

At last

2009 is a most exciting year for us as we finally got the long-awaited refurbishment which included many of the ideas collected in London: the red floor featured in all the Idea Stores, a computer section with a spacecraft feel, a purpose-built film and sound room, brightly coloured furnishings, a chameleon desk finish, a cafe, the latest funky wallpaper, and best of all, "The Idea Shop" sign right next to the entrance. We have officially arrived!

Where to next?

We are already attracting a very large clientele, with barely any breathing room each morning. Our challenge is to keep them coming and stay abreast of new client interests, technological developments, and the latest of everything, without neglecting the important development of a good research collection and the skills they need to access information.

Students come into our Idea Shop to do all the usual things that students need to do, but they also walk into a world where there are always new and exciting ideas to encourage their imagination and fire them to try something different.

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Diversity and multiculturalism through fiction

When it comes to teaching diversity and the power of literacy, literature can prove a powerful medium. A conceptual paper focusing on Khaled Hosseini's best-selling novels *The kite runner* and *A thousand splendid suns*, illustrates literature's ability to expand and enhance education with multicultural themes stemming from the novels.

Looking at Hosseini's geographical and cultural depiction of his homeland, Afghanistan, the authors, Mary F. Agnello, Reese H. Todd, Bolanle Olaniran, and Thomas A. Lucey, consider how Afghanistan has now become more accessible to the outside world, particularly in international classrooms, and explore the notion of censorship and education in our global environment.

Globalisation has changed how individuals perceive their national identity and culture, which presents a challenge to current education practice. Agnello et al. argue that "Political and cultural borders that once separated nation and states, along with people who reside in them, are increasingly blurred. Hence managing difference along with the friction created, is becoming one of the central functions of modern nations that call for new educational agendas..."

"From education and learning perspectives, individuals and students who are intellectually curious, cognitively inclined, socially responsible, democratically engaged, productive, and globally conscious members of the 21st century should not be educated in the 20th century model of education."

Citing a "pandemic of boredom" and "the redundancy in today's schooling", the authors stress that "students may have to engage in collaborative learning that circumvents traditional classrooms ... to deepen their understanding of issues affecting their world and existence, especially when local laws or teachers are prevented from exposing them to such information." The conflicts that arise between different value systems sometimes lead to censorship, which has been the case for Hosseini's novels, banned in some classes both in Afghanistan and the USA.

The study discusses further the concepts of global citizenship education and diversity pedagogy and how today's emerging technologies provide more opportunities for international exchange. Diversity pedagogy is a concept that links culture and cognition (Hernandez-Sheets, 2005). Within teaching, the importance culture plays in learning must be recognised.

Hernandez-Sheets (2005) identifies a framework of eight recommendations to

educate young people about diversity, which is adapted below:

1. Develop diversity consciousness
2. Promote ethnic identity development
3. Promote opportunities for social Interaction
4. Create a safe classroom context
5. Encourage language learning
6. Select culturally inclusive resources
7. Experiment with instructional strategies
8. Use multiple ways to access competency

Diversity pedagogy allows students to question their identity, take pride in their ethnicity and express themselves openly. Novels like those written by Khaled Hosseini provide opportunities for students to interact across geographic borders through the internet, on fan sites or forums.

These students are able to understand and comprehend the information in this literature, express ideas and opinions, and make decisions and solve problems, all important aspects of literacy and education.

Educators today are more responsive to other cultures and can provide educational opportunities, through virtual technologies, to create international cultural bonds.



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The power of literacy is one of the central themes within *The kite runner*, for instance, where the narrator's desire to become a writer distinguishes him from his peers. The novel highlights how the written word can build a sense of social status for the individual in cultures like Afghanistan.

The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, accessible online, further raises awareness and support for various literacy initiatives as well as teacher training courses and creating libraries in Afghanistan.

The UN Millennium Development Goals of Afghanistan documented that Afghanistan has one of the lowest literacy levels in the world, between 9–18 % (UN, 2005).

The paper, entitled "Afghanistan and Multiculturalism in Khaled Hosseini's Novels: Study of Place and Diversity", is published by Emerald Group Publishing in volume 3 Issue 2 of *Multicultural Education & Technology Journal*.

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Collection development in early childhood resources

The Australian Catholic University is a multi-campus institution comprising of six campus libraries, five of which house collections for the Faculty of Education. In 2007, a project was developed to start building the collection for the new Early Childhood Education program that was commencing in 2008.

One key outcome of the project has been the establishment of important new partnerships with academic staff to facilitate collaborative collection development. Academic staff in Early Childhood contributed their expertise,

and suggestions according to what resources were required for the curriculum. This partnership ensured that the library had a relevant and well balanced collection and has raised faculty perception of liaison librarians. This, in turn, has established a solid foundation for future liaison work. The library's resources were promoted to students through displays and exhibits to assist in locating a variety of book and non-book items.

To assist us with our understanding of the kinds of resources used in early childhood, we visited Early Learning Centres in conjunction with the academic staff. We discovered a shift from a cognitive development to a socio-cultural approach to learning. Children interact and use each other's strengths and there is interdependence and cooperation as opposed to independence and competition. Children develop good social skills and learn what their strengths are, and are seen as capable individuals who can direct their learning experiences with the facilitation of the teacher. Knowledge gained from visiting the centres was then incorporated into the collection development of the library's resources. This included:

- **Concrete materials**
The library explored the concept of including concrete materials, or realia, in the collection. The collection includes puppets, dolls, felt, and magnetic resources.
- **Community experiences**
Children are exposed to their community and city as much as possible. They visit their parents' workplaces and become involved in the work environment. Prepping them with our resources in the collection on community helps is beneficial. Some experiences included visiting a bakery to handle food and sell bread to customers, providing real-world math; going to a café to order a babycino, to build social and numeracy skills; and plotting city sites to determine what constitutes a city.
- **Art**
Children's development is not considered in compartmental stages. Our library acquired art books that use photography and the processes of art and modern philosophies of how a child learns art. Some of the work created at an early learning centre included the Harbour Bridge made of wire, a large canvas showing Sydney in Ken Done style, disposable camera photos (after they are taught how a camera works) documenting an event or something the children are studying, and heads of a pharaoh

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