

## 6. Lok Sin Tong Yu Kan Hing Secondary School

### Introduction

The school leaders and teachers at Lok Sin Tong Yu Kan Hing Secondary School are strongly supportive in promoting reading. The school library and subject panels collaborate to organise a variety of reading programmes to stimulate students' interests in reading and to help them develop a habit of reading. Reading activities are well received as they match students' interests and abilities. For example, the Reading Variety Show, a large-scale annual event, enables students to promote books in various ways. We will see how the school library helps promote reading and support learning in this case study.

#### *School Environment & Teachers' Resources Centre*

The library collection consists of around 10,000 Chinese books, 4,700 English books, 960 magazines and 900 items of audio-visual materials. Seven computers are available for students to use. The library also provides a room which serves as a teachers' resource centre. The centre is equipped with computers, desks and chairs. It provides teachers with a quiet and comfortable place in which teachers can read newspapers and reference books.



### A Variety of Reading Activities

#### *The Reading Team: Agency for Communication Between the Librarian and Teachers*

The teacher-librarian and subject teachers cooperate to promote reading activities. The school has set up the Reading Team which comprises members of the Chinese, English, Mathematics and Humanities subject panels, with the teacher-librarian as the coordinator. With the promotion of reading as its prime objective, the Reading Team also serves as a channel to facilitate collaboration, discussion and communication among the teacher-librarian, academic departments and subject panels.

The teacher-librarian has established a culture of reading by introducing a range of reading activities, including talks by famous authors and participation in the reading carnival. Two other major reading events, the "Morning Reading Programme" and "Reading Variety Show", are also organised. They provide regular opportunities for students to engage in reading activities and are important for the promotion of reading.

#### *Morning Reading Programme*

A 20-minute morning reading session is held three times a week. While one of these weekly sessions focuses on English reading materials, there are no language restrictions on the other two. To foster a whole-school reading culture, all school members including the students, teachers, Principal, and other staff members participate in this activity. Students usually bring their own reading materials for the session. Subject panels or committees may provide reading materials, supplemented with visual aids and questions to facilitate discussion. In addition to individual reading, the morning reading time offers an opportunity for students to share their reading experiences. Class teachers encourage every student to recommend books and share their reading experiences at least once a year. Teachers of the Reading Team also visit different classes to understand the performance of students and arrange “reading ambassadors” to recommend books to each class.

### *Reading Variety Show*

The Reading Variety Show is an important event organised jointly by the Reading Team, Drama Department, Chinese Language Department, Life Education Team and Health in Mind Club. The target students are from Form 1 to Form 3, with Form 2 students being the performers, and Form 1 and Form 3 students being the audience.

The variety show recommends books in the form of talent show or short drama. It also links to the theme related to daily life and moral education. Ms Wong believes that these collaborative activities should align with the subject curriculum and annual themes of the school so as to boost the team spirit of teachers without increasing their workload. This is well demonstrated by the last Reading Variety Show. The annual school theme for the 2010/2011 academic year was the “Year of Perseverance”, and the annual theme of the Health in Mind Club was “Live a Healthy Life”. In line with these themes, the objectives of the 2010/2011 Reading Variety Show was twofold: to enable students to share reading experiences and to raise students’ awareness of their mental health. The Reading Team and Health in Mind Club also collaborated to provide a series of books relating to endurance and mental health for students to choose and read. Students may introduce other books related to the theme under the guidance of class teachers.



Each of the Form 2 classes selects a book for presentation. To facilitate this, the class teacher appoints a working group with 5 to 6 core members to recommend good books to the class. The class then votes to select a book for sharing. The working group then reads the book, and selects extracts for the whole class to read. Students decide their form of presentation with drama being the most popular type. Class teachers then facilitate their discussions and assist them in allocating duties for the students, such as actors, lighting, costumes, stage props, backdrop and publication. Based on the theme and selected paragraph of the book selected, students adapt and write scripts, which are sent to their Chinese language teacher for comments. Drama teachers then help students with on-stage rehearsals and stage effects. As the school provides drama classes, students already have some knowledge of drama.

The teacher-librarian, Ms Wong Yee Suen, opines that this cross-curriculum activity not only promotes reading and sharing among students, it instils positive values and communication skills in them. For example, when two groups of students decided to use a wheelchair in their drama, they borrowed it by contacting the nearby community centre on their own. Through this, students learned how to tackle problems and their communication skills were enhanced.

From preparation to the launching of the show takes more than three months. During this period, students remain actively engaged and enjoy the process very much. After completion of the programme, all students involved demonstrate improvement in their reading abilities and other generic skills, and naturally, Form 2 students benefit the most. An important factor in the success of the Reading Variety Show is the close collaboration between subject teachers and the teacher-librarian.

The teacher-librarian also supports reading schemes for various subjects.

### *Chinese Language Panel*

In addition to collaborating with the teacher-librarian in the Chinese Extensive Reading Scheme, Chinese language teachers also cooperate with the teacher-librarian in organising Reading Club activities, including the annual talks by famous authors. They also work with the teacher-librarian to train Reading Ambassadors as well as to participate in the Reading Club. There are about 20 to 30 students joining the Reading Club each year. Ms W.P. Chan, the Chinese language teacher, thinks that students can benefit in various ways through participating in the Reading Club talks. Those working as MC in the talks need to immerse themselves in the authors' works. Those assigned to ask questions also learn a lot in this process. They need to explore the concept of the author's works and the main characters, etc. The talk also arouses the interests of other students who attend the talk. Besides, the Reading Ambassadors visit each class during the morning reading session. They recommend and share good books.

### *English Language Panel*

The teacher-librarian collaborates with the English Language Panel in organising various activities, including the Extensive Reading Scheme, magazine reading scheme, and some other extracurricular activities.

In the 2010/2011 school year, a significant number of English magazine titles, including The English Channel, The English Corner, Discovery Box, Typhoon Club, TC 2, National Geographic Kids, and CNN, were added to the library collection. To encourage junior form students to read English materials, a book box, filled with around 60 English books and magazines were selected jointly by the English language panel head, Native English Teacher ("NET"), teachers from the English Reading Team and the teacher-librarian. It was placed inside every junior form classroom.



Students were encouraged to read these materials during the morning reading sessions or the English language lessons.

To cater for learner diversity, the English language teacher Ms Y.I. Ma, the Native English Teacher and the teacher-librarian implement a programme in those classes where students' English abilities are stronger. With an aim to promote reading of English magazines. Students, in groups of 4 to 5, read the English magazines and select their favourite articles. During morning reading sessions, these students, led by the three teachers, visit Form 1 to Form 3 classes and recommend the English articles. Ms Ma noted that the involved students had expanded their vocabularies, and their confidence was also strengthened. According to Ms Ma, the provision of appropriate resources is essential for the programme, and the support of the school library is indispensable.

***“The programme enables students to acquire a larger vocabulary size, and to broaden their horizons. The magazines provided by the school library are sufficiently varied in terms of difficulty to suit learners at different levels.”***

- Ms Y.I. Ma, an English language teacher

The Graded Readers' Scheme is implemented in Form 1. The teacher-librarian and the NET Ms Rodgers classify English materials according to reading levels and provide administrative support to the planning of the scheme. At the beginning of the 2010/2011 school year, Ms Rodgers, arranges Form 1 students to take an English Reading Literacy Test to assess their reading levels. In the English reading lessons, teachers provides about 50 English books, classified by reading levels, for students to read in the classroom. It is expected that students will read about 20 English books in the school year. The goal of the Graded Readers' Scheme is to raise the reading level of 70% students by two grades by the end of the school year. At present, most Form 1 students, including 6 groups of students of students, has made excellent progress, with their English reading levels already raises by two grades.

The English Extensive Reading Scheme requires students to complete 5 book reports. Suitable books are located on special bookshelves designated for the Scheme in the school library. The school library also contains an English Book Corner which encourages students to read English books.



The English Language panel and the Liberal Studies panel also had jointly organised a guided tour for a group of overseas exchange students from the University of Hong Kong. Senior form students were required to guide the group around the Chi Lin Nunnery and Nan Lian Garden in English. The school library played the role as the information provider and helped teachers and students prepare for the tours. Ms Wong expressed that all participants were confident to speak English with them during the tour and some student guides still maintain contact with the overseas students.

### *The Mathematics Panel*

The library provides a Mathematics Reading Box for the junior forms. Each box includes 40-50 mathematics books on various subjects, such as mathematics riddles, inferences, and the life stories of mathematicians. These boxes are circulated among the classes, and are placed in each classroom for two to three weeks. The Mathematics teacher of each class distributes the books in accordance with students' abilities and interests.

Students report on the Mathematics books they have read. The teacher decides the format of reporting, e.g. verbal presentation or worksheet. Ms W.F. Yuen, a teacher of the Mathematics and Reading Team, observed that students' interests in both Mathematics and reading had grown and their breadth of reading had also been broadened. Some students even read the entire series of books, such as those relating to the mathematician Hua Luo Geng. The school library's support to Mathematics panel not only includes the provision of reading materials, it also includes administrative support for the programme, such as circulation of Reading Box.

### *Cross-curriculum Collaboration*

Lok Sin Tong Yu Kan Hing Secondary School emphasizes cross-curricular learning. An example is the "Walking with Nature" project, a large-scale activity in which Mathematics, Science, English teachers, and the teacher-librarian collaborate in arranging field trips for students. This project encourages students to apply their knowledge of different subjects. Over the past two years, students visited Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve and Tsiu Hang in Saikung. The teacher-librarian acted as a supportive role in this project. She prepared relevant books for students to read, and allocated manpower.

***"As the theme of the project is broad, students usually have to go to the library to search for information. I collaborate with the teacher-librarian closely to ensure that the school library can provide materials relevant to the current theme of the project."***

- Ms K.L. Tang, the Vice-Principal and Liberal Studies Panel Head

### **Strategies for Promoting Cross-curriculum Collaboration**

The teacher-librarian, Ms Wong, has extensive experience in cross-curricular collaboration. What advice can she share with us? Ms Wong believes that when the teacher-librarian promotes cross-curricular collaboration, it is the best to start with small steps. The project must align with the objectives of the subjects or the theme of the school, so that confidence for cooperation could be increased without increasing the workload of subject teachers. At the same time, the project should match the teaching schedule of various subjects.

Ms Wong suggests that collaboration can begin starting first with language subjects, for example the Chinese or English Extensive Reading Schemes. Collaboration may then be introduced to subjects that the teacher-librarian is familiar with, for example the subject that he/she teaches. A progressive approach can be adopted for collaboration and it is better to start with small-scale co-operation, for example, provision of book lists, thematic book displays, book acquisition,

information searching, and news clippings. Collaboration can then be extended to tasks such as planning of classroom activities and supporting extended activities. There are complications at the start, but the teacher-librarian can learn from mistakes, gain experience, and improve. Evaluation of the activities is carried out with various subject panels at the end of the school year, and thus collaboration opportunities are further explored.

Ms Wong also points out that the teacher-librarian will usually take on a more active role at the beginning of a cross-curricular project, by making plans for various activities and discussing with subject teachers how to put these plans into action. Once a project is on track, the teacher-librarian can recede and turn her/his attention to new plans for promoting reading and collaboration with teachers of other subjects.

Ms Wong believes that after years of effort, her school has built a culture of collaboration in junior forms, and the school can advance one step further by promoting collaboration in senior forms. With the launch of the New Academic Structure, reading is of critical importance in the senior secondary curriculum. Students must obtain extensive knowledge from books and other information sources to cope with the demand of the senior secondary curriculum. As a result, there are many potential opportunities for the school library to collaborate with subject teachers.

#### **Fostering the spirit of servicing others among students**

The teacher-librarian arranges students to serve at the Library and this improves the daily operations of the school library, and fosters the spirit of serving others among students. The Library Service Team comprises 5 team leaders, 5 vice-team leaders and more than 40 members. Team leaders and vice-team leaders are responsible for leading the members in managing daily library routine, including book lending and return (circulation), use of computer, newspaper processing, students' discipline, shelving, covering books, photocopying and reading promotion. After completion of a structured training programme and assessment, members can be elected as team leaders. Here is what two team leaders have said about this team.

***“Being the team leader of the Library Service Team enhances my communication skills, as well as my sense of responsibility and leadership skills.”***

- K.W. Lam, a Form 4 student cum team leader of the Library Service Team

***“Initially, I joined the team just on the recommendation of my Form 1 class teacher. As my interest in working in the library gradually grows, I start to have a sense of belonging.”***

- H.T. Leung, a Form 4 student cum team leader of the Library Service Team

After serving as team leader, students' sense of responsibility and their independent capability have been enhanced. K.W. Lam, a team leader, expressed that the team leaders believed that the Library Service Team was not efficient, and the speed in handling the borrowing and return of books was slow. As a result, the leaders initiated a training class during the Easter holidays, to improve the Team's performance. Ms Wong noted that the team leaders have matured through

organising various activities. The parent of K.W. Lam also pointed out that joining the Library Service Team had helped students grow.

*“At the time when Ka-wai was promoted to secondary school, I considered that she was very dependent, and did not know how to take care of herself. However, ever since she has started serving in the school library in Form 2, she has become more capable in managing herself, and learnt how to better allocate her time. She can also manage her academic work despite her participation in extracurricular activities. When she was promoted to Form 3, Ka-wai was selected as the vice-team leader, and she was very excited about it. She began to study harder than before and actively involved in organising various activities and became more outgoing. At home, Ka-wai initiated to share the household chore and was able to take care of herself. In Form 4, Ka-wai was promoted to the team leader of the Library Service Team. As she takes up more responsibilities now, she has developed a greater sense of responsibility too. Ka-wai always invites her brother and me to join the activities organised by the library. In November last year, Ka-wai and her peers were very much engaged in helping out at the game stalls in the Victoria Park. I think that Ka-wai is a lot more mature now and has made much progress in other aspects too. She cares about others, and helps her brother with his homework. When problems arise, she tries to solve them and spared no effort in completing every task.”*



Students K.W. Lam (left) and H.T. Leung

- Mrs P.C. Yau, Parent of Form 4 student K.W. Lam

### **Support provided by the School**

#### *Deploying an Assistant for the School Library*

The school has appointed a full-time library assistant to support the teacher-librarian. The library assistant undertakes administrative work of the school library so as to allow teacher-librarian to concentrate on more professional tasks, such as supporting the school curriculum, promoting reading, and collaboration. According to the Principal, Ms F.H. Ng, the teacher-librarian plays an important role in promoting cross-curricular collaboration. The Principal is convinced that the teacher-librarian is one of the curriculum leaders and he/she plays an important role in promoting cross-curricular collaboration. Therefore, the function of the library assistant is very important as the teacher-librarian can focus on reading promotion.

***“Apart from a full-time teacher-librarian, there is also a full-time library assistant, who is mainly responsible for managing daily routine and administrative work in the library. It is hoped that this will enable the teacher-librarian to focus on reading promotion and to assume a leading role in cross-curricular collaboration.”***

- Ms F.H. Ng, The Principal

### *Specialization of the Duties of a Teacher-Librarian*

The principal believes that the main role of a teacher-librarian is to promote reading and carry out cross-curricular collaboration. If the teacher-librarian is required to take up subject teaching, it will have a negative impact on carrying out her professional duties, and may even reduce the effectiveness of the reading schemes. Therefore, the Principal has not assigned the teacher-librarian to take up teaching duties so that she can assume a leading role in curriculum development.

***“Given the resources, the arrangement for having the teacher-librarian to stand out and collaborate with all teachers in reading promotion is the right thing to do, as there has to be someone to take up the duties in liaising with subject teachers. If the school assigns the teacher-librarian with teaching duties, then it will unavoidably affect her work in promoting reading.”***

- Ms F.H. Ng, The Principal

Ms Wong admits that, as she had to teach Liberal Studies in the previous school year, subject teaching inevitably affected her work in the school library. However, she also holds the view that teaching experience is an advantage for her job as the teacher-librarian, as it enables her to have a better understanding of the curriculum. During this school year, Ms Wong does not have any teaching duties, but she thinks that being able to understand student learning is important for reading promotion. Therefore, she attends English reading lessons in junior forms every week and assists students to read.

### *Arranging the teacher-librarian to play a middle management role*

The teacher-librarian is responsible for building the reading culture, supporting the curriculum and promoting cross-curricular collaborative projects. To facilitate her to discharge these duties, the school has arranged Ms Wong to assume the role of a middle manager. She takes part in joint meetings with subject panels. This arrangement enhances her understanding of the curriculum and the progress of teaching and learning in various subjects. Thus, she can provide more effective support to learning and teaching, and collaboration between the school library and subject panels is also strengthened. Besides, more potential collaboration opportunities can also be explored.

### *Encouraging communications among Teachers*

The principal encourages teachers to engage in professional exchange with other schools. She often arranges visits to other schools, acting as a leader herself. The principal also encourages Ms Wong, the teacher-librarian, to visit other school libraries, so that she may have better ideas for improving the facilities and resources of the school library.

## **Conclusion**

Lok Sin Tong Yu Kan Hing Secondary School supports the view that promotion of reading is not the sole responsibility of the teacher-librarian. In fact, all teachers have an important role to play in

developing the reading culture. This is why the Reading Team includes subject teachers, while the teacher-librarian serves as a coordinator of the Reading Team with the responsibility of promoting collaboration among subject teachers. The Reading Team is a platform to facilitate discussion and communication among teachers, and to enable the staff members to jointly promote reading throughout the school community. Ms Wong does not have teaching duties, so she can focus on her professional role as a teacher-librarian and this facilitates the promotion of reading. The quote from the principal below succinctly underscores the role of reading in learning.

***“The Library is not the sole party responsible for the promotion of reading. The responsibility is also shouldered by every subject teacher and even the Pastoral Care Team and Careers Guidance Team. The school hopes that students can see reading as an important means of learning. Reading cannot be separated from subject learning and activities related to whole-person development. The past experiences of various schools showed that, while reading award schemes or reading lessons, for example, can encourage students to read several pages of a newspaper or leisure books a day, which can be a good start in stimulating students’ interests in reading, but such arrangement is separated from the curriculum. It is part of our missions in recent years to infiltrate reading into the curriculum; thereby infusing reading into all subjects and other learning experiences, such as value education. We also wish to infiltrate reading into cross-curricular learning.”***

- Ms F.H. Ng, The Principal