



THE SECRET SHOULD BE OUT

After studying and working in education and a variety of schools, Kristy Moody embarked on a decision to enhance her career and embrace her real passion for literacy and learning. Now she's an advocate for what she believes is one of the best kept secrets around – the value of the school library.

It was while I was doing a day of casual relief teaching in a primary school library that the light bulb flashed and I decided that I wanted to follow that dream I'd had of becoming a teacher librarian, the one that took me back to my primary school days when rewarding things like author visits, writers' camps and exciting reading experiences were guided by the teacher librarian.

When I revisited that school a few months later for a day of relief in a classroom, I found the library dark and its doors locked. After speaking to a teacher at the school, I realised the library was a victim of neglect. Days that followed of relief work in schools using their libraries for storage space - or not at all – might have emphasised the importance of classroom libraries but also stirred a little unease for my future in a position that I was told was as rare as a dinosaur fossil).

But I did find hope. In the comfort of the State Library of Victoria, I cradled a fantastic book of a collection of case studies on examples of the school libraries of my dreams. The book is *Global Perspectives on School Libraries: Case Studies and Projects*, edited by Marquardt and Oberg and published earlier this year by IFLA. It features the literacy visions of schools and teachers being put into practice through school libraries around the world.

There I read about a school library that identified student needs and, as one measure to meet these, multiple copies of popular texts were purchased so that students would have more access to the literature they wanted to read. Though a well-resourced collection does not necessarily result in reading, it certainly encourages it.

Some of the most important things an education provides, such as access and critical thinking, can be supported by a collaborative relationship between the librarian and the rest of the school and, arguably, the most important factor is the educational value those in leadership place on the school library. Reading the *Close Your Eyes and Dream* article by Steve O'Connor (INCITE

September 2011), I realised this is one of the biggest challenges libraries face for the future. Even school libraries with the best resources may face challenges as teacher librarians are forced to spend more time out of the library, for example. The recent Senate inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools has given some focus to these issues.

Schools do not exist outside of community; they are a crucial link. My experience working in them has shown me few kids like to miss out but

the actual effect of disregarding the library and its vital connections results in just that. Some school libraries are the best kept secret of their school and it's time the light bulb flashed to light up all the school libraries and the educational possibilities that they offer.

“Some school libraries are the best kept secret of their school and it's time the light bulb flashed to light up all the school libraries and the educational possibilities that they offer.”

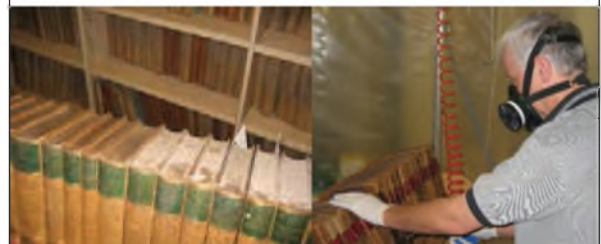
Kristy Moody

Master of Information Management student (RMIT)
krstmd@gmail.com

JOPA Services

book and collection cleaners

- Collection cleaning
- Mould removal
- Asset protection during renovations
- Free, no obligation quotations



Mobile 0407 815 722

E-mail admin@jopa.com.au

P.O. Box 234, Trentham, VIC 3458

