

Managing change

June Wall, 2007 President of ASLA (NSW), shares some tidbits that may help you to begin some steps towards change in your school library and across your school.

1. Start small - within your library staff first or a department / faculty. Once they are *evangelised*, then they will spread the word.
2. Linked with the first point, in order to get your staff working or thinking in a different way, provide small informal sessions on a number of aspects of the change you are proposing.
3. If your Principal/ Head of School is not on board with your ideas, you need to provide short articles or have short conversations with him/her with the emphasis on how the change will benefit the students in general - not just the library.
4. Have you checked your stakeholders? You need to survey/ talk with/ find out what staff, students and other community members think. If, in general, they are not in agreement, then you will need to re-think the change planned. Perhaps a smaller change that leads to the one you had in mind?
5. Consider what other actions or changes are taking place at the time. Timing is crucial for successful change. If the community is not ready because they have other commitments, they will not think positively if the change is viewed as just another thing to do.
6. Plan for the change -think the whole process through before you start. Introduce new ideas or activities in increments. If you break the whole process down into smaller parts, staff will not feel so overwhelmed.
7. Be aware of the issue of 'comfort zone. Many staff (and students) will not want to change simply because it has always worked 'this way'. Pushing someone outside their comfort zone, may result in a response based on fear. So because they are concerned about the change they will reject it, be passive obstructionists or fight against it. This fear needs to be considered and strategies determined before it starts, as once it takes hold, it is difficult to work around.
8. Think about your whole staff and their 'standing' within your school community. Who are the people who are listened to? This is not always Heads of Department or school executive. Find the person or people who exert influence (consciously or unconsciously) and get them on board with the change idea.
9. Make sure that staff sees you as an approachable person who can change ideas to meet their needs. Staff needs to see that you are flexible and can adjust to the changing circumstances as much as you

are asking them to change.

10. Don't give up or get too discouraged. Remember the fable of the *Hare and the Tortoise*? Slow and steady wins the race.

Oh and a passing thought—a mantra helps!

Mine is along the lines of '...turkeysgetting me down...' :-)

As W. Edwards Denning quips: *It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory.*