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SCHOOL LIBRARIES ON THE AGENDA

UPDATES ON PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES IN SCANDINAVIA

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● **School libraries**

Schools, the idea of grouping people together in one place for learning, have existed since ancient times and the Scandinavian countries have documentation of schools that date far back in time. Since this first issue of SLQ in 2013 is all about school libraries, I tried to find out when the first school library was established. This proved to be an impossible task. What I did find out was that there is no comprehensive history of school libraries available, this according to dr. L. Anne Clyde who wrote a PhD thesis (*The Magic Casements: A survey of school library history from the eighth to the twentieth century*) on the subject.

We have no PhD theses to offer in this issue, but we do have a number of interesting articles about school libraries in Scandinavia today, and an article about libraries in contemporary Iceland – after the recession.



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Cover photo: The school library is on the agenda in Scandinavia and must play a key role in learning and developing new information skills among pupils and students



Christina Jönsson
Adrial

Welcome to a new year with Scandinavian Library Quarterly!

Since the Swedish Parliament legislated in the summer of 2011 that all pupils have the right to a school library directly connected to their school, the issue has been vigorously debated. However, many pupils in Swedish compulsory and upper secondary schools still lack access to a school library. In those schools which say they have a school library, the standard is variable to say the least. There are half-asleep headmasters who make reference to a public library in the municipality and there are schools which have approved objectives, plans and a well-functioning library integrated into their teaching practice.

This fragmented picture is nothing new. I have encountered all these variations during my own and my children's schooling. Ranging from the collection of books in the school's attic where I would go in the early 1970s to meet the speech therapist and learn not to 'hiss' on the 'sssss' sound. No one else was ever allowed there, only the speech therapist and those who hissed. At senior level we would press our noses against a locked glass door behind which there was a former library, but the librarian had left and that was when the library closed as well. The only time in three years that we were on the other side of the glass door was when we watched the Swedish slalom star, Ingemar Stenmark, make an important run on the school's one and only TV.

At upper secondary school everything was quite different, there was a large library with a librarian where new books and journals covering different subjects were being purchased all the time. You could also sit and do group work and study there.

The library was where things happened! When my children go to school, those who can't settle down in the classroom are sent to the library and sit down – as a sort of punishment. In another school the headmaster referred to the fact that all pupils have portable computers connected to the internet which "solved the problem" of the "library being so old-fashioned".

When people, such as we do in Sweden, have the task of co-ordinating libraries as a whole you cannot help but see the close connection between the school library and the university library. They are governed by the same ministry and have similar tasks but at the same time they are, in many cases, two different worlds. At a university or university college you would never dream of having a library which was just a room without competent staff and activities. The library itself is often a symbol for learning and education and it is there the headmasters take their prominent foreign guests to show what they have. So it goes without saying that a library always has good resources, but the library is regarded as a matter of course, they are respected and a lot of

development work goes on there. The university library is adapted as required to the needs of the particular seat of learning and integrates them into education and research.

There are many common questions which the university library and the school library should be able to collaborate on: they should be able to share knowledge with one another regarding how the library can be a teaching resource, how to generate creative learning environments and develop modern services. Together it should be possible to test different measures and assessment models and also to create progression in the pupils'/ students' skills in information research and source criticism.

This issue of SLQ includes several development projects and examples of what is happening in Scandinavia regarding the school library. I believe in the power of good examples and hope that you will find inspiration. Don't let the school library just be a room for books without even space for development!

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There are many common questions
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On the brink of a new era

At each school a school library is established as a learning centre

Danish school library activities are based on the *Act of the Folkeskole*, which states that “every independent school must establish a school library as a pedagogical service centre”. In 1995 the Danish minister of education Ole Vig Jensen, issued an executive order regarding the school libraries. This order does in fact expound on the text of the law. But an executive order also tells the Danish municipalities, who own the “folkeskole” (i.e. the municipal primary and lower secondary schools) how the minister of education wishes the development to take form. This moved the school libraries from the Ministry of Culture to the Ministry of Education and the school libraries thus left the public libraries which belonged under the Ministry of Culture. This, to underline the fact that the school libraries were “school” primarily, and to a lesser extent “library”.

Right now work is in progress on a new executive order. A new minister of education, Christine Antorini, wishes for the comparatively old order from 1995 to be replaced by a new one. A new executive order will have to update the old one as well as outline a new development for the Danish school libraries.

It is in the nature of things that an executive order from 1995 has been overtaken several times by the pedagogical as well as the didactic development, but naturally also by the development of the internet and other electronic platforms. Just as we can observe giant leaps in the development of learning resources.

In a textbook from 2009 on the subject ‘Danish’, the Ministry of Education describes the school library thus: “But

it is also as learning centre, as development centre, media centre or “multi-learning centre”, pure and simple.”

The debate about the school library’s aims, content and function has since 2009 gradually come to mean that the word used to describe the school library will in all probability be ‘learning centre’.

A learning centre – in relation to pupils

The school library as learning centre embraces the many activities that relate to culture, media and learning in the school today. It contains a culture, a media and a learning dimension. The learning centre team communicates, guides and teaches in relation to various subject-specific fields. The pivotal point for all these activities is a broad understanding of the concept of learning. As far as the pupils’ learning is concerned the learning centre is the extended classroom. Based on the teaching in the classroom and with the task defined and the aim determined, the pupil is sent through the learning centre where the school librarian, the learning instructor, didactically advises and guides the pupil in relation to digital, analogue and concrete materials

But it is also the learning centre’s job to introduce the world into the school and make it interesting and relevant to the pupils. That can be done with exhibitions, competitions, surprise activities, experiments, arrangements, guests et cetera. The pupils also have access to a modern and relevant selection of children’s and youth literature.

The task also means introducing the pupils to the world outside, for example the experts and cultural insti-

tutions that can help them on their way. The learning centre has a quite unique cultural and learning function and addresses the issue of the pupils’ liberal education as citizens and human beings.

A learning centre - in relation to teachers

The learning centre has an equally important task in relation to teachers in their role as advisers and sparring partners. The advisers working here have special didactic and pedagogical skills, for example as school librarians, reading, IT and teaching advisers.

The particular aspect about school librarians is in fact that they give didactic advice and guidance, not only pedagogically but also didactically speaking. It requires that the school librarian has completed a teacher training course followed by a training as school librarian. In very simple terms didactic guidance and advice consist of finding the right learning resource in relation to the target set for the pupil, at the right time and with the completely relevant content.

Media, pedagogy and didactics

The advising team have the greatest knowledge in terms of learning resources and know what is available at the school or what can be acquired. They help in procuring the learning resources requested and offer relevant advice about them and how they should be used.

All in all it is a question of a media professional sparring which both supports the pedagogical practice and challenges the pedagogical agenda at the school. Key words are media pedagogy and didactics. Pedagogical designs

VELKOMMEN TIL NY NORDISK SKOLE



C.C. Rasmussen



- A new vision on school and school library is in progress in Denmark

development, relevant news, campaigns, cultural initiatives and other initiatives which can be included in the teaching

- Launch initiatives to encourage the creation and dissemination of culture.

The teaching aids in the learning centres include fiction and non-fiction, concrete and laborative materials, digital teaching aids including net services, digital learning spaces and guidance skills.

It is this learning centre, which with a network of advisers – including school librarians as learning advisers – will be the pivotal point for a school's daily work with the pupils' learning as the absolutely essential element.

The new act on the the danish Folkeskole:
<http://nynordiskskole.dk/Service/New-Nordic-School>

are developed which open up for new learning spaces that include analogue and digital learning resources.

The next step

As mentioned above, the Danish minister of education, Christine Antorini, has appointed a committee to prepare a new executive order for the Danish school libraries. This executive order will be tied up with a new act on the Folkeskole, which is expected to be passed before long.

The committee members are stakeholders from municipal, union and professional organisations and representatives from the ministry. (The author of this article is a member of the committee). The committee has been working for some months, and a clear picture is emerging as to what is expected from a learning centre:

At each school a school library is established as a learning centre. The overall objective for the learning centre is:

- The pupil's learning is at the centre of the learning centre's activities and efforts
- Focus on didactic guidance in relation to learning processes, teaching aids and school development

- The learning centre functions as a place for creating and disseminating culture.

The learning centre's team function must:

- Support the pupil's learning in a virtual as well a physical space
- Handle tasks such as teaching, didactic guidance and mediation in relation to learning and learning processes, including advice and guidance of teachers and pupils on choice and use of didactic, semantic and functional teaching aids
- Make available digital and physical teaching aids for the teacher's instruction and for the individual pupil's versatile and academic development and assist with the use of the teaching aids
- Implement initiatives that contribute to continuous development of the school including competence development, project support, course activities and practice learning
- Facilitate initiatives and cooperation with the school's management about the school's development, including dissemination of knowledge about

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The Norwegian School Library Programme

The library as a tool for literacy training and education

The Norwegian School Library Programme is a four-year (2009-2013) national programme which aims to strengthen school libraries as an educational tool. The goal is to make active use of the school libraries in reading education and development of information literacy. The University of Agder (UiA) implements the programme on assignment from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.

The programme encompasses several focus areas: competence enhancement through studies and training courses, practice-related school projects, and development of a digital collection of ideas and a learning resource concerning information literacy. When the programme is completed in August of this year, a total of 173 schools will have undertaken projects under the auspices of the programme. 105 municipalities and all counties are represented through projects.

UiA's long-standing efforts in providing training to school librarians are the reason why the Norwegian School Library Programme was located here. This university has trained school librarians for more than three decades. In 2011, the study programme was expanded into a BA programme in school library studies, in which an introduction to library-related disciplines, literature for children and adolescents, information skills and literacy development are key topics.

The project schools in the Norwegian School Library Programme were initially funded for one year, but have the opportunity to apply for an additional year. The schools that have been granted funding for two years have developed their projects and act as resource schools to the programme.

Support to the primary and lower secondary schools

Only primary and lower secondary schools have been eligible for project support, since the programme has had no funding for the upper secondary schools. This priority was decided on the basis of a comprehensive study of Norwegian school libraries undertaken by the research institution Møreforskning in 2007. In their report, the researchers concluded that the primary and lower secondary schools had the least resources for school libraries. The upper secondary schools more frequently had qualified personnel and tended to allocate more time to the school librarian's position. These two types of schools were also different in terms of the funding devoted to premises and accumulation of collections.

The principal as project director

On the other hand, Møreforskning's study revealed no clear correlation between the resources that were devoted to school libraries and the extent to which the school library was integrated into teaching practices.

The report established that the key factor for active integration of the school library into teaching activities consisted in support from the school administration, inclusion of the library in planning frameworks, and a school culture that was open to inclusion of resources such as libraries. The teachers' attitudes were crucial. For the school library to be actively used, the teachers had to include it in the planning of their classes. This is the reason why the Norwegian School Library Programme insists that the principal should act as project director, and that the entire project group, consisting of the principal, the school librarian and

the teachers involved, must attend a supplementary training course under the auspices of the programme.

Collaboration important

Research on the students' learning outcomes from the process of searching for information underscores the need to regard training in the use of libraries and information sources in the context of the teaching provided for each school subject. The students acquire knowledge related to searching for and using texts more easily when they need to do so for purposes of school assignments. This means that the use of school library resources must be planned and evaluated in collaboration between the teacher and the school librarian. The projects devote much effort to establishing satisfactory forms of collaboration.

The supplementary training courses for the project group members are held in the spring and autumn, and topics include educational use of school libraries, development of information literacy in schools and reading of

In their reports schools highlight two essential success factors: the principal's role as project director and the participation by the entire project group in the supplementary training course provided by the School Library programme

Photo: Royken Library, Buskerud

ramme



Siri Ingvaldsen

various types of printed and online texts. The courses also focus on cooperation between school libraries and public libraries. In addition to the course, all schools are provided with a mentor to accompany them through the project period.

The role of school owners

The programme assumes that embedding the activities in the school system is essential to achieve a more deliberate and systematic use of the library in teaching. Its use must be endorsed by the school administration and in the schools' annual plans and syllabuses, and as project director, the principal has a general responsibility for ensuring that the experience gained from the development activities will benefit the school once the project is completed. Embedding the activities with the school owners, the municipalities, is equally important. These school owners have determined their priorities and subsequently submitted project applications to the programme. This two-step application process has ensured that both the schools and the

municipalities have needed to reflect on the roles and remit of the school libraries. Moreover, this process has included an incentive to consider shared solutions within the municipality, between schools, as well as between the schools and the public libraries.

Digital resources

Two websites have been developed during the programme period. *www.skolebibliotek.uia.no* disseminates information about the development projects and programme activities on an ongoing basis. Here, articles are also posted on Norwegian and Nordic school library developments in general. The website *www.informasjonskompetanse.no* contains ideas for teaching programmes on information literacy, examples of completed projects and web assignments. It also encompasses a progression pathway with relevant competence goals from the syllabus and proposals for learning objectives related to information skills. The collection of ideas and examples of completed projects will gradually be expanded.

Knowledge dissemination

The project and resource schools included in the Norwegian School Library Programme have developed models for the use of school libraries as a method in teaching. In their reports, the schools highlight two essential success factors: the principal's role as project director and the participation by the entire project group in the supplementary training course provided by the programme. Knowledge dissemination is a key part of the project schools' role, and experience from the programme will help build a foundation for the further development of Norwegian school libraries.

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Resource schools in the Norwegian School Library Programme

Three examples



Photo: Mortensnes school

THE ROAD TO INFORMATION LITERACY: MORTENSNES SCHOOL

Mortensnes primary school in Troms County, Northern Norway, joined the Norwegian School Library Programme during the 2011-2012 academic year, and became a resource school the following year.

In the project period, Mortensnes school has systematically sought to link teaching and learning efforts to the services and opportunities provided by the school library. The teaching community has been consistently included in this process.

Before the end of the school year, all grades should have prepared requests for topics that include cooperation with the school library, and the project group has provided examples of planning documents for such training programmes. These course plans will

serve as templates for the teachers during their planning for the coming year, and they will be evaluated and improved on the basis of the experience gained from the initial period.

Training schedule

Mortensnes school believes that it is important for all its teachers to have a shared educational outlook. To achieve this, a format for planning and sharing of experience has been prepared, and training courses and a planning day focusing on information literacy have been implemented for all staff members. The school implements a training schedule in which the school librarians and teachers provide each other with training opportunities. The sharing of experience has been systematized, allowing the school to cover in depth the two main focus areas: *school libraries* and *assessment for training*. Knowledge updates for the staff should always end in a specific task that should

be tested in practice. The teachers test their new knowledge in their encounter with the students, and in this manner, the school can systematically accumulate a bank of plans and programmes that are embedded in the school's culture and practices.

All students library trained

The plan for training the students in the use of the school library was one of the first to be applied during the project. The plan should in essence be linked to the school subjects, but includes a basic skills package as well. Now that all students have completed the library training programme, the school can observe that the school library's non-fiction collection increasingly captures the students' attention.

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Inger Berg Wilhelmsen



Mari-Anne Mørk

READING WORKSHOP IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY KANEBOGEN SCHOOL

Kanebogen Primary School in Harstad municipality, Northern Norway, has chosen to focus on reading workshops as part of its school library project. The model was initially developed for the 3rd grade, and is currently being applied as part of the resource-school project in the 7th grade. In consultation with the students, the reading workshop for the seventh-graders has been given the name *Multinorsk* ('Multi-Norwegian'). For two hours each week the students visit the library, where they are divided into groups of four, with two teachers attending. The groups are to some extent divided according to level, and they alternate between four stations according to a set schedule.

The reading workshops follow a regular routine, and each group has its own box containing all the equipment that the students need. A group leader is responsible for bringing the box from one station to the next. The workshops always start with a quiet session in the library, when the students assemble to listen to music.

Different stations

The first station is 'the reading station'. The students sit in the library's reading corner, and a teacher is always present. Kanebogen School is working with the reading programme *Grip boka* ('Grasp the book') for the 7th grade. The programme aims to familiarize the students with various literary genres, and to teach them to identify descriptions of persons, places and passages with peaks of suspense in the literature they are reading. The students agree between them which book and how

many pages (50-90) they should read every week. As part of each reading workshop, the students write book reviews and discuss the books they have read.

Improve writing skills

At 'the strategy station', the students work on learning strategies for studying non-fiction texts. *Multinorsk* also focuses on improving the students' writing skills, with the aid of a writing station. Here, the students should apply what they have learned about narrative techniques and practise constructing narratives with an introduction, a body and a conclusion. The narratives should contain descriptions of people and places, and be able to capture the reader's attention. As part of this station the students have brainstormed writing assignments that currently amount to a bank of twenty assignments.



The final station is referred to as 'the drama station'. Here, the students practise reading aloud, they produce dramatizations and read fairy tales to the younger students.

The municipality's role

For many years, Harstad Municipality has received acclaim for its systematic conceptual development and literacy training. The municipality's literacy programme was initiated in 2010, and as part of the follow-up, all primary schools now have part-time reading mentors. Kanebogen School has linked its reading mentor to the development project, thus ensuring a good correlation between the school library and literacy training.

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● "the reading station"...
"the strategy station"...
"the drama station".
Three steps in developing
students interest in literature

>> Resource schools in
the Norwegian School
Library Programme

MY FAMILY IN HISTORY: KRÅKERØY LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Krårkerøy Lower Secondary School in Fredrikstad municipality, South-Eastern Norway, is undertaking a development project that focuses on source evaluation in particular. In the project called *My family in history*, students in 8th grade are given the assignment to present the life story of a family member. In an everyday situation where the students are inundated with information, the project group at Krårkerøy School envisaged a need to teach the students how to sift through information. The goal of the project is to enable the students to better evaluate the relevance and credibility of sources, and then apply the information in their own work. In this manner, the students will improve their skills in writing non-fiction texts.

Studying the ancestors

In other words, the project engages the students in studies of their own ancestry. They choose a research problem and interview a family member on a particular topic from the past. The purpose of this assignment is to regard this person's history in light of wider historical processes. In addition to interviewing a family member, the students must identify a number of various sources, such as books on local history, reference books in the school library, pictures and various online sources. The school also invites parents and grandparents to come to the school to share their stories with the students. As part of the project, the students receive training in information management, such as issues related to copyright and protection of privacy. Krårkerøy School places major emphasis on correct use of sources, and at the start of the project the school hands out a leaflet that not only outlines the assignment, but also includes guidelines for assessment of

sources and preparation of lists of references.

Generates interest in history

My family in history is a comprehensive student project that has a duration of three weeks in the autumn and three weeks in spring. Before Christmas, the students submit a factual interview on which they receive specific feedback. After Christmas, the students should rework this into an article. After the first year, Krårkerøy School recorded a clear improvement in the students' knowledge of history and the use of sources. In addition, the school has observed an increased interest in history among its students.

The students are also encouraged to submit their assignments to the national competition *My family in history*, under the auspices of the Norwegian Historical Association. During the 2011-2012 academic year, several of the school's students made it to the final, and one student achieved 2nd place for his contribution. The statement of the jury praised the assignment for its broad and well-considered selection of sources.

In 2012-2013, Krårkerøy School has expanded the project to encompass also the 9th grade. The students will focus on World War II, and the result will be presented as a digital narrative. In this manner, the project will also link up with the goals defined by the syllabus for multimedia texts, and the school hopes that it will provide some extra motivation to students who find written presentations especially challenging. In the project, the students will see how the same historical event can be portrayed in different ways, depending on the sources used for the presentation.

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Headmaster



The concept of a school library has long been a legislative requirement in Sweden. A school library has long been part of the Swedish Library Act. But as this act did not indicate sufficiently clearly to the schools (read headmasters) that a school library was important and mandatory, the requirement was made part of the Swedish School Act itself. In addition, and at the same time, those laws which made our independent schools exceptions were removed. Since 1 July 2011, they too must provide access to a school library for their pupils.

The fact that the school library has now been incorporated in the Swedish Schools Act has created a need to define what a school library is. This is what the Swedish National Agency for Education and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate have been attempting to do.

I am the headmaster!

My job is to ensure that the pupils at my school do as well as they possibly can. This applies to grades, social skills,



Edward Jensinger

rs view of the school library

“I regard a well-functioning school library as an absolute must for me to be able to achieve my goals and fulfil my ambitions”

democratic assessments, culture, general education et cetera. The school’s remit, and responsibility, is extensive.

To help me in this very important task I have access to many hardworking staff members. Top-quality teachers of course, but also administrators, service staff, student nurses, study mentors and school governors, and also the school librarians who work in our school library.

School life today, in 2013, demands a lot from pupils. To go to school is a challenge. But the requirements on staff are also much higher. These requirements often revolve around knowledge of different approaches and the ability to assimilate and convey this knowledge. This is important especially now when there is so much going on in terms of the digitisation of schools.

More required today

Schools today are different to when I was a pupil. It was sufficient to be good at listening to the teacher and reading books. That was then! So much more is

required of pupils today. The pupils have to be absolutely ready to listen, read, write etc. But there are now so many ways to gather information that you also need the ability to use these, essentially, fantastic opportunities.

At our school we have a school library which has been the recipient of a prize for being an important part of the pupils’ path to knowledge. The skill of our proficient librarians is a natural complement to teaching.

An absolute must

As a headmaster, I regard a well-functioning school library as an absolute must for me to be able to achieve my goals and fulfil my ambitions. We talk about giving pupils “Sound knowledge through pleasurable teaching”. This is achieved partly by means of demanding theoretical studies, partly by means of digital technology.

By providing a library and librarians in attendance, we can support the pupils in everything from the provision of literature, information skills and source

criticism. All things which are important in today’s society and therefore important skills which we must also train our pupils to acquire.

The collaboration which materialises between teachers and librarians creates opportunities for delving deeper and for interesting meetings. The fact that as a pupil you can have a teaching experience with your teacher during the lesson in order then for such work to progress with the help of a librarian I regard as an important part of preparing pupils for further studies at college and university.

Through collaboration between professions we provide important development opportunities for pupils.

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Illustration from Pauli gymnasium: Platform/Johnér

The Swedish National Agency for Education’s definition of a school library

“A shared and well-regulated resource comprised of media and information which is put at the disposal of the pupils and teachers with the help of competent staff. The school library is a part of the school’s teaching activities with the task of supporting the pupils’ learning. The school library can therefore be regarded partly as a material resource which is part of a school’s teachings aids and other tools and partly as a function which actively contributes to the development of knowledge and is responsible for certain services.”

(Source: <http://www.skolinspektionen.se/Documents/vagledning/infoblad-skolbibliotek.pdf>)

The Swedish National Agency for Education’s requirements for a school library

The Swedish National Agency for Education believes the following requirements must be fulfilled for the pupils to be regarded as having access to a school library:

1. The pupils have access to a school library on their own school premises or at a reasonable distance from the school which makes it possible to regularly use the library as a part of the pupils’ education in order to contribute to achieving the objectives of this.
2. The library contains books, professional literature and fiction, information technology and other media.
3. The library is adapted to the pupils’ needs in terms of promoting language development and stimulating reading.

(Source: <http://www.skolinspektionen.se/sv/Rad-och-vagledning/Stallningstaganden/Skolbibliotek/>)

Long live the desire to read

Just reading for reading's sake? Can we spend time on that? The answer is yes. We have to spend time on that

Is the appetite for reading alive and well among the children and young people of today, or have we extinguished it in our hunt for what is *good literature*, *worthwhile literature*, the *right literature*? How can the slow book survive in competition with the quick-fire stimulation of the Internet and video games?

Both writers of this article's have grown up with books – one of them as a faithful user of the local public library, where she easily borrowed four to five books at a time each week, always with the well-versed, wise and friendly guidance of the librarian; the other with a father who was a publisher and writer, and with books in every corner of the home. In many ways two extremes, but with the same outcome: a great interest and delight in literature.

Now we both have children ourselves, two seven-year-olds who have just

Ingebrigt Steen Jensen and Trude Solheim will write the viewpoints for SLQ this year. Mr. Steen Jensen is a well-known advertising man as well as a soccer enthusiast, lecturer and writer. His biggest success is his book *Ona fyr* [The Ona lighthouse], which is about passion, motivation and how to create a culture of achievement. The book was published in 2002 and became a bestseller. Ms Solheim is a secondary-school teacher of the humanities and a former editor and translator.

begun to know the joy of books, and a 15-, a 20-, a 21- and a 23-year-old who read: now and then from a desire to do so, but perhaps most often out of the need to pass exams that can open life's doors.

Like all parents of children and young people today, we see that books have tough competition. The seven-year-olds would simply rather play Super-Mario on the iPad, and the 15-year-old would rather watch films on Netflix than read a newspaper, a novel or a textbook.

Compulsory reading

But let us not turn this into yet another discussion about the hopeless habits of children and young people and how excellent things were in the past. Let us rather talk about how we offer them literature: at school, at home and in the library.

In upper secondary school there are so-called class sets of books. They are sets consisting of 30 copies of the same book. Every school has on average perhaps 15 of these sets. They represent a selection of contemporary literature and some older literature, which largely covers the curriculum requirements regarding what children should have read while at upper secondary school.

Do we ask the young people what they would like to read? Rarely. They are each handed their book from the class set, told how long they have to read it, and given instructions on what type of homework they will get once they have read it. It may be an analysis, a book review, a summary of the plot, a book report. Do we ask whether they liked the book? Whether it made them want to read more? Seldom.



Voluntary reading

The American language and literature researcher Stephen Krashen has conducted research on what he calls "free voluntary reading". Very briefly, this is how it goes: let the students choose a book themselves, a book that, for whatever reason, captures their interest. Let them read it with no pressure, without there being any demanding task at the other end. Then small miracles can happen. When the shock of being able to choose a book themselves has subsided, after the unavoidable restlessness of pubertal 16-year-olds has calmed – it takes about ten minutes – you can see them sitting, heads bowed over their respective books in deep concentration. The computer is switched off, mobile phones are put away, and only silence and words on a page fill their heads. They have taken responsibility for their own reading. Or to put it more accurately: they have been given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own reading. It wasn't the right book? Well then, you can change it. It's *okay*. But they always ask permission. They are accustomed to book-



Ingebrigt Steen Jensen
and Trude Solheim

- Let them read it with no pressure, without there being any demanding task at the other end. Then small miracles can happen ...



reading being governed by a number of rules about *what* and *how*, but seldom any explanation of *why*. Let it be Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, Erlend Loe's *Kurt* books, *Twilight*, *Harry Potter*, *The Hunger Games* or *Fifty Shades of Grey*. 100 pages or 400 pages. Chick-lit or Charlotte Bronte.

Reading for the sake of reading

This type of approach focuses on two main areas: One is to stimulate the appetite for reading and to create – or reawaken – the child's natural interest in *storytelling*. The other is to give children the chance of a breathing space in a world continually filled with input, demands on availability, noise and rapid scene-changing.

Two longer-term goals are firstly transferability, since at some time or another we have to embark on the literature that is set out in the curriculum. By then they have read, perhaps for the first time, a whole book, or even two. The other is an increased ability to concentrate.

Be prepared to meet resistance in the teachers' staff room when you introduce this idea. It runs counter to the established view of literature teaching. No homework to do on the book, did you say? No analysis? No hunting for literary devices? Just reading for reading's sake? Can we spend time on that? The answer is yes. *We have to spend time on that.*

A good librarian makes a difference

At the same time, availability and guidance are a precondition for success with a reading project of this kind. Here the librarian re-enters the picture. The librarians in our schools do a fantastic job with the means they have at their disposal. They receive whole school classes with open arms, they guide, they help and they order books. They visit classes and tell them about literature. A good librarian can make a great difference to what can be a child's or a young person's first encounter with literature.

Children need magic

Others are lucky enough to have their first encounter with literature in the home. They are read to, sung to, told bedtime stories. But here, too, we can lower the threshold. It doesn't need to be authentic literature. They don't have to be politically correct, socially realistic books, where everyone is either starting at kindergarten, has divorced parents, or has to undergo the trauma of acquiring a little sister. Or books in which everything scary has been made nice, where the trolls are tamed, the witches kind-hearted. By all means do read these books as well, but do not rob children of the possibility of magic. Magic and dark forces, the classic battle between good and evil that we encounter in the folk tales do actually

have an important function. Bruno Bettelheim, child psychologist and author, explains in his book *The Uses of Enchantment – The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976) how the universal and timeless issues in fairy tales help children to understand and solve challenges in their own daily lives. The encounter with and vanquishing of a troll, for example, can show the child that even big problems can be overcome. Through the symbolism of fairy tales, children can interpret and adapt the content to suit their own needs at given stages in life.

Relax and read

So don't hide the Brothers Grimm and Asbjørnsen and Moe deep in the bookcase! Don't think that these tales are too scary, too grotesque. Children understand that when the wolf eats grandma and Little Red Riding Hood, it isn't real, but they want to have magic, and they need it. If they are robbed of magic as children, they will compensate for it when they reach their teens. Perhaps there is a link between modern parents' disparagement of folk tales and the immense fascination of young people today for the supernatural in the form of vampires, hobbits, trolls and wizards, and the many fantasy films with which Norwegian cinemas are inundated?

Reading can in itself be magical, both with and without supernatural elements, but let us not make it into an exercise in what is clever and right and educational. Lower the threshold and relax, and let small children come to literature themselves.

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School libraries a must!

There was much celebration when requirements for school libraries for all children and young people were incorporated into the *Swedish Education Act* in the summer of 2011. All pupils were now entitled to a school library 'directly connected' to their own school. The act was to apply to all schools regardless of whether they were municipal or private, special schools or Sami schools. This was a clear political statement regarding the importance of libraries as a teaching resource and every child's equal right to have one. But, in contravention of the act, over 200,000 pupils still do not have access to a school library.

The organisation with responsibility for monitoring the activities and content of the Swedish school system is the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. Its aim is to carry on its activities within a framework of inspections, quality checks and processing of licence applications. The inspectorate can call attention to infringements and decide on penalties if the infringements are not rectified in a satisfactory manner. When the requirement for school libraries was incorporated into the Education Act, monitoring of this also became part of the inspectorate's remit.

Statistics from the National Library of Sweden show that as many as 210,000 pupils in compulsory school and upper secondary schools have access to a school library. During the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's regular monitoring in the first half of 2012, 33 out of 470 compulsory schools inspected were criticised for not providing pupils with access to a school library as stipulated in the Swedish Education Act. This equals 7% of all compulsory schools

inspected. The situation with upper secondary schools was much worse. A total of 30 out of 114 upper secondary schools, so 26%, were criticised. Virtually all the upper secondary schools criticised, 29 out of 30, were independent. The bleak picture painted in the National Library of Sweden's statistics is thus intensified further.

But what does the monitoring actually say about the activities? The school library is placed under the overall inspection title of *scope, content and resource access* and focus is on "pupils having access to a school library which is used in the school's teaching activities with the purpose of supporting the pupils' learning". Exactly what this means is largely ignored by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate.

Differing level of ambitions

A large part of the problem is the vague wording of the act which creates uncertainty as to what can actually be regarded as a good quality school library. For example, much criticism has been directed at the fact that the text of the act is entirely lacking in information regarding staffing. Ultimately, it is up to the individual principal to decide how many people shall work with the library as a teaching resource. No extra funds have been assigned for special measures, rather the work shall be carried out within the framework of the standard budget.

Some principals lack ambition and prefer to rely on the lowest level accepted by the Swedish School Inspectorate. It is too expensive and they see no benefit. Like the headmaster who

mailed the National Library of Sweden: "what we have done is to collect together in one room all the literature in the school. The library staff have been here and sorted out what's not wanted. They have also contributed with blocks depicting letters. We ourselves have sorted all the books. We now have a library."

Other principals have high ambitions and want to invest. The school library of the year is selected every year by the National School Library Group, a network of Swedish organisations with an interest in preserving, strengthening and developing the concept of the school library. The intention is for the distinction to act as an inspiring example. The most recent winner, Nacka Upper Secondary School, is described as "a dynamic teaching institution where the school librarians operate a goal-oriented system to work to develop the information know-how and invest aggressively in promoting the pupil's reading. This work is carried out together with the school's teachers and pupils and with the school management's active support." In other words, the differences are extensive.

Can a public library be a school library?

Many of the schools inspected admit to accepting help from a neighbouring public library in order to satisfy the pupils' access to information. In many cases, however, the inspection believed there was nothing to show that the public library acted as such a resource. No agreement had been signed, and the so-called collaboration was composed





Elin Lucassi

more of, at best, sporadic, unannounced visits from teachers and pupils.

Stockholm's City Library is one of the public libraries which have formulated a concrete agreement which they can enter into with schools in need of school library services. The agreement includes, amongst other things, stipulations that the school pays for media and at least a part-time service. None have hitherto accepted the agreement.

Many employees in public libraries express unease regarding how to be able to meet the new requirements from the school. Most will willingly help and this is deeply rooted in the democratic, adult education tradition. You have to put up with turning away borrowers even though it sometimes feels strange when a whole subject area is emptied by visiting school classes.

The question is a complicated one. On the one hand, the public library is there for all citizens, including school pupils. On the other hand, the school library is a completely different type of activity than that which most public libraries can offer and requires knowledge of such things as teaching, reading didactics and teaching plans.

In addition, you are always in that area shared by culture, leisure and education. Sometimes the library is geared more towards one area and sometimes towards another. Some librarians are expected to have a planning meeting with teaching staff and have a headmaster as the immediate supervisor,

others are lumped in the same staff group as caretakers and their immediate supervisor is the administrative manager.

The issue must be dealt with by the right authority. It is the school which is the teaching institution. It is probably difficult therefore for a public library to reach a solution on its own. Nor is it likely to be especially effective to place school librarians outside the teaching environment. To be successful, the solution must be designed by concerted and professional collaboration with the same objectives in sight, namely the best possible conditions for all pupils.

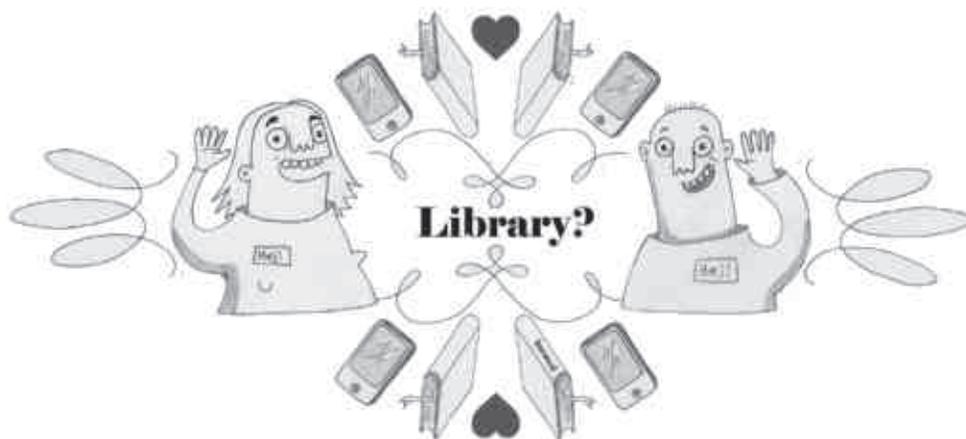
The solution?

There is no complete answer to what a well-functioning school library actually is. Nor is there any sense in formulating check lists of the number of running metres, staff hours or specific content which should apply to all. Each school must decide completely on its own just what its pupils and teachers need. Schools are extremely heterogeneous and range from everything from small village schools many miles from the nearest public library to large state

schools with many hundreds of pupils and the school library on its own premises. The solutions cannot be the same everywhere.

At the time of writing, some political proposals have been put forward for a tightening up of the act's text so that staffing requirements are also included. Many of those involved such as the Swedish Library Association and the academic professional association DIK are running campaigns with the same aim. Regardless of whether the requirement goes through or not, you can't get away from the fact that the school principal will have overall responsibility. A responsibility which includes operating a school library is obviously a part of teaching work and which operates with the same aim as the rest of the school, the best possible conditions for teaching for each individual pupil.

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School Libraries in Finland

The heart of school seldom beats

Finns like to read. Women, especially, are keen readers and understand the significance of reading. Young Finns are among the best readers in the world. The Finnish educational system has proven to be effective. The Finnish library institution is one of the most superior in the world, and of all the cultural institutions, Finns love and use the library most of all. In a country where the schools and libraries are superior in quality, it is a paradox that its school libraries are rather modest.

To be precise, few schools have a good library. Indeed some schools are lucky enough to be located in the same building complex as the public library. Most schools do, however, have a library although they may be outdated. They are often situated in inappropriate facilities and their collections are older than the students. A teacher may tend to the library a couple of hours a week, and therefore it may not be open during the school day except during a certain break. There is no regular budget set for school libraries and therefore they have to rely on a random amount of scarce funds. For this reason, the collections are not systematically expanded. The amount of IT equipment is also meager.

However, there are some schools and school libraries in Finland which have inspiring collections, a school librarian who is a pedagogic information specialist, a library team to support the school librarian, a student union active in the school library activities, a sufficient budget to make acquisitions, appropriate and pleasing facilities, furniture and lighting as well as the latest IT equipment to find material and information. In some places, the entire municipality has joined forces to

improve school libraries. Schools associated with the universities and used for teacher training have impressive libraries and library professionals working in them. This gives teacher trainees a rather good – perhaps unrealistic – vision of the role of the school library. Unfortunately, the PISA studies, or any other study pertaining to learning outcomes, have not indicated any cause and effect relationship between good school libraries and learning outcomes, although many tend to think this way. Hard facts pertaining to this relationship are needed in Finland before investments will be made in school libraries.

In Denmark, the Basic Education Act ensures that there is a school library in all schools. In Finland, the Basic Education Act makes library activities possible (alongside after-school club activities), but it does not obligate schools to have a school library. Instead, the *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education* compiled by the Finnish National Board of Education (2003, 2004) lays down the norms for the concepts of learning and knowledge, the learning environment and the objectives of learning, the achievement in which a functioning school library would have a significant and natural role.

However, the words ‘school library’ could not be mentioned in the *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education* because the organizer of education is free to plan the ways in which it aims to achieve the objectives in the curriculum. Alternatively, expressions such as knowledge in the use of the library and skills in acquiring information are used. Often, students practice these

skills during cooperation between the school and library. Some municipalities have their own information literacy curriculum which schools and libraries have compiled together. On the other side of the coin, some municipalities have ‘outsourced’ information literacy teaching to the libraries, and in its most simplified form, it involves a lesson or two during a visit to the library.

The current *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education* obligates the organizer of education (usually the municipality) to provide a learning environment where “the working tools, materials, and library services must be available to the pupil so that they provide an opportunity for active and independent study” and allows the use of a diverse range of teaching methods. As regards high school, the study environment is described as follows: “Students must be provided with tools to acquire and produce information and to assess the reliability of information by guiding them to apply the ways of acquiring and producing skills and knowledge that are characteristic of each particular branch of skills and knowledge. Students will be guided to use the information and communications technologies and services provided by libraries.”

The objectives for information acquisition and source critique are set forth in the cross curricular theme of communications and media literacy, which states that teachers in all subjects are obligated to teach students to develop their information literacy skills and to compare, select and utilize the information they acquire. Different subjects, in particular Finnish language and lite-



Pirjo Sinko

rature, have more precise objectives and contents as regards information literacy skills.

A recent study suggests that the strategic skills of Finnish high school students are ineffective and students do not critically assess the use of sources. According to the researcher, these things are not taught sufficiently and systematically enough in schools. Schools need an information specialist to support the information acquisition of both teachers and students, and teachers need better skills to be able to guide their students. Schools would need a learning environment where students can practice their information literacy skills on a daily basis. Rare visits to the library are not enough in such an essential area of learning.

Multi-literacy - a new competence

At the moment, a new *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education* (2016) is being compiled in Finland. A new element in the curriculum includes extensive areas of competence. One area involves multi-literacy, the basis of which is a broad conception of text and multi-modality. Multi-literacy not only comprises the traditional reading and writing skills, but also the so-called new literacies such as visual literacy, digital literacy, information literacy and media literacy. The skills needed in interpreting text and information as well as in producing text are contained in the meaning of the term literacy. Multi-literacy is to be included in all of the definitions, objectives and contents of each subject as well as in the descriptions of what good performance is. The concept of learning will also be updated. Learning together, enthusiasm in learning and consideration for the

feelings of others in learning will be reinforced. Functioning school libraries would help in achieving these objectives in practice.

In Finland, school libraries have at least three tasks: inspiring reading, developing information acquisition skills and increasing school satisfaction by offering students attractive facilities for reading and working. Supporting the hobby of reading is one of the areas of strength of our school libraries. However, a new breakthrough for the school libraries in Finland has yet to take place after they were deemed unnecessary in the 1980s – a paradox that took place just before the concepts of knowledge and learning became more focused on the initiative of the learner and the construction of knowledge. The collapse of the school libraries meant that the National Board of Education no longer ensured the development of them. The condition of them was no longer monitored. The issue was left to the local organizer of education. School libraries have been considered too expensive in Finland, and public libraries have also frowned on the development of them. However, campaigns to save them have taken place from time to time.

The school curricula of the 1970s considered school libraries as the heart of the school. The idea that the school library plays a key role in learning still lives on in the consciousness of the Finns, but that beautiful metaphor becomes a reality regrettably seldom.

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● Multi-literacy not only comprises the traditional reading and writing skills, but also the so-called new literacies such as visual literacy, digital literacy, information literacy and media literacy

Working together is the key to success

Educational investments within Vaasa city library



Vaasa city library

Vaasa city library has been making long-term educational investments for many years. In 2010, the library was awarded the title of Library Developer of the Year. The award was presented by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, and one of the reasons mentioned in the citation was the creation of new types of collaboration between schools and libraries.

Vaasa is a medium-sized city with a population of approximately 65,000, situated on the west coast of Finland. Vaasa city library also serves as a provincial library. The provincial library area covers 16 municipalities, 12 of which have Swedish as their majority language. Bilingualism permeates everything that is done at Vaasa city

library. Customer services, all the events that are organized, the information given out – everything is done in Finnish and in Swedish.

Vaasa city library has three pedagogical information specialists on its staff. Two of us work with children and young people. Naturally, this work is also done in both Finnish and Swedish. We work with the schools in the city of Vaasa, coordinate school libraries, booktalk, help people learn to use libraries, teach information seeking and how to evaluate sources, and much more. A large part of our job is about taking the city library services out of our physical building to our customers, and we are constantly developing our activities to serve our customers even better.

We have put together lots of educational packages suitable for different age groups. Teachers can select which packages they want their classes to participate in. Various types of tours and instructions on how to use the city library are usually given at the library, but booktalks and information seeking lessons are also frequently given in school classrooms. Thus, the educational work of the library is not confined to the physical library building.

We seek to continuously develop our educational efforts. We try to take a critical look at our tutoring sessions so we can develop them. As a result of this work, for example, instead of providing a traditional walking tour of the main library with seventh grade students, we organize a competition called the *Amazing Library Race*. During the race, the students have to perform various tasks and they are timed as they navi-



Terhi Piikkilä Lena Sägfors

gate the library. The first group to finish is the winner, and by taking part in the competition, the students have familiarized themselves with the main library and its services.

Unease despite excellent PISA results

The key plank of our educational work consists of activities to promote reading. Schools ask us to give book-talks more than anything else, and naturally we are involved in all the reading projects and initiatives in Vaasa's schools.

Although Finland scores well in the *Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA)*, there is nevertheless a downward trend among Finnish children when it comes to reading skills. One example of how the library tries to counteract this growing problem has been the meetings we as city library education specialists have held with the director of Early Childhood Education Services. As a result of these meetings, we now attend parents' meetings at Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking child-care institutions in Vaasa and meet the parents and talk to them about the value of reading aloud to children as an aid to their development. We try to inspire parents to read aloud to their children, and we present lots of different types of picture books. We also organize storytelling sessions in Finnish and Swedish at the main library and at our branch libraries, which parents who are at home with their children can participate in.

Those of us who work as pedagogical information specialists at Vaasa city library are also part of a strong cultural network in the city. Museum educators, archival educators, audience

developers, pedagogical information specialists and other cultural educators in the city meet regularly to plan various collaborative projects. Once a year, the entire network get together to arrange time travelling sessions for several groups per day over a period of about two weeks. Some 600 pupils in the city usually take part in these sessions. Smaller collaborative projects also come about quite spontaneously within the network of cultural educators. For example, at Vaasa city library, we have organized an archive mystery for students in the fifth grade, working together with The Ostrobothnian children's culture network, *BARK*.

School library links with the city library

There is extensive collaboration between basic education programmes in Vaasa and the city library. Much of this collaboration is focused on the city's school libraries. At the moment, 16 school libraries are linked to the library network, and the school library network is coordinated by the pedagogical information specialists at the city library.

Various reports and plans focusing on school libraries in Vaasa have been prepared over a number of years before the school library project financed by The Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) began in 2008. The school library collections have been catalogued and reorganized, and electronic lending has been adopted in the schools. The collections in the school libraries now share the same classification system as the city library, and pupils are able to use their city library cards at school too. The educational thinking behind this is that once a child learns to use the school library, he

or she will recognize the same system when visiting one of the city library units.

One of the objectives of the school library projects was to bring the school libraries into the city library network. The project has raised the profile of the school libraries; lending statistics for school libraries are up, and pupils have learnt to use the library as a natural part of doing their school work. The school libraries are run by teachers who are in charge of the libraries, with library-trained support from the pedagogical information specialists at the city library. The future of school libraries in Vaasa has been ensured following the end of the project period by means of an agreement between the city library and municipal Early Childhood Education Services. The agreement sets out the division of labour and expenditure.

The value of working together is by no means a new concept. But we still want to emphasize how incredibly important it really is. Working with others makes it possible to achieve so much more and to reach many more. Working together with other organizations is absolutely vital to our work as educational specialists at Vaasa city library.

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Danish youth education en route to digital literacy

Denmark invests massively in education and we pride ourselves on having a world-class IT infrastructure. But at the same time our educational system and the libraries fail to examine the connection between information supply, learning and the new digital reality. A new strategy could be the first step in the right direction.

Once upon a time libraries were full of books. And there was a time when textbooks, blackboard and chalk in closed classrooms were the basis for all teaching. Digitisation has caused a historical breakaway that cannot easily be ignored. Immense volumes of information can be retrieved in minutes. The classroom is wide open as soon as the portable or the iPad is switched on. The traditional monopoly of the correct knowledge enjoyed by teacher and textbook has been undermined. The good old verbalism or written form has been extended to include a large number of new media forms.

In this incalculable process of change which has hit the Danish upper secondary school (the gymnasium) and the rest of the educational sector, digital literacy is emerging more and more clearly as a necessity. Teaching and instruction have to be adapted so that

Think tank for digital literacy in upper secondary school (gymnasium) was set up within the framework of DEFF in spring 2012. The strategy is the first output, as the think tank is supposed to be a forum for knowledge sharing, ideas generation, projects, resource allocation, evaluation and strategy follow-up. The 18 members represent the gymnasiums, headmasters, students, researchers, the libraries and the corporate world.

children and young people will be able to use relevant digital platforms and media effectively, critically, creatively and innovatively. It is an absolute must in preparing the young for the challenges that lie ahead not only during their higher education programmes, but also in their work life and their participation in a democratic societal process.

Think tank

Denmark prides herself on having a world-class IT infrastructure, but there is some way to go before also becoming world champions of a critical and innovative use of the enormous volume of information available.

Digital literacy is a continuation of the information literacy which over the past 10-20 years – with varying success – has been sought incorporated in many learning processes in Denmark. Seen from a Danish angle digital literacy is a continuation of the traditional aim for liberal education and study preparedness that form the basis for upper secondary education.

Among other things, the digital initiative in Denmark is to be strengthened via Denmark's Electronic Research Library (DEFF) which is anchored in three ministries (culture, education and research). Apart from providing digital access as cheaply as possible to as many educational institutions as possible, DEFF considers it an essential task to help develop and underpin upper secondary education's access to knowledge and use of information-critical skills.

In spring 2011 DEFF therefore arranged a conference on 'digital literacy



Students at Metropolitan University College
Photo: Claus bjørn Larsen

and study preparation', where a productive dialogue between researchers, teachers and librarians was successfully established. It was decided to carry on this dialogue in *Think tank for digital literacy in the upper secondary school*, which so far has held three meetings from April to September 2012. With this think tank a broad platform has been created for the first time where all the important and relevant stakeholders within the area have been gathered together to share their thoughts on a common strategy.

Totality and interaction

In Denmark it would mean a reinforcement of digital literacy if a top-down strategy or central political guidelines for this were established by central

...the professional librarians in the schools ought to be important players in the digital competence development



Knud Holch Andersen



Thomas Kaarsted



authority. But as the political focus is directed at the Folkeskole this is unrealistic.

The think tank's prepared strategy is therefore based on the bottom-up principle. It is the individual gymnasiums – and preferably networking between the schools – that have to kick off the development processes. At the

Digital literacy should be seen in continuation of 21st century skills, which include:

1. Faceless communication
2. Information search. Reading of multi-modal texts
3. Communication-critical skill
4. Production of multimodal texts.

Source: Freely adapted from Jeppe Bundsgaard, Aarhus University/The Lime Guild.

same time the development must be holistic, i.e. embrace the entire school culture and thereby include school management, teachers, librarians as well as students in an active interaction.

The digital technology, which incidentally today's schools are well-supplied with, changes nothing in itself. It is the targeted competence development – both in terms of teacher and student – that presents the decisive challenge. Development of digital competences must be integrated in the academic and semi-academic course programmes. They must act as practical tools in the day-to-day work.

Various studies indicate that it is a great mistake to believe that present-day students can handle IT media and platforms just because they are 'digital natives'. Critical, creative and selective competences have to be developed and trained in a targeted way and throughout the entire upper secondary school.

The need therefore exists for a broad initiative in terms of advanced teacher training courses, and it must be tied to the general professional didactic development process. Collaboration between professional groups and networking between groups of schools will contribute significantly to expediting the process. It requires some prioritizations for which the individual school managements must assume responsibility.

The traditional gymnasium libraries and study centres must be transformed into the schools' digital resource centres, and the professional librarians in the schools ought to be important

players in the digital competence development.

A great deal to be gained

It is going to be a long haul to transform the ambitions of the strategy into the reality of the classroom. But there is a great deal to be gained. There is probably a correlation between the ability to develop and express ideas and decode information and the results the students achieve. Digitally literate students are also less inclined to plagiarize, have a heightened source-critical approach and are better at exploiting analysis tools.

The strategy for digital literacy will be underpinned by a number of development processes and projects. Moreover, it is the ambition of the think tank to influence the educational political debate as well as highlighting the necessity of digital literacy. In this context it is essential that the organisations represented in the think tank actively support the follow-up work. It is precisely this organisational backing that can give impetus to the continued activity of the think tank.

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The Danish think tank for digital literacy in youth education wants a dialogue with similar networks in other Scandinavian countries. Please contact either of the two authors.

Effects of economic recession on Icelandic libraries

It has now become clear that the poor state of the economy has had significant effect on public libraries in Iceland. The author's research, conducted from December 2011 until April 2012, revealed considerable cutbacks in most Icelandic libraries. The goal of the research project was to collect data on whether, and if so how, cutbacks have been made to the libraries and to identify the effects of said cutbacks. Information was collected from a quarter of Icelandic public libraries and four interviews were conducted with directors. Documents from various public institutions were reviewed and the cutbacks were assessed in an academic context. Recently, a review was conducted of new statistics from the Consortium of Icelandic Libraries so as to better understand developments in the field.

Data from 2007-2011 shows that operational expenditures have increased slightly, indicating that no cutbacks have been made. However, if the rate of inflation is viewed for the same period, it becomes clear that significant cutbacks have been made, or an average of 19 percent. The level of reduction varies by library. Selected libraries show no reductions in total operational expenditures, while the libraries with the greatest cutbacks have faced reductions of about 40 percent.

Allocations for the purchase of library materials reveal a higher level of cutbacks, and such cutbacks have been made at all libraries in the study. Taking account of inflation, 45 percent of the libraries show reductions of 30 percent or more. The highest level of reduction was over 70 percent, taking account of inflation.

Clearly, the libraries are buying less than they once did. Fewer new titles are entered into the Consortium of Icelandic Libraries than prior to the collapse and directors have had to prioritize their purchasing using new methods. Opening hours have also been shortened in many locations, especially during weekends.

The employment statistics of the participating libraries also reveal cutbacks. No inflation calculations are needed to understand these numbers. In 2007 there were 167.23 positions at the 20 libraries, or an average of 8.36 positions at each library. By 2011, the number of positions had decreased by 8.35 percent to an average of 7.66 at each library. The change in employment levels does however vary between libraries, and in several places the number of positions has increased. At the libraries with a reduction in the number of positions, the average reduction was 12.45 percent. It seems that immediately after the collapse, few changes were made to the number of positions. More changes were made during 2010 and 2011.

The number of employees at the libraries has decreased more than the reduction in positions. There were a total of 225 employees at the participating libraries in 2007, 218 in 2008, 216 in 2009, 209 in 2010 and 200 in 2011. This is a decrease of 11.11 percent during the period.

The Consortium of Icelandic Libraries, which operates Gegnir, the joint catalogue for Icelandic libraries, collects data on lending and the number of borrowers for most public libraries in Iceland. That data reveals a consistent



increase in lending at the participating libraries until 2010, in addition to an increased number of registered borrowers. A turnaround seems to have occurred in 2011 regarding the use of libraries. Lending has decreased in many libraries, as have the overall lending levels in the National Registry of Libraries.

The final annual data for 2012 is still not available, although numbers from the Consortium of Icelandic Libraries indicate that the decrease continues. This is a probable indicator of a reduction in purchasing and service levels, leading to a reduction in the use of services and may keep general users away. Many libraries have, however, reported more use of their library's resources by other institutions, which probably results from cutbacks at those institutions, for example schools and pre-schools.

The table next page shows developments in recent years regarding resources, loans and borrowers of all member libraries in the Consortium of Icelandic Libraries (<http://lanskerfi.is>).

The most obvious effects of cutbacks in public libraries in the short run are a reduced level of purchasing of library materials and a change in the make-up of library resources. The long-term effects are partly the same regarding



Reykjavik City Library
Photo: Anarchivist



Eyrún Yr
Tryggvadóttir

TOTAL NUMBERS – YEARLY COMPARISON

Year	Titles	Copies	Borrowers	Loans
2011	1,012,814	5,115,617	196,500	3,720,542
2010	980,404	4,881,988	194,083	3,754,263
2009	947,823	4,646,587	179,930	3,720,883
2008	910,886	4,376,850	168,029	3,367,516
2007	866,896	4,082,247	159,372	3,004,612
2006	827,034	3,969,925	150,965	2,803,687

purchasing and resources, but are worse in the total level of resources for each library, which becomes consistently reduced with every year of cutbacks. There is also a risk that library resources become more homogenous, as popularity-driven materials purchasing causes the catalogue to become out of date more quickly, because materials that are popular today, especially fiction, are not necessarily what readers in coming years will be seeking.

A reduction in the purchasing of children's books is another area of concern. Many library directors in schools and public libraries are concerned that a reduction in the purchasing of new books may possibly affect willingness to read, especially that of children and teenagers. Less reading has a negative effect on literacy. There has been much discussion on the drop in reading levels among children and teenagers. The Schools and Recreation Department of Reykjavik issued a report in 2011 which

reveals that reading comprehension is generally decreasing among elementary school children and that a large share of teenagers never read for leisure. A clear connection has been shown between reading comprehension and students' interest in reading books.

Directors have also expressed concern that, with time, a decrease in the quality of library resources may lead to a drop in the number of visitors to public libraries. In addition, a drop in procurement levels of magazines, foreign materials, academic books and other types of resources will inevitably lead to a decrease in the level of service toward students. Across the country there are a number of long-distance students at secondary and university level that use the public library due to distance from their own school library.

Other potential long-term effects, according to the interviewees, are fatigue and a sense of giving up among library

employees and directors. People can join together to deal with the prevailing issues in the short-run, but when circumstances are difficult for longer periods of time, it is not unlikely that people lose sight of the purpose of the battle. Persistent cutbacks have a negative effect on continuing education and therefore the skills and value of employees. It is therefore possible that the human resource levels at libraries may decline. That potential decline is more likely the longer the period of cutbacks lasts.

It is clearly necessary to protect libraries and their roles during difficult times and the fight must be kept up on all sides. Library employees are making their best efforts to keep the effects of cutbacks at a minimum for borrowers and continue to try to provide a high standard of service, guided by optimism.

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DENMARK

Libraries' net guide to music

This is how the future of music libraries might look like: searching the different commercial and non-commercial (including library catalogues) online music services and providing the user with both search results and links to services such as Spotify, and information on music. eMusik.dk does just that, it is not a streaming or downloading service but a rather traditional library service helping users locate and find what they're looking for. Users will have access to information on CD's, sheet music and books as well as blogs written by professionals and music buffs. The libraries behind the service platform are the Aarhus, Copenhagen, Gladsaxe, Viborg and Helsingør public libraries but all Danish libraries are free to post their recommendations and reviews on the site for the benefit of library users in the whole country.

Bibliotekspressen

<http://issuu.com/bibliotekspressen/docs/perspektiv310113?mode=mobile>

Toy fair at Hvidovre Library

Libraries are popular partners. This was proved once again when Hvidovre Public Library facilitated a toy fair

together with toy suppliers, students of pedagogy and kindergarten teachers. A successful mixture of public and commercial services, the fair attracted a public of 200 children, 70 adults and a number of professionals working with children. The children ran, played and had fun and tested the toys on offer – and the adults, both parents and those working with children, could see which toys were popular and how the children were playing with them. The library, of course, presented its own selection of games, books and toys. The role of the library was to provide the premises and bring together the different parties.

Bibliotekspressen

<http://issuu.com/bibliotekspressen/docs/perspektiv310113?mode=mobile>

Homebound library service by volunteers

Sydhavn and Østerbro Libraries have started a new development project which combines homebound library services with a 'friendly visiting' programme similar to that of the Red Cross. The customers of the homebound services will not only receive the books they've ordered but get a visit from a volunteer as well. The volunteers deliver the books with time for a chat and a cup of coffee as well.

Kgs Enghave Bladet og Valby Bladet

<http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=36610472d0e39649d0b21199d&id=e0fde5874e>

Guerilla marketing with young users

Silkeborg Public Library has received a grant for developing guerilla marketing among the younger customers. The aim is to work towards redefining the role of libraries in the local community. Guerilla marketing refers to non-

traditional forms of marketing such as flash mobs and different kinds of happenings, which the library plans to use in engaging young people. The idea is also to involve the teenage users as volunteers who in their turn could present, market and promote the library services and products to their peers. The library staff will not be alone in all this: branding experts and anthropologists will also be part of the project.

Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier

<http://projekter.bibliotekogmedier.dk/projekt/guerilla-marketing-unge-bibliotekerne-pagadeplan>

FINLAND

Libraries promoting health

Kurikka municipality in Ostrobothnia has awarded the local public library with the Health Action of the Year reward in December. The libraries in Kurikka and the nearby Jurva have been actively taking part in health promotion and lending out sports equipment for people to try out, a service form which has also proven to be popular in several other Finnish libraries. A working group consisting of library and other municipal staff have arranged several programmes for senior citizens from themed evenings for the elderly to a fair presenting volunteer work. The well-visited arrangements have brought new users to the library.

Kirjastot.fi. www.kirjastot.fi/

fi-FI/ajankohtaista/tiedote/ajankohtaista/kurikan-kirjastolle-vuoden-terveystekopalkinto



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Silent Tuesday

To shush or not to shush? A heated debate has taken place in Finnish newspapers around the question of peace and quiet in libraries. While the staff would like to welcome students working in groups, friends playing board games or quite simply, people wishing to meet and discuss at the library, some of the users would like to ban all noise from library premises. Some libraries have dedicated areas for different noise levels but Turku City Library is trying out a different approach: Silent Tuesdays when all users are encouraged to keep their voices down and enjoy the silence.

Turku City website
www.turku.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=418774&nodeid=4873

Finnish library network in search of a joint library system

The Finnish National Library has received funding for hiring five workers to coordinate the drawing up of a pro-

ject plan and requirements specification for a joint new library system for all library sectors. The specification will be completed during 2013. All types of libraries, research, public and special libraries, are represented on the board. The acquisition of the new system is meant to start in 2014.

<http://wiki.helsinki.fi/display/UKJValmistelu/>

Cycling for Libraries rewarded in Sweden

Finnish library activists Jukka Penanen and Mace Ojala, organisers and masterminds behind the hugely successful *Cycling for Libraries* unconference, received yet another recognition for their efforts when the Swedish library system vendor Axiell awarded them with the New thinkers of the year award in November 2012. This year, the event will be arranged for the third time, running – or rather cycling – from Amsterdam to Brussels. Cyc4lib

makes libraries visible, creates networks and encourages discussion among library professionals and the surrounding society.

Biblioteksbladet
<http://biblioteksbladet.se/2012/11/30/cyklande-bibliotekarier-arets-nytankare/>

NORWAY

New services for students by students

Customer-driven development is the key to a new project – and a new way of thinking – at Oslo University Library where library services will be developed in cooperation with students from different disciplines. First out are students in computer science with knowledge of IT design, use and interaction. The students will develop concrete services as part of their studies, the library will gain in the form of e.g. mobile apps and free expertise, and the users will of course have access to new tools, designed with their needs in mind. Further plans include engaging students in pedagogy, media and communication.

Nasjonalbiblioteket
www.nb.no/Bibliotekutvikling/Aktuelt/Nyheter/21-5-millioner-deles-ut-til-bibliotekutvikling. See: *Liste over tildelte prosjekter*

Meet the Mayor

What would be a more suitable place for meeting the local mayor than the public library? This has clearly been the thought behind the weekly Mayor's Corner at Tønsberg Public Library. The mayor is available for questions or a chat for two hours every Wednesday. An idea worth copying elsewhere.

Tønsberg Folkebibliotek
www.tonsberg.folkebibl.no

Library comes to work

The Norwegian public libraries are targeting the work force as part of a national initiative, *Reading Boost for Working Life*. In Oslo, the Deichmanske Library is developing further the already successful workplace library at the Ryen metro workshop, while the issue of democracy is addressed in the island communities of Frøya and Hitra where the number of immigrant workers is relatively high. The libraries aim especially to increase the integration and engagement of immigrant workers and their families, and of workers speaking a minority language, through reading and independent study. The participating libraries around the country are offering book talks, a selection of books in different languages, author visits and literary lunches.

Nasjonalbiblioteket
www.nb.no/Bibliotekutvikling/Aktuelt/Nyheter/21-5-millioner-deles-ut-til-bibliotekutvikling. See: *Liste over tilldelte prosjekter*

SWEDEN

High quality phone service

A lot of the news clips chosen for this issue seem to be featuring different kinds of awards and recognition for libraries which is obviously a good way of gaining visibility for libraries and their services. This award is not focusing on the web or any revolutionary novelty service, though, but a rather traditional one: there are still those who would rather use the phone instead of online services. In Sweden there is even a competition for best customer service given over the phone. This year, the National Library of Sweden came second in its class. The organisers made 200 phone calls to all companies and organisations taking part. The ques-



The Native Language Library serves multilingual pupils

Yet another rewarded library is the *Native Language Library*, a project and a section of the public library in Mölndal, which has received the European Label, a quality award for language teaching.

The project is a close cooperation between the municipality, the local school, school library and the public library targeting itself not only towards the pupils but also their parents. The focus is on multi-language children whose interest in and love of reading is being strengthened through better command of their first language. The library in Mölndal provides the children with multi-language materials and is integrated into the regular teaching.

Biblioteksbladet
<http://biblioteksbladet.se/2013/01/03/modersmalsbiblioteket-i-molndal/#more-4372>
Photo: Mölndal Library

tions ranged from simple requests for a particular co-worker to more specific questions where the 'customer' didn't know the name of the contact person. Points were given for being connected to the right person but also for the reception and personal service received.

Kungliga Biblioteket
<http://www.kb.se/aktuellt/nyheter/2013/Hog-kvalitet-i-vaxeln>

Ask the Library among top ten Swedish websites

The motivation of the jury says it all: "This is folkbildning – popular education or non-formal adult education – in essence. We pose the questions, librarians around the country provide the answers. It is a service which is equally fun and important and shows why librarians/libraries are needed". The website of the year is chosen by *Internetworld* who last year nominated 100 sites for the award. *Ask the Library* (or rather, in direct translation, The Library Answers) was one of the ten

sites shortlisted together with, among others, publishing house Nordstedt's language and dictionary site *ord.se* and *Rättviseförmedlingen*, an equality project aiming to correct the imbalances of representation in media, culture, business and other contexts. The winner was the site of the TV4 television channel.

Biblioteksbladet
<http://biblioteksbladet.se/2013/01/18/hederspris-till-bibblan-svarar>

Inspiration, udsyn og netværk i verdensklasse

Next Library 2013 arrangeres af Aarhus Kommunes Biblioteker i samarbejde med sponorer og partnere: Danmarks Biblioteksforening, EBLIDA og Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Kulturstyrelsen støtter Next Library 2013 via puljen for internationale bibliotekskonferencer. DBC er hovedsponsor.

INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE
AARHUS / DENMARK
16 – 19 / JUNE / 2013

/ RE-IMAGINATION
/ CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
/ COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

next library

next library. International Library Conference in Aarhus, Denmark 16 - 19 June 2013

RE-IMAGINATION - CIVIC ENGAGEMENT - COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

Meet, share, learn and co-create – an international event for open-minded library innovators and decision makers. The overall purpose for Next Library 2013 is to inspire public libraries to re-imagination, civic engagement and collaborative innovation with the perspective of supporting equal access to technology, learning and active citizenship for all.

Confirmed speakers and moderators: *Brian Bannon* / Commissioner at Chicago Public library, USA. *Patti Manolis* / Chief Executive Officer, Geelong Regional Library, Australia. *Vincent Bonnet* / Director, EBLIDA - European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations. *Jens Thorhauge* / Thorhauge Consulting, DK. *Jennifer Valasques* / San Antonio, Texas, USA. *Holmkell Hreinsson* / County Librarian Akureyri, Iceland. *Jakob Lærkes* / Chief of Ørestad and Solvang Libraries, Copenhagen, DK. *Michel Steen-Hansen* / Director of Danish Library Association, DK. *Marie Østergård* / Project Manager, Urban Mediaspace Aarhus, DK.

Conference Chair: *Rolf Hapel*, Director of Citizens' Services and Libraries in Aarhus, DK.

Conference fee: 390 EUR.

Language: English

More information: www.nextlibrary.net

Keep up with developments in the Nordic libraries in Scandinavian Library Quarterly. www.slq.nu

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