

ASLA XXII National Conference 2011 Report
Sydney 2 -5 October
Saint Ignatius College, Riverview

The ASLA XXII Biennial Conference **Innovation Instruction Integration** was held at Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview, Sydney from 2 – 5 October, 2011. Delegates could choose to stay on site in the boarding facilities within the spacious grounds of the college or in other accommodation throughout the city and travel to the venue by shuttle bus. The view across to the city from Ramsey Hall, the venue for keynote sessions, was truly a beautiful sight. I couldn't help thinking that Yard Duty would be a pleasurable experience in such a setting!



View from the balcony of Ramsey Hall



Ramsey Hall - Venue for keynote sessions

As always happens, I came away from the conference with my head spinning from all the stimulation and ideas presented but the following keynote speakers and their presentations dominated. They have driven my action for this term and will continue to do so into 2012.

In his keynote address, **Jeff Piontek** from the Hawaii Technology Academy said that today's teacher librarian has to be an information technology/information literacy expert for today's learners. Learning today is social and kids are always “on” and always connected. The networked student focuses on problem solving, embraces digital tools, designs real world challenges and has an authentic audience. Our students will need to be effective communicators - able to create something new and able to communicate across culture, time and distance. They will need to be effective collaborators - able to collaborate to reach common goals, able to lead or follow and have no boundaries.

The title of **Karen Bonanno's** keynote address *A profession at the tipping point: time to change the game plan* confirmed my fears about the state of teacher librarianship in Australia. For some time now I have been hearing first hand of changes to the role and value placed on teacher librarians in schools and Karen made some very salient points in regard to this situation. She claimed that teacher librarians are not alone in facing threats to their existence - many positions in schools are in jeopardy. Some teacher librarians have been invisible within their schools and their contribution and value to the learning program can't be seen and as **Mal Booth** later said in his keynote address, *Dangerous Ideas for Libraries*, “An invisible librarian is a vulnerable librarian.” We can't afford to look at the glass as half empty. In her game plan overview, Karen provided ways in which teacher librarians can be proactive. She outlined the five finger plan to success from Trump and Kiyosaki, 2011, 'Guide to developing your Midas touch' in *The Midas Touch*, Plata Publishing, Scottsdale, AZ. I found this to be a particularly useful tool and have since shared it on numerous occasions over coffee or dinner with colleagues and with the staff at my school. The Australian Curriculum, Karen says, provides a great opportunity for teacher librarians particularly in the area of History. “We need to be seen to be engaged in what's happening at the National level. ... Feel yourself, hear yourself, see yourself within the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum. ... Claim your space to support History curriculum

development and delivery.” Throughout her presentation Karen stressed “Your rhetoric must resonate with your audience. Who is it and what is your rhetoric?” If you'd like to learn more about Karen's game plan and the five fingers to success, the slides from her presentation can be viewed at <http://www.slideshare.net/ASLAonline/profession-at-tipping-point>.

After **Judy O'Connell's** keynote, *Learning without frontiers: School libraries and meta-literacy in action* my mantra has been “Don't be a “retro” teacher librarian!” She challenged my thinking, learning and practice with “What is your digital adaptability? How are they (the students) learning because of your learning? ... There is a large opportunity cost for schools whose teachers are not fully aware and fully equipped searchers and managers of information. ... It isn't about learning how to use a particular digital tool. It isn't about social media. It isn't about new media, augmented reality, immersive story-telling. It **is** about our **ability** to understand when and how we move across the ever-expanding **meta-literacy** environments.” Judy referred to many applications and tools during her presentation which can be viewed at <http://www.slideshare.net/heyjudeonline/learning-without-frontiers-school-libraries-and-metaliteracy-in-action>.

During both Jeff and Judy's presentations I couldn't help feeling that we were getting a bit of a telling off but also that they were probably “preaching to the converted” in that setting. Their message needs to get to a broader audience within education. I found myself wishing that ICT technicians, classroom teachers, principals and other education leaders were there to hear what they had to say because it's not just about “retro” teacher librarians and libraries. We don't want “retro” classrooms, “retro” pedagogy, “retro” ICT infrastructure in our schools. There are sometimes a few hurdles for teacher librarians who are trying not to be “retro” but this one is not going to let them stop her. They also raised in my mind issues to do with equity of access to ICT and it's very likely that some students will have a lot less access than others.

The term metaliteracy, referred to by Judy O'Connell, was a new one for me and if I'd heard it before I didn't really have an understanding of what it meant. I did some research and found that the term was developed by Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi E. Jacobson. The following definition comes from their journal article 'Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy' in *College & Research Libraries* vol. 72 no. 1 January 2011 62-7. The full text of the article is available at <http://crl.acrl.org/content/72/1/62.full.pdf+html>.

“Metaliteracy is an overarching and self-referential framework that integrates emerging technologies and unifies multiple literacy types. This redefinition of information literacy expands the scope of generally understood information competencies and places a particular emphasis on producing and sharing information in participatory digital environments. While information literacy prepares individuals to access, evaluate, and analyze information, metaliteracy prepares individuals to actively produce and share content through social media and online communities.”

So where to from here? Here are a few of my goals. I am determined to continue to develop my own knowledge and skills in using an increasingly wider range of tools, applications and devices and to build their use into the curriculum at my school wherever possible. This term I have made myself available for after school sessions to help teachers to develop their resources in Moodle which is the Learning Management System we use. I have been playing with cloud based tools Prezi and Glogster and used Prezi to share the five finger plan to success so that I could show this tool to teachers at the same time. I was excited by the presentation by **Henrietta Miller** (Roseville College, NSW) in which she demonstrated how she uses Edmodo – a secure learning network for teachers and students – to have her students connect and collaborate - <http://www.edmodo.com>. It looks and works a bit like Facebook so I can see that it would be very motivating for students. I have joined the Edmodo network and belong to the Teacher Librarians of Edmodo group set up within it. I intend to learn more about how to use it and set up a group for teachers in our school so that they can learn about it and hopefully get their students using it too. After two sessions of *The Googlification of Everything* with **Chris Betcher** (PLC, Sydney), a Google Certified Teacher, I now know that Google does an awful lot more than what I've been doing with it. Again, I'll offer PD to staff who'd like to know more and will offer PD at meetings of hub groups that I am member of. I have a blog in progress <http://asla2011.blogspot.com/> and will be sharing my notes from the conference and links to presentations through it.

Many thanks to SLASA for their contribution to the registration cost to attend the conference.

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