# About Our Makerspace

By Karin Gilbert

The philosophy and purpose of a Makerspace is to facilitate and support the learning in content creation. We are changing the paradigm of what our library learning space is about – not just content management but content creation. Libraries are places where we learn, we find and we discover; the evolution of a Makerspace is a natural progression in a library space. It provides an opportunity to construct and facilitate knowledge creation.

We had already in the past been running several activity groups based around such things as book clubs, craft, and gaming. Combining all these opportunities into one available space seemed to be a great idea. We decided to combine these groups and create a Makerspace to facilitate creation of content. We were inspired by the physical computing movement and the use of devices such as MaKey MaKeys, raspberry pi and arduino boards. Other areas of interest were the use of augmented reality, stop motion animation, and also the potential of 3D printing.

We attended the opening of the Makerspace at Mill Park and talked with the New Technologies Coordinator at Yarra Plenty Regional Library service about some of the resources they were using in this Makerspace. We were fortunate at being able to use a space in the LRC that was previously designated an office and we have turned this into our dedicated Makerspace.

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While you don't really need to have a dedicated space, and I imagine there will be times when we will overflow and work in the general LRC space, it is great to have this space tagged and identified as the Makerspace. We also utilise it for storage of resources and materials and we have set it up with some benches and stools and some fantastic equipment. We as yet do not have a 3D printer but will be working towards this in the next year.
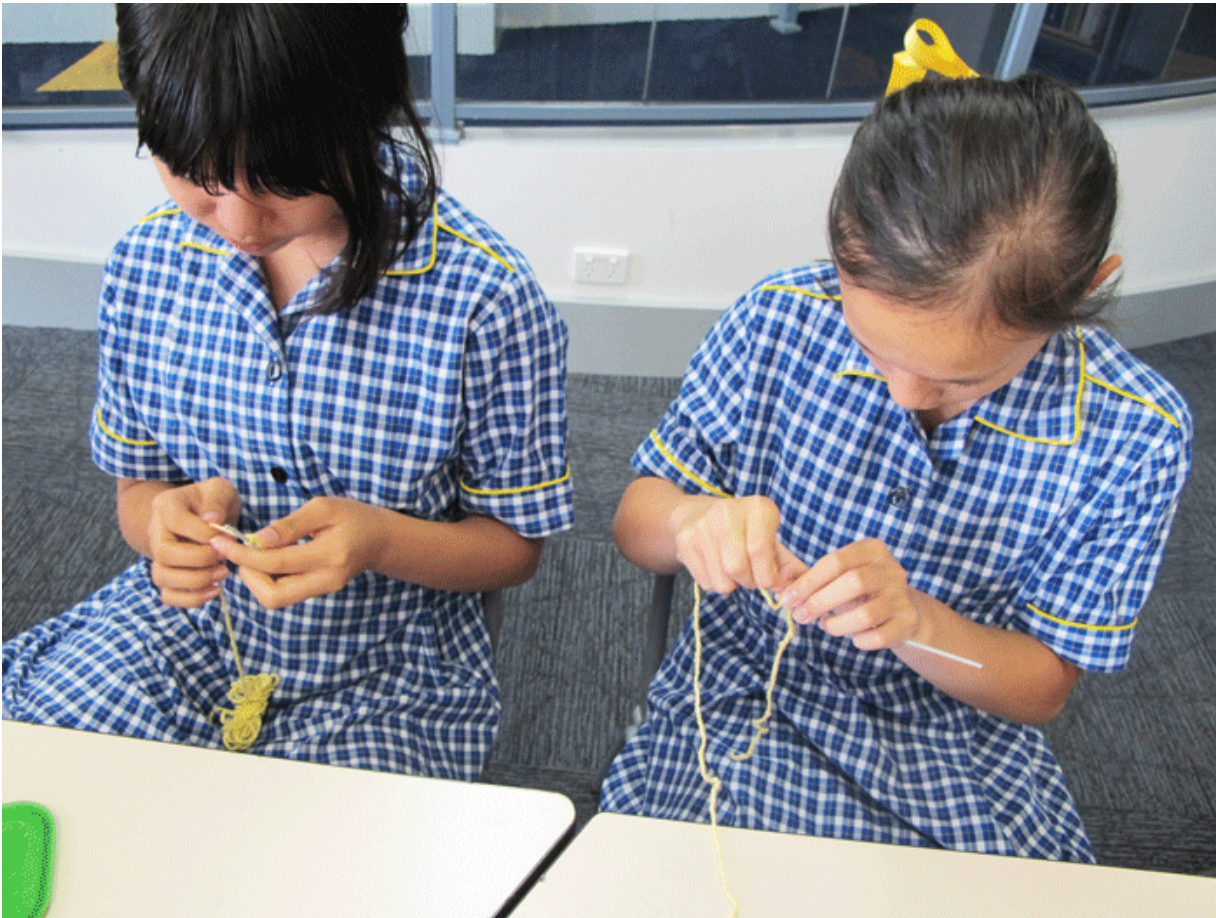
We plan to scaffold some activities e.g. the use of Arduino boards and the coding required with step by step instructions; building the circuit for a flashing LED, and adding the code to make it run. We also run craft activities around a specific creation. Our craft will incorporate the use of resources from a range of areas. But we will be encouraging students to come up with their own ideas and designs.

We have staff who are designated as mentors with particular expertise in certain areas. We will be asking the students to identify a project and keep a record of it; ongoing projects will be kept in boxes with the student's name. Students will be able to access the space at lunchtimes to work on their projects. But we have a designated meeting time once a fortnight as well as running special project making sessions where students can be inspired to try something they haven't tried before!

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