

Before getting into the functional components of the library design, consideration should be given to the program plan and to identifying and setting program priorities to be reflected in the physical space. Discuss the focus of the library program with administration, staff and students and reflect the input in your development of the plan and determine how they can best be reflected in the space. Does an inviting entrance focusing on a reading program take priority over a bank of computers? Or is the program heavily focused on new technologies? What impact does the focus on teaching and learning styles and multiple intelligences have on the space utilization? How can the design of the space contribute to truly making it the learning and information hub of the school?

THE PHYSICAL LAYOUT

The physical layout will determine how many students, small groups or whole classes can be accommodated and what learning activities can be provided and supported. The general traffic flow and organization will determine how efficiently and effectively resources will be used. A well-designed Library Information Centre will have space for individual, small group learning and whole class instruction, research, reading, listening, viewing and producing multimedia or dramatic presentations.

Students will become actively engaged in their learning in the School Library Information Centre when they are able to:

- Research, read and use technology individually (or in a group)
- Collaborate in small groups
- Learn as participants in full class instruction
- Access a variety of leisure reading materials, including books and periodicals
- Produce final products that are professional in appearance and content
- Present their culminating work through multimedia, drama and other modes of communication

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The key considerations for facility planning for the exemplary learning environment can be divided into six areas:

- Create an inviting and welcoming entrance
- Consider learning areas for teaching, learning and production
- Build in flexibility
- Plan the traffic flow
- Think about spatial relationships, clear sight lines
- Integrate technology considering connectivity and access

An Inviting and Welcoming Entrance...

... sets the tone and defines the program – Does the entrance stimulate interest in the program? i.e. are there reading promotional displays, multicultural posters, newsletters, new technologies showcased? What are the promises that entice students?

... is colourful, bright and interesting – Are there attractive bulletin boards, display cases, colourful banners and posters? Are activities highlighted and easily accessed? Are the colours and textures attractive?

... exhibits student art work – Are the displays current and renewed on a regular basis? Is it a gallery of student work in Visual Arts, Design and Technology or Computer Graphics?

... promotes user friendly access to reading and information – Does it highlight programs like Silver Birch and Red Maple? Are the new books up front, inviting and changed on a regular basis? Are curricular materials well displayed and current?

... provides direction through coordinated and well placed signage – Are there brochures and signage with clear location of resources? Is each area – reference, production, reading – well defined and signed? Are the resources neat and well organized with appropriate display and format shelving?

