



Fun and games in the Library

Creativity is the name of the game at Swinburne University of Technology's Croydon campus library. The TAFE only campus has a high youth population and to encourage students to use the service we have come up with some 'off-the-wall' ideas. We held an successful youth focused Living Library, opened a recreational space with a Wii and, in the lead up to our major library refurbishments in July, the youth group produced some 'demolition art' (street/graffiti art) on the library walls.

Background

Swinburne University is a dual sector institution with five campuses across Australia. The Croydon campus is located in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne and is currently the smallest of the five campus libraries and is to undergo a major extension and refurbishment due to begin in July.

The campus offers award winning programs to students from as young as 15 and who come from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds. The courses include:

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL): A Victorian Senior Secondary Certificate that sits alongside the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), based on applied learning. It has been designed to address the needs of young people in Year 11, and is offered at the intermediate level. The campus runs 7 VCAL programs with about 140 students amounting to 140,000 Student Contact Hours (SCH).

The Certificate in Vocational Engagement (CVE) for Youth is an alternative program for Year 10 students designed to meet the needs of those wanting to move into Yr 11 VCE, VCAL, apprenticeships, vocational training, or further study and work. The campus runs three programs with 60 students (27,000 SCH).

Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA) is aimed at students who have not yet completed Year 10. It has an emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills with students moving into Certificate III courses, VCAL, VCE or employment. The CGEA program has currently 15 students (9,000 SCH) with staff working on getting a second program up and running.

Finally, a Young Mums Program enabling young mothers to continue their education. They are able to choose what modules they would like to study from the VCAL and CGEA suite of programs, allowing the young mum to design an education program to suit their specific needs.

Over the years there has been great synergies built between the Library and the youth programs and the Library awards prizes, recognising student effort and application.

But we wanted to do more.....

Living Library

On September 4th last year, the Croydon Library held its first ever Living Library, where you borrow a person instead of a book - the purpose being to break down barriers and reduce prejudice. The 'books' were extraordinary and included

a blind member of the 'Choir of Hard Knocks', Burmese refugees and two local police officers who injected the day with humour and fun.

Have a look at the JTV video clip if you would like more information <http://abc.net.au/jtv/video/default.htm?clip=livinglibrary> or the Andrew Denton interview on Enough Rope <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/enoughrope/transcripts/s1776670.htm>

Recreational area with Wii

Installing a Nintendo Wii was about engaging the large youth population at the Croydon campus with the library environment. It has become the focal point of the newly formed recreation area and fills the library with an energy we've never had before - lucky for us, very few people view this energy as a nuisance!

More knowledgeable students gave demonstrations and recommended future games for us to purchase.

Demolition art

As previously mentioned the Library is due for a major refurbishment and extension due to commence in July. The Youth worker on campus developed the idea with Library staff to allow the students to 'trash the library' by painting street art on the walls soon to be demolished. We set aside one large wall in the recreational space near the Wii and after lots of discussion and planning, the students 'trashed the Library' on the 6th May. Not only was it lots of fun but it gave the students a chance to claim the Library as their own space and broke down a few barriers in the process.

The staff at Croydon Library have embraced these new ways of working; making the Library a place where young people are welcome.



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