activity you do around promoting books and events, will implicitly champion your library. However, you can take your advocacy to the next level by engaging more directly with your stakeholders and developing effective channels of communication. For example, you can further your library's cause by liaising with colleagues, attending departmental meetings, and delivering school assemblies. Similarly, you may wish to engage with the student council, attend parents' evenings, and provide the governing body and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with regular library reports. If no member of the governing body has been assigned responsibility for the library, you could even request that it be adopted as part of their remit. Your reports could then be included at the governing body's meetings, which would ensure your interests are represented at the highest levels in your school. Putting your claims in writing can maximise impact and awareness, but you should strive to support them with evidence wherever possible, for example, through data from your LMS. It is important that your reports link to the goals set out in your library development plan and the school's mission statement, as well as explaining how you are achieving these.

Whichever way you approach it, actively engaging and communicating with your stakeholders will raise awareness of the work you do, signal the importance of your library to the educational process, and give you greater influence within your school.

> **Additional resources**
>
> CILIP's School Libraries Group's guide to impact evaluation is a useful template to refer to, which shows how you can demonstrate your value and importance as a librarian to others.

To consider this subject further, watch the video below where Nick discusses the importance of communication and visibility when advocating for your library. After this, reflect on your own use of communication channels to advocate for your library then proceed to the next section where you will explore the relationship between advocacy and networking.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 2

Activity 2

🕐 *Allow approximately 15 minutes*

Provide two examples of ways you use communication channels to advocate for your library.

    Provide your answer...

....

Discussion

There are no right or wrong answers to this task, but below are some suggestions which you might have considered:

- Maintaining a presence at parents' evening allows you to engage with parents in person and showcase the range of benefits your library can offer their children.
- Using Twitter to boast about your achievements or share information of interest, for example, the number of books borrowed that month, a new scheme you are launching, or any anecdotal feedback you've received.

3 Continuing professional development

Networking, especially for those librarians who work alone or whose team is limited in size, is an important part of the role. By attending conferences, meeting new people, and participating in training days, you will develop new ideas, gain knowledge, and refine your approach to librarianship. This will help you make decisions, tackle problems, and achieve your goals, all of which can empower you to better advocate for your library.

In addition to networking, it can be beneficial to read as much about school libraries as you can. This will help you learn best practice and identify different approaches to librarianship which you can adopt in your own library and learn best practice. Just as with networking, reading relevant literature so you are up to date with developments in the school library sector will contribute to your continuing professional development (CPD). By progressing and developing as a librarian and utilising new innovations and ideas, you will elevate your status in your school, be better placed to realise your ambitions, and make sure the library is able to meet the needs of the school community.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 3

As Nick mentioned in Video 3, networking can be a symbiotic process which benefits both your library and the wider industry. It's important, therefore, to remember the power of unions and professional library organisations to provide guidance, support and an opportunity to network with your peers. There are many of these organisations around the world but some of the most prominent include the following.

(To avoid losing your place in the course, if you are studying on a desktop you should open the link in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on it. If you are studying on a mobile device hold down the link and select to 'Open in New Tab'. Return here when you have finished. You might find it useful to bookmark these links so you can return to them at a later point.)

- The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)
- The CILIP School Libraries Group (SLG)

- [School Library Association (SLA)](#)
- [International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)](#)
- [Libraries Connected](#)
- [International Association of School Librarianship (IASL)](#)
- [National Education Union (NEU)](#)

By exposing you to large networks of librarians, these organisations help reinforce that you are not alone when it comes to defending the library cause. You don't have to have been in the profession for years; new librarians are just as welcome. Crucially, professional organisations can help you better advocate for your library by exposing you to new ideas, keeping you abreast of developments in the sector, and giving you the opportunity to meet and engage with your peers. Membership also gives you a valuable opportunity to pass your insights on to others and use your expertise to influence national policy advice for school libraries. You may wish, for example, to join committees as part of these organisations or deliver talks where you can defend the interests of other librarians and advocate for the profession as a whole.

Now that you have watched the video, you should reflect on your present approach to networking by completing Activity 3.

Activity 3

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

How often do you network with fellow library professionals? Do you feel there's room for you to network more? If so, how?

> Interactive content is not available in this format.

Now give two examples of ways you could network with other library professionals and keep abreast of new developments in the sector in the future. What advantages do you think this would bring to you and your library?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

There are many ways you can network with other library professionals but some possible examples might include:

- joining local or regional librarian networks
- joining a national or international library organisation
- joining an online librarian community, for example, the [School Librarians' Network (SLN)](#)
- attending conferences, for example, the SLG or IFLA conferences.

4 This session's quiz

Now that you've completed Session 7, you can take a short quiz to help you to reflect on what you've learned.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 7 quiz.

5 Summary of Session 7

In this session, you have seen how advocating for your library can help dispel outdated notions about the profession and showcase the dynamic role libraries play in the educational landscape. You have looked at how developing channels of communication throughout the school is key to your advocacy. For example, getting involved with events, attending meetings with colleagues, and taking part in committees can all help raise awareness of your library's work and improve its visibility throughout the school community.

Finally, you have seen how advocacy and networking go hand in hand, helping you to develop professionally, keep abreast of developments in the sector, and equipping you with the experience necessary to champion your library's cause. In the next session, you will explore how to review your library's performance, considering in the process how to approach reports, gather evidence, and identify areas for further development.

You should now go to Session 8.

Session 8: Reflection and review

Introduction

In the final session of this course, you will consider how to think about your experience and learning on your journey as a librarian, and systematically approach the process of reflection and review. This practice is essential in helping you assess yourself and your library's performance, and the effectiveness of your role. It can also help you to appreciate how you have 'grown' in confidence, expertise and professional stature. By placing your projects and strategies in a practical context, analysing them, and arriving at conclusions, you can evaluate your performance, and identify areas of success, areas which require further development, and areas that need changing altogether. This process can often involve a colleague or line manager who may offer an alternative perspective by considering matters from an independent, unbiased point of view. This kind of reflection is vital to your library's development plans, your continuing professional development (CPD), and is also integral to your performance review.

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- understand the need to gather data and analyse it in context
- recognise different ways to gather feedback from your stakeholders
- use data analyses to review your performance and that of your library.

1 Gathering and analysing evidence

As a librarian, you will often need to review your practices and compile reports which evaluate your library's performance. When writing reports or undertaking a review, it's important to identify your audience and tailor the tone of your writing accordingly. For example, a report for governors or the senior leadership team (SLT) should be formal and detailed, whereas an update circulated amongst parents might be briefer and chattier. However, no matter who you are writing for, you should support your arguments with evidence wherever possible, ensuring that you are focused and analytical in your approach.

One of your most significant sources of data will be the reports from your Library Management System (LMS). In particular, you may be able to obtain information on the most borrowed books and most popular authors, as well as other borrowing statistics which are broken down by category, for example, by gender or genre. You could even view the borrowing data for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or students with English as a second language (EASL). In doing so, your LMS will be able to supply you with important data on reading and literacy, a topic which will undoubtedly be of common interest to all schools, whatever their teaching and learning

objectives. Using this data might influence and inform anything from library funding and procurement to collection management and your school's literacy development plan.

Whether it's reading and literacy analytics from your LMS, feedback and suggestions from staff and students, the footfall counter on your security gates, or your social media and website analytics, evidence is most useful when viewed in context. For instance, if you are interested in breaking down borrowing statistics by gender, but one particular year group has a gender imbalance, interpreting the data in isolation may lead you to draw misleading conclusions. Similarly, you may find that there's been a decrease in footfall and borrowing during one week of the year, however, further investigations might reveal that this can be explained by the fact that a year group has been on an exchange visit abroad. Applying context to the evidence you collect can help you to explain anomalies and more confidently identify trends.

It is important not to fall into the trap of reporting everything though. This can dilute your message and make those reading the report lose focus from the main points you are trying to put across. You should focus on your school's goals and development plan and relate your evidence to these, as Sarah suggests in the next video.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1

In Video 1, Sarah suggests a combination of statistical and anecdotal evidence can help bring your report to life. Is this something you include in your reports at the moment? In the activity below, you will consider the reports your LMS can generate and how you use them in your reviews.

Activity 1

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Provide two examples of reports you produce using your Library Management System (LMS) and describe how you use them.

Provide your answer...

. . . .

Discussion

Below is an example of a report you might produce using your LMS and its benefits to you.

- Analysis of non-fiction borrowing statistics by year-group:
    This will help you to identify which topics are most popular and, therefore, might benefit from further investment.
    It can help you create a marketing strategy to target year groups that have shown the least interest in non-fiction.
    It can help you make a judgement as to whether non-fiction books were read for pleasure or were borrowed to assist in schoolwork.

Having read this section and listened to Sarah, are there any changes you would make to your future reporting? Could you use more anecdotal evidence, for example?

Provide your answer...

Now you have considered *what* information you should include in your reports and *how* you should report it, in the next section, you will develop these themes further and examine the different types of evidence that you can use to substantiate your arguments.

2 Using feedback from your stakeholders

Analytics from your LMS, library footfall data, and analytics from your social media and website were all mentioned in the previous section as useful and important evidence to obtain to demonstrate the value of your library. When compiling reports though, it is important to collect both quantitative and qualitative evidence, that is to say, evidence which can be expressed in numbers and evidence which can be expressed in words. For example, the number of students who requested a certain book would be considered quantitative whereas their opinions of that book would be qualitative. Although it may be tempting to focus solely on concrete statistical data when reviewing your service, qualitative information has an important role to play. Qualitative evidence can reveal information that can't be expressed in numbers. This can be the anecdotal evidence that Sarah mentioned in Video 1 in Section 1, which helps to convey a sense of personality in your reports, and helps to bring your library to life in a way that statistics alone cannot. Striking an appropriate balance between the two is therefore key to a successful report.

As well as gathering quantitative data from social media, footfall data, and reports from your LMS, it is also wise to obtain feedback from your library's stakeholders. This might involve using a suggestions box or gleaning anecdotal information from conversations with staff and students. It is also worth making an effort to record impromptu comments in a Word document or Excel spreadsheet. Doing so is easy and ensures compliments and criticisms are not forgotten or ignored. Online surveys also offer a quick way to gather anonymised feedback. Many of these are free and easy to use, making them popular with both staff and students. Other ways of gathering feedback include organising focus groups, circulating physical questionnaires, attending subject departmental meetings, or consulting the student council. Choosing just one or two of these methods will provide you with useful information that can give you an insight into what colleagues and students value in your library and what they would like you to develop or improve.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 2

You should now complete Activity 2, which asks you to reflect on how the feedback you gather from stakeholders affects your approach at work. Then, in the next section, you will look at how both the quantitative and qualitative evidence you have collected can be used to compile your annual report and reflect on your performance.

Activity 2

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Provide two examples of how you gather feedback from students and other library stakeholders. How do these influence your work and the library's provision?

Provide your answer...

. . . .

Discussion

Reflecting on your answers, do you think there are any areas for improvement? For example, are you using a mix of traditional and digital methods of gathering feedback? Or do you focus solely on one particular approach? Do you regularly implement recommendations made by stakeholders? And if so, how do you demonstrate this to your library's users, your line manager, and the Senior Leadership Team? To reflect further on how you could refine your use of feedback, complete the second part of the activity below.

Is there any other method of gathering feedback which you do not currently use? What benefit(s) might this offer you?

Provide your answer...

3 Reviewing your performance and that of your library

As you have looked at so far in this session, evidence gathering is invaluable to instil confidence in the findings of your reports. This is especially true when it comes to your annual report and reviews of your performance. Having data and information to show as evidence for your areas of success and those which need improvement, ensures that you and your line manager can reflect on the previous year and, moving forward, shape your aims and objectives in accordance with the school's policies. When considering your future goals, you should ensure that they are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic and Time-Related. Each goal must, therefore, be well defined and unambiguous (specific), have an indicator against which success can be judged (measurable), specify who will be responsible for achieving it (assignable), be achievable (realistic), and have a deadline or timescale (time-related).

When it comes to your annual report, an ability to demonstrate engagement with evidence gathering can support your claims and requests, equipping you with facts necessary to safeguard yourself against any possible criticism. Likewise, being able to substantiate your achievements will strengthen your position, demonstrate a level of strategic management and professionalism, and help both you and your line manager in your annual appraisal. These are just some of the ways you can use evidence gathering to review your performance and that of your library.

Now watch Video 3 in which Sarah discusses the value of evidence in your annual report in more detail. After you have done this, think about how you've used evidence in the past when reviewing your library's performance.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 3

Activity 3

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes*

Provide two examples of how you've used evidence to evaluate your performance and identify new objectives.

> *Provide your answer...*

....

Discussion

Below is an example of how you might have used feedback and LMS data relating to school staff:

> Using LMS data on staff borrowing statistics or feedback from teachers on the quality of your subject-specific resources can help you identify the extent to which your library is meeting colleagues' needs. In turn, this information can help you identify areas for improvement and formulate a strategy for the future.

4 This session's quiz

Now that you've come to the end of the course, it's time to take the Session 8 badge quiz. It's similar to previous quizzes but this time, instead of answering five questions, there will be 15.

Open the quiz in a new tab or window by holding down Ctrl (or Cmd on a Mac) when you click on the link. Return here when you have finished.

Session 8 compulsory badge quiz.

Remember, this quiz counts towards your badge. If you're not successful the first time, you can attempt the quiz again in 24 hours.

5 Summary of Session 8

Congratulations on completing *An introduction to school librarianship*.

You began the course by considering how an awareness of school policies, government legislation, the content of the curriculum, and the needs of your stakeholders are all essential if you are to effectively support your school.

The rest of the course looked at how to best utilise technology in your library, how to create a reading rich culture in your school, how to embed both reading and information literacy, and how to champion your library.

In this final session, you have considered different approaches to writing reports and how you can gather evidence to contextualise and focus your arguments. You have also seen that this evidence needn't just be hard statistical data gathered from your Library Management System (LMS) or social media pages. Anecdotes and other qualitative information which you can glean from surveys and daily interactions with library users can also be used to great effect in reports. When taken together, the evidence you gather and the reports you produce can be used to reflect on your performance, substantiate your achievements, and devise strategies for further development.

One of the common themes running throughout the course has been the creation of your library development plan. Now that you have reached the end of the course, you should be well placed to create your own plan with the ultimate goal of supporting your school and stakeholders to the best of your ability.

Although no two schools and no two libraries are the same, by providing a rounded approach to school librarianship this course should have provided you with a secure foundation to build on and the confidence to approach challenges facing the typical librarian wherever they arise.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 4

Where next?

As a librarian, making the decision to develop your learning can involve becoming a member of the School Libraries Group (SLG) a special interest group of the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professional (CILIP). Those at the beginning of their career may wish to apply for CILIP's Professional Registration Certification, which entitles you to use the post-nominal letters ACLIP.

Those with more experience may wish to undertake CILIP's Chartership. This is the level of Professional Registration for those working in the information professions who wish to be recognised for their skills and knowledge of the profession.

You may be interested in the following titles on school librarianship published by Facet Publishing:

- *Creating a School Library with Impact: A Beginner's Guide*, by Caroline Roche, Barbara Band, Nick Cavender, Lucy Chambers, Sarah Pavey, Annie Everall and Ellen Krajewski
- *CILIP Guidelines for Secondary School Libraries*, by Sue Shaper
- *The Innovative School Librarian*, by Sharon Markless, Elizabeth Bentley, Sarah Pavey, Sue Shaper, Sally Todd and Carol Webb

If you've enjoyed this course you can find more free resources and courses on OpenLearn.

You might be specifically interested in these courses:

- *Digital skills: succeeding in a digital world*
- *Developing Reading for Pleasure: engaging young readers*

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Tell us what you think

Now you've come to the end of the course, we would appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete this short end-of-course survey (you may have already completed this survey at the end of Session 4).

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