

Completed copy of lightning talk Overview and Outcomes

Title: Back to basics within a School Library – Discover and enhance student engagement and voice

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Delivery method: Oral Presentation

Supporting media: Power point, bound photo book

This presentation is designed to give strategies on how student voice can be used to foster engagement in a school library, or indeed could be used as a template with patrons of any library.

I will present 5 programs that have been successful in our school library, while generating awareness of a vibrant, flexible space for our community.

By tapping in to our student population and giving them multiple platforms to provide feedback and ideas, I was able to develop and implement programs that have broadened our library's appeal and visibility. These all incorporate the 'back to basics' theme of creating programs that are straightforward yet engaging to our patrons.

(Slide 1)

When first studying to become a Library Technician, a most valuable phrase stuck with me and become the bedrock of my practice and it was basic! Say yes and be seen to act immediately.

Say yes! Yes, I can help you! Yes! I can find that obscure book for you! Yes! That book recommendation is a great suggestion and Yes! It will be purchased!

With apologies to Michelle Knudsen; being a Library Lioness allows me to hunt out either the perfect book or a great alternate!

So how do I use student voice and engagement to foster an enhanced Library service?

Firstly the overarching requirements:

1: I researched ideas relentlessly until they were refined and then added this to my yearly goals document; this way discussion and decision making was made collaboratively with my Principal and administrators. All budgetary expenses and permissions were sought and gained.

2: I promote the life out of the programs; attending and presenting at staff meetings; using brochures, newsletters, assembly and library blog; as library professionals we use every method available to promote and encourage response and feedback, don't we?

To quote the Victorian Department of Education and training's 'Student Engagement Policy' it is "...valuing the positive contributions of students and creating a sense of belonging and connectedness that are conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning'

(SLIDE 2)

STUDENT VOICE – POST IT WALL

1. I Created and attached large initial outlines of our school's name: BBPS onto a large library display board.
2. 4 question plaques were placed underneath each letter: What books would you like the library to get? What would you like to see in the library (furniture, games etc)?, What do you like to do in your spare time? What are your favourite books?
3. Students then wrote their name, grade and answers on post it notes and added this to the mural
4. Outcome: Lovely collaborative display and a large data capture of student information; which once extrapolated formed the basis and evidence for future small and large purchases.

(Slide 3)

STUDENT VOICE – RESPONSE: ACTION TAKEN

My order book is made up of pages of post it notes! Once these are given to me, they go straight into the book, so I can reference them and once purchased give them to the ever grateful student. The look of excitement is priceless.

The most popular resources requested were:

1: A new couch

2: More cushions

3: More 'Weirdo series'- Ahn Do, 'Tree house' series – Andy Griffiths and Raina Telgemeier titles. Most surprising request: Books about surgery.

(Slide 4)

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT – BOOK CLUBS

Every term a voluntary book club for one grade level is convened at lunchtime fortnightly in the Library.

This offers students the opportunity to engage in another way with the Library and their peers; we meet at the beginning of lunch; with students able to bring their lunch and relax while listening and discussing a book. This is viewed as a great treat, as eating is not allowed in the Library!

This is set up in the following way:

The grade is chosen via either a staff meeting or advice from the Literacy co-ordinator.

A range of classic books suitable for the students' age are recommended by staff, students and myself.

At the first meeting we take a list of names, read the blurb and discuss each book, before holding a secret vote.

Titles chosen have included 'Flat Stanley'- Jeff Brown, 'George's Marvellous Medicine' – Roald Dahl and Bugalugs the Bum Thief' –Tim Winton.

The club is run using framework common to many book clubs with the bonus of an activity; such as making slime, creating a mural or games. Fostering

Engagement can certainly seen by the attendance at the final meeting is a big draw card to inspire students to participate; we have a picnic in the library with hot chocolate provided, rugs on the ground and guest readers. To attend students must have attended 3 or more meetings and contributed to discussions and activities.

(Slide 5)

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND VOICE – GUEST READER PROGRAM

The guest reader program is run either twice a term or as often as we can host a reader.

This has engaged our participating students with the opportunity to hear a variety and expressive range of voices; whilst allowing the wider school community an opportunity to share much loved books and connection to students.

Student readers are very popular within the program; all have actively asked to take part and most often chosen their own books to read. Students who have differing reading abilities; are able to tell stories, which is an exciting alternative and a marvellous connection to Indigenous traditions.

Grades are chosen at a staff meeting or open to all students via announcements at assembly, newsletter and library blog.

We use parents, staff members, students and community groups (The Equity Foundation – Literacy initiative Storyville). The possibilities are endless.

Currently we have a performer from Storyville who reads with sensational expression and vitality.

(Slide 6)

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT – LIBRARY MASCOT

Library Mascots: I have had a few! Library Whale (Wilbur); which a whole school award was built around. The Library Rabbit (a giant plush toy) and now Riley Readalot!

Many benefits can be observed of the Library Mascot.

Riley can be dressed for every theme, special day or occasion; Melbourne Cup, Easter, Book Week, May the 4th; you name it! Riley is a dog for all seasons!

One of the engagement outcomes is the appreciation that students who require support either emotionally or with reading confidence are able to use Riley to listen or just be without judgement.

A library mascot like Riley brings student engagement and voice to the fore.

(Slide 7)

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND VOICE - LUNCHTIME LIBRARY

The library is open for the second half of lunch every day.

Student voice can be illustrated by the timetable which was designed via input from the student representative council. This ratified that there would be separate boys and girls days on the computers and a non computer day.

An exemplar of voice and engagement are that the Library Captains assist often with borrowing, putting out drawings, pens, pencils, puppet theatre, games and colouring in.

Voice can be revealed by new initiatives which have been implemented within the library including: board games, reading awards, lunchtime clubs (learn Elvish, chess, coding and student reading clubs).

Engagement can be seen in very happening hub of activity that lunchtime library offers!

In conclusion: I see that developing authentic voice and engagement with our students gives rise to a school of citizen librarians! Our students have the opportunity to have an enhanced experience as a real part of our library via discussion, quality and exciting programs, make the library theirs!

Be the Lion or Lioness that roars for your library; be bold, be brave, be adventurous and seek the curiosity and engagement of your community.

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