Razzle, Dazzle

Creating interactive library spaces

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Design & community building

Keep in mind:

"All architecture is shelter, all great architecture is the design of space that contains, cuddles, exalts, or stimulates the persons in that space."

(Philip Johnson, 1975)

School libraries in the 21st century

Keep in mind:

- Legacy systems/infrastructure (OPAC + print + Dewey)
- Old architecture (Australia 44% school libraries >20 yrs old, 11% are 15 - 20 yrs old)
- Educational change (Australian curriculum vs outcomes + lifelong learning/information literate graduates)
- New information landscape characterised by:
  - Technological change (new formats, delivery modes)
  - Differentiation (layered landscape – access denied, costly $$$)
  - Overload, complexity, increasingly dense, decontextualisation
  - Access 24/7

Students in the 21ˢᵗ century

Keep in mind:

- Technology use (outside vs inside school)

- Assumptions (digital native or digital refugee?)

- Social disconnection (divorce, absent parents, physical & emotional abuse, safe haven)

- Learning disengagement (boredom, lack of skills, relevance, success)

- Community disconnection (no sense of belonging)

- Virtual vs real (cyberbullying, virtual worlds)

- Communications breakdown

What does the research tell us?

Keep in mind the social context:

- – Teaching-learning dynamic
- – Sense of belonging
- – Community identity
- – Citizenship
- – Lifelong learner

What does the research tell us?

- In FYE studies at university, students who fail to establish a sense of belonging and community experience feelings of isolation, lack of motivation and anxiety - all major factors that lead to disengagement and failure.

- Primary and secondary schools are by the nature of their design (architecture) and how they conduct their core business (curriculum), compartmentalised and isolationist for both teachers, students and administration.

- The library is the one place in this environment that is outside this design. It is whole school based and has the flexibility to draw together the social and academic aspects of the whole school community.

School libraries & community building?

- I do not have all the answers or the ideas.
- Let's collaborate and share.
- How do we create interesting, engaging spaces that resonate with our school community:
  - Administration (core business = teaching and learning)
  - Teachers (curriculum design & support)
  - Students (engagement & relevance)
  - Parents (lifelong learner & future citizen)
  - Wider community (status & reputation)
- This does not have to be a costly business.

First things first?

- Change is an inclusive process:
  - Whole staff
  - New mindset
  - New processes and procedures
  - New service delivery
- Changing perceptions:
  - Flexible
  - Adaptable
  - Open to challenge & innovation
- Practising what we preach:
  - Modelling lifelong learning

Physical spaces – opening the door

The entrance – messages to send?

- Welcome!
- Here we are!
- Great things are happening in here!
- Come in!

Your turn - groups of 4

- 2 ideas to improve the entrance to your library
- Can we make this flexible ie. change it.

Physical spaces – opening the door

Photograph by Kay Poustie

Physical spaces – how much?

Have you ever measured the:

- – Floor space?
- – Spare wall/display space (everything)?
- – Ceiling space?
- – Window space?

You can't change your physical space until:

- – You know exactly how much you have.
- – Where the power points/Internet connections are located in relation to everything else.
- – Think & plan.

Physical spaces – introducing light

Photograph by Kay Poustie

Physical spaces – introducing light

Photograph by David Morcombe of Imagery

Physical spaces – introducing light

Ways to maximise light in the library:

– Light paintwork

– Half shelving

– Mirrors

– Light, patterned carpet (up walls as well)

Your turn – in your group

– 1 idea to improve the light in your library

– Considerations – cost $$$, easy to do

Physical spaces – introducing colour

Photograph by Kay Poustie

Physical spaces – introducing colour

Photograph by David Morcombe of Imagery

Introducing colour

Photograph by Kay Poustie

Physical spaces – signage

What message does your library send?

– Rules, rules, rules!

– Don't!

– Shush!

Your turn – in your group

– 3 positive statements to guide behaviour in the library

Physical spaces – look & feel

Children's Librarian, Kokand Children's Library, Uzbekistan. Photograph by Linda Abblitt

Physical spaces – look & feel

Photograph by Kay Poustie

Physical spaces – look & feel

Photograph by Margaret Muthiga

Physical spaces – look & feel

Photograph by Ingrid Poljanic, Split, Croatia

Physical spaces – look & feel

Photograph by Josephine Mmasepatela Thebe, Botswana

Social spaces – creating a look & feel

What message does your library send?

– Ask the kids!

– Hand over ownership.

– Flexibility is the key.

Your turn – in your group

– 1 idea for creating a look & feel in your library

Physical spaces – events

Photograph by Kay Poustie

Social spaces – events

Ideas for events:

- The Great Build (lego creativity at school)
- Games, Games, Games
- Twisted Tales
- Soapbox Corner
- Readathon

Your turn – in your group

- 2 ideas for events in your library

Social spaces – displays

Good displays:

– Change regularly, some more than others

– Are planned in advance

– Attract, engage and resonate

– Promotional

– Informational (curriculum)

– Services – school and community

– Are not necessarily in the library!

Your turn – in your group

– 2 ideas for displays in your library

Virtual spaces

Introducing technology – what message does your library send?

- Technology is a solution or a tool?
- Flexibility?
- Multiple delivery modes?
- Multiple formats?
- Outside use = inside school use?
- Multiple teaching moments?

Your turn – in your group

- 1 idea for using technology in your library

School libraries as community

All architecture is shelter, all great architecture is the design of space that contains, cuddles, exalts, or stimulates the persons in that space."

(Philip Johnson, 1975)

Does your library architecture/design:

– Offer shelter?

– Provide flexible boundaries?

– Cuddle and enfold all community members?

– Exalt and stimulate users?

– Provide exciting, restful and engaging spaces?

School Libraries in Action

Sharing and collaborating

IASL – free and members resources

http://www.iasl-online.org/sla/index.htm