The Innovative School Librarian

SECOND EDITION

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Preface

Katya received a visit by fellow librarians to see the new school library. She prepared for the visit by displaying information on all her most recent activities to demonstrate how the library contributed to assessment for learning, reader development, teaching of 16–18 year olds and staff training. Katya observed that her visitors wanted to look at her stock and her general displays and to discuss how she managed overdue books. Several times she drew their attention to the information that showcased her wider activities but the majority of her visitors remained focused on the room's resources and its management rather than moving to a discussion of teaching and learning.

Although the context of school librarianship has changed dramatically over the past seven years, we believe that the fundamental concerns introduced in this vignette, which opened the first edition of this book in 2009, remain the same. School librarians are still faced with difficult decisions about their roles, priorities and activities: the shape of their contribution to teaching and learning within their schools. Therefore in this second edition we still aim to prompt school librarians to stand back from their day-to-day activity and critically re-examine their

values, philosophy and what defines their professional practice. We have maintained our focus on ways of thinking about the job of school librarian rather than on its operational responsibilities. However we do not underplay the changes that have occurred since 2009 and recognize the many different ways in which context affects what we do and what we are able to achieve. In response we discuss the challenges and opportunities accorded by such changes as burgeoning technologies and resource cuts, and offer new vignettes describing current situations.

We recognize that there are big differences between schools: different curricula, different patterns of governance and management; and different levels and types of resources, before we even get to the students and teachers. This inevitably leads to big differences between school libraries. However, through working internationally with colleagues from the USA, Australia, Sweden, Denmark, Lithuania and Portugal, we know that school librarians share many common concerns as well as a common vision of what we are trying to achieve. We therefore believe that this book has international relevance because although the authors are school librarians working in the UK and use UK examples, the book addresses principles and issues that all school librarians need to confront during their career, whatever their context.

We invite you to take what you want from this book and adapt the ideas to your own context. We are not trying to provide solutions to your everyday problems. We are challenging you as a school librarian to think more widely, to be strategic and to move outside your comfort zone into the heart of teaching and learning in your school. But we are also challenging you to do this in a way that connects deeply to your underpinning beliefs about the role of the school library and school librarian. To this end, the book raises issues to consider, questions to pose, and approaches to analysing your role. We hope that this will enable you to examine your practice critically and find the innovative responses that will work for you.

We have tried to illuminate the ideas in this book through vignettes that present some real experiences of school librarians. We hope that the vignettes will resonate with you and enable you to look afresh at elements of your own practice. The vignettes may indicate a way forward or the unexpected consequences of a course of action. However, they are not meant to be blueprints for action nor do we use them to suggest that everyone will find themselves in the situations outlined.

This book was written collaboratively by five school librarians and a lecturer in higher education. The school librarians work in very different environments (schools with different types of students, different rationales for the school library, different roles for the school library, different priorities and different governance). This collaboration involved us in a sustained quest for clarity and understanding. The process of collaboration forced us to share our assumptions, examine our prejudices and justify our interpretations. Effective collaboration is not about gaining consensus, but about crafting something more than can be achieved individually. Our different realities have been brought to bear on each chapter. The challenge has been to find significant things to say that all of us are happy to subscribe to.

How to read this book

We hope that you will read the chapters in this book in the order that they are presented. This is because we believe that coming to think and act differently is a cumulative experience; we have therefore constructed this book as a narrative designed to lead the reader through a succession of issues, culminating in the chapter on innovation, which we see as the key to renewing and refreshing our professional identities.

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PART 1

WHO IS THE LIBRARIAN?

CHAPTER 1

Professionalism and the school librarian

Why should professionalism be important to us? This has always been a hotly debated topic, across all sectors of librarianship because of its links to status, conduct and quality of service. In recent years we have been travelling through a global economic downturn, which combined with changes in UK government policy has resulted in a rapidly changing educational environment. In order to negotiate our identity within this context we need to make difficult choices, amid a plethora of changing expectations. This chapter will examine professionalism in the belief that it remains fundamental to our work identities.

How do we develop these identities and how do they link to our practice of librarianship?

When writing eight years ago, it was within the context of campaigning in the UK for statutory recognition of school libraries. Now we write at a time when library services in many sectors are being reduced or closed and so discussion of this issue of professionalism is ever more important. Indeed, many schools around the world are not fortunate enough to have a library and those that exist may not have statutory status or be run by someone with a librarianship qualification which results in provision of uneven quality. They may be run by teachers, teaching assistants, clerical assistants or volunteers who bring

to the role a variety of qualifications and experience. The professional organization for librarians in the UK – the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) – has moved towards promoting and implementing a framework of qualifications and accreditation, which covers the whole spectrum of those working in our field. There are different stages available on the same road of continuing professional development: Certification, Chartership and Fellowship (CILIP 2014a). Following this pathway or maintaining our footfall on it through the re-validation process, regardless of our starting point, demonstrates our commitment to professionalism.

If we cannot think about professionalism in terms of qualifications, experience or the promise of statutory status, where does that leave our ideas of professionalism? Traditionally we may view the general characteristics of a professional as altruistic, principled and ethical. Membership of a professional organization usually entails the upholding of a charter that sets out a code of conduct and standards to be maintained. Professional people may build up a sense of autonomy derived from their beliefs, ideals and standards, which lead them where necessary to stand in opposition to authority or even state control. The reality of the modern world is complex and notions of professionalism are more open to varied interpretation than they were in the past.

In this discussion there is another element that must be considered: identity. This has several layers, adding complications and requiring some reflection.

What influences the school librarian's professional identity?

Professionalism is not about status but about establishing worth, and that can only be conferred by those using the library service. Our professional identity is not only a personal construct but affected by

and in a sense co-created by those around us. This is explored in a number of ways in Chapter 2. Insight can be gained from examining how others see us and our practice. One of the ways this can be done is by looking at the ways in which they construct our role. Job descriptions are a concrete expression of espoused values and can be used as a trigger for dialogue about our roles. To study job descriptions in greater depth we would recommend looking at *CILIP Guidelines for Secondary School Libraries* (Shaper, 2014).

The work environment

The work environment, with its intricate rituals and pressures, is a microcosm of wider society. The social and political realities of our work relationships can present enjoyment, satisfaction, bewilderment, alienation and heartache. The nature of the organization affects our professional identity. In some schools, the librarian is seen as the keeper of books, in others, as someone working at the heart of the learning process. One of the strongest influences will be the lead set by the head teacher. His or her vision of education and how far it permeates the senior leadership team is fundamental to the organization and the librarian's place within it.

Lia Kanton's head teacher gave an assembly for World Book Day about his reading habits and began by saying that he always asks Ms Kanton in the library to choose some books for his teenage son because she knows all the latest ones and never fails to find something that really suits him.

This head teacher invested Lia with authority in the minds of his audience. Within a school, everyone will have different views of the librarian, influenced by their previous experiences and the attitudes of those around them.

Our confidence and effectiveness in responding to the range of demands made, develops our professional identity in the eyes of others, so too do our image and appearance. This does not refer to the power-dressing concept of the 1980s, but to group theory. If we want to be part of a group, then we need to adopt their characteristics. If the leaders in our organization dress smartly, then we should do the same to be identified with their values.

Our professional identity

Our underlying purpose and values create the professional identity we wish to perpetuate. Where these are unclear to others the visibility of our role within the school is adversely affected. This is where a deeper consideration of group theory can take our understanding to the next level. Forsyth (2006) describes the stages of Tuckman's theory of group development as forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. At this point we will focus on stage 2: 'storming', which refers to engagement and intellectual conflict with each other; it is where appreciation of other viewpoints is gained and jointly understood meanings are achieved. Ideally this process helps provide individuals with insight into ways forward, establishing norms in order to achieve the group goals (norming); conversely it can also highlight reasons why a group is unable to work well together. One cannot reach successful 'performance' without developing those relationships.

The importance of this concept is underlined by the findings of research into teachers' understanding of information literacy (Williams and Wavell, 2006b). This found that although teachers understood information literacy to be a useful consideration they found the linear models used by librarians to be too prescriptive and simplistic. These models were more about the practice of information literacy in a library context than that used in the classroom. In learning from this research,

librarians continue to engage with teachers to find ways within their subject contexts to develop student skills. Tuckman (quoted in Forsyth, 2006) emphasizes that some of his stages are cyclical, so 'storming' may be a continual process for teachers and librarians to explore and negotiate meanings. Our professional role cannot be understood by teachers unless we engage intellectually with them.

How we are received and treated reinforces our professional identity and in this context the concept of cognitive authority is particularly relevant to librarians working in the education sector. Cognitive authority (Wilson, 1983) is concerned with how people construct knowledge from their experience and the ideas of other people. The term cognitive authority is applied to a person or source of information that is seen as credible and therefore is allowed to have influence over one's thinking. If a colleague who is seen as authoritative by others introduces us as an expert, then they extend their authority to us. This was illustrated in the vignette about Lia whose head teacher referred to her as a source of expertise for reading recommendations. This conferring of authority establishes our professional identity in the eyes of students and colleagues. Subsequently, as established staff members we can similarly confer cognitive authority on others.

We bring different qualities to the role and identity of school librarian from our previous career experiences. Indeed some of us believe that the solo librarianship experience, common in schools, can be a gruelling one for a young professional. Well developed professional experience may be an advantage in such situations. Reasons for job choice affect our engagement and motivation in the post and this is reflected in the development of our professional identity. Whatever our background, the difficulties of this challenging role should not be underestimated. Further complications may arise when we enter an organization where the predominant view of the librarian's role is at odds with our personal vision. This will be explored further in Chapter 3.

One way forward is to consider the issues identified in different discourses of professionalism. These give us indicators about what professional practice looks like and what we are doing when we act professionally. There are many different models and each has strengths and weaknesses. They help us to examine ourselves as professionals in our schools and give us ways of moving on. Their influences help determine our priorities for how time and money should be spent in service provision. The theories that follow are not just about UK school librarianship but are relevant to all sectors of the library profession in all parts of the world.

We will discuss these different discourses and their implications for us in the next section. To identify a discourse that is relevant to us begins a process of negotiation around the meaning of our role within the context of our workplace.

The discourses of professionalism

The language we use daily within our institutions is a reflection of the organization's accepted thinking. We use it to drive institutional policies and shape behaviour and responses. Such is the power of language that it creates a narrative that shapes our practice and identity. This is what we mean by discourse. On a larger scale discourse is a powerful tool used in the formation of policy by governments to solicit support and compliance. The study of discourse is mainly derived from the seminal work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1972). We can easily recognize its continuing significance in education where the use of language is always evolving to influence people's understanding and acceptance. For instance, 'remedial studies' of the 1960s and 1970s became 'special needs' in the 1980s and is now often referred to as 'learning support' (and, in the school library world, the 'school library' became a 'learning

resource centre' or has evolved across the Atlantic to be a 'media resource center').

The discourse of managerialism

Typically the discourse of managerialism is externally imposed; it is not about individuals negotiating what they want to do. We may have some say in types of target-setting but generally this is done to other people's expectations. The discourse of managerialism emphasizes the manager's role in instilling accountability into the organization's culture. The discourse of managerialism is usually identified with the methods of the private sector that have been transferred to the public sector to encourage a culture of efficiency and economy. It aims to encourage conduct and activities that are considered appropriate in a market environment, as the market mechanism is considered to be the best driver of effectiveness. This is done by linking evaluation processes and performance review to value for money.

In education, the externally imposed demands are those of exam boards and publication of exam result league tables coupled with a system of inspection to monitor implementation. Knowledge of how we will be evaluated influences our behaviour, hence the pressure that teachers feel to 'teach to the test' rather than give attention to topics or skills that they might consider more appropriate for their students. School improvement plans could be seen as an outcome of the managerial discourse, as they allocate resources to desired changes, which are linked to central government priorities. Some of us may criticize this level of prescription and setting of common standards for reducing the level of autonomy available to teachers and librarians. Others see this as a method of achieving change for the better, in a manner that is rapid and cost-effective.

The managerialism of target-setting and the drive for cost-

effectiveness can lead to tensions with the philosophies and ethics of librarianship. For example, public libraries in the UK are mainly measured by their issue statistics and therefore must tailor a large part of their stock to materials that are in high demand. On the surface this appears to be a sound business response. However, this can cause a tension with the public libraries' remit to support learning in the community. A traditional public library philosophy has been to fulfil the role of 'the people's university', but public libraries have been criticized for failing to develop the breadth and depth of their collections in the race to satisfy mainstream demands (Christie, 2008; Coates, 2013). Their approach to stock acquisition has also attracted criticism, when these processes have been contracted out to one major supplier for cost-efficiency reasons. It is possible that this has resulted in the purchase of materials of far less diversity than previously, leading to a neglect of smaller publishing houses and local bookselling businesses. Potentially this affects the quality and diversity of books published for all of us as the market adjusts to meet these big customer demands. Ethically, most librarians would avoid taking actions that are likely to be detrimental to the community and culture of the book trade. Librarians in large organizations are not responsible for all such decisions and pragmatism prevails in the face of managerialism.

If diversity of stock is contracting there is a conflict with the ethics of information provision and a greater danger of not meeting the needs of all parts of a community. Why should a service be valued by the whole community if it is not meeting the needs of all parts of that community?

The managerial model of school librarianship is one where we express effectiveness quantitatively, by value-added and other audit-measurable terms. This emphasizes the management skills of systems analysis, target-setting and evaluation. For the school librarian this may involve counting issues, reservations, catalogue use, student and class

visits, and reporting on the size of collections and how they map to the curriculum. The following vignette demonstrates this approach.

The performance target of Alan, a school librarian, was to support a new module on the Tudors for A-level history. He provided publishers' catalogues for the teachers to select from and then purchased the items. A special subject heading was added to the online library catalogue so that pupils would be able to locate the selected books. Alan also used this heading to track the issue statistics. At the end of the year he produced a short report for the history department, which showed that very few resources had been borrowed.

In this example, Alan measured the library's effectiveness by assessing its system performance, just as when we measure a school's effectiveness only through its exam results, we know this tells us very little about the nature of the learning that takes place there. We may find in our schools that we have targets set for us to achieve, data that we are required to collect, but does that reflect what we really do?

The deputy head responsible for data analysis identified that those students with the highest number of classroom exclusions also had the weakest literacy levels. In order to improve their engagement with lessons she developed a holistic programme run by learning mentors. As part of that offer she asked the librarian to develop a reading project that would build the students' confidence and allow them to experience success as readers.

Clearly this deputy head's priorities, supported by the data, are to improve relationships and learning experiences for these students. Target-setting and number-crunching are tools and not necessarily ends in themselves. Even though we are operating under a managerial-style imposed target we can still reflect our philosophy of librarianship

in our reporting. Do the data we report focus on teaching and learning through using resources, or only focus on the resources themselves?

If Alan in the earlier vignette had surveyed the history students to find out why their library usage was low, he might have obtained insights that would not surface through study of the systems data alone. Such an exercise could reveal barriers such as the lack of study space available in the library or a perception of the library not being a welcoming place, or simply that the history teachers never suggest that students use the library.

We can develop good practice as a result of personal learning and individuality rather than from an externally imposed set of standards or targets, as demonstrated in the following vignette.

Margaret was inspired by the master's programme she was studying, and developed an excellent library programme of activities as part of her school's chosen specialism: performing arts. A new deputy head teacher began to draw on Margaret's energy and resources to develop activities as part of initiatives to raise standards in spelling and grammar. Margaret had to re-prioritize her workload to meet these new demands. In addition to organizing the required spelling bee rounds across the school she also continued to provide poetry and writing competitions under the new banner of raising standards.

It is possible that imposing narrowly defined targets on Margaret might have stifled her creativity. In delivering work to meet the school's improvement goals, Margaret illustrates how management expertise enables the library to be tailored to the needs of its community, while enabling a librarian to remain inspired by their own values.

In an era of economic downturn schools are required to be evidence-based and accountable, and their teaching decisions informed by the data collected about student progress: the managerial model

becomes dominant. There is less room to manoeuvre in this environment, and fewer opportunities for individual interpretation of role. Despite this it is still important to look at what professionalism means to us. By doing so we identify and articulate our underlying purpose and decide what we are not prepared to compromise on. This in itself confers a sense of personal autonomy. In times of adversity it is this sense of personal control and value that helps ensure our well-being and that is why professionalism remains important.

We need to consider how much time we spend on activities that fall within the managerial model. How far does the managerial model support the development of the library's educational role? Which of these activities, auditing the effectiveness of library systems or evaluating the educational role, would deliver the outcome most desired by the head teacher?

The discourse of technical rationalism

The discourse of technical rationalism characterizes professional activities as a set of solutions that can be applied to problems. Professional activities can be designated as competencies that can be broken down into their parts, as a set of skills that can be mastered and whose efficiency of delivery can be easily measured. Practitioners are accountable for the technical accuracy of their work. The model assumes that professionalism can be systematized as a set of guidelines and protocols, and that there is an equality of delivery. It does not make any allowance for the difference that varying levels of experience can make to the performance of a role.

When we apply this model to school librarianship we emphasize the mechanics of the role: cataloguing, issuing books, displaying work, sending lists of new books to teachers, organizing author talks and providing user education on how to use the library systems to locate

items. The priority is to put the user in contact with the required item and at that point the librarian's responsibility in the process ends.

School librarian Diana delivered an induction lesson to Year 7 students every September. She gave each student a new library card and explained the rules of the library, its layout and the procedures for borrowing a book. She then gave students a worksheet to complete that enabled them to practise locating books using the Dewey Decimal Classification system. After some years Diana began talking more to other librarians, who suggested that she consider extending her role to include aspects that she had not previously considered. Diana realized that students had problems with defining what information they needed and in selecting useful search terms. She discussed her observations with teaching colleagues and realized it would be helpful to the students if she taught research skills as part of subject tasks, so they would learn in a more meaningful way at the point of need, rather than being expected to remember skills from a standalone context.

Some may be attracted by Diana's initial approach because it offers a clear definition of tasks. Alternatively, we may view the approach as reductionist, because it does not acknowledge the intellectual or creative processes involved in research. Some of us go further in our critique of the technical-rational discourse and view it as a denial of the complexity that fills real-life situations. In this stance, we see the intangible elements of intellect and creativity as essential parts of the professional expertise needed to lead a successful school library and so this discourse might be dangerously limited. It takes more than a set of technical skills to create a dynamic learning environment in a library that is vibrant and responsive to users' needs.

Making skills visible is a powerful imperative; if they are visible they are measurable and then, from an organizational point of view,

manageable. From a professional association's point of view, if we make acquisition of a new skill visible, it can be rewarded. Continuing professional development is considered an inherent part of professionalism. We believe such development is more than just the acquisition of a new skill; it must also be an enrichment of understanding. New learning that leads to re-conceptualization is the most powerful form of continuing professional development. Should we as a professional view our practice as a series of problems to be solved or rather as a process requiring intellectual engagement to examine the different ways of fulfilling our role?

The narrative for this discourse does not acknowledge a professional identity motivated by an underlying purpose, fuelled with a set of values and philosophy. How visible are these values and the learning outcomes of the library? See Chapter 6 for a discussion of practice and impact.

The discourse of social democracy

This discourse of professionalism places an emphasis on the librarian's obligations to society, by maintaining justice and equality of access to library use for all. Its characteristics are those of collaborative leadership, shared decision making, and responsibility for processes and their outcomes, where professional judgements are valued.

In this discourse we emphasize opening dialogue with different stakeholders to aid in the designing and marketing of the service to appeal to all parts of the school community; this leads us quickly to the question of how to focus time and budget. In any school, it will not be possible to meet all of the needs all of the time, so targeting resources to achieve maximum effect is strategically vital. In some schools the librarian does this by putting energy into developing relationships with younger students, believing that this is a foundation

for the students' time in the school. Others do it by prioritizing relationships with staff, hoping through working with them to reach many more students.

This discourse resonates with the inclusion agenda (Ofsted, 2014), which is promoted by central and local UK governments. The next vignette gives an example of considering the inclusion agenda when evaluating a library homework club.

Eliza decided to evaluate her library's homework club to find out what was most valued and least valued by its users and also to find out why some students never used it. A series of questionnaires and interviews yielded quantitative and qualitative data, answering not only the research question but revealing some unexpected results, too. This evidence helped managers plan future development and secure increased funding. An analysis was also made of the attendance register by age, ethnicity, ability banding and overlap with the special educational needs register. It concluded that the homework club appealed to all parts of the school's community and was therefore a successful part of the school's policy on inclusion. This evidence was then included in the school's self-evaluation prior to inspection.

Which comes first, the requirement to meet national targets or the desire to meet children's needs? The pragmatic librarian might argue that it does not have to be a choice; it is simply a matter of using the opportunities within national targets to help realize philosophical and ethical goals for the service. Others feel uncomfortable with the idea that they must find solutions to help society solve its social and economic needs as laid out in government targets. Can the social democratic librarian be all things to all people or must difficult choices be made?

School librarian Chris believed it was important to give students access to information about sex education including fiction featuring lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer characters. The whole collection came under the spotlight when a parent complained that her child had borrowed a book which was unsuitable. The head teacher asked Chris to justify the inclusion of the book in the stock. Chris had to find a way to show respect for the parent's point of view, satisfy the head teacher's concern and maintain his view about the importance of giving students access to this collection.

We might also characterize the social democratic discourse as the view that librarians uphold when resisting censorship, whether generated by government, business corporations or individuals. Influenced by this discourse, the school librarian wants to make information accessible. At what point does duty of care towards students lead to censorship? Ethical dilemmas are at the heart of professional judgements; in examining our beliefs and reasons in relation to our role, how far will we defend them or how far will we go in order to realize them?

Student choice and his educational role are Nathan's two greatest influences when making decisions about the school library. He often experiences conflict: should he allow 11-year-old students to borrow only manga books or should he intervene believing that the reading skills of some students would benefit from also reading a text-based story? Should he negotiate with the students, setting them targets to widen their reading choices, offering the latest manga titles as part of the mix? Would this intervention be unethical?

The school librarian within this model acknowledges the importance of individual choice but in a school library this is also tempered by the educational aim of introducing students to the wider world of literature in all its forms. In educational terms, this social democratic model

points towards the need for a learner-centred approach to working with students in the library environment.

The discourse of post-modernism

The post-modernist discourse in professionalism is seen as an expression of the uncertainty of roles and identities and a search for new ways of articulating the experience of living in a post-industrial, high-tech era of globalization. Post-modernist interpretations have both positive and negative visions for professionalism. Technology presents opportunities for professionals to create and communicate without boundaries. This can facilitate a revolt from what we may see as the more oppressive aspects of managerialism and technical rationalism.

Kai's line manager wished to review the school's extra-curricular offer, which involved counting the number of pupils entering the library at lunchtimes. Kai organized his library monitors to carry out the task but felt irritated as he thought they would not take account of the type of learning that took place in the library during a lunchtime. Conversations with an online librarian community allowed him to see that his role was being measured only in a technical sense, and the monitors did not reflect the education that takes place in this extra-curricular time. So instead of feeling de-professionalized he opened a conversation with his line manager and shared some examples of the learning taking place in the school library.

In response to the sense of threat to his status, Kai responded by exercising professionalism demonstrating a regard for the quality of his practice. Post-modernist interpretations also offer more pessimistic visions of professionalism. Within this discourse roles are seen as fragmented and de-professionalized by central control; their subjection

to market values suggests that they no longer offer a meaningful personal sense of identity. The nature of professional identity is complex and it has been found that people experience phases of both stability and fragmentation at different times due to a variety of factors (Day et al, 2006). Professionalism is aptly defined as 'judgement in conditions of uncertainty' (Fish and De Cossart, 2006), which reflects the plural nature of our experiences. We make decisions, large or small, ethical or otherwise, amid the messiness that is real life.

Where does this leave school librarianship in the 21st century?

We are now in an age where universal truths are questioned. The digital world increasingly allows people to generate information and its free availability seems to have dispensed with the need for intermediaries to check content, either at the publication stage or at the point of access. Society's view of information is changing and in turn the role of the librarian is being questioned, not least by librarians themselves.

We can develop our vision of professionalism. We do not have to adopt a single type of discourse by which to measure ourselves; to do so may leave us confused, disempowered and de-professionalized. Discourses simply serve as a series of lenses through which to view our professionalism. It becomes more important than ever to examine our central values and to be clear about what we see as professional practice. There may be elements of each of these models that we need to meld and bring together into our vision. We need to be able to set targets, to be aware of skills required but also to move into the creative context. In education, the level of change we experience can be immense and the power of discourse is used in increasingly sophisticated ways. Having a clear personal vision enables us to identify when we are being re-positioned by a particular discourse and to

engage with it critically, in order to achieve personal meaning, whether in agreement or disagreement.

Essential ingredients for success in this dynamic environment are a clear sense of self, vision and ethics. Even those who have been in the profession for some time recognize the need to re-examine values. Revisiting vision, ethics and values can help us identify the most appropriate course of action to take in the school. The word professionalism comes from the Latin word 'profiteor', to profess, to make a commitment to a set of values. It is this most intangible aspect of the concept that gives professionalism its greatest strength and passion. Naturally, implementing vision successfully must be underpinned by strategic thinking and this will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

What is our view of professionalism in the school library? What should it encompass? If we want to raise our profile we need to develop a vision and articulate our underlying purpose: on which issues will we not compromise? What is it that we are prepared to fight for? Which tasks reflect the core values of our professionalism? That knowledge is the basis of our professionalism.

If our comfort zone lies within the model of technical rationalism but the school's leadership demands more of the activities associated with the social democratic model, the experience is not going to be easy. If the school's expectations are that we will simply stamp books and mind the space then those with social democratic leanings will feel unappreciated and become very frustrated.

In reality the successful school librarian is involved in a continuous negotiation of role, identity and professional values depending on the context of the situation. This is sometimes governed by our workplace and sometimes by our beliefs. Whether our priority is the day-to-day mechanics, teaching and learning or the nurturing of children, the outcomes from it will need to fit the school's vision in order to be

considered effective. Once we have a grasp of our own model it is time to focus on how others see us.

In Chapter 2 we look at how other people see us, enabling us to explore the congruence, or lack of it, between those perspectives and our own.