

Crossing Boundaries with Reading: A National Year of Reading project

Crossing Boundaries with Reading is an exciting project currently underway at Marsden State High School library in Logan, Queensland. It aims to celebrate the National Year of Reading through a program of activities that promote reading, creative expression, and digital literacy among Year 8 and 9 students.

The project, which is funded by a QUT Engagement Innovation Grant, involves a partnership between Marsden SHS, the Marsden teacher-librarian, Shirley Birrell, and teachers; Logan City Libraries; School Libraries Association of Queensland; QUT academics and students from the MEd (Teacher-Librarianship), MIT (LIS), and BEd programs; and QUT Library. It builds on a close existing relationship between Marsden State High School and Logan City Libraries, and a flourishing Manga Club at Marsden SHS.

Drawing on the popularity of digital technologies and manga in youth culture, the project enables students to *cross boundaries with reading* in various ways designed to engage their interest and learning. *Boundaries* are understood as spaces of opportunity rather than limitation.

So the students are:

- crossing technological boundaries by learning tools and techniques for digital storytelling and reading
- crossing cultural boundaries by exploring manga and other storytelling traditions, extending their reading horizons
- crossing personal boundaries by developing new understandings about their community, their capabilities, and their opportunities, through reading and digital storytelling

For the launch on Wednesday 22 August, 70 students participated in a full day manga drawing workshop led by manga artist David Lovegrove. The students' comments on David's website (available here: http://davidlovegrove.com/?page_id=110) are testament to the learning and fun they experienced.

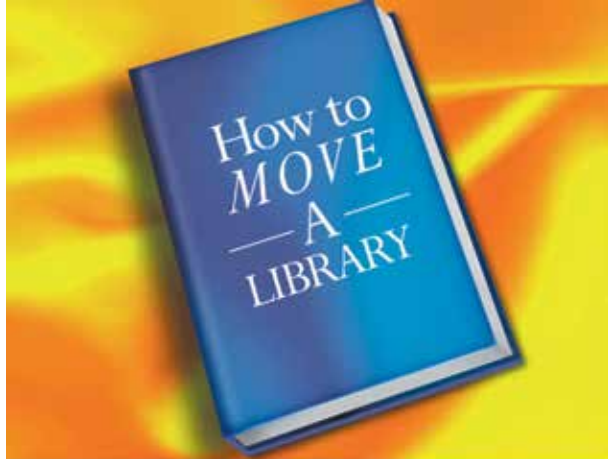
Recently Marsden students crossed educational boundaries at an on-campus day at QUT Kelvin Grove. They participated in design and technology workshops presented by academics from across the university; interacted with QUT student mentors from Education and Library and Information Science courses; had some hands-on practice in the library games lab; and experienced lunch in the student canteen. Forthcoming highlights also include a three-day workshop during the last week of term 4, featuring NYR ambassador and youth author, Tristan Bancks. The closing celebration at Marsden Public Library on Thursday, 13 December will showcase the manga artwork and stories that students have created through the program.

The project also offers an opportunity for Marsden SHS teachers to extend their professional learning boundaries through workshops on social media, digital storytelling, and youth texts. The project website will present professional development materials, along with students' digital stories.

As a longer term objective, the project partners are developing an innovative approach to promoting reading and digital literacy, which is potentially of benefit to Marsden SHS students and transferable to other school communities. In the meantime, we're all having a highly enjoyable and rewarding experience crossing boundaries with reading!

For further information and photos, please visit the Crossing Boundaries with Reading website: <http://cbwr.edu.au>

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