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In this Issue:

How to Get Teenagers to Read

Writing *Fish Jam*

Supporting Reading & Literacy

Attention Span Crisis in our Schools

VIBE Festival

The Right to Choose

Professional Journal of the
WA School Library Association
Vol. 5, No. 2
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I can't believe that we are already half way through the year. It has been a crazy, busy time and I personally have struggled with time management and the expectations that I put on myself. I'm sure that many of you can relate. Being part of the WASLA Committee is a challenging but rewarding experience and I am positive that I have improved my professional practice because of the opportunities I have been exposed to. One of the most exciting parts of being on the Committee is organising PD events. Already this year, I have organised professional learning focusing on Makerspaces and the *Birds of a Feather* ideas sharing session. Other talented school library volunteers are currently working hard putting together the WASLA Conference. I highly recommend that you register and take the opportunity to grow professionally. Also, take the plunge and give back by sharing your ideas and experiences either in print or in person at one of our many upcoming PD events.

This edition is largely focussed on promoting reading and therefore improving the literacy levels of our students. This is a good lead up towards Book Week in August. There have been many children's books published by local authors recently and we are fortunate to highlight Kylie Howarth's as our annual featured author/illustrator with her first picture book *Fish Jam*. Enjoy and see you at the Conference!

Natasha Georgiou, Editor

Artwork is reproduced courtesy of the author Kylie Howarth and The Five Mile Press.
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Panel of Referees:

The following people have agreed to act as referees for ic3's peer review process (see the WASLA website for more information):

- Val Baird
- Barbara Combes
- Jo Critch
- Mary Hookey

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From the President's Desk

Half the year has already gone and WASLA has been busy preparing for the WASLA Conference to be held on August 8 at Shenton College. This will be an all-day conference based on the theme of making your library visible or how to strategically position the library in as the hub of teaching and learning in the school. This is a difficult task for lone practitioners or those who are working part time. There are plenty of sessions on the program which are designed to cater for all library personnel. Sessions include performance management and AITSL; working with technology such as blogs, Google apps and iPad apps; creating digital resources such as Libguides and ICT passports; developing digital collections; engaging ESL and refugee learners and more. The conference is for members only, but if your school is a member then you can bring a buddy. I urge everyone to bring a colleague from their school to the conference. Our keynotes are Susan La Marca from Genazzano College in Melbourne and Brad Tyrell from Scotch College. Fees have been kept at the same price as the 2013 conference and there will be plenty of giveaways and goodies, plus a great networking opportunity over morning tea and lunch.

On May 3rd representatives from WASLA attended a meeting at ALIA in Canberra to develop a plan for the State Associations to work with ALIA on an advocacy program at a national level. Teacher librarians and the importance of school libraries have been in decline across Australia for a number of years, so it is important that we develop a national advocacy program where all states are sending the same message. ALIA is the national accrediting body and is well placed to lead and manage such a program. In fact ALIA have already begun such a program with the FAIR project (<https://fair.alia.org.au/>).

All the States were represented except Tasmania and the Northern Territory. The ALIA president and CEO and representatives from ALIA schools were also present. After a round table discussion of issues currently being faced by the various states, the group broke into two groups to discuss possible opportunities. Suggestions included the development of a TL toolkit for schools, organizing a concerted campaign to target principals, focusing a national goal (eg. literacy and equity), developing generic presentations for parents and Principal conferences and linking in with the IFLA Lyon Declaration and the UNESCO Millennium Goals, which are currently being developed and are focusing on literacy as a foundational skill for the successful development of all countries.

Goals for the day included the establishment of a national goal, strategies for a grassroots swell;

agreement to produce a joint advocacy toolkit; training of appropriate staff and PD; and a strategy to engage valuable supporters such as industry suppliers and booksellers. It was pointed out during the sessions that the Australian curriculum supports ICT, literacy and guided inquiry, all of which are essential and the core business of the library and the services we offer staff and students. While some participants wanted to gather more statistical information, others felt that this had already been done and the time to act as a group for national strategic planning is now. The group has decided to meet via teleconference next month to report back after discussion with the State committees.

WASLA is committed to raising awareness across the community of the importance of well resourced and professionally staffed school libraries. Universities and TAFE personnel report that the number of students entering tertiary education who have no experience of a library, no research or problem-solving skills and who have difficulties with study at this level is increasing. Similarly, reports from the workplace indicate that students entering the workforce lack initiative, basic problem-solving skills and little or no experience of ethical workplace practice. It is our libraries and the dedicated people who work in them that



Back row: Cindy Tchernitz (SLAV), Di Ruffles (SLAV), Anne Girolami (ALIA Schools), Sandra Ryan (ALIA Schools), Anne Lockwood (ASLA), Holly Godfree (ACT), Isobel Williams (ASLA).
Middle row: Rhonda Powling (SLAV), Shirley Birrell, QSLA, Hajnalka Molloy (SLASA), Carol Grantham (SLASA), Anne Plowman (ACT).
Front row: Michelle Jensen (SLANSW), Katie Cripps (SLANSW), Damian Lodge (ALIA), Barbara Combes (WASLA), Phyllis Paioff (WASLA).
Also present: Sue McKerracher (ALIA), Sue Johnston (by teleconference (SLASA)).

From the President's Desk

provide resources and spaces where students can acquire these skills which are so important for students' future success after school. We will keep everyone posted!

WASLA is also trying to organize a visit by internationally renowned literacy and reading expert Stephen Krashen. So watch out for this PD, tentatively placed for October this year. I hope everyone has had a good break, despite the cold weather and the coming term is a fruitful one.

Dr Barbara Combes
President WASLA

Meet Your Committee

Over the next few editions of *ic3* you will be able to put faces to the WASLA committee members and get to know a little bit about them.

Natasha Georgiou, Publications Editor



Natasha is the Library and Information Centre Manager at Sevenoaks Senior College. As part of the Committee she is Publications Editor and involved in planning PD. She has a blog at www.backtothelibrary.com and actively contributes on Twitter as @natashageorgiou at <https://twitter.com/natashageorgiou>.

She loves travel, learning languages and has also lived and worked in Florence and Melbourne (her two favourite cities).

Phyllis Paioff



Phyl is a qualified Library Technician, working within the industry for over 8 years. Currently she is working at the International School of WA. Past

Executive Officer of WASLA and currently on the Committee, she specialises in cataloguing, with specific experience in international resources and RDA.

Sarah Betteridge



I am qualified teacher librarian currently employed at Ocean Reef Senior High School. I am passionate about literacy, lifelong learning and all things library.

As a 21st century connected educator I actively curate resources on Scoop.it as *The Bookmarking Librarian* (<http://www.scoop.it/u/sarah-betteridge>) and am now blogging at <https://thebookmarkinglibrarian.wordpress.com/>. Find me on Twitter as @SJBetteridge at <https://twitter.com/SJBetteridge>.

Rebecca Murray, Secretary



Having worked as a teacher librarian for the past 20 years and across both primary and secondary levels of education Rebecca has witnessed and participated in many adventures. Being awarded the Western Australian Teacher Librarian of the Year award in 2013 has been the highlight of her career. She shares this award with many other worthy recipients.

Although she has finally finished her law degree she sees no immediate change in her career and looks forward to many years in the sector advocating for the profession.

WASLA News



WASLA STATE CONFERENCE

Leading the Way: Strategy, Collaboration and Education

Keynote Speakers

Join our keynote speakers, Susan La Marca and Brad Tyrell, at the 2015 WASLA State Conference.

Concurrent sessions include:

- Blogging, creating a professional profile, International Baccalaureate ideas, Google Apps, publishing with iPads, Libguides, visible libraries, RDA cataloguing, digital collections, unsolved mysteries of cataloguing, being strategic on the fly, ICT passports, Balga experience - ESL and refugee learners, Makerspaces, what do teachers want libraries to do, translating Edu research, St Stephens - a case study, CPSU Union.





Reading for pleasure has proven benefits in other areas of academic and vocational life. [Sophie/Flickr](#)

Children are heartily encouraged to read in their early years of school. However, once students have mastered this skill and they move from learning to read, to reading to learn, the role of pleasure in the activity can be forgotten.

If reading is just seen as a tool for learning, the will to read may not be fostered in young people. Recreational book reading involves voluntary reading for pleasure, and research suggests that students in Australia and internationally are reading less over time.

Why is reading important?

Regular recreational book reading is one of the easiest ways for a student to continue developing their literacy skills. The ability to read fluently is by no means the end of development of literacy skills.

Reading for pleasure has been associated with a range of benefits, including achievement across a range of literacy outcomes, with literacy levels linked to advantages for academic and vocational prospects. Regular recreational reading also offers benefits for cognitive stamina and resistance to cognitive decline, the development of empathy, and even achievement in other subjects, including mathematics.

What is aliteracy?

While much of the discussion around reading is concerned with skill acquisition, which usually (but not always) occurs during the early years of schooling, there is little focus on will acquisition, where students who have developed the skill to read continue to choose to do so.

Students with the skill to read, but without this will, are deemed aliterate. They exclude themselves from the range of benefits conferred by regular reading, perhaps without ever understanding the consequences of their recreational choices.

The West Australian Study in Adolescent Book Reading (WASABR) examined adolescent attitudes to reading and how often they do it, as well as how teachers, schools and parents can contribute to supporting it. The WASABR found that the most common reason for infrequent reading was related to preference for other recreational activities.

Whose job is it to encourage teen reading?

Teachers and parents may cool off in encouragement once students have demonstrated that they can read. Research suggests that adolescent aliteracy may be inadvertently perpetuated by withdrawn encouragement from both parents and teachers.

Parents may assume that once the skill of reading has been acquired, their job is complete. They may assume the role of encouraging further literacy development lies with the school.

Teachers may struggle to find time to encourage reading within the demands of a crowded curriculum, which focuses on reading skill, without recognising the role that reading for pleasure plays in fostering reading skills. The WASABR study sought to provide insight into how teachers and parents can successfully continue to encourage recreational book reading into the teen years.

What can teachers and parents do to encourage regular reading?

- Take students to the school or community library and encourage them to take self-selected reading materials home;
- don't curtail reading aloud to young people at secondary level — this practice is enjoyed by teens, too;
- explicitly teach strategies for choosing books — don't assume that this has been learned in primary school;
- be a model — read and show an interest in reading;
- find out what your young people like to read so that you can connect them with books of interest to them;
- talk about books in class or at home, not limiting the discussion to course texts;
- allow and encourage an aesthetic response — love characters, loathe characters, give up on books halfway through, re-read favourite books. Share what it means to be a passionate reader;
- communicate the value of the practice by putting aside class time or time at home for reading books for pleasure; and
- finally, don't assume that equipping them with an e-reader will automatically lead to increased engagement in reading. Research does not yet support the popular contention that young people prefer using e-readers. Thus continuing to provide access to paper books is important.

There may be confusion about what to read to experience literacy benefits. Books are the text type most consistently associated with literacy benefit; neither comics nor web pages have been associated with the same level of benefit at present.

Margaret Kristin Merga

About the Author:

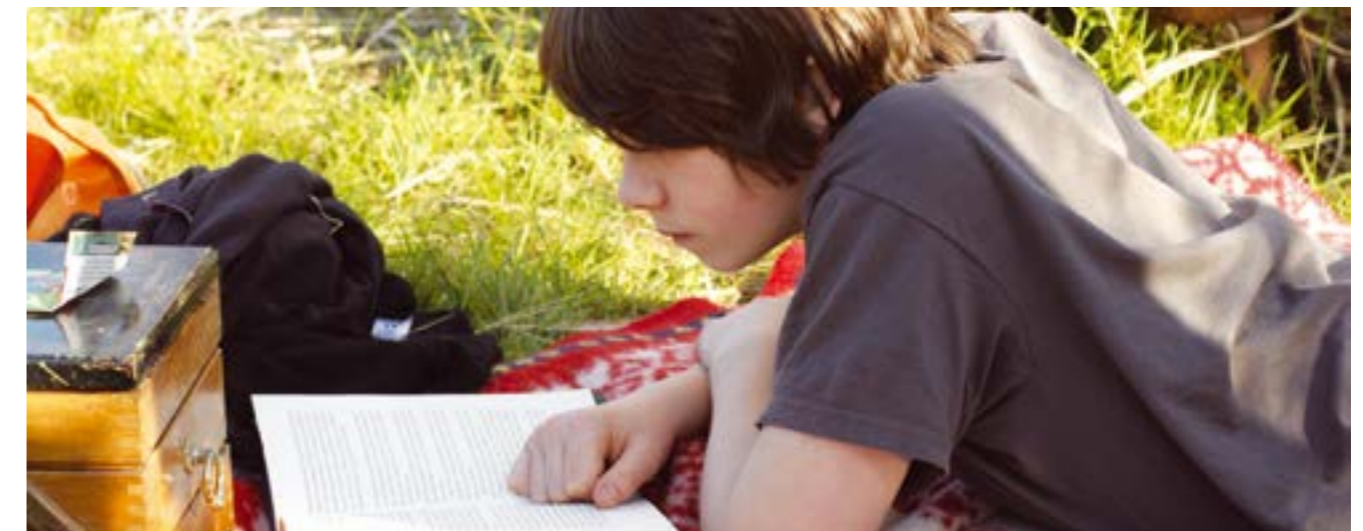


Margaret (PhD, MEd, GradDipEd, BAHons) is a lecturer in Secondary English Teaching at Murdoch University. Her research areas include literacy, health promotion in education, technology in education and doctoral education. She has taught in schools in Australia and internationally.

In 2012 Margaret undertook the West Australian Study in Adolescent Book Reading, which examined adolescents' attitudes toward reading books for recreation, and the impact of social influences on adolescent engagement in the practice. Margaret has had findings from this mixed-methods study published across many Australian and international journals. She is currently on the Editorial Board for the US *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*.

This article was originally published in *The Conversation* (<https://goo.gl/gQdODc>)

THE CONVERSATION



Regular recreational reading is one of the easiest ways for a student to develop their literacy skills. [Richard Leeming/Flickr](#)

The local children's books landscape is currently very colourful and active. Normally, we would look enviously to our eastern state school library cousins with the large number of local authors they have available to them. Just this month alone there have been two new books launched in Perth and there have been many more earlier in the year.

One of these books is *Fish Jam*, written and illustrated by Kylie Howarth and released in April. We are privileged to have Kylie's artwork presented on our cover for this edition. The picture book is a beautiful one about acceptance and self-belief and her illustrations are reflective of our coastal lifestyle here in WA.

Kylie was raised on an emu farm in Harvey alongside her brother, a dog, sheep, several orphaned kangaroos and an echidna. She is an award-winning graphic artist but after deciding to stay at home to look after her young sons, she ventured into writing and illustrating children's books. *Fish Jam* is her first. I asked her questions regarding the book and school libraries.

What was your inspiration behind *Fish Jam*?

A version of this little musical fish first appeared in my sketchbooks over ten years ago. I have a graphic design background and had developed the concept of using musical instruments as fish-features when designing a record label logo. As he kept reappearing in my sketches over the years, I felt he was an interesting and memorable character, so I decided to write a story around him.

It is rare to both write and illustrate a picture book. How did you find the experience and what were the processes that you employed?

It was an absolute privilege to both write and illustrate *Fish Jam*. The relationship between text and image in picture books needs to be so perfectly balanced, so sketching illustration ideas whilst writing really helped me edit the story down to include only the essential text.

I first submitted this manuscript using only jazz scat sounds (nonsense syllables) intending for it to be an almost wordless picture book that read like a song. I wrote several versions and kept testing them on my son to come up with sounds that he really enjoyed making and could pronounce. Some of my previous versions were too much of a tongue twister for young children. After working on it further with my editor, we decided to add in a few sentences in addition to the spoken sounds, to help the story flow more easily for the reader.

The illustration process was ridiculously fun and messy, as most of the textures in *Fish Jam* were created during backyard art sessions with my three and one year old sons. We used finger painting, potato stamping, leaf printing and rock rubbing techniques, to create beautiful textures. I then scanned these into the computer to paste into the illustrations.

What message do you want young children to receive from reading *Fish Jam*?

Follow your dreams, and always sing, scat and dance to your own beat!

From the book it would appear that jazz and animals are important to you? Is this true? Why?

Several studies have proven music to be very helpful in developing a child's language and literacy skills. Not only that, I had a musical upbringing and have seen in my own children, how much enjoyment they get from singing, dancing and playing musical instruments.

I have always been an animal person thanks to my mother. My boys are always excited to see what gorgeous little ball of fluff she has hiding in her bag when she comes to visit. Usually an orphaned kangaroo or wallaby joey or sometimes the occasional possum. My love for animals has not only influenced my work, but also my travels. In 2009 I spent six months with my husband travelling through Africa, the Amazon and the Galapagos Islands. So I often look back through those photos for inspiration when developing characters or working on new manuscript ideas.

What advice do you give aspiring illustrators/authors?

Draw from your own childhood passions and memories. Try to remember what it was like to be a little you, what you loved, what you hated, what excited you, what disgusted you and what made you feel happy, sad or loved.

If you have always thought you would like to write or illustrate a children's book, then stop thinking about it and just start. And join SCBWI. It takes a lot of persistence, practice and research to get your foot in the publishing industry door, so joining a group like the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators not only gives you amazing tools and networking opportunities, but also allows you to meet and hang out with like-minded, fabulously fun people.

Fish Jam by Kylie Howarth

What's next for you?

I have begun working on my second picture book to be published with The Five Mile Press early next year. This one involves a very rude and cheeky, chip-loving seagull, so is set above water this time, but not too far from the ocean. You won't believe what he would do to get a chip!

What memories do you have of your school library?

I immediately recall the clink, clink, sound of the books falling against the sides of those old wooden boxes as I would flick through looking at each of the covers trying to decide which one to take home. For some reason I distinctly remember borrowing *When The Wind Changed* by Ruth Park, a book about Australian baby animals and several *Clifford, The Big Red Dog* stories by Norman Bridwell.

I actually still have my yellow drawstring library bag and the brown, floral chair bag that mum made for me using the same fabric as our couch cushions. I grew up in the country and went to Harvey Primary School.

Do you think that school libraries are important? Why?

So important! They provide such a wonderful and nurturing learning environment tailored specifically to children. They allow children to be themselves and explore their own ideas and interests in a safe and inspiring place. I believe school libraries are particularly important for those children who wouldn't normally have access to such a wide range of information and books.



Do you offer any services to schools?

I am very excited and feel honoured to be speaking to several school groups during Book Week. I have upcoming sessions at the Murray (Pinjarra), Midland, Peppermint Grove and Whitford Libraries this year.

Natasha Georgiou & Kylie Howarth

Artwork is reproduced courtesy of the author Kylie Howarth and The Five Mile Press.

Fish Jam is available for RRP \$19.95

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www.fivemile.com.au



Improve your school reading program by connecting with authors

When I first started working as a teacher librarian, it was explained to me that the aim of the wider reading program was to introduce new novels to students and share relevant library news. After a brief talk by the teacher librarian, the English Teacher would then supervise the class quietly, leaving the teacher librarian free to work on other tasks. At the end of the session the teacher librarian would then process the borrowing of books and offer words of encouragement, but often students would put them back on the returns trolley to be re-shelved.

For the teacher librarian there was no real follow through, value adding or involvement in student reading engagement. Research evidence highlights the importance of the teacher librarian's role in developing and maintaining an engaging reading program to support student achievement (Cullinan, 2000). The value that a teacher librarian needs to add to a reading program should be a unique service to teachers and students. Within our school library we wanted to engage and excite our students to pick up books and read them, but for this we needed more information and a totally different approach.

Motivating students in recreational reading involves understanding what their interests are as a reader (Pitcher et al., 2007), but in-house circulation records were no longer a reliable source of evidence of student reading. At our school, students rarely borrowed the books they began reading during wider reading, citing that they were reading something else at home, or that they couldn't get into the book they picked up.

Many students read different books at school to what they read at home, perhaps as they felt that they needed to be seen to be reading a peer-accepted book rather than something that they might be genuinely interested in. Our school library was also not the sole provider of reading material to our students, as many had home libraries or memberships to their local libraries where they could also get access to extensive physical and eBook collections.

What are they reading?

Focusing on Year 8s initially, we identified the most popular authors and genres of that year level. We gathered data by quietly talking to every student throughout their assigned wider reading session and documenting the following:

- what students were reading at school and at

- home;
- attitudes towards the books they were reading;
- what was the last book read that they really liked?; and
- any interests or ideas for teacher librarians to follow through.

Most of this data was informally recorded on a class list then transcribed into a spreadsheet where it could be further analysed. This allowed for the use of short hand and incidental notes by the teacher librarian.

Talking with students who were engrossed in a specific book revealed that many of them had developed an interest in the authors themselves, and where possible followed the authors online via social media. This personal connection made students more open to risk-taking when choosing a new book to read.

Engaging students with author visits

The Senior Library had previously booked authors as part of Library Week to engage students in wider reading. It was an established strategy, but there was no evaluation as to whether it had any impact on or made any difference to students' reading behaviour. Now with an increased presence on social media, students can form connections with authors on a more personal level, therefore increasing their motivation for reading.

For schools, author visits are not only limited to the physical presence of the author, as video conferencing technology via Skype is now so much more accessible than it was years ago.

Planning your author visit

When talking with authors about their school visits, many say that it is important to have a clear focus. George Ivanoff, author of the *Gamers* and *You Choose* series, reflects that, "talking to the English teachers or teacher librarians beforehand and collaborating with them leads to a presentation with greater impact".

A few years ago my school had Michael Pryor present to the Year 8s as part of Library Week. He presented for over an hour and explained the process that he went through to come up with the ideas for his *Laws of Magic* series. He engaged students with explanations on how he attended Magic School and then he demonstrated a few tricks to the students.

Speaking with Michael about his school experiences overall, he reflects, "I always say that

the test of a presentation in a school is whether kids linger after the session ends. The shy, the curious, the unfulfilled, they sidle up and the conversations that happen then are often magical." While working with the Year 10 reading classes this year, Michael Pryor's presentation is still talked about and the warmth and connectedness that the students feel to this author has created opportunities for students to expand their reading choices.



Get to know an author by regularly visiting their official website. Screenshot of George Ivanoff's blog at <http://georgeivanoff.com.au/>

A totally different author experience was James Phelan, a Melbourne based dystopian author. His presentation was a bit "rawer" than Michael Pryor's. A younger author, he engaged students differently with tales on how he got his first book contract and his desire to drive a tank into the foyer of Penguin Books. He spoke about his tenacity in trying to get a book deal and he displayed comedic timing that had the teachers in stitches. His presentation sparked a rise in the interest in Dystopian Zombie Fiction, which is still quite strong in the school.



Website of *The Last Thirteen* series by James Phelan at <http://www.thelast13.com/> encourages students to make contact with the author and enter a competition on the final book in the series.

When authors present, they don't just inspire students to read. They also inspire students to write. Students love the idea that authors go off and engage in experiences in order to add authenticity to their writing.

We invited George Ivanoff to the school to present to our student 'Write Club'. George brought a number of props including copies of what an edited draft looks like and his 'ideas notebooks'. Students asked him all sorts of questions about his books, and this then sparked an interest in students reading his young adult novels.

Author visit checklist

Here's my advice for those considering an author visit:

1. Know your authors and read their books, so that you can ask poignant questions of them at the end of their presentations.
2. Plan and book early! Many authors are booked up six months in advance.



Use an author booking website such as Creative Net & The Literature Centre to organise your author visit

3. Work with your teachers so that the focus of the presentation is clearly communicated to the author. Generic presentations are less likely to make an impact.
4. Contact book publishers to see if they hold 'author tours' in your area. For example, the Children's Charity Network organised a rural Western Australian tour of authors and illustrators, including George Ivanoff, during 2013.

- Often authors offer the opportunity to purchase their books, or sign books at the end of presentations. Have a purchase order ready!
- A cup of tea with the English teachers and teacher librarians to de-brief after the presentation can build the relationship between these two areas of your school.
- Make sure your Library Homepage has links to the author's social media presence and take lots of photos of the author's visit and to encourage student engagement after their visit.
- Join up to associations such as the Children's Book Council and YABBA to keep up-to-date with developments in young adult literature.
- Attending book launches is an excellent way of seeing if an author is suitable to present at your school. Also use social media to identify opportunities.
- Rather than a one-off presentation, plan a day where the author can run writing workshops as well as PD sessions for teachers.

For more detailed advice about organising and hosting author visits, refer to Gutman (2013) and the following websites.

Organisations

- Children's Book Council of Australia <http://cbca.org.au/>
- Young Australians Best Book Awards <http://yabba.org.au/>

Booking authors

- The Literature Centre <http://www.thelitcentre.org.au/authors>
- Creative Net <http://www.fordstreetpublishing.com/cnet/>

Author websites

- George Ivanoff <http://georgeivanoff.com.au/>
- Michael Pryor <http://www.michaelpryor.com.au/>
- James Phelan <http://jamesphelan.com.au/>

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Margaret Lawson
Teacher Librarian
Mater Christi College

This adapted article was first published in the Autumn 2015 edition of *Learning Hub*, the journal of the School Library Association of NSW.



About the author:

Margaret Lawson has 20 years experience as an Information Technology Teacher and eLearning educator, and is a recent graduate of Charles Sturt University's Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship) course.

She now works as a Teacher Librarian at Mater Christi College in Belgrave, Victoria, and maintains a blog documenting her Journey into Librarianship at <http://infowhelm.blogspot.com>.

Attention Span Crisis in our Schools

Recently, I had a teacher at my school come up to me with a look of frustration and desperation on her face. She had just come from teaching her Year 11 Geography ATAR class. She implored:

I don't know what to do anymore! I have just spent half a lesson going through a task with the class and I was very specific about what to do. They then just sat there and asked me what it was that they had to do, as if they were not paying any attention to anything I was saying at all!

This complaint from teachers about the increasingly noticeable lack of concentration from their students is sadly becoming a common occurrence. Last year, I wrote an article for Connections, titled 'A World of Online Distraction' where I discussed how the pervasive use of technology was changing how we think and relate with other people.

I have begun to notice that my own behaviours have changed. I often lose my train of thought in the middle of a sentence as I am easily distracted by some other thought. I find it very difficult to not pick up my smartphone and check my emails or social networks. It is often the first thing I do in the morning and the last thing at night. Even though I am educated and know that what I am doing is detrimental to my mental and physical health, I still continue to do it. Sounds a lot like an addiction, doesn't it? A very common addiction.

Current State of Affairs

The Government's latest findings on how we use technology in our lives was released by ACMA at the end of March. You can watch the video online, which gives an interesting overview of Australians' digital lives (<https://youtu.be/JJAFbKmHBpA>)

The research on young people's use of technology has even prompted the Federal Government to address the issue of attention spans being affected by technology use in their new Cybersafety module for kids called #Game On:

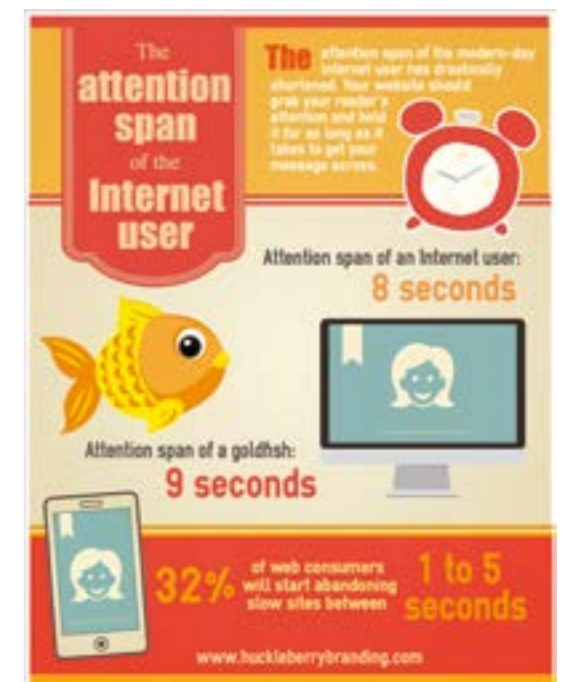
A frequent criticism of your generation is that you have short attention spans. Not only does the average attention span clock in at eight seconds, it is also shrinking, with experts predicting that very soon it will only take six seconds for you to move on.

Further studies suggest that you shift from tab to tab, window to window and use multiple platforms simultaneously, moving on whenever you are bored or tired, turning your attention to something new to change your mood. You

abandon websites that take too long to load.

The Crisis of Attention Spans

So what is attention span? Attention span is the duration of time dedicated to a particular task before our mind drifts away from it (Culverhouse, 2009). According to research posted on the USA's National Center for Biotechnology Information (Weinreich et al., 2008), the average continuous attention span of Americans focusing on an Internet site in 2013 was eight seconds, a decrease in four seconds from 2000. Their research also revealed that 25% of teens forget major details of close friends and relatives, that an office worker checks their email inbox an average number of 30 times per hour and only 4% of people spent longer than 10 minutes on a single web page (Attention Span Statistics, 2015). From this research many sites went further and proclaimed that humans had shorter attention spans than goldfish, although this statement is not backed up by any empirical studies.



www.huckleberrybranding.com, 2015

What we do need to note here is that even though the above widely quoted research relates to Internet use only, other research has shown that:

Continuous attention span may be as short as 8 seconds. After this amount of time, it's likely an individual's eyes may shift, or a stray thought will briefly enter consciousness. However, these short lapses are only minimally distracting and do not tend to interfere with task

performance.

Dukette and Cornish go on to state that, "Attention spans in children may be 3 to 5 minutes, increasing as we age to adults being about 20 minutes" (McCall, 2014).

Even though there is dispute regarding how long our attention spans actually are, there is enough circumstantial evidence to support the claims that we are becoming an increasingly distracted society. Why are we struggling to stay focused? This obviously requires a complicated answer but in simple terms some of the common reasons could be attributed to:

- our reliance on technological devices;
- continuous-partial attention;
- increased stress; and,
- information overload.

Reliance on technological devices

There has been much written about how young people are dependent on their smartphones when it comes to problem-solving. How many times have you seen people whip out their phones or use their computers to solve simple numeracy, literacy or navigational queries? Yes, we all use these devices, but I am quite certain that most adults know how to work out the above problems without using technological aides. It has been stated that "For all the convenience such inventions have brought to our daily lives, the reliance on the same has lulled us into not thinking for ourselves" (Baggs, 2013).

Continuous-partial attention (CPA)

CPA is "where children and adults devote less-concentrated attention to two or more tasks that are attempted simultaneously without one's full attention committed to any single one of those endeavours" (Wesson, 2011). One of the outcomes of CPA is the loss in performance that can even cause 'performance-paralysis'. 'Performance paralysis' is when either of the tasks can be done instinctively, without "actively and consciously thinking about each step in the process of execution", before the other task can be effectively carried out (Wesson, 2011).

This is scientific proof that the brain finds it very difficult to multitask (which is really just fast switching your attention between two or more tasks). "The brain doesn't multitask," said Daniel Levitin, author and professor of psychology, behavioural neuroscience and music at McGill University. "It engages in sequential tasking or

unitasking, where we are shifting rapidly from one thing to another without realizing it" (GDC Team, 2014). The brain is actually fracturing time into ever-smaller parts and focusing on each thing individually. This is known to be detrimental to productivity and creativity.

Increased stress

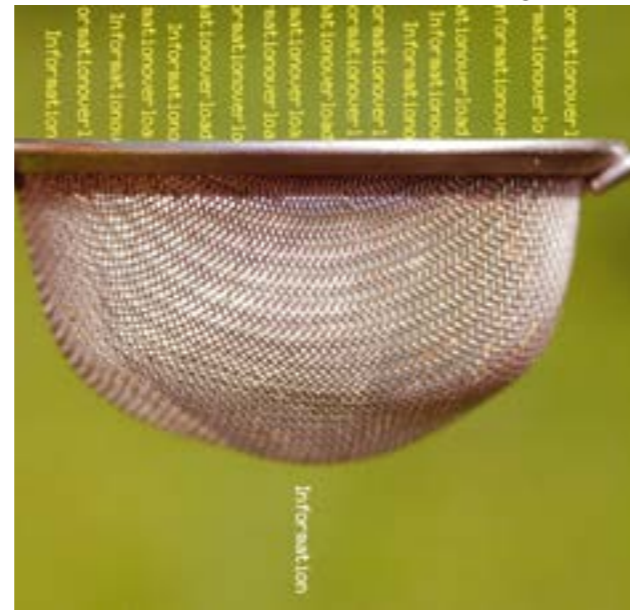
Personally, my workload has greatly increased in the last year. During that time I have noted that when my stress levels go up, my ability to concentrate and hold information or thoughts in my head for any length of time declines. There are a large number of published articles about this connection between reduced attention span and stress. One of the most fascinating quotes has come from the Center of Studies on Human Stress:

When you are stressed . . . this stress takes a lot of resources from your brain and interferes with your capacity to encode any new information (Hollinsworth, 2014).

Our busy lifestyles and intrusive use of technology have contributed to this quite dangerous biological phenomenon.

Information overload

A study revealed that the average person is bombarded with around 100,500 words a day. That is 23 words per second! Roger Bohn, co-author of the study *How Much Information*, said: "Our attention is being chopped into shorter intervals and that is probably not good for



information overload by Marina Noordegraaf/Flickr

thinking deeper thoughts" (news.com.au, 2009). This has only increased over time with the amount of electronic devices that are throwing information our way and often simultaneously. Our ability to think deeply or creatively has been compromised.

How do we help our students?

It is important that we teach students how to be present and focused. We can do so in the following ways.

- Teach time management skills with an emphasis on how we should prioritise our schedules and work loads to pay attention to one task at a time.
- Analyse information critically – this should be a Teacher Librarian's forte. We need to be showing students how to quickly differentiate between information and misinformation.
- Externalise memory. When we write down to-do lists we are relieving our brains of the burden of remembering what we should do and allowing it to focus on the task at hand.
- Break-up lessons to allow students to focus and process information that has been already given.
- Incorporate games/activities that involve thinking and creativity such as puzzles, word games, strategic games, reading or writing, arts and crafts, pretend play or musical instruments. If you haven't explored makerspaces activities, this could be a good reason to start including these into your library spaces.
- Encourage and model time-out where we get to rest our minds. Dr. Leviatin states that, 'You need to give your brain time to consolidate all the information that's come in, to toss it and turn it.'
- Daydream. 'Children shouldn't be overly scheduled. They should have blocks of time to promote spontaneity and creativity' (GDC Team, 2014). Without that time, students don't have the mental space to let new ideas and ways of doing things arise. Daydreaming and playing are crucial in developing the kind of creativity many say should be a focal point of a modern education system.

The above point leads me to the importance of incorporating mindfulness in our education system. Going back to my introduction where the Geography teacher was asking about what to do with her students. I gave her some short mindfulness techniques to use at the beginning of her class to encourage her students to be fully present. This is a work in progress but she was grateful that she had been offered a practical strategy for her problem.

Below are some daily mindfulness exercises that you can try now in your classes.

- Journaling at the beginning or end of class – this requires students to reflect on the topic being studied and their thoughts about it.
- Mindfulness Relaxation Exercise (<http://teachers.theguardian.com/teacher-resources/13303/Mindfulness-Relaxation-Exercise----Script>).
- Five minutes to a calmer classroom (<http://teachers.theguardian.com/teacher-resources/5879/Tips-for-guiding-a-mindfulness-relaxation-5-minutes-to-a-calmer-classroom----Introducing--Meditation>).
- Sample Mindfulness Lesson Plan (<http://www.mindfulschools.org/resources/sample-lesson/>).
- Mind Space Tips for Dealing with Exam Stress (<http://teachers.theguardian.com/teacher-resources/13320/Mind-Space-Tips-for-Dealing-with-Exam-Stress>).



Mindfulness Activities by Pisanuchai/Flickr, 26 October 2010

Natasha Georgiou
Library & Information Centre Manager
Sevenoaks Senior College

This article was first published in the Volume 13, Number 1, 2015 edition of *Synergy*, the journal of the School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV).

Book Reviews



All the Lost Things
by Kelly Canby
Peter Pauper, 2015
hbk., 32pp., RRP \$A32.55
ISBN 9781441318046

Reviewed by Natasha Georgiou & James Foley

I was fortunate enough to go along to this book launch earlier this month (photo below). It was a unique launch that was trendy, colourful and warm. Much like this picture book. The local children's authors and illustrators are a supportive lot and many were there to celebrate with Kelly.

When James Foley, the current Illustrator Coordinator for SCBWI Australia West and fellow children's author and illustrator, spoke about Kelly and her book, his description and review summed up my feelings about *All the Lost Things*. This is what James said:

"Kelly has achieved a huge amount in the two years since she attended that SCBWI Rotto Retreat. Many people want to publish a children's book, and Kelly has made it look easy. But of course it's not easy, and it wasn't easy. Behind her meteoric rise to fame and glory you'll find an arts degree majoring in Design and Illustration. You'll find a graphic design career. You'll find without fail at least one daily act of creativity. Kelly is not an overnight success. She's worked at it, and she lives it, and it shows."

This book is colourful. It is whimsical. It is entertaining. It is energetic and joyful, and above all it is hopeful.

I don't want to give too much away. I can say that this story is about a young girl who finds many lost things that she collects in jars. Jars actually play an important role in the plot. So for a story involving jars, what else would you choose to call your main character, but Olive.

Olive is driven and optimistic in an aggressive greyscale world. Rather than sit around waiting

for bad things to happen, Olive goes out exploring; curiosity gets the better of her. She finds a mysterious underground storage facility headed up by a peculiar and very huggable guardian. This facility is where all lost things are stored. Pay attention to the labels on the cardboard boxes and you'll see many types of lost things. Some are physical objects: lost dolls, phones, coins, keys. Others are abstract concepts: lost loves, youth, faith, courage. And it's here that the story takes off. Olive realises that members of her family have lost some very important things, due to the inevitable process of ageing, or the stresses of everyday life. And now, Olive has the chance to bring some of those lost things back. And maybe in the process, she can bring some happiness and colour to the wider world."



This colourful and warm book is recommended for lower primary school children.



The Keepers: The Box and the Dragonfly
by Ted Sanders
Hot Key Books/ Five Mile Press Aus, 2015
pbk., 496pp., RRP \$16.95
ISBN 9781471403590

Reviewed by Susan Stephenson (The Book Chook)

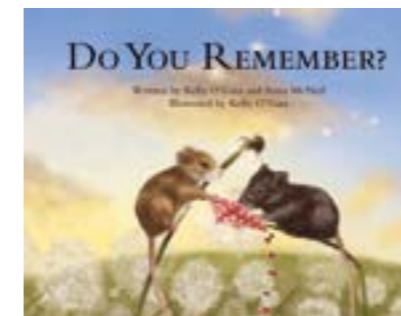
Reading Rocks

From the publisher:

From the moment Horace F. Andrews sees the sign from the bus—literally a sign with his name on it—everything in his normal little life changes. An encounter with the House of Answers, a magically hidden warehouse full of mysterious objects and even stranger people, only leads to more questions. These people think he's special—a Keeper of an incredible gift—although scientifically-minded Horace isn't so sure he really believes in that kind of thing. But then a confrontation with an impossibly tall, thin, creepy and undoubtedly menacing man makes him think twice...

Horace must now quickly begin to unravel the mysteries of this hidden world and his new gift, as he finds himself immersed in a battle between ancient forces, where the bad guys don't pull any punches, even the good guys have their flaws, and where friendship, loyalty and trust turn out to be the greatest powers of all.

I believe the very best kinds of children's books are those that are so well-written they are instrumental in kids becoming avid readers. Second on the "best books spectrum" (to me) is when I begin a children's or YA book because I suspect it may be brilliant, but completely forget about that because I am pulled into the story as an adult. Yes, this is a middle grade book and these are child characters but they are ones I could relate to. I loved the cast of quirky characters, I loved the puzzles to solve, I loved the intricately detailed world and I truly believe kids will too. I predict both boys and girls 10+ will grab this 500 page chapter book crammed with moments of scariness, humour, drama, and action, and enjoy Horace and Chloe's adventures as much as I did.



Do you remember?
by Kelly O'Gara and Anna McNeil
Wombat Books, 2015
hbk., 32pp., RRP \$A24.99
ISBN 9781925139242

Reviewed by Barbara Braxton

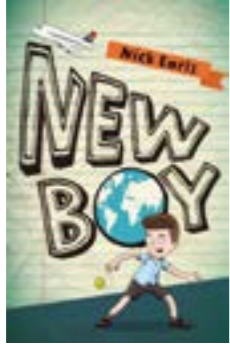
"Do you remember how much we loved each other?" is a strange way to start a story because you would think that two relatives talking to each other would not forget that. But it is the perfect beginning for this gentle, insightful reflection of that special relationship between grandparent and grandchild. Beautifully and softly illustrated using mice as characters, it explores a situation that so many of our students are facing as their grandparents and great-grandparents get older and forgetfulness and dementia start to take over.

"Do you remember when you started hiding things in strange places?" Do you remember when you flooded your house?" "Do you remember when you were cross?...You'd never spoken to me like that before. Did I do something wrong?" Such a common experience for so many, but this story has a beautiful twist. Because while Grandma Mouse can't remember, Grandchild Mouse can and so she starts to paint pictures of Grandma's stories so that even if Grandma has forgotten, the memories won't be lost entirely. As gradually the grandchild becomes the 'adult' it doesn't really matter that Grandma can't remember because they create new memories and the love that binds them together is the strongest memory of all.

When memory fades to the point where even a child is not recognised, it can be very confronting and difficult to cope with as an adult who understands what is happening on an intellectual level if not an emotional one. Thus it is even more difficult for a child who interprets the loss as personal rejection and banishment and even lack of love. *Sharing Do You Remember?* is a wonderful and useful way for a parent to help a child understand what is happening, what dementia is and how a child can interact with the sufferer. Little children often fear those who are ageing, especially when they have to move into assisted care and sometimes the visits stop and the relationship wanes, but this book, which also gives guidance for parents about how to handle the situation could be the pathway to keeping the love flowing. Helping our children understand by being upfront with them is the greatest gift we can give them and their grandparents.

Speaking from personal experience based on my own grandchildren and their Great Gran, O'Gara and McNeil have nailed it.

Book Reviews



New Boy
by Nick Earls
Puffin Imprint, 2015
pbk., 176pp., RRP \$14.99
ISBN 9780143308393

Reviewed by Sue Warren

Yes, it's true, Nick Earls is one of my very most favourite authors, no matter if it's kid lit or adult fiction. Aside from that, he is such a lovely human and very funny. When he graciously did a Q&A for my blog last year, one of the things we discussed was his arrival in Australia from Ireland as a child. Nick talked about the aspects that he found a little strange coming to a new country.

He has taken that personal experience and projected it into terms that children today can easily embrace through the story of one boy's experiences as a newly arrived immigrant from South Africa. Herschelle is a pretty typical boy who has left mates, sport, school and a fairly frightening environment behind when his family move to Brisbane. He soon realises despite his research of Australian slang and customs, in order to fit in, that he doesn't – at all.

With his ever present humour, Nick takes the reader on Herschelle's journey into acceptance via his struggle with bullying and racism. It is this humour that takes the edge off some pretty intense concepts and puts this in terms with which younger readers can readily identify from their own playground observations.

Along with his designated buddy Max (of whom Herschelle initially suspects total nerdism), Herschelle takes on the challenge of assimilating into his new surrounds and most notably his new school, One Mile State School. When the burgeoning friendship is jeopardised by Max's apparent collusion with the school bully, Lachlan, Herschelle is all the more convinced he will never become part of the Australian fabric. After the ongoing persecution from Lachlan comes to a head and the principal steps in, Herschelle realises

that racism is not manifested in just one way and that bullying can be invisible to others, as he finds out that Max has also suffered from Lachlan's intimidatory behaviour. The two boys are back on track and find themselves well placed to 'buddy' another 'new boy' when Roy arrives at the school. A refugee from South Sudan, Roy's experiences provide even more enlightening revelations to the two friends.

This is an important book to promote to your readers and with recent events like Refugee Week, would be a perfect vehicle to convey the important messages of acceptance and unity.



One True Thing
by Nicole Hayes
Random House Australia, 2015
pbk., 400pp., RRP \$19.99
ISBN 9780857986887

Reviewed by Sue Warren

With this second novel, Nicole Hayes has absolutely confirmed her talent as a quality writer for young adults. We are all too aware of the intense scrutiny under which our politicians are placed (and often, rightly so) and the accompanying media feeding frenzy which generally accompanies this scrutiny, but how often do we give thought to the effect this has on a public figure's family or children?

Hayes has taken this idea and crafted a stunning story revolving around Frankie (Francesca) Mulvaney-Webb, daughter of the Victorian Premier, Rowena, who has stepped up into that position and is now running for election to confirm her post.

Amid considerable antipathy from some quarters about having a female state leader, Rowena is subjected to a vilifying media campaign over her connection with an unknown young man. Woven into this storyline is Frankie's new friend (potential boyfriend), a dedicated amateur photographer. He has unwittingly provided the 'evidence' of this

Reading Rocks

questionable relationship. Her younger brother and father who, like the rest of the family struggle to cope with the glaring spotlight and open "slur" tactics; her rather eccentric Irish grandmother who appears to be keeping secrets; Frankie's Indie band and her relationships with her best friends all combine to impact on Frankie and her life in ways which would have many of us running for cover.

Despite her life seemingly going completely pear-shaped, Frankie demonstrates strength of character which is both admirable and inspirational. Strong female characters abound in this novel which makes it a must-read for young women as they also navigate their way through sometimes fraught teenage years.

For those looking for novels which also deal with gay issues, this is a worthy addition to your 'Rainbow' collection as Frankie also deals with the developing gay relationship between her two best friends. Her difficulties in adapting to being a 'third wheel' would easily apply to many other

circumstances and her struggle to bring herself to an acceptance with grace and warmth is a pattern for similar situations.

The novel also lends itself well to philosophical debates. For example, when does the political become personal? When is a secret not ours to share? How does a family demonstrate its unity in the face of overwhelmingly opposition? Loyalty, love and commitment to a cause, there is much to unravel in discussions arising from the reading of this novel. An amazing book which demands to be consumed immediately, I know I for one will follow Hayes' writing career with great interest.

Highly recommended for readers, particularly girls, from around 13 upwards.

Teaching notes can also be found at <http://www.randomhouse.com.au/content/teachers/onetruething.pdf>.

WASLA Recommends...

WOW Websites

Why the Smart Reading Device of the Future may be ... Paper

<http://www.wired.com/2014/05/reading-on-screen-versus-paper/>

IFLA 2015 School Library Guidelines

<http://www.ifla.org/publications/node/9512>

Year of the Learning Commons

<https://sites.google.com/site/yearofthelearningcommons/>

2015 American Assoc. of School Librarians (AASL) Best Apps...

www.ala.org/aasl/standard-guidelines/best-apps/2015

...AASL Best Websites

www.ala.org/aasl/standard-guidelines/best-websites/2015

Around the Blog-o-Sphere

Free Primary School PDFs for Teachers, Parents and Librarians

http://www.thebookchook.com/2015/05/a-list-of-free-pdfs-for-teachers.html?utm_content=bufferd9e3f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Enhancing the student digital experience

<http://judyconnell.com/2015/03/23/enhancing-the-student-digital-experience/>

Using Playfic to write interactive fiction

<http://infowhelm.blogspot.com.au/2015/06/using-playfic-to-write-interactive.html>

PD & Advocacy

Why Do We Need Teacher Librarians?

<http://blog.cue.org/why-do-we-need-teacher-librarians/>

Smash All The Gates, Part 2: Professional Silenc*

<https://laurenwallis.wordpress.com/2015/05/12/smash-all-the-gates-part-2-professional-silenc/>

The Essential Role of School Librarians

<http://publishingperspectives.com/2015/07/the-essential-role-of-school-librarians/>

NMC Horizon Report > 2015 K-12 Edition

<http://www.nmc.org/publication/nmc-horizon-report-2015-k-12-edition/>

Vibe Festival: a day of celebration and showcasing

Our school is a small, regional, co-educational boarding college with about 500 students from Early Learning 3 year olds to Year 12 (18 year olds) housed on two campuses: www.hamiltoncollege.vic.edu.au. We run our library as one service with two branches, using Oliver v3 (soon to upgrade to v5). There are two of us on staff, an assistant who works four days a week, and a qualified teacher-librarian who also teaches a class of VCE History Revolutions. Other teachers are also rostered to assist.

The VIBE Festival was designed by our Director of Community Relations (Jen Hutton), in conjunction with other key staff, as an enrolment initiative to encourage more students to join our Middle Years program. It was a whole day event, held on the Wednesday of the last week of Term 2, and focussed on students currently in years 5 – 7 (age range 10 to 13). Current students were involved instead of their usual timetabled classes and other regional students were invited to attend.

A wide-ranging program was set up, concentrating on using the facilities that the school has recently developed including a climbing wall in our Sports Centre, the large learning spaces in our new Middle Years Positive Education Centre, our wonderful Music and Performing Arts centre, our relatively new Science Centre and our recently renovated Arts building.

Our library (an older space) was not part of the original program, to avoid disrupting senior students' study. Once I realised the Festival was happening, and knowing that some of the resources we offer are unique in our region, I checked the booking requests. Fortunately, there were no classes booked, and few private study students visit us on Wednesday mornings. So I volunteered our spaces and our expertise to run a Treasure Hunt.

My Assistant, Mrs Sue Smith, and I brainstormed all the things we felt should be showcased, and then planned ways in which this could be achieved. Our list included 3D printing (we have

What is Happening

two printers); 3Doodling (we own two pens and have a stock of filament); puzzles (we have a number of different games and jigsaws); our interactive whiteboard (generally a teacher-driven tool in most classrooms); our "collaborative cube" (a four sided whiteboard built on an old TV trolley with wheels) and, of course, books.

We connected the list of resources to the theme of treasure. We arranged with the Head of Information Technology to have a rock scanned, and experimented with sizes to print in yellow filament through the bigger of our 3D printers. On the day students were fascinated by watching another rock print and holding those that had been prepared earlier.

We set up our 3Doodler pens. We bought a few bags of gold "coins" from the local cheap shop. We spray painted some real rocks with gold paint. We linked to bushrangers, pirates, inventions, art work and Australian Aborigines through creating activities and displaying relevant books near each of the activities.



As each student entered the space, they were given a plastic pocket containing a Treasure Map, a sheet to record the activities they chose to spend time on, a pencil and a bookmark which had the school logo, our blog address and a foil textured owl sticker on it. (Our College badge is an owl and our motto is "Knowledge and Wisdom").

The preparation took time, and some things did not work out as expected; other activities, such as the Sphero challenge and the Makey-Makey Pong

Around our School Libraries



game, were provided by our wonderful IT team, who share our building. As well as frustrating, frenetic and full-on, it was fantastic, energising and incredibly well received. We ran two sessions and had 53 students sign up – many of whom do not currently attend our school. Our colleagues were surprised at the popularity and our Principal astounded at the vibrancy he observed. Feedback from parents has been amazing.

The message we would like to share with library staff everywhere is the incredible value of getting involved with school-wide initiatives. We took the concepts of positive Involvement Buzzing Engagement, developed for marketing our school, and converted them to meet our own ends: **Vital, Information, Books and Equipment!** In terms of advocacy in our learning community, we really struck gold!

You can see more at our blog: <https://winifredberrylibrary.wordpress.com/2015/06/16/vibe-festival/>. Feel free to email me for more information on any aspect mentioned here: msimkin@hamiltoncollege.vic.edu.au, or connect through Twitter @margaretsimkin, or LinkedIn.

Margaret Simkin
Head of Information Services
The Hamilton and Alexandra College

Learning Plaza at St. Brigid's College - A space for creative thinking

Libraries and the role of librarians continue to change as we move into a digital world. It could be argued that access to digital information has not been equated with the school library. Libraries historically were a portal to knowledge through the print texts, but we now see shifts in how students consume knowledge and IT largely influences this shift.

Therefore libraries need to reinvent their space to remain relevant. What a library might be is still a fuzzy area. I have visited a number of school and public libraries and I find it somewhat sad to see large open spaces with portals to IT. It is not that I am resistive to the move into texts online, but I feel that there is a role for the space and the book to play in our world.

Therefore in our Learning Plaza (library) we have kept many of our shelves with a focus on fiction as a print text and we are now moving towards all our non-fiction materials being databases. We believe that books provide students with a different reading experience that is both tactile and more easily navigated. A book takes a student away from the computer and into a different world of reading. So our fiction texts stay. The novel is still very much prized in our school.

When coming into our Learning Plaza (library) in the beginning of 2013, I was struck by the size of the space. I considered how this space might be best utilised. Over a period of two years the Learning Plaza has taken on the role of being a venue, a type of mobile space. It made sense that the space became fluid or mobile. All our shelves are on wheels and easily moved around the large area. This means that it is easy for us to move shelves and be able to accommodate 150 -180 students in the Learning Plaza for guest authors, speakers, workshops, expos, exhibitions including Personal Project and Grade 5 Exhibitions, artists, lunch time and recess activities spaces and many other guests or workshops.

This has helped us reinvent our space as not simply a portal of knowledge but a genuine hands-on learning environment that is forever changing. One teacher said to me; "I always like coming into this space it is always so different every time I come here; it changes and reminds me of a chameleon".

**Laraine Reason – Curriculum Team Leader
Learning Plaza
St Brigid's College**



What is Happening

The Right to Choose: Year 7 and 8 Book Club

When I started working at Haileybury Castlefield in 2012, Book Club was part of the curriculum and involved a very labour intensive process of asking more than 300 students to nominate three books they wanted to read in order of preference, from a pool of about 100 titles divided into "girls" books and "boys" books. Students who chose the same book were put into groups together and then at a nominated time late in the term the groups met informally and discussed the book they had all read. Discussion was driven by prompts put together by the Head of English.

There were no measurable outcomes, despite the fact that it was written into the curriculum; the students (and staff) were disengaged with the titles available, and by 2013 there was talk of abandoning Book Club all together. I was asked for suggestions about how to rejuvenate Book Club. My first piece of advice? Don't make the students all read the same book in their groups. Let the kids choose whatever they want to read in a given genre, as long as they borrow it from the Library (statistics!). After 18 months of trying variations on the existing formula, the decision was made to allow me to run Book Club using a genre-based model, beginning in Term One, 2015. This article details how Book Club 2015 was set up, and how it has run for the past two terms. It is still a work in progress, but we are learning new things all the time and making improvements as we go.

October 2014 to January 2015

The decision was made to go with a genre-based model for Book Club. I began work on eleven genre lists:

- Adventure Fiction
- Biography & True Stories
- Family & Relationship Fiction
- Fantasy Fiction
- Friendship Fiction
- Historical Fiction
- Humour Fiction
- Mystery and Suspense Fiction
- School Fiction

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- Science Fiction
- Sport Fiction



The aim was to find at least 100 titles for each genre list, with a preference for Australian literature, the more recent, the better. Some of these genres proved to be more challenging than others, there are not as many novels for older readers based around sport as one might think. However, I managed to hit or surpass that target for most genres. These lists were designed to be a starting point for the students, particularly those who might be assigned a genre they had not read before. If students thought creatively about the genres and found titles that I thought fitted the genre, they read them. Each home room was assigned two genres for the term from which to make their selection. Teachers were sent copies of the genre lists to share with their class, so the students could think about what to borrow when they arrived in the Library. Staff could read any book that fitted the genre, from the YA collection.

In conjunction with Book Club, students would be participating in an initiative to maintain their interest and encourage regular reading. TRED (Try Reading Every Day) was the motto: "Go where others fear to TRED" was the suggestion on the posters sent out to the home rooms. Each home room was challenged to read 4 million words in their Book Club choices across the three terms. The winning home room will win a pizza party in the Library during Term Four and will each get to

choose a book to place into the Library collection, with their name on a bookplate indicating they were in the winning class for 2015. The word count would be handled by me, using the Accelerated Reader website and, when the book did not appear there, a predetermined formula to calculate the word count of a book.



Posters promoting each genre were created, as well as genre bookmarks showing the upcoming Book Club date and suggesting things to think about as students and staff read their books.

February to March 2015: Term One Book Club

Week two of Term One was insanely busy. There were seven girls' home rooms and ten boys' home rooms to borrow books for Book Club. Each class booked time in the Library to make selections, but the idea of spending even half a lesson (about 25 minutes) choosing books was considered "time-wasting" so I had to come up with ways to streamline the process. This basically involved me having 7 or 8 examples for each class, two genres ready to show students, along with copies of the lists they could take with them to the shelves. I gave a 30-second summary of each book so they had a taste of what each one was about. I was acutely aware of the "gatekeeper" issues involved with this process, so I made sure I chose books that I felt had been "buried" in the collection and used it as an opportunity to highlight them for the students. By the time the selection phase was completed, students were coming in during their 15 minute home room sessions and leaving with their books, posters and bookmarks. It was a

valuable lesson to learn and one that served us well for Term Two.



At this stage Katie (Head of English) and James (Head of Middle School Curriculum) were still focussed on a tangible outcome for Book Club, so they set a task for the students to complete during the 50 minute period that Book Club would run. This changed the focus of Book Club from a discussion-based activity to a task-based one and it was not successful.

A survey, put together using Survey Monkey, was run and sent to random students and staff to see what they thought about the new Book Club. Whilst the reaction to being able to choose their own books was positive, the overwhelming message was that the task set (creating a 5 minute book trailer using iMovie) was far too onerous and detracted from the enjoyment the student might have had reading their books. Staff also indicated that there was not enough scaffolding for them to run the sessions (not all of them are English teachers and felt at a disadvantage). These comments were taken on board and Katie, James and I met to work out what to keep and what to change.

One huge positive was the reaction to the 4 Million Word Challenge. This was definitely something both staff and students were on-board with and in Term One more than 20 million words were read by Year 7 and 8 for Book Club. The gauntlet was thrown down and the boys, in particular, rallied to the call to get their class in front.

HOMEROOM	T1	T2	T3	TOTAL
7.3	1431712	1666752		3098464
8.3	1310032	1502668		2812700
8.5	1084333	1653865		2738198
8B	1132278	1427360		2559638
7D	1583283	959443		2542726
8.2	1296852	1193698		2490550
8.4	1191016	1216186		2407202
7C	1152346	1194067		2346413
7.5	1198921	1025132		2224053
8.1	834484	1388536		2223020
7.1	832183	1355374		2187557
8C	933856	1252889		2186745
7A	1039200	1092813		2132013
7.2	849398	1281421		2130819
7.4	1228051	863453		2091504
8A	843068	1233181		2076249
7B	903660	1012438		1916098
Total Words Read:				40163949

The other thing that happened was less able to be measured, but even more significant. A Year 8 boy came to the Library to speak to me. He showed me the copy of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* that he had selected for Book Club that term and said he wanted another book.

“Are you not enjoying that one?” I asked.

“No, I’ve finished it. Do you have any more like it?”

“Sure!” I replied with a huge smile on my face.

“I usually read non-fiction – I’m more of a statistics kind of guy,” he told me. “I never knew fiction could be this emotional.”

Music to my ears. This young man and I then proceeded to have a 10 minute discussion of his likes and dislikes and I gave him *Butter* by Erin



ANZAC Project and Author Visit at Ocean Reef SHS

During Term Two, Norman Jorgensen, author of *Jack’s Island*, visited our library to discuss with the Senior Extension and Challenge students (SEAC) their ANZAC project competition entry and their planned excursion to Rottnest Island. This excursion was suggested by the school librarian, Sarah Betteridge, as a follow up to their study of *Jack’s Island*, set on Rottnest Island during WW2. In early May, Norman accompanied about fifty SEAC students, Matt the Chaplain, Mrs Debra Unwin (SEAC teacher) and Sarah on their excursion to Rottnest.

Norman took us on a tour of Rottnest, visiting various scenes from the book and reading excerpts to the students, explaining the scenes, characters and historical settings. Some of the places visited and discussed were the lighthouse (the scene of the hill trolley race), the church, the schoolhouse and the Kingston Barracks (dance scene). The Rottnest trip was a definite highlight for the SEAC students and staff alike and brought to life conditions during WW2 and the settings of *Jack’s Island*.

Sarah Betteridge



Norman Jorgensen, Mrs Debra Unwin, Yr 9 SEAC students

Lange and *The Interrogation of Ashala Wolf* by Ambelin Kwaymullina. He has since devoured those, and his class is now, at the end of Term Two, running second in the 4 Million Word Challenge. This was the kind of good news story the Club needed. More followed. The Year 7 boy who had never read fantasy before and read through the entire *Mortal Instruments* series in five weeks; the Year 7 girl who had never tried suspense before and is pressing me almost every week to find her something else. The Year 8 boy who had no interest in reading at all until he read a “true story” fiction book (*The Gallipoli Story* by Patrick Carlyon) and is currently working his way through things like the *Through My Eyes* series, as well as biographies.

Castlefield Book Club has just completed its second term and the students’ total word count, has passed 40 million. The leading class has now read over 3 million words for this term. Reports back from teachers in the Term Two sessions have been more positive – with more guidelines in place the sessions ran better, and the students enjoyed it more. And we also had a few entries for the “redesign the cover” competition we ran as an optional extra. It is also being run across the other two middle school campuses at Haileybury. As yet no feedback is available.

July to September 2015

In planning for next term’s Club, the last for the year, we are looking at ways to engage the students even more, perhaps with a book-tubing option or short 30 second iMovie using photographs to describe the plot or how the book made them feel. It is an organic and flexible format that may loosen up even more, depending on what is decided by Katie and James - after all, I just handle the back-end. They run the show. Either way, the library’s borrowing stats are up, students’ interest in genre is on the rise and the Year 5 and 6 students are about to embark on their own 4 Million Word Challenge for the term – run by me. The right to choose what to read works, just give the kids a chance to do it.

Sue Osborne AALIA
Head of Library
Haileybury, Brighton

WAYBRA Displays



Oean Reef SHS



Kennedy Baptist College



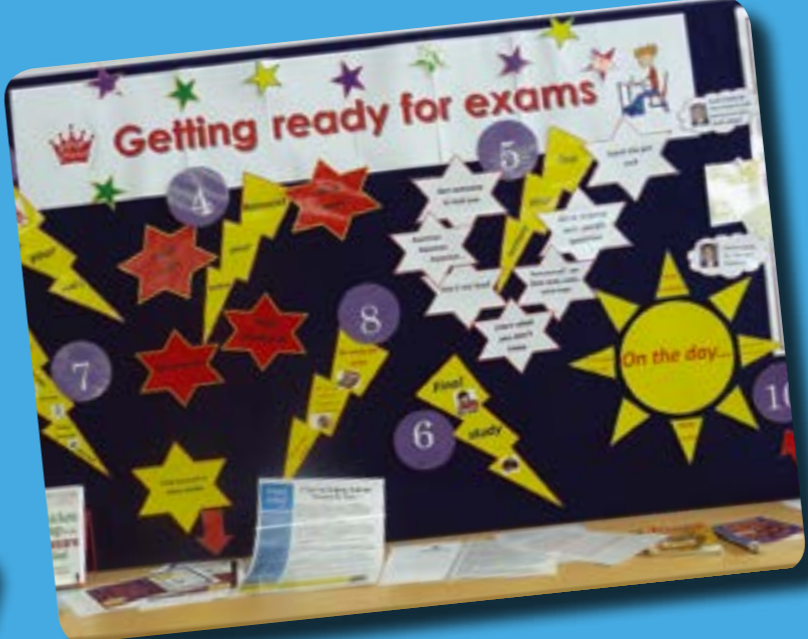
Book Club Plus More...

Each Tuesday after school between 20 and 30 avid readers (between years seven to eleven) meet in our Research and Study Centre for our book club. After a milo and oreo we have a chat about what we are reading and then do something different each week which we all participate in such as discussing series we love, doing black-out poetry, engaging in genre wars, reading and once a term playing quidditch. Here's some photos of our most recent quidditch match – we all love it – having a real hoot out on the soccer field running around on broomsticks – what's not to love?

And... We recently did an ongoing display for exams. Each day we added to it as it was a countdown to the exams. We also asked students to contribute their own ideas via sticky notes to the display (one of which said "Don't cry")

At lunchtime we have added colouring-in to the game activities at lunchtime and it has proved very successful. While the colouring-in is happening our teddy bears are reading away!!

Virginia Yurisich
Teacher Librarian
Research and Study Centre



Santa Maria College



Birds of a Feather PD

What is Happening Around our Libraries?

Pattie Talks Books in the St Mary's Senior Library

On Friday May 1, Pattie from Dymocks at Karrinyup Shopping Centre visited the library at lunchtime to talk about the latest releases and her favourite young adult fiction titles. We had 120 girls attend the event listening to the enthusiastic promotions of each book and a variety of authors.

The girls then had the opportunity to select titles for our library collection and to ask Pattie questions. After a big round of applause the girls requested that Pattie return in third term with some of the upcoming new releases. It was a very popular and exciting event in the library and we thank Dymocks for providing us with the opportunity to hear Pattie promote books and reading for pleasure.

Each semester our top three borrowers from each year group are taken up to Karrinyup Shopping Centre to select books for our collection. This is a great way of motivating our students as word gets around that it is a fun morning excursion. Last year, as we visited the book stores, we were spoken to by Pattie at Dymocks and after her inspirational talk the girls requested that she come to the school.

We hope to make this an ongoing event in the library.

Jo Pengelley
Teacher Librarian
St. Mary's Anglican Girls' School



Library Officer's Big Day Out

In 2009, I held the first Library Officer's Big Day Out at Wyalkatchem District High School. It was very well received and was followed by a second one in 2010 which was also very popular. However, life got busy and, for one reason or another, I just didn't get around to organising a third. With the support of my Principal, an event was organised on May 25th. After a round of emails, plus a little word of mouth advertising, I had a list of twenty Library Officers from around the wheat belt area and two from Perth who would all be heading to Wylie for the day.

Farralee Clark from Merredin started the day rolling in great spirit with her often entertaining explanation of how three libraries became one with the opening of Merredin College. A huge task which is still ongoing for Farralee and her co-Library Officers.

Mel Wahlsten, also from Merredin, then told us about the two children's books that she and her mother, Di Mastores, have written, illustrated and self published. Mel even read one of the books to us. *The Wind Farm* and *The Wheat Farm* would make great additions to your library shelves. Contact them at meldipub@gmail.com for more information.

Next up Louise Moore from Marangaroo Primary School told us about what she had learnt at a recent finance PD and Andrea Bear from Wongan Hills District High School filled us in on the Kevin Hennah PD she'd attended. Wyalkatchem District High School teacher, Taraeta Nicholls came in on her day off to give us an interesting presentation



What is Happening Around our Libraries?

on using technology in the library and she got us all motivated to try new things.

We ended the day in a circle discussing anything and everything, mostly library related! By the end of the day people left promising that they'll be here in Wylie again around the same time next year! If you are interested in attending next year's event you can email me on wendy.chapman@education.wa.edu.au and I'll make sure you get on the mailing list.

Wendy Chapman
Wyalkatchem District High School

Making the most of your Book Fair

I have just held my fourth Scholastic Book Fair and WOW! What a success! We are a K-6 school and have around 420 students. We sold just shy of \$6700 at this last Fair which blitzed last year's sales total by over \$800! My consultant is continually surprised with our sales and is always asking "So, what are you doing to get such good numbers?"

At first my response was "Um, I don't know..." But after discovering that not every school is making such good numbers, I really got thinking seriously about the answer. Is it all just about decking the library out with amazing decorations? Definitely not. My last two Fairs, I went all out. Our library got slimed for the Story Laboratory Book Fair and during last year's Book Fair Garden, our library reminded me of Mr McGregor's garden. Sadly, this year I didn't have the time to decorate. Sure, the decorations elicit some oohs and aahs, but I'm positive they don't result in more sales.



I think it's important to focus on the Fair BEFORE the event. And it doesn't take a lot of effort to promote it. I usually put a little snippet in the school newsletter and it gets mentioned at the school assembly. You could even get some of the older students to do this.

During the week leading up to Book Fair, I always promote the titles that will be coming. I show the Book Talks that are found in your Book Fair Online page. You can also ask your consultant to send you out the Book Talk pack. This consists of a box of books that will be included in your Book Fair. They then just get added to the Book Fair when it arrives. I received this for the first time this year and it complemented the Book Talk videos nicely. I also gave the students the catalogue to browse and get excited over all the inclusions. While you're doing all this, find out which books the kids are most excited about. Ask your consultant to include extra copies of the most popular titles to minimise re-orders (and no doubt boost the sales as some families may be reluctant to re-order).

Signage will also help to promote your Book Fair. I'm very lucky that our school's library is smack bang in the middle of the school. This no doubt brings in people passing through the school who realise something interesting is happening in the library."

Our 2013 Story Laboratory Fair was the first time I ran the Classroom Wish List program. Not having run it before, I had no idea how it was going to be received. But by pumping it up during the Fair, I managed to boost sales by over \$500. Our P&F got on board this year, spending over \$500 and donating two books to every classroom. You can also ask your consultant to send out the Classroom Wish List kit which includes a poster on which to attach envelopes for your classes, photocopyable donation slips and book plate stickers to insert into the donated books. I ran the program twice using only the resources on the Book Fair Online page and, trust me, it's much less work with the Scholastic kit!

Libby Iriks
Teacher Librarian
St Vincent's Primary School

"This article was first published on Libby's blog: <https://truebluelibrarian.wordpress.com/2015/07/01/making-the-most-of-your-book-fair/>

WASLA Events

Birds of a Feather PD

In May, WASLA held its now annual and popular professional learning half day event with over 70 participants attending. This PD is designed to be a practical sharing experience, where it is possible to pick up tips from other schools and library professionals.

The first half of the morning was an ideas sharing session and the topics covered included how to set-up a successful book club, study skills programs, visible thinking strategies, helping overseas schools with creating a functioning library, using social media for Professional Learning, Year 7 transition skills programs, Libguides, an exemplar model for teaching students referencing and a SCIS update.

After morning tea, participants were involved in two hands-on workshops. Jennifer Lightfoot showed us various makerspace electronic kits, which we all got to play around with. It was interesting observing how adults interacted with this foreign technology. Some were nervous and reluctant, whilst others jumped in with eagerness. By the end of the session, I think that most of us felt more comfortable tinkering and playing with electronics.

Barbara Combes took a useful session on how to make life easier in the library. She supplied all participants with an USB drive full of templates, such as newsletters and various library policies that can be badged to your library. This is a great way to save time and to help those people who have little experience and help with promoting the library within your school.

You can find all these resources within the members only section of the WASLA website. Many thanks to all the people who presented and shared their knowledge with their colleagues. Please think about sharing your ideas with us in 2016. Below is some of the feedback given:

"Good to catch up with professional colleagues and learn new ideas."

"This was great. Short sharp session on library related issues is a good way of quickly getting your message across."

"Barbara Combes USB of templates - PRICELESS!"

"Fantastic opportunity to network with others and find out what is happening in the library world."

"Thank you so much for organising another worthwhile, stimulating, interesting, varied half day PD. I enjoyed last year's and wasn't disappointed this year!!"

Natasha Georgiou

Thoughts from the Library Officer's Desk

Welcome back! As some of you may know one of the projects I have been working on recently has been on the committee for the upcoming WASLA Library Conference. This has given me the opportunity to speak to a number of Library Officers and one of the most frequently asked questions I have been asked has been "What has happened to the Library Officer Day?"

Here is the answer – After last year's LO Day the committee had a discussion about the positives and negatives of the PD (this is done after all PD or PL opportunities). One of the observations was that the traditional LO Day model had become a bit tired and jaded. Val Baird, a passionate Library Officer advocate, who most of you would know, suggested that we offer something new. I for one have to admit that I only attended the LO Day every two years as the program topics were similar each year. After a lot of discussion it was decided to offer Library Officers sessions at the Conference.

As a new committee member this year, I have watched with interest the process involved in planning a Professional Development Conference on this scale. Believe me it is a lot of work (and all done by volunteers). Deciding on the guest speakers and the program itself is by far the issue that causes the most discussion. Let me reassure you that the committee has worked very hard to ensure that there are many opportunities for Library Officers to extend their knowledge at the upcoming conference. We have planned sessions for all experience levels and Library Officers are welcome to attend sessions recommended for TLs or Library Techs if that is where your interest is.

WASLA is about all library professionals and we welcome all feedback – positive and negative. Come along to the Conference and let us know if you found it useful to you. The Conference format is a trial this year and the committee will revisit its decision at the conclusion of the conference. If you have not registered yet please visit the WASLA website and follow the links:

<http://www.wasla.asn.au/waslastateconference2015/>

I am looking forward to meeting you all soon!!!

Hanneke Van Noort

This is Toot.

