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Collected

Blue sky thinking

What it means to our 2013 conference keynote speakers, and contributors from across the New Zealand library community:

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Editorial

By Senga White

Reserve your seats for this issue of Collected. Prepare to be challenged, have your paradigm shifted or even have your current thinking validated as you read the stellar articles from both national and international educators.

It is refreshing to have the importance of librarianship in schools highlighted and acknowledged by those not working within the boundaries of a physical library but who can nonetheless see the endless potential and value of a well-run, fully staffed and adequately resourced school library.

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading the diverse articles that make up this issue and it seems fitting to be looking at the beautiful Southern blue skies as I write this editorial.

So what do we do with all these exciting new ideas or the rekindling of old ideas right at the end of the working year? For me, each January I take stock. After reflecting on the successes and challenges of the year just been, I look at the fresh, shiny-bright new year stretching enticingly ahead and then I commit my goals to paper. This usually happens immediately after, or even during a lovely long lunch and a glass of wine in the sunshine with one of my flockmates, who just happens to have a birthday around this time so we always get together to celebrate. The brainstorming is always so much richer when shared with a kindred spirit. I highly recommend it!

You will find much food for thought for your own summer lunch brainstorming sessions in Collected. For an entrée you could begin with SLANZA Conference keynote speaker Erica McWilliams' blue-sky musings around librarians and teachers collaboratively educating the up and coming thinkers of tomorrow, or maybe you would prefer to begin with National Librarian Bill Macnaught giving us a taste of the new, dynamic and exciting look of reading in New Zealand that's just around the corner. Your main course could include the second of our keynote speakers' offerings, the inimitable Tara Brabazon expounds her thoughts on how do you know what you do not know; or maybe you could choose Desna Wallace's heart-felt book club chronicle that made it all the way from Christchurch to the Guardian in the UK (Keep a tissue handy for this one guys). Your dessert could be made up of a taste of our third keynote speaker Susan Sandretto's vision for the dissemination of multi-literacies in our schools or of SLANZA President Fiona Mackie's "I have a dream" composition.

But these menu choices are just to whet your appetites for the full array of specialities offered. And fortunately the only real choice you have to make is which delightful morsel you will consume first!

Finally, on behalf of the Collected team of Miriam Tuohy, Lisa Salter and myself, I wish each and every one of you well for the end of the school year. I hope you get the chance to do something you love, or spend time with the ones you love over this summer break and that you are refreshed and renewed for 2013 by some blue sky thinking and dreaming.

Senga White - Editor

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[So simple ! / Si simple !](#)

By Paul Falardeau

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I HAVE A DREAM

that every school has a **fabulous library**, with a range of **flexible** spaces for a wide variety of activities - reading, researching, learning, enjoying, thinking, **dreaming**, collaborating, creating, reflecting, engaging...

that our students find their library to be a warm, **inviting** place where they are welcomed, staff are interested in them as *readers* and *learners*, and their needs are met

each library has a **budget** that enables staff to develop collections, resources and programmes that **engage** and **create readers** across the school community

every school library is staffed with **qualified librarians** who are addicted to sharing their **passion** and **knowledge** with staff and students

that **everyone** who works in school libraries works closely with teaching staff to **support inquiry** programmes in all curriculum areas and at all levels

that we can **organise** all types of **information** in a way our students can **navigate** easily, and they can **find** what they need, when they need it, or know that there is always **someone to help them** find what they need

that we can stock our libraries with a truly diverse range of resources and **our students can see themselves** in the collections we develop, both hard copy and electronic

school leaders understand the vital importance of the range of literacies our students need and **the role that library staff can play** in helping our students master these literacies

I have a **dream** that I'm trying to make **come true**

DO YOU?

A blue sky response

If time, money and resources were no object

by Erica McWilliam, Adjunct Professor, ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, Queensland University of Technology

If time, money and resources were no object ... what would be the first thing you'd do in your library or influence in your professional role?

As background to my blue sky musing, I want to begin by sketching out *four assumptions* that underpin my understanding of the nature and purposes of school-based learning in this decade and beyond:

1. That value-adding learning environments will continue to become more digitally resourced, more networked, more self-directed, more software mediated, more open and more accessible.
2. That the data transformations shaping our world make it impossible to teach young people all they will need to know, and so the focus of schooling needs to be less on content coverage and memorisation and more on building students' capacity to engage meaningfully and ethically with a world replete with uncertain data and unfamiliar concepts and processes.
3. That the young people who can thrive in such environments are those for whom learning has become personally significant, those who have learned the pleasure and the demands of self-managing their learning, rather than those who see learning as something that is done merely to pass exams or to meet the demands of teachers, administrators or parents.
4. That the teachers and librarians who are most effective in these times are those who have built strong repertoires for supporting 'low threat, high challenge' learning.

In light of the above, I'd make my 'blue sky' move to blur the current distinction in schools between library staff and teaching staff. Both professional groups would be engaged in both domains, so much so that the distinction between their professional roles would be increasingly hard to discern. The user-oriented service culture of libraries would permeate the supply and demand culture of classrooms, and the discipline-specific passions and pedagogies of teachers would become resources for adding value to libraries.

It follows that the distinction between Head of the Library and Head of the School would disappear. The office of the new Head, the Leader of Learning, would be re-located to a central place in the library-as-learning hub, which would itself be re-located and expanded to embrace and reconfigure the surrounding industrial classrooms. In this way, everyone would be implicated in building and maintaining a learning culture, not just a 'coverage' culture.

This would have profound ramifications for pre-service and in-service teacher education, and not before time. Despite all that we know about the importance of teaching quality to young people's learning, and despite all the reviews of teacher education, and all the promises about its

reinvigoration, initial teacher education has resisted any and all attempts at real reform. I am increasingly unconvinced of the will of universities to radically rework the current models – the internal politics are too complex, with so many faculties having a stake in their piece of the funding. But let's pretend, for the sake of keeping the sky cloudlessly blue, that:

- universities would welcome a model of teacher education that is genuinely focused on teachers' capacity to build a culture of meaningful learning in schools, and that
- unions and accreditation agencies would welcome more relevant and innovative models of professional learning, and that
- governments would be keen to generously fund such schemes in the national interest.

(Already, despite my best efforts at denial, I see storm clouds gathering on the horizon!)

A teaching qualification would involve engaging with cutting edge practice not just in formal learning environments but also in libraries, art galleries, museums and IT specialists in a range of cultural settings, on and off-line, in order to bring fresh user-led thinking to pedagogical work. The core business of all school staff would be on building student capacity for moving seamlessly across disparate knowledge domains in ways that make for better living, learning and earning. Curriculum and pedagogy would be focused on improving students' ability to select, re-shuffle, combine, or synthesise already existing facts, ideas, and skills in original ways through skills like pattern recognition, creation of analogies and mental models, the ability to cross domains, the exploration of alternatives, knowledge of schema for problem-solving and fluency of thought.

School staff, as learning directors and supporters, would continue to build their own epistemological agility, as schools abandon the idea of one-teacher-one-classroom and build organisational systems based on dynamic teaming. This would usher in a 'post-Gulliver' teaching culture, where individual teachers no longer go like Gulliver among the little people – *my students, my classroom, my subject* – but move more dynamically to optimise the value of their skills across the entire community. All staff would have core responsibilities, but they would not be de-limited by the walls of one classroom or the one group of students or the one year level. The de-privatising of classroom teaching would see teams of teachers working with groups of children, who would also be de-coupled from lock-step learning in age 'batches'. It would be normal for students to accelerate in their learning and make choices about their learning that reflected their interests and capacities rather than their age and the age-related requirements of a national curriculum.

Needless to say, external testing based on 'national standards' would give way to site-specific feedback loops for evaluating and then improving the outcomes of learning. Young people would have a language for speaking their own learning processes and the on-line technology for monitoring their own learning journey. They would be able to use such personally maintained and edited profiles to lead parent-teacher-student meetings and to explain the significance of their learning to others.

Phew! I am pausing to look back at the wish-list I have created in a few minutes of writing, in the realisation that I was asked to elaborate on 'the first thing I'd do'. So hard to stop once the 'what if' juices begin to flow. But I will exercise some self-discipline at this point and see if I can get back to the matter of 'blurring professional distinctions'. In a sense, we could argue that the term 'teacher-librarian' does this work already – that people who are named thus usually have both a teaching degree and a library qualification. So a hybrid already exists – the challenge is to expand its possibilities, and I think there are ways to do this by looking to the history of *lifelong learning* rather than the history of *schools*.

I have written elsewhere about the importance of remembering that the antecedents of self-selected, self-managed learning are to be found in Western café culture (see McWilliam, 2011). In centuries past, the café or coffee house provided a convivial space in which sociability, learning and public display came together. Many European cafés, in Paris, Prague, Amsterdam, London and so on, gained reputations as lively social hubs where discussions of life, art, and politics were a constant feature, not just for the fashionable set, but also for emigrés and intellectuals. As learning places, cafés continued to provide a space for discussing the politics of Lenin, the art of the Impressionists, the philosophy of Sartre and the literature of Hemingway.

Given this rich and vibrant tradition, I suggest that much could be learned about the role of a new 'hybrid' learning mentor from the best of the café proprietors of the past. Such individuals were exemplary providers of pleasant and engaging spaces of interaction and self-managed learning.

They took a strong interest in local affairs, acting as arbiters of the affairs of the neighbourhood, brokers of social relationships, and assemblers of high quality newspapers and other learning materials. They were, too, highly competent business managers, alert to the 'special needs' of clients and their changing tastes.

Of course, there are important distinctions to be made about the role of café proprietors and the role of 'in-school' professionals. Café proprietors did not have custody of their clients, nor did they have a curriculum to 'cover' or a formal sorting and credentialing function. Nevertheless, at their best they did seem to understand learning as *a fundamentally pleasant thing to do*. (I wish I were as sanguine about the proposition that all teachers and teacher librarians feel likewise!) Having said that, I would want to add that engaging in debates about science or art or literature or philosophy was also a *rigorous thing to do*. So, then, what café proprietors made possible was *the pleasure of the rigour of learning* accompanied by the intoxicating aroma of well-brewed coffee!

We have only just begun to understand the importance of aesthetics in and for learning. In place of the industrial classroom, we might imagine spaces based on learning design principles that combine the conviviality of the café, the clean-surfaced multi-functionality of the kitchen, and the 'stow away' or space saving capabilities of the caravan. I would add two further design principles, namely, *colonisability* and *access*. Taken together, these last two principles would enable relatively seamless transitions for a number of different groups using learning spaces for different purposes, at times of their own choosing.

So many possibilities, so little time! Perhaps it is time, then, to come down from the heady blue heights and plant my feet once again on the solid ground of real-world schooling. Yet how important it is to continue to imagine how we might all live, learn and earn in a high-flying learning utopia!

References

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How do you know what you do not know?

By Tara Brabazon, Professor of Education and Head of the School of Teacher Education
Charles Sturt University

For me, the pivotal question when considering the future of teaching and learning is, “How do you know what you do not know?” It is relatively easy to summon and share what we remember and understand. But it is a key moment in life – and learning – to recognize the gaps in our knowledge and then realize that we must move beyond ourselves and our environment to welcome interventions, questioning, critique and challenge.

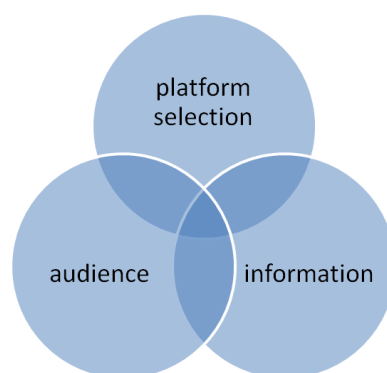
Teachers and librarians are integral to such a project. Enabling information literacy is the method. But the problem in fulfilling our interventionist goals is that social media creates a culture of self-satisfaction, selfishness and comfort. Indeed, social media are not singular in this environment of inward contentment rather than outward challenge. The myth of abundance – the myth of choice – dominates the narratives of both liberal democracy and capitalism.¹ Shopping becomes a proxy for thinking and searching substitutes for reading. While ‘we’ are looking down at our smart phone rather than up at the world, freedom to blog becomes an acceptable substitute for freedom to learn.

It is time to transform our freedoms. Instead of the freedom to access information, there is the right to learn information literacy. There have been some remarkable critiques in the last decade of information excess, user generated content, web 2.0 and the read-write web. Many have been staunch, strident and opinionated. Others have been concerned or worried about the cultural movements for which the read-write web is the channel, conduit or platform. One of the earliest and shrillest reviews was from Andrew Keen. His *Cult of the Amateur*² affirmed the rights of artists, journalists, writers and academics to protect their intellectual property. He was critical of the loss of expertise from a blog-infused culture. He was not ‘against’ the internet or the web, but wanted to return quality control to digital environments.

My critique is different from Keen’s arguments. It is not the end of civilization if ‘the audience’ becomes ‘the author.’ Keen did not like bloggers or people taking pictures with their mobile phones. This proliferation of content does not worry me. But it must be attended by a necessity to improve our information literacy – improve our interpretative capacity – to sort and sift this material. An explosion of blogs, updates, comments, photographs and footage is not a concern. But experiencing a glut of information without the capacity to sort and shape it is a disaster for education. Simply because there is a lot of nonsense online does not mean it has to be read. The more serious question is whether – through this explosion of low quality data – the capacity to judge, interpret and evaluate is being worn down by the scale and scope of basic material. Put another way, if citizens and students read a large amount of simple, self-evident, commonsensical material, is their capacity reduced to read and write at a higher level?

There are many methods to structurally create barriers to block the sending or receiving of low quality information.³ For example, selecting delivery systems is a form of information management. When a platform is selected, producers are making a series of decisions about who they will not reach and the type of information they will not convey. It is not efficient to choose Twitter to convey complex ideas. However as a pointer to richer information sources, it is excellent. If a producer wants information that can be scanned at speed, sonic media is a mistake. Scanning print on paper or screens is a faster way to glean information. For abstract ideas that slow down users and defamiliarize the relationship with information, then sound is ideal. Marshall McLuhan argued that “any technology creates a new environment. It creates a total numbness in our senses.”⁴ However, by withdrawing some sensory experiences, numbness reduces. Consciousness and choice returns.

In an era of proliferating platforms, which platform is the best carrier for this data and – more importantly – which of our senses are best activated to engage with this information is a key decision in terms of learning and teaching. When selecting a platform, decisions are made about who will not receive the data and what type of information will not be conveyed. Jack Koumi stated that “each medium has its distinctive presentational attributes, its own strengths and its weaknesses. These distinctions must be fully exploited by choosing different treatments of the topic for different media.”⁵ Therefore, strategic decisions about information, media and audience must be made.



The difficulty with the read-write web is that it is based on fragmentation and individuality. Choices about audience, information and media platform selection are automated. We choose to talk with people like ourselves. They are our ‘friends’ on Facebook. We ‘follow’ them on Twitter. Similarly, communities become increasingly specialized in content as they geographically disperse. Nicholas Carr, in *The Big Switch*,⁶ probes the movement from offline to online environments. Carr argues that we are all drawn to people like ourselves. Fans of Justin Bieber talk with other fans of Justin Bieber.⁷ *Star Trek* fans chat to *Star Trek* fans. More concerningly, citizens with extreme ideas bond closely with

those also holding extreme ideas. In some disciplinary fields, this behaviour is explained through subcultural theory.⁸ A goth wears black clothes and whitened makeup, but this appearance is naturalized when communing with other Goths. But beyond this naturalization of community behaviour, Carr confirms that when extreme views are shared by a community, they become more extreme. Through the deterritorialized connectivity of the Web, an individual who holds highly marginal views in Galway, Cape Town or Dunedin can find a geographically dispersed community sharing their beliefs. Before the internet, there were citizens with extreme views. But they were isolated, managed and controlled by legal and social restrictions. Now deterritorialized communities with extreme views can find each other and bond. The online relationships and communication normalizes behaviour, language and ideologies. When extreme ideas are shared, they become more extreme. Whenever a phrase is used like 'everyone does this,' a technique of neutralization⁹ has been activated. 'Everyone' does not smoke marijuana, watch pornography or download music illegally. A technique of neutralization is a mode of justification that has been enhanced and extended in the online environment. Further, these views can become more pervasive and far more extreme. This tendency can be seen in Pro (anorexia) Ana¹⁰ and cutter¹¹ communities. It is also the reason why odd or extreme ideas have become tolerated and often encouraged through the 'comment culture' on blogs. Certain levels of personal abuse and disrespect, often from anonymous writers, are now accepted as part of online life.¹² Intriguingly, when the PEW Internet and American Life project conducted a survey, young women aged 12-13 and black teenagers reported a greater experience of 'unkindness' through social media than other groups.¹³

In our daily lives, it is easy to seek out environments that make us comfortable. We enjoy mixing with friends and family, people who know and understand us. Audiences, consumers and citizens seek out environments in which they are comfortable and are literate: they understand the language, signs and codes. Such behaviour is not limited to our analogue and corporeal lives. Rarely do we move towards those images and ideas that make us uncomfortable or that we do not understand. It is difficult to change personal worldviews, to even consider that the ideas offered by our family, friends, teachers, religious leaders and politicians may be wrong and not in our best interests. 'We' want to believe that there are people in our lives who care for us and are correct in their views. It is safer to talk to people who share our ideas, reinforce our identity and protect us from the excesses of cruelty, ignorance, inequality and prejudice.

Google has serviced this desire. On December 4, 2009 the corporation stated on its blog that Google would use 57 signals to offer assumptions about the type of sites that would suit the user. So from December 2009 searching was personalized. This post-Fordist strategy may seem welcome. However, the personal information 'targets' information and enables a narrow range of goods and services to be accessed. As Eli Pariser realized,

The basic code at the heart of the new internet is pretty simple. The new generation of internet filters looks at the things you seem to like – the actual things you've done, or the things people like you like – and tries to

extrapolate. They are prediction engines, constantly creating and refining a theory of who you are and what you'll do and want next. Together, these engines create a unique universe of information for each of us – what I've come to call a filter bubble – which fundamentally alters the way we encounter ideas and information.¹⁴

This strategy may enable efficient and targeted marketing. For educators, it is profoundly serious. Students and scholars are continually directed to information that is 'at their level' and unchallenging. It is safe data that cannot lead to threatening knowledge.

Such an arc of argument explains Graeme Turner's long term and courageous critique of the supposed democratization of new media. Indeed he terms it "demoticization."¹⁵ The interplay between digitization and popular culture is powerful, evocative, fascinating and brilliant. Online culture enables thousands of people to tell their stories, express their enthusiasm and passion and build new forms of community. But formal education is different. Education – teaching and learning – is not meant to reinforce the decisions we make in our lives. It is meant to raise questions, trouble us and challenge our views. We start to know what we do not know. Living in consumerist self satisfaction, uploading, editing and commenting, is not the basis of education. Leisure is different from learning.

In his follow up book to *The Big Switch*, titled *The Shallows: how the internet is changing the way we think, read and remember*, Carr tracked his online behaviour and the consequences of searching, clicking and commenting. He noted a reduction in concentration and time management.

What the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation ... The more they use the Web, the more they have to fight to stay focused on long pieces of writing.¹⁶

My critique of Carr is that he conflated automated decision making about web usage with the transformation in his brain. He *chose* to click and link his way around the online environment. This was not his brain changing. This new environment required making a choice between surfing and reading. He chose surfing.

Sometime in 2007, a serpent of doubt slithered into my info-paradise. I began to notice that the Net was exerting a much stronger and broader influence over me than my old stand-alone PC ever had. It wasn't just that I was spending so much time staring into a computer screen. It wasn't just that so many of my habits and routines were changing as I became more accustomed to and dependent on the sites and services of the Net. The very way my brain worked seemed to be changing.¹⁷

He is suggesting that this is natural or inevitable. Carr – like all of us – can make distinct choices, deploy different platforms and activate different literacies. More intricate relationships can be configured between communication systems, information systems and memory systems.¹⁸ Older models of literacy and learning are not destroyed. They are overlaid. Therefore, it is only necessary to scratch below the simple and the superficial to reveal more complex ways of learning, reading and writing.

Notes

- ¹ Chris Harmon, in *Zombie Capitalism: global crisis and the relevance of Marx*, (London: Bookmarks, 2009), argued that such narratives do not provide the ability to explain radical events such as the credit crunch or credit crash.
- ² A. Keen, *The cult of the amateur*, (New York: Doubleday, 2007)
- ³ T. Koltay, introduced a range of mechanisms to manage a proliferation of content creators and creation in "New media and literacies: amateurs vs. professionals," *First Monday*, Vol. 16, No. 1 – 3, January 2011, <http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/3206/2748>, pp. 2-7. Koltay realized that, "Despite differences and similarities among information literacy, media literacy and digital literacy, all of them have to differentiate between amateur and professional contents produced in new media," p. 2.
- ⁴ M. McLuhan, "Fordham University: First Lecture (1967)," from S. McLuhan and D. Staines (eds.), *Marshall McLuhan Understanding Me: Lectures and Interviews*, p. 145
- ⁵ J. Koumi, *Designing video and multimedia for open and flexible learning*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 1230
- ⁶ N. Carr, *The Big Switch: rewiring the world, from Edison to Google*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2008)
- ⁷ *ibid.*, p. 165
- ⁸ D. Hebdige, *Subculture* (London: Routledge, 1989: 1979)
- ⁹ G. Sykes and D. Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 22, No. 6, 1957, pp. 664-670
- ¹⁰ "Pro-Ana," <http://community.livejournal.com/proanorexia>
- ¹¹ "Self-injury webring," <http://t.webring.com/hub?ring=selfinjury>
- ¹² Jimmy Wales and Tim O'Reilly proposed guidelines for bloggers in 2007 and confronted a remarkable backlash. Please refer to "Web gurus want blog etiquette despite backlash," *Reuters.com*, April 11, 2007, <http://www.reuters.com/article/gc08/idUSN1042471620070411> and Ed Pilkington, "Howls of protest as web gurus attempt to banish bad behaviour from blogosphere," *The Guardian*, April 10, 2007, p. 17
- ¹³ Amanda Lenhart, Mary Madden, Aaron Smith, Kristen Purcell, Kathryn Zickuhr, Lee Rainie, Teens, kindness and cruelty on social network sites, PEW Internet and American Life, Nov 9, 2011, <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Teens-and-social-media/Part-2/Section-1.aspx>
- ¹⁴ E. Pariser, "Should we be scared of the made-to-measure internet?" *The Observer*, June 12, 2011, p. 20-21
- ¹⁵ G. Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, (London: SAGE, 2004)
- ¹⁶ N. Carr, *The shallows: how the internet is changing the way we think, read and remember*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2010), p. 6-7
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 16
- ¹⁸ Helen White and Christina Evans confirmed that "listening and attention are learnt behaviours," from *Learning to listen to learn: using multi-sensory teaching for effective listening*, (London: Lucky Duck, 2005), p. 3

50 shades of blue

by Sally Pewhairangi, Strategic Services Development Co-ordinator for Waimakariri District Libraries



Blue sky thinking for New Zealand schools

Services to Schools vision for school libraries

by Lisa Oldham, RLIANZA, MLIS, Development Specialist, School Library Futures, National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa

I love this question! In my role as Development Specialist - School Library Futures, I think about how to create a systemic shift in our national approach to library services for students and how this translates into change in individual libraries. I spend a lot of mental time in the Blue Sky and also at Green Fields. I focus particularly on student learning and literacy and the ways library services, through capable library teams, can impact learning and literacy outcomes. There are many ways we can continuously improve student outcomes through library services. Some are little and local, others are significant and system-wide.

The first thing I would do to improve school libraries is free but will impact significantly on students, their learning and their literacy levels. It will enable continuous improvement at schools large and small; those already providing excellent library services as well as those that aren't.

I would raise the level of expectations for library services for students for everyone connected to schools and students: teachers, principals, students, parents, board members, education consultants working with schools and of course, school library staff.

People working in school libraries are closest to the action, the agency, the real work of supporting students with library services. But these dedicated individuals are part of a much larger whole. They are working within a school, within a community, within a national education system and within existing paradigms held by everyone about what we expect from a school library.

When everyone expects more, together we will strengthen school libraries everywhere and our students will win.

The expectations

Every school leader **expects** their school library to support students' learning and literacy anytime, everywhere – and enables this to happen.

Teachers **expect** to be open and committed to collaborative projects and expect library staff to collaborate and partner with them to enhance educational outcomes for their students.

Students **expect** their library, physically and digitally, to be the first place to go for information, tools, help or instruction that will help them achieve their academic goals and provide for their recreational reading.

School library staff **expect** to share their practice with colleagues; to be open to change that will improve outcomes for their students, and to centre their practice on student outcomes.

Parents **expect** the library to welcome their child any time during the school day for reading and learning, providing the space and resources to satisfy their educational and recreational reading needs.

Boards of Trustees **expect** to resource their schools to provide library services at all times – including after hours through a web based library presence.

All people working in the education sector, supporting schools and teachers, **expect** school library staff to be an integral part of the education team and to include them in their planning and service delivery.

Adults in school libraries and across the education sector **expect** students and their learning and literacy needs to come first.

New Zealanders **expect** every student to have access to high quality library services that support their learning and their reading needs.

We **expect** school library personnel to see themselves as part of a team of educators and their teaching colleagues to see them as part of that team, too.

We **expect** that children are more important than books or procedures.

We **expect** rules and policies in school libraries to be developed with learning and literacy as the criteria.

We **expect** that libraries are learning environments; full of students learning all day.

We **expect** that library equals service and support.

I want us all to **expect** New Zealand school libraries to be staffed by collegial, collaborative, professional people (regardless of their qualifications) who strive to offer the best service possible to their students and colleagues.

The implications of these expectations

What are the implications for New Zealand education if we all raise our expectations about school libraries?

Many schools understand the value excellent library services provide for their learners and the library's impact on outcomes. In these schools, raised expectations will:

- affirm the path they have chosen and inspire them to continue
- support their decisions to make the library the heart of learning and literacy
- encourage them to continue to lead by their example.

These already great schools will continue to expect and enable their libraries to operate as learning and literacy centres, integrated into and deeply connected to teaching and learning.

For schools where leaders and others may consider the potential of their library services to be as yet unrealised, raised expectations will provide the impetus and stimulus to enable more from their libraries for their students.

The implications for students are most significant. The evidence is clear—school libraries that are adequately staffed and resourced; whose staff have positive collaborative relationships with teachers and deliver strong library programmes; that have excellent internet connectivity providing good access for students; that focus their attention on literacy and learning needs, have significant impacts on student achievement in literacy and across the academic spectrum.

And what are the implications for schools where little is expected of the library and its services? It is so obvious, it is cliché: school leaders who expect little from their school libraries get what they expect.

If we raise our expectations, schools with undervalued, under performing or non existent library services will need to raise their game, learn how libraries can contribute significantly to their student outcomes and decide how they will make that happen. When students, parents and teachers expect student centred library services that make significant and measurable positive impact on literacy and learning, leaders and governance groups will need to support the development and continuous improvement of the library.

But what would raising everyone's expectations about school libraries really mean in schools and in libraries?

If we expect every student to have access to high quality library services and resources then it means we won't accept that some students have poor access to a library because their class never visits, or they are not allowed to borrow books, or they are not welcome in the library. We won't accept sub-standard and out of date collections of books and other materials.

If every principal expects their library to support learning and literacy anytime, everywhere, then s/he won't accept reduced connectivity in the library. They won't accept diminished ICT support for library services, or restrictions and firewalls that impede the provision of digital materials, catalogue access and digital curation services to students and teachers through library-built web portals. These principals will enable the doors to be open to students at any time when students are at school. Teachers who expect collaboration and partnerships won't accept a culture that leaves the library out of the pedagogical mix.

Students who expect their library to be the first and perhaps the only source of information will not accept a lack of connectivity in their library, or out of date or inappropriate books and materials. They will expect the adults in their school community charged with leading and governing to resource their library so it is their information and access equity solution.

Parents who expect their school library to welcome and provide for their child's recreational reading and other learning needs won't accept restrictive and unhelpful policies, loan limits or rules created without sound pedagogical basis. They won't accept decision-making that reduces student access to quality resources – print or digital in the library.

Boards of trustees who expect to resource their schools to provide quality library services won't accept sub-standard library services, reduced/limited opening hours, unfriendly or unhelpful staff or a school culture that does not view the library as an integrated part of all learning.

Educators working with schools who expect school library staff to be integral to the learning team will plan for library staff to take part in professional learning and school planning along with the rest of the team.

School library staff who expect students' needs to come first, will not accept poor quality ICT infrastructure, baseless procedures or policies, exclusion from staff meetings and professional learning opportunities.

We expect: school libraries to provide high quality service and support to students; library staff who are welcoming, collegial, collaborative and professional; libraries which are learning centres, fully integrated into their schools with programmes and services which are focused on improving student outcomes. We will support our colleagues by sharing information and resources, collaborating on professional projects, facilitating, mentoring. We will create partnerships and work together to achieve goals collectively that support students across schools. We'll share expertise where we have it; blogging, sharing presentations, and through advocacy.

We expect our school libraries to strive to offer the best service possible to all New Zealand students and we'll work together to help achieve that.

Together we can expect more and together we can achieve more - for everyone.

To arm yourself with information, so you can work to raise expectations in your community here is a selection of articles to read and share.

Evidence and learning outcomes

[<http://schools.natlib.govt.nz/21st-century-literacy-inquiry/school-libraries-21st-c-literacy/evidence-and-learning-outcomes>] Services to Schools

Student achievement – the research

[<http://schools.natlib.govt.nz/developing-your-library/student-achievement/research-student-achievement>] Services to Schools

Excellence in Practice

[<http://schools.natlib.govt.nz/developing-your-library/school-library-futures/learning-facilitation>]

Share these videos with teachers, principals and others to show how schools with high expectations for their libraries to support learning and literacy are enabling excellence.

Using multiliteracies to navigate blue skies

by Dr Susan Sandretto, University of Otago College of Education

Introduction

Thank you to the editors of SLANZA for inviting my musings on “Blue Sky Thinking – if time, money and resources were no object ... what would be the first thing you’d do in your library or influence in your professional role”. What a pleasure to consider what I would do if time, money and resources were no object. I have spent the past eight years working with teachers and students in the area of critical literacy and lately, multiliteracies. In this article I am going to advocate for the development of a shared understanding of literacy that would enable educators to communicate across sectors, curriculum areas and contexts to support students to engage with a wide variety of texts in order to prepare them for an unknown future.

Most educators today will agree that we are preparing our students for an unknown future (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). We need to work with a framework for thinking about literacy that will enable us to accommodate the rapid development of technology, global immigration and increased diversity we are seeing in our classrooms and schools (The New London Group, 1996). In addition, we need a literacy framework that will support our students to engage with the dizzying array of texts they encounter on any given day. In 1996 a group of leading literacy researchers from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia coined the term multiliteracies (The New London Group, 1996). Researchers working in this rapidly growing area have proposed we shift our thinking around how literacy is gained from a global mental process that is acquired according to a developmental, hierarchical timeline to “a repertoire of changing practices for communicating purposefully in multiple social and cultural contexts. Knowledge and literacy practices are primarily seen as constructions of particular social groups, rather than attributed to individual cognition alone” (Mills, 2010, p. 247).

In my research and teaching I argue that the Four Resources Model (Luke & Freebody, 1999) provides a framework for developing a balanced literacy programme that will allow students to interact with the diversity of texts that they currently encounter, as well as “future-proof” them to be able to engage with texts they have not yet met. This model suggests that students need to be able to develop the practices of code breaker, meaning maker, text user, and text analyst (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Luke & Freebody, 1999). *Code breaker* refers to the practices readers use to break the codes and systems of texts. *Meaning maker* relates to the ability of readers to make meaning from texts, what we refer to as reading comprehension. *Text user* represents the practices of using and constructing texts effectively in a wide variety of contexts. And, lastly, *text analyst* emphasises that texts are not neutral and signifies the importance of analysing texts. We refer to the text analyst role as critical literacy (Sandretto with Klenner, 2011).

In the multiliteracies landscape the term *text* is used quite broadly. A text is any medium for communication. The term text comes from the Latin words *textus* meaning tissue, and *texere* meaning to weave (Bull & Anstey, 2010). This provides us with a useful metaphor for the term text as it describes the “weaving together [of] a combination of signs and symbols in a design that conveys meaning” (Bull & Anstey, 2010, p. 8). In the classroom or library we can use traditional texts that are live, such as a play, or paper, like a book. We can also use the new texts that are delivered through digital or electronic means, such as a wiki. A text is any “vehicle through which individuals communicate with one another using the codes and conventions of society” (Robinson & Robinson, 2003, p. 3). This broad conceptualisation of text encourages us to extend our literacy programme across the curriculum.

Most texts are multimodal (Serafini, 2012). This means that the text draws upon more than one mode, or system of signs and symbols, to convey meaning. The five semiotic systems are the systems that we use in varying combinations to construct texts. These semiotic systems are:

- Linguistic (oral written language)
- Visual (still & moving images)
- Gestural (facial expressions & body language)
- Audio (music, silence, sound effects)
- Spatial (layout & organisation of objects spatially) (Bull & Anstey, 2010, p. 10)

When you support students to develop the resource of *code breaker* you are supporting them to break these codes. Typically in literacy instruction we have placed emphasis on supporting students to decode the linguistic semiotic system in traditional texts delivered on paper.

I have presented the Four Resources Model to educators in the early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. I have given workshops underpinned by the Four Resources model to teachers and librarians. I have yet to meet a group who does not nod in agreement and quickly see links between their own practice and the Luke and Freebody (1999) framework. By implementing the Four Resources Model we can develop a shared metalanguage to support students to develop multiliteracies.

Concluding thoughts (Or why does this count as blue sky thinking?)

The Ministry of Education formed the Multiliteracies Working group to consider the influence of information and communication technologies on literacy (Jones, 2009). The group drafted a framework for multiliteracies acquisition which took a multiliteracies lens to the four resources model (Luke & Freebody, 1999) of learning the code, making meaning, using texts and analysing texts.

The group signalled a need to augment current literacy practice and policy:

The working group concluded that we need to expand on current practice models to take account of the need for young people to develop a range of social, creative, ethical and cultural practices to make meaning in a technology-rich and culturally diverse world. (p. 1)

Unfortunately the findings of this group did not come to fruition. In order to realise this framework we will need time and money. Here is where we encounter blue skies. Educators need time to make sense of the framework, implement it, reflect on it and share their thinking. And of course in education, time costs money.

Policy makers often expect quick results that can be measured in a valid and reliable fashion. The development of a shared literacy framework and metalanguage to communicate to one another across sectors and curriculum areas is not currently measured on standardised tests. But it will go a long way in preparing students for an unknown future in which change is the only constant.

Acknowledgements

The ideas presented here were developed from the results of Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) grants with support from the University of Otago. For extended discussion on the ideas presented here see *Planting seeds* (Sandretto with Klenner, 2011).

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Our readers share their Blue Sky Ideas

Students would seek out the library as the place with the best computers in the school.

From: Coralie, secondary (9-13)

All staff would be able to assist students with research in a consistent way.

From: Lisa, secondary (7-13)

Everything would be free to borrow in my library including eReaders, laptops and other mobile devices.

From: Lisa, secondary (7-13)

The library would be full of happy readers and researchers at all times.

From: Lisa, secondary (7-13)

The library would have a suite of the fastest, up to date computers with every kind of software loaded.

From: Coralie, secondary (9-13)

Plenty of iPads or even the new minis.

A class set of iPads.

From: Primary and Secondary libraries

We would have 3 full time library assistants plus the library manager and constantly-changing display areas highlighting curriculum-related items and motivating readers.

From: Secondary (9-13)

A technician to video all the wonderful things happening in our library, to promote the library to the parent community, and squeeze more funding out of school management.

From: Corinne Hinton, Secondary (9-13)

More integration of library stock into classrooms for designated times; and some of our working space in the library.

RFID for everything including text books.

From: Corinne Hinton, Secondary (9-13)

Not to operate out of a shoebox in 2014.

From: A year 1-13 school

For rural areas, an IT-librarian-teacher expert in every area. Our teachers seen some wonderful technology at reading conference, but not the devices to support it.

From: A contributing school (1-6)

Perhaps the best of our IT-savvy librarians could be paid to go on teaching weeks to help up-skill part-time librarians in rural areas.

From: A contributing school (1-6)

A dedicated 'teen' space in our year 0-8 library with couches, beanbags etc and enough techno-gadgets to make the place awesome for Year 7 & 8s to hang and learn!

From: A full primary school (1-8)

Refurbish with bright colours and new carpet; pods of FAST computers on a mezzanine floor; eReaders; new suitable furniture; a redesigned office and a new heating/cooling system.

From: Judy Dawson, Secondary (9-13)

Creative space with a 3D printer so students can make jewellery, do sculpture, create 3D creatures for their animation movies, as well as modelling in the maths and science areas.

From: Jenny Carrol, Secondary (9-13)

A co-worker who understands unspoken instructions, loves students & the library, reads voraciously - especially YA books, loves doing displays, is not afraid of technology, has a fantastic sense of humour and will work for free!

From: Bridget, Secondary (9-13)

A full time techie in the library. Someone who made sure all the equipment in the library is operational, working and clean. Techie to talk to students f2f when tech problems occur.

From: Corinne Hinton, Secondary (9-13)

A purpose-built library with huge quantities of beanbags, sofas, armchairs, NO CHAIRS ON WHEELS! Lots of reading areas, power points for phones, iPads, eReaders and ample computer access points throughout.

From: Sue Esterman, Lauren Bennett & Vicki Hughes, Composite Year 1 – 13

A portable OPAC that leads you to physical resources, activating a light that shines as a guide! Or a voice saying "I'm over here!"

From: A primary school librarian

Ranch sliders opening onto an outdoor reading area, with a wooden or stone fence around a lovely green space, with native trees and flax, and sculptures & seating by art & design technology students.

From: Lis Marrow, Secondary (7-13)

For the library to be at the front of the school, rather than downstairs at the back of the school.

From: Jan Brady, Secondary (7-13)

An enclosed courtyard with cafe style tables & chairs and built-in benches around the sides. Plants in pots and existing beds. Wooden fencing covered in climbing plants to create a quiet relaxed space.

From: Sheila Duke, Secondary (9-13)

Our TLR said her dream library would have attractive, comfortable seating for children for recreational reading, and a purpose built library with more space.

From: A primary school librarian

Hands on displays/promotions with 3D images, listening posts, teacher recreational corner, regular author and illustrator visits, a play corner for pre-schoolers.

From: Jenny Whiting, Contributing (1-6)

Plenty of free PD in working hours to help us learn and model technology and software stuff which would benefit learning.

From: A contributing school (1-6)

My dream is a professional librarian in each school. A person who is student learning focused, has both personal & ICT skills to work positively with the whole school community to support literacy, teaching & learning.

From: Glenda, National Library

Café/library where you could get a coffee and read at the same time, and community and parents could drop in at anytime to use the library and issue books.

From: Jenny Whiting, Contributing (1-6)

Blue sky thinking about reading

An exciting new approach for New Zealand

by Bill Macnaught, National Librarian

This month we celebrate the final steps in the refurbishment of the National Library building in Wellington. The team has successfully delivered this \$65 million project on time and within budget. Not only has it been a highly complex construction project; it has also ushered in a new era in service delivery across the National Library. We have sharpened our planning to meet our statutory duty to enrich the cultural and economic life of the nation. Our new colleagues in Internal Affairs are bringing exciting opportunities for collaboration in the shift to a digital environment.

In this article, however, I will focus on a different area for collaboration: creating new readers. There is already great work being undertaken in New Zealand, including the work of the National Library's Services to Schools in reading engagement within school communities. However the reading engagement for all communities is currently still fragmented, with significant gaps in provision, for example in New Zealand prisons. Support for literacy and reading engagement has long been a core activity for the National Library. The Library's Services to Schools team already has a role in support of the outcome that all students and families are engaged in a reading culture.

For many years now the National Library has had a proud record of supporting school librarians in their work to turn young people into enthusiastic readers. Now that work has taken a new turn. We are aware from recent consultation that there is a demand from the library sector for the Library to take an even stronger leadership role in this area, to raise the level of multi-disciplinary collaboration and improve the results for New Zealanders in literacy and reading engagement. In the last year, in collaboration with SLANZA and other partners, we have been building support for a programme of activity to get more people reading. Under the banner of Word Up there is a fresh focus on the importance of reading.

The *Word Up* proposal has been put together by a group of organisations with a shared belief in the importance of reading for the educational, social and economic well-being of New Zealanders.

Its focus is reading for pleasure and it aims to reach people - especially families - who are not in the habit of reading.

There is a great body of research which points to the influence of reading on social and economic outcomes - evidence relating to outcomes from school achievement and employment to crime reduction and cycles of poverty and deprivation.

Literacy, the ability to read, is clearly important, but the research shows that enjoyment of reading and sharing stories, books in the home, family reading and reading role models have a real impact on the life chances of individuals.

The OECD considers reading for pleasure to be the most important indicator of the future success of a child; in Harlem, New York, reading to babies is at the heart of the significant

Harlem Children's Zone project which is improving the life chances of its poverty-stricken children. Research shows that across the world children growing up in homes

with books stay at school for three more years than children from bookless homes, independent of other factors. Gordon Brown, then Prime Minister launching Britain's 2008 National Year of Reading, commented: 'It's probably one of the best anti-poverty, anti-deprivation, anti-crime, anti-vandalism policies you can think of.'

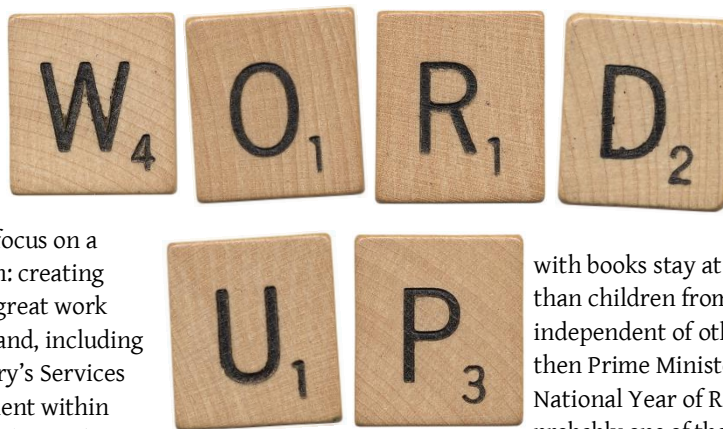
Word Up was originally conceived as a National Year of Reading but we wanted our programme to have a lasting impact.

Instead of confining our efforts to a single year, we are devising a programme that can achieve sustainable results into the future, planned from the outset for cumulative long term impact.

The programme is made up of a series of project proposals that better target the communities we want to reach. It also enables us to link to the great range of existing work by libraries, publishers and booksellers to promote reading for pleasure, and it has been designed to leave in place new relationships and activity that can continue to engage more New Zealanders in reading for pleasure.

The material we have prepared to introduce *Word Up* further outlines the need for this kind of programme. The need for *Word Up* is serious, but the campaign itself is not positioned as 'worthy'. The message is: read, and have fun reading with your family - for yourself and for your children's future.

Designed to get more New Zealanders to read more, each *Word Up* project would focus on an under-served group of New Zealanders, who are currently not in the habit of reading - from new parents with young babies, to people who don't know where to begin selecting a good read, through to new readers who struggle to find an engaging read which is within their reach. Under investigation are initiatives for children, young adults and adults; projects led by the commercial sector as well as the library sector; and activity that takes place in libraries, schools, homes, retail outlets, places of work, prisons.



The partners involved in developing the initial programme proposal are:

- National Library of New Zealand
- Ministry for Culture and Heritage
- Department of Corrections
- APLM, the Association of Public Library Managers
- LIANZA, The Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa
- Te Rōpū Whakahau, Māori in Libraries and Information Management
- NZ Book Council
- SLANZA, School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa.

Initial discussions with the Publishers Association of New Zealand have been highly encouraging. We expect that booksellers, other retailers, big companies, small businesses, rūnanga, writers and public figures will find ways that they can be part of *Word Up*, be it as partners, sponsors, ambassadors or supporters. Over the last year consultation has been carried out inside DIA with colleagues in the Office of Ethnic Affairs, Community Operations, GISMO, Communications and Effectiveness for Māori. Elsewhere in Government discussions have been held with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Ministry of Education and the Department of Corrections. Colleagues at the Ministry of Education agreed that our programme would complement the Ministry's priority programmes well, particularly the Ministry's support for the 'Reading Together' programme. Colleagues in the Department of Corrections have also been developing plans to strengthen prison libraries.

Externally, the Association of NZ Booksellers, the board of the NZ Book Council, World Book Night UK, Quick Reads UK and the Australian Booksellers Association have all been contacted. These discussions have been encouraging and have informed our current thinking.

We are about to embark on the next phase of development, which will include inviting potential partners to become involved in the further development of the programme initiatives. We are now about to start the process of seeking partnership support from the private sector, other government agencies and not for profit organisations with an interest in this area.

There are many ideas for new projects but I am keen to focus our efforts on work that will produce the best results. I think that means we focus on young people. The logic is simple. If we can create enthusiastic readers at an early age then they can extract maximum benefit from the educational opportunities ahead of them. We will still have to support adult literacy efforts for some time to come but in the longer term there will be less need for that activity if we begin to reach young children more effectively from now on. In our most recent discussions the *Word Up* team discussed the merit of using a summer reading campaign next year as the vehicle for much greater collaboration between school and public librarians, with family literacy as the focus. In the weeks ahead we will be discussing possibilities with a range of partners. If you want to get involved, let Fiona Mackie know.

Meanwhile we are also using our expertise to support online communities for knowledge sharing and co-creation across New Zealand. That is why our work with school and public libraries is so important to us. Ultra-fast broadband increasingly allows the National Library to reach out to all citizens, more effectively delivering on its statutory mission to enrich the cultural and economic life of the nation.

I am pleased to say that our new website has gone live at www.natlib.govt.nz making it easier for New Zealanders to use the National Library's services wherever they are and of course we will continue to develop and enrich the services to schools online delivery channel. Face-to-face public programmes, such as the latest *Big Data* exhibition in Wellington, provide an inspirational platform for co-creating new knowledge. We are living through the biggest technological change in libraries since Gutenberg's printing press 500 years ago. Our methods are radically changing but there has never been a better time for the National Library to collect, connect and co-create knowledge to power New Zealand. To that end I look forward to closer cooperation with school librarians in the months ahead. If there is anything you want to discuss feel free to contact me at bill.macnaught@dia.govt.nz with ideas for collaboration. We all want to see more young people reading. I welcome your comments.

Word Up, SLANZA and Blue Sky Thinking

The brand new and exciting nationwide reading initiative *Word Up*, announced in National Librarian Bill Macnaught's article above, and to be rolled out in 2013 had its origins in a 'blue sky' conversation dating back over 18 months.

SLANZA president Fiona Mackie, representing our organisation at a meeting for a delegation of heads of the State and National Libraries of Australasia, seized the opportunity to talk with Bill Macnaught about the buzz surrounding preparations for the Australian National Year of Reading in 2012. Being the passionate champion for reading that she is, Fiona couldn't understand why New Zealand wasn't working towards a national year of reading here and forthrightly said so to Bill Macnaught. The result of those few minutes of fairly intense discussion was an agreement to work towards a similar event for New Zealand.

A programme board was established to investigate options, on which Fiona ably looked out for the schools' sector interests and the result of this first stage of hard work and planning is a visionary series of initiatives which goes beyond just a year of reading, and is designed to create, sustain, encourage and nurture readers throughout the country well into the future. The intention is for *Word Up* to incorporate some of the fantastic reading programmes already underway in New Zealand, to build on them, and add new initiatives to support all New Zealanders in a sustainable and diverse way.

Speaking on just one of these initiatives, Fiona says *"I'm really excited about the prospect of having a nationwide Summer Reading programme that is shared between school and public libraries, as I believe it will have great benefits for our students as well as school library staffs' relationships with public library staff. I am working closely with Paula Murdoch, Chair of the Association of Public Library Managers (APLM), and National Library's Services to Schools staff on this, but that does not mean that SLANZA cannot do something special, inclusive and celebratory as well. Your Executive has some ideas, and we welcome your suggestions via our website <http://www.slanza.org.nz/word-up>. We'd love to hear from you!"*

Book Clubs

How blue sky thinking can be translated into reality

by Desna Wallace, Librarian, Fendalton Open Air School

What's the secret ingredient to running a successful book club? Have fun. Whatever your expected outcomes, if fun is not part of the equation, then your book club may struggle to survive.

So how do you create fun? How do you run a book club which everyone wants to join? The answer differs for each school but here's what works for us at Fendalton Open-Air School.

Our small group was formed after the devastating February 2011 Christchurch earthquake. It was one of those things as a librarian I was always going to do but never quite got around to doing. The need suddenly was there and so were a group of students just ready to begin. My purpose was to take a group of 12 or 13 boys and girls in year six and guide them away from the middle of the road books they were reading. I wanted to encourage them to read quality writing and introduce them to authors they may not have considered.

I purposely did not choose reluctant or struggling readers but this would also make a good choice for another book club.

The PTA plus the sale of old shelving provided extra funding to purchase multiple copies of some titles. The titles were chosen according to the quality of writing and past reviews and are kept in the teacher resource room at the back of the library. The students just love going out the back and choosing books (even though most of the titles are already in the library) it becomes a special place and almost like a shared secret from the rest of the school.

We began with *Little Manfred*, a short novel by Michael Morpurgo. The aim of starting with the same book was to have a level playing field but after that students chose their own titles. Often they would choose the same title anyway just so they could talk about the book together.

We met fortnightly at lunch times, eating our lunch together and discussing books. We also talked quite often about the earthquakes and it was a privilege to hear the children share their fears and experiences. They all agreed reading helped them cope. They could forget about the aftershocks while they read and travelled to other places in their minds, at least for awhile. We sat outside one lunch time discussing a group name and loving fiction and coming from Christchurch we came up with the Faultline Fiction Fanatics.

I had only recently joined Twitter and discovered a tweet asking book clubs to join up with the Guardian Newspaper's (UK) Book club. I took the chance and sent in a request to join.

When they found out we were from Christchurch they asked us to write a postcard about our group and situation. We wrote this together one lunch time. This was later [published online](#) with the most fantastic response.

guardian.co.uk/childrens-books-site/2011/dec/16/postcard-christchurch-new-zealand

The Guardian Newspaper's book club had arranged with Michael Morpurgo to send us a [podcast](#), which was amazing.

guardian.co.uk/childrens-books-site/audio/2011/dec/16/morpurgo-books-school-earthquake-audio

I actually rang all the children at home to tell them the news. We were by now a tight little group that had experienced so much.

We were incredibly lucky, proud and very grateful. It ended the year beautifully. The books arrived early this year and are read all the time.



Faultline Fiction Fanatics from Fendalton Open-Air School

This year with a different group of year sixes I was asked by Prue Langbein at Radio New Zealand if the club wanted to do radio reviews for New Zealand Post Book Week. My immediate reaction was to say no. Too hard, too much extra time and effort required but it was really up to the children. They loved it and the parents talked about the extra confidence their children were gaining. Some of them read their reviews in assembly as a trial run for

the radio reviews. It was a wonderful experience for all.

When it came to book week the group dressed up and went from class to class promoting the festivities using book characters. At the end of this term, the children will be visiting the local pre-school and reading Christmas stories to the young ones. It really is about reading and having fun, taking chances and allowing the students to discover some of the best writers, with just a little help from the librarian.

We discuss the books as they are read, talk about the bits they like or bits that challenge them. The books are more demanding than what they have previously read but they have all taken the challenge and are now reading even more than before. Our job as librarians is more than providing books; it is about hooking them in to the love of reading. Sometimes a little push in a different direction is all it takes. And a shared lunch at the end of the year always goes down a treat.

For those in secondary schools I suggest you read the great [article by Senga White](#).

sengaw.wordpress.com/2012/09/10/reflections-on-the-hargest-book-club-and-why-i-need-to-find-a-new-wheel/

Some do's

- Create a name
- Fundraise for multiple copies (I used Scholastic rewards for free books)
- Have a special place to shelve the books - students love a place that is theirs and almost secret
- Have a manageable sized group (allows everyone a say when discussing books)
- Add reviews to the library blog but only if they want to do them
- Meet regularly
- Take risks - do something special with the group
- Promote reading - involve the students in promoting reading
- Use social media – Twitter, blogs, book-trailers
booktrailers4kidsandya.wordpress.com

You can see more of what Desna and the Faultline Fiction Fanatics are up to on the Fendalton School library blog

library.fendalton.school.nz/

Some of our favourite titles

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| • Let me whisper you my story | M. Simons |
| • Little Manfred | M. Morpurgo |
| • Shadow | M. Morpurgo |
| • Wonder | R. J. Palacio |
| • My name is Mina | D. Almond |
| • Phantom Tollbooth | N. Juster |
| • War horse | M. Morpurgo |
| • The travelling restaurant:
Jasper's voyage in three parts | B. Else |
| • Dragon rider | C. Funke |



Promoting book week ahead of the events

Meet – Michele Whiting

SLANZA representative for Wellington Region, Principal of Corinna Primary School, Porirua East

Although she is now the current principal of Corinna Primary in Porirua East, this is not her first position as principal. Michele was previously principal of Otari School and has also done a four year stint with the Education Review Office, which gives her a good perspective on education from both sides of the fence.

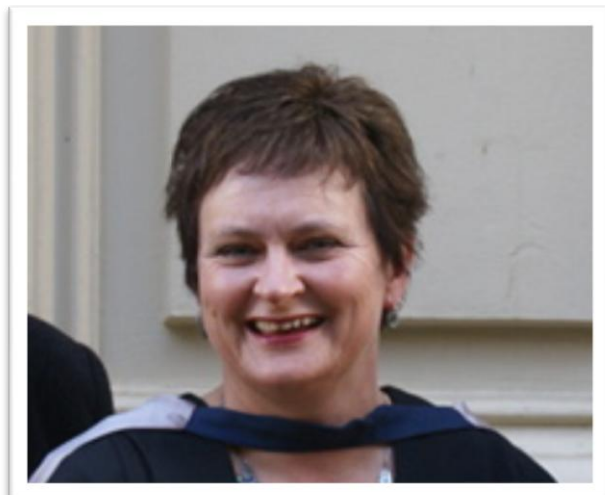
Michele joined the Wellington Committee after the SLANZA conference in 2007, going on to take on the chairperson's role in 2008. While Michele's official involvement in SLANZA may only date back a modest six years, as a teacher and now principal she has always believed very passionately about having a teacher based in the library.

"When I worked at a school in Porirua East in the 1980s we had a teacher in the library and Corinna school is one of the few that still has a teacher in the library as well as a Resource manager."

Also, in 1994 she helped Adaire Hannah to prepare and present a submission to the Select Committee in Education opposing the National Library's restructure and removal of School Library Service from Wellington, which received great coverage by the media at the time. Her educational knowledge as a school principal is invaluable at national executive level as she brings a difference perspective to discussions and has unique insight to current thinking.

Her personal vision for school libraries is quite simple, that they are staffed by qualified passionate educators and librarians working together to support learning and that the library is seen as the "hub" of a school. In working towards that vision for her own school Michele says:

"We try to have the library as an extension of the classroom so individuals as well as groups of students come through throughout the morning and the library teacher supports them with whatever they want to learn. As well as that there are some formal arrangements with teaching information literacy. We've got some way to go with digital literacy but are in the process of developing an e-learning strategic plan that ensures the library is central to digital literacy. It's not that radical but probably the most significant achievement has been in the improved personal reading by students as they get such personalized support for choosing the most appropriate books. We enter literacy quizzes now, which we never have done before and there is a lot of on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the work that Trish our teacher in the library does. She is also our literacy leader and has a close working relationship with classroom teachers over their literacy programmes in class. We really aim for coherence!!"



Another part of her role with SLANZA is being a member of the 2013 Conference organising committee, a very active and hard-working bunch of committed and passionate SLANZA members who are being ably supported by experienced education event managers to put together SLANZA's next conference.

"Things are shaping up very well, with almost all of our key note speakers and authors booked. Sponsorship and bookings for trade stands are still coming in. It will be a lot of fun!! We have inspirational key note speakers. Our aim is to encourage as many teachers as librarians to register for this conference in a bid to bridge the gap between what happens in school libraries and the classrooms. The digital age requires everyone in a school to work differently to provide the best options for students. I'm hoping the mix of key note speakers and workshop presenters will attract a wide range of people."

So what about Michele in her role as a principal? When asked how her students and staff might describe her, even though complaining what a hard question that is to answer she thought some of the responses might include "hard working", "wants the best for us" "supportive, with a good sense of humour" and, she hopes, "radical"!

When not running her school or putting her own time and energy into SLANZA in the effort of preserving high quality public education, Michele likes to get on her bike and cycle and, of course, to read. Her favourite book is *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry, which she describes as brilliant. Her favourite book from childhood was *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri, the only book in her house as a child, given to her by an aunt. Her favourite author for children is a hard call, but would be Eric Carle for picture books, and David Hill for middle and senior fiction.

AnyQuestions

Promoting information literacy – whatever the budget!

by Rob Baigent, AnyQuestions/UiaNgāPātai Service Manager,
National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa

AnyQuestions is thriving – so why would we change anything?

As some of you might not have heard of AnyQuestions yet Let me explain: *AnyQuestions.co.nz* and its partner sites *ManyAnswers.co.nz** and *UiaNgāPātai.co.nz* together make up a 24-7 go-to point for NZ school students (including home-schooled students) to get help with online searching. Between 1-6pm Monday to Friday this help takes the form of a live chat – and students have the option of booking a chat in te reo Māori on UiaNgāPātai.

The implicit purpose of these three services is to develop the use of Information Literacy skills with students. The students may not realise it, but every time they engage with our services they are skilfully and subtly guided through an information literacy process of identifying an information need, constructing an effective search strategy, and evaluating the search results.

And who pays the bills?

The infrastructure cost of the AnyQuestions services is met by the Ministry of Education on a yearly basis. The cost of the nearly 100 librarians across the country who staff AnyQuestions is covered by our partner libraries, who provide staff time for covering AnyQuestions shifts, and in exchange receive valuable staff development and training, as well as belonging to a supportive community of practice.

So, what would AnyQuestions look like in a parallel universe where money and resources was no object?

We would:

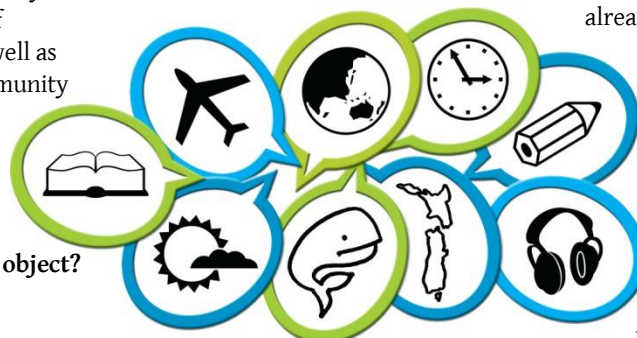
- **Do more!** Students visit the AnyQuestions site from 9 in the morning to 10 o'clock at night. Our service is currently operating at capacity, both in terms of Ministry funding and partner library staff hours. With more funding we could expand the service to meet the demand coming in.
- **Keep developing our interface!** Last year we improved the stability of our platform and developed a much friendlier user interface – but we could go beyond chat to video conferencing, especially for the UiaNgāPātai service, where face to face connection might be more in tune with the kaupapa of te reo speaking kura / schools.
- **Extend the Service!** Some teachers and school librarians have told us they'd like information literacy support when developing teaching plans. We'd like to develop a team of, say, ten AnyQuestions librarians who could provide information literacy lessons to teachers and students by request.

However, in the current climate government departments will keep being expected to do more with less for quite some time, and our partner libraries will continue to have numerous demands on the time of their skilled librarians.

We are more likely to increase incrementally and, with luck and funding, to trial some innovations.

At least we know that AnyQuestions is already managing to achieve great results within its modest budget. In 2012:

- AnyQuestions usage has increased by 43% on last year's totals just in the year to September (Note: 2011 was the first year to see an increase in student visits to AnyQuestions since the service was launched in 2005).
- On August 21 this year we exceeded the total number of chats for both 2010 and 2011 combined.
- By mid September we exceeded the previous year's total page views for ManyAnswers (we expect that the total page views for 2012 will be up 35% on 2011, which was already our busiest year to date).
- Over 80% of AnyQuestions operators were rated as Effective or Highly Effective (up from 65% a year ago).
- We are constantly adding to ManyAnswers, and have already increased new ManyAnswers entries to over 250 for 2012.



So, what impact will this blue skies exercise have on AnyQuestions?

Students' use of the AnyQuestions services shows that we are meeting their information needs, and their transcripts tell us that they are

being exposed to information literacy principles in their quest for answers. And whilst students keep coming back to AnyQuestions – and telling their friends about us – we know that we're doing a good job.

But we don't intend to rest on our laurels – we want to keep thinking about how we can enhance students' experiences with AnyQuestions, and continue to make information literacy skills come alive for them through their contact with us. Blue-skies thinking helps generate fresh ideas for continuous improvement of our service, whatever budget and resources we may be working with now and in the future.

** ManyAnswers is an ever-growing database of student questions with answers (in English and te reo) that incorporate effective search strategies, direction to quality websites, and help with website evaluation.*

THANK YOU!

TO OUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPONSORS **Book Protection Products Ltd**

Did you know that many of the professional development opportunities that SLANZA regions have provided for their members over the past three years is due to the support from Warick Ashton of Book Protection Products?

In 2009 an agreement between Book Protection Products and SLANZA was initiated, enabling the Executive to provide regional funding each year to support a range of professional development opportunities in the regions, specifically tailored to each region's needs. Regions have used the funding in a variety of ways, including bringing a range of speakers to present seminars and workshops, running professional development weekend schools, and visits to libraries which are demonstrating excellence in different areas.


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SLANZA National Executive is extremely grateful to Warick and his team at Book Protection Products. Without their sponsorship, the regions would not have been able to provide their members with the superb range of professional development opportunities they have been able to put together over the last three years. This generous support has also extended to include sponsorship of our bi-annual conferences, as well as additional support to areas, over and above the agreement we signed in 2009. Please continue to support Warick and Book Protection Products, as they are certainly supporting you!

Conference 2013 update

Winds of Change

by Karen Clarke, on behalf of the conference committee

Wellington July 15th-17th 2013
Wellington Girls College

The Wellington SLANZA committee kindly invites you to the next SLANZA conference in 2013.

If you have been to one of our conferences before you know how great they are for inspirational speakers, stimulating workshops, seeing what other librarians are doing in their community and for making new friends.

The theme of the conference in 2013 focuses on libraries continuing to be the source of energy for 21st century learning in New Zealand schools.

- Empowering Learners
- Generating Enthusiasm
- Energising Partnerships

These themes will be addressed by our keynote speakers: Tara Brabazon, Kathy Wylie, Erica McWilliam and Susan Sandretto. These forward-thinking professionals have engaged with you in this edition of Collected and you will be able to hear them build on their ideas at conference.

But wait there's more! In our final conference session we will have a panel of totally outstanding people, who you all will be familiar with.

Kate di Goldi and Fifi Coulston, along with Bernard Becket mixed together and kept in line by the iconic Kim Hill.

What a way to end the conference. I am sure that they will send us all away with laughter ringing in our ears and new ideas filling in our minds.

Finally, to anyone who has never experienced a SLANZA conference before we say take up the challenge! Visit Wellington, home of good coffee and the occasional wind gust.

So you know what to budget for, costs are as follows:

Costs	Members	Non-Members
Full registration	\$425	\$475
Early Bird	\$375	\$425
Dinner	\$80	\$80
Breakfast	\$30	\$30
Daily registration	\$160	\$200

Note: If you're not already a SLANZA member, it's worthwhile joining up before registering for conference.



Accommodation information

Budget option	Mid-range options	Luxury option
<p>Downtown Backpackers 1 Bunny Street, Wellington Phone 0800 225 725 email: db@downtownbackpackers.co.nz www.downtownbackpackers.co.nz 10% discount on any room subject to availability – quote “SLANZA” and book before 1 June 2013</p>	<p>Ibis Wellington Hotel 153 Featherston Street, Wellington 6011 Phone 04 496 1880 email h3049-re01@accor.com www.accorhotels.com/Wellington \$129 incl gst per room per night subject to availability – quote “SLANZA2013” and book before 1 June 2013.</p> <p>Kingsgate Hotel Wellington 24 Hawkestone Street, Thorndon, Wellington (closest to conference venue) Phone 04 473 2208 email reservations@kingsgatewellington.co.nz www.kingsgatewellington.co.nz \$135 incl gst per room per night subject to availability – quote “SLANZA2013” and book before 1 June 2013.</p>	<p>Rydges Wellington 75 Featherston Street, Wellington 6011 Phone 04 499 8686 email reservations_wellington@rydges.com www.rydges.com/wellington \$199 incl gst per room per night subject to availability – quote “X-MEC0713” and book before 1 June 2013.</p>
Other accommodation options can be found online: wellingtonnz.com/accommodation		

7 steps to create an iCentre with Apple Store buzz

by Susan Tierney, Advocacy Thought Leader, Softlink International

Have you ever contemplated what the Apple Store phenomenon is all about? What is it about this store that makes kids of all ages to flock in droves and line up for hours just to be part of it?

Clearly, ownership of Apple's leading technology is a key driver. But what are the other motivating factors behind the unique community and "I've-got-to-be-part-of-it" vibe that radiates around these stores?

Imagine if you could emulate Apple's engagement success. What if you could create a learning and technology centre that achieved, albeit on a smaller scale, a similar connection? What would this do for your school?

This article explores some observations about the Apple Store success and how some simple steps might help you to build an iCentre with rousing appeal.

A critical factor underpinning the Apple Store concept is its overarching strategy that directs store development, customer service and operations. These strategies are based on understandings of the market. Simply, Apple understands that today's youth:

- will flock to the latest technology and feast on advancement;
- want to feel connected, be social and belong to like-interest groups;
- want to unite in physical hubs that match their virtual realities;
- like to self-serve with anywhere, anytime technology; and
- want to be delighted by change and innovation.

Most importantly, Apple understands strategies to achieve the above are paramount to their success.

Our students live in a technology-rich environment. Apple's insights teach us that technology innovation is a priority. This means that web-based technologies, digital and automated interfaces, interactive OPACs and real-time searches, as well as eBooks, eResources and integration with mobile devices are mandatory and not just a good idea.

Topical articles linking technology to student literacy and reading indicate that students will continue to drive new ways in which they want to receive knowledge. A recent Pew Research study on eBooks shows that young people (age 16-29) are now reading more. There are four times more people

reading eBooks on a given day than there was two years ago. And much of what they read nowadays is on a screen rather than on paper. Most of these young people who read are using a screen read on their phones or their computers rather than on eReaders.

For our libraries this means change is moving at a rapid pace. Libraries that don't evolve run the risk of being superseded by other tech-savvy learning centres within their school. As Apple has repeatedly shown to its competitors that struggle to engage at the same rate, only one hub will triumph and win student loyalty.

Adopt these 7 Steps to help you create your school's iCentre with Apple Store buzz:

- Create your iCentre vision
- Develop a brand name and personality to inspire student engagement
- Engage with and influence others to share your vision. A one-page vision document will help you to clearly communicate the benefits
- Match your students' experiences across virtual and physical environments
- Give your students the technology they want – eBooks and eResources on digital devices
- Innovate the role of librarian to support integration
- Capitalise on the buzz and measure your success. Develop programs to let your students drive the buzz!

Ideally you could do all this if only you had the time and resources of an Apple Store. The truth is that you don't. Libraries are being asked to do more with less and less. Time is precious. But so is the time to move. Now is the time to act and capitalise on the secret your students already know... the library has the power to be the Apple Store of your school!

The above article was provided by Softlink International. Softlink is the largest provider of knowledge, content and library management software solutions for Australian/ New Zealand schools. Softlink is also the New Zealand supplier of leading eBooks from OverDrive. Softlink supports more than 10,000 organisations across 108 countries and has partnered with schools for almost 30 years.

Softlink, a world-leading developer of Knowledge, Content and Library Management software are pleased to be a SLANZA Top Shelf business sponsor.

www2.softlinkint.com/?nz/welcome

Softlink
Our Experience, Your **iCentre**

ePlatform: ready, set, engage!

The face of libraries is certainly changing, or perhaps more correctly, the inter-face. Today's library is a dynamic hub of many offerings and nowhere is this more evident than school libraries: especially those engaged with the eBook revolution.

"The school library of the future will be a far more integrated hub for the whole school environment", says Paul du Temple of Wheelers Books. Imagine a social network within the library, where students studying the same Shakespeare play for example, can get together and discuss it, anywhere, anytime. Groups who like a particular genre can share opinions and ideas in a comparatively safe peer environment. Librarians and teachers alike can nurture interest in particular authors' work by creating information bytes and interview links within the platform to stimulate activity. Teachers can weigh in on and create debates, they can also quickly access material for use on an interactive whiteboard.



Find out more at www.eplatform.co

The future of Wheeler's ePlatform is all this and more. Investing heavily in ongoing development, Wheeler's look to schools and the community to ensure the ePlatform stays relevant and supplies not only the latest content, but also the best ways to get that content to readers. Not having to access the physical library is a significant change to the way users engage. Students can now access eBooks anywhere, anytime. School holidays are no barrier to borrowing or staying connected to a peer group with shared interests.

The growing engagement with eBooks bodes well for the future of libraries beyond school. Public Libraries have traditionally found the young adult market the hardest to connect with. But with students becoming digitally literate from childhood, using an eReader will soon become second nature. The accessibility and convenience of eBooks is something the students of today will take for granted tomorrow.

The Wheeler's ePlatform now offers schools a world first with their free set up options. This allows schools more flexibility in how they manage their eBooks and also more opportunities to engage with their readers. "Since we launched the ePlatform in 2011, we've focused on how we can create the best model to support schools, because the needs of students/teachers will guide the development of eBook lending platforms going forward", says Paul.

Wheeler's host the school's personalised ePlatform, from which they buy eBooks licensed for library lending and loan them to their students (protected by DRM). Unlike competitors, Wheelers don't ask for any annual commitment to buy, and the school has ongoing access to their ePlatform.

The new website www.eplatform.co not only promotes this service, it facilitates the whole process. A school can learn about ePlatform, register to receive a free login to the demo site and then go on to sign up for their own personalised ePlatform.

Every school can now afford to introduce eBooks into their library. With immediate access to over 1000 free Gutenberg titles (out of copyright) to play with as well as Wheeler's ever expanding collection. Wheeler's are regularly signing new publishers, most recently and significantly, Hachette Children's and Random House. With two more signings of the major publishers expected to be announced inside 2012, ePlatform schools can expect thousands more titles to choose from in the coming weeks.

The eBook revolution is here. It's now just a simple matter of becoming actively interactive.

For more information and a 30 day free trial please go to www.eplatform.co, or email info@wheelers.co.nz or Ph 0800 890 333



ePlatform
by wheelers books

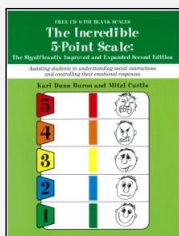
The IHC Library

If you are 'blue skies thinking' – why not use the IHC Library to expand your horizons!

The library is free and open to anyone in New Zealand. We pay for the outward postage - the only cost to you is the return postage to the library.

We have excellent books and DVDs for children about intellectual disability and resources for the teachers and teacher aides who teach them. Please let your colleagues know about our library.

Below are a few books that have been rated highly by our borrowers.



The incredible 5-point scale The significantly improved and expanded second edition

By Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis
Published by AAPC Publishing, 2012
Subtitle: Assisting students in understanding social interactions and controlling their emotional responses.

Kari Dunn Buron has published widely on the topic of managing stress and emotions and together with Mitzi Curtis has produced a second edition of the very successful original publication.

The 5-point scale is a method of teaching social understanding to children and young people with autism and others facing similar challenges. Once a 5-point scale is developed and understood it can be used for all manner of different issues – voice volume, frustration level and a variety of emotional responses and social interactions. The book is packed full of useful examples and ideas of how the 5-point scale has been applied.

The first edition was highly rated by borrowers, the second edition also promises to be a practical and worthwhile resource.

Cover image reproduced with permission of AAPC Publishing



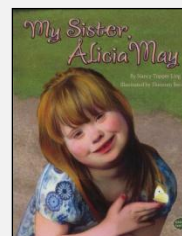
Frog's breathtaking speech : how children (and frogs) can use the breath to deal with anxiety, anger and tension

By Michael Chissick and Sarah Peacock (illus.)
Published by Singing Dragon, 2012

In his introduction Michael Chissick explains that this book is intended for teachers who may have little or no knowledge of yoga, as well as children's yoga teachers, and is suitable for all ages. The book grew out of the need to increase children's awareness of their breath and, more importantly, how to apply it in stressful situations.

The explication of the different breaths is simple and marvellously illustrated. "A Helpful Guidance" section at the end of the story gives further instructions and includes the Sanskrit name of the breath.

Not to be missed.



My sister, Alicia May

By Nancy Tupper Ling
Published by Pleasant St. Press, 2009

Beautifully illustrated, this picture book tells the story of two sisters, their feelings and relationships both with each other as well as with friends and school peer groups. Written from the older sister's point of view we see how Alicia May, who has Down Syndrome, behaves, what her interests are and how she reacts in various situations.

This is a touching account of a real life relationship which could be an excellent introduction for other children into the mind set and behaviour patterns of a child who has Down Syndrome.

To find more special education resources available, please download the catalogue for Primary / Intermediate Schools or Secondary Schools, or access our full online catalogue from the [Library pages of the IHC website](#).

For further information about borrowing these resources please contact the IHC Library.

If you are in Wellington we would love to have you visit us on Level 14 Willbank House, 57 Willis Street – open Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5.00 pm.

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IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Email: librarian@ihc.org.nz
Phone: 0800 442 442
Online Library Catalogue: ihc.org.nz/resources/our-library/

Books for older readers

SLANZA members share their reviews



A Confusion of Princes By Garth Nix

Reviewed by Annie Coppell,
Auckland Libraries

My internal chronometer said I had been a Prince for all of thirty-five minutes. If I made it through another twenty-five minutes, I'd be ahead of the statistical curve...

Two things sold me on this one: Garth Nix!; then there's the cover image – he looks like Adam Ant (*teenage-me fangirl swoon*).

A thoughtful, thought-provoking, exploration of humanity and technology, in a Space Opera setting.

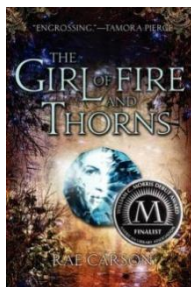
This is what science fiction is best at: making us question our lives and society now.

Khemri is an enhanced being – equipped with medical and technical enhancements which make him a Prince of the Empire. As an adult, he learns there are millions of princes, but only one can become Emperor and leader of the Imperial Mind. With his retinue of priests and Haddad, his Master Assassin, Khemri learns his destiny is not the same as other Princes, if only he can stay alive to discover all of it – and achieve it. As he faces physical challenges, Khemri begins to question his training and upbringing. As he is exposed to life outside, and time spent as a normal human being, Khemri's choices become even less clear-cut.

As much as I love this world, and Khemri, and would love to see more – the story arc is closed, and resolved. Alas.

A classic read along similar lines is *Enchantress from the stars* by Sylvia Louise Engdahl, or the more recent *The xenocide mission* by Ben Jeapes.

Something to offer your thoughtful 14+ science-fiction fan readers.



The girl of fire and thorns by Rae Carson

Reviewed by Annie Coppell,
Auckland Libraries

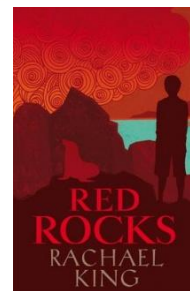
"Honor from death," I snap, "is a myth. Invented by the war torn to make sense of the horrific. If we die, it will be so that others may live. Truly honorable death, the only honorable death, is one that enables life."

Elisa is the second princess. She also the bearer of the Godstone, meaning she is the chosen one, marked by God for service in His name. Raised in ignorance of all this portends, Elisa is confused by the rapid changes in her life on her 16th birthday, when she is suddenly married to King Alejandro and, even more quickly, taken to his capital city, Brisadulce. On the way, their caravan is attacked and Elisa must fight and kill to survive. Upon arrival in Brisadulce, Elisa is even more confused when the marriage is kept secret. Somehow, this scholarly, naïve, unworldly – and overweight – young woman must negotiate politics, war preparations, and human emotions, to fulfil God's plan – if she could only figure out what that might be. A first novel, with two sequels planned, set in a world similar to Medieval Spain.

Now, this one has received mixed reviews – from 5-star 'love love love' to 1-star 'sick of the pity-fest'... So, I leave it over to you.

Myself, I'm more in the higher-star camp, albeit with some reservations. Elisa is whiny. Alejandro is one-dimensional. And the war scenes and strategies lean toward incompetent.

A solid read for 12+ girl fantasy readers, who are likely to move on to the wonderful, and classic, Tortall books by Tamora Pierce, *Graceling* by Kristin Cashore; the must-read *The Blue Sword* and *The hero and the crown* by Robin McKinley; and the hard-to-find-but-worth-the-effort *Crown duel* and *Court duel* by Sherwood Smith.



Red rocks by Rachael King

Reviewed by Bridget Schaumann,
Kings High School, Dunedin

Jake is spending the school holidays with his Dad, spending lots of time on the beach and exploring the rocks around the wild south coast of Wellington, while Dad writes books in his shed. The holiday is going much as he expected, when he stumbles across a seal skin hidden in a cave, which he decides to take home. The skin has an irresistible allure, and he sneaks it into his room and hides it. This decision has huge ramifications. It puts him and his Dad in danger from the strange woman his Dad has become more and more romantically involved with.

Jake begins to suspect that she is a selkie: a seal which can shape-shift by shedding its skin and assuming a very alluring human form. If the selkie cannot find its seal skin it cannot return to the sea. Trapped on land, always pining for their former life, the selkie will destroy the life of those who fall in love with them. Jake is worried for his Dad - could it be her skin he has taken?

Meanwhile, Jake is dealing with bullies who are terrorising the neighbourhood, a kindly but strange old man, the unusual girl Jake befriends and the unpredictable nature of the sea. It will be an adventurous and sometimes scary holiday for Jake.

Rachael King has written two adult novels, which have been well received, this is her first for children. She says of the book that it is the sort of book she would want her children to read. It is a refreshing change from the dystopian novels flooding the market right now, and proof that you don't need graphic violence in a story to engage readers in the action.

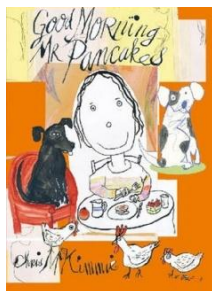
I thoroughly enjoyed this book and will be recommending it to my Year 9 and 10s who loved Des Hunt and Jack Lasenby's country stories. It would work for upper primary too.

I must comment on the cover, which is great, so much better than lots of other recent NZ books I've read.

Some parts of this review were previously published in the D.Scene newspaper in Dunedin in June.

Books for younger readers

SLANZA members share their reviews



Good Morning Mr Pancakes
by Chris McKimmie

Reviewed by Claire Cheeseman,
Laingholm Primary School

My first impression upon opening this book was: It's messy; it looks like a four year old did it. However, this book does not lend itself to a quick skim through; it needs thoughtful reading and the reader needs to take the time to unpack both the text and the artwork.

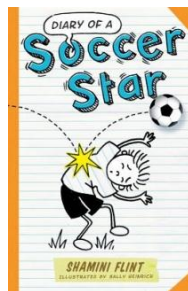
McKimmie uses naïve art, illustrations and dialogue to tell the story of Bee who is about to go on holiday. She is so excited, "I think my head might fall off."

The normal routines of ballet and football will be suspended. But first arrangements need to be made for the animals to be taken care of. As well as a child's perspective, the animals have their say too: "Not the Kennels?"

While holidaying on the island, Bee talks Dolphin, sleeps with a turkey at the end of her bed and climbs in and out of 100 holes. This reminded me of how easy it used to be to take imaginative children on holiday.

I enjoyed the scrapbook style of the book: the different fonts, sizes, pieces of text and pictures all mashed in together. This hardback picture book, a celebration of imagination, would be great for parents to share with their children aged about three to nine.

In a classroom setting it could be used to inspire diary or scrapbook writing; and also used for art.



Diary of a Soccer Star
by Shamini Flint

Reviewed by Claire Cheeseman,
Laingholm Primary School

Marcus Atkinson is 9, likes computer games, is good at math but doesn't like sport. Marcus' father is convinced that Marcus needs to be a TEAM PLAYER and signs him up to play soccer. Dad is a motivational speaker and has written a book about changing your life for the better. As Marcus says, 'My Dad speaks in capital letters.'

Marcus keeps a diary to record the frustrations that he knows are coming especially after scoring an own goal with his bottom. With a combination of words and drawings, Marcus shares the ups and downs of the soccer season and the surprise result of the soccer tournament final when Marcus makes a connection between geometry and soccer.

This humorous story is the first in a series of books featuring the uncoordinated Marcus and his family and friends. Although Marcus is annoyed at his father's pushiness, he bounces back from any setbacks, makes friends along the way and even does well sometimes. There is a lot of humour in Marcus' confusion over the soccer terms used by his coach and the other players and I was laughing out loud quite often.

The format of many cartoon drawings with little text make this book perfect for reluctant readers aged about 7 to 11, especially those interested in sport.



Diamond Spirit
by Karen Wood

Reviewed by Nova Gibson,
Massey Primary School, Auckland

This book is the first in a new trilogy by Karen Wood. Set in rural Australia, the story's central character is Jess, a teenage girl, who loves horses.

The story opens with the start of the summer holidays. Jess and her 'bestie', Shara, are setting up a secure area for their horses to have a rest. Disaster happens: Jess's horse, Diamond, is found stuck in a cattle grid and has to be put down. Jess suspects Shara knows more about this accident than she is letting on and their friendship is in jeopardy.

Jess makes some new friends who encourage her to enter the camp drafting competition and win some money towards buying a new horse, Walkabout.

Although no horse lover myself, the plot of this book contained enough mystery and drama to keep me reading. There is an interesting cast of characters, each with their own issues and foibles. The plot moves along at a cracking pace with no boring bits. The dialogue is interesting and realistic; and I did enjoy the interplays between the characters, wondering if they could ever resolve their differences.

There are two sequels to follow.