

TAFE Library Futures Seminar

Summary & Overview of the
Outcomes from the Learning
Commons Research Project

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6 Issues Identified for the Project

1. How to choose an appropriate Commons model and identification of its implications for TAFE Libraries.
2. Ensuring well-skilled staff – looking at staff development in the light of the changing scope of staff roles and the need for new positions in TAFE libraries.
3. Capitalising on collaborative services – looking at the role of collaboration between partners for mutual benefit.
4. Managing new physical facilities, as they are transformed towards the commons model.
5. Increasing availability and access, including access to both physical and electronic resources for the whole student cohort.
6. Keeping up with educational and organisational change, in line with changing perspectives on education and the role of TAFE libraries.

5 Search Conference Themes

- Staff Development
- Collaboration for mutual benefit
- Physical environment
- Availability and access
- Keeping up with change

How Can we use Collaboration?

Values

- ✓ Strength in numbers;
- ✓ Supporting those in isolation;
- ✓ Creating community;
- ✓ Getting and sharing new ideas;
- ✓ Sharing resources and Sharing services.

Collaboration between City & Regional TAFE_s

- Opportunities for collaboration, need to be sought, between rural and city TAFE_s.
- There could be a twinning program that allows a sister library approach to share ideas, swap staff and visit each other.
- A collaborative approach to professional development, would also offer advantages.

Collaboration between Library & IT Departments

- As the culture of Library and It Departments are often at odds with each other in relation to priorities, Librarians need to get together to develop and share an IT manifesto, which can be supported by VATL as a group initiative.
- Working under such a manifesto can then support a more uniform approach across TAFE's.

Implementing Learning Commons

Principles

- Space should be user-centred, as community/work/learning space.
- Whilst shape and size of the space can constrain improvements strong consultation methods and careful planning and review can help clarify outcomes.
- Zoning of spaces and the strategic placement of furniture can create specific spaces that will allow more effective use of the space, and support a range of learning needs.
- Where there are a limited number of PCs, snap points could be provided for students who don't have wireless access. Areas set aside for this may encourage more social interaction.
- Spaces can be multifunction, depending on the need at the time (eg. quiet study at times and group discussion at others)
- Seek opportunities for consortia, both inside and outside the institute.

Librarians & New Technologies

How can we explore our roles & what our ongoing development needs are?

- By logging on to library blogs, being involved in professional groups such as VATL, ALIA, etc. and actively seeking professional networking opportunities.

How will the roles evolve or change?

- Encourage “play” to learn and communicate continuously with all stakeholders to identify changing needs in order to be able to respond to them.

Librarians & New Technologies Cont.

How do we encourage staff to adopt and promote new technologies?

- Attempt to gain institutional support, from the CEO right down the scale through Directors and Library Managers to ensure access to the technology needed.
- We also need to recognise why we need the technology and be able to communicate this, so we are not seen to be seeking it just for technology's sake.

Change for the Future

Change needs to be proactive rather than reactive, but also needs to be reviewed regularly to ensure appropriateness and allow for adjustments as needed.

Any change needs to identify the stakeholders, in order to ensure their needs are considered and properly encompassed and libraries will need to look beyond the obvious groups of staff and students in considering this.

Some Recommendations

- ✓ Establish a working party to oversee and support the adoption of a Learning Commons model for Victorian TAFE's where possible and practicable.
- ✓ Investigate the possibility of a consortia bid to have the RODSKI survey which is proving effective in higher education institutions, adapted to the needs of TAFE at a price that can be afforded by all.

Some More Recommendations

- ✓ Develop an IT manifesto in response to one of the main issues identified at the search conference, of collaboration and cooperation between TAFE Libraries and IT Departments.
- ✓ VATL needs to publicise the “*Electronic Resources Australia*” project to its members and in particular TAFE Directors, who can support their libraries in opting in to consortia subscriptions, which will make them more affordable, particularly to smaller regional TAFEs.