The influence of a school library development and management programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on the development of school libraries

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Abstract

The Advanced Certificate in Education School Library Development and Management (ACESLD) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal was offered from 2004 until 2016 to train teacher-librarians. A tracer study was done to evaluate the ACESLD Programme by surveying the educators who graduated from the Programme to determine the influence the Programme had on the development of school libraries in KwaZulu-Natal. The study results show that the ACESLD Programme influenced teacher-librarians' involvement in developing and maintaining school libraries within the province.

Keywords: School libraries, training and development, teacher-librarians, KwaZulu-Natal, University of KwaZulu-Natal, UKZN

Introduction and background

In the modern era information, as a powerful resource, is available and accessible through various platforms. This results in a high potential for information overload and libraries gain more relevance in this context because of their ability to organise and facilitate access to information resources. This underscores the importance of developing functional libraries, particularly in an

educational environment. In response to the need for the development and management of school libraries, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) offered the Advanced Certificate in Education School Library Development and Management (ACESLD) Programme to produce teacher-librarians with the knowledge and skills that would enable them to develop and manage school libraries. The Programme could not be offered beyond 2014 due to the new Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF) standards for educators.

The Programme was offered at approximately the same time as similar programmes were offered at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) and the University of Free State (UFS) (although the UFS offered their qualification at a lower NQF level). The eight modules comprising the Programme were designed to provide teacher-librarians with the knowledge and skills that would enable them to develop and maintain functional school libraries. The literature emphasises the importance of using a practical or general approach when training teacher-librarians to better prepare them to establish and maintain their libraries. It has, however, been pointed out that South African universities tended to offer more theoretically-based training with a limited practical component or no practical component at all (Evans 2014).

This study sought to determine if the ACESLD Programme influenced the development and management of school libraries in the province. In doing so, the researchers looked at what the Programme offered through the lens of its aims and objectives and the rationale for its development.

Research objective and questions

The objective of the study was to determine the ACESLD Programme's influence on the development and management of school libraries in KZN.

To achieve the objective the following research questions were posed:

1. Did the ACESLD Programme provide the teacher-librarians with knowledge and skills to develop a school library?
2. Did the ACESLD Programme provide the teacher-librarians with the knowledge to manage, organise and maintain a school library?
3. Did the programme provide teacher-librarians with the knowledge to promote reading programmes and reading clubs?
4. Did the programme provide teacher-librarians with the knowledge of collection development and understanding of how to draft a policy?
5. Did the programme provide teacher-librarians with the knowledge to adopt information and communication technologies (ICTs) to access and retrieve

information?

Theoretical framework

The constructivist theory was used to evaluate the role of school libraries and teacher-librarians within a constructivist education system. Du Toit (2008) argued that the constructivist learning theory was at the core of South Africa's (SA's) then Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement. School libraries are invaluable tools for providing the necessary resources to construct meaning and build on previous learning.

According to Daba (2015: 66) "Jonassen (1994) argued that constructivism has often been misconstrued as a learning theory that compels students to 'reinvent the wheel'. In reality, constructivism 'taps into and triggers the students' innate curiosity about the world and how things work." Constructivists tend to emphasise learners' pre-existing knowledge, suggesting that the availability of various resources could greatly impact learners' future learning. Arko-Cobbah (2004) argued that resource-based learning (RBL) is learner-centred learning (LCL) in which learners are actively involved and more responsible for their learning. RBL is an educational model in which learners, teachers, and teacher-librarians are actively engaged in the effective and meaningful use of a wide range of print, non-print and human resources (Manitoba Department of Education and Training 1994).

RBL is premised on libraries no longer being perceived as quiet places, but rather as centres of activity. The library is the centre for this kind of learning, and teacher-librarians are the facilitators. Teacher-librarians coordinate the sharing of resources with other information centres in the school system (Simba 2014). As in a reference interview, teacher-librarians can ask the initial questions that assist learners in developing a focus for inquiry

The choice of this framework to guide a school librarianship study was justified given the importance of the development and management of school libraries.

Literature review

This section covers the role and importance of the school library and teacher-librarians in teaching and learning to support the delivery of the South African Basic Education Department's Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

Training teacher-librarians and school library development in KwaZulu-Natal

A study conducted by Radebe (1994) which focused on the training of school librarians in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), was intended to provide insight into how teachers were trained rather than giving a comprehensive report on the state of school libraries. The current study intended to do the same. Studies conducted on the training of teacher librarians show that there are similarities between the practice of processes worldwide. Dubazana and Karlsson (2006) conducted a study looking at the integration of the school library into the curriculum in one of the peri-urban high schools south of Durban, KZN. The study made a case for such integration at schools through a typology of six approaches that included an integrated school library programme, inquiry-based projects, educators and teacher-librarian collaboration, advocacy campaigns, the influence of the school leader, and the school library environment. The study found that the school library was minimally integrated into the teaching and learning of the curriculum at the school. However, Dubazana and Karlsson (2006) concluded that the six approaches were important scaffoldings for further development of school library utilisation at the school.

Although it was conducted outside KZN, a study by Zinn (2006), is relevant because it traced students who were trained as teacher librarians between 1976 and 2000 at the UWC. The study aimed at ascertaining the influence that teacher librarians had in the development of their school libraries and reading programmes. It has to be noted that the training of these teachers took place during a crucial period when the curriculum was under reconstruction, and some school libraries were closing down due to the absence of funds to pay librarians.

Hoskins (2006) investigated the status of libraries in schools from which the ACESLD educators had come and the use of ICTs in those libraries. Her study found that very few schools had well-resourced libraries with adequate ICT resources. Hoskins (2006) concluded that the training offered by the ACESLD Programme should assist educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop and manage a school library. Furthermore, training should also provide educators with basic computer skills. She argued that it is the principal's responsibility to ensure that a dedicated teacher-librarian is appointed to each library and a sufficient budget was allocated to the library.

The study most similar to the current one was conducted by Evans (2014). It aimed to assess the establishment, management and sustainability of public school libraries in KZN and to recommend ways to improve the appropriateness of training and development of teacher librarians at the UNIZULU. Evans (2014) study embraced both interpretive and critical research

paradigms while a case study method followed inductive reasoning. The findings indicated that most of the public school libraries surveyed were neither fully functional nor properly resourced. They lacked full-time teacher-librarians trained to manage and integrate their collections into the curriculum. The findings further revealed that the quality of library services that did exist differed markedly between urban and rural schools. The study recommended that the Provincial Department of Education's (DoE) School Library Services (ELITS) selectively award teacher-librarian bursaries to suitable candidates and then combine these awards with the provision of core collections of books and technologies. Doing so would link the establishment of their school libraries to the practical outcomes of the two-year university-based training programme.

Training and competencies

The American Library Association (ALA) (2019) explains that school libraries exist for information and enlightenment. It has to be noted that a qualified teacher-librarian has to be in place for this to happen. As Riedling, Shake and Houston (2013) argued, accurate and appropriate information will occur when the teacher-librarian has complete and precise knowledge of the library collection, alongside competence in selecting, acquiring and evaluating that collection.

Poole (2018) argued that the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) goal is to put library and information skills at the heart of a democratic, equal and prosperous society. He further stated that CILIP does this by being the best membership body for everyone working in knowledge, information, data and libraries. According to CILIP (Poole 2018), library employees at all levels can be more effective and engaged when they are familiar with the basic principles and core values of librarianship and the role of their library within the community.

The ACESLD Programme was offered to educators who were already in the basic education field in KZN. It was, therefore, designed to develop further and improve the skills of teachers rather than training people who aspired to be teachers. With this in mind, the Programme was offered on a part-time basis during the school holidays over a period of two years. Eight modules (16 credits each) were offered over the two years – four were offered in the first year and the remaining four in the second year. Table 1 below provides the structure of the ACESLD Programme:

Table 1: ACESLD Programme structure

First-year	Second-year
EDPD101 Learning and Teaching	EDPD119 Education Studies for School Library Development
EDPD102 Education Policy & Professionalism	EDPD120 Professional Practice in School Library Development
EDPD121 School Library Development & Management. 610	EDPD123 School Library Development & Management. 630
EDPD125 School Library Development & Management. 620	EDPD124 School Library Development & Management. 640

It is worth noting that each of the eight modules offered within the ACESLD Programme had specific objectives and learning outcomes that were to be achieved to complete the Programme. With this in mind, all the module objectives were aimed at meeting the broad objectives of the Programme, which were to provide educators with sufficient knowledge and skills to enable them to develop and manage school libraries in their respective schools as qualified teacher-librarians.

The role of school libraries and their importance in teaching and learning

Previous studies conducted on the topic noted that if students were to pursue knowledge on their own and learn independently, then they must be provided with the facilities to do so (Ellsworth and Wagener 1970). In this regard, a logical starting point was the school library, the only academic area ordinarily planned for individuals rather than groups. Ellsworth and Wagener (1970) further argued that an accurate barometer of the intensity of interest in knowledge was the kind of library service provided by the school. Todd and Gordon (2010: 3) supported this notion, as they advised that effective engagement with information resources enables the construction of knowledge. They further underlined the importance of the school library and school librarian in this process and stated that the reason for their existence is "making actionable all the information and knowledge that a school possesses or can access so that students can construct their understanding and develop their ideas in rich ways".

Donaldson (2004) wrote that "school libraries are places that bring learning to life and encourage the development of vital research and study skills that learners can take with them to further and higher education and the workplace". Good experiences in the school library can encourage enthusiasm for lifelong learning. In a similar vein, Hoskins (2006: 239), citing the International

Association of School Librarianship (2003), argued that

> The school library functions as a vital instrument in the educational process, not as a separate entity isolated from the total school programme but involved in the teaching and learning process. Its goals could be expressed through the following functions:
>
> - *Informational* - to provide reliable information, rapid access, retrieval and transfer of information; the school library should be part of regional and national information networks.
> - *Educational* - to provide continuous lifelong education by providing the facilities and atmosphere for learning: guidance in location, selection and use of material and training in information skills, integration with classroom teaching, and promotion of intellectual freedom.
> - *Cultural* - to improve the quality of life through presenting and supporting the aesthetic experience, guidance in art appreciation, encouragement of creativity, and developing positive human relations.
> - *Recreational* - to support and enhance a balanced and enriched life and encourage meaningful use of leisure time through provision of recreational information, materials and programmes of recreational value, and guidance in the use of leisure time.

Given the school library functions highlighted above, it is worth noting that school libraries are essential to developing the human character and society's spiritual, moral, social, cultural, and socio-economic development (Raseroka 2003). Hoskins (2006: 238) is of the view that "the changing role of the school library in democratic SA indicates that the library, being a social institution, is set up by society to serve its needs". However, in most cases, school libraries are often considered merely a standard requirement (if deemed a requirement at all) without recognising their importance in the teaching and learning process.

The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2006: 4) views the mission of the school library as follows:

> The school library provides information and ideas fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge-based society. This equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops their imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens.

This study viewed "good" school libraries as those furnished with collection/resources that support the current curriculum and were staffed by qualified teacher-librarians. Therefore, such libraries are essential to the success of the (CAPS) education system used in SA. International research has provided unequivocal evidence to support the positive impact of school libraries on improved learner performance. Budhu's (2018) study also found this to be the case with grade eight learners' information needs and information-seeking

behaviour in a South African secondary school. Two international studies conducted by Baughman (2000) and Smith (2001) in Massachusetts and Texas found that learners from school libraries serviced by professional librarians generally achieved higher literacy and information literacy scores, positive academic performance, and better social cohesion. Wessels' (2010) study further confirmed that international research has indeed provided convincing evidence of the contribution of school libraries to quality education and learner achievement and advised that access to books fosters learners' reading habits. In addition, learners who attend schools with high-quality library collections tend to have higher reading comprehension scores than those schools without such collections.

The importance of teacher-librarians and their significance in education

If school librarians are not needed, then we need to look at the philosophy shaping our schools. An appropriate school library operating in the right kind of instructional relationships would encourage good school librarians to do the type of work they know they should be doing and that others expect them to do.

Most researchers interested in the role and importance of teacher-librarians commonly found that the role of the librarian was in itself similar to that of the researcher: defining the problem, finding information, questioning its validity and assessing its relevance to the problem, and then moving on to yet further questions arising from the information, as a means to redefining the problem (Kinnell, Feather and Mathews 1994). These tasks are considered the day-to-day realities of librarianship. This was argued because the essence of professional reference and enquiry work is similar to academic research.

The ACESLD curriculum, through practicals and action research activities, as given to students (teacher-librarians), encouraged systematic record-keeping so that librarians could chart their progress. In project-related work, support was provided throughout the project using consultations, when the students' assumptions and propositions as teacher-librarians were discussed and related to the emerging findings from the project as a whole.

Although curriculum changes often occur in the school setting, students need for information will always exist. Riedling, Shake and Houston (2013) argued that while students' dependence upon the Internet to find answers to their questions has increased, the school librarian's role as a provider of quality information resources and as a guide for using information resources effectively will always be important. They further argued that what the school librarian does concerning reference services is fundamentally to assist students in finding

the answers to their questions and help them become independent users of information and ideas.

To fulfil this role, the school librarian must have the ability to translate student questions into terms that can be understood by aligning them with proper resources. In essence, these activities, knowledge and expertise constitute what is referred to as the reference service. Hence, it is important to note that the flow would be inefficient or might never happen without the teacher-librarian bringing sources and learners together. In principle, the teacher-librarian acts as a mediator between confused learners and information overload or scarcity. As a mediator, the teacher-librarian has to evaluate the collection to identify, locate, and retrieve accurate sources to meet the information needs of learners and assist learners in determining what they need out of the ever-growing masses of electronic and print information.

The American Association of School Librarians (2009) publication, *Empowering learners: guidelines for school library programs*, identified the roles of the school librarian as an intellectual partner, information specialist, teacher, program administrator and leader. These roles are depicted in Figure 1 below.
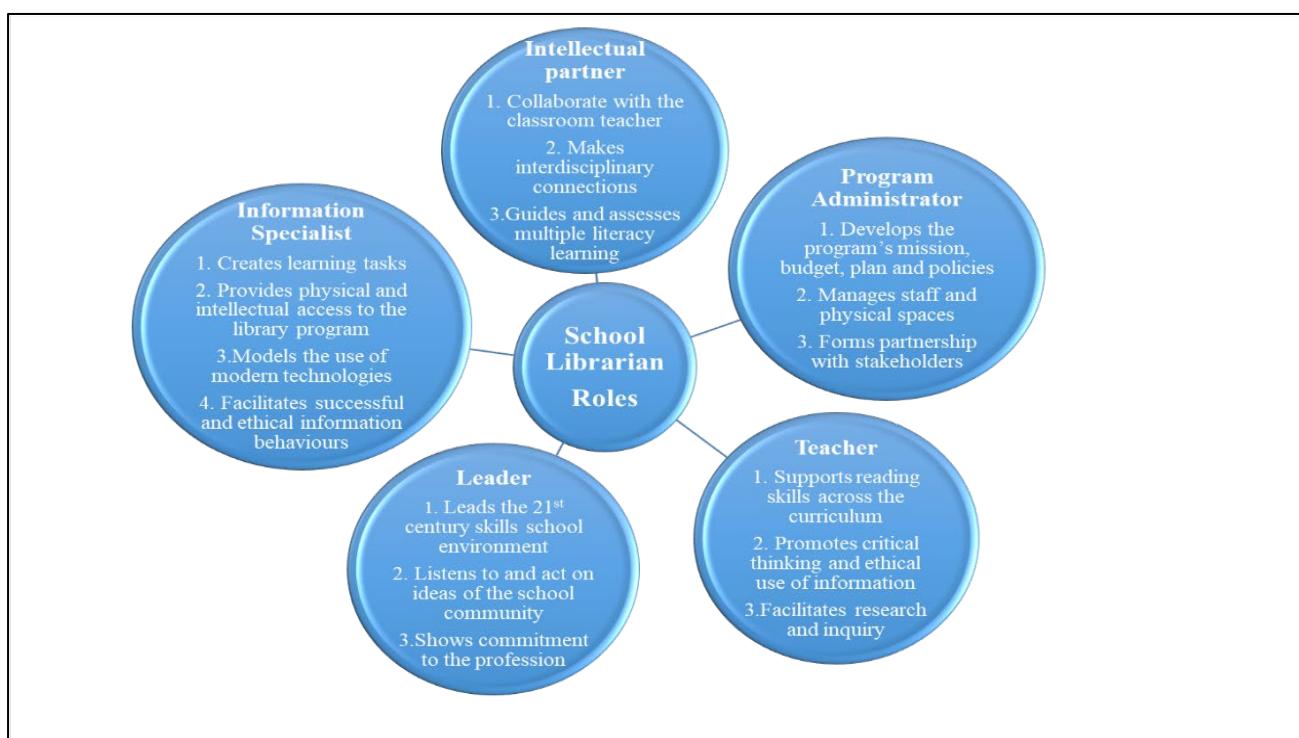

Figure 1: Roles of the school librarian
(Adapted from Subramaniam, Ahn, Waugh, Taylor, Druin, Fleischmann and Walsh 2013)

It is worth noting that the importance of information literacy can never be overemphasised. As Wessels, Mnkeni-Saurombe and Knoetze (2014) pointed out, it is accepted in educational circles that literate individuals who have learned how to learn and who become information literate and lifelong learners in the process will ultimately succeed in the workplace.

Schools with libraries and teacher-librarians can offer learners information literacy and reading skills that help them initiate learning independently. This notion is in line with the learner-centred learning approach supported by the Resource-based Learning/ RBL Model, given their expertise in teaching information literacy skills, reading for understanding and digital literacy skills. If the teacher-librarians were allowed to dispense their duties of empowering people with such skills, it would be easier for learners with such skills, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, to learn from home compared to those without the skills.

According to the KZN DoE (2003: 3), the KZN *School library policy* states:

> Suppose the school is to recognise the school library as being at the core of its academic function. In that case, it is equally important that all the educators accept responsibility to further the aims of the school library. A whole-school information literacy policy engages all the educators and structures the different responsibilities they might hold.

The teacher-librarian, or a trained co-ordinator of the library collection in the school, should work with the educator team to ensure that a comprehensive and holistic information literacy policy is created for the whole school. The policy aims to provide continuous structured development and evaluation of reading and information literacy skills within a contextualised learning approach (KZN DoE 2003: 3). Some issues to be considered in developing a whole school literacy policy are highlighted in Figure 2 below.
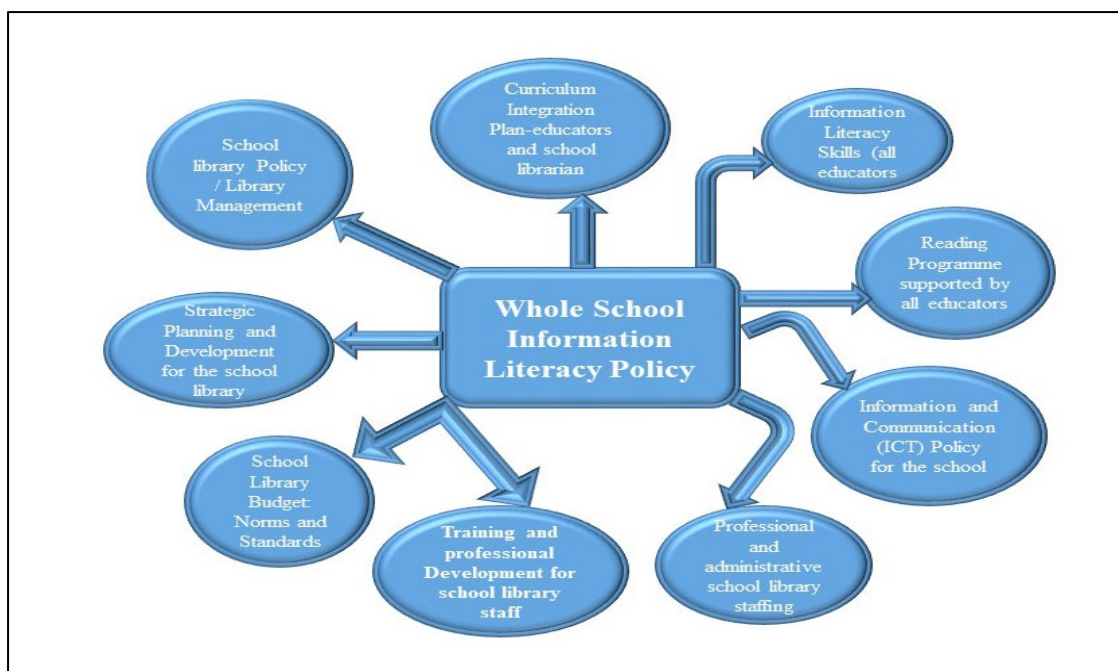
Figure 2: Whole school information literacy policy
Adapted from KZN School Library Policy (KZN DoE 2003)

According to Bush and Jones (2010), school librarians most frequently identified "teacher" and "collaborator" as essential professional dispositions. School librarians teach information literacy, technology, critical thinking and ethical skills to young people. Indeed, according to Johnson and Green (2018), school librarians perceive themselves as teachers who enable student learning. The authors claimed that factors such as state-mandated standards were beneficial and led to an increase in collaboration, as well as the potential enactment of librarians' instructional roles. It is the librarian's duty, given their knowledge and expertise, to teach and assist the school community in this regard. Teacher-librarians and teachers should collaborate to design the curriculum by constantly discussing the research projects that the students should work on and encouraging them to acknowledge each step taken to complete the project.

The importance of information literacy is increasingly stressed. Yet, a Scholastic (2016) report stated that resources and support for the programmes and people best-suited to teach and facilitate information literacy have dropped globally in too many schools and districts. The Scholastic (2016) report further revealed that although the demand for accountability grew and increasing evidence continued to affirm that school libraries operated by qualified teacher-librarians made a measurable difference on student achievement, library resources were too often reduced or removed from budgets altogether.

Librarians' involvement in the roles mentioned above usually encourages them to see themselves as leaders or pioneers in teaching and learning at their respective schools. Some of the librarians in Johnston and Green's (2018) study revealed their aspirations for innovative programmes in their schools.

Methodology

Guided by the postpositivist paradigm, the study employed a mixed-methods approach. Hence both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to investigate the problem, though the overall approach was mainly qualitative. The population surveyed was 940 educators who graduated from the ACESLD programme at the UKZN from 2006 to 2014. Given the population of 943 teacher-librarians, using stratified random sampling and guided by Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample selection table, a sample of 274 teacher-librarians was drawn. Therefore, 274 copies of a questionnaire were distributed to teacher-librarians via the network of subject advisors from ELITS, and a total of 170 were eventually returned resulting, as shown in Table 2, in a very good response rate of 62%, as argued by Babbie and Mouton (2001: 261).

Table 2: Sample size of KZN teacher-librarians who graduated between 2006 and 2014

District	Sample size	Percentage from total population
Amajuba	24	8.8
Empangeni/ Uthungulu/ King Cetshwayo	12	4.2
Ilembe	16	5.7
Obonjeni/ Umkhanyakude	10	3.7
Othukela	32	11.7
Pinetown	35	12.8
UGu	20	7.2
Umgungundlovu	34	12.5
Umlazi	35	12.8
Umzinyathi	10	3.7
Sisonke/ Harry Gwala	21	7.6
Vryheid/ Zululand	25	9.1
Total sample size	**274**	**100%**

The type of data collected and the purpose for which the study was conducted determined the methods for data analysis. Given the quantitative data collected, a coding key was prepared in which numerical values were assigned to all

closed question responses in the questionnaire. Data was entered on a data matrix designed using SPSS, then processed in frequency counts and percentages presented in tables and figures. On the other hand, the open questions were interpreted and discussed using thematic content analysis.

Research findings and discussion

The results are reported and discussed under broad headings in line with the research objective and questions.

Position within the teaching profession

The teacher-librarians were asked to indicate their position within the teaching profession. They were provided with a list to select from, and the findings are given in Figure 3 below.
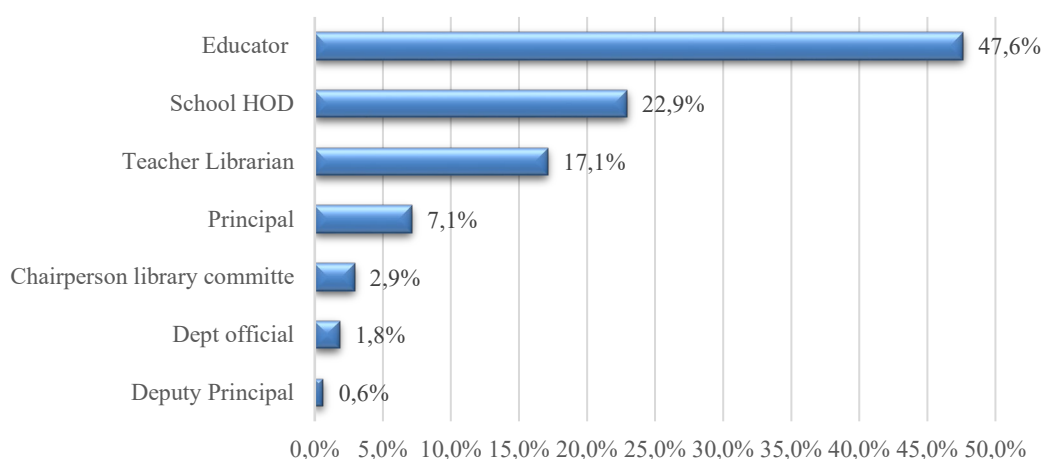

Figure 3: Position of respondents N=170

The results show that almost half, 81 (47.6%) of the respondents were Educators, followed by 39 (22.9%) who were School Heads of Department, 29 (17.1%) referred to themselves as Teacher-Librarians, and 12 (7.1%) indicated that they were Principals. The results also showed that five (2.9%) respondents were Chairpersons of the Library Committee, three (1.8%) were Departmental Officials and one (0.6%) a Deputy Principal.

Location of school

The teacher-librarians were asked to indicate where their schools were located. The location of the schools is depicted in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Location of respondents' school N=170

School location	Frequency	Percentage
Rural areas	76	44.7
Township	51	30
Informal settlement	15	8.8
Metro city	11	6.5
Town	10	5.9
No response	7	4.1
Total	170	100%

The results in Table 3 show that the largest number of respondents, 76 (44.7%), worked in schools located in rural areas. This is followed by 51 (30%) respondents whose schools were located in townships and 15 (8.8%) in informal settlements. Respondents whose schools were found in a metro city and a town accounted for 11 (6.5%) and 10 (5.9%), respectively. The study revealed that a majority of the teacher-librarians came from rural schools. Therefore, it can be argued that the training that gave them the requisite knowledge and skills will make a difference in working to improve the urban-rural imbalance when it comes to information literacy in the province.

Development of a school library

The teacher-librarians were asked if they had developed a school library either in their previous or current school. The results are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Development of school library N=170

Involved in the development of a school library	Yes		No		No response	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
	119	70	47	27.6	4	2.4

The results show that majority of respondents, 119 (70%), affirmed their

involvement in the development of a library in their school compared to the 47 (27.6%) who indicated that they had not been involved in such development. While the reason/s for these respondents not being involved was not asked, it could be assumed that a library had already been established in their schools or their schools had not considered the establishment of a library. Despite the low response rate, Zinn (2006) concluded that the UWC trained-librarians had minimal influence in library matters although they had high ranking roles in their schools. She nonetheless argued that teacher-librarians play a crucial role in their school's reading and ICT programmes.

Ways in which ACESLD qualification influenced the development of school libraries

The 119 respondents who had indicated they were involved in the development of a school library were asked to state how the ACESLD qualification had influenced the development of the library. Various themes emerged from the analysis of the responses guided by the research questions and these are outlined below.

Provide teacher-librarians with the knowledge to establish a new library

The first theme to emerge in terms of how the ACESLD Programme influenced the development of the school library was that it provided the knowledge, motivation and ability to start a new library mentioned by 12 (10.1%) of the respondents. According to Raseroka (2003), libraries are places of convergence for some communities. They may serve as an institution respecting human rights, specifically as they relate to the right of access to information for all, especially for children and youth who are vulnerable to information deprivation through deliberate actions by adults. Therefore, schools must provide platforms such as libraries that are perceived as receptive for the development and availability of ICT infrastructure, print and non-print media, and access to information.

Establish a school library committee

The establishment of a school library committee was noted by just one (0.8%) of the respondents as a way the ACESLD had influenced the development of the school library.

Encourage others to start a school library and staff training

To educate and encourage others was noted by two (1.7%) of the respondents as ways the Programme influenced the development of the school library. This shows that through knowledge transfer to others, the Programme reached beyond the participating individuals. The Programme empowered one (0.8%) of the respondents to train other staff members in their school. Although cited by only a single respondent, this theme shows how the knowledge acquired by a staff member can also empower other staff members. This constructivist learning approach also encouraged the teacher-librarians to share knowledge and teach the skill to those who were not part of the Programme. The duty of developing and maintaining the school libraries was commonly understood and supported by other stakeholders within the school community.

Provide teacher-librarians with the knowledge to manage, organise and maintain a school library

Thirteen (10.9%) of the respondents emphasised how the knowledge acquired through the ACESLD Programme helped them manage, organise and maintain a school library.

Understand accessing and classification of books

The ACESLD Programme helped two (1.7%) of the respondents understand accessing and classifying books. Behrens (2000) argued that no matter how well-resourced the school library may be, it will not satisfy its users' information needs if the collection is not well-organised or managed. Libraries are known for their good order and bibliographic control, which leads to easy access to information sources. This gives them the edge over the less organised and sometimes chaotic Internet. A well-organised school library (or any library for that matter) has the huge potential to attract users and promote its services to the school community.

Provide teacher-librarians with the knowledge to promote reading programmes and reading clubs

The results show that the ACESLD helped three (2.5%) of the respondents to introduce and promote reading programmes and clubs in their schools.

Assist learners with reading and research skills

Nine (7.6%) respondents mentioned that the Programme enabled them to assist learners with reading and research skills. One can assume that this assistance

would have led to the improvement of these skills in the learners. This was to help improve the country's poor literacy levels and low reading skills, cited by Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga (2016). Her report stated that the DoE had started the "Read to Lead Campaign" to create a national focus on improving the reading abilities of all South African children. She argued that the Campaign sought to provide energy, direction and inspiration across all levels of the education system, in homes and the public domain, to ensure that all learners can and do read by 2019. Schools with libraries and teacher-librarians can offer learners information literacy and reading skills that help them initiate learning independently. This is in line with the learner-centred learning approach supported by the Resource-based Learning model.

Provide teacher-librarians with the knowledge of collection development and understanding of how to draft a policy

Simba (2014) argued that the usefulness of a school library depends upon the richness of the collection (curricula and extra-curricular content of information resources) coupled with the programmes designed to make the information resources easily accessible and useful. Thirteen (10.9%) respondents reported that the ACESLD helped them better understand the collection development process and provided the skills for drafting a collection development policy. This is evidence of the Programme's learning outcomes being achieved and put into practice by nearly 11% of the respondents. On the other hand, Evans (2014) found that some schools within the Zululand district lacked full-time teacher-librarians trained to manage and integrate their collections into the curriculum. His findings further revealed that the existing library services differed markedly between urban and rural schools. South African school libraries are managed based on either a formal committee, such as a school library committee, or informally through other committees, such as the literacy committee. A library committee is an appropriate vehicle for the devolution of power, accountability and responsibility from the governing body to manage the school library. Hart (2014: 14), however, argued that the role of a school library committee is problematic because most South African schools lack relevant teaching and learning resources and trained personnel.

Provide teacher-librarians with the knowledge to adopt ICTs to access and retrieve information

Hay and Todd (2010) viewed the future role of a school library as a facility that seeks a balance between print and digital collections and does not privilege one format over another, consistent with the multi-format nature of the information world. This assertion makes school libraries dynamic learning spaces that

evolve with the changing times while not relinquishing their role and essence. Three (2.5%) respondents pointed to the ACESLD helping them learn to use ICTs to access and retrieve information. Hoskins (2006) concluded that the training offered by the ACESLD Programme should assist educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop and manage a school library. Furthermore, the training should also provide educators with basic computer skills. Evans (2014) has pointed to the theoretical orientation of computer literacy modules offered by a local tertiary institution when training teacher-librarians, and this may well have also been the case with the ACESLD Programme

Integrate curriculum and library resources

The Programme helped one (0.8%) respondent to integrate the curriculum and library resources. This may have assisted learners in meeting their curriculum needs using the resources available in the library.

Improve language usage, speaking and writing confidence

One (0.8%) respondent also mentioned the last theme to emerge from the responses provided. Here, the influence of the Programme was personal in that it helped improve the respondent's language usage and to speak and write with confidence – improvements which would ultimately positively reflect on the development of the school library. This is in line with Johnston and Green (2018), who noted that studies that examined the impact of school libraries in improving language literacies concluded that schools with at least one full-time school librarian might achieve higher reading proficiency, higher scores in critical literacies such as the ethical use of information, and higher scores in English language, arts and science.

Conclusion and recommendation

The constructivism theory was used to evaluate the ACESLD as a training programme and its influence on teacher-librarians' ability to develop and manage school libraries in the province. The ACESLD Programme aimed to produce competent professionals who could develop and manage a school library to enhance curriculum development and promote lifelong and independent learning.

The study confirms and concludes that the ACESLD Programme influenced teacher-librarians' involvement in developing and maintaining school libraries within the province. The influence of the Programme was confirmed by the teacher librarians who believed that upon obtaining their qualifications, they

were able to: establish a new library and some were able to motivate and educate others to do so as well; manage, organise and maintain a school library; access and classify materials; introduce and promote reading programmes and reading clubs; assist learners with reading and research skills and improve learners' literacy skills; undertake collection development and draft a collection development policy; establish school library committees; train staff; use ICTs to access and retrieve information; integrate curriculum and library resources; and improve their learners' language usage, and speaking and writing confidence.

It should also be noted that even though slightly fewer teacher-librarians indicated their involvement in the development of school libraries, a majority of the respondents stated that there were libraries in their schools. This means that even if teacher-librarians did not establish the school library from scratch, given the knowledge and skills gained from the ACESLD Programme, they may have contributed to the maintenance of the already existing school libraries

It is recommended that to maintain the development of school libraries in the province, the teacher-librarians who have graduated from the programme should undertake further continuing professional education and further their studies in the field of school librarianship.

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