

**Investigation into Contemporary Libraries and
Information Centres.**

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Executive Summary

This project was to be a practical research investigation where relevant information is shared to help school leaders facilitate their visioning, thinking and their development process from the initial concept of their library/information centre to the physical layout and the equipping of hardware including possibilities for them to consider in design and décor. The purpose of this paper is also to provide people with the opportunity to consider many of the components that need to be taken into account before making the transition from the traditional form of library to the new integration of information communication technologies to become an information centre. A centre that manages all access to information into the school across a variety of platforms, to enable children to become more independent self motivated lifetime learners.

The body of this research includes case studies of a variety of libraries/information centres both public libraries/information centres and schools in Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire in the USA and schools in Melbourne Australia and some schools in West Auckland, New Zealand. Some of the case studies do have information about how Inquiry Based Learning may impact the library/information centre development and in some cases school development as this was another interest of my school. The information in these case studies reflects a diversity of quality ideas and shares the rich environments and cultural expressions of a variety of communities. Out of this investigation also came commonality.

Finally a conclusion that lists a number of factors indicating what a high functioning information centre may look like and how it may operate. These include:

1. A purpose built or designed library building, that reflects an aesthetic environment that focuses on a child centred learning centre and an environment that reflects its community.
2. A comprehensive library/information centre strategic plan that gives clear direction for ongoing development. Where the library/information centre is the hub of the literacy curriculum and the management of all information resources both digital and concrete to support an integrated learning curriculum are stored and managed.

3. An information skills curriculum driven by student motivated learning which may be linked to or driven by an inquiry type process.
4. An investment into quality trained staff. Teacher trained librarians who have either full time or part time support staff.
5. Resourcing that allows for facilities to be well equipped with the latest information communication technologies including the best network cabling and of course rich quality literature, software, etc.
6. Resourcing to supply fulltime technical support to keep the information communication technology up and running.
7. A commitment to the parent community to grow them with the knowledge that they need to know about information communication technology and the information skills curriculum, sharing clear rationales as how this will support their child's learning and giving them direction as to how they can help their child.
8. An X factor that reflects cultural aspects of the community it represents. This can be evidenced in a variety of ways but may be directed in the library/information centre's vision statement.

In the end libraries of the past will become the information centres of today, enriched if they embrace the warmth and love for literature that past communities have enjoyed, learning and interacting with the possibilities of print, but now also equipped with the possibility of learning by interacting first hand with an exciting adventurous world through information communication technologies.

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Purpose

My area of interest is in the development of an Information Centre that supports drives and equips children in their quest and synthesis of information. The “library” of old needs to undergo a transformation, or in modern day terms a “makeover”. The purpose of this study is to visit a variety of children’s libraries to ascertain how they have made the transition to include information technology and to identify how the change supports children’s learning. I wanted this to be a practical research project where relevant information is shared to help school managers facilitate the school’s visioning, thinking and developing the process from the initial concept to the physical layout and hardware of equipping their Information Centre.

Background

At Rutherford Primary School we have been on a journey to develop information communication technology throughout the school. But being a small school with a limited budget it has been important for us to thoroughly research into how best we can get value for money. We have found the time we spend in researching and thinking through how to best implement new pedagogy is perhaps the most important stage in developing an action/implementation plan. Reflection on previous teaching practice and pedagogy, reviewing the literacy and numeracy information over view, and looking at present resourcing including the teaching strengths of the staff, evaluating where we might dare to move to next and finally clarifying what our vision is and to realign any decision making to uphold the vision. Alongside this initiative we have looked at pedagogy and processes to implement what might be the vehicle to develop and to support many of the skills of Information Communication Technology. We believe having a vehicle to drive the change brings purpose, structure, direction and momentum for children and staff. So over the last 3 years (we do have available overviews on how we implemented the change if people would like to have a look) we slowly started to look at Inquiry Based Learning as the driver. It has been such an exciting process to work with and the level of learning outcomes for both staff and children has been amazing. We have felt this process really was a best fit for our school and we have come to understand that we need to break the process down into a 4-5 year implementation plan as the scope and value and the limitless

number of skills that need to be taught for it to be effective will take a very comprehensive plan of professional development for staff and then learning for children. Inquiry Based Learning has become the vehicle that now drives the further development of Information Communication Technologies at Rutherford Primary. Historical activity leading up to this investigation includes extensive readings, discussions as a staff, individual staff doing related courses, visiting of schools already using the process both here in New Zealand and in Australia, whole staff professional development, developing a trial implementation plan and then carefully evaluating the outcome. One of the areas we have had to consider for change is our library. As part of this development we have had to look at how our library works and how best can we make the transition from library to an effective information centre. The challenge is to keep all the essence of a fabulous library but to integrate successfully the technologies that will equip our children with skills required of them coming into the new millennium. The motivation to do this well encouraged me to go looking at a variety of new libraries and what I found was informative, and exciting. This project directly relates to Rutherford Primary School's strategic plan. We have begun the process of looking at plans for an Information Centre and my research will contribute greatly to confirming, extending and challenging existing ideas and thoughts. The photographs, interview results and readings that have been collated will be used to support ideas and spark the discussion as well as demonstrate alternative ideas.

Methodology

- October 10th-14th Visit to Melbourne/ visited Essendon Primary and St Monicas
Interviews, tour of schools, discussions, photos and professional
Readings.
- October 17th-21st Back to New Zealand. Organised the next section of the
Sabbatical, confirming some appointments in America.
Gathering information and readings together. Learning how to
Use a new digital camera and a new computer in readiness for

- Research trip. Meeting with a supervisor to make an overview Plan of the research.
- October 24th-28th Fly to America/ Maine. Confirm appointments for visits and Interview times. Set up templates for work. Gather information And work out reading schedules
- October 31-4 Visited the following schools: Kennebunk Elementary, Maine. Kennebunk Children's Public Library, Maine and Salem Public Library, Boston. Continued to format case studies On Information/Libraries already visited. Professional reading And making appointments for next week.
- November 7-11 Visited and interviewed Margaret Chase Smith school and taught classes about New Zealand. Also talked To staff members about how the New Zealand reading and Writing curriculum works. Looked at their work on 6yr nets, as They were just starting to use them as part of their professional Development.
Visited Springvale's Children's library. Included discussions, Photos and interview.
Professional reading.
- November 14-18 Visited the following schools: Berwick Academy Senior Library And Berwick Academy Junior Library.
Visited Kennebunk Elementary.
Continued with discussions, interviews, photos, readings and Collating information.
- November 21-25 Visited the following schools: Pennacook Elementary School, New Hampshire and Merrimack Middle School, New Hampshire.
Salem public library, Boston. Continued with discussions, Interviews, readings and developing case studies.

November 28-2 Visited an amazing new high school Whitman-Hansen, Boston.
Attended a professional development session on how to best
Use smartboards. I had a great discussion with an ICT facilitator
And her class of teachers. An excellent session. Continued
To do the final collation of my data and questionnaires. Prepared
To return back to New Zealand via Rarotonga.

December 5-9 Organised some local visits to schools. Visited Hobsonville
Primary and Massey Primary. Again conducted interviews,
Took photos and collated information.

December 12-16 Final visits to fit in Kristin Senior Library and Kristin Junior
Library. Last week of school and realizing it has been a very
exciting term. (also incredibly stimulating)

All findings need to be analysed and collated. The final outcomes to be submitted in
March in a report form and also in a powerpoint presentation.

Kennebunk Elementary School

Kennebunk

Maine

This school is beautiful and is only one year old. The information centre was purpose built and designed to provide an amazing facility which would be a valuable asset to any school. It was interesting for me to see that this school used the title Information Centre rather than Library. This Information Centre is extremely well set out and very user friendly. It features: a table area for children to sit at, a listening post area set out ready for use accompanied by a great selection of audio books, a magazine article area, a fabulous audio visual room well organized and extremely well stocked, beautiful developed seating areas, large picture windows framing views of the gardens, and a purpose built outside garden area to be used as part of the information.

The shelves are so well stocked, fresh and new because as you can imagine they were able to stock this library from scratch. The school budget is \$10,000 per year (the centre librarian was quick to point out that Kennebunk was a rich community). The librarian is part of the curriculum development team and able to be a part of up coming planning and as a result, able to have a buying plan to support curriculum learning. This inclusion of the librarian in the planning stages brought the Information Centre into the bigger picture for the school and it generated superb support to classroom teachers with the research of websites, articles, books, references and displays. There is literature to support such action for example Wade (2005) offers advice for ways in which library staff can help classroom teachers including: “locating sources of information for topics nominated by the subject teacher, assisting the classroom teacher in teaching and developing good research study skills among students, being part of the schools curriculum committee..., being part of information literacy skills generation processes” (as cited in Education Horizons vol. 8 no. 5, 2005, p.13).

A smart board alongside a great pod of computers (the school also has a suite of 25 computers and every room has a smart board.) and Information Technology (IT) support is readily available when required and the IT department is very strong in the area with great input into professional development as well as technical support.

This centre has a fulltime teacher librarian who is extremely passionate about her job and she was able to give very clear rationales of vision, practice and purpose. This teacher is also a fully trained librarian and is also the school media specialist. Each of the 26 classes is timetabled into the library and their program includes some form of story time or introduction to new books or maybe a theme. It can also include some form of teaching and or practice of information skills (this was only 1 of the schools that had some form of overview of what these skills may look like and actually had them written down). Gaweth (2005) states “skills are complex cognitive skills. If you are going to use framework, the skill-tools within each step have to be explicated carefully, often using micro-teaching and modeling over significant chunks of time, acknowledging that the skills and strategies are neither simple nor capable of being learnt simply by giving the student the step and asking them to do it.” (as cited in Good Teacher Vol, 2005, p.10). This supports the importance of overviews and putting to paper the practice and teaching of information skills. The children have independent time to enjoy the library and all the beautiful facilities it offers. I thought with the size and space of this centre that they could easily and quite comfortably run 2 classes at a time.

This teacher-librarian also has close contact with the public library which once again empowers children with more choice and with opportunities outside school hours. This is an important practice and is reinforced by Learning in the Information Landscape (2002) which highlights a critical success factor in ‘access’ as “the library networks effectively with other libraries, develops links with appropriate information agencies and sources beyond the school, and utilises their services” (p.32). The community is extremely supportive and has helped to fundraise for the outside furniture and for the landscaping in the garden area. There are doors that open up onto a wonderful garden. Parents also volunteer help to work in the centre. This centre also has a hands on area where there might be a craft or an activity the children may engage in (being close to Thanksgiving when I was visiting, children had been making turkeys).

Observations

This was a fabulous Information Centre, well resourced and aesthetically pleasing. A lot of thought and planning had gone into this facility. The passion and creativity of the teacher/librarian had a huge influence on how the centre operated and how it supported class teachers with curriculum learning. This was one of the few schools that I felt included their information centre into their wider literacy vision and because they did I believe they are moving towards getting the full potential from the facility. A point in *Learning in the Information Landscape* (2002) sums this up perfectly “School libraries have an important role in managing schools access to information, but their role extends further than this. The school library’s systems should support the development of the students’ skills in accessing and using information. To enable students to become independent, confident, lifelong learners, it is important that the systems are well documented and regularly reviewed.” (p.33).

There is also an acknowledgement that information skills must be taught not just caught and that the teaching of these skills can and should be linked to the wider literacy program. I had been able to observe some great facilities that stood alone from the rest of the school. The use of computers was still seen as just development computer skills but ignoring the skills that are needed to sort, evaluate, and assimilate information; to know what form to present the information which of course overlaps into computer skills. When planning topics or curriculum areas what better person to have as part of the planning group than the most experienced resource person in the school. To integrate the planning of information literacy across areas means we are developing the essential skills that children need to become lifelong learners. As Wade (2005) states, “as team members, librarians could lift a great burden from teachers’ shoulders by using their specialist skills, assisting them to deliver the curriculum content. They could also use those skills in teaching students to become more information literate, and to make better use of facilities coming online” (as cited in *Education Horizons*, vol.8 no.5, 2005, p.13).

Margaret Chase Smith Elementary School

Sanford

Maine

Margaret Chase Smith School has 400 children and is part of a state wide literacy program where all teachers have been trained in literacy development. There is a huge focus on lifting literacy levels across the state and strong initiatives to collect data. A lot of money has and is being spent on the professional development of teachers and the model they are implementing is basically the New Zealand model. It felt very exciting and familiar to go into classrooms and to see book boxes stocked with Price Milburn and Sunshine books. Marie Clay is accepted as a literacy guru and reading recovery as we know it is well underway. It is amazing to see even the basics in our literacy programs for example children grouped for rotational teaching being seen as new and innovative.

There is definitely an air of “we are now on the same page” however I was a little concerned at how year 1 and 2 teachers had to administer the observational survey test completely 4 times a year. This is done regardless of if a child had a reasonable result or not and all results are handed in as well as statewide literacy tests twice a year. When asked why they would want to retest children who had good results the first time, the response was: because we have to. I’m sure after a lot more logical discussion they will come to the reality of one lot of testing analyses to be used to give a variety of information and data rather than spending a lot of time administering similar tests. Secondly once they are more familiar with the process and purpose of the observational survey they will use it more discriminately. They could really do with a fabulous contingent of New Zealand teachers to go and demonstrate how to fine tune their programs.

Although the library at Margaret Chase Smith was very small in space the shelves were absolutely stocked with a great selection of books. This was reflected in their budget of \$9000 for library resources and \$1000 for audio/visual resources. This budget was supported with a full time trained teacher-librarian (It isn’t enough to have teacher training you must also have a full post graduate degree in Library studies this is a state wide requirement). Each school in Maine must have a full time librarian and

a full time teacher's aide. Margaret Chase school also uses volunteer parent help. As part of their library they are also developing a teacher's resource section. Surprisingly they do not have school librarians.

There are only 4 computers in the library and the use of these is mainly for adults or for finding books. There are links to state initiative websites or to intranets which are pre selected. This whole area will need to be developed. There is technical support available for all Information Communication Technology (ICT) equipment as part of a state initiative.

There is community support in the form of volunteers and in the form of fundraisers such as the book fair. Timeframes for the facility coincide with school hours and all classes are timetabled for lessons. This year the class teachers leave their classes with the teacher/librarian while having syndicate or school-wide meetings. There is an integrated system of buying where the teacher-librarian is part of the discussions of what is being covered in the curriculum so purchasing coincides with supporting curriculum learning. The school is also interested at looking at a process for researching topics called The Big Six. This process sounds similar to the Action Research process. However in relation to having a learning program for identifying or developing information skills it will still be something of the future. Again this is an area that we can give some support to and recommend some fabulous readings.

This library was impressive because of the quantity and quality of its collection and the amazing emphasis in budget allocated to keep equipping it with fabulous resources. However it was extremely limited by space with a small processing area, limited computer access, and a small seating area for classes to meet on. It did have TV /video machines available with quite a well resourced video, DVD and CD library. Classes could book out machines and any other resources.

Observations

This school is definitely on a literacy journey and the majority of the school seems genuinely excited about the changes and more importantly the results of children's

learning due to professional development and teacher intervention. On visiting classrooms there is a genuine focus on literacy and I was able to be a part of that by reading to classes and engaging in some fabulous discussion about books and of course about New Zealand. I was reminded that where ever there are children there is a naturally generated love and enthusiasm of learning. I think there is a natural development going on and that as the emphasis on literacy continues the development of the library program will develop to reflect the thinking and identifying of the needs to develop the skills of information literacy. The bones are in place and a simple strategic plan for the library would give some more direction. It is a wonderful initiative in Maine to have a fulltime teacher-librarian and a fulltime teacher aide in the library. It shows an incredible commitment to literacy in a school. This is another school I felt we could share some great ideas with.

Springvale Public Library

Maine

Springvale Public Library came from the humble beginnings of a literary club in 1906. Later in 1907 the library was opened employing a person for a salary of \$15.00 per annum. After a selection of buildings to house the library a final destination was purchased on Maine Street in 1938 and this site has been developed to offer the wonderful outlay of the library as it stands today. It is so amazing to see the depth of commitment and history that comes with this public library. Libraries can often be seen as the information hub of their communities reflecting historical and cultural perspectives. This library has a special feature of the Maine History and Genealogy Room this is a room steeped with such amazing information and knowledge.

This library offers 14 computers that can be accessed by the public, plus it offers cable television, scanners, fax etc for public use.

The children's library is a purpose built architecturally designed area. It is one of the quaintest buildings I have seen. This brings me to a point highlighted in *Learning in the Information Landscape* (2002, p.41) by Lau (2002, p.59) "Creating a library for kids requires special attention to a set of aesthetics that also promotes curiosity and learning" It has kept with the New England designed themes resembling an old styled school house. It is punctuated with amazing windows that optimise the wonderful large maple trees and gardens from outside. The architecture and design of a children's library can truly create an amazing environment for children to discover literature. This library has a simple and spacious layout and it also has doors that open up onto a court yard where a massive bell is the monument donated to the library from Jagger's Mill where it was first hung in 1841. "The school library can also be seen as part of a wider network of educational and cultural facilities, like public libraries and museums, that have symbolic value and provide students with "a place to stand" and a sense of belonging" (*Learning in the Information Landscape*, 2002, p.41) The bell was rung between the hours of 9 and 4 am on the hour. Springvale and Sanford are developed around the river and this area was the home to many textile and show mills none of which remain in operation today. This courtyard provides a wonderful space for children to go outside and read or for fun active activities that

may be related to the activities of the month or visiting theatres or performers can use. A fabulous feature of this library is the number of small windows at child's level where children can look in and look out.

The budget is small but the collection is of a high quality. They have a \$2000 budget each year and have a firm policy of review and discard. A special feature of this library includes a wonderful exhibition area where 12 children's artist have had work displayed. There is also story reading times for children and parents and a craft activity time for children to participate in. Krashen (2002, p.39 and 42) states as cited in *Learning in the Information Landscape* (2002, p.29) "Children who are read to ... read more ... Children read more when they see other people reading" from this we can see the significance and importance of having such a time and space. Furthermore this library has a large selection of videos and CDs that members can borrow.

This library has one fulltime person and one person who helps to put books away on a volunteer level. The librarian also works with local schools and provides links to schools to support children's research. The librarian also visits schools to encourage schools to become part of the summer reading program and to also encourage children to come to the after school programs. The librarian is also on the town's literacy committee which includes representatives from the school district. Maine has a huge focus to lift the achievement of literacy in children in the state and has invested money into the professional development of teachers and plotting data to achieve its focus.

The availability of computers in the children's library is purposely placed near the issuing desk to allow for closer scrutiny and safety.

This library has some flexible opening hours: Mon – Wed 9.30 – 7.00 pm, Thurs and Fri 9.30 -5.00 pm, and Sat 9.00 – 2.00 pm.

The program provided by this library is exciting and the librarian has a lot creative ideas to enthuse members.

Observations

The joys of a purpose built library are indeed fantastic; the use of colour and layout accentuates the atmosphere and use of space. It is so important to keep displays beautiful and fresh making sure text is at children's height to allow them to read the information available to them. Culling and disposing of old and useless text is the key to keeping quality resources. The integration of local school curriculums is an important link to provide more resources to young learners as is the service to home schoolers. Finally Springvale Library is a community hub providing resources for all ages. It allows children to have exhibitions and has large community room for use of all the community. This library was well organised and it had a development plan to guide it along its way.

Pennacook Elementary

New Hampshire

Pennacook was built four years ago including a purpose built designed Media Centre situated in the main block of the school and a centre designed specifically to provide the school with a move into the 21st century. The school had approximately 500 pupils. It employed a fulltime teacher-librarian who works independently, responsible for the operation of the centre including the programs delivered to the children. The teacher-librarian is also supported by volunteer parent help and there are no child librarians. The budget is \$2000 and the decision on how that is spent is up to the teacher. (As the library was still relatively new it had been superbly stocked when first opened). I would also make the observation that the price of books is more reasonable and so there is more value for money in purchasing them. The school is also supported well with fulltime technical support for all Information Technology (IT), this is a budget initiative supplied by the state.

The layout of the Media Centre includes a large office/mending/processing room, 12 computers along 2 walls, book shelves spaciouly placed, a story reading/teacher area for children to sit in is being developed, a video/television is available with video resources and a listening post is also set up which is proving to be very popular. The teacher-librarian has a belief that an important focus of the media centre is to provide an enriched vocabulary environment that enables children the chance to be introduced into new exciting vocabulary. Another focus would be to develop a love and interest of literature. Each class had a timetabled lesson in the library each week.

The program included a rotation:

- 10 minutes Class focus/Introduction of new books or introduction of any
 Other activities that may be happening that day

- 15 minutes Work on the computers that are related to research on a trivia sheet
 every teacher relates and directs (the teacher found the monitoring
 of the computers a challenge.)

10 minutes Looking for books and enjoying browsing (using the resources provided independently)

10 minutes Playing vocabulary games with the whole class and then the issuing of books.

The teacher-librarian was extremely new and enthusiastic to the position. She really saw this year as a chance for her to learn how best to develop the centre and the programs. Buying resources where possible would be linked to curriculum delivery but this was related to the teacher researching this out from teachers not a formalized integrated approach.

There was good community support for the centre through fundraising through book fairs where proceeds went to future buying or development of the Media centre. Parents gave support in the making and buying of new bean bags, purchasing videos and donating art.

The overall environment was warm, well organized, extremely spacious, with a calming décor, and well laid out with fabulous windows providing lots of natural light. Everything is in place to develop an amazing facility.

Observations

All the elements of a fabulous Information/Media Centre were in place however I felt that the media centre was far too isolated from the input of other staff and children and also isolated from the curriculum being delivered to the children in the core programs of the school. It would be good to see a greater integration of the curriculum supported by the programs in the Media Centre which are far more planned and purposeful rather than good ideas presented adhoc. It would be beneficial to have school wide literacy and IT skills overviewed including the Media Centre developing specific information literacy/skills that equip children for the acquisition and assimilation of information in the twenty first century. This point is reinforced by Moore (2002 p.24) as cited in Learning in the Information Landscape

(2002 p.19) “Rather than being merely an ‘add-on’ to the curriculum or requiring ‘integration’ with it, the information literacy demands of learning need to be exposed and explicitly supported. They weave together the essential skills of the National Curriculum to provide the fabric of learning in all curriculum areas.” An integration of programs brings support both to classroom programs and information literacy developed in the media centre which contributes to the buying program and so on.

Merrimack Valley Middle School

New Hampshire

This school is an older school and the campus is connected to the High School although still autonomous. The school has 600 pupils of grade 6,7and 8. The library is staffed with 2 fulltime teacher librarians and 1 part timer. It is a well resourced library with a pod of 10 computers available for student access and the library is also annexed to an adjoining computer suite. Full time Information Technology (IT) support is available at the school as part of the state initiative. A conference room is also a part of the library available to students and staff alike. This library also has an audio video room with videos DVDs and CDs available for issuing. It had a well resourced and up to date magazine and article section. The students were confident in using the area and genuinely enjoyed being in there. The shelves are well stocked and some peer learning and research was in progress. This is identified as an important practice as in Learning in the Information Landscape (2002) “[the library] provides an environment that facilitates independent inquiry and discovery by the students and gives them opportunities to solve information-related problems on an as-needed basis through flexible scheduling” (p.19)

The whole school was timetabled for lessons and teachers came in with the students. The library program is well organised and there is an emphasis on practical research worksheets to develop information skills (examples of these are available on file).

Merrimack also had a wonderful online library that students could access from home and sites are available to support homework assignments and other current curriculum topics. General topics under the Dewey number system are also available for students use. Lists of all updated homework assignments or projects are also available online. Learning in the Information Landscape identifies this concept in one of its key success factors for access “The library ICT equipment and systems meet the users’ needs and provide fast, efficient, and user-friendly access to information, including appropriately managed access to the internet and other electronic resources” (p.32)

The teaching of information skills are a priority in the library and integrated throughout the general literacy program. It was really great to see a list of library related events to encourage the use of the library or of reading. These included: read a

book from a different author each month depending on who the author of the month is, write a review on it which will be published and will automatically put you into a fantastic raffle, holiday reading assignments which if you read so many you receive a prize. Other events include: the book fair (buy one get one free), and Book Swap – bring in your old books and swap them for some new ones. A reminder was given to the students that the library was there to give them service. Directions were available on how to request books or how to reserve a book and examples were given on how to write a bibliography.

When purchasing for the library an integrated buying plan based on curriculum topics is taken into consideration. The budget is approximately \$5000 and the library is well stocked. The décor is tired looking but the facility was well used. The community is involved in fundraising for the library through the annual book fair. Parents also volunteer time to help in the library.

Observations

Merrimack Middle School Library had definitely made the quantum leap to become an Information Centre. Programs and IT equipment and websites and their functions are clearly in place. Aesthetically the library really needed a refurbishment and probably a better floor plan, an extension would give more space for growth and development. Clearer signage would perhaps give better direction to support student's use of the library. The strength of this library was definitely the thought that had gone into the programs encouraging students to use the facility successfully and the natural relaxed way in which the students used all aspects of the library. This is important because as it is stated in *Learning in the Information Landscape* (2002) "School library resources are available to students in an increasing range of formats (print, electronic, and multimedia), and many of them may also be accessed online" (p.37). It was a well resourced efficient library with amazing adult supervision and support. I felt that there was some great forward planning that was student centered.

Salem Public Library

Massachusetts

Salem Public Library is situated on a street surrounded by large 1800's old mansions all equipped with servant quarters. The house that the library works out of was donated by John Bertram's family, he was a self made man who became extremely rich and contributed to many of the community projects in Boston including welfare for young boys.

Salem has a whole floor designated to a beautiful children's library which is well stocked with quality books. The children's library embraces the beautiful architecture and the furniture and trims are made of quality fixtures and quality wood. It incorporates computers around the walls, the standard of computers needs to be upgraded but the infrastructure is now in place and there are plenty available for use. The children's library opens up onto a beautiful garden and has lots of fabulous windows to frame the views from outside.

The library has a lovely picture book area and encourages the use of listening posts and books on CDs. It also has fabulous puzzles that children can take out along with videos and DVDs. It is stated in *Learning in the Information Landscape* (2002) that "Flexibility is a key requirement, so the school library will have spaces to accommodate a range of uses by both groups and individuals. In order to establish a great learning environment, it is important to create the right ambience for students" (p.41). Salem really achieves this in its library environment. The Salem library also has a wonderful webpage which allows for children to link to topical and child friendly sites. The furniture is appropriate for children from pre-school through to elementary age and provides a variety of choices to suit the level required. The library offers separate regular meetings for babies 0-15months old including looking at books, rhymes and finger plays. There is a similar programme for toddlers 16-35mths and then story corner for 3-5yr olds.

The children can have their own library card once they can print their own name and if they lose their cards they can be replaced for a mere 25 cents. The library hours are extremely extensive for a children's library it is open Mon-Thurs 9.00am-8.45pm,

9.00am-4.45pm Friday and Saturday and 1.00pm-4.45pm On Sunday. These were the most extensive opening hours I came across on my trip. This library is definitely opened for servicing as much of the community as possible. There are 2 librarians available and the overall organisation of the library is superb. Perhaps this is because they have had over 150 years to get it right.

Observations

It amazes me the incredible heritage that this library has and again how much of a hub of the community the library is. It is just as stated by Learning in the Information Landscape (2002) “In its role as a provider of information resources, the school library does not stand alone” (p.37). The children’s library is certainly a specialised library and meets the needs of the children in that community. Apart from the need to upgrade computers I would think that some thought could go into upgrading lighting as I can imagine on dark wintry days and nights a part of the library could feel quite dark. Although the fixtures and trims are of good quality I think the library could be a little more creative with colour and child like models of interest. It does have an awkward entrance way and it needs a storage place for prams and bikes and so on however these are mere minor suggestions that are not to distract from the amazing service this library offers.

Berwick Academy

Maine

USA

Berwick Academy is a private school situated near the border of Maine and New Hampshire. It has 600 pupils from primary through to high school. The library building is relatively new and has been built to fit in with the existing architecture. It is 2 storied and incredibly spacious and the furniture and fixtures are of a very high quality.

The junior library optimises the light by having large picture windows which allow for children to see the changes of seasons through the leaves on huge maple trees and the children are also able to enjoy the skyline. The children's library is extremely well stocked and the books are of an amazing quality. The budget for the year is approx \$18000.

The layout of this library includes a listening post, a music area with headphones, computers for reference, and tables for children to be able to use for activities. It has 3 part time librarians to cover both senior and junior libraries.

The junior school has fixed timetabling which means each class gets a 40 minute lesson a week. This includes the day care on site that bring the 2 and 3 year olds for a weekly visit.

Fundraising includes a huge book fair once a year that brings in approximately \$5000; this is on top of the designated budget and librarians are free to spend the money that is raised the way that they deem appropriate.

The library is a relaxed child friendly environment and when we arrived children were being introduced to new books and they were seated in a window seat framed out by fabulous 8 foot windows.

The senior library is state of the art; it is so superbly designed. Aesthetically the library creates that hallowed ground presence and is truly overwhelming. There are no ceilings between the floors so it embraces a feeling of spaciousness as well as a

sense of clear and precise planning and of interesting and flexible layout. The layout is so comprehensive and a pleasure to move around. It creates a sense of curiosity like it is waiting to be explored and somehow you know you aren't going to be disappointed. This environment shows us "the school library provides an information-rich environment for the students' learning. Having a wide range of high-quality information resources available to them enables students to develop information skills, fosters their critical thinking skills, and extends their interests and their knowledge of the world and its cultures" (Learning in the Information Landscape, 2002, p.37)

There is a pod of computers for students and staff to use for research. Nearby there are large work tables enabling students to lay projects out; and an area set aside for periodicals, magazines, newspapers and recent articles for students to access. Students are able to sit in the most comfortable chairs available in abundance on both floors for their comfort (It was the sort of place you didn't want to leave).

Deeper into the first floor you come to a spacious teaching room totally full of computers, smart board, data projectors, and with special lighting to assist with better use of the computers. It has the look and feel of something from the future; the interesting thing for me was that no one was using this suite. In addition the library has an archival section which is being developed. Also on this floor is of course, the issuing desk and the expansive workroom. There is a real integration of the old and the new in this library as a facility and it has been done so well. This is just as stated by Wade (2005) "The new library can no longer be confined to four walls, it must reach out globally to resources undreamed of a decade ago. Using the sentiments expressed by the poet John Donne, it cannot be 'an island entire in itself [the library] must be a piece of the continent, a piece of the main'; it must be fully networked into the total school information accessing system" (as cited in Education Horizons vol.8 no.5, 2005, p.12)

Then it is into the lift and up to the second floor. Up here, there are study booths, comfortable seating, a conference room for meetings, and a teacher/librarian preparation room with all the equipment you might need. One of the areas that are amazing is the gallery where an artist was being profiled. I have so enjoyed this

added dimension to some of the children's libraries I have visited. To have a variety of exhibitions where children and local artists can display their work just exposes children to another exciting dimension of the world. As stated in Learning in the Information Landscape "It is a visible symbol of the school's philosophy on learning and teaching, reflecting the value the school places on knowledge, independent learning, creativity, intellectual freedom, and curiosity. The library also visibly reflects the school's cultural identity and its commitment to partnership with the tangata whenua" (p.41)

This school teaches an integrated curriculum where the investigation of topics incorporates information skills as part of the overall study. Again there is fixed timetabling for classes and the library is opened after school.

Observations

Berwick Academy has truly embraced the challenge of transitioning a library into an information centre. The school is able to have all the latest up to date technology with endless technical support. The use and space of the senior library has been extremely well set out. However I do think more thought and planning into the junior library would have allowed for a greater flow through from one library to another. Although housed in the same building and sharing a common corridor they are separate identities. The library program for the junior library still seems to follow the more traditional library curriculum. Although there are computers in this library it would seem the use of them tends to be more focused on searching for book titles rather than as an information tool. As in many of the American schools I feel that this school has all the resources; however the actual rationales of how and why children need to develop information skills at primary level are still to be tackled. In contrast in New Zealand I feel we have clear rationales, we have brainstormed the possibilities, and we have listed the challenges. We are now trying to find solutions and to create programs which will enable children to progressively build on skills to give them an incredible range of tools to discover the world. One can not ignore that no matter how creative the thinking that money and resources must be had to implement these programs. Although I do think a smaller scale of technology but of the best quality plus a team

of educators who are clear on how to develop authentic learning opportunities to enable students to acquire the information skills that they need to access their future is the best scenario.

Whitman Hansen High School

Massachusetts

This was an amazing high school to visit. Whitman Hansen was a joint community project. It is actually built on the boundary line between the two counties.

Massachusetts is known for its very high taxes and as a state it is also known for its large educational budgets. The design and building of this high school resulted in the most amazing learning environment. The cost of this school was 37 million dollars which seems exorbitant but the facility is absolutely amazing. Some of the highlights of the tour before I share about the library: large hall ways with waiting or teaching bays, enormous flat screen TVs in the hallways to advertise upcoming school events or school-wide programmes, soundproof floors, aesthetically designed hallways the amazing use of colour and design. The school had 7 labs of computers available for all subjects. Plus each room was set up with data projector, laptop, and specially controlled lighting sound flat screen television. The whole school is connected to provide for quick communication showing that clear communication can be achieved in a huge school. This school has a gymnasium that is large enough to fit three basketball courts; it also has on its second story a fully rubberised running track which is open after hours for public use especially in the winter season. The music area has practice rooms storage areas, recording areas, amazing sound and top line pianos and instruments to practice with. It has specialised rubberised flooring that is not damaged if you come in from football and soccer wearing your cleats to get to the changing rooms. It has an up to date gym with every machine you can imagine and of course a weights room.

There is a culinary arts area which is fully equipped with every piece of equipment you would expect to find in any trendy restaurant. The students design menus and open a restaurant up once a week where they run the whole thing from orders to serving to menus to cooking to presentation to clearing away. They also have a television and radio studio and a huge technical team to keep all the technology working. The size of their servers fills whole rooms. They have full security footage of the whole school. The school also boasts the most efficient lock down system where they can seal off corridors to protect students if necessary.

The science laboratories are once again something out of the future. This school also has a branch of their local bank set up in the school to cater for on site banking - a very novel idea and great to be able to access the bank during the day. The cafeteria is designed to resemble a food hall at a mall and it looked amazing. There is a great use of colour and design to create the largest school cafeteria I had ever seen.

Next was a state of the art theatre that can seat 1000 people. The design is magnificent. Nothing was spared. The sound and lighting boards are equivalent to any great theatre. The data projector and screen is overwhelming really you feel like this is an incredibly plush movie theatre. The standard of productions that could be produced would be of an incredibly high standard. The sick bay area has a full time medical nurse and the first aide room looked like a fully equipped doctor's surgery.

Overwhelming is a word that describes my reaction to this tour. We finished off with a visit of the library. To me it was at least the size of a gymnasium. The layout was spacious and comprehensive. The book collection would rival any university library. It was all on one floor but with extremely high ceilings. It had several pods of computers in the library available for constant use. The library hours extend into the afternoon enabling the children to do further research or homework. There is available for use, a conference room and a variety of equipment that students can use. This library could easily be operated as the community library it was so big and so well resourced. It has three librarians and is well operated and run. It was an absolute privilege to get around and see this school. It will really stand in my mind as a school that gives students the structure and resources needed to springboard into the world from. As a teacher your creativeness goes into planning and teaching not into having to make do or to be thinking about how to make money to provide the resources needed to teach. Well done to two counties who decided to invest in their young people's education and their future.

Massey Primary

West Auckland

New Zealand

Massey Primary is situated on top of a hill and it encompasses a wonderful view of the city from West Auckland. Their library has been built recently and is colourful and child centred. The use of coloured steel shelves adds vibrancy to the environment. It has long windows which allows for optimising the light, large display boards available for centres of interest, and a great corner of computers to allow for small group work or for independent research and this is supported by an efficient Information Technology (IT) support worker. The library has an outdoor area set up as a small stage area to use for a variety of library related activities and it is presently being decorated by fabulous mosaic panels that children across the school have contributed to. The library is still in its development stage of setting up and will eventually include a teacher resource area that will house all the teaching resources.

The librarian works 4 days a week and this is all the budget can cope with (which is the restraint with most schools). The library is open before school from 8.30 and closes at the end of the school day. Classes are timetabled through the week and teachers are responsible to plan and take the library lessons. The buying of the books is done by looking at up coming topics giving support to what is being taught in the classroom. The layout of the library is comprehensive and it's easy to move around in.

Observations

Massey Primary's library is just built and it is very exciting for them to have a fabulous new facility but as it is with most schools they still have to find resourcing to get it up and operational to optimum use. You often have to begin to operate in a new facility with an initial implementation plan and the refined operating plan comes later as observations of how to best manage the facility evolve including the storage of resources and looking at timetabling and budget allocations. It will be able to optimise the input and the ideas of a staff that have now had an opportunity to use the facility. It may be helpful to visit some other libraries again to add a little more detail

to the operational aspect of the library. It is exciting and the facility adds so much to the expression of the school.

Kristin

Auckland

Kristin is situated in Albany Auckland. It is a prestigious private school with a roll of 1600 children, Year 1 to Year 13. Kristin's Library is a purpose built architectural structure which embraces the natural environment with the use of lots of glass to optimise the beauty and interest of the natural environment. The use of glass enables the viewing of the tops of large trees which is such an interesting view of nature. It also enables the viewing of birds, streams and wet lands and other beautifully designed natural gardens. This facility is just one year old. Both the senior and junior library can be found on the second floor linked by a walking bridge.

The senior library is spacious and extremely comprehensive. The senior library has a variety of areas to use for teaching situations; it has a pod of computers and also large tables to allow for any class instruction. It has study booths and other large areas of choice for students to use including quiet comfortable nooks and crannies to enjoy a good book in. This encourages students to enjoy their reading experience and this is important as cited in Learning in the Information Landscape (2002) "If children begin reading for pleasure, their reading comprehension improves, writing style improves, and their vocabulary, spelling and grammar control improves" (Krashen, paraphrased in Abell (1999)) It also has a beautiful room called the quiet reading room where children are encouraged to go in and just read quietly. The library is open from 8am to 5pm and parents and community members are welcome to come in and use the library during those hours.

Kristin also has a website allowing families to log on from home. It incorporates a parents section which is under development, a comprehensive book collection, a huge data base, access to 36 computers and facilities to allow for children to plug in numerous laptops. Existing computers are found in a teaching pod, in study booths and the rest are interspersed throughout for student and teacher use.

Kristin is fortunate enough to be able to have four to five technicians available to support all their Information Communication Technology (ICT) needs. The library is well supported and can run smoothly allowing for the ready access to networks, programs and word processing.

The library also has a comprehensive CD, DVD and video collection available for learning. This library has a flexible timetable which allows library time to fit into any curriculum area a teacher may want their class to use the facility for. The importance of this is highlighted in Learning in the Information Landscape(2002) discussing the role of the library in supporting information literacy; “provides an environment that facilitates independent inquiry and discovery by the students and gives them opportunities to solve information-related problems on an as-needed basis through flexible scheduling” (p.19) Teacher’s book in library time anytime during the week and they can use it more than once if need, children can also go and work independently as there is always great librarian support. Kristin has 6 fulltime librarians some of which are trained teacher librarians. The head librarian is also on the curriculum planning group which allows her to plan the purchasing for the library to support the delivery of the curriculum.

Kristin has an extensive budget which is split 60-40 in favour of the much larger senior library.

The junior library is light, well laid out and extremely well stocked. There are computers in here available for research and a focus seating area for teacher and class interaction. There is also ready access to a room for any other class related instructional delivery. The whole junior school follows the International Baccalaureate Curriculum and a major focus of this is Inquiry Based Learning. There has been an increase in the junior library buying of non-fiction books to support this demand in the curriculum learning. Inquiry Based skills are taught school-wide and there is a strong integration of information skills across the curriculum. The book displays are superb, topical and child centred allowing for natural curiosity to be stimulated.

Observations

This dual library complex is an amazing facility; it is also supported by an incredible number of qualified staff including ICT support staff. The importance of having such

an effective team is highlighted by Learning in the Information Landscape (2002) as a key success factor stating “the library is well managed by an effective team, which is structured to maximise library’s contribution to student achievement. This team is an effective combination of people with the relevant professional expertise, personal qualities, and qualifications” (p.22). The budget is phenomenal and one we would all covet but the exciting area to note is the integration of information skills across the curriculum and the practical implementation and continuity of Inquiry Based Learning across the school which enables children to take the process and to eventually independently apply it to any new learning situations. The development of information skills has purpose and direction, as stated by Gawith (2005) cited in Good Teacher Magazine Term 1 “This makes the point that the skills are complex cognitive skills. If you are going to use a framework, the skill-tools within each step have to be explicated carefully, often using micro-teaching and modeling over significant chunks of time, acknowledging that the skills and strategies are neither simple nor capable of being learnt simply by giving the student the step and asking them to do it.” (p.10). It influences the professional development of teachers, the planning and delivery of the curriculum and the buying of resources. It is a vehicle to equip the children with the skills they need in the new millennium. This facility has had the guidance and work of a very dedicated librarian who has worked with the planning and implementation of both the new facility and the direction of the use of it.

Although this library is well resourced, in many ways aesthetically, I believe there is still room to add to the environment in both libraries likely because it is still only early days.

Essendon Primary

Melbourne

Essendon Primary has been involved in an initiative called Navigator Schools where some schools in the Melbourne area were given money and resources to develop Information Communication Technology (ICT) throughout their school. Of course this included professional development on a significant level. Essendon Primary has embraced Inquiry Based Learning as the process to bring hands on purpose driven learning in developing information skills. It is a matter of choosing the best technology to do the job whether it be finding information, sorting information or presenting information. To do any of these things well children must be taught the skills and then have authentic learning opportunities to practice these skills. This concept is touched upon by Gawith (2005) “Information literacy isn’t a ‘thing’ or a skill. It’s a dimension that embraces the ability to find, read (listen, view) information; understand, interpret and apply it with critical discrimination, building knowledge. It is a journey, not a destination. It’s a complex mesh of skills – skills that must be taught incrementally, year-by-year. Information literacy isn’t caught by osmosis or incidental exposure to ‘inquiry’.” (as cited in Good Teacher Magazine, Term 1, 2005, p.9)

Essendon provides a variety of technologies including, eyesight cameras, smartboards, DVD’s, video cameras, digital cameras, microscopes, scanners, photocopiers and of course computers. This school has a smorgasbord of technology available for children and teachers to use independently. It is about children knowing how to best use these technologies to support their process of learning.

At this school there is an amazing natural use of computers in classrooms, as much as we would use a dictionary or a text book. Computers are strategically placed in the middle of a group of desks providing ready access for all learners. The whole process of learning is taken into consideration including questions such as: how does a learner set themselves up for success? What part does the wider learning community have to offer? What does the learner have to understand about themselves to develop their learning?

The classroom environments at Essendon are exciting, colorful and dynamic learning centers. The walls are peppered with insightful questions and challenges and child produced works of quality. It also includes teacher laptops connected to large screen TV's. The evidence of technology being used independently and purposefully is exciting. It is clear that this school has done its thinking and planning. Essendon has worked creatively to provide a technological platform that allows for the educating of their community, the professional development of their staff and the teaching of their children. The classrooms are mini information centers all on their own. Focus for learning is definitely within the classrooms, so much so that many of the books from the original library are found now in the classrooms.

The library looks quite bereft of books but it is of a good size and has a fulltime librarian with a history of focus on the process of changing from library to information centre. Classes are timetabled for the library over the week. When the children come to the library they then become part of a rotation. Group1 works on a technology based activity, Group 2 works with the librarian and Group3 is involved in an information skills written activity or a craft activity. The technology room is an extension of the library where children can continue working on story boards, filming, and so on.

There is development of \$6000 per year and all purchasing is integrated into the wider curriculum overview and supports in class learning. Like most schools they hold fundraisers through book fairs. There is a planned strategy to bring the community on board and to educate them on how to receive and interpret their child's learning through technology. The library is opened for parents 2 nights a week until 4.30pm. A survey was done to find out what were the needs of the parents or what concerns did parents have with the new technology and the school saw it was important to show how the new technologies would equip and enhance their child's learning. This has developed into a parent based curriculum and resourcing parent nights are part of the wider school planning. Good clear communication brings understanding and more cooperation from the community.

Observations

It was encouraging as an educator to see a model of a school who was operating successfully at implementing ICT with clear rationales and keeping the focus on children's learning not just on providing technology for technology's sake. Again seeing a school use Inquiry Based Learning as a process to bring meaning to investigating a topic and for developing information skills and learning strategies to use across curriculum areas independently is so exciting. We can see a movement towards learning for the future as stated by Breivik and Senn (1998) "In this next century, an "educated" graduate will no longer be defined as one who has absorbed a certain body of factual information, but as one who knows how to find, evaluate, and apply needed information" (as cited in Learning in the Information Landscape, 2002, p.19).

I believe that being part of a cluster has enabled this school to do a lot of thinking, debating and assimilating of knowledge to be able to implement the transition into the use of technology throughout the learning community at Essendon Primary. I did note that the emphasis in the juniors is still literacy and numeracy. Again you need the building blocks but there was still evidence of ICT with juniors.

Budget is also a challenge; the state government gave the school money to buy computers but does not give any money for ongoing ICT support or new equipment. Essendon does show commitment by having a fulltime technical support person on staff. They raise money for their school by providing professional development for other schools in Australia and New Zealand.

St Monicas

Melbourne

St Monicas School has 170 children 91% of these children are ESOL (english as a second language), 57% Vietnamese and 21% of other ethnic groups. As soon as you walk into this school it has the feeling of inclusiveness even though as an inner city school it is completely fenced in and has obvious security. Its number one priority is a strong literacy focus across the school but literacy is the particular focus for the year one and two students. They have organised their topic curriculum around Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) starting at year three and four, based on the premise that children need the building blocks of literacy to more successfully express their ideas and findings. A similar idea to this is highlighted in Learning in the Information Landscape (2002) “The School library is well placed to support the school’s commitment to partnership with the tangata whenua and to strengthen school programmes designed to foster cultural awareness, understanding and sensitivity” (p.13)

The senior school includes literacy, numeracy and IBL. They have 70 computers in their school and fight to get enough technical support to keep them going. In the past they have been reliant on what expertise was available in the community. A budget of \$5000 a year is dedicated to technical support but in reality this buys very little time. They run a variety of ages of computers to try to optimise all the resources available to them. The school have been part of scheme where they could get a loan for \$20,000 and the government pays for the interest on it. There is a buying plan of replacing 15 computers a year. They also have a mini lab of 8 to 9 Macs and another pod of about 10 for more group instruction. There is a soundproof room where they can do recording both musical and video. The school owns two digital videos and two digital cameras. The library also offers all resources catalogued for teachers and students and has multiple scanners to allow for efficiency.

They have a three day a week librarian/resource person who is extremely passionate about the purpose of the library and this librarian is a trained teacher. They are also responsible for the web page update and linking all the buying to the IBL topics. The book collection was amazing and the quality really reflected carefully thought out,

planned and researched buying. The school finds the flexibility and expertise of the librarian enhances what they have to offer as a school. This concept is supported by Kalseth (1997 p.19) who states “learning must be about exploiting in-house and external knowledge and experience using a wide variety of resources (which may include) documents, databases and fellow colleagues...People represent a vast knowledge and competence network to exploit” (as cited in Learning in the Information Landscape, 2002, p.12). The library has fabulous displays of work contributed by students showing the product of some wonderful IBL learning.

Learning is evidenced as being authentic and purposeful and able to motivate some good interactive thinking. St Monicas has developed a sister school and children share their IBL learning with this school in Vietnam. Information skills are developed as part of the literacy and IBL process and evidence of this can be seen in all the classrooms around the school. Computers were being used effectively in the rooms I visited and in most, where logistics allowed, they were interspersed throughout the room, available as an immediate tool when appropriate to use.

The library was a spacious place and was decorated with high interest displays or models. It incorporated a pod of computers to be used. Teachers have ongoing professional development and they have goals where they must try new things and produce an outcome. We can find this practice encouraged in the School Library and Learning in the Information Landscape (2002) as one of the critical success factors necessary for information literacy. The hours of the school have been restricted to the hours children are at school. They are supported by the community through book fairs as most of the parents are working hard just to survive, unable to contribute monetarily themselves. The children do have places to sit and enjoy looking at books or tables to work on. Best practice in this library is reliant upon good clear communication between staff and children.

Observations

St Monicas is a Catholic State school that is working hard to give their children the best that they can to equip them for the third millennium. These children come from a

lower socio-economic background and many are first generation Australians. This school suffers from some of the great dilemmas that face small lower socio-economic schools and that is the lack of sufficient funds to do the job to its potential. Sympathy went to the principal who is constantly looking for ways for funding, staff, equipment, resources and new creative ideas. The question of Information Communication Technology (ICT) support to keep hardware up and running must be an ongoing battle between ministries and schools. What other business has to raise money to buy required equipment and then staffing to keep it going? St Monicas has a very comprehensive strategy of teaching information skills and sees it as a process. We can find similar beliefs highlighted in Learning in the Information Landscape (2002) “access to more information does not guarantee that the learner will be better informed. In fact, the opposite may be true unless learners can gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes and values that they need to function effectively in this landscape”. (p.9). This point is further compounded by the words of Todd (2001) as cited in the same text “Effective learning is increasingly more dependent on the development of information scaffolds to enable learners to connect with, interact with, and make use of a rich information landscape” (p.9). The library very much integrates into the process and thus creates a positive learning environment for children to thrive in. It was a delight to celebrate the work that is being done in this school and to cheer on the staff and principal for an effort and job well done.

Waimauku Primary

West Auckland

Waimauku Primary has about 700 pupils. It is a well resourced school with a historical commitment to library/information/resource centre development. In West Auckland library circles it is often referred to as a facility of best practice.

Waimauku has had a very clear strategic plan to guide development over many years and has embraced the challenge of incorporating information communication technologies into its present day. This includes a pod of computers available for children to research/work on. Alongside the pod is a network printer and scanner, a teaching screen and a flat screen television. Available for staff and children’s use, within the library/information centre is a telephone, fax, music system and a pod of centralized catalogue search computers.

The layout of the area is very user friendly. There is a differentiation in the use of space which supplies a variety of choice of areas for the user. This includes an area for class discussion with white board facilities, an area with tables to allow for note taking and reading, and a spacious area for computers and junior fiction. There is a lot of floor space for children to spread out on with cushions. The environment is warm and comfortable well organized with clear routines.

The school is now working on an integrated curriculum that contributes to the buying plan of the library/information centre. The library is part of supporting the delivery of the school wide curriculum.

Therefore library and information skills may be best taught when completely integrated with all subjects. Thus information seeking can be followed through, from conception of the information need, to final use of the material found. A project on Birds should not be just for library skills, but part of science, writing and art curriculum. The thinking skills associated with independent resource use may thus be fostered through all subject areas. (Moore & St George, p.21, 1989).

All teaching resources are centralized and managed as part of the information centre. The resource area at Waimauku is incredibly well organized and formatted to the Dewey System and of course put onto a data base for easy access and quick return. This is one of the most comprehensive resource systems that I have seen. There is also an area to profile all new resources into the resource bank and to give teachers a chance to familiarize themselves with the resources before putting them into the system.

For all staff to Waimauku Primary there is an orientation to the working of the library/information centre systems. This allows for the librarian to share how the resource room and library area functions and it orientates teachers as to how to use the technology themselves so they can guide the children. During this time the Information Skills curriculum is also shared with staff to give them direction for their level and it gives indicators of benchmarks expected to be reached over that year level. As stated by Moore (2002) "If development of information literacy is to be supported in schools, teachers need to be information literate themselves, and to develop a range of pragmatic approaches to extending children's understanding of the

information world.” (p.20) This is the most comprehensive information skill curriculum that I have seen actually working in a school environment. The information skills overview is directly linked to the Action Learning process where it identifies the skills children will need to be taught and know before they can independently use Action Learning to it’s full potential as a process. Later in the school year a test is given to each level to asses the level of information skills children have acquired and can use. Next the data is collected across the school, analysed by the librarian and reported back to the board of trustees and to staff.

The library/information centre is driven by clear policies and is one of the few libraries with a vision statement all of its own. “A dynamic service which plays a central role in promoting a love of reading and literature. Children’s skills are developed to access and use information independently, through a variety of information and communication technologies in a welcoming environment.”

The librarian is passionate and committed to providing a wonderful service to both staff and children in the community. The librarian is full time and has a paid teacher aide 4 hours a week. The budget for buying books is approx. \$ 8000 per year and it is evident that this school has prioritized funding to the library, as the collection is one of quality and quantity. There are many innovative ideas that operate in this library; including the instigation of a book hospital if you find a book needing to be fixed, scavenger hunts to develop information skills, the training of nearly 60-100 librarians a year, and a suggestion box for children and parents of what books to buy.

Observations

This is a library that models best practice on a number of levels. It is well supported by a school leadership who has resourced a fulltime librarian and a good sized budget to support the continued buying to add to an already quality collection to equip it with up to date information communication technologies. It is enhanced by the quality of the lead librarian; this impacts on the standards of systems operating and the warm environment. This school has identified several key initiatives that support this library/information centre as being the hub of information management in the school. It has a professional development programme for training staff in expectation benchmarks of information skills at every level and the programme also teaches staff

how to use the library to ensure consistency throughout the school. Waimauku Primary has also identified that teachers need to understand what is meant by information skills and how they should be taught. They are a school who understand that Action Research is not a means in itself but is a complex process that needs skills to be supported and taught and revisited many times. The school is about to build a new library so it will be exciting to see how this develops. They have a strong history of producing excellent results and I believe they will continue to do so.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The opportunity to travel and see a variety of children's libraries has been invaluable. It has stimulated great discussion and provided a myriad of ideas for my school's future development and hopefully for others. To be able to have a visual portfolio allows us to have a ready resource available for everyone to refer to for great ideas. The following components planned well will contribute to a very high functioning information hub.

A with fabulous design both in functioning layout and creative aesthetics, and a good healthy budget to equip the facility with the resources needed to run it with efficiency and to resource it with quality (this is a must). The design includes all the latest Information Communication Technologies for example: computers, scanners, photocopiers, televisions, screens, data projectors, and so on. Add to this a teacher trained librarian who is able to integrate an information skills curriculum across the school and a person who is part of whole school planning to support all curriculum development especially in the literacy practices reinforced throughout the school. The combination of these aspects would have us on the way to a winning information hub.

All schools should have by right a teacher/librarian position given to contribute to the valuable resource of each school library/information centre. The requirements of this job have become so complex and demanding that a fulltime teacher can not oversee the running and organising of the facility just using an untrained teacher's aide. (This is not to undermine all the amazing work these faithful teacher aides accomplish with little supervision and limited resources.) However what we must acknowledge is that people deserve to be trained to do the best possible job and to be paid accordingly and the job description and requirements have become so complex and demanding. In *Learning in the Information Landscape* (2002) the importance and growing complexity of this position is highlighted "The other major role of the library staff is managing library development and operations. This includes planning, budgeting, reporting, collection development, systems management, user services and promotion..." (p.23)

To give direction and energy to developing the efficient functioning of the library/information centre it is imperative that every facility has a strategic plan to identify priorities, monitoring of programs, identify future needs and resources and to develop an integrated approach and to be a part of school wide development. As stated in *Learning in the Information Landscape*(2002) regarding successful literacy programs “Effective, school-wide information literacy programmes include a framework for systematically developing information skills by using an information process model” (p.19)

It was interesting, to compare the American facilities. The administration of schools has definitely addressed many of the resourcing issues that New Zealand schools find incredibly frustrating. These include the resourcing of hardware and cabling and also the resourcing of technicians to keep systems and machines up and operating. The budgets that are allocated annually seem on the average much higher and then perhaps the most valuable resource is the one where you must have a trained teacher librarian and this resource is an amazing asset to any learning institution. To have a fulltime librarian would allow for the possibility of amazing across-curriculum support for classroom teachers and children’s learning and they are able to coordinate the management of information systems. They also supply library support positions for book preparation and general library resources. When comparing the lack of resourcing in New Zealand where any hours given to employ a person for a library position comes from the operations grant and of course must compete with the cost of consumables such as toilet paper and electricity. On the whole the librarians are not trained teachers, most do not have a librarian’s degree, on the whole they are untrained or start their first professional development in the position. In most schools a lead teacher takes the responsibility of organising the school library on top of an already demanding teaching job. Here we can see a downfall in the management of New Zealand school libraries where we are missing a critical success factor as stated in *Learning in the Information Landscape* (2002) “The library is well managed by an effective team, which is structured to maximise the library’s contribution to student achievement. This team is an effective combination of people with the relevant professional expertise, personal qualities, and qualifications” (p.22)

Although the American facilities have all the ICT resourcing and adequate stock I felt that they had not optimised the vision and the potentialising of the resource in the following areas. There didn't seem to be an understanding of having an information skills curriculum which would be different from a basic computer skills overview. It was of some concern that these fabulous facilities actually stood alone as resources rather than as fully integrated resources to support curriculum delivery and development. There also seemed to be an absence of a strategic plan for library development which contributed to a more spasmodic operating of the library/information centre.

The library/information centre in development is best seen as the hub of the school for accessing information and it can be a centre that integrates all literacy practices. This means that it can also be a hub for information communication technologies and it can comfortably supply the vehicle in which these can be used effectively. It can also manage the school-wide resources developing a rich bank of support resources for pupils and students.

When considering the part a community can play in the development and function of a library/information centre it is important to have some strategies that share best practice with parents of children's learning and an overview of skills that you hope to teach the children. Senge et al. (2000) state "As every parent knows, the school classroom provides only a small part of what a child, teenager, or college student learns during the course of a week" (p.16). In this way parents can support their child's learning and be a part of providing authentic situations for the children to practice their skills in. It is also advantageous to both teachers and students if parents are given development which gives them more understanding of the curriculum being delivered and how they might more effectively support their child's learning. Parents need to be educated to be able to understand the changes and development of information literacy and this can be done with parent education classes. As stated by Senge et al. (2000) "A community and its schools are reflections of each other. If one is succeeding so is the other." (p.16)

The librarian who is trained as a teacher and librarian provides the whole package. If school wide resources are also managed by this department and the librarian is doing

topic searches on the net then they can also do research in preparation for the topic being studied and then provide intranets for fast appropriate access. This person becomes the most valuable resource in the school. If all resources are accessioned then the care and monitoring of resources becomes far more managed and cared for. A well managed resource bank actually will save a school from losing and wasting time and energy looking for lost items. It also contributes to cost efficiency. It allows for a tracking of resources for access and it protects valuable resources from being lost in a teacher's cupboard for their exclusive use.

In many of the library/information centers I was able to visit I felt it would be good for them to stop and reflect on where their practice was at and then develop a 4 – 5 year strategic plan. The vision for some of these facilities was too limited or non-existent. It is well put by Senge et al. (2000) "Learning is driven by vision. Too many organizations, including schools, ignore this precept, but it may be the most critical to their success" (p.21). It would be advantageous for these facilities to fill in the library audit checklist which gives them a good independent overview to identify and to evaluate where their strengths are but just as importantly the areas where they could develop effective information skills curriculum or introduce a more integrated school wide essential skills development. I believe to take the time to be reflective about existing practice allows for greater improvement in developing the standard of opportunities and services offered to support children's learning and to equip them with third millennium skills. The library/information centre can be pivotal in equipping both teachers and children with an information rich environment that resources everyone to be a rich learning community.

It is important that good design is considered for providing a rich environment. The aesthetics of a library/information centre contribute greatly to how people respond to it and use its services. The design of a library/information centre will totally enhance the way people can optimise the way the environment is organised this includes the use of colour, the type of furniture, the use of light and of course the layout of the environment. The traditional hallowed atmosphere provides a respect and contributes to the culture of a library/information centre. The challenge to integrate Information Communication Technologies has definitely been embraced by many libraries/information centers. But for many it has been an exercise that has been added

onto the existing concept rather than developing a more whole picture of what and how it can be embraced for what does a library information centre look like in the third millennium. It was so exciting to have the opportunity to visit so many differently designed children's libraries. The standard overall was very high and it was clear to see that Americans value their libraries/information centers and the buildings and furnishing are well resourced. A library/information centre is seen as an essential resource both in building design, and in resourced people. It was clear to see that library/information centers often communicated the cultural aspects of the communities they represented. This is the area that often contributes an 'x' factor to a library/information centre by reflecting the original characteristics of the community. Finally, to be able to continue to develop the teaching of the process of Inquiry Based Learning should be the vehicle to develop.

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