

The Role of School Library in the Promotion of Information Literacy

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Background

Educators have always been challenged to prepare our young people to live and work effectively in this information age. Moreover, the NSS curriculum entails a teaching and learning style which is very different from what students were used to in the past. Hence, equipping students with information literacy skills has become an important agenda in most school curriculum.

In view of these, the school library should no longer be just a place to provide students with access to resources. Apart from preparing students to evaluate the information sources, teacher-librarians should also teach and equip students to be effective users of information.

The UCCKE library program, first introduced in 2005 to provide students structured learning sessions on the basic library and information skills, has instilled in students and teachers alike the awareness of the importance of information literacy in our younger generation and the need of a well-planned program to help students develop information literacy in a systematic way.

Objectives

Students who have attended the program are expected to develop the habits of reading for learning; become effective users of library resources and information in general; develop problem solving, co-operation and communication skills; and become independent information seekers and life-long learners.

Pedagogical Approach / Teaching Schedule / Teaching Contents of each level

The *UCCKE Library Program* (see [Attachment A](#)) was designed to cover all basic library/ information skills to be taught to S.1-3 students to equip them to be effective users of information. Each 20-min library teaching session aims at introducing to the students the various basic information skills which are crucial to support their learning; discussion of the skills is tied in closely with what the students are doing in their classrooms so that they can see how the application of the skills learned can help enhance their studies across the curriculum.

In view of the tight schedule of most Secondary School Curriculum, the library program is scheduled to be conducted in the morning during the Reading Time which is held every morning between 8:25 to 8:45 am for all S.1-3 students. Nine library sessions are scheduled for S.1; six for S.2 and 5 for S.3. When classes are scheduled to attend the library sessions, students will come to the library instead of having the Reading Time in the classroom. And if longer period of time are needed for certain topics, the sessions will be conducted in the English lessons instead which is 60 min long. As the library has a very close working relationship with the English Department, the English teachers are prepared to accommodate the special requests and are very supportive of the library program.

The topics covered in the Library Program are dissembled in three levels with most of the basics ones given to the S.1 classes. Topics may change if necessary when special needs arise with some classes. Newly introduced topics will be given in all three levels with slightly modified level of difficulties; for example, *News Reading* (see Attachments [B1](#) & [B2](#)) and *Note-taking Skills* (see [Attachment C](#)) are two recent major school academic concerns, so they were added to the library program in all three levels in the corresponding school years.

Collaboration between TL and teachers

Value-added benefits accrue when the teachers and teacher-librarian collaborate to plan, implement and evaluate student learning experience together. In order to assure that students have an opportunity to apply the skills they learn in the library program, on top of the regular project-based assignments like Liberal Studies Project Learning, SBA Book Reports given by individual subject teachers across the curriculum, special reading activities/ assignments and mini-research projects are planned by the library with the subject teachers, and implemented right after certain skills have been taught.

Activities / Application of skills / (worksheets if to be included)

A special reading buddy program is implemented in collaboration with the S.1 English teachers for S.1 students in the first term right after the Seven Reading Strategies (see [Attachment D](#)) have been taught; the S.1 students are paired up with S.4 reading buddies to tackle assigned information materials using the strategies learned in a series of meetings. This is to help them consolidate their skills in making use of information which is actually the task involved in the Stage 4 of the Big 6 Model. It is often assumed that students have already mastered these basic skills and are aware of the importance of the proper use of information; but unfortunately, Stage 4 seems to be the most neglected stage among the others in the Big 6 Model.

After the *Big 6 Skills Research Model* (see [Attachment E](#)) has been taught, a research-based assignment is planned with subject teachers including Humanities, Science and English, the students have to look for information from various sources in order to complete it; students are guided through what they have to do in each of the six stages in the research model. Some classes are given a *Science Reading Assignment* (see [Attachment F](#)) in which students are also required to make use of the Big 6 Skills.

Other library initiated school-wide programs include *Reading Circles* (see [Attachment G](#)), *Growing through Reading*, *Book Week* in which students of different forms will have chances to apply the skills learned in the library program. *Reading Circles* is implemented as part of the English curriculum in which all S.1 and S.4 students are involved. While exploring the fun of reading, students are assigned different tasks to prepare and present in the weekly meetings; some tasks involve students to prepare questions for further investigation or research on related topics. *Growing through Reading* is an across the curriculum reading program; the focus of which is to sustain "Reading to Learn" in different subject areas. While the theme of each year *Book Week* tries to support the school major academic concern of the year, the main purpose of which is to promote information literacy to the whole school community with entertaining and stimulating activities.

Teachers' voice

"Our library program which puts emphasis on Information Skills makes good sense in meeting students' needs of the new millennium. In this age of knowledge explosion, information skills are of vital importance, for knowledge are 'generated' and 'renewed' every day in different sectors in unprecedented speed that can no longer be mastered by teachers in traditional sense. Both teachers and students need to be equipped with skills that can acquire knowledge effectively and be prepared to for life-long application of these skills.

Our students are in general confident in looking for and using information in their studies. We have quite a few self-regulated programs of different subjects. Students are guided to prepare for themselves and their fellow students the core knowledge of specified topics (and have them presented) before going into more in-depth applications and reflections. Students enjoy these practices as they realize that what they can learn from the information they find by research are often much richer and more rewarding than mere text books studies.

Students have plenty of opportunities to practise information skills at school. One example among many I can cite is the self-regulated learning package of Chinese language in S2. Students are guided to prepare topics on Chinese ancient literary work through research. They are then given opportunities to 'teach' their fellow students as 'experts' in their specialized area. They are also invited to present what they've learnt to school visitors during the School Open Day."

--Mrs Fung, Vice Principal

"The library program is a mutual support to enhance students' English competence as well as critical thinking in a conducive learning environment while strengthening their expertise in library skills"

--Mrs Cheung, English Department Head

Students' voice

"Information skills are the essence of my life in the midst of overwhelming information in daily lives as well as my studies, and checking on the reliability of information is always a real challenge. I appreciate the wide variety of school work which has helped further polish my information seeking strategies to seek the appropriate source of information in the most effective manner."

--Ruth Lin, S.5 student

"I expect to learn more from the Library Program about how to do information search and identify good and useful information."

--Gabriel Chou, S.1 student