FROM THE MANAGER, LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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Manager, Library and Information Science

Open Books, Open Doors

The buzz in the air during the first week of a new school year is palpable. While staff and students alike relish downtime from work and study, part of the joy in returning to Monte is sharing post-holiday updates about family, travel, activities and (hopefully) the unputdownable books that were discovered and read by the beach, snow or air conditioner.

Every morning this week, from my desk, I watched as tentative groups of Year 7 students independently came into the library before and after school. In small packs they browsed the shelves, looked at the displays and checked out the study areas. I imagine that they are ‘trying on’ the library to see how it fits them and they fit in it.

I picture the College Library as an iceberg: 10% immediately visible and 90% waiting to be discovered or revealed. The 10% starts with the spectacular architecture – the vaulted, cathedral ceiling, two Titanic-esque staircases, and hundreds of metres of tantalising books. The other 90% lies in wait for our students – they will discover it over the course of their six years at Monte. Our digital presence is akin to a whole additional school campus – dozens of virtual collections tailored for our students of academic journals, ebooks, audiobooks, online newspapers, magazines and primary sources. There are also online tools to support academic honesty, referencing, researching and recreational reading. This part of the library, the online presence, is open and accessible anytime and anywhere.

This ‘library iceberg’ is enveloped by a guiding philosophy that informs everything we do: we want students to feel that they belong here and are always welcome here. There is something for every student in this library – it is a place to print, to work collaboratively, read silently, find a book for a friend, find a friend, ask for a reading recommendation, record a podcast, research an assignment, ask for help, watch a movie and take time out.

We build connections with and between students through annual events such as Write a Book in a Day and our Ladies & Literature book club. We welcome connecting with parents and carers too, and our fabulous teacher librarian, Cathie-Jane Wotherspoon, hosts a book club for adults twice each term. It provides a great incentive to commit to some quality reading and chatting. Keep an eye on Monte Matters to find out when the next meeting is.

Additionally, in Term 2 we will be launching a parent/student reading partnership program to explore what can happen when you and your daughter sign-up to both read the same book. Drop me an email at dbrown@monte.nsw.edu.au if you’d like to be on the advisory group for this pilot program.

The library is open from 7:30am every school morning to 5:30pm each evening (4:00pm on Fridays).