

**ALISE '13**

**Always the Beautiful Question:**

Inquiry Supporting Teaching,  
Research, & Professional Practice

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**ciSSL**

Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries

# School Librarian Educators SIG

## One Common Goal: Student Learning

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# RUTGERS Always the beautiful question... about:

- **Educational preparedness for 21<sup>st</sup>C learning and working**
- **Transformation of information provision & access: digital devices**
- **Changing arena of content publishing**
- **Changing culture of reading / literacy development**
- **New technology frontiers for learning: virtual worlds, gaming**
- **Creative pedagogies centering on information-based inquiry & intellectual rigor in learning**
- **The ongoing closure of school libraries: questions of future, function, format, facilities, funding**



**Effective Leadership**

- Focus on all students learning
- Dynamic and distributed leadership
- Sustained improvement efforts over time

**Quality Teaching and Learning**

- High expectations and accountability for adults
- Coordinated and aligned curriculum and assessment
- Coordinated and embedded professional development
- Quality classroom instruction

**Support for Systemwide Improvement**

- Effective use of data
- Strategic allocation of resources
- Policy and program coherence

**Clear & Collaborative Relationships**

- Professional culture and collaborative relationships
- Clear understanding of school and district roles and responsibilities
- Interpreting and managing the external environment

**Report of Findings  
and Recommendations of the  
New Jersey School Library Survey  
Phase 1**

**Report of Findings  
and Recommendations of the  
New Jersey School Library Survey  
Phase 2**



**One Common Goal:  
Student Learning**

Prepared by Dr. Ross J. Todd, Dr. Carol A. Gordon,  
and Dr. Ya-Ling Lu

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[NJASL Phase 2 Report - One Common Goal: Student Learning](#)

[NJASL Phase 1 Report - One Common Goal: Student Learning](#)

[School Libraries, Now More than Ever - CiSSL Position Paper](#)



## Welcome to the Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries

The Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries (CiSSL), as the leading international center dedicated to school libraries worldwide, provides an arena for the international community of school library scholars and practitioners to generate produce and share a substantial body of rigorous research on the dynamics and impacts of school libraries on student learning.

- **The overall research agenda (Phases 1 and 2) sought:**
- **(a) to construct a picture of the status of New Jersey's school libraries in the educational landscape of New Jersey;**
- **(b) to understand the contribution of quality school libraries to education in New Jersey;**
- **(c) to understand the contextual and professional dynamics that enable school libraries to contribute significantly to education in New Jersey, and**
- **(d) to make recommendations to NJ stakeholders to develop a sustained and long term program of capacity building and evidence-based continuous improvement of school libraries in New Jersey.**

- Examined 12 schools whose librarians reported high levels of collaboration with teachers in Phase 1 survey of the study.
- Focus groups in the schools were comprised of school principal, curriculum leaders, school librarian, and classroom teachers, including specialists such as special needs and literacy teachers (97 participants). The focus groups addressed the following themes:
  - **Theme 1:** In what ways does the school support learning through the school library?
  - **Theme 2:** In what ways, if any, does the school library contribute to learning?
  - **Theme 3:** What do students learn through their interaction and engagement with the school library?
  - **Theme 4:** How do you envision the future of school libraries

- **Whole school values learning and working collaboratively**
- **School leadership view: learning-centered vision of the school librarian**
- **Focus on quality teachers and effective teachers, and librarian as co-teacher**
- **Value complex information capabilities and expert use of media and technology to build content knowledge for work and living**
- **Vision and leadership of school principals who see the unique learning opportunities provided through the school library, despite the cost, and have the courage to make a financial commitment to the school library**

- *(School Principal) In the center part of our school upstairs is the library, and the main office is the center part of the downstairs and I always say that downstairs is where we ruin school culture and upstairs is where we make it.*
- *(School Principal): It really comes down to the willingness of the media center teachers, or librarians, to embrace their role in school culture. ... I can only define it as kids love coming to our school and this is one of those components.*

- For students, the primary focus of SL is on *building capacity for critical engagement* with information and producing knowledge (not finding “stuff”)
- For faculty, SL is a center of learning innovation, experimenting with technology and information; enhancing teaching skills using information and technology (disruptive innovation)
- The role of the school librarian as co-teacher is the most powerful dynamic in the sustainability of school libraries
- Teachers recognize the instructional expertise of school librarians and actively seek out this expertise, and consistently highlighted the sustained, active use of the school library by them and their students

**The dimensions of school library practice that have contributed to their sustainability and continuous improvement include:**

- **Substantive and highly visible instructional role as co-teachers, and not necessarily in the library**
- **An inquiry-centered pedagogy**
- **Knowledge-outcomes orientation of the school library**
- **School librarians as professional development leaders**

- **Inquiry-based instruction implemented through instructional teams: collaborative pedagogy**
- **Mutuality of working towards one common goal – enabling core curriculum content standards**
- **Gives emphasis to intellectual agency for developing deep knowledge and understanding: curriculum outcomes**
- **Builds excitement, interest and motivation for learning**
- **Engages students as content providers who produce creative products that represent knowledge acquisition**
- **Staged process of inquiry-based learning; students are not left to their own devices to undertake substantial research projects**
- **School library portrayed as a common ground across the school for meeting individual and special needs**
- **Literacies include visual literacy, print literacy, media literacy, digital literacy, and technological literacies –best described as transliteracies**

- *(Supervisor of Instruction) There's the idea such as media literacy, visual literacy, information literacy – it's all folded under the umbrella of 21<sup>st</sup> century inquiry skills ... and inquiry is the heart of our school.*
- *(Language Arts Supervisor) ...in terms of contributing to the learning process, the library does it, but on two different levels: ... content support but also skills support. Sometimes those skills are ... more imperative than the content because they are lifelong skills that teachers are supporting through their content as well.*

- **Principals are willing to support the acquisition of resources for the school library with an adequate budget because they perceive the school librarian as a good teacher who actively engages in curriculum planning, instruction, and knowledge outcomes**
- **Teachers expressed deep emotion about how school librarians helped them to be better teachers.**
- **Principals recognize the need to provide professional development for school librarians that enables them to be good teachers and good teachers of teachers**

- *(Science Teacher) Basically like guided inquiry on students, and teachers side as well – like they're guiding you along the way, and they're helping you breakdown preconceived notions of something you need to research. I think of the library here as a think tank ... That's true inquiry.*
- *(Teacher) I would like to say the librarians do two things exceptionally well in process – [they] spend a considerable amount of time planning for teachers to understand the research process, and helping them align what part of research cycle or stage they might want to start with. So they model for teachers what is good practice of inquiry and do the same for students. They model student-learning behaviors. And they seem to be able to seamlessly do that, whether they're working with adults or students.*

- **Considerable in-school training of teachers, delivering effective professional development with ongoing support**
- **Primarily takes place in instructional collaborations**
- **Plays a dynamic role in building collaborative and collegial relationships among staff members through sharing of information-learning expertise, ideas, problems and solutions**
- **School libraries as part of a “culture of help”**
- **Support for professional development**

- ***(Teacher) We have fantastic media specialists who continue to keep up, to keep abreast with all of the new innovations in technology which is not always easy because things are happening so quickly .... But our media specialists will come in and will teach the teachers how to go about creating wikis; they will teach students how to access it.***
- ***(Supervisor of Instruction) [The school librarians] spent a lot of time with us understanding the components of discovery – a metaphor for good research. ... They made sure we knew process and the tools and how to use them in the context of any class where a teacher would want to use research. We can model effective research for the students.***

**DIGITAL YOUTH**

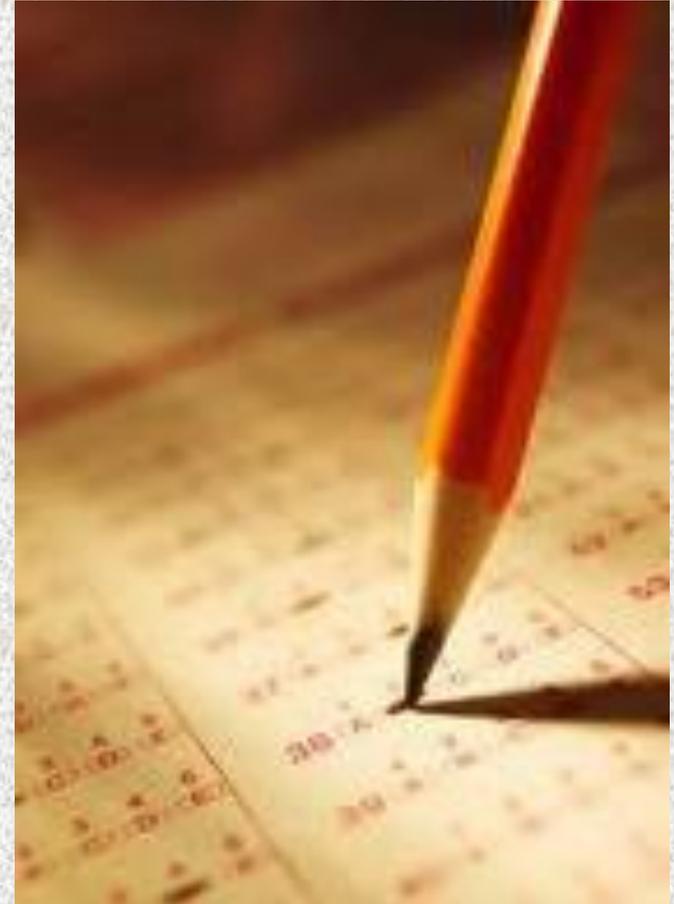
**INFORMATION WORLDS**

**ETHICAL  
CREATORS OF  
INFORMATION**



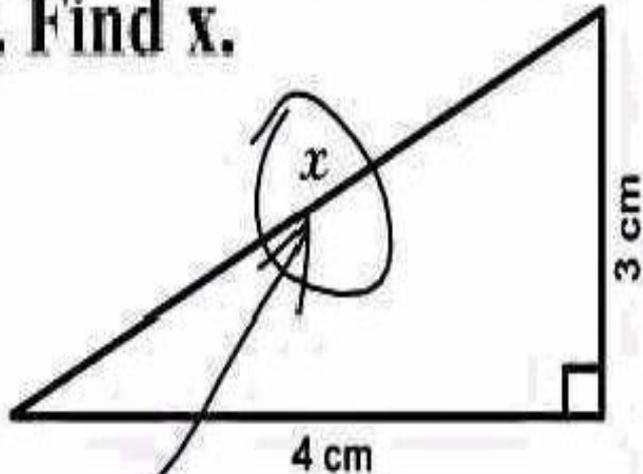
- **The instructional role of SL is significant mechanism for the development of students as digital citizens**
- **Recognizing quality information in multiple modes and across multiple platforms: Accessing quality information across diverse formats and platforms**
- **Participating in digital communication in collaborative, ethical ways to share ideas, work together & produce knowledge**
- **Using sophisticated information technology tools to search, access, create and demonstrate new knowledge  
Learning appropriate ethical approaches & behaviors in relation to use of digital technologies**
- **Understanding the dangers inherent in the use of complex information technologies , learning strategies to protect identity, personal information, & safety**

- **School libraries make lasting contributions rather than temporal ones**
- **Development of a range of capabilities and dispositions that can last a life time and have salience beyond schooling and not merely school-based achievement**
  - **navigating the information landscape**
  - **career skills**
  - **digital citizenship**
  - **ethical behaviors**
  - **lifelong learning capabilities**



- Global economy and society as the destiny of learners: **digital citizenship**
- Rigorous content and skills: **learning integration**
- Application of knowledge and understanding to solve serious world problems: **application**
- Higher order thinking skills: high level cognitive demands. Development of critical and reflective capacity: reasoning, justification, synthesis, analysis, and problem-solving **transformation**
- Progression of learning that is meaningful and appropriate: **authentic inquiry-centered learning**
- Research and evidence-based practice: **research-based pedagogy**

3. Find  $x$ .



*Here it is*

Dear Algebra,  
Stop asking us to find your  $X$   
She's not coming back

We don't know  $Y$  either