The Marginalisation of School Librarianship in England: Tackling the Fading Influence of School Librarians as Digital and Information Literacy Educators – Sarah Pavey MSc FCLIP FRSA

Research Question:

How have the 2012 curriculum reforms in England contributed to the marginalisation and decline of information and digital literacy instruction by school librarians, in contrast to rising global demands for teaching critical research skills?

Outline:

The proposed publications for inclusion in this thesis will provide an evidence base documenting this marginalisation, as well as highlighting the provision of alternative visions and models for reclaiming the educational influence of school librarians. Although arising from interest in the effects of education reform in England, I aim to include comparisons with other curricula worldwide such as the International Baccalaureate and the US Common Core curriculum predominantly and others from countries participating in the Erasmus project: *Information and Digital Literacy at School. A Bridge to Support Critical Thinking and Equality Values for Primary Education Using Children's Literature and Transmedia* (8) namely Finland, Greece, Turkey, Italy and Spain. Here will be considered whether the presence of inquiry-based learning acts to promote information and digital literacy and underpins the necessity for a robust school library service.

The outcomes of research analysis of the publications highlighting reasons for the changing role of school librarians in England will make several unique contributions:

- This thesis will offer the first in-depth analysis of how removing coursework requirements in England in 2012 has specifically impacted and devalued school librarians' capacity to teach and support the development of digital and information literacy.
- The publications build a qualitative study examining the fading recognition and value placed on the specialised role of school librarians filling a gap in the literature around the changing status of school librarianship both in England and internationally.
- It will provide comparative perspectives by contrasting this deprofessionalism with more supportive approaches within curricula containing a core of inquiry-based learning such as the International Baccalaureate.
- The portfolio draws together research suggesting alternative change models and practical proposals for reinstating the vital educational role of school librarians. Specifically, the writing will serve to evidence the teaching competencies needed for empowered and ethical participation in the digital information society, thus advancing policy and practice.

The diversity of research approaches within the publications provides strong evidence to support the claims of changes in school librarian role in England from multiple perspectives.

This includes desk research identifying and applying pedagogical theory to practical solutions, comparing theoretical models of teaching information and digital literacy, an in-depth analysis of curriculum elements relating to information and digital competencies and education policy analysis from a selection of countries to contextualise the approach in England. Additionally, surveys, case studies and interviews will add qualitative evidence to exemplify the findings.

To summarise, the aim of this thesis is to combine detailed case study analysis situated in a broader international comparative framework to elucidate the specific forces marginalising English school librarians and to propose constructive evidence-based changes to highlight their essential expertise as information/digital literacy educators. It addresses a notable gap in the literature regarding contemporary threats to school librarianship that could be applied to other countries facing similar issues.

Portfolio of publications:

1. Bentley, E., Pavey, S, Shaper, S., Todd, S. and Webb, C. (2016) *The Innovative School Librarian*. (2nd Edition) Facet Publishing. (and comparison with first edition 2009).
2. Pavey, S. School Libraries and Librarians: Why They are More Necessary Now than Ever (2015) in Gilbert, I. (Ed.). (2015). *There Is Another Way: The Second Big Book of Independent Thinking*. Crown House Publishing Ltd.
3. Pavey, S. (2023) Information Literacy and Digital Literacy in Roche, C., Band, B., Cavender, N., Chambers, L., Pavey, S., Everall, A. and Krajewski, E., 2023. *Creating a school library with impact: a beginner's guide*. Facet Publishing.
4. Pavey, S. (2022) Supporting Inquiry-based Learning in a Behavourist Education System in England, in Schultz-Jones, B., & Oberg, D. (Eds.). (2022). *Global action for school libraries: Models of inquiry* (Vol. 182). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
5. Pavey, S. J., & Sewell, R. (2023). Perceptions of Support Worker Roles in English Secondary Schools: Impact on Transition to Higher Education. In *Perspectives on Enhancing Student Transition Into Higher Education and Beyond* (pp. 1-20). IGI Global.
6. Pavey, S. (2021) *Playing games in the school library: developing game-based lessons and using gamification concepts*. Facet Publishing.
7. Pavey, S. (2024) *The Networked Librarian: The School Librarian's Role in Fostering Connections, Collaboration and Co-creation Across the Community*. Facet Publishing.
8. Pavey, S. and Goldstein S. (2024) Chapter 3.6 BRIDGE Report for United Kingdom (England) in Abbatecola, E., Akkoyunlu, B., Amigo-Ventureira, A.M., Antoniazzi, A., Banou, C., Caffarena, F., Enwald, H., Goldstein, S., Hirvonen, N., Huttunen, A., Kostagiolas, P., Kurbanoğlu, S., Martzoukou, K., Morelli, M., Multas, A-M., Nygård. T., Pavey, S., Sales, D., Saran, M., Saran, N., and Şencan, I. (2024) *Information and Digital Literacy at School. A Bridge to Support Critical Thinking and Equality Values for Primary Education Using Children's Literature and Transmedia*. Erasmus+ project BRIDGE (Project number: 2021-1-ES01-KA220-SCH-000032527). Available at: https://bridgeinfoliteracy.eu/report/
9. Pavey, S. (2023). AI bots: Our secret weapon for information literacy, info smarts and global thinking!. *Synergy*, *21*(2). https://slav.vic.edu.au/index.php/Synergy/article/view/718
10. Pavey, S. (2024). Cracking the code: Unlocking the terminology puzzle of information literacy. *Synergy, 22*(1). (awaiting publication May 2024).