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Scan's regular Research columns feature is refereed by Dr Ross J. Todd. Research columns continues to build a value for research as a process, strengthening the theoretical basis for the practice of teacher librarianship. It gives particular emphasis to demonstrating how research can inform practice through the application of findings, questioning of assumptions, and identification and analysis of practical problems. This issue focuses on continuous improvement and capacity building for school libraries in the 21st century.

School libraries and continuous improvement



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On the 16th February 2009, school libraries and the work of school librarians made it to the front page of *The New York Times* (both paper and electronic editions). With a daily circulation of one million copies, this is a fairly incredible feat. The feature article, 'The future of reading: in web age, library job gets update' (Rich, 2009), focused on the work of school librarian Stephanie Rosaila, and the practical implications of school libraries supporting learning in a connected world. A link to this article is available from *Hot topics* on the *School Libraries and Information Literacy* website <www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/schoollibraries>.

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Reporting on this event in the *School Library Journal*, Rocco Staino (2009) claims that the article

became the most emailed story of the day, receiving more than 75 comments from readers and becoming the topic of more than 100 blogs around the world.

In the *School Library Journal* interview with Rosaila, she was asked if she had one wish for her library, and she replied:

My library needs space! I wish for all of us to have the staffs and budgets to do our jobs to educate students, teachers, and parents alike.

Rosaila points to an underpinning and central question that challenges school libraries today: what is the future of school libraries, and how can they be continuously improved to sustain and nurture 21st century learning? The professional need for capacity building and continuous improvement of school libraries is no more timely than at present.

As Lyn Hay and Colleen Foley present in this issue's research column, capacity building is broadly conceptualised as any process, strategy, initiative or action that is employed to strengthen or facilitate the ability of school libraries to provide powerful and sustainable, high quality learning in their schools, and to provide opportunities for school teams to work together in new ways. This involves putting a shared vision into action, for example, using the model that is suggested. Following Lyn and Colleen's article is a case study of continuous improvement. ■

References and further reading

Rich, M. (2009), 'The future of reading: In web age, library job gets update' in *NYTimes.com*. The New York Times. Viewed 23 April 2009. <www.nytimes.com/2009/02/16/books/16libr.html?_r=1&partner=permalink&exprod=permalink>.

School Libraries and Information Literacy, Curriculum K-12 Directorate, NSW Department of Education and Training. Viewed 23 April 2009. <www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/schoollibraries>.

Staino, R. (2009) 'Stephanie Rosalia: the new poster girl for school libraries', *School Library Journal* (November). Viewed 23 April 2009. <www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6640367.html>.