

Evidence-based practice for School Libraries

The 4th E = EVIDENCE! Empowering Evolution, Experience, and Education

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Focus of the 4th E Presentation

- **Evidence-Based Practice:** background, concepts, framework, research design
- **Evidence-Based Approaches:** preliminary findings
- **Evidence-Based Action:** moving forward



The EBP School Libraries Beginning

First paper on EBP and School Libraries at IASL conference, Auckland 2001 (TODD, R. (2001). "Transitions for preferred futures of school libraries: knowledge space not information place; connections, not collections; actions, not positions; evidence, not advocacy". *International Association of School Librarianship Annual Conference*, Auckland, New Zealand, 8th-12th July, 2001.

2008 EBP Summit (School Library Journal)

Peer-review journal Evidence Based Library and Information Practice: <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/EBLIP> published a special issue devoted to EBP in school libraries in 2009.

Embedding in LIS curriculum, professional development agendas, publications



The EBP School Libraries

Lyn Hay and Ross Todd: School Libraries 21stC Futures project (NSW Department of Education & Training) 2009-10

Hay, L. & Todd, R.J., (2010). "School Libraries 21C- A School Libraries Futures Project." New South Wales, Australia: NSW Department of Education and Training. ISBN: 9780731386901

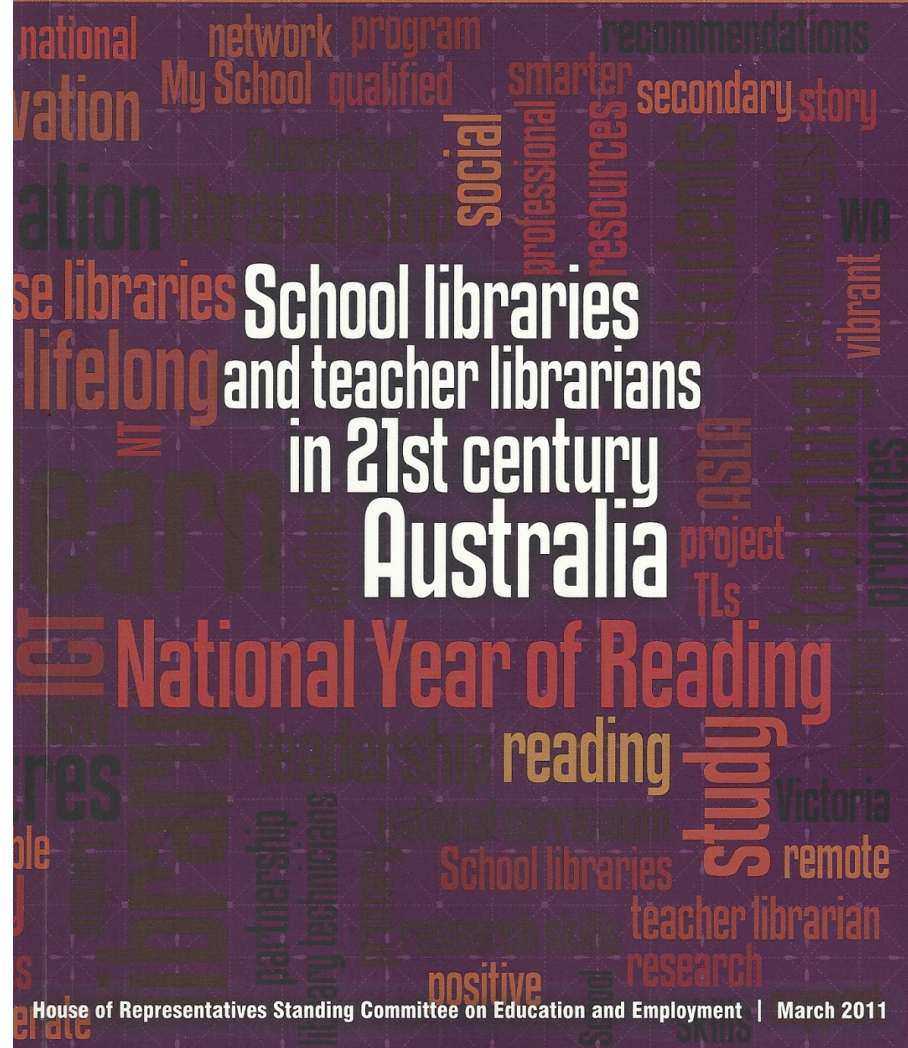
Australian Parliament Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher-Librarians 2011

December 2014, Knowledge Quest, (ALA) published a complete issue on EBP





- **Report published March 2011, tabled at Parliament 23 May 2011.**
- **“6.10 - The Committee has been struck by the breadth of anecdotal evidence that it received demonstrating the significant contribution to learning outcomes in primary and secondary schools that a fully resourced school library, when staffed by a fully qualified and active teacher librarian, can make. This supports the findings of Australian and international research in this area.” (p.118)**



3

Potential of school libraries and teacher librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes

Having access to electronic information can never replace the contributions to learning provided by teacher librarians. The role of school information services and teacher librarians are key factors in the improved delivery of curriculum outcomes,

Evidence-based practice

- 3.18 Dr Ross Todd of the Centre for International Scholarship in School Libraries described the importance of 'evidence based practice (EBP)' in influencing the recognition of teacher librarians. Dr Todd explained that EBP is the process of teacher librarians documenting how they make a difference to learning at their school and bringing it to the attention of principals, teaching colleagues and parents.²⁰ More than just proving the worth of teacher librarians, EBP is about 'demonstrating the vitality of our [teacher librarians'] contributions to learning.'²¹
- 3.19 While there is no standard approach to evidence-based practice and strategies can vary from school to school, it is essentially about creating assignments that tie the library to the classroom curriculum.²²
- 3.20 Dr Todd suggests that a good starting point for teacher librarians is to focus on collaborative lessons with teaching colleagues, who, he says, can

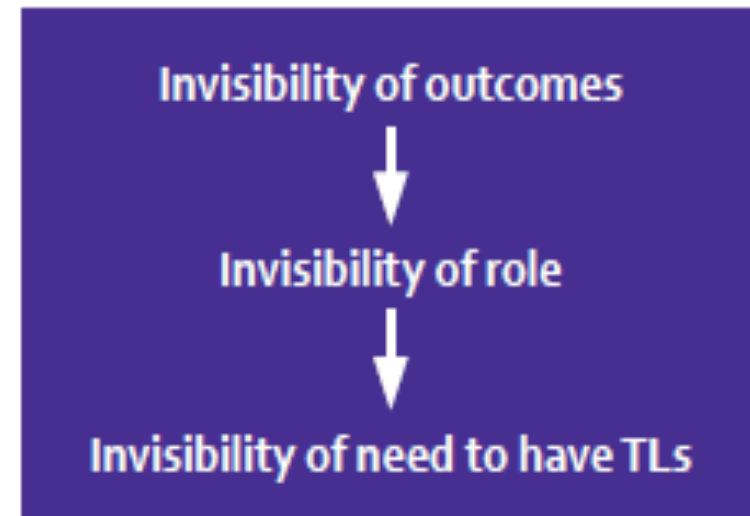
students on how that lesson assisted them better find the resources they were searching for, ultimately being able to demonstrate that her lesson had improved the quality of their projects.²⁴

3.22 ASLA referenced Ms Gillespie, a teacher librarian who worked to improve literacy levels across her whole school after receiving the school's first NAPLAN test results. She assisted teaching colleagues to provide resources that would support classroom activities.²⁵

3.23 The Committee appreciates that evidence-based practice takes time on the part of teacher librarians but agrees that documenting and highlighting examples of teacher librarians' successes in improving educational and community outcomes is critical to illustrating the enormous potential of school libraries to help students achieve better results. The Committee will discuss further the need for teacher librarians' self-promotion and marketing later in this chapter.

Developing Capacity as Evidence-Based practitioners

“We recommend that the profession as a whole needs to develop the capacity to articulate needs from research-based evidence and local evidence collected in the school.”



EVIDENCE is the connector!

Gather evidence in YOUR local school

Are you able to provide convincing evidence that answers these questions:

What differences do my school library and its learning initiatives make to student learning outcomes?

What are the differences, the tangible learning outcomes and learning benefits of my school library?

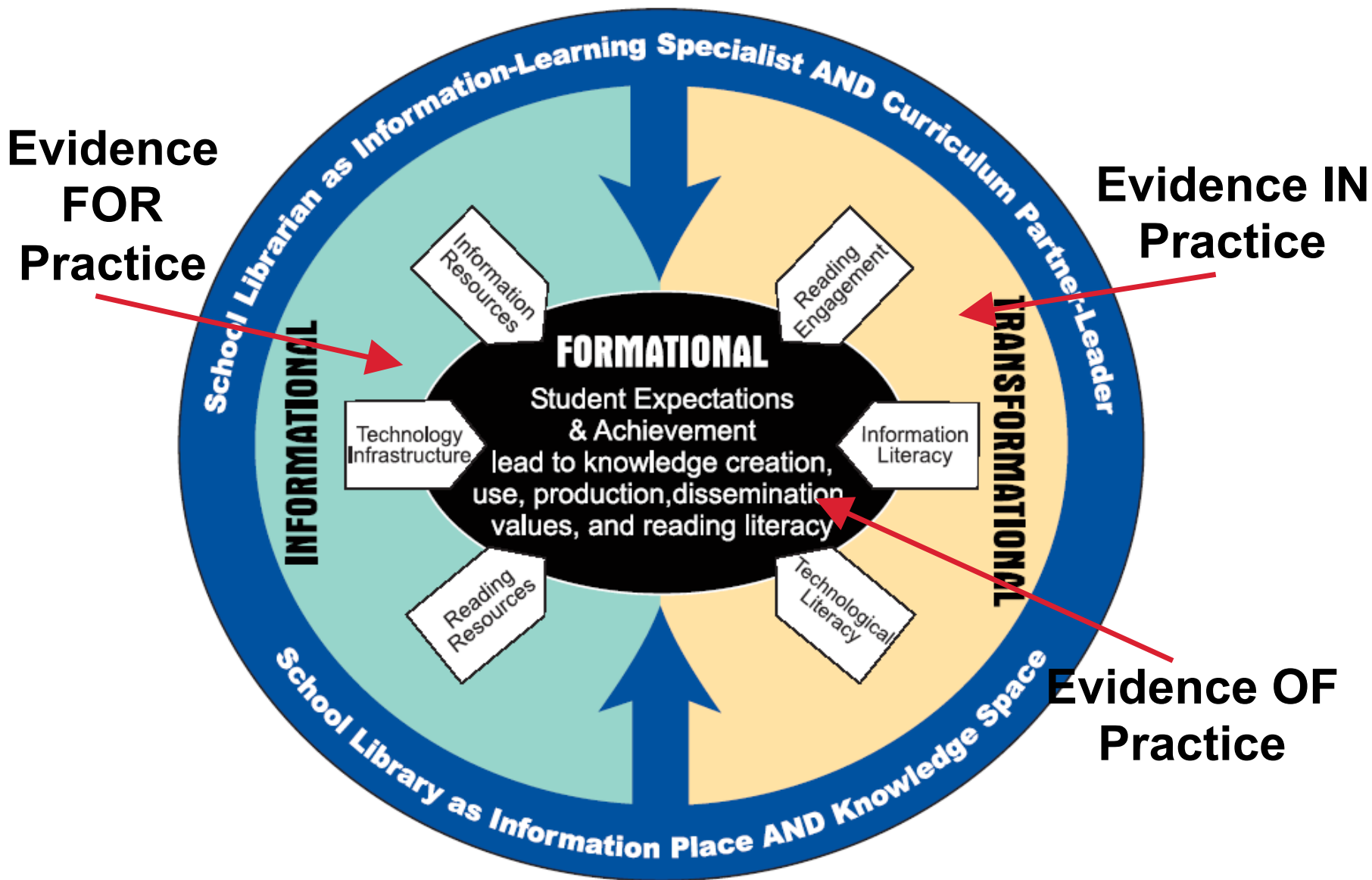
EVIDENCE = ADDING VALUE



Framework: Holistic Model of EBP for School Libraries (Todd 2008)¹¹

<p>Evidence FOR Practice</p>	<p>FOUNDATION INFORMATIONAL</p> <p>Existing formal research provides the essential building blocks for professional practice:</p>
<p>Evidence IN Practice Applications / Actions</p>	<p>PROCESS TRANSFORMATIONAL</p> <p>Locally produced evidence; Data generated by practice is meshed with research-based evidence to provide a dynamic decision-making and learning environment: Librarian's evidence / thinking / wisdom</p>
<p>Evidence OF Practice Results – impacts & outcomes</p>	<p>OUTCOMES FORMATIONAL</p> <p>user-reported evidence learner changes as result of inputs, interventions, activities, processes</p>

Model of the School Library as a Dynamic Agent of Learning



Research Goals & Methods

- **Understand how school librarians have embedded an evidence-based practice approach into their school library programs.**
- **Identify dynamics of evidence-based programs, showcase innovative strategies for collecting, disseminating and utilizing evidence to build school library programs, identify a range of outcomes reported in these initiatives, and illustrate how evidence of educational outcomes tied to curriculum standards has informed collaborative instructional practices.**
- **Voluntary sample, drawn from the 500 participants who have registered on the Evidence-Based Practice for School Libraries Facebook site: 52 participants**
- **Web-based survey: categorical and open-ended responses**






Discussion Members Events Photos Files

[Write Post](#) [Add Photo / Video](#) [Ask Question](#) [Add File](#)

Write something...

Add information about your group.

PINNED POST

 **Lyn Hay**
April 28 · Canberra


Dear EBPSL members,

We invite your participation in the Evidence-Based Practices of Teacher Librarians Survey for 2015.

This international project seeks to understand how teacher librarians/school librarians have embedded an evidence-based practice approach into their school library systems. [See More](#)

MEMBERS 568 members

[Add People to Group](#)



Invite by Email

DESCRIPTION [Edit](#)

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE for SCHOOL LIBRARIES is designed to support teacher librarians in buildi... [See More](#)

TAGS: [Edit](#)

What is this group about?

CREATE NEW GROUPS

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EBPforSL/>



Evidence-Based Practices of Teacher Librarians 2015

Welcome to the EBP survey for Teacher Librarians

1 / 7

14%



This survey research project seeks to understand how teacher librarians / school librarians have embedded an evidence-based practice approach into their school library programs. In the context of school libraries, evidence-based practice is defined as an approach to professional practice in school libraries that systematically engages research-derived evidence, school librarian-observed evidence and student-reported evidence in iterative processes of decision making, development and continuous improvement to achieve the school's mission and goals, which fundamentally centre on student achievement, quality learning and quality teaching.

This questionnaire is in six sections. These sections will gather data on:

- (a) Demographics
- (b) Context
- (c) Evidence for practice
- (d) Evidence in practice
- (e) Evidence of practice
- (f) EBP documentation and further participation

The results of this study will help strengthen EBP initiatives in school libraries. It will identify the nature and scope of EBP practices, identify EBP exemplars of practice, show the diversity of data collection methods and techniques to gather evidence, and provide insights into factors that enable and hinder EBP in schools.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

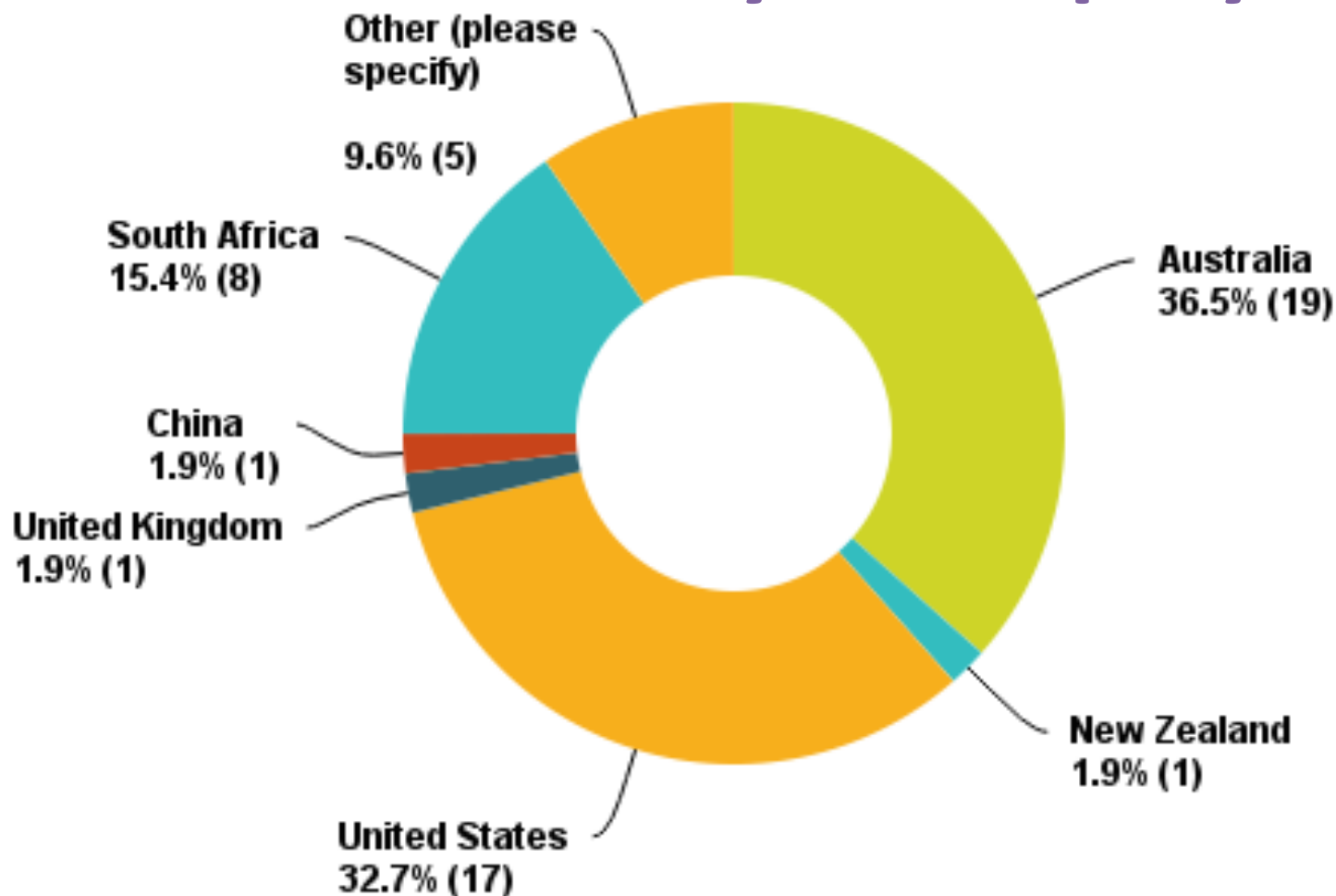
Sharing your experiences with EBP practice is important in helping our profession further develop as evidence-based practitioners.

Quantitative Data: Demographics

- **current country of employment**
- **years of employment in schools**
- **years of employment in a school library team**
- **job title(s)**
- **gender**
- **school type (public/govt, private/charter, Catholic)**
- **student population of school**
- **grade/year levels of school**
- **number of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) qualified teacher librarians/school librarians**
- **number of FTE para-professional and/or support staff**
- **type of school library program (fixed schedule, modified fixed schedule, a flexible schedule)**
- **school library as a joint-use facility**
- **total budget for the current academic year (not including salaries)**
- **comparison between current and previous year of school library budget**
- **membership of Facebook EBP group**



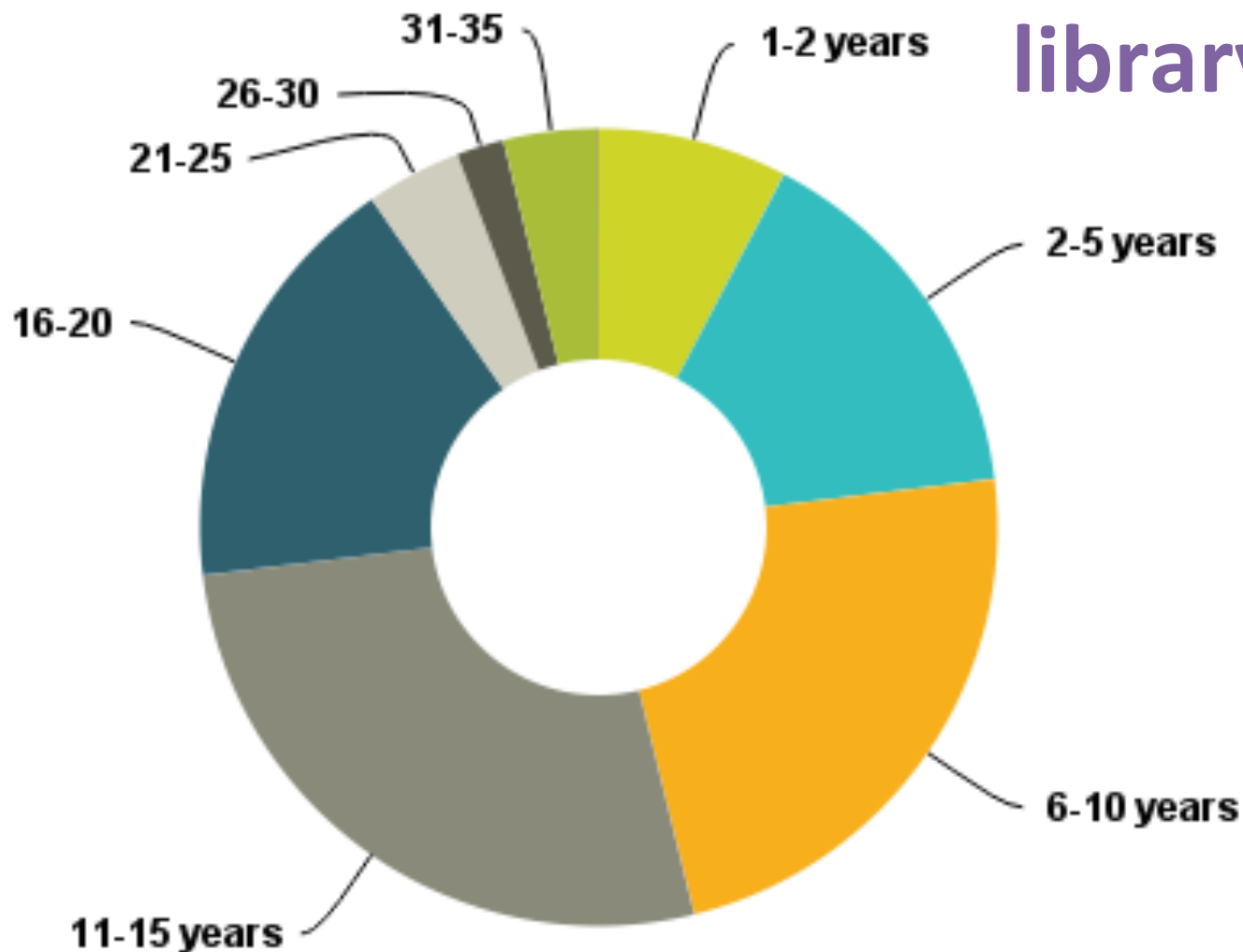
Country of employment



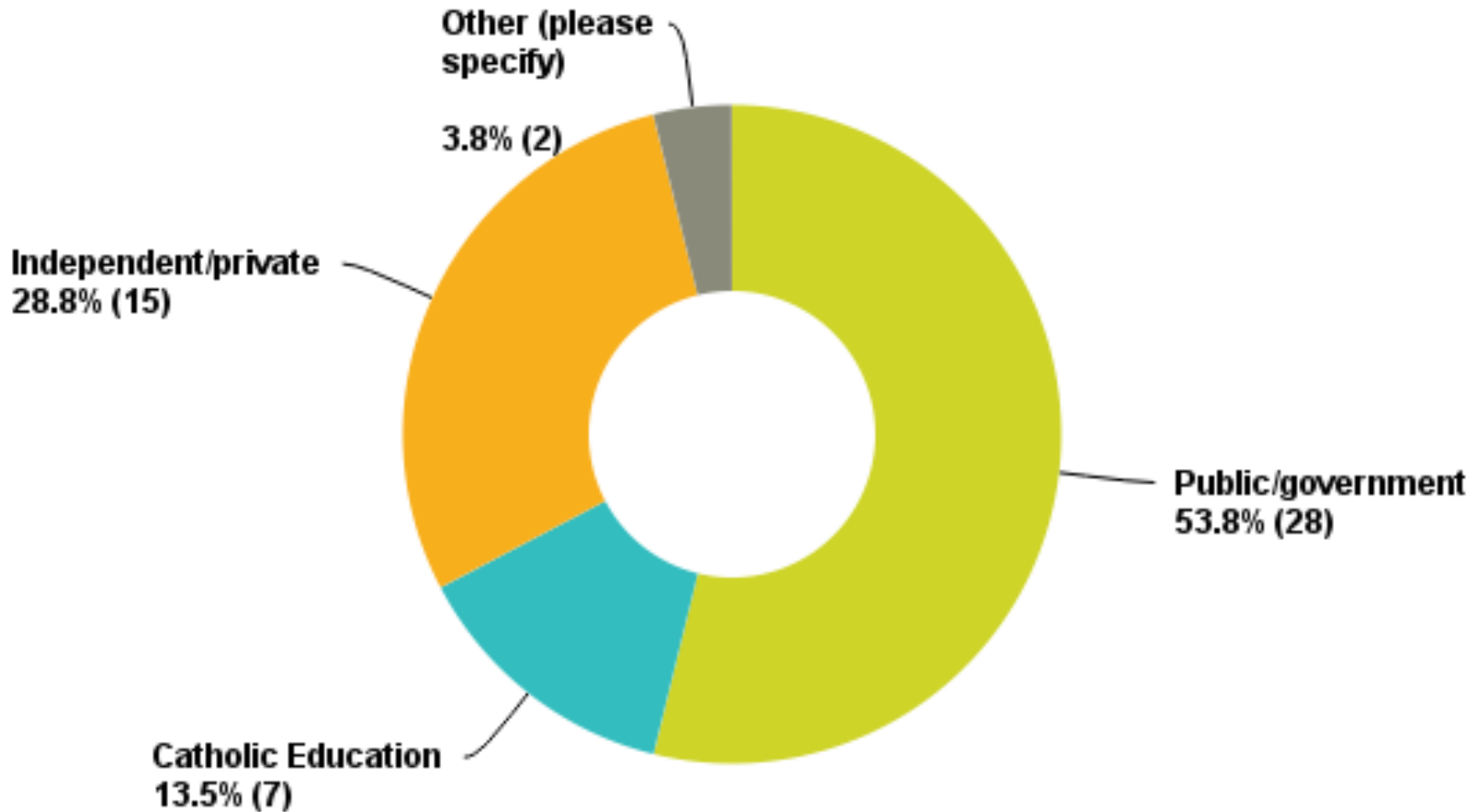
Other: Egypt, Japan, Portugal



Years of employment on a school library team



School type



Types of EBP training

Types of EBP training undertaken to help SLs gather, analyze and report local evidence (18 responses):

- Professional Development/Workshops – by education systems or regions, conference sessions, all day seminars
- Masters Courses, e.g. MEdTL, MEd(Learning Analytics)
- Training Programs
- Training through Professional Associations
- Professional Reading
- Whole school-based initiative
- No formal training



Factors supporting EBP

5 key factors that have assisted SLs in undertaking EBP activities in their school (15 responses):

1. Support from School

- School based inquiry support
- Access to students in regular classes
- Involvement in whole school assessment analysis workshops
- The change to analyze and propose improvements/ solutions
- Evidence based practice training for across school initiatives and a school-wide expectation for reflection and innovation



Factors supporting EBP

2. Peers

- Practice of peer support & peer reviews in school
- Social networking, e.g. Twitter, Facebook groups,
- Other online networking, e.g. webinars, listservs
- F-2-F conference presentations
- Accessing knowledge of practices in other schools & the benefits of EBP

“Having seen exemplars from other TLs to help me make a start on creating suitable questions.”



Factors supporting EBP

3. Internal Motivation

“The desire to show how the library does support student learning.”

“Curiosity and the need to feel up-to-date with tendencies”

4. Surveys & record keeping tools/processes

- Library management system tools, recording number of classes, teachers, students using the library, Survey Monkey to easily collect survey data from staff and students

5. Professional certification process/promotion

- Gathering evidence to meet professional standards for teachers



Factors hindering EBP in school

Factors that have hindered SLs in undertaking EBP activities in their school (24 responses):

- Lack of time/Heavy workload
- Staffing Levels
- Lack of knowledge/Uncertainty
- Lack of support from other teachers
- Lack of support from administration
- Budget
- Lack of access to EBP initiatives
- School Environment



Factors hindering EBP

Lack of time

Too busy to investigate

Workload

Other teaching duties

Sufficient time with students to ensure meaningful collection of evidence

Lack of support staff to focus on collecting more evidence

Unsure of what data to collect and how to maximize the audience that see the evidence

Lack of clear understanding of strategies to apply

Unclear about what data would make a difference to decision makers

The seeming unwillingness of time-pressed, curriculum-pressed subject teachers to want to try something different.



Sources used to inform EBP

Sources of research evidence SLs have used to inform EBP activities (30 responses):

- Journals
- Conferences, seminars & workshops
- Websites & social media
- Masters courses
- Books
- Professional association resources
- Discussion Lists
- School - Professional Development



Types of school library practice informed by scholarly literature

- Guided Inquiry
- Technology
- Reading
- Library Space
- Staff Collaboration
- Information Literacy
- Assessment
- Peer Review
- Copyright
- Inquiry
- Visible Learning & Design Thinking
- Respondents' own research process & professional learning



How TLs have applied evidence to inform practice

Sources of research evidence SLs have used to inform EBP activities (30 responses):

- Teaching
- Assessment & evaluation
- Collection development
- Discussions & planning with administration
- Sharing with others
- Policy
- Staffing
- Overall role



Using evidence to inform practice

I am currently busy looking at the Grade 8 Information Learning programme with my colleague. We are trying to make everything we do about the learning process as activity-based as we can.

We are somewhat frustrated as we see the classes only x1 in a 10 day cycle for 40 mins and everything is compartmentalised into subjects, and [is] very marks-driven and marks-orientated. The teachers see these as free lessons for themselves.



Using evidence to address school priorities

I made an appointment with the Principal to find out his goals for the school for next year so I can see how the library can support his goals.

We presented the results in a meeting of the School Board.



Using evidence to get what you want 😊

To increase staffing, as Guided Inquiry teaching throughout subject areas has increased.

Discussion

- Evidence–based practice is still seen as an ‘add on’
- Issue of time vs priority
- Absence of data collection strategies
- Overall, SLs say they need more training in EBP
- Those with some training, need more than basic EBP101 style training – project-based mentoring could be one solution?
- Evidence for, in and of – the gaps

WHERE IS YOUR EVIDENCE?

HOW DO YOU GET IT?



**IF IT IS IMPORTANT
TO YOU, YOU WILL
FIND A WAY.**

**IF NOT
YOU'LL FIND
AN EXCUSE**

Emphasis on INFORMATION

- **Number of classes in the library**
- **Number of library items borrowed**
- **Number of students using the library at lunch times**
- **Number of items purchased annually**
- **Number of web searches**
- **Number of books lost**

And who can do this?



Emphasis on KNOWLEDGE

Understanding how school libraries help kids learn: Learning outcomes in terms of

- Knowledge outcomes – deep mastery of content through inquiry
- Information processes: transformation of information into new knowledge through inquiry
- Information technology: using tools to construct representations of knowledge and to present new knowledge
- Reading for learning in digital and print formats
- Independent learning: knowledge transfer
- Attitudes and values of information, learning
- Self concept and personal agency

And who can do this?



Mission Statements & Policy Documents

Contexts for Evidence

School Library Policy and Mission Statements:

- **Redefine school libraries from Place to Experience**
- **Shift in focus from School Library as collections, access, information literacy, to inquiry, thinking, knowledge development and learning outcomes**

Does your mission and policy statements do this?



Research tells us what to focus on:

How school libraries help

From information Deficiency to
Information Agency

- Reading-to-learn capabilities
- Resource-based capabilities
- Thinking-based capabilities
- Knowledge-based capabilities
- Learning management capabilities
- Personal and interpersonal capabilities

Learn to write evidence-based claims

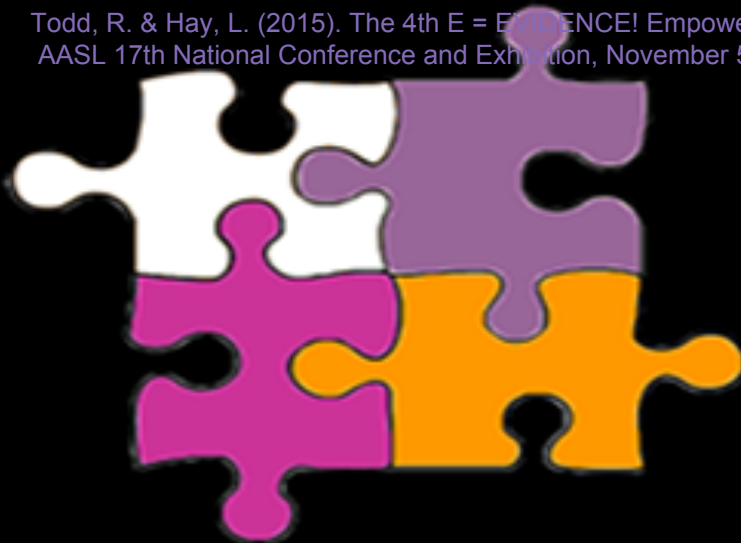
- **Following an inquiry-based unit of work, 70% students showed improved ability in formulating essential questions that directed their inquiry as compared to their previous research task**
- **As a result of instructional interventions focusing on the development of arguments, students showed stronger ability to identify claims, provide supporting evidence and to identify rebuttals**
- **Students' final products showed improved ability to analyze and synthesize information**
- **Students' research reports showed improved ability to draw conclusions and state implications of their findings**
- **Students' presentations showed ability to present different viewpoints and to provide a strong and supported case for their own position**



Example of Claims

- **93% of the students showed mastery of strategies for evaluating websites for misinformation and bias**
- **Following instructional interventions that focused on establishing the quality of websites, 100% of the students' bibliographies showed use of high quality websites**
- **Based on a pre-test of initial and final knowledge of the Grade 8 science curriculum topic, students' knowledge of their topics changed from descriptive and random listing of facts to statements that showed explanations, conflicting knowledge and making predictions**
- **Students' products showed increasing complexity of language used to describe their knowledge, and the ordering of this knowledge into conceptually coherent units**
- **83 % of the class show improved ability in thoughtfully analyzing and evaluating major alternative points of view**





Evidence-based practice for School Libraries

How to Build Your Evidence Base

Tools and measures for charting &
documenting evidence

CiSSL WEB SITE

- <http://cissl.rutgers.edu/joomla-license/impact-studies/57-impact-studies-slim>

- **Student Learning through Inquiry Measure (SLIM)**

SLIM Handbook

-

SLIM Reflection Instruments and Scoring Guidelines

SLIM Scoring Sheet



Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries



Evidence-based practice for **School Libraries**

Inquiry Reflection Tasks

Tasks 1, 2 & 3 consisted of the following questions

1. Write the title that best describes your research project at this time.
2. Take some time to think about your research topic. Now write down what you know about this topic.
3. What interests you about this topic?
4. How much do you know about this topic? Check (✓) one box that best matches how much you know. Nothing, Not much, Some, Quite a bit and A great deal
5. Write down what you think is EASY about researching your topic.
6. Write down what you think is DIFFICULT about researching your topic.
7. Write down how you are FEELING now about your project. Check (✓) only the boxes that apply to you. Confident, Disappointed, Relieved, Frustrated, Confused, Optimistic, Uncertain, Satisfied, Anxious or Other.



Analysis of student bibliographies

- **Diversity of choice of sources**
- **Depth / levels of knowledge**
- **Accuracy of citations**
- **Relevance to learning task**
- **Use of multiple formats**
- **Engaging with state-of-the art knowledge – recency / accuracy**
- **Reasons for choice of source**



Evidence through formal feedback strategies

Examples

- **Simple feedback – survey every term on what the library does “best” and “least” to help students with their school work**
- **Feedback at end of instructional unit: what helped and did not help**
- **Feedback on quality of resources**
- **Feedback on what students could do better at**
- **Use of “How School Libraries Help” survey instrument (Ohio / Australia)**
- **Judicious use of evidence: How learning is enabled and hindered**



Student Learning Through Ohio School Libraries

“Now, remember one time when the school library really helped you. Write about the help that you got, and what you were able to do because of it”.

TODD, R. & KUHLTHAU, C. (2005). Student learning through Ohio school libraries, Part 1: How effective school libraries help students. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 11(1), 89-110.

Students' Voices

- **1015** I would have never have found the sources I needed for the paper if not for the school library, the public library, and the helpful people who staff those places. They even showed me steps to work through to do the research and complete it. They ran some classes specifically for us and they were very very very helpful
- **1075** Well one time was when we had to do a report on Animals and I had no clue how to find information about my animal. So Mrs. X helped me find the information on the computer. On the internet if its true or false – to learn that is very important at school.



Students' Voices

- **3532** I was working on History project and we had to have several sources (primary documents) and the librarians instructed the students on how to go about finding the information we needed and compiling it into something worthwhile. I was able to combine everything together and earn a good grade.
- **100** I needed help doing a project for government that had to do with presidents and they had so many books and then the librarian helped me find web sites. But then they gave me ways of sorting through all the ideas to extract the key points so I could get my head around it all



Reflections: Students

- ***Question formulating was difficult and required a lot of thinking and deliberating.***
- ***I was very interested in my topic, it made me think what life was like back then. I want to read more about my topic.***
- ***These skills have come in handy for some of my other projects.***
- ***I saw the value of multiple sources to cross check information for reliability***
- ***I loved making up my own questions. (This) made me more comfortable with what I was researching.***
- ***The thing you have to know before you start researching is if you are interested in the topic or not. And if you are not, you will not make a big effort to find the information you want. So, always choose a topic that you are interested in!...***



- **Number of collaborations**
- **Instructional focus of collaborations (curriculum outcomes and inquiry-based interventions)**
- **Subject / grade levels**
- **Teacher observations of student engagement**
- **Teacher summary of outcomes**
- **Teacher summary of benefits**

Teacher- Related Strategies



Plan ~ Action ~ Evidence



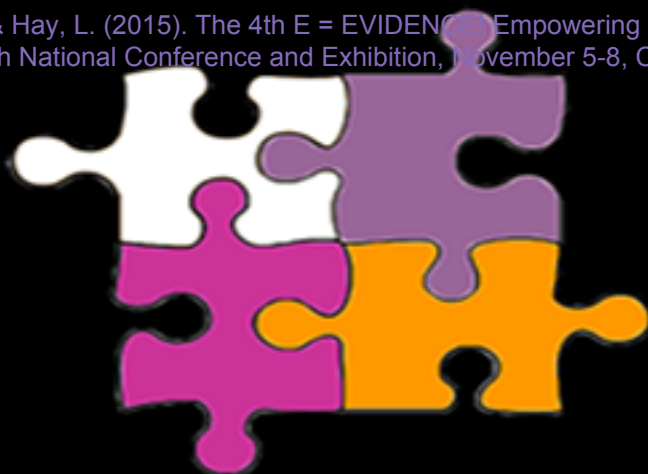
EBP Action Plan Template

This template helps you identify key stages of an EBP initiative and articulate a plan for action.

Use a separate template for each EBP initiative.

Complete each of the following EBP stages:	Who is responsible	Resources required	Timeline
1. Aspect of school library program you wish to measure for impact:			
2. Research literature documenting evidence/impact of this aspect of school library program:			
3. Type(s) of evidence required to demonstrate impact of this aspect of school library program: Student evidence: Program evidence:			

<https://studentslearn.wordpress.com/>



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