

## WJ SCOTT EDUCATION LIBRARY

**USER SURVEY OCTOBER 2009**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go to Skalk van der Mere for his help with getting useful numbers out of Voyager, and of course to the whole WJ Scott Education Library team for helping to get the survey out to the students in the first place.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*We don't want to push our ideas on to customers, we simply want to make what they want.* *-Laura Ashley<sup>1</sup>*

During 2009 there have been several minor changes to the layout of WJ Scott Education Library (WJS). This was in response to a growth in the library collection, and improvements to make the multiple call number systems more intuitive. These changes have been very successful and have highlighted several other areas that could be improved.

Before undertaking a larger rearrangement of the library it was decided that a survey to realise what the users actually desired would be very informative and would ensure the patrons felt included in library decisions and part of the library as a whole.

The need for regular surveys is explicitly set out in the Library's current strategic plan, the WJS team plan and the Collection Development and Management Policy. In addition we have similar goals in our strategic vision where we are aiming to achieve the following:

- Create a library environment that meets current and future library user needs.
- Create a service environment that focuses on meeting individual need with a strong emphasis on communication and feedback.
- Raise awareness of the value and benefits of the library service.

This need flows from following professional practice. Booth and Brice (2004, p3) say "the concept of professionalism require that a practitioner remains in constant contact with the knowledge base that determines the content, nature and impact of their day-to-day activities. Implicit, or tacit, knowledge acquired from years of experience must be informed, and indeed complemented, by explicit knowledge, or evidence". This evidence will be gathered through this research and will help build on our observed, tacit knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: quotationsbook.com, accessed 20/1/10.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

*Though this be madness, yet there is method in't*  
*–Shakespeare<sup>2</sup>*

The basic aim of this research is to collect an evidence base to inform changes and improvements to the WJS Library. Powell and Connaway say “the major purpose of basic research is to discover new knowledge” (2004, p17), and this new knowledge “usually develops in a logical sequence of three stages. The first stage typically involves the accumulation of specific facts ....derived from actual experience or observation .... The second main stage typically involves the definition, review and classification of these facts or data into a meaningful set of categories... The formulation and testing of these groupings of data, or variables, make up the third and main stage in the development of a field of knowledge” (2004, p30).

Sacket et al (1997, in Booth and Brice 2004, p6) state there are five stages of evidence-based practice, and these fit well into the three stage model described by Powell and Connaway.

Figure 1: Correlation between two models for evidence based practice

<b>3 Stage Model</b>	<b>5 Stage Model</b>
Accumulation of specific facts	Identification of a problem or question
Definition, review and classification of these facts or data into a meaningful set of categories	Finding, as efficiently as possible, the best evidence to answer the question
	Appraising the evidence for validity and usefulness
Formulation and testing of these groupings of data, or variables	Applying the results to a specific population
	Evaluating the outcome of the intervention

Source: Powell and Connaway (2004, P30) and Booth and Brice (2004, P6).

Since it would appear that many source corroborate this sequence of research to be logical, this research follows the five stages through each section of this report.

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<sup>2</sup> Hamlet, Act 2 Scene 2.

## **2.1 Choosing the best method**

To find the most efficient way of obtaining the best evidence several methods were investigated. However, the potential methods available for use in this survey had a few limitations, including the sporadic presence of students in the library. Students at the Karori campus have periods of time when they are on teaching practice, when they have a large amount of teacher contact time, and also when they have specific tasks to complete during “studio time”. This can result in limited free time being available for visiting the library during the day. In addition, we wanted to capture some of the students who do not currently use the library regularly. This desire to cover a broad range of people meant that the format the survey was presented in, needed to be very flexible.

Focus groups or other in depth survey methods would not be appropriate as we would likely not get a broad range of library users, as those who chose to participate would be regular library users. It would also not achieve one of our aims as stated in section 1, of making *all* the students feel included in library decisions, since it would involve only a small selection.

Instead of using in depth survey methods it was instead decided to try and attract a much broader range of patrons with a short paper survey that allows them to expand their answers should they choose to do so, but will let those students who are short of time to participate.

## **2.2 Applying the method**

The short survey is intended to provide a baseline for ongoing customer service targets, and also address a few imminent library decisions that would benefit from patron participation. It is proposed that a short survey be conducted on a regular basis, and that some of the questions remain constant whilst others are more flexible to allow for up to date consultation on imminent issues and decisions.

The most practical way of obtaining surveys responses from staff and students who are regular users of the library, as well as those who rarely venture down to it, was to have questionnaires freely available in multiple locations. The main one would be by the entrance to the library and be well highlighted with posters and a large box of chocolates as an incentive. Secondary locations would include the Karori campus staff room and the student common room.

In order to increase responses a promotional email was sent to all Karori campus staff and postgraduate students explaining where surveys could be found and allowing

anyone to request a copy to be sent to them through internal mail. In addition, colourful posters were put up around the library with only a brief explanation of the content and included large pictures aimed at grabbing the attention of passing staff and students.

### **2.3 Applied research and sampling**

Powell and Connaway (2004, p53) describe the difference between basic research and applied research being that applied research is “more pragmatic and emphasizes providing information that is immediately usable in the resolution of actual problems” whereas basic research “tends to be theoretical in nature and concerns itself primarily with theory construction, hypothesis testing, and producing new, generalizable knowledge”.

Given these definitions it is clear that this research will be “applied”, and whilst the data may have applications beyond this immediate study, that is not its purpose. As such certain other facets of achieving theoretical rigour may be overlooked. A key one is the sampling method.

The most simple method of analysing our data at the end of the survey period is to assume a random sampling method. “The technique of simple random sampling gives each element in the population an equal chance of being included in the sample. ... In order for the probabilities of including each element and each combination of elements to be equal, it is necessary that there be independence from one draw to the next ... But this condition cannot be met fully unless the sampling is done with replacement.” (Powell and Connaway, 2004, P96).

A key element to random sampling is sampling *with replacement*, however for our research it is very unlikely that a person would fill out more than one survey. Therefore once they have completed one survey, the probability of them completing a second is different to the original probability and the requirements for simple random sampling have failed.

However, Powell and Connaway (2004, P97) go on to say that “There are mathematical formulas that can be used to correct for sampling without replacement, but if the sample represents a relatively small proportion of the population, use of a formula is unnecessary”. As our response rate was not significantly high, and we are undertaking applied research, i.e. we are being pragmatic, the requirements of our research mean that we can overlook the change in probability from replacement and normal analytical formulas for simple random sampling can apply.

Analysis of the data will include cleaning the data, which ensures “completeness, comprehensibility, consistency, and reliability” and “can avoid numerous problems in subsequent statistical analysis” (Powell and Connaway, 2004, P89). This will be done by numbering every paper response and coding answers, then carrying out a check of a random sample of responses once all data have been loaded. In addition, large variations in results will be investigated to ensure it wasn’t a result of typing error.

The accuracy of the responses we receive will be determined assuming a random selection of respondents and deriving the standard deviation from additional data about the total population available via Voyager.



### 3. SURVEY CONTENT

*I meant what I said, and I said what I meant.*  
–Dr Seuss<sup>3</sup>

There are several themes that could have been addressed through this user survey. The primary part already identified is user feedback on recent and upcoming changes to the library layout. Repositioning of stock and furniture that has already occurred is reasonably minor and can be subsequently “tweaked”.

#### 3.1 Changes at WJS

Some of the changes to WJS are unique within Victoria University of Wellington (VUW):

- adjustment of the positions of the Dewey stock, inherited from the Wellington College of Education and not converted to Library of Congress classifications;
- provision of stock and equipment originally held at the Education resource centre

However, other upcoming changes are occurring, or will soon occur, throughout all libraries at VUW:

- adjustment of the positions of 3 day loan material
- implementation of blue/quiet and green/loud zones
- creation of Te Ropu Whakamanawa area with all Māori related stock extracted from the main collection and held in one place and additional formal and informal study areas – in the case of WJS this will be a Māori and Pacifica area

Consulting with patrons about these issues will serve a dual purpose of allowing us to make adjustments and create new areas that the students will use, and provide a route to advertise and highlight the new improvements occurring in the library.

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<sup>3</sup> Geisel, T. (2004). Horton Hatches the Egg. Random House Books for Young Readers: London.

### **3.2 Structure**

Before writing a survey it is worthwhile considering how the wording and structure of a questionnaire could influence the outcome. We need to ensure we say what we mean, and what we're saying has to have meaning both to the patrons and to us.

Powell and Connaway (2004, p136) say that the wording of a question can affect its validity and reliability, and that it is "a good idea not to use slang, jargon, and technical terms". They go on to point out that "Even the sequencing of questions can influence how they are answered. ... It is generally recommended that questions with a similar context be placed together".

### **3.3 Themes**

The identified themes were covered in the survey by four questions and were grouped under two headings to give them similar context, "Group Study and Quiet Study Areas" and "Māori Area", aimed at making the survey simple to understand but also allowing free form answers to those who wish to explain their responses in detail.

The four questions focused on what the students wanted to do, and what they expected to find in these areas. It was unnecessary to go into detail over how these choices were implemented as it would have made the questionnaire significantly more complicated, and therefore less likely to be completed. In addition it would have given a false impression to the students over how much they could directly influence. Practical considerations over the location of areas and the funding to furnish the areas with the desired equipment and furniture need to remain with the professional library and facilities staff.

A third theme was incorporated into the survey to allow some feedback on the services the Reference and Research (R&R) team provide and the awareness with staff and students of these services. The feedback from the responses will allow the R&R team to adjust their methods of promotion, and ensure the range of services wanted by patrons is met.

When seeking feedback for the services provided by the R&R Team it was very difficult to create a question that would be quick and simple to answer, but not be too leading. It was decided that a higher number of responses was more desirable, therefore the question was created in the same style as the rest of the survey. The results of the question are therefore indicative but not necessarily a true reflection of the knowledge customers have of the R&R team.

## 4. SURVEY RESULTS

*However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.*  
–Winston Churchill<sup>4</sup>

### 4.1 Demographics

Before analysing the results of the questions it is useful to see what the demographic spread is of those who completed the survey, compared to those who visited the library during the time of the survey, and with our normal spread of patrons over the year.

Since the number of respondents from sources outside of the library was minimal (4 responses), using our population as the number of patrons who visited the library in October gives us a fairer indication of potential participants. Reducing our population also gives us a better return rate and means we can make inferences about our library population with greater accuracy.

Figure 1 below shows that the number of people in the library in October, when the survey took place, was a good match to the average for the year from January to November 2009. Comparison of these figures with those who completed the survey shows a small disparity, particularly from graduates.

Figure 2: Customer group of respondents

What group do you most associate with?	Patrons in the Library					
	Number	Proportion	Oct-09	Δ survey	Jan - Nov 09	Δ survey
<b>Undergraduate</b>	32	42%	45%	3%	44%	3%
<b>Visitor</b>	0	0%	2%	2%	4%	4%
<b>Graduate</b>	37	48%	39%	-9%	38%	-11%
<b>Staff</b>	5	6%	14%	8%	14%	7%
<b>Total</b>	74	96%	100%		100%	

Source: WJS survey results 2009, 3 respondents chose not to state their group; and Voyager report from Digital Services dated 26/11/09.

Another potential reason is the time it would take a customer to complete the survey given the time they have available. In October, when graduates are on campus they are here for only one or two days per week and must attend a demanding timetable of classes during this time, as well as sorting any library material they need for

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<sup>4</sup> Source: quotationsbook.com, accessed 20/1/10.

assignments. This lack of free time could have dissuaded some customers from completing the survey as they did not rank it as a priority in their limited time.

Graduates at the Karori campus were also affected by the introduction of e-reserves part way through the academic year which resulted in a significant amount of frustration from the students. This issue was dealt with through liaison with lecturers and student representatives but was partially because of school decisions outside the remit of the library. However, the result of this frustration could prompt students to be less likely to donate their free time to the library, particularly when many will not be returning in 2010.

Identification of these reasons should allow us to realise a better distribution of customer groups for future surveys, however the disparity is not significant and the magnitude of each group in the survey still mirrors those patrons using the library. Therefore the results from this survey can be taken as a good representation of the sentiments of the WJS customers.

#### **4.2 Group and Quiet Study Areas – Blue and Green Zones**

In order to determine which of the options available to respondents should be applied to the area we need to determine the confidence interval for what we would accept as a significant proportion of the population. For our research, a significant proportion is the minimum percentage of population that we would be content to providing a service for. In this case I would suggest that a third of the population is significant and providing to this proportion of our customers would have a positive impact on user satisfaction and the library's image within the campus.

In order to be 95% certain that a third of our respondents have chosen a specific option, we need apply a confidence interval of 9.77% (<http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>, accessed 13/1/10). This means we can select any options with a response rate of  $33\% + 9.77\% \approx 43\%$  or more. We can now analyse the responses by drawing out any options that were chosen by a significant proportion of respondents, these are set out in Figure 2 below:

Figure 3: Options for the group and quiet study areas chosen by more than a third of the respondents.

What would you like to do/use in the:			
Group study area?		Quiet study area?	
Work with friends	71%	Work at your own table	68%
Work at a large group table	64%	Eat and drink	56%
Eat and drink	58%	Work on soft seating	48%
Talk	57%	Use a computer	48%
Use a computer	57%	Talk quietly	43%
Work on soft seating	43%		

Source: WJS survey results 2009.

We can see some common options are desired in both areas:

- eat and drink
- work on soft seating
- use a computer
- talk

Despite the requirement for the quiet study area to be quiet, respondents still wanted to opportunity to talk, albeit quietly. The impact of this on customers wanting total quiet will need to be balanced against these survey results.

The requirements in a quiet study area prompted several comments from respondents:

- Talk quietly - NO! This is for group study. (Respondent (Res) 5)
- Table has to be large enough though. (Res 31)
- Would be nice to have more nooks and crannies where can't still hear socialising or groups. (Res 37)

Whilst these comments are not particularly impassioned, they are note worthy as out of 77 respondents only these three written comments were given. I would suggest that because of this, these three responses earn additional weight and the option to talk quietly in the quiet study room should be removed as it is already a borderline result.

### 4.3 Māori Area

The first question on the Māori area presented the respondent with similar options as the group and quiet study areas. Applying the same logic as we did for these areas, we draw out the options that a third of the population chose, set out in figure 3:

Figure 4: Options for the Māori area chosen by more than a third of the respondents.

What would you like to do/use in a Māori area?	
Work at a large group table	55%
Work with friends	47%
Talk quietly	44%
Work on soft seating	43%

Source: WJS survey 2009.

The options chosen for the Māori area are similar to those for the group and quiet areas but with two important differences, there is no desire for computers nor for eating and drinking. A single written comment was added about the use of the Māori area that requested “cushions, etc, more like on a Marae” (Res 44)

These choices indicate what our students desire, given the options presented to them, and should be used in conjunction with what is also offered at other universities to inform the WJS Te Ropu Whakamanawa area.

The second question about the Māori area sought opinions on what should be contained within the space. The responses to this had more than a third choosing every single option. Whilst this lack of discrimination between options reduces the direct input allowable from the survey, it highlights the need for library professionals to apply their understanding of the situation.

As can be seen in Figure 4 whilst every option was chosen by more than a third of the respondents, it is clear that there is a preference for Māori artwork and Te Reo material in the collection, with Māori cultural and authored material being less desirable. The only free comment about the collection content which requested resources “specific to Māori content/context” (Res 37).

Figure 5: Options for the Māori area collection and space.

What would you like to find in a Māori area?	
Māori artwork	78%
All adult Te Reo material	70%
All junior Te Reo material	62%
All AV Te Reo material	58%
All adult Māori cultural material	58%
All junior Māori cultural material	51%
All AV Māori cultural material	48%
All Māori authored material	45%

Source: WJS survey 2009.

#### 4.4 Reference and Research Team

As discussed in section 3 the results of the question about what customers believe the R&R team do is very leading and therefore results are indicative, rather than a true reflection of customer knowledge. Figure 5 below sets out the responses to each of the options. The “correct” answer to this question would be to select every option. Whilst tours are done by the whole library team not just R&R, their inclusion would still be right. In addition finding books could be interpreted to mean directions within the library as well as sourcing a title through a catalogue search, therefore implying the whole library team. Ticking every option was only done by eight respondents.

This lack of full knowledge of what R&R do is perhaps a reflection of the services an individual has used during their time here. Finding books/articles and tutorials on databases, the catalogue and APA, are the main sources of contact for students with R&R. Those who have not used these services personally would still have been aware of tutorials taking place as they are advertised on posters in the library and around the Karori campus.

Figure 6: What customers think the R&R Team do.

What do you think the Reference and Research team do?	
Help with finding books/articles	74%
Database tutorials	73%
Catalogue tutorials	62%
APA help/troubleshooting	57%
Tours	47%
Produce handouts and guides	46%
EndNote training/troubleshooting	41%
Displays	39%
In class instruction	39%
Purchase recommendations	36%
Newsletters	20%
Other	

Source: WJS survey 2009. 4 respondents chose not to answer this question.

The second question asked about the R&R team sought to discover what services customers would like to see more of. The only statistically significant result, using our definition of significant as a third of the respondents, is to provide more help with finding books and articles. This option is ambiguous as it could imply help finding books within the stacks of the library, but could also mean identifying the required book through a catalogue search, or searching through online databases. The intended meaning was sourcing through a catalogue search but the other potential answer should not be ignored when trying to determine a solution to improve on this service.

Figure 7: What do respondents want the R&R team to do more of?

<b>What would you like the Reference and Research team to do more of?</b>	
Help with finding books/articles	44%
APA help/troubleshooting	39%
Produce handouts and guides	31%
Purchase recommendations	29%
EndNote training/troubleshooting	27%
Database tutorials	24%
In class instruction	24%
Displays	22%
Catalogue tutorials	19%
Newsletters	19%
Tours	15%

Source: WJS survey 2009. 18 respondents chose not to answer this question.

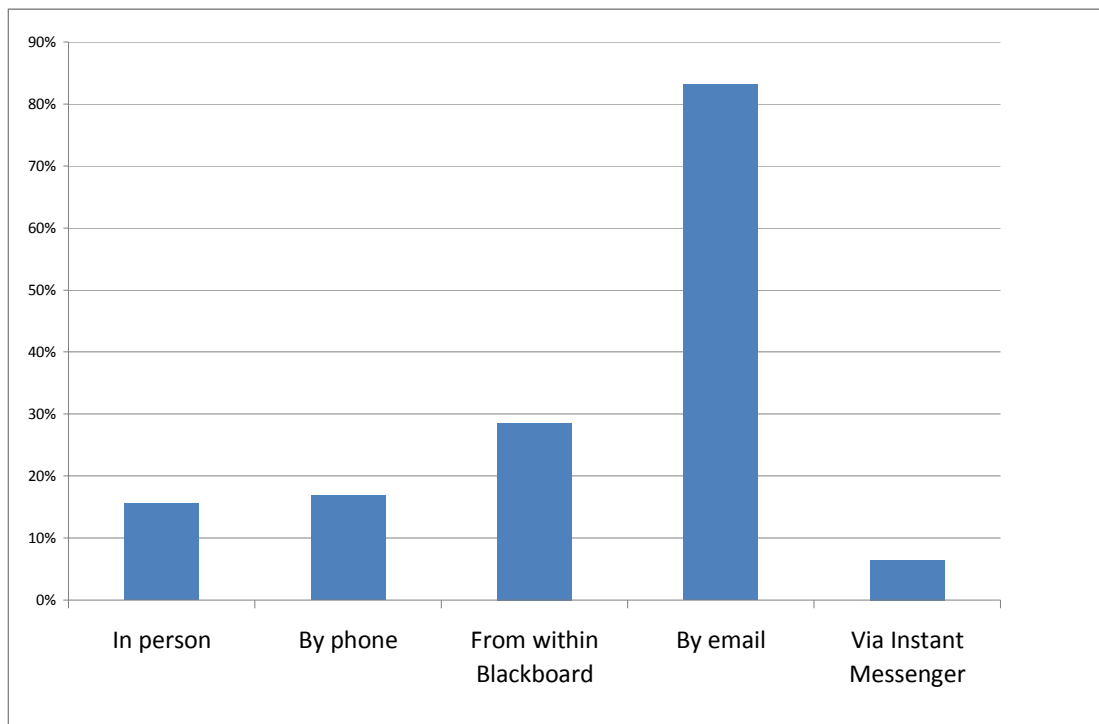
One comment was made about what the R&R team could do more of, which was to “provide handouts of booklets on APA references” (Res 62), and another to promote what they already do a bit more: “They are doing a good job! Maybe make it more explicit that they are available for these things” (Res 5).

The final question for R&R asked how the respondents would prefer to be contacted. A clear result came through of contact via email with 83% of respondents choosing this option. The next preferred option was contact via Blackboard at 29%, followed by phone and in person at 17% and 16% respectively.

The only statistically robust result was the choice of contact via email, however the fact that some people chose the other options would suggest that a variety of options was still of value in order to accommodate the preferences of as many customers as possible. In addition the question could be slightly ambiguous in that users were not asked whether this stated preference was for communication initiated by the R&R team or in response to requests for information.



Figure 8: How customers would like to be contacted by the R&R Team.



Source: WJS survey 2009. All respondents answered this question.

## 5. USING THE RESULTS

*I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.*  
–Bill Cosby<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of this applied research was to obtain input to changes occurring imminently at WJS. The questions are deliberately practical in focus which allows to use the results directly in the project process. We will also be able to let students know which parts of the new projects were directly influenced by their input when providing information on upcoming changes through posters, newsletters and the WJS website.

Crawford (2007, p2) says that “balance favors change with continuity” and “improvement over transformation”. The changes to WJS discussed in this report will follow this philosophy, and will build on it by ensuring there is good communication with students over these changes which will help to keep them involved and retain a sense of control over “their” library.

### 5.1 Influencing the group and quiet study areas

When using the data from responses on the group and quiet study areas, only the statistically significant responses are used. The choices for the group study area are:

- Work with friends
- Work at a large group table
- Eat and drink
- Talk
- Use a computer
- Work on soft seating

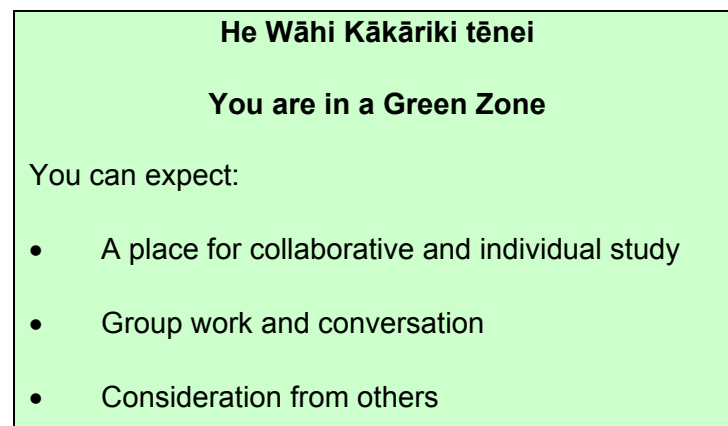
As a result of this, the new group study area will have as a minimum, three large tables to allow customers to work with friends, and work at a large table; it will also contain at least two sofas; and customers will be permitted to eat, drink and talk in the area. It is not possible to guarantee ITS computers in the group study area due to restrictions on wiring and power points, so instead one borrowable laptop will be relocated to WJS from Kelburn. Once the usage of this laptop has been established, obtaining further laptops will be investigated.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: [www.quotationspage.com](http://www.quotationspage.com), accessed 20/1/10.

The group study area is intended to reflect the green zone at the Kelburn library, and as a result of this research we can see that the basic requirements for a green zone are met. As such, the wording for the green zone posters will be replicated at WJS as in figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Green zone poster content.



The choices for the quiet study area were:

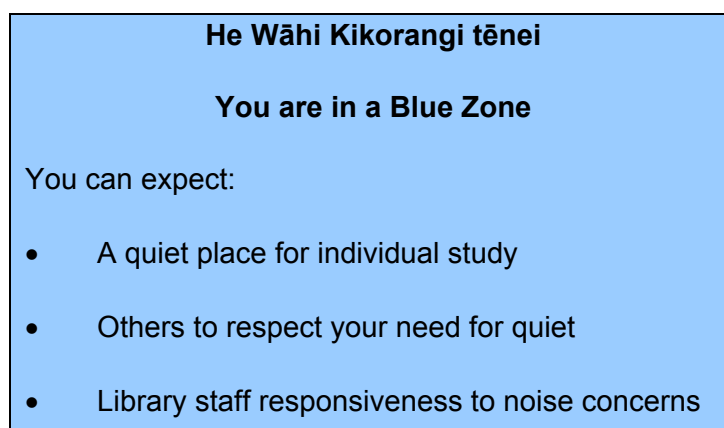
- Work at your own table
- Eat and drink
- Work on soft seating
- Use a computer

There was another option of “talk quietly” that was just statistically significant, however, as a result of the free comments submitted this option was removed from the final list. It is particularly relevant at WJS to have one silent area as the majority of the library space is not able to be noise controlled due to architecture. The main floor has a mezzanine level and these two areas comprise approximately 80% of the library space. If quiet talk was permitted in the quiet study area then no space would be silent.

As a result of this, the quiet study area will contain as a minimum, twelve individual study spaces; four soft seats; and customers will be permitted to eat, drink and talk in the area. As with the group study area, ITS computers cannot be guaranteed so laptops will be used instead.

The quiet study area is intended to reflect the blue zone at the Kelburn library, and as a result of this research we can see that the basic requirements for a blue zone are met. As such, the wording for the blue zone posters in the quiet study area will be replicated at WJS as in figure 10 below.

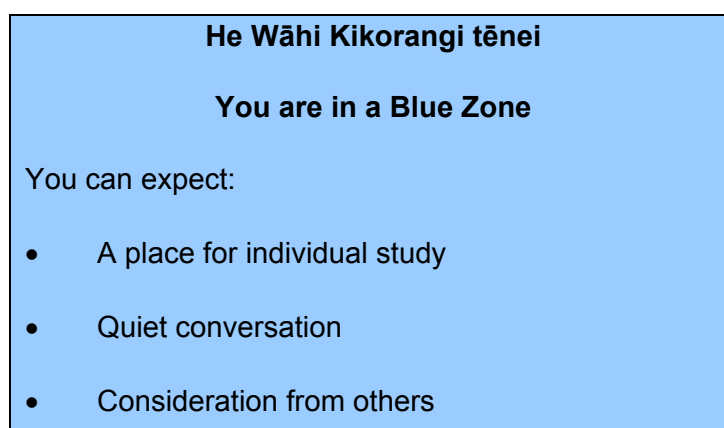
Figure 10: Blue zone poster content.



The group study room and the quiet study room are two specific rooms within WJS and the remainder of the library comprises of the main floor, including the library issue desk, and the mezzanine level above this. It would be inappropriate to have this space as a green zone as the noise would amplify through the library and disturb many customers. Equally it would be very restrictive to try and enforce a blue zone in this area, and impractical around the issue desk where customers need to talk to staff.

Therefore the main floor and mezzanine level will be zoned as “blue” to encourage students not to talk loudly, however the wording will be adjusted. A third colour would likely confuse customers who use the Kelburn and WJS libraries and is unnecessary where we are trying to homogenise services across campuses. A possible wording for the main floor and mezzanine level is in figure 11 below.

Figure 11: Potential wording for additional blue zone poster.



## 5.2 Influencing the Māori area

The statistically significant responses for the Māori area were:

- Work at a large group table
- Work with friends
- Talk quietly
- Work on soft seating

As a result of this we anticipate providing at least two large tables for group work, and to work with friends; and at least two sofas. The area will be located in the modified blue zone so quiet discussions can take place without the area becoming too loud.

These choices indicate what our students desire, given the options presented to them, and will be used in conjunction staff professional and cultural knowledge. In addition we can build on the experience of other universities and be influenced by they offer, to reflect customers previous expectations of a Māori area.

A summation of what is offered at other New Zealand universities is:

- Computers
- Printer
- Help desk
- Group study
- Individual study
- Photocopier
- Relaxed space

Given the breadth of what is offered at other universities it is impractical to offer all of these services within the one space intended at WJS. However, all these services are available at WJS, which is a small library and therefore within easy reach of the Māori area. We will be able to provide computers, through use of laptops; a help desk, by being located adjacent to the library service point; group study, as identified by our customers; individual study, although this was not identified by our customers and may be omitted; and a friendly and relaxed space, which is already the informal feedback from customers about WJS as a whole.

The final decisions on the Māori space will be made by WJS staff in conjunction with Te Pouwhakaapa, Te Ropu Whakamanawa and Te Kura Māori, the Māori teaching staff at Karori campus.

### **5.3 Influencing the Reference and Research services, by Meg Cordes.**

Statistically significant responses for what services library patrons believe R&R provide are:

- Help with finding books/articles
- Database tutorials
- Catalogue tutorials
- APA help/troubleshooting
- Tours
- Produce handouts and guides

Of the total responses, more than half of respondents were unaware that R & R offered:

- Tours
- Produce handouts and guides
- EndNote training/troubleshooting
- Displays
- In class instruction
- Purchase recommendations
- Newsletters

In response, some of these services will be more widely communicated to students and staff members in 2010 and 2011, with an emphasis placed on R&R's overall responsibility for such services. Of special importance is APA and EndNote training, and the revision of out of date handouts and guides, as these were identified as areas of priority in 2009 for specific groups of students. It would be impractical to advertise all services to all users, so targeted campaigns will be used to encourage staff to take advantage of purchasing opportunities or in-class instruction, for example.

The sole statistically significant response to what users would like the R&R team to provide is:

- Help with finding books/articles

This ambiguous answer allows for a variety of suitable responses from the R&R team. Catalogue and database tuition, including in class instruction, handouts and one to one tutorials fall within the boundaries of the request. The R&R team has recently conducted a survey of Graduate Diploma of Teaching students to assess their confidence and competence with library skills and tools. Modification of current information literacy practices will take the results of this survey into account.

Note that the goals of the Information Literacy Working Group (of which both Subject Librarians in the R&R team are members), and the strategic goals of the Library emphasise the importance of sustainable information literacy support. In light of this, providing extra tuition in response to demand expressed in this survey may not be appropriate. Given that not all respondents were aware that R&R provides help with finding books and articles, there is still scope for inclusion of this service in any communication campaign with students and staff.

Users were unambiguous in selecting that they preferred R&R to contact them via email and this must be taken into account in any communications campaign. Users are, however, unlikely to welcome frequent unsolicited emails from the library and the effort required in high frequency communication is likely to be unsustainable. For these reasons any communication intended for a wider audience (for students especially) is best directed through the medium of Blackboard or other class software.

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED

*Actually, I'm an overnight success. But it took twenty years.*

*–Monty Hall<sup>6</sup>*

No matter how successful a piece of research is, there is always room for improvement. Experience gained through engagement with the specific population being researched will always enhance future research, whether that research be a continuation with the population or the topic.

In this case a major lesson learned was that responses to surveys depends tremendously on when that survey occurs. The student population at the Karori Campus fluctuates significantly throughout the year as students are frequently away on teaching practice. In addition the majority of students are here for only one year, as such their interest and attendance at the campus may dwindle as the year progresses.

As a result of these observations, future surveys will be timed for completion during trimesters 1 or 2. A balance will need to be found between gaining access to students whilst they are at their most enthusiastic, i.e. at the start of the year, and when they will have experienced sufficient parts of the library service to be able to identify problems and suggest solutions.

Other avenues for accessing students will also be investigated before the next survey is designed. In January 2010 a questionnaire was handed out to students by the Reference and Research team at the end of a lecture compulsory to all on the Graduate Diploma course. The number of completed questionnaires submitted to the library was significant, much higher than those collected for the October 2009 survey. Gaining the students attention as part of a captive audience is a very good way of getting access to students who do not currently use the library. However, when analysis is done on the subsequent data, the sample must not be deemed as simple random as this way of promoting the survey will provide a boost to a specific part of the population.

Additional ways of improving submissions from staff will also need to be investigated. Again timing was an issue, as many staff were very busy helping students finish their final assignments. However, staff after often very busy throughout the year, with teaching or research, which contributes to an atmosphere where engagement on

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<sup>6</sup> Source: [www.famous-quotes-and-quotations.com](http://www.famous-quotes-and-quotations.com), accessed 20/1/10.



issues outside of one's immediate circle of influence is not a priority. Potential ways to boost staff uptake would be to deliver them personally, whilst explaining what the survey is for and how it will be used to aid promotion by word of mouth, or to promote via the Faculty Library Liaison Committee to be established in 2010. Another would be to promote it as part of a tea morning, encouraging staff with cakes and biscuits in return for completing our questionnaire. However, these techniques may again impact on how robust our data is at the end of the collection period. A decision will need to be made at the time of the new survey to decide how robust the data needs to be, and whether the number of submissions is more important.

Should the decision be made to retain the robustness of data collected through these surveys, over time value will be added through collation of the data into a longitudinal study. This study would be able to analyse constants achieved through the questionnaires, and whilst this may only result in a study of the population that engages with our surveys, i.e. the demographic information, this is still of value.

Anecdotal evidence collected through informal conversations with users suggests that they are pleased that we are starting to seek their opinions. This good will can be retained by continuing to ask for their input, and more importantly by demonstrating that we are using it.

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