



Suncoast Christian College Submission for the Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher-Librarians

Suncoast Christian College is a P – 12 co educational College situated at Woombye on the Sunshine Coast, Qld. The College has been operating for 30 years and has employed the services of a Teacher Librarian for the majority of that time either in a full time or part time capacity.

Current staffing arrangements are as follows:

- Head of Information Services - Teacher Librarian – full time
- Primary Teacher Librarian - .4
- Junior Primary Literacy program – Teacher - .2
- Support staff – 2 full time equivalent

Library operating hours are 8.15 – 4.30 most days.

The Library occupies a unique place within our school community. Working across all year levels and all subject areas, it underpins and supports the learning process in a multitude of ways. It also serves as a gatekeeper, upholding through its selection policy, the Christian standards and values set by the College.

Historically, the Teacher Librarian has been at the forefront and in many instances, the instigator of important changes within the learning process at Suncoast. The introduction of Resourced Based Learning, Information Literacy, Lifelong Learning and more recently Guided Inquiry has all been library driven.

Information technology in all its guises has drastically changed the way knowledge is accessed, processed, transformed and shared. These technologies have also brought with them major social and cultural shifts. Yet again, the school library has found itself at the forefront of this change as the traditional library model morphs to acknowledge and accommodate this cultural shift.

However whilst the outworking of the library may change the underlying vision remains the same.

The Suncoast Christian Library has:

- A culture of, and an enthusiasm for, continual improvement
- A strong awareness of the external environment
- High sensitivity to the preferences of key stakeholders
- Coherent but flexible planning

- Recognition of expert knowledge held by teachers
- A readiness to innovate, treating mistakes as opportunities for learning (Hargreaves, D. 1999)

A culture of, and an enthusiasm for, continual improvement is vital if the Library is to take advantage of the opportunities offered by new technologies and pedagogies. Free from the daily requirements of a classroom, Teacher Librarians are ideally positioned to explore possibilities and present their findings to busy teachers. We continually look for better ways to support and service the educational process by attending quality professional development in-service.

A strong awareness of the external environment allows us to stay in touch with and respond to the needs of the College. The Library has a “bird’s eye’ view of the College due to its involvement with every class P – 12 across every subject thus enabling a holistic approach to be taken in regard to curriculum and standards.

High sensitivity to the preferences of key stakeholders whether they are teaching staff, administration, students or parents, ensures that the Library remains a relevant and integral part of the educational and cultural fabric of the College. Awareness of preferences is achieved through meaningful communication with the stakeholders and participation in planning sessions.

Coherent but flexible planning across the curriculum results in a consistent and productive implementation of information literacy, allowing students to gain deeper understandings of subject area curriculum content and information literacy concepts. Identifying “zones of intervention” and working with teachers within these zones results in information skills being taught consistently and in context.

Recognition of expert knowledge held by teachers forms a working relationship with teaching staff who remain the drivers of a research task. However the input of the library staff within their own area of expertise contributes greatly to the effectiveness of the task.

A readiness to innovate, treating mistakes as opportunities for learning is an essential quality for any educator in any field but more so for those who work hand in hand with the emerging Web 2.0 technologies. The Library continues to explore these technologies to identify and implement those that have educational application.

Our College Library does not produce an educational product as such that can be assessed, graded or marketed readily. Neither does it fit squarely within the service model as represented by the Business Office, Canteen and Maintenance. Neither is it owned by any one school, department or subject area.

The question then arises as how to evaluate the effectiveness of the Library and its various operations. Just as the “proof of the pudding is in the eating” then the proof of the effectiveness of the Library is in the evidence of its impact within the College community.

At Suncoast, the Library is a place where:

- Teacher librarians believe in the significance of their role
- Library staff perform as a highly effective team
- Library staff believe that the student is the primary reason for being there
- Teachers find support and collaborate with the Library
- Programmes are delivered that inspire and educate students
- Administration values the contribution made to the College by the Library

- Teachers' expertise about information literacy and guided inquiry is enhanced
- Rich tasks are created
- Deep learning is supported by Teacher-Librarians
- Teacher-librarians assist with the provision of curriculum and pedagogy in the classroom
- Valid conversations about good literature are held
- Responses/ forums about new books and information are found
- Enthusiastic readers are encouraged through programs such as Reader's Cup and Wide Reading initiatives
- Reluctant readers are encouraged through literature promotion and discussion
- Readers and writers are inspired through author visits
- Students plan search strategies
- Students learn to be discerning about their information sources
- Students learn to question and analyse content without copying
- Students are trained to be responsible users of another's intellectual property
- Students develop the skills to transfer information literacy skills to another inquiry
- Students are actively engaged and on task during their time in the Library
- Spaces are in use for most of the time
- The environment is welcoming and inviting
- Resources can be found in any format and of the highest quality and relevance
- Students come to recreate during breaks and after school

Reference List

Hargreaves, D. 1999, 'Revitalising Educational Research: Lessons from the Past and Proposals for the Future' *The Cambridge Journal of Education*, 29 (2) pp.242-260