

# Graduate-level Educ Teacher-

**Dr. Jennifer Branch,  
Joanne de Groot,  
Marcia Mardis,  
Diane Galloway Solowan  
and Lois Barranoik  
Faculty of Education,  
University of Alberta**

**T**o run a well-used library, you need to keep your finger on the pulse of your patrons' needs. You need to find out what your clientele wants and what they think about the library-based activities you have been running. Analysing differences between the genders when it comes to reading tastes and habits and collecting some information on popular authors to beef up the collection might also keep you more in tune with patrons' needs. But who has the time to survey?

What is the highest degree most leaders in your schools and districts have? We are guessing you will say a Master of Education degree. Rightfully so! The Master of Education (MEd) degree prepares leaders – for roles in administration and policy, psychology, special education, curriculum, and information technology. We are proposing all teacher-librarians in the 21st century need to have, or be working on, a Master of Education degree or a Master of Library and Information Science degree.

What does it take to be a teacher-librarian? In many countries, most will have a Master of Library (and Information) Science/Studies (MLS/MLIS) degree while others will have a Master of Education degree with a

specialization in school libraries. In the US, most states have certification requirements for School Library Media Specialists that expect a Bachelor of Education (BEd) and a MLS/MLIS degree. The same is true in Australia. From my experience in Britain, many of the school librarians will have a MLS/MLIS degree but not necessarily a BEd and a teaching certificate. In Ontario, however, most teacher-librarians only need to take one additional qualification course in Librarianship to be qualified to run a school library. We believe that this is NOT enough for teacher-librarians in the 21st century. In *Librarians as Learning Specialists: Meeting the Learning Imperative for the 21st century*, Zmuda and Harada present the idea that teacher-librarians are, in fact, learning specialists.

These specialists generally have no official classroom assignments per se because they work with the entire school population. They may include reading specialists, writing coaches, mathematics coaches, science coaches, and instructional technology specialists. Learning specialists are strategically positioned to be teacher leaders.

To be a teacher leader, you need to have the same degree as other school leaders.

For the past year or so, the Faculty members in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta have been spending a lot of time thinking about the role of the teacher-librarian in the 21st-century schools and what knowledge, skills, and attitudes we needed to be developing in our program. We were successful in our application for a Fulbright Senior Specialist and Dr. Marcia Mardis joined our faculty for three weeks in October of 2008. Dr. Mardis has been instrumental in the writing of American Association of School Librarians' new *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* and is a prolific researcher and conference presenter in the area of school libraries. This was our chance to work with a leader in the field and take a good hard look at our program. In preparation for Dr. Mardis' visit, we surveyed all of our recent Master of Education in Teacher-Librarianship graduates to find out more about what they were doing in schools and school libraries, how well prepared they

The new Teacher-Librarian by Distance Learning Program will start courses in January 2010. Applications will be reviewed for the first cohort in April and October 2009. For more information, contact Jennifer Branch at [jbranch@ualberta.ca](mailto:jbranch@ualberta.ca) or check out our website at [www.quasar.ualberta.ca/tl-dl](http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/tl-dl).