

Swedish School Librarianship: Meeting New Challenges

Lesley S. J. Farmer, Ed.D.
California State University Long Beach

Abstract

Sweden has made great strides in school librarianship, particularly in the area of legislation and policy. School libraries are now mandated, and curriculum indicates where school librarians should play a role. School libraries must be accountable to two sets of agencies, and oversight mainly occurs at the municipal level. The main challenge currently is the lack of school librarians. The author examined the practices of the Borås Högskolan School of Library and Information Science faculty, and collaborated with their school librarian program faculty to address this shortage and the preparation needs of school librarians. Several recommendations emerged from this work.

Keywords: Sweden; school librarians; school libraries; curriculum

School libraries can play a vital role in K-12 education by providing physical and intellectual access to educational resources that help the school community become effective users of information and ideas. However, for school library programs' resources and services to be effective, they need both material and fiscal resources and trained informational professionals. They also need administrative and legislative support.

For years, school libraries in Sweden had been ignored by the school community and the government; moreover, in the 1990s school library positions were slashed. Not until the 21st century was there strong lobbying by various library associations for legislation that would support school libraries, and the National Authority for School Improvement funded pilot school library development. As a result, the Education Act of 2010 made the school library mandatory (Barrett, Eriksson & Contassot, 2011). The Swedish Library Act of 2013 further stipulated that all students should have access to school libraries (Rameno, 2017).

However, the reality is that several schools might share one collection or be served by an integrated public-school library, and only about half of the students in Sweden today have access to a school library that has at least half-time staffing. To address this issue, the government granted three million euros as a one-time effort in 2017 to stimulate staffing of school libraries. However many schools have had no luck in finding and recruiting trained school librarians; formal academic preparation to prepare professional school librarians seriously lags behind these legislative initiatives.

Swedish universities with librarianship programs include Borås and Uppsala. With its seventy employees and more than a thousand students, the University of Borås's School of Library and Information Science (UBSSLIS) is the largest, leading institution within Sweden for preparing professional librarians, and offers their program in English. This paper details the educational situation in Sweden and efforts to improve school librarianship in the face of new curriculum and school librarian shortage.

Research Plan

The University of Borås School of Library and Information Science is the principle university in Sweden that provides school librarianship training. Thus, their faculty constitute the main body that is working to address school librarianship issues. The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) School Libraries Section, which I chaired, held a meeting in Stockholm. At that event I was able to meet with the National Library's statistics director, who maintains data about Sweden's school libraries. Because of my work, The University of Borås School of Library and Information dean invited me to consult with them about the school librarianship program's direction.

The guiding research questions were:

1. What knowledge, skills and dispositions do school librarians in Sweden need in order to provide a school library program of resources and services that complies with Swedish legislation and supports student academic achievement?
2. What formal academic preparation do school librarians in Sweden need in order to provide a school library program of resources and services that complies with Swedish legislation and supports student academic achievement?

To answer these questions, a phenomenological research methodology was employed to study the lived experiences of school librarians and school librarian faculty. To that end, the following procedures guided this study.

- Examine Swedish legislation about school libraries.
- Conduct a literature review on school libraries in Sweden.
- Contact relevant Swedish library associations about the status and needs of school librarians (Skolbibliotek, Skolbiblioteksforum, and Nationalla Skolbiblioteksgruppen).
- Analyze statistics about school libraries in Sweden.
- Analyze the University of Borås library science curriculum in light of Swedish legislation and Swedish school library statistics, in collaboration with their faculty.
- Make recommendations for school library curriculum for the University of Borås School of Library and Information Science.

Swedish Education: Background and Current Needs

In order to understand the situation of school libraries in Sweden, it is necessary to understand the context of Swedish education and the role of school librarians therein.

Education Overview

The Swedish school system consists of several levels of education ranging from optional, free preschool (förskola) starting at age one through adult schooling. Schooling is required from grades one (usually age seven) through nine (grundskola): divided into lågstadiet (years one through three), mellanstadiet (years four through six) and högstadiet (years seven through nine). Most students attend three more years of school (gymnasium), which prepares them for university or a trade. Post-secondary schooling is also free, but university acceptance is competitive, dependent on grades and national examination scores. Schooling must provide Sami (Lapland) language instruction as needed, and must educate newcomers of all languages. School libraries should provide materials in those languages as appropriate. There are about 5000 grundskola and 1.34 million students in Sweden, of whom about 27% are immigrants. A separate division addresses the needs of students with disabilities.

The Swedish school system is governed by several agencies. The National Agency for Education (Skolverket) has central administrative authority for the public school system. It provides services for students and teachers, including training. It also establishes educational standards, regulations, and national tests. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Statens Skolinspektion) audits the schools and conducts quality control. The National Agency for Special Needs, Education and Schools (Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten) ensures that all students, regardless of functional ability, can fulfill their educational goals through accessible teaching materials and support, and the Ministry of Education and Research oversees the relevant agencies. However, most decisions are made at the municipality level, including library services.

School Libraries

Sweden has about four thousand school libraries, which are funded and managed by local authorities. The first national library law did not exist until 1996, the creation date for the Act on Library Services, which focused on public libraries. For years, school libraries had been ignored by the school community and the Swedish government. Many library associations lobbied for legislation that would support school libraries, and the National Authority for School Improvement funded pilot school library development (Hell, 2014). As a result, the Education Act of 2010 made the school library mandatory (Barrett, Eriksson & Contassot, 2011). The Swedish Library Act of 2013 further stipulated that all students should have access to school libraries (Ranemo, 2017). According to the library act, the library system "aims to promote the development of democratic society by contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and freedom of opinion" (p.1). The library service should also "promote the position of literature and the interest in education, enlightenment, education and research, as well as cultural activities in general" (p. 1). Additionally, all Swedish curricula were revised in 2017 to strengthen digital competence, and school librarians are responsible for supporting and empowering students in both linguistic and digital skills. However, the reality is that several schools might share one collection or be served by an integrated public-school library, and only about half of the students in Sweden have access to a school library that has at least half-time staffing; one third have no access to a school library.

Organizationally, school librarian oversight has changed hands recently. School libraries today are governed by the school law and the library law. The National Library of Sweden now serves as the agency responsible for coordinating support for all libraries; it records library statistics, maintains a common catalog, and promotes school libraries, but it has no authority to see that legislation is complied with. Its 2018 strategic plan asserted that librarians themselves need to start by examining user needs and behaviors, and then identify effective library functions.

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) oversees staff regulation and has a reference group for school library public relations. It also oversees regional media centers, which serve as educational resources for municipal schools; these centers provide several kinds of services for school librarians, including helping school librarians develop libraries as well as providing opportunities for them to develop their own competence. Some centers provide other educational supports for special areas like information technology, multimedia, special education, multi-language education, health, and subject-specific supports (e.g., an interactive map of Stockholm's history). The media centers in Borås and in Stockholm both provide viewing collections for school-appropriate educational materials, and both conduct in-service training for school librarians. Situated in the country's capitol, the Stockholm center is much

larger and provides more comprehensive services such as circulating class sets of literature in several languages, streaming media, makerspaces and robotics, and services for students with disabilities.

The State Media Council oversees media and information literacy. The government's national digitization strategy for the Swedish school system encourages cooperation between teachers and school libraries. The Council asserted that states that "the school library has an important pedagogical task to complement when it comes to strengthening student skills in information retrieval and source literature" (Regeringen, 2017, p. 8).

School libraries have additional support from other groups. The Culture Council helps buy literature for school libraries. The Authority of Available Media deals with accessibility issues. The Swedish Library Association networks, publishes, and advocates. The non-profit National School Library Group of Sweden, which was founded in 1990 by Swedish authors, advocates for school library development. Skolbibliotek Vaste (West School Libraries) and Skolbibliotek Ost (East School Libraries) are the two regional school librarian professional organizations that facilitate networking and professional development. DIK is a trade union for LIS graduates and other academic professions, which advocates for these professions and helps establish fair wages.

School libraries fall under the general umbrella of assessment by the Swedish School Inspectorate, and the recent government efforts showed improvement in their assessing the state of school libraries. However, the National Library's 2015 report on the school library aspect of library planning noted the impact of municipal level governance, which did not recognize that school libraries are answerable to both school and library law. In the final analysis no clear guidelines exist, even though systematic and expanded collaboration between school and public libraries would benefit students.

A 2018 report from the Swedish School Inspectorate examined middle schoolers' ability to "critically search, review and evaluate information in digital and other sources" (p. 5), and found them wanting even though Internet access and use among youth is very widespread in social sciences and Swedish courses. The Inspectorate audit found that information searching needs to be more comprehensively taught, and source criticism needs to be updated to include digital media and images. The audit also indicated that instructors who did not teach these skills did not cooperate with a school librarian, even those these concepts play to school librarians' strengths. Teacher preparation programs tend not to discuss school librarians' roles, and it was found that even principals did not receive training to inform them about the school librarians' skill set and their potential contribution to supporting digital and media literacy.

Skolverket (2017) identified a set of priorities for addressing school libraries' situation. The organization asserted that when school libraries are integrated into the school's activities, school librarians are able to collaborate with the school community, and when a school's principal has a long-term plan for school library activities, then school library programs can effectively impact student success. Currently, however, school librarians are not interacting enough with the school staff, largely because of staff ignorance about school library functions and lack of leadership-based support. To add to the issue, school libraries are weakly regulated. A second key concern is that more people need to be trained as school librarians. Garden's 2017 synthesis of research between 2010 and 2015 on school libraries, focusing on the Swedish system, aligned with Skolverket's study. She also noted the need for more studies, particularly ones that have larger populations and are more rigorous and generalizable.

The lack of collaboration reveals itself in terms of curriculum. School librarians view curriculum in terms of their role in providing supporting resources, as an opportunity for partnering, as a venue for teaching students how to evaluate resources, as a means to incorporate fiction into instruction in various disciplines, and as a way to help define their profession. Barriers to curriculum-based collaboration include lack of time, lack of knowledge and availability, and lack of goal-setting around school library activities (Schedvin, 2017).

One area for possible collaboration is reading, which is a nationally legislated school library function. The library should be stocked with a rich collection of developmentally-appropriate and attractive reading materials that address students' interests and needs so students have many options to choose from. Non-Swedish materials should be available for students as well. The library should also collect non-print multimedia and digital formats of information; these resources support media and digital literacy, which is another curricular high priority – and which provides another opportunity for school librarians to collaborate from an expert position. The library itself should offer a welcoming and stimulating reading environment for individual reading and group sharing of reading experiences. The school librarian brings content and learning knowledge by collecting and organizing appropriate materials, guiding students in their reading habits, instructing students about information and media literacy, and promoting a reading culture. Nevertheless, no legislation requires any collaboration with school librarians or use of school libraries. Again, practices are determined at the local level, so the impact of the principal is very significant.

School Librarians

The qualifications of Swedish school librarians remain challenging. No national qualifications for school librarians exist by the government, librarian preparation programs, or Swedish professional organizations. Even Skolverket, which credentials teachers, does not credential school librarians, nor do they intend to. Currently, principals decide if a person is qualified, largely because school libraries are governed and financed locally. Studies found that principals often do not know what school librarians can do, and tend to prioritize an unmanned library rather than a school librarian (Skolinspektionen, 2018).

With the support of the University of Borås, Limberg and Lundh (2013) edited a collection examining the roles of school libraries in 2013. They questioned the school library's mission relative to reading, education, and relationships with public libraries. They determined that the school library's tasks focused on two main areas: support and stimuli for reading and language development, and teaching different dimensions of information retrieval and use.

A 2016 study by the National Library identified typical school librarian duties, and mapped nine pedagogical functions: teaching information retrieval, teaching source evaluation, promoting reading, advising readers, helping students choose materials for school assignments, giving special aid to students with reading difficulties, planning instruction with teachers, planning media purchases with teachers, and lending media remotely. Almost all school librarians reported that they helped students find developmentally-appropriate reading and ordered media. Among the respondents, 62 percent trained students in evaluating resources, 68 percent participated in teacher training, and several school libraries stated that they also act as information technology (IT) managers, information and communication technology (ICT) educators, and specialist teachers.

Curriculum guidelines for grades one through nine were revised by the Swedish Department of Education in 2017, which strengthened the emphasis on critical thinking,

language arts, information and media literacy, and technology. For instance, the introduction asserted that "Students should be able to orientate and act in a complex reality with the great flow of information, digitalization and rapid change rate. Studying skills and methods to make use of and use new knowledge are becoming important. It is also necessary that the pupils develop their ability to critically review information, facts and arguments, and to understand the consequences of different alternatives" (p. 14). Furthermore, the guidelines indicated that "The school will help students develop an understanding of how digitization affects the individual and the development of society. All students should be given the opportunity to develop their ability to use digital technology. They will also be given the opportunity to develop a critical and responsible pre-emptive kit for digital technology, in order to see information's potentials and prime risks" (p. 16).

Relative to school libraries, the guidelines stated that primary children are expected to:

- use knowledge from scientific, technical, scholarly, humanistic and aesthetic knowledge areas for further studies, in community life and everyday life
- use digital and other tools and media for knowledge searching, information processing, problem solving, creation, and communication and learning
- use critical thinking and self-formulating views based on knowledge and ethical surveillance.

In terms of the guidelines' section on language arts as it relates to school libraries, by grade nine, students should be able to:

- read and analyze scholarly literature and other texts for different purposes
- create and process texts
- communicate in digital environments, including interactive texts
- search for and critically evaluate information from different sources.

In terms of information and communication as it relates to school libraries as noted in the guidelines, by grade nine, students should understand:

- the role of media as information disseminator, opinion maker, substitute for and reviewer of the merged power structures
- various media, their structure and content, and their newsworthiness
- opportunities and risks associated with internet and digital communication and how to act responsibly in the use of digital and other media based on social, ethical, and legal expectations

Through the education of technology, which can be supported by school libraries, by grade nine, students should be able to:

- identify and analyze technical solutions based on purpose and function
- identify problems and needs that can be solved by technology and develop proposals for solutions
- apply technological concepts and means of expression
- understand the impact of technology choices on individuals, society, and the environment
- analyze driving forces behind technology development and how technology has changed over time.

The curriculum continues to be refined as information technologies continue to evolve as well as cognitive and critical demands on use need to respond.

In 2017, the National Agency for Education was charged to determine what school librarian skills and library functions contribute the most to the quality of education. The report made several recommendations: to clarify the law about school libraries and staffing, strengthen

school library activities within the national school development program, inform the school community about the importance of school librarians, increase school librarians' competence, and provide short-term funding to hire school librarians. Already, in 2018, the National Schools Inspectorate facilitated staffing by providing training for principals about the value and oversight of school libraries. The 2018 national revised curriculum also clarified the role of school libraries as part of teaching.

In 2017, the government granted three million kronor to stimulate staffing of school libraries, and in 2018 the government again proposed adding funding to close the equity gap between schools having staffed libraries and those without. However, many schools have no luck in finding and recruiting skilled, trained school librarians, regardless of the funding available.

School Librarian Preparation

Formal academic preparation to prepare professional school librarians seriously lags. Swedish universities with librarianship programs include Borås, Linneaus, Lund, Umea, and Uppsala. A 2018 report underwritten by the National Library focused on library science as a profession and addressed education and research. The report pointed out the need for professional librarians, and noted the general consensus about the librarianship programs as to professional competencies. Nevertheless, they recommended more coordination and a single national structure for continuous professional development. Unfortunately, the report barely mentioned school librarianship.

Sweden's post-secondary librarian preparation exists at three degree levels: bachelor, master, and doctorate. The bachelor's degree is usually 180 EU (European Union) credits, which translates into three years of full-time study. This degree is usually the entry point for public librarians in Sweden, but may be the baseline for school librarians as well. However, the master's degree (typically 120 EU units) is the preferred level for most professional library positions in Sweden as it is in the U.S., including for school librarians. Pedagogy is seldom part of the curriculum, so school and academic librarians are often not prepared to instruct or develop curriculum. Doctoral students usually become academic faculty or researchers, and some become administrators. Classroom teachers are required to be certified; some of them who become school librarians earn a library science master's degree, others take extended education courses (Borås offers four such courses, and is the leader in school librarianship), while others work in the school library without any library preparation or prior experience.

With its seventy employees and more than a thousand students, the University of Borås's School of Library and Information Science (UBSSLIS) is the largest, leading institution within Sweden for preparing professional librarians at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral level. They offer both on-campus and distance programs, as well as individual elective courses specifically on school librarianship. Some of those courses are delivered in English. No other Swedish university prepares school librarians.

Work at Borås Högskolan SSLIS

Pre-Existing University-Related Efforts

The Borås Högskolan School of Library and Information Science (SSLIS) offers a bachelor's degree in library science, a campus-based master's degree in library science (Culture, information and communication), a distance-based master's degree in library science (Digital library and information services), and a doctoral program. The school exists within the

Faculty of Library, Information, Education and IT, so offers related courses that vary between being more pedagogical or more technical in nature.

The seventy faculty members of the SSLIS themselves reflect a wide range of specialties, from political science to ebooks. Twenty faculty members are involved in teaching courses that involve school librarian preparation. Some members focus more on research, and others expend more of their energy on teaching. The faculty are divided into four research groups, or "brands": information practice; knowledge infrastructures; library, culture and society; and social media studies. These groups meet regularly to discuss current readings and research, and they collaborate on projects. I was particularly impressed with the amount of international research collaboration. The Swedish and EU governments offer a variety of grant opportunities for faculty. The library programs are largely theoretical, but faculty often share courses, and guest speakers such as practitioners are common. Monday research seminars give faculty opportunities to share their work, and their open oral doctoral defenses are also good opportunities for SSLIS members to share ideas. Borås also holds symposia that are open to the larger community, such as their one-day conference on MIK (media and information competencies). On an informal, social level, the school has a commons room centrally located in which faculty meet for free beverages, weekly gudfika (coffee "happy hour"), and frequent events (including birthday celebrations). This central space facilitates and reinforces school-wide communication and collaboration.

For their curriculum, the SSLIS faculty meet yearly to schedule the following spring and fall courses. They also have a retreat to work on curriculum issues. Courses are usually set in order for a three-year plan, with electives offered yearly. Each course lasts one to two months, and students generally take one course at a time. Online courses may include a face-to-face orientation or may not. Face-to-face courses usually include lectures and hands-on workshops (e.g., Internet searching). Course coordinators have the freedom to decide how many face-to-face contact hours to provide as well as how to time them (which can range from 2-3 times in a week over the course of five weeks to a preponderance of independent work). The yearly scheduling process occurs over two consecutive days, during which all course coordinators independently upload their course schedules; the dates and times for each class session should not overlap with other courses in the same program so there is an incentive to upload the course dates and times quickly. Bachelor level courses usually hold 40-60 students while graduate seminar typically need at least fifteen students. The program budget takes into account the number of students and number of hours as well as the type of work that the faculty member does (guest lecturing, grading exams, etc.).

As for the courses themselves, students have a final exam (or project-essay), which they have to pass. By national regulation, they have five chances to pass the exam, but the teacher can decide the timing (e.g., three times during the first month, then maybe a month or two later and a last time a semester later). Most courses include a couple of other smaller assignments to submit earlier; students may be given an A-F grade for these. However, it is possible to not do the assignments and still pass the exam and get credit for the course. The typical course grade is pass or fail, with teachers sometimes giving "pass with distinction." For master's degree students, there is one research course that students have to pass before they can start their thesis, which is a degree requirement.

School Library Curriculum Issues and Efforts

By the end of 2020, the school librarianship program needed to be overhauled, so the study's timing was good. The program course coordinators began examining current curricular practices in light of new national school curriculum and the need for more school librarians.

At the time of the study, students were free to take whatever elective course they want; there was no "track." To address the need for school librarians and to optimize their preparation, the faculty considered creating a school librarian track. Current elective courses about school libraries included:

- C3BUB1 Using ICT in Educational Library Services
- 31BSF1 School Libraries: Function and Activities
- 31DIP1 Information Literacy and Learning

The following courses were targeted to teachers and librarians' professional development:

- C315R1 Role of School Librarians in Learning Environments
- 11M100 Media and Information Literacy in Education
- C3F161 Promoting Literature in the School Library
- C3FIN1 Information Seeking and Critical Thinking in Educational Contexts

LIS programs overall seem strongest in information practice; that is, the strongest courses teach theories about information behavior and its context and include some applications. In asking program pre- and in-service school librarians about content approach, the faculty discovered that the respondents generally wanted a greater emphasis on practice than these courses offered up to this time. Especially given the new national curricular emphasis on school librarians' role in teaching media and information literacy, the faculty thought that the school librarianship program would benefit from expanding its content on media literacy and on instructional design; many pre-service school librarians have no teaching background, so the latter subject is crucial for them.

In the process of the study, the program faculty also considered other changes in practice. Of particular interest were service learning, field experience, and advising; none of these features were part of their students' experience. Faculty thought that service learning and advising were feasible ideas to incorporate into their programs.

As noted above, a great need for school librarians has resulted in school principals sometimes hiring classroom teachers without a library science background. As no school librarian credentials exist, the library science degree is the only official path to expert status, but the need far outweighing the number of available graduates, alongside the current employment of a number of school librarians without this qualification, calls in to question the needfulness and/or appropriateness of the standard library science degree for school librarians. Therefore, the question arose among the school librarianship faculty: could a program be established that would leverage classroom teaching experience to shorten the number of courses need to become a knowledgeable school librarian? At the beginning of the study, collaboration between SSLIS and teacher education programs was just starting, and already seeing the fruits of their efforts. Such interaction benefits both programs and facilitates in-service collaboration. To facilitate future efforts, teacher preparation programs and syllabi, were examined to discern possible overlapping and related courses, particularly in terms of literacy and instructional design.

Motivated by the national pronouncement of the need for more school librarians, the program faculty had already talked with school librarians to imagine ideal curricula, and they recognized the need to reach out to school classroom teachers. They liked the idea of a course "package" for existing classroom teachers instead of a credential, since the latter does not exist

and a new program is very difficult to create. Over a decade ago, they had offered a similar kind of course package, which was popular, so they thought that a new round of course packaging would be useful now, especially as principals and rectors are being trained in the need to support school libraries. They liked my idea of providing a more condensed course on resource organization. I had also suggested a new course, and found out that the school librarian program had just created a similar one to that which I had suggested, so it was a confirmation for all of us. Nevertheless, the faculty member who created that course is using my idea to polish her course.

At the beginning of the study, students were free to choose electives but had no assigned program advisors, so they might not think strategically or know the best courses to take. To optimize their preparation, it was suggested that career pathways be developed, focusing on school librarianship. Based on a literature review and discussions with school librarians, three educational pathways for school librarianship preparation were proposed, with a baseline requirement of a bachelor's degree. Talks with school librarian practitioners and consultants in three areas of Sweden indicated that they all liked the idea of a 60-unit track or "course package" for school teachers that would enable them to serve as school librarians (being clear that they cannot function as a professional librarian in other library settings without additional qualifications). The school librarian program faculty discussed the proposed school library track proposal. The three tracks are outlined below:

*Pathway 1: Bachelor's degree in library science (Bibliotekarie)

4 elective courses:

- Role of school librarians in learning environments
- Media and information literacy in education
- Promoting literature in the school library
- Using ICT in educational library services

*Pathway 2: Master's degree in library science: Culture, information and communication

4 elective courses:

- Role of school librarians in learning environments
- Media and information literacy in education
- Promoting literature in the school library
- Using ICT in educational library services

*Pathway 3: School Librarian Certificate (Pre-requisite: current teaching certification)

Library science courses:

- Library and information science as research and professional studies (7.5 EU units)
- Classification (7.5) OR Content Management (7.5) [possible 7.5 credit course on resource organization that addresses cataloging, classification, controlled vocabulary -- which are three separate courses presently]
- Knowledge organization 2 (7.5)
- Methods and tools in libraries (7.5)
- Methods and tools in libraries 2 (7.5)

School librarian specialization:

- Role of school librarians in learning environments (7.5)
- Media and information literacy in education (7.5)
- Promoting literature in the school library (7.5)

In the process, it was recommended that the same courses be taught for the face-to-face, distance, and practitioner programs, which would again streamline the curriculum and make it more equitable – as well as optimizing the program's alignment with the national reports and

recommendations for school librarianship preparation. It was also suggested that the program map its curriculum, starting with the national recommendations for school librarian functions and their competencies to implement those functions. Then those competencies can be addressed in the various courses, which can also facilitate their assessment.

The coordinating faculty also discussed lengthening all of their courses to two months instead of five weeks, which was the existing norm in order to give more time for students to do more substantive projects, reflect on their learning and show progress within that course (Ferguson & DeFelice, 2010; Hodara & Jaggars, 2014; Sheldon & Durdella, 2010). Lengthening the time also eases course planning and delivery. There was a concern that lengthening the time would result in fewer courses, but they realized that students could take two courses simultaneously where presently students tended to take just one course.

These ideas were discussed in full during the school librarianship faculty curriculum revision retreat, which involved all the teaching faculty. The attendees met in small groups, organized by course, to review and revise curriculum to expand and deepen learner engagement. A tentative three-year master's program course schedule was then shared. The next day, three faculty members gave presentations on current and future library trends and on knowledge organization. Afterwards, faculty met in four cross-curricular groups to map curriculum for a three-year bachelor's program and then presented their plans. Each group had a slightly different version and approach, which reflected a lack of referring, during group activities, to the program learning outcomes. Such all-faculty program meetings are held annually, with coordinators meeting at least twice a semester. Because of the number of programs offered and the observed need for major curricular and delivery changes, the faculty decided to meet more regularly until they could tighten up these programs more clearly and differentiate them more systematically.

Update and Conclusions

At the same time that school librarians shake their heads about the need for school librarians – and the uneven quality of current staff – those same school librarians are creatively engaging their school communities with innovative, meaningful learning activities and quality collections. Site school librarians, library educators, and supporting government personnel are on the lookout for relevant resources and are initiating projects to improve school library programs.

In the midst of changing dynamics, it can be difficult to find equilibrium, but school librarians do not seem to be panicking. Rather, they are working at a scale that they are comfortable with. Some efforts are deployed quickly on the national level, such as workshops for principals to become more aware and knowledgeable about school library functions and needs. Other tasks, such as establishing qualification baselines and credentialing school librarians, may require greater incentive to fuel the effort. Many structures are in place but need systematic coordination in order to insure high-quality school library service for every student.

Since the time of the study with Borås faculty, their pre-service librarian programs has been redesigned and two new versions, one on campus and one at a distance, is starting in August of 2020. In parallel, they have continued to discuss a school librarian program for practicing librarians who do not have school librarian training. As the school librarian program coordinator stated in a recent correspondence, “Now we'll just tie it together into one whole.”

In sum, school librarianship in Sweden can serve as a microcosm to see the factors and dynamics of change and how to deal with such change Especially as few countries in the world

have university library programs with a track or specialization for school librarians, the process and product will hopefully inform and inspire them.

References

- Barrett, H., Eriksson, B., & Contassot, M. G. (2011). The school library as a tool to empower literacy and improve schools: A Swedish government initiative. In L. Marquardt & D. Oberg, (Eds.), *Global perspectives on school libraries: Projects and practices* (pp. 245-253). Berlin: De Gruyter Saur.
- Ferguson, J. M., & DeFelice, A. E. (2010). Length of online course and student satisfaction, perceived learning, and academic performance. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 11(2), 73–84.
- Garden, C. (2017). *Skolbibliotekets roll för elevers lärande*. Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket.
- Hell, M. (2014). Collaboration for school library legislation and school library development in Sweden. Paper presented at IFLA conference, Lyon, August 15.
- Hodara, M., & Jaggars, S. S. (2014). An examination of the impact of accelerating community college students' progression through developmental education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 85(2), 246-276.
- Kungliga biblioteket. (2018). *Från ord till handling*. Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket.
- Kungliga biblioteket. (2018). *Profession, utbildning forskning*. Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket.
- Kungliga biblioteket. (2016). *Skolbibliotek – hur set det ut?* Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket.
- Kungliga biblioteket. (2015). *Skolbiblioteken in biblioteksplanerna*. Stockholm:
- Limberg, L., & Lundh, A., (Eds.). (2013). *School library roles in the changing landscape*. Lund, Sweden: BTJ Publisher.
- Ranemo, C. (2017). *Library statistics – school libraries*. Stockholm: Kungliga biblioteket.
- Regeringen (2017). *U2017/04119/S, Nationell digitaliseringsstrategi för skolväsendet*. Stockholm: Regeringen.
- Schedvin, M. (2017). *Skolbibliotekarier och läroplanen i grundskolan. En studie ur ett nyinstitutionellt perspektiv*. Borås, Sweden: University of Borås.
- Sheldon, C. Q., & Durdella, N. R. (2010). Success rates for students taking compressed and regular length developmental courses in the community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 34(1–2), 39–54.
- Skolinspektionen. (2018). *Skolbiblioteket som pedagogisk resurs*. Stockholm: Skolinspektionen.
- Skolverket. (2017). *Utvärdering av statsbidraget för personalförstärkning i skolbibliotek*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- Sweden School Libraries National Agency of Education. (2018). *Agenda report No. 2017:1228*. Stockholm: Sweden School Libraries National Agency of Education.
- Swedish Department of Education. (2017). *Forordning om andring i förordningen (SLOLFS 2010:37) om laroplan for grundskolan, foskoleklassen och fritidshemmet*. Stockholm: Swedish Department of Education.

About the Author

Dr. Lesley Farmer, Professor at California State University (CSU) Long Beach, coordinates the Librarianship program, and was named as the university's Outstanding Professor. She also manages the CSU ICT Literacy Project. She earned her M.S. in Library Science at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and received her doctorate in Adult Education from Temple

University. Dr. Farmer chaired the IFLA's School Libraries Section, and is a Fulbright scholar. A frequent presenter and writer for the profession, she won several honors, including American Library Association's Phi Beta Mu Award for library education, the International Association of School Librarianship Commendation Award, and the Catholic Library Association St. Katharine Drexel Award.. Dr. Farmer's research interests include digital citizenship, information and media literacy, and data analytics.