



Participating students were given show bags. The teachers said that they will definitely bring more classes next year. Commenting on the workshop, one teacher said, "Oh, there is so much information. I think I will come in school holidays and find out more information myself".

It was a very rewarding experience for us. Now we promote these databases and websites whenever we get an opportunity while answering reference enquiries. We are confident that the use of our databases will increase and our customers will get value for the money spent.

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## Reference outreach and digital literacy at Ashfield Library

Like most public libraries, the Ashfield Library spends a lot of time and money on developing online resources and, like most public libraries, we want them to be cost effective and time efficient. In a venture to increase use and awareness of these tools, a plan was hatched to trial an outreach program into our local schools.

The plan was to target grades 4, 6 and 10. Each audience group is very different and requires a separate method of implementation. A meeting was held with the Teacher Librarian to establish the curriculum needs and the appropriate level of information for each grade.

With grade 4, we focussed on fun and help. We explored the World Wide Web, learned how to decipher URL addresses, played with the council website and the library *Pretxts* Blog, then finished with a discussion of the flaws of parents. Why is it that parents never know how to do Grade 4 homework—didn't they pass Grade 4?! We then 'played' with the *yourtutor* program: it was a snap, and she knew all the Grade 4 homework. Most of the students had experience with the web and some had even had chat sessions before. If only Grade 6 could have been that much fun!

Grade 6 didn't seem to think it was that much 'fun' to play with a librarian on the web. They all spent at least an hour a day on the web, but some were shocked to discover that the URL actually told you something about the site. We actually got rather sidetracked on the discussion of how to evaluate and decide to 'trust' a website, that we never made it into all the databases. We looked at ANZRC, which a few of the more studious sorts found interesting. Many of the others found free magazine articles moderately entertaining, except for one young man who was ecstatic and couldn't wait to show his mum that *Woman's Day* is all free on the library website. We flew through the Blog and ended with a quick *yourtutor* preview.

Now I must confess that 12 classes of Grade 4 and 6 over two weeks had this librarian exhausted and I am yet to tackle Grade 10. The Plan for Grade 10 is to try and shift their focus for research and homework materials from the web and into databases, and of course detour via the Blog with finally the *yourtutor* program.

I must also say that it is essential to supply notes for everything you want them to remember—lots of short and plain English ones. The class can't take notes, interact with your digital presentation and keep a cracking pace all at once. It is also important to break the session into 10-minute lots: attention spans get stretched and you will always be fighting with a myriad of distractions. I prefer to have one computer with a projector, and then to take turns with an assistant. Probably the most important thing is—don't forget the rewards. I use magnetic bookmarks with the council website on them.

Working with the schools has been very profitable for our library and the school. Ashfield Library has experienced a jump in the use of the purchased tutoring program and a small shift in use of the databases. The students received confirmation that what their Teacher Librarian is trying to impart is important information, and also found out about some free homework help they didn't know they could get. And the Teacher Librarian got to see some of the resources that the public library provides to the community, and of course a greater understanding of the educational support that is available from public libraries. If you can get into the local classroom, it is a very worthwhile venture.

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