

Using rubrics to develop lifelong learners

By Diane Lester

Timetables are a nightmare to create and for those of us in specialist teaching areas, they can be a nightmare to work with. Under a flexible scheduling arrangement teachers can accompany their classes to the library, thus facilitating options for co-operative planning and team-teaching. Learning outcomes can also be designed to reflect classroom needs and provide beautifully for differentiated learning.

For most teacher-librarians, however, library sessions must fit into a fixed timeslot and can easily become isolated and lack authenticity. At Caulfield Grammar's Malvern campus the timetable is not flexible and has to cater for a wide range of specialist classes. Fortunately for the library, in addition to the class library program, there is provision for a two hour Information Literacy session each week (on a term-by-term rotational basis) that is planned co-operatively and delivered by both the teacher and teacher-librarian. This provides meaningful opportunities for the library to make connection with the classroom program.

Mini workshops are provided along the way for those students in need

This article discusses how I have attempted to bring a sense of authenticity and flexibility to that part of the library program that has to fit into a rigid timetable space. It's an ongoing quest which is continually being modified but in general, it works well, giving flexibility to both the teacher-librarian and the students and allowing for those

inevitable timetable changes, while at the same time catering for a diversity of learning styles and capabilities and developing a range of skills support lifelong learning.

This program is for Years 4 - 6 but relies on skills that are explicitly taught and developed in all year levels, such as literature appreciation, location and ICT skills, using the database for searching and the computers for borrowing and returning, and so on. Those outcomes drive the program for Years P - 3 in a much more structured way.

Library tasks: Years 4 - 6

During Term 2, students are given a set of library tasks and a self-reflection rubric which outlines the skills necessary for lifelong learning. The tasks are discussed, a timeframe negotiated and the rubric presented with explicit guidelines regarding my expectations. During each library session, students work through these tasks, individually or with partners as per teacher/student negotiations.

The teacher-librarian acts as the facilitator and guide. Mini workshops are provided along the way for those students in need who have been identified from my personal observations or who come to me directly during regular conferencing sessions.

For example, some students may be having difficulty using the OPAC terminals for searching and locating or could be struggling with writing a book review or a bibliography. Mini workshops are offered in these skills and students

have the choice to participate if they believe they need to or simply to continue working on their tasks. The workshop is geared to suit their specific needs.

I try not to make the tasks too difficult. The aim is to see students working their way around the library independently and comfortably, using a variety of thinking skills, research strategies and problem-solving tactics, learning from mistakes and seeking help when needed. That being said, the library tasks endeavour to cater for a range of capabilities. Some tasks are a 'must do' whilst others have options available. This ensures there are one or two challenging tasks for those capable students who manage their time well and fly through all tasks easily and still provides them with something that tests their capabilities and stretches their talents.

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Towards the end of the term, some time is set aside to share students' work. Collectively we review and discuss the end product and compare individual tasks, but this is not the real focus. Instead, the priority is the skills used to get to the end product and this is what is assessed. Students complete the self-reflection rubric, identify their strengths and weaknesses and reflect on their learning. On the same rubric, the teacher-librarian assesses the student's work and reflects on their progress as learners. This rubric then becomes a springboard for future personal goal setting.

During Term 3 students are given a new set of library tasks and another self-reflection rubric. The tasks differ from those of the previous term but the skills being assessed remain the same. Students are directed to consider their previous self-reflection and establish some personal learning goals before beginning the new tasks. Once again, tasks are discussed, timeframes negotiated and mini workshops provided throughout. Usually these

Library tasks: Year 6 Term 2

Work through these tasks at your own pace but don't forget the deadline is

* Use the ATHENA data base to locate and borrow a book written by ONE of the following authors:

- BAILLIE, Alan
- CLARK, Margaret
- CREW, Gary
- DANN, Max
- HIRSCH, Odo
- RUBINSTEIN, Gillian
- THEILE, Colin

* Borrow and read at least one picture book written by an Australian author. Complete a 'Hot Books for Kool Kids' book review. (If you want to know more about how to write a great book review, attend Mini Workshop no. 1 with Mrs Lester or go to:

www.yara-online.org/main_pages/write_review.htm).

* Read your Loan History and think about how you use the library. Use the goal sheet provided to set yourself three reading goals for the rest of the year.

* Complete a YABBA Fun Page located in the Class Box.

* Investigate the YABBA website at www.vicnet.net.au/~yabba. Read some of the reviews written by other students. Maybe you know some of the reviewers?

* List the criteria for reviewing books for YABBA.

FINISHED EVERYTHING???

* Use your Hot Books for Kool Kids Book Review and submit it to YABBA following the guidelines and ensuring that it meets the criteria.

OR

* You may have another book that you would like to review. If you are confident it meets the criteria, email the details to Mrs Lester for approval. Please include 'Review of . . .' in the subject line.

Your review must include TITLE, AUTHOR, PUBLISHER, DATE OF PUBLICATION, brief synopsis of the story and a personal opinion with a supporting statement as to why you liked/disliked this book.

Library Tasks: Semester 2 2005

SELF REFLECTION RUBRIC

Student Name: _____ Year: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Location of resources	I am confident and successful using <i>Athena</i> to locate the resources needed.	I can confidently use the <i>Athena</i> database to locate resources most of the time.	I can use <i>Athena</i> but often can't find the resources I need.	I am not comfortable using <i>Athena</i> resources and need help to find my way around the library.
Focus on the task	I find it easy to stay on task. I can work independently.	I usually work well independently.	I can be easily distracted.	I need a lot of guidance to stay on task.
Time management	I used my time really well and regularly worked on the tasks during library sessions and other times.	I usually used the time well during library sessions.	I sometimes put things off and have a rush at the end.	I left everything to the last minute.
Pride	I am proud of the work that I submitted and I believe I tried my hardest. My work is of a very high standard.	I am proud of what I did.	I could try a bit harder.	I put very little effort into these tasks.
Preparedness	I always came to the library prepared and ready to work.	Most of the time I was prepared and ready to continue working on these tasks.	I need to ask more questions and seek help more often. I often don't know where to begin.	I often forget what's needed and where things are and do not get much work done during library sessions.
Attitude	I always have a positive attitude towards my work and others.	Most of the time I feel positive about my work and others in my class.	I am sometimes critical of my work and of other members of the class.	I often complain about the work/project.
Selects appropriate resources	I often choose books I have not read before or are a challenge to my reading level. I am comfortable asking the teacher-librarian for help if needed.	I can use the <i>Athena</i> database to locate resources but tend to choose books I am familiar with.	I am gaining confidence but still need to ask more questions to help me select suitable resources.	I am not comfortable in the library and need help to locate and select resources to suit the tasks and my reading level.

What I discovered about my learning . . .

Mrs Lester discovered my learning was . . .

tasks are a little more difficult or sophisticated and the timeframe is extended so that it carries over into the early part of Term 4.

At Caulfield Grammar School's Malvern campus, senior classes are scheduled to come to the library on a fortnightly basis for an 80 minute session. Library tasks fit in well with this because if by some chance a scheduled time is missed due to a timetable change or public holiday, students are able pick up from where they left off without too much effort. This system also caters for the students who are regularly leaving or returning to the library from other 'specialist' lessons such as drama, music, remedial lessons, speech pathology, meetings and so on. They are able to rejoin the group and continue on with their work without too much disruption. The mini workshops provided along the way ensure that lessons suit the needs of individual students.

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Library tasks have not been available online in the past because of network and computer limitations. Last year the library was fortunate enough to have extra computers and five floor powerboards and network points installed to facilitate online learning. This year, my goal is to have the tasks available online for students to access via the school network.

Self reflection rubric

By providing a rubric with the library task, students have clear guidelines and are cued into assessment expectations from the very beginning of the task. The self-reflection rubric enables students to monitor personal attributes that facilitate learning. It also facilitates goal setting strategies for both the teacher-librarian and the students and enables all to work together towards achieving particular outcomes to suit specific learning needs. Furthermore, it helps put the students in the driving seat to achieve their potential and gives

the teacher-librarian the opportunity to act as a facilitator and guide. The same rubric can be used for a variety of activities.

This particular rubric was initially developed online using *Rubistar* (2006), a free tool for teachers mentioned by Sheila Gersch (2006) at a SLAV conference several years ago. This particular rubric is very flexible. With few changes it has been used with Years 4 - 6. Their tasks may be different but the rubric is similar.

This model proves it is possible to introduce flexibility and authenticity of time and task within a rigidly timetabled library. Students enjoy the challenge of the library task while the rigid timetable gives the teacher-librarian access to all students for teaching information and literature skills.

References

- Gersch, S. O. 2006, *Gersch's Guide for Educators: Teaching with the Internet*, viewed 20 March 2006, <<http://www.schoollink.org/twin/>>.
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- YARA: Read a Review* 2006, Young Australian Readers' Awards, viewed 20 March 2006, <http://www.yara-online.org/main_pages/read_review.htm> .
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Looking for . . .

- support for library teams
 - links to assessment
- conference registration forms
- branch professional development
 - professional reading?

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<http://www.slav.schools.net.au>