

Leading Perspective
Rethinking traditional libraries
Linda Gibson-Langford

Inside this final issue for 2008 you will find an article by Georgia Phillips. She reflects on the positional changes in schools as teachers retire, principals' decide what positions they want in schools, budgets change as world economies collapse and the paradigm shift in pedagogy as print merges with the communication and digital wI would be only to happy to share more information about Mark's presentation....he did it in a most encouraging and thoughtful way - no doom and gloom, rather, energised by the exciting times ahead and the important role Teacher-Librarians will play in the next 8-10 years - as this new paradigm shifts hits midpoint - in managing information. Here is some of what Mark had to say...

orlds. This course looks at the revised role of school libraries in the 21st century. We will look at changing technology and opportunities that will arise from an emerging tidal wave of information for students to deal with.

D we control information or do we

Dna of teachers the pedgagical dna...

Pedagogical dna for 21 we co-construct as learners and coconstructg as ...

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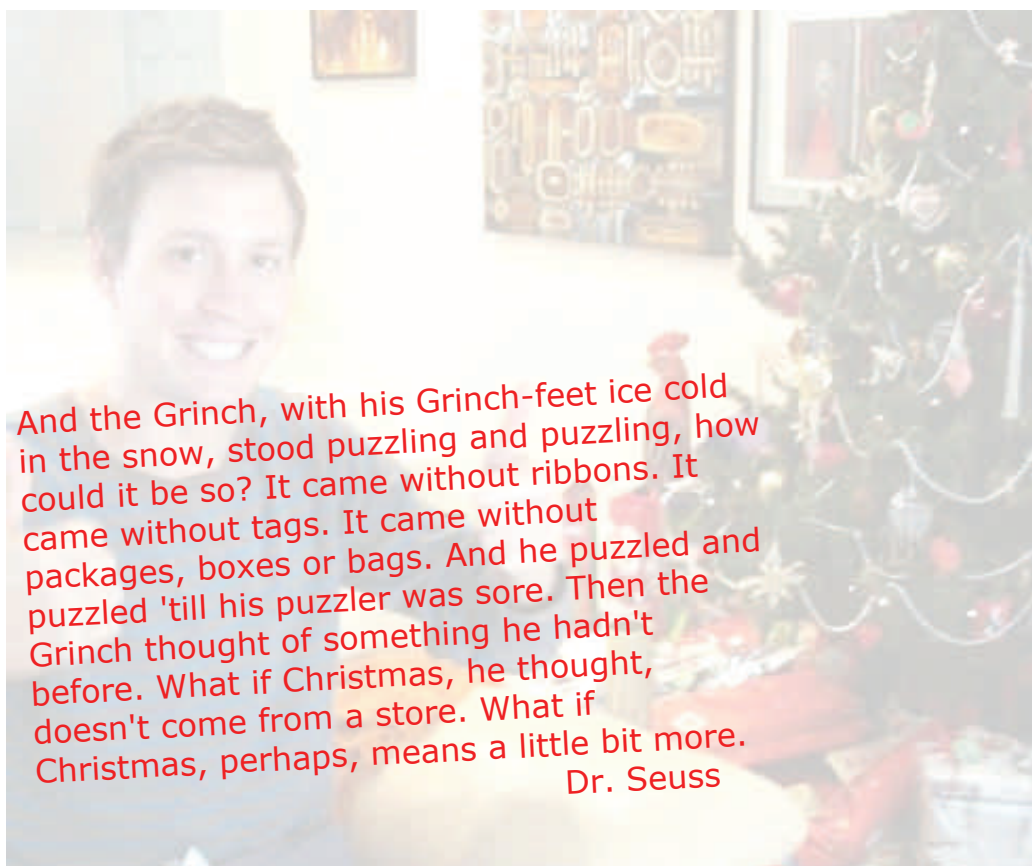
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ISSUE 4 2008 INCLUDES

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And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold
 in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how
 could it be so? It came without ribbons. It
 came without tags. It came without
 packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and
 puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the
 Grinch thought of something he hadn't
 before. What if Christmas, he thought,
 doesn't come from a store. What if
 Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.
 Dr. Seuss

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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Agnes Nieuwenhuizen ... on reading for life

Agnes Nieuwenhuizen offers a passionate perspective on reading as a lifelong involvement, beyond the basic literacy rhetoric of modern society. Thank you Agnes for permission to reprint this edited excerpt from a longer essay published in Idiom Volume 44, Number 2, 2008.

Everything starts with reading – but not yet in Australia

One of the first announcements the incoming UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, made was to declare 2008 the *National Year of Reading*. We too will have *got it* when our PM considers reading as being critical and worthwhile enough to declare an Australian National Year of Reading and to use this as a springboard for major reading initiatives that focus on reading widely and for pleasure; and go beyond achieving basic literacy.

It is evident from research and numerous international reading initiatives, that being a confident, committed reader has wide ranging positive effects on personal, intellectual, social and educational well-being from early childhood to old age. This much broader view of the place and value of reading has significant implications for the classroom and **requires a radically new approach to the role of reading in schools.**

This should include time and opportunity for much more reading – at least five books each term! These could include fiction, non-fiction, picture books and graphic novels.

Why reading matters for teenagers (and everyone)

Julia Lawrinson, the outstanding WA writer for young people, encapsulates perfectly why reading matters to teenagers. She believes that:

Writing and reading are essential activities – for everyone, but especially for teenagers – because they give us space to think about the thing that matters most: the question of how it is we live our lives (Magpies, May 2008).

Richard Hughes boldly insists that you should ‘*Do your bit to save humanity from lapsing back into barbarity by reading all the novels you can*’ (1975,

in Julie Rugg & Lynda Murphy 2006 *A Book Addict’s Treasury* - a delicious book for any book addict and full of treasures!)

It is not difficult to gather similar observations and further evidence.

The challenge is to translate this into policy and action. One of the obstacles in Australia is that reading and being a reader are considered *nerdy*, and *uncool*, especially for males. Remember the derision that confronted Mark Latham when he started talking about the importance of reading to children? Didn’t he have anything serious or substantial to talk about? In the *Education Age (The Age, May 12 2008)* there was a passionate piece challenging the myths of the failing schools. The author, Graeme Smithies, a retired Principal, describes the children most likely to succeed thus:

They will come from homes where the child is read to frequently, the parents read and are seen to enjoy reading, and there is a large variety of reading matter; and the child has had at least a year of pre-school experience before starting school.

The former NSW Premier, Bob Carr, is that rare creature who revels in being a reader (and a nerd) and does not hesitate to extol the virtues of books and reading as he sees them. It was he who introduced the Premier’s Reading Challenge program to Australia, a project now replicated in several states. And unlike most recently retired leaders, rather than producing a tell-all or head-kicking memoir, his first book after retirement is the recently published, *My Reading Life*, detailing what he has read and why these books have been important to him. He refers to Nabokov’s *Lectures on Literature* (1980) and observes:

I liked his observation that as infants we read to identify with characters, as adolescents we read to learn about life. But as adults we read books for the sake of their form, their visions, their art’ (my emphasis, The Australian Literary Review, May 7 2008.)

The evidence is in for why, at this most questioning, questing and exploratory time in their lives, teenagers are just so ready for what fiction, but also other types of literature, can offer.

They are, in current parlance, *hot* for ideas and experiences and ready to revel in language.

And here is critic Kerry Goldsworthy, in the same issue of the Australian Literature Review [ALR], in the context of a review of three first novels,

*... all the best novels and stories are...
implicitly saying something about the world.
They are making a case or pointing a moral,
or answering (or asking) a question.*

As well, at this fragile and often confusing period in their lives, stories provide a safe and stimulating way to stand in other people's shoes and try to understand those in similar or different situations or similar or very different worlds. Books can also provide quick, inexpensive and easy entertainment and intense pleasure.

We read to understand, or to begin to understand. We cannot do but read.

Reading, almost as much as breathing, is our essential function.

Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading*, HarperCollins 1996.

From little things...

It was to provide these kinds of enriching experiences; to bring teenagers, books and authors together, and to remind young people and the adults who live and work with them of the pleasures of reading, that I established the Youth Literature Project in 1991. In 1999, the Youth Literature Project metamorphosed into the Centre for Youth Literature at the State Library of Victoria, where it continues to flourish. This work was always informed by my experiences as a teacher and as a parent.

For over 25 years, I had seen how easy it was to turn young people off reading but also how rewarding it was to enthuse them. Mostly it is a matter of the right book at the right time.

The same aims and experience inspired and informed the Youth Literature Days of the *Melbourne Writers Festival*, which took shape when I was approached in 1994 to devise a festival component for young people.

Initially everyone cautioned me that it would be **impossible to attract teenagers to book events**. By the time I left the Festival five years

later, the Youth Days were attracting over 3000 teenagers, mostly in school groups.

Our biggest compliment was always to hear young people say, as they rushed to buy and have books signed, *'I thought it/he/she would be boring but they were great.'*

The most disappointing aspect was how few schools and teachers made the effort to brief or prepare their students, many of whom were not even aware what they were coming to. So, many were unable to get books signed because they had not been told to bring money. What a lost opportunity, especially for some, as it was their first trip to town or the first time they had met an author!

The success of such events depended, and will continue to depend, on the extensive book and author knowledge of those creating the programs,

the determination not to underestimate the interest, intelligence and hunger for stories and ideas of teenagers and the need to be balanced but fearless in the face of potential controversy.

Also essential are great attention to organisational detail and excellent service. In the case of the biennial *Reading Matters* conference, which has become the Centre's signature event, top international authors and fine food always add to the buzz.

Reading is our essential function

A final word from Alberto Manguel (1996 *A History of Reading*) acknowledging the essentialist function of reading:

We read to understand, or to begin to understand. We cannot do but read.

Reading, almost as much as breathing, is our essential function.

AN

Note—Agnes Nieuwenhuizen's latest book is *Right Book Right Time - 500 great reads for teenagers* Allen & Unwin 2007.

Sharing the joy... valuing books

The background to this article involves a weed of the school library at Fairfield High School after which books were sent to poorer schools in the Philippines. The people from the Philippines wrote back ... to say thank you. Lorylene Osorio, a former student at Fairfield and a Filipino herself, knew how much the donation would be valued by her countrymen. An edited version of her paper Sharing the joy of reading follows.

While I was writing scribbles and scribbles of homework one subdued afternoon in the school library, my gaze landed upon a topsy turvy pile of books that were mercilessly shoved in a dark dusty corner. This was unusual, I thought. Surely these books did not accidentally travel there; they should be resting somewhere on their shelves. With a sigh, I picked them up and spent the next fifteen minutes looking at each book number and locating their prescribed shelf. Whilst doing this, my mind was pondering about how some people are so careless, unappreciative and apathetic to treat books like some unwanted crumpled papers.

Why am I ranting? As students living in a first world country, we are very fortunate indeed to have opportunities to access information easily, especially books. We are lucky to see more than

Some of them would skip lunch because they decided to use their lunch money in photocopying important pages in the book...

one bookshelf crammed with books full of knowledge and colourful stories, waiting and calling out for our attention to read them. We are given this golden key to go through their pages and indeed borrow them for free if we so desire. We do not need to bicker over whose turn is it now to bring the book home—to borrow it—because libraries in Australia have sufficient books that correlate to coursework, research and for pleasure.

Sadly, however, we often fail to recognise this privilege. Often, we are too preoccupied to fully realise their value in terms of our learning.

Another world

Our fellow peers, living in developing countries, are not as privileged as we. Based upon my experiences overseas, I have witnessed the utter lack of books

and the desperate measures students take trying to access them. In a nutshell, three to four public school students in the Philippines share one book for each subject. Mind you, these frayed books are far from what we students would have in our bags right now. Yet they handle these books like prized possessions. I still vividly remember the time when my classmates had to constantly decide amongst themselves on which day they were able to take the book home and make notes from it. Some of them would skip lunch because they decided to use their lunch money in photocopying important pages in the book, especially during exam periods. Cases of stealing books was rampant, a solid example of the desperation some students would go to so as to own just one...

Looking back, I can imagine how my friends would react if they stepped inside our school library packed with hundreds of books neatly arranged according to their subject matter. I'm sure their faces and minds would be painted with astonishment, awe, curiosity and gladness—like mine was.

Sometimes I wish they could be here, reaching for the shelves to grab a book about Dali or skim through the encyclopaedias, to savour and share this feeling of precious wonderment with me as we read from such knowledgeable treasures. Yet here I am, dismayed at the fact that we tend to see these books as if they are useless—only worthy enough to be dumped in a corner.

Your trash—others' treasure

It is still possible to give these less privileged students hope, wonderment and access to information through numerous philanthropic means. When I heard that our school had collaborated with the Fairfield Library in donating books to the underdeveloped regions of the Philippines, such as Nueva Ecija High School, my heart soared with pride.

Pay forward

Why am I ranting?

Well, I am trying to encourage everyone to value what we have, to be empowered, to pay something forward, to share the joys and benefits of giving books to the ones who are not as lucky as we.

Merry Christmas!

LO

Holy Toledo, Ms Devine!

Our ASLA (NSW) Teacher Librarian of the Year 2008 (Joint Winner with the late John Free), Di Laycock, continues to hold, unashamedly, the mirror up to her would-be doubters to steadfastly defend the rise and rise and rise of graphic novels as fitting choices for school based collections.

Moreover, she argues strongly for the rightful place of graphic novels as an additional format for not only recreational reading but as stimulus for units of study that can be delivered or enhanced through story/ image.

... graphic novels were substandard literature with limited scope for critical thinking and deconstruction of literary style and language.

And she has been successful in delivering the message that graphic novels have a place in our schools. The kids told her so!

However it would seem that Laycock has wandered into a journalists' juggernaut. Both the *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* have donned their respective superhero regalia and have leapt across state lines to open up the debate that is raging on the introduction of graphic novels as legitimate reading material in the secondary curriculum.

Liza Power, journalist for Melbourne's *The Age* [*Graphic tales make novel teaching tools* September 21, 2008], interviewed several secondary teachers, including Di Laycock, as well as Pam McIntyre, lecturer in language and literacy at the University of Melbourne.

The teachers who used graphic novels in their mainstream teaching were understandably fierce in their defence of the format whilst others, who were less inclined to accept graphic novels as legitimate text for school students, felt that graphic novels were substandard literature with limited scope for critical thinking and deconstruction of literary style and language.

Power's investigation into teachers' attitudes toward graphic novels in the English curriculum portrayed factional responses. She summarized the vote against graphic novels as:

Many teachers argue that class time spent studying [a] non-traditional texts is time taken away from more rigorous scholastic

endeavors. Hobby reading, they argue, has no place in the classroom.

Hobby texts for hobby reading are pretty harsh words from our colleagues when you consider the depth of emotion and historical truths in Spiegelman's *Maus*, the empathic and sensitive rendering of Tan's *The Arrival* and the very clever portrayal of the main characters in Hind's adaptation of *Merchant of Venice*.

However, the stalwarts who champion the inclusion of graphic novels in the curriculum as legitimate texts for the purpose of enhancing learning give

vent to their passion as they witness the change from disengagement to engagement of their more disaffected students and the intensity of discussion between their more engaged students.

It is this quality in graphic novels—their ability to cater to a wide array of learning styles and abilities—that lends itself to careful examination beyond prejudice that comes from social conditioning.

McIntyre, in her interview with Power, argues that, in today's highly visual world,

students want to look, engage and understand material very quickly. If they're daunted by a difficult to understand text, they simply get bored and move on.

She is steadfast in her belief that young people are, in fact, sophisticated users and readers of the visual form.

It is this comment alone that forces the question *as to why graphic novels carry for some teachers, schools, school councils and parents alike, such stigma?*

Miranda Devine, in her opinion column for the *Sydney Morning Herald* [*English teachers have lost the plot* October 4 2008] lambasts the English Teachers' Association of New South Wales for their lack of responsibility in their response to an HSC syllabus review by the NSW Board of Studies. She is at odds with the Association for wavering from what should be a solid diet of print/word based media.

In their world, as in the curriculum, "texts" can be books as we know them—words on a page that ideally have some literary merit—and can also be music videos, movies, reality TV shows, comic books ("graphic novels") or songs. To ETA, all texts are equal, and sceptical students are required to expend considerable effort trying to prove it.

Ms Devine continues that:

While oral language and iconography—pictures—are important, it is the written word that has helped us most to think. To elevate pictures and sounds to equal status is to rewind human evolution and primitivise the brain.

For graphic novel advocates, Devine’s blatant stab at the visual as legitimate text is provocative.

Those who have involved themselves with the research into the use of graphic novels in the classroom will tell you that students’ identification of character, story and response are just as genuine as if they had read the word-only version.



Higher Order Thinking Skills

Laycock argues that teaching students to analyse visual information is crucial and that graphic novels assist in the development of analytic and critical understandings in ways that other texts cannot.

As Power explains:

When Laycock first introduced a year 8 class to an adaptation of Macbeth, boys who had struggled with the language and

themes of the traditional text found that being able to see the relationships between the characters made a dramatic difference. Higher-ability students studied the graphic novel and original text together, evaluating the adaptation process.

Power has done her homework. She interviewed Melbourne High School English teacher Blair Mahoney who also supported the use of graphic novels as excellent text for the study of English because, as he states, they have the ability to incorporate:

words with visual images—which involve colour, perspectives and framing—often combined with dialogue in speech balloons.

He continues that ‘*graphic novels represent a unique visual/literary form*’.

Supporting Mahoney [in Power] is Laycock’s affirmation that ‘*graphic novels have the ability to cater to a wide array of learning styles and abilities.*’

Surely the plum in the pie is the response of the students.

Laycock has pages of evidence to suggest that, amongst other things, her students were stimulated to think differently about characters and relationships between them; to question critically the body language presented through the images, to make meaning from text between the panels and to critically think about the author’s intention.

Her evidence is supported by a growing body of research regarding the efficacy of graphic novels as teaching tools for powerful learning.

But will this evidence be enough to convince the sceptics?

Perhaps so, if the debate can swing away from pitting graphic novels and word-only texts as rivals and instead, place them hand in glove.

I’m betting that graphic novels has all the potentiality that 21st century learning requires—not in how they look but in how they function for young learners that face making meaning in a hypermedia world.

LGL

Georgia Phillips asks the question... *Is there a future for school libraries?*

The pressure of teacher shortages in Australia is putting specialist teacher positions on the line. If your teachers' union, your principal and your voter parents are not convinced that teacher librarians make a difference to student learning, don't count on being replaced when you are forced out of the library or retire.

The trend for school staffing to be placed in the hands of school principals is snowballing from state to state. Principals are asking *How will I get enough classroom teachers? Will our students really miss out if they have no teacher librarian?*

To quote from a recent letter to the NSW Teachers' Federation [NSWTF][citation??]

In Western Australia, the state government ... asked schools to identify all work currently performed by teachers but [sic] can be performed by non-teachers. As a consequence of this, teacher librarians, for example, are at risk of being replaced by librarians without teacher qualifications and presumably paid at a cheaper rate.

In South Australia, the state government wants to change the current agreement so it can make changes which will, inter alia, dramatically affect the teaching conditions of teacher librarians. It is also proposing placing staffing in the hands of principals, using Victoria as its model.

In Queensland secondary schools, it is not uncommon for teacher librarians to have a quarter or more of their time allocated to classroom teaching, even though they are appointed as **fulltime** teacher librarians (or its equivalent for part time).

Principals are also using discretionary powers to appoint teachers in place of teacher librarians so that the person in charge of the library can provide what we call *relief from face to face* [RFF] in NSW. (Specialist teachers, **which teacher librarians come under**, are not allowed to do this under their current industrial agreement.)

Is NSW to follow this pattern?

The NSWTF tells us

Whether the NSW DET intends to replace teacher librarians with librarians or SASS staff is a question that should be directed to DET.

According to Gary Zadkovich, NSWTF Sr?? VP, the NSW government also wishes to put hiring and firing in the hands of school principals (*DET white-ants transfer system with codes change* NSWTF website, Sept. 2008).

Teacher shortages are now a fact of life. The Australian Council for Educational Research recent survey of 14,000 Australian teachers and principals,

does show some strong indications that there are [teacher] shortages, more so in secondary schools than in primary schools, more so in government schools than in non-government schools,

Dr Phil McKenzie, research director of ACER, stated in a recent ABC news report.

And teacher librarians are retiring in increasing numbers.

ALIA's library and information service workforce survey done in 2006 (G Hallam. *Nexus* 2008) included a sample of 177 **school** librarians. It concluded:

In terms of the sectors that need to plan for incremental retirements, the school library sector needs to consider the future with care, as almost half of the respondents planned to retire in the next 10 years ..

Once teacher librarians start **disappearing, what can stop it?**

The demand for action has to come from the bottom up, from you and from me:

Through school union reps and association meetings to union councils, putting teacher librarian issues on union annual conference agendas, urging union officers to revitalize teacher librarian Special Interest Groups. (And supporting union colleagues in their campaign for greater funding for public education.)

A Student ICT Traineeship Program

Georgia to finish

Cecily Trevillion is teacher librarian and Learning Technologies Coordinator at St John the Evangelist High School in Nowra. She shares with us her ideas on a program she has implemented at her school using the talents of her digital natives.

In 5 of the 11 sessions at *The Australian Computers in Education Conference 2008*, the presenters specifically suggested that students should be involved in working collaboratively with the teacher as coaches and mentors, using technologies in a variety of ways. This confirmed to me our student ICT program at St John's, which was initiated, firstly in an informal way and subsequently in a more successfully structured program.

In their presentation *10 steps to building better ICT*, Levins and Callil discussed whether students are 'problem or opportunity.' They suggested that, 'student support with ICT is an opportunity!'

John Travers in his presentation, *Replacing strategic development with teacher collaboration with a little help from online tools*, suggested that through action research, students could be involved collaboratively in projects to achieve student outcomes. He further stated that,

the isolation of teachers in the classroom can be reduced by collaboration with other teachers and also students, who may assist as mentors in a variety of ways and circumstances. Teachers are learners and teachers; students can be both learners and teachers when technologies are involved, in the building of a collaborative learning community.

Rationale for program

We all have groups of students, especially boys, who are keen on computers and enjoy being asked to help in a variety of ways. At St John's, despite successes and failures we remain buoyant about working alongside selected students as they design

School Libraries

Where teachers see learning through the eyes of their students

Where students see themselves as their own teachers...

Apologies to Mr John Hattie Visible Learning Lab University of Auckland NZ

support and maintain aspects of our ICT network and programs.

The beginning

A group of year 9 boys seemed very keen to help with our computers in the Library and so we established one session per week where we could work together. From fixing simple computer problems to downloading and organizing photos ready to upload to the School's homepage, the boys were happily engaged until the *novelty* wore off. According to Emeritus Professor Leoni Still in her address at ACEL's *New metaphors* Conference [Melbourne] in October this year, this seemed to be a particular demographic of this generation.

And then an idea bubbled up...

Passports for School Service

Year 11s were provided with a *passport* to encourage them to become involved in school service activities. For each activity completed or service rendered, the students had their passports signed. Further to this, each student nominated a subject area from a variety provided by teachers who were happy to have students work as student mentors within their class group.

My part in this was to develop a range of ICT needs/requests across the school.

To formalize the requests, I developed a list of ICT activities which teachers requested help with from a simple quick fix of a technical issue to helping develop PowerPoint presentations [which included weblinks and *YouTube*], trouble shooting data projectors as well as advanced use of some of the more popular computing applications to assist students, cleaning up computer screens and desktops in the computer labs, downloading photos from school events for the school magazine and, for the more mature students, supervising work on the school computer Help Desk.

Six Year 11 boys nominated to become ICT mentors. An ICT Trainee Checklist was developed along with a profile for each student. The checklist is signed off as each student demonstrates mastery of each skill.

The staff was advised which boys were available to help during which periods and encouraged to ring the Library when they needed help.

Two of them are now working with ICT Support in developing our new school homepage and also supporting the Help Desk.

Back to that year 9 cohort

If the idea of an ICT traineeship worked for year 11s, could it work for the Year 9 students as well? And so, we trialed it and, happily, were successful!

Well received by teachers and students alike, the boys now develop and operate a house assembly presentation, download numerous images, clear up the many documents which students just save to the desktop instead of their student folder and regularly check computer labs to ensure efficient operation for class use.

As they see a tick beside their name for each task, they are becoming more excited with the possibilities of the Traineeship and are now making suggestions of their own!

As an extra incentive, the boys receive a Certificate when they have completed the different levels of the traineeship.

Other spin-offs

Using Garageband to create enhanced podcasts, a group of boys, extremely varied in their ability, went to work! The peer teaching was profound and being guided through a clear checklist helped them as their independency developed.

Student ICT Forum

Using a blog, the Principal invited students, from years 7-11, to a full day ICT Forum, which he ran. The boys worked through a process with another keen member of staff, producing samples of Web 2 tools and demonstrating how they could be used in an educational process within class. Further, the boys demonstrated their ideas at a staff meeting.

And the future?

I am determined more than ever that our program has definite merit and is supported by research findings. The research has convinced me that it is worthwhile to continue with our student mentors. Certainly the idea of train the trainee has merit. It is also important to remember to keep the students motivated and engaged in being a part of the program—to not lose them—to hear teachers in

their classrooms say *'Is anyone in this class one of the ICT mentors?'*

I also now need to encourage teachers to work more collaboratively with students in using technologies and to seek assistance from students in their classes. Collaboration between teacher and students in working through ICT applications and learning together is an empowering process, both for the teacher and the student. One of our more mature teachers was heard to say, *'I have learned to let go of the mouse and give a student a go! It was a great experience!'*

Collaboration and learning

Collaboratively working with students through meaningful work transforms and enhances student learning. Sylvia Martinez (ACEC 2008) asks *'Where do teachers teach?'* and responds, *'In the classroom. PD is best in the classroom, in an activity where the teacher is learning at the same time as the students and with the students.'*

She proposes that,

'models of student centred, student-led support for teachers, that support classroom practices aligned with the attributes of constructivist learning environments utilising technology,

are best for our digital natives.

This is our challenge!

????????????????????...quote?

Wanted—a place in the school called haven

The media has been running hot with a recent study that has revealed a need for social and emotional literacy to be taught throughout the compulsory years of education. Professor Bernard [University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education] revealed that, in a survey of more than 11,000 primary and secondary students, there were high levels of social and emotional illiteracy. The underdevelopment of these skills, he notes, can have a significant impact on the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

Why?

His point is simple, yet complex.

... social and emotional literacy will push up hard against literacy and numeracy as indicators of a successful education.

bullying] which in turn affects how students engage in learning. This then has an impact on literacy and numeracy development. A nice full circle swing!

Bernard talks about *'low self-esteem, stress, anxiety, feelings of loneliness, anger and underachievement at school, (Social skills 'vital' at school, theage.com.au, September 29, 2008)* as affecting motivation to learn.

CT

He suggests that by learning to deal with stress and developing higher levels of emotional intelligence and resilience, students position themselves to perform better and to be more effective learners. Social and emotional literacy will push up hard against literacy and numeracy as indicators of a successful education if the writers of the national curriculum heed any of Bernard's work

I like to think that today's school libraries function as communal places where social and emotional literacy were fostered; where please and thank you and excuse me are part of the way kids can be safe with each other, where they can argue and critique and where they can, importantly, read what they choose—a haven in fact for *unsafe* things to be said and, importantly, respected. I like to think

that our school libraries take on that *safe playground environment* - a place where it is OK to think differently, to be understood for different ideas and for just needing to be safe to express ideas or engage in activities like reading the latest Paolini or contributing to the literature blog or even just hanging around having a chat with teachers.

If Bernard's results from this national study (2003-2007) of 80 schools point to a need for social and emotional literacy to be taught in schools, then let's join this crusade and be the leaders we are through guiding inquiring minds, understanding the essence of information seeking behaviours and leading, *through presence*, social and emotional literacy.

It is through modelling that great lessons are learned. **LGL**

What's media literacy got to do with body image?

Butterfly Foundation general manager Julie Thomson was discussing the findings of a recent NewsPoll survey sponsored by Dove [*BodyThink* program]. She commented that the findings were not surprising and noted that young people are increasingly more aware and more concerned over their appearance and, in particular, their body image.

She comments that if young people's concerns about their appearance are not addressed, they can grow into adults with serious body image problems.

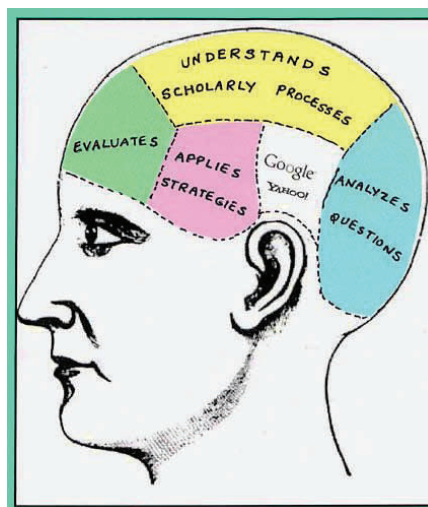
In an interview conducted by the Herald's Caroline Marcus (September 28, 2008 *Lifestyle & Design*), Thomson said:

...it was important for children to be educated in media literacy, particularly the way in which images are manipulated, with schools playing an important role in helping young people feel good about themselves.

As teacher librarians, we have some responsibility toward shifting the ground in promoting positive images to our students that go beyond the media diet of the stereotype.

We can ask ourselves what images we push consciously and unconsciously in our school's

library. Can good looks go with interest in the physics of the big bang or do we necessarily have to display images of quirky geek scientists? Can an avid reader also be a top athlete?



www.masternewmedia.org/images/new-media-techn...

Through raising awareness of the messages that inform, entertain and sell to us every day, we can mount digital or print displays that ask our students to be critical examiners about music videos and

Web environments to product placement in films and virtual displays; we can invite the students who are viewed as leaders by their peers to spend time in the school library promoting their favourite novel; we can ask the rugby coach to spend time reading for pleasure in full view of the rest of the student body.

Media literacy is a quality that can be achieved. Like being a strong and successful athlete, it takes practice... lots of it. And the school library can be that place that promotes the critical questions necessary to help our students interpret their world astutely and without prejudice.

There are so many ways we can be active in helping our students to be astute questioners—to determine and articulate what the messages are in the media and equally important, what has been omitted from the visual image. We can mount displays that question the motives behind how media images are put together; we can help our students to understand how content is influenced by the placing of the visual and the word, the use of shadow and light, colour and no colour.

Our opportunities to be effective teachers in guiding our students in developing critical and socially responsible media literacy are endless.

LGL

ICT Student Support Program 2008

A note from Cecily Trevillion: *The ICT Traineeship Program (pages 9-11) is in the early stages and still developing! I am sure that many of you will have a group of similar students. I thought that these ideas may be worth sharing with you. I certainly do not have all the answers and I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who is running something similar and has some suggestions of their own to share with me.*

Rationale

Our vision is to develop and promote an ICT Training and Mentor Program which will encourage student initiatives, trust and integrity, whilst developing their ICT proficiencies and skills to provide support and assistance in a variety of areas and classroom support across the school.

Suggested tasks/skills

- Culling and selecting photos from the large numbers taken at school events ready for loading onto the school web page
- Assisting with in class support for hardware and software problems such as: the use of data projector, laptops, network connections, digital cameras, video cameras, programs such as enhanced podcast, and others as they arise.
- In the preparation of school power points for special school events.
- In the operation of power points, movies and accompanying music for school assemblies, liturgies etc.
- ICT Support Help Desk

Skills –mini technology inservices

- criteria for selection of school photos
- trouble shooting data projectors for use in a variety of situations and locations
- Trouble shooting in the breakdown of computers in classrooms and labs
- Reformatting MAC laptops
- Using data projector and laptop for presentations in the school hall
- Trouble shooting for the use of cameras in class groups
- Trouble shooting in the use of laptops and trolleys in classrooms
- Preparation/ installation of 'new'

CAR-TL

Researcher-in-Residence Dr Ross Todd

Our second Researcher-in-Residence day was an intimate and energetic affair. Directions for CAR-TL as a research community were discussed and the broadening of the membership to any teacher who wants support and guidance in handling small research projects using any methodology they choose was considered favourably. The action coming from this decision was to alter the name to Community of Active Researchers—TLs.

As Dr Todd is fond of saying...listen to the voices....

'...an inspirational day for CARTL. ...really enjoyed listening to the diversity of interests of the others and especially sharing the problems and challenges that we face as novice researchers. Ross Todd's encouragement was infectious and it was particularly rewarding to be able to share his wisdom ...'

'...day was extremely useful. Without it, I may not have been able to continue my project as I felt I had hit a brick wall. Ross, in his typical clear manner managed to steer me in the right direction and put it into perspective... general session in the morning was great. I returned home feeling refreshed and with added commitment to CAR-TL.'



It is always good to hear what issues other people are wrestling with. ...achieved some clarity with my research, the topic was so big I was overwhelmed until I talked to Ross. He has suggested a way of doing some initial research that is manageable. I am going to follow the example given by Smith ... going to look at user generated tags and SCIS tags for non fiction... Will let everyone know more on the Wiki when I have clarified it further. I also liked Jill's idea of attending the conference in Perth next September. I would like to be considered if you think the research I am doing is worth presenting. I also like the idea of changing the word action to active as this will probably encourage more people to feel they can join.

Don't block our OPACs

How would you like your OPACs to be the next greatest social networking tools?

Visualise fuzzy search logic that lets users misspell only to receive a *Did you mean response*. Yes!

How about OPACs that will support user reviews and rankings just like *YouTube*? Hmm, could be helpful in collection development!

How engaging would the building of favourite authors lists be?

What about the idea of a clustered results engine or the ability for users to add subject headings.

Perhaps social bookmarking is a function you want from your OPACs or maybe some spaces for social networking where students and teachers alike recommend books.

Imagine uploading digital objects to your MARC records.

OK, I am getting a bit lost now but all these capabilities are already being developed or are developed with the next generation OPAC.

According to Barbara Fein, Assistant Professor, Western Kentucky University in an article written for *Multimedia and Internet@Schools* (15, 5 pp27-29), teacher librarians are already expressing concerns about how the web 2.0 OPAC will work in schools.

Will students really have the ability to input what up to now has been the domain of a trained position? Will they bother?

Will they see their OPAC as far more engaging than what can be offered through Google?

I think not!

However, as Fein notes, let's not scoff too much because the applications being engineered by such companies as *Mandarin*, *SirsiDynix*, *Follett* and some new fellas on the circuit, *Fish4Info* and *Auto-Graphics*, will be engaging for students far beyond what our OPACs deliver now and who knows, we might end up with a great tool for teachers and students to discuss that book review outside the school gates.

If tag clouds can be generated to help students narrow or expand their searches, I'm in!

LGL

Filtering you out of online collaboration

It is perplexing to hear the call for online collaborative learning and teaching communities and then discover that you have been filtered out of anything that has words like MySpace/FaceBook, BLOG, image generator, social networking, chat, wikis and second life.

Perplexing? More like frustrating as how does one answer the call when the tools for such creative learning and teaching are blocked. Pretty self-defeating!

What do we need to do to create such attitude change and in relatively quick time? Evidence is a great start. Just showing the depth and breadth of learning and teaching at *takingITglobal* and the plethora of great projects developed by teachers and their students using wikis should loosen the filters a bit but of course there is the issue that will thwart most arguments—child safety, important but, though keeping our students 'Net safe, we are also undermining their education. How do they learn to be savvy users of online tools if not in the safety of their classrooms?

Dr Mary Ann Bell has an interesting wiki you might like to visit <forwhomthebelltold.pbwiki.com>. She is a self-appointed campaigner against net filtering. Her tinyurl.com/3o46ay has an interesting survey that might be a good start.

Makes me wonder if computer-pals had undergone a similar trial so many decades ago? **LGL**

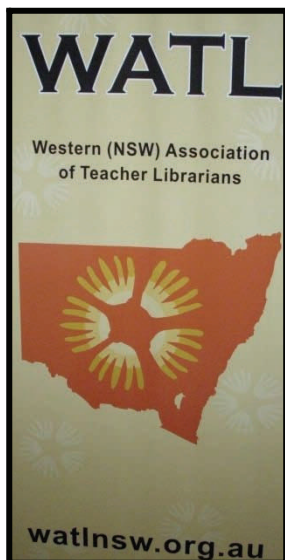
IASL Conference School Libraries in the Picture: Preparing Pupils for the Future

Padua Italy
September 2-4th 2009

On long service leave next September? Then consider presenting or being a delegate at the 38th Annual Conference. Details at www.iasl-online.org/events/conf/2009/

REAR VIEW MIRROR with JENNIFER WATTS

Jenny Watts received the John Hirst Award for the passion and drive she has for ensuring regional schools get not only the support they need to maintain regional school libraries but to be stimulated by championing regional professional learning.



So little money, so much desire... to be professionally inspired

A major benefit of regional conferences is that people make connections. Like their larger counterparts in the cities, they bring together people from all kinds of schools who have a hunger for information and practical advice.

It's a huge undertaking and the capricious nature of such an event can be of concern. So much depends on individual schools' calendars, whether staff members can be released, the weather, time of year, budget constraints and the attitude of principals.

For a large number of regional school teacher librarians and administrative assistants, this is the only professional development activity for the year relating to their library duties. High turnover of staff in many western and isolated NSW schools means that basic management workshops will always attract a strong interest. It is not uncommon to see a specialist secondary teacher librarian sitting with a parent volunteer from a small school, swapping ideas and information.

Practical, hands-on training is sparse—every opportunity is taken to absorb whatever is offered.

Conscious of the geographical isolation of the job, networking is probably the most important benefit. It's all about sharing and western school library workers are generous, both in their time and resources. Out here, nothing is assumed. In a small school, people wear many hats—the teacher librarian may also be the Assistant Principal, the Sports Coordinator and a member of the regional Creative Arts committee, or any other combination of jobs that teachers take up with their school positions. The steady erosion of personnel, funding and time from school libraries exacerbates their plight. They drive many hours to attend meetings and often at a personal cost not always measured in monetary terms.

So why do they do it? Belief that their students deserve the best that they can give and that they should not be disadvantaged just because of geographical location.



With that in mind, the Committee for Western Association of Teacher Librarians [WATL] trawls the professional development activities across the country with an aim to bring the best from those to western teacher librarians and interested others. In 2008, it offered practical teaching and management workshops, others on Web 2.0 tools and AMOW, and topped it with a keynote address by Scot Gardner, who seized an instant rapport with the assembled crowd. The best and most valuable resource in any school library, rural or otherwise, is the person in charge. Events like WATL Annual Conference serve to validate that belief to those who may feel that they are undervalued and to impress on them that they are not alone.

Collegiality and professional support are offered in spades.

JW



**THINGS TO DO ! THINGS TO REMEMBER !
2008 –2009**



Nomination Deadline

October 1 2009

John Hirst Award

John H Lee Memorial Award

Teacher Librarian of the Year (NSW)



After 4 Seminars

Professional Learning that is hard to beat
—after school, affordable & relevant to you!

ASLA (NSW) has been running after school seminars in the Sydney metropolitan area throughout September vis-a-vis:

<p>Library Management - 2nd September St Mark's Primary School, Drummoyne</p> <p>Power Searching - 3rd September Birrong Girls High School, Birrong</p> <p>Promoting Literature - 17th September Tara Anglican School for Girls, North Parramatta</p>

If you have been unable to attend these seminars due to distance, we would like to hear from you.

ASLA (NSW) is looking for schools throughout NSW to host a full day combination of these three seminars. ASLA (NSW) will provide the people and materials to run the workshop.

As a host you will:

- provide a teaching space (library, classroom etc.)
- ensure that at least 10 people are registered (including payment)
- provide afternoon tea

Contact **Anne Plowman Vice President Professional Learning** at aslainfo@ozemail.com.au
[www.aslansw.org.au] for more information.

NOVEMBER 2008

