

Scrapbooking

Creative documentation

You may be surprised to find an article about scrapbooking in the Bulletin. I was actually a bit surprised to be writing one! Scrapbooking has always been an interest of mine, as the combination of photos and bright colourful paper make it an irresistible lure for a visual person like me.

Fortunately, I am not alone in this fascination. I was pleased to discover that scrapbooks have been luring people for almost two centuries. In the 1800s “Common Place” books were used by educated people to record quotes and phrases. The term “scrapbook” was created in the 1830s, based on the bright coloured paper – called “scrap” – that was used for the albums (Taylor 2003; Moreels 2003).

In 1836 the first scrapbook went on sale, and was designed for keeping newspaper articles, poems, drawings, diary entries, pressed flowers, feathers, handwriting, paper cuts and locks of hair (Hamman 2003). In the 1870s die cutting and stamping appeared, and the Kodak camera in the 1880s revolutionised scrapbooks, enticing people to add photos to existing scrap (Taylor 2003; Hamman 2003; Moreels 2003). In the mid-20th century scrapbooking declined, then once again became popular with the renewed interest in family history in the 1980s (Moreels 2003; Tate 2003). Since then an increasing demand for products, ideas and information has created an industry spread through shops, magazines and websites.

Having always felt as though I was a bit of a magpie for being drawn to bright shiny layouts, I was quite reassured to find that my interest in scrapbooking placed me in the distinguished company of Thomas Jefferson, Mark Twain and Queen Victoria (Moreels 2003; Hamman 2003).

Just as they did, I am documenting my story (and that of the Stronger Families Learning Exchange team), in a scrapbook that includes photos, journaling, documents, comments, reflections and other things relevant to our work. Due to their flexibility, simplicity and attractiveness,

Scrapbooks have been around for two centuries, writes KATRINA BREDHAUER, and have an enduring appeal for those who wish to document their “story”.



Photos, comments, stories and drawings from the Midwest Gascoyne and Murchison Family Support Project.

scrapbooks are a fantastic way to document the story of your project. You can put together a document that can be used by multiple audiences, including the participants in your project.

Scrapbooks can be a more descriptive, visually interesting and accessible way to record and communicate what is happening in your project – a living story that unfolds as your project develops. You can pass it around at meetings, leave it on your coffee table for people to flick through, or adapt it for your management committee or to your funding government agency. Also the people who participate in your project can help you to put it together by taking photos, writing comments, or designing layouts. This has the advantage of building capacity, increasing participation in your project, and spending less time writing reports!

There are many different ways to use a scrapbook. It can range from a paper scrapbook that you take to playgroups to collect photos, comments from parents and children, or handprints, to a more formal scrapbook with designed layouts that your project team or participants can compile together. The possibilities are endless.

Fortunately, so are the materials available. You can buy these from craft stores, scrapbooking shops or websites. There are also

several different magazines on scrapbooking and memory albums, which can be found in most newsagents. These are a good place to start for ideas on layouts and tips and tricks for putting pages together.

How to start

- What sort of scrapbook do you want to create? Casual or formal?
- Check out some magazines for ideas on layout and design.
- Get the photos in front of you that you want to display.
- Select some bits and pieces to add – for example, stickers, borders, mats, cut-out shapes.
- Crop the photos so that they fit on the page and are interesting to look at (you can use different shapes and types of scissors for an interesting effect). Use cropping to take out irrelevant background detail and to put the emphasis on the main point of the photo.
- Put your photos and bits and pieces on the page and move them around until you are happy with how the page looks.
- Add some journaling, either handwritten or printed.
- Glue it all into place with some acid-free glue.
- Put it in your album and show it to people!

A PARENT PEER SUPPORT GROUP



The project

The Parent Peer Support Group is part of the Stronger Families Fund FACET project, in Inala, in Queensland.

How did the group get started?

Rebecca and Erin had been involved in a peer playgroup and, when that ended, they wanted to continue to meet with other parents. Bec and Erin and their children started meeting each week at the Inala Young Mum's program to chat and support each other. They also attended the fortnightly groups at Inala Young Mum's program which is a semi-structured group with a focus on art and craft and being together. They made up a flyer about the group they were starting and had a stall at the local shopping centre to tell others about it. There are now around five parents and their children coming to the group, and hopefully more will come along and be part of it in the future.

Using the scrapbook

"Each week we write something about ourselves or the group in our group scrapbook. It includes who came along, what we did, what we thought about it, and other things going on in our lives. We also decorate our book with stickers, drawings, photos and collages. It is a record of our group, as well as ourselves."

Anne Garrow
SFLEX Senior Research Officer

What you will need

- Some sort of album or book.
- Acid free glue.
- Cutting implements to crop photos – scissors, craft knife, paper cutter, specialised tools like Fiskars shape cutter.
- A cutting mat can come in handy, either a specialised mat or a bread board.
- It can be useful to have a photo pencil to mark where you want to cut.
- Some sort of acid free backing paper to put your design on. Some album pages for scrapbooks include a background page and a page protector.
- Frames/cut-out shapes/borders/stickers.
- Pens to decorate and do some journaling – make sure they are acid-free and permanent.
- Templates can be really useful for cutting photos and paper into eye-catching shapes so your layouts look great. They can also be a time-saver compared with using a ruler and scissors.

Using scrapbooks

Some Stronger Families Fund projects have already been using scrapbooks in their work.

The Perth Young Mum's Support Project has gathered together a group of young women who are interested in scrapbooking and they are compiling a scrapbook that describes the activities of the project and the young women involved. The group has also become involved in other aspects of the project, such as talking to the Minister on a recent visit.

"The young women have been very enthusiastic and . . . have made some pretty dramatic recent changes to their lives. Who knows what scrapbooking can bring?" (Helen, Perth Young Mum's Support Program).

The Midwest Gascoyne and Murchison Family Support Project in Geraldton is taking scrapbooks along on their mobile playgroup run, which extends across their region and involves regional, rural and remote communities. They include photos of activities and families, particularly those capturing strengths and good times, plus asking parents to write comments about the activities. Children are also invited to contribute by

taking photos, making comments, or doing some drawings.

"Nic has also started a child care services scrapbook and has started promoting them as a form of documentation in child care. She is taking the scrapbook to other services and the first time she did a staff member saw a new idea (from another service, represented photographically in the scrapbook) and wanted to implement it in her service straight away!"

There is an increasing emphasis on being creative, using a wide range of mediums for documentation, and involving participants in recording and reporting. Scrapbooks are a great way to achieve all of this, with the benefit of creating an interesting, lively resource suitable for many different audiences and occasions. So think about the possibilities, get people involved, and try it out!

References

- Hamman, Debbie (2003), *The history of scrapbooking*, www.littlebit.com/scrap/history_scrap.html
- Moreels, Sarah J. (2003), *Scrapbooking – not just another "fad craft"*, www.auscrafternet.com.au (craft of the month – September – scrapbooking history).
- Tate, Cindy (2003), *Where it all started*, www.idreamofscraping.com/default.asp?ID=178
- Taylor, Maureen (2003), *The history of scrapbooking*, www.memorymakersmagazine.com/articles/history.asp

Websites of interest

There are many websites on scrapbooking, and I would encourage you to do your own search.

www.auscrafternet.com.au has information on a huge range of crafts, including scrapbooking. In the scrapbooking heading you will find several websites and links, plus information about stores in different states. Well worth a look.

www.webcon.net.au/ozscrappin/layouts.html has some examples of layouts, plus, under "shops", you will find some internet suppliers of scrapbooking materials, as well as shops in each state.

www.memoriesandmore.com.au has products for sale, tips and tricks, and some layouts you can have a look at.

www.thescrapheap.com.au is an easy-to-use website that has a good product range as well as a gallery layout for some ideas.

Useful magazines

- My Reflections*, rrp \$6.95.
Scrapbooking Memories, rrp \$9.99

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