

TEACHER LIBRARIANS

and Anubis the god of the underworld from Ancient Egypt made of paper mache, then painted in glorious gold and black.

- **Popular culture**

Children studied superheroes and the effects that popular culture and the media has on our lives. Children record their experiences and if a child introduces a topic, they may talk about it, read a story related to it, create something, or study it in the garden.

The visits gave us practical knowledge on how children learn best through experiences and that there is more to literacy than reading and writing. Gaining this insight into the learning processes of young children, as well as working collaboratively with academic staff, provided the project team with a foundation and inspiration for acquiring material for the collection. Feedback from the students has been positive and the collection is highly used by both early childhood and primary education students.

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Building literacy: synergies & partnerships

Public libraries have a significant role to play supporting families and educational institutions in building literacy. They offer an accessible building, are open at times customers want to use them, and have staff who can assist in navigating the maze of information available. Traditionally, public libraries have offered this service by providing access to a huge range of materials and resources to encourage both children and adults to develop their literacy skills and a love of reading.

However, in recent years, public libraries have also started offering specific programs designed to build literacy. This has been a key interest for Fairfield City Library Service where 67.3 % of the population speak a language other than English. This means that many families are unable to help their children with their homework and assignments. It also means that many adults in the community struggle with English language and literacy skills. In order to support the work done by the schools and the agencies working with adults, we have designed a suite of programs and resources including Family Literacy classes, Homework Centres, YourTutor online homework help, Babytime, Storytime with Dad, English Conversation Classes, and orientation tours and classes for ESL groups from schools and community agencies.

The programs all work due to the synergies and partnerships developed between the library and other agencies and businesses. These take some time to develop, but are a valuable asset to libraries which often have extremely tight resource allocations. Our partners have access to staffing, resources, and an audience that can complement what we, as a library service, bring to the project. The Family Literacy and YourTutor programs were initially funded through CDSE (Community Development Support Expenditure) in partnership with local clubs. As this is non-recurrent funding, Council then continued the funding. However, as these programs have grown and developed over the years the funding structure has needed to change accordingly.

One area of exceptional growth was the YourTutor service. The number of students wishing to access tutors in maths, science, English, and research outstripped the funding Council was able to contribute. The University of Western Sydney is now an enthusiastic partner in providing the YourTutor online homework service to an ever growing number of local students – over 2500 students from January to July 2009 alone. UWS' support has dollar matched Fairfield City Council's contribution and enabled

thousands of extra students to access this resource, thereby helping to build the literacy, numeracy, research, IT skills, and confidence of local students.

Storytime with Dad is run in partnership with Learning Links, The Smith Family, and UnitingCare Burnside. These agencies all have an interest in building children's literacy and language skills as well as encouraging fathers to be active participants in their child's development. The sessions are run once a quarter and only use male staff to role model good emergent literacy practices to the dads and granddads who attend with their children. The sessions are also multicultural and multilingual – stories and songs are in community languages as well as English to encourage dads to build their family language skills. This project shows the synergies that can come into play when libraries work with other local agencies to produce a program none could offer individually.

Recently there has been increased interest in adult and young adult customers looking to improve their language and literacy skills. Groups from ACL (Australian Centre for Languages), MTC Work Solutions, the Intensive English Unit at local high schools, Australian Citizenship classes from the local community centre, and Atlas (a service for young adults with disabilities) come to the library for tours and classes in specific areas of interest. The groups are given registration forms and library brochures, in community languages if needed, before their first visit. Filling in the registration form then becomes a class literacy exercise: addresses are checked by teachers against their class rolls and registration forms returned to the library. When the students come for their first session, they receive their library card and can start borrowing straight away.

The increasing number of these groups has encouraged us to start a new literacy collection (Beginner Readers) to fill gaps in our existing collections. Beginner Readers will be mainly aimed at children learning to read, but will also cater to young people and

Library and Information Managers.

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adults struggling with English literacy. Many of the items are non fiction and should have a wide appeal to the broad cross section of the community needing literacy and reading support.

Building partnerships and synergies with educational institutions, community agencies, and businesses is a logical way for public libraries to continue supporting their local communities. Literacy is an important issue for all of us and is an area where public libraries are ideally placed to showcase their resources, services, and programs. Partnerships and synergies give us opportunities to get more out of the resources available to us – staff, time, promotion, good will, and money.

Carolyn Bourke
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Assistance for bi-literacy through AIATSIS

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Library holds the world's premier collection devoted to Australian Indigenous studies. Teachers and librarians can access resources from the library to facilitate the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum and enhance literacy outcomes for Indigenous Australians. The resources include web resources, subject guides, databases (eg. Australian Education Index- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders subset), readers, teachers notes, kits, and a variety of print resources, including Indigenous education journals. They can be accessed through the AIATSIS website (<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au>) or through the Mura® online catalogue (<http://mura.aiatsis.gov.au>). Any queries can be directed to the Client Services Reference Desk (library@aiatsis.gov.au, 02 6246 1182).

Librarians and teachers have a role in ensuring that their collections include resources related to bi-literacy or bilingual programs. Bi-literacy or bilingual programs involve children learning to read and write in their own languages and then transferring these skills to reading and writing in Standard Australian English (SAE). The Australian Indigenous Languages Collection of the AIATSIS Library holds 3700 titles including picture dictionaries, grammars, and readers in Indigenous Australian languages as well as items in language and English.

There are also a number of publishers as sources of material acquisition for libraries. They all publish items by and about Indigenous Australians. **Aboriginal Studies Press** (<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/asp/about.html>) publishes the *Little Red, Yellow and Black Book*, a resource that provides an entry-point to Indigenous culture and history. It includes online links to teacher's notes, further readings and is freely available from the following web page: <http://lryb.aiatsis.gov.au/>. When used as a teaching resource, the book introduces almost all areas required for study in secondary Indigenous Studies curricula throughout Australia, as well as large parts of Australian History and studies of society and environment (SOSE). ASP also publish a variety of children's readers dealing with traditional life, kinship, landscape, and cultural knowledge. Some have been written and illustrated by children with the support of their teachers.

Magabala Books (<http://www.magabala.com/>), based in Broome is Australia's oldest independent Indigenous publishing house. They publish the *Aussie Kids'* board book series, which aims to encourage early childhood literacy. They also publish readers dealing with Indigenous cultural subjects.

Indij Readers (<http://www.indijreaders.com.au/>) publishes a series of culturally appropriate, contemporary Indigenous classroom readers. It consists of three series, which are made up of readers, teachers' guides, audio CDs, a 10-minute film, and some titles

available in big book format. The readers are significant because the stories have been gathered using extensive consultations with Indigenous Elders and communities. The Teachers' Guides contain many methods for addressing literacy building upon the Indigenous focus, including cultural notes, guided reading lesson plans, and blackline masters.

IAD Publishing, is based at the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) in Alice Springs and publishes language dictionaries and learner's guides, books for children and young adults. Each language project produces a comprehensive and detailed language dictionary, as well as basic learners' guides, teaching materials, specialised books, and other reading and audio materials. Their picture dictionaries are an important feature of sustaining, retaining and promoting language and literacy.

The AIATSIS Library and ASP are involved in Indigenous Literacy Day as a means of promoting the types of resources that are available on the subject and to raise money for the Indigenous Literacy Project (ILP). On Indigenous Literacy Day, which this year was held on 2 September, ASP contributes \$5.00 from every copy sold of the Aboriginal Australia map to the ILP, which is an initiative between the Australian Book Industry and The Fred Hollows Foundation. Every school library ought to have one of these maps and if you are considering buying one, this would be the day to do it! For further details on ILD, see <http://www.worldwithoutbooks.org/ILD/Index.aspx>

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