

Technostress

Sixty teacher librarians from many parts of Victoria convened for the Schools Section Victorian Group's successful one-day conference held at Methodist Ladies College, Kew, on Saturday, 13 May 1995.

Key address

If one more person mentions the superhighway... was the telling title of the keynote address given by Celeste McNicholas, full-time teacher librarian from Marist Sisters College in Woolwich, New South Wales. Celeste regaled her audience with her personal experiences of technostress peppered with practical advice and humorous tips for coping with everyday technological problems.

Celeste reminded us that technology is only a tool and a means to an end; we must always determine our users' needs and plan our electronic learning facilities accordingly.

Celeste enabled us to evaluate our strategic position in the area of electronic learning and dispelled the myth that we should understand all the computer jargon. We were encouraged to ensure that our professional skills are exercised in all aspects of technological development within our school libraries.

CD-ROM workshop

Marion Rebesco is the head teacher-librarian at Westbourne and Williamstown Grammar and in the course of her work takes every opportunity to incorporate suitable technology into the learning environment. Marion shared many hints and practical ideas for incorporating electronic resources into the curriculum and managing their use in a busy school library area. The combination of theory and practice was much appreciated.

The workshop then proceeded to hands-on practice.

NEXUS workshop

Rae Fankhauser is well known in our library community as actively liaising with, and publicly lobbying the cause of, the teacher librarian. Rae's recent work has been involved with learning enhancement through electronic information. She has developed a computer-based tutorial package to facilitate the use of NEXUS.

Rae emphasised that electronic learning/information is additional to, but not overtaking from, other learning!

Internet workshop

Laurice Brady is the user services librarian at Methodist Ladies College and has recently completed a Masters thesis on *Internet in Victorian schools*. This background ably qualifies Laurice not only to introduce participants to the mysteries of the Internet, but also to discuss some advantages and disadvantages of this on-line service for the educational environment.

Laurice emphasised the primary focus of the school library to be learning, teaching and information retrieval but illustrated the shift in emphasis from reference and storage to that of support and training for students in sourcing the appropriate information.

Participants were given the guidance needed to explore the Internet. One clear message of this session, and the conference in general, was the huge amount of time needed to explore electronic resources. In busy school libraries the real challenge will be to make this time available on a regular, on-going basis.

Plenary session

The conference plenary session was conducted by Melbourne University lecturer, Allan Thomas. Allan linked the key elements of the day's work — technology, teacher librarians, learning and curriculum. He reminded us of our selection criteria in relation to electronic resources and recalled some of the implications for successful technology use.

Our speakers had all stressed the cons as well as the pros of electronic sources and the real challenge in the implementation of technology for effective learning.

Teacher librarians were affirmed in their role as information specialists, encouraged to evaluate new technologies always in light of curriculum needs, warned against the pressure tactics and jargon overkill of sales representatives, and advised to hasten slowly in order to implement electronic resources successfully.

Nola Smolders - John Paul College, Frankston, Victoria.

PS...

Due to the overwhelming response to this inservice, ALIA Schools Section (Vic Group) are currently planning a repeat conference in August. All interested in participating please watch the next Events section for application details!

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