WSD|150

Re-Imagining School Libraries

The re-imagining of school libraries has been evolving over the past few years to include more than just a place for books. Libraries now include a place for individuals to acquire online resources, as well as exploratory, hands-on learning experiences.

As learning content becomes more accessible online and the role of libraries expands from being the familiar place to choose books to read, it is also becoming a place for inquiry-based learning, collaboration, and constructing knowledge.

In recent years, more and more schools are shifting to a vision where libraries incorporate reference, information, and media centres. As a Literacy-Design Centre, 21st century libraries are physical and virtual learning environments that inspires creativity in teaching and learning. Reading thrives, multiple literacies and technology competencies evolve, and critical thinking, creativity and innovation pervade.[1] Twenty first century learning skills will shape the framework that drives this learning space and vision.

Re-Imagining the Library Space

The re-imagined library offers exciting opportunities to spark the love of literacy and numeracy learning. There is also the unique opportunity to re-imagine and explore a new name for the learning space. (Appendix A)

- Creates a warm and inviting space for all students and staff.
- Showcases student voice, through student writing, art, and technology.
- Promotes a welcoming environment with a diverse representation and #OwnVoice authors in book collections, and Indigenous perspectives in reading choices.
- Supports the continual improvement of student learning outcomes.
- Encompasses multimodal sources such as book collections, journals, magazines, online resources, and other artifacts developed for the school community that support literacy and learning.
- Provides opportunities for Inquiry Based Learning approaches.
- Promotes collaboration through flexibility in design and function.
- Connects the school community and information together.
- Creates a stimulating and engaging teaching and learning environment.
- Enhances curriculum through diverse approaches.
- Provides students with an opportunity to explore and discover.

PROVIDES AN ENVIRONMENT FOR INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Inquiry-based learning is an approach that emphasizes the student's role in the learning process. Rather than the teacher telling students what they need to know, teachers facilitate discussions and students are encouraged to explore, ask questions, and share ideas.

Inquiry-based learning uses numerous approaches, including self-discovery, small-group discussions, guided learning, and collaborative work. Instead of memorizing facts and material, students learn by doing. This allows them to build knowledge and understanding through exploration, questioning, experience, and discussion.

Pillars of a Re-Imagined Library

1. Focus on Inquiry-Based Learning

- Serves as a vibrant open space where students and staff embrace learning and exploration.
- Supports the school's numeracy and literacy plans and increased learning goals in these areas using inquiry approaches.
- Enhances communication, collaboration, and engagement for students.
- Fosters a learning model of student driven learning, deeper understanding, and self-discovery.
- Supports students with the critical competencies of Collaboration, Creativity, Critical Thinking, and Communication (4 Cs).

2. Literacy Centre

- Allows students to connect literacy learning in meaningful, contextual ways while learning in a space outside of the classroom.
- Fosters literacy learning opportunities and access to a wide range of materials to support development and practice of literacy skills.
- Contains a wide range of multi-modal resources including books, journals, magazines, online journals, artifacts, and digital resources such as Discovery Education, Sora, World Book Kids, and World Book Students.
- Contributes to a love of reading and the development of a literate school culture.
- Fosters student choice through reading and other multi-modal resources.
- Plays a vital role in developing proficiency levels in literacy.
- Serves as a welcoming and inclusive space in which all students have equitable access to rich literature and other relevant learning resources that are reflective of their experiences, identities, and interests.

3. STEAM Approaches for Facilitating Learning

- Increases student engagement and enhances learning in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics through integrated planning for learning approaches.
- Develops self-efficacy through the critical competences; communication, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, risk taking, resilience and reflective practice.
- Promotes exploratory learning, persistence in problem-solving, and using feedback in supporting learning.
- Sets the stage for learning by doing, allowing students to show their understanding while focusing on the process of learning versus the product through creation.
- Includes learning materials and equipment that supports STEAM based approaches that promotes the student as "maker".
- Integrates the competencies in collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication as important and life-long learning skills.

4. Digital Competency & Responsibility

- Supports students in Digital Citizenship.
- Accessing virtual resources in a library learning centre.
- Critical thinking and examining the authenticity of resources.
- Promotes academic honesty and respect for copyright laws.

5. In-Residence Learning Series Pilot Program:

- Create momentum for learning and curricular connections in the Re-Imagined learning space.
- Connect to the initiatives and priorities of the School-based Continuous Improvement Plan.
- Plan as a series to maximize the focus on learning in the re-imagined space.
- Re-Imagined Library In-Residence series topics could include:
  - Artists in Schools
  - Career Planning
  - Coding and Conceptual Thinking
  - Digital Media Arts
  - Film and Animation
  - Flight and Aerospace
  - Healthy Minds
  - Indigenous Perspectives
  - Manitoba Young Authors
  - Science and STEAM
  - Writer In-Residence

Recommendations for Re-Imagining School Libraries as a Learning and Exploration Hub:

Physical Space-Design	Materials & Equipment	Student Focused Elements
- Open, versatile spaces. - Flexible seating and alternative furniture that allows for a variety of learning situations. - Creative/collaborative spaces in which students can explore, invent, design, create, build, reflect, and work together. - Whiteboard tabletops, glass walls or whiteboard painted walls to support student creativity, collaboration, planning and design. - Soft seating spaces for reflective time, and collaboration. - Spaces for students to explore, invent, design, create, build, reflect, and work together. - Exploratory hands-on materials for students to explore. - Diverse Culture of school on display.	- Mobile Technology available at the point of learning. - Student-centered learning materials and equipment available to support STEAM based approaches and strategies for learning. Including such possibilities as: 3D Printer - Arts Exploration - Coding Materials and Devices - Construction Zone - Fabrication Equipment - Green Screen Area - Lego Wall - Maker-Space Materials – Design Challenge Materials - Math Design "Take Apart" Area - Virtual Reality Equipment	- Displays of student artwork and other creations. - Student choice honoured in the way of collection choices, reading and other multi-modal resources. - Student voice honoured and represented through design elements, student book reviews, book clubs, Manitoba Young Readers Choice Awards (MYRCA) book club, writing centres, student-published books, student diversity audits, social justice inquiries, initiatives, campaigns or clubs. - Diverse culture of school and identities of students represented in the Library Learning Centre. - Student Voice - technology/books/themes: student book reviews, book clubs, MYRCA book lunches, writing centres, student-published books, student diversity audits. - Visual Literacy - theme/genre/subject-based.

Guiding Questions to Support the Development of a Learning and Exploration Hub

- How does your school library's physical space support a re-imagined vision?
- How might you begin to shift your space to more of a Library Learning Centre?
- Reflecting on how approaches to learning have shifted over the last 150 years, how can your library space engage students in focusing on learning today and in the future?
- How is technology infused in the re-imagined library and how does it support student learning?
- How might you develop a team to lead this work?
- What support do teachers and staff need to embrace this developing vision?
- What are your next steps?

Professional Development Plan

- Develop a professional learning plan in collaboration with library support services, learning technology team, and WSD Professional Support Services to support inquiry at all levels while supporting the 4 Cs in the re-imagined school library.
- What would be the role of digital platforms to support students with designing good inquiry questions?

Sustainability – What does the future hold?

As school libraries evolve and best practices shift accordingly, there is one constant to strive for: equity. All students deserve access to a school library. Libraries support students' literacy and life-long learning, help develop their empathy, build their critical thinking skills, and empower them with skills to navigate their world. In other words, school libraries provide the tools students will need to navigate their complex world.[2] School libraries of the future should continue to strive to maintain a balance of physical literature, exploratory materials, and online resources.

[1] Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada, 2014

[2] eSchool News – Innovations in Educational Transformation, 2020

Appendix A

The Re-Imagined Library Space at 150 Years:

- Develop a consultation process to include both students and staff to re-imagine the library space.
- Refer to the following as consideration for renaming the re-imagined space in your school:
  - Curiosity Space
  - Design-Literacy Centre
  - Learning-Creativity Hub
  - Literacy-Design Centre
  - Learning-Exploration Centre
  - Learning-Imagination Centre
  - Learning-Innovation Centre
  - Library-Innovation Hub
  - Learning-Design Centre
  - Literacy-Innovation Hub
  - Literacy-Learning Hub
  - Literacy - Learning & Innovation Centre