



Double General Learning Block



Interior of General Learning Area



Learning Commons Verandah



Library Pod Interior

Relocatable Library and Learning Spaces

Sippy Downs, Sunshine Coast, Australia (2010)

The Challenge

In 2010, the Montessori International College received \$850,000 grant funds from the Commonwealth's Building the Education Revolution Program for a learning commons (library) and double general learning spaces.

The school was leasing the land upon which it was established and planning to relocate and develop a permanent campus (location unknown at the time).

As a result the library and learning spaces were designed to be disassembled when the school moves to its future home; yet responsive to the site context and micro-climate of the impermanent campus.

Phillip's Responsibilities

Design Architect and Project Manager for the public buildings:

- stakeholder engagement to ensure the delivery of purpose built resources meet community needs and most importantly the needs of learners in the 21st century; and
- Client's Superintendent during construction of building and landscape works.

The Design Approach

The library had to reconcile the programmatic tension between centralization of resources which a library tends to do and Montessori's pedagogy which favors decentralization of books across classrooms. The resolution and its architectural expression sought to provide a learning commons and social hub for the whole school community. The plan/form comprises:

- A learning commons dematerialised as a lumi-

nous verandah;

- A pavilion to house computer cluster, book catalogue and kitchenette for functions.

This aim worked hand in glove with the educational need to show the building's structure to students. A steel structural frame and modular plywood wall and floor panels provides the generating principle for organising the learning spaces with generous views and access to the natural landscape.

The *Library* and *Double GLA* buildings fits comfortably in a highly constrained site amongst trees and built infrastructure. The shimmering zincalume cladding on a simple box with skillion roof recalls memories of the local cane shed whilst at the same time establishes a contrasting image of evolution and change for the College.

The building's sustainable design strategies include resource reduction via (1) dematerialisation and thermal performance through integrated design, (2) passive solar design, and (3) rainwater harvesting.

Human wellbeing is realised through healthy materials selection with low toxicity, visual and spatial connection to nature and access to natural daylight.

Some Key Learnings

It was more cost effective to disassemble the buildings into modules, rather than the flat pack system as originally designed. Refer [Website](#) photos.

The Impacts

Resources were optimised and sustainability targets achieved with the repurposing of these custom buildings when they were relocated to the new campus.