



depth help, the Rovers will refer students to other Learning Commons services (i.e. the Library, Teaching and Learning, IT and Careers).

As well as providing targeted just-in-time assistance to 'stuck' students, the Rover Program provides experiences and skill development in a student leadership framework that is invaluable for the Rovers themselves, for their own studies and academic skills, their personal and social development, and for their future careers. All in all, it's proving to be a very beneficial component of learning and literacy as offered to students within the VU Library / Learning Commons.

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## Alter ego: To change your self worth

In response to the growing needs of the community, the Gold Coast City Council library service approved a pilot program for the Beenleigh Branch Library that combined literacy, multicultural and children's services. The outcomes and ongoing work associated with the program have enabled the public library to have an important and positive effect on the surrounding community.

During 2007, the Young Persons (YP) team at Beenleigh Branch Library created an interactive literacy program named Alter Ego, designed to promote information and computer literacy for children aged between ten and twelve years. The program includes elements that proactively support the settlement of migrant and refugee children within the community, addressing social and cultural concerns.

The impetus to develop the program was due to staff of Beenleigh Branch Library identifying an increase in disruptive behaviour by children visiting the library during the after-school period, with the children exhibiting a lack of engagement with library resources.

The main objective of the Alter Ego program was to give all children the confidence to learn how to read, and how to support one another to realise their individual potential. Designed to assist in the settlement process of the migrant and refugee children who had recently moved into the area, it was hoped that the program would give the children a sense of belonging in the community.

A bi-weekly literacy based program, Alter Ego consists of a literacy session that includes book chapter readings, craft and other activities that require participants to read and comprehend instructions. Another session focuses on computer literacy that includes one half hour tutorial and free time on the computers.

During the 2007 sessions, the YP Team worked hard to facilitate the building of relationships between all participants regardless of their background. As the sessions progressed, specific areas of low literacy were identified, and the 2008 program now includes flash cards and word picture associations that address particular literacy areas.

The Beenleigh Branch Library has experienced many positive outcomes since the commencement of Alter Ego. Participants have been practising their writing and typing outside of Alter Ego sessions and speak to staff respectfully. Staff have also witnessed an increase in racial tolerance. Non-English speaking parents now visit the library to obtain library membership cards for their children through a translator and some children have encouraged their friends to join up, acting as translators for their friend's parents; the parents becoming aware of library services and the as a positive environment for their children.

The success of the program has enabled the library to partner with the neighbouring primary school. By using the much appreciated resources and knowledge provided by the school, the library has been able to support school programs by engaging in cross-curricular activities.

Alter Ego has proved to be a highly successful program based firmly on respect, acceptance and literacy. Programs such as Alter Ego identify the library as a place for everyone in the community through its support of social interaction, cultural diversity and education.

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## 90% student satisfaction with the Curtin library's services

Curtin University of Technology's most recent student survey reveals a 90% satisfaction rating with the Library's provision of service; an impressive validation of how the library has embraced new communication and social technologies to assist clients.

Helping clients at point of need is the essence of librarianship and it is what the Curtin University Library model is all about. Whether based on campus or off, all clients can receive help through Ask Online, the library's chat service; by email, telephone or SMS queries. Other services and resources include online tutorials, podcasts, i-lectures, e-reserve, e-journals, e-books, databases, library workshops and roving assistants to help at points of need within the Library.

A continuous referral network is very much an integral part of the Curtin model and its success is supported by the latest Curtin Annual Student Satisfaction survey results.

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