

Integrating School Libraries into the Curriculum as part of Educational Reform

**Paper Presented at the Second International Forum on Education Reform
Bangkok, Thailand
Sept 2-5**

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Introduction

It sometimes seems that the field of education is in constant flux. It does not matter how good or bad the local school system is, there is always someone or some group that want to change, improve, re-think, maximize or reform the educational system. Educational systems regardless of culture or country seem to be always under pressure to improve. This impetus for reform probably grows out of the value that people, regardless of culture, social standing or religion, place upon education. In human cultures, the education of children is universally considered one of the most important, sometimes sacred, duties of parents and societies.

Asian schools have developed a tradition of producing graduates who perform exceptionally well in academic areas, primarily areas such as Mathematics and the hard sciences. A simple referral to the place students from Hong Kong, Singapore or Tokyo occupy in standardized test scores in Mathematics versus students from the US and Canada leads many in Western countries to conclude that they should adopt a more Eastern approach¹. Yet, in Hong Kong and other Eastern countries, there is a growing resistance to the "Stuff the Duck" method of schooling. It is perceived that while students may memorize a great deal of information. They are unable to creatively solve problems for which they have no memorized answer. This can be extremely problematic in a dynamic fast-paced business or professional environment. Employees without the ability to find correct answers can quickly cause a business system to break down.

Thus, in Hong Kong as well as other areas in Asia, educators and governments are beginning to try and reform the educational system to create schools that provide an education that

¹ Bracey, Gerald W. *How Bad Are Our Schools?: Principal*; v71 n4 p14, 16, 18 Mar 1992 (ERIC Document # EJ439329)

allows students to think through problems rather than memorize an answer². One aspect this author believes to be often overlooked in the process of education reform and helping students to acquire thinking skills is the role of the school library. Integrating library services into the curriculum is not a new concept, but it is a concept that is nearly completely ignored³ when it comes to reforming educational systems

This paper will discuss what a library that is well integrated into a school's curriculum both is and is not, what services it could provide, how it should operate and why a library that is significantly integrated into a school's curriculum is essential to providing a good education. It will also look at a case study of a school library that has attempted to become more fully integrated despite severe budgetary and space limitations. The significance of this paper lies in the hope of helping educators to rethink and expand the role of school libraries so that educational environment and outcomes would perhaps be improved for all students.

Attributes of a Curriculum Integrated School Library

Why should a library be integrated into the curriculum?

This is the first question that should be asked. However, if the answer is not obvious, the questioner should take a trip to the nearest university library. School libraries, especially secondary school libraries, need to be integrated into the curriculum of the school because one of the foremost functions of giving children a secondary education is to prepare them for a university and university libraries are integrated into the university curriculum. If a student graduates from a secondary school without knowing how to access, process and synthesize research information,

² Cheung, Kwok-cheung; *Science Curriculum Reform for the Changing Future-- An Explication of a Curriculum Inquiry Framework and the Educational Context of Sixth Form Science*; Chinese University Education Journal; v18 n1 p79-87 Jun 1990

³ For example, until the year 2000 there was not a training program for school librarians in Hong Kong. Even today, the training is part-time and only available at an Associate's Bachelor's degree level.

he/she has received an inadequate education⁴. There is no excuse for any student not to be taught how to access research data independently and a library that is integrated into the school curriculum is potentially the best curriculum aid a teacher can have to teach thinking and research skills to university bound students.

As stated above, university libraries are integrated into the university curriculum. Professors often make assignments that require library research. Yet, there is probably no part of the modern university campus that has changed more in the past 25 years than the library reference room. Despite this, most students arrive at university with little or no training in gathering, evaluating, finding or using research data.⁵ Indeed, most have very little idea of the purpose a University library serves in the educational process. Integrating the school library into the curriculum so that the school library can be used as training or practice facilities for honing the skills needed by students in a tertiary library is the most obvious, and probably the best way to remedy this situation.

The nature of this problem has also changed with the rise of electronic reference materials. In 1980, most published research was indexed in heavy volumes with small print. The Oxford English Dictionary was, and probably still is, shipped with a magnifying glass so that the definitions could be read by a person with normal vision. It was difficult for libraries to maintain currency of information and sometimes just as difficult to find what information was housed in the library. Professors and students would regularly travel long distances to visit a university with a larger, better-equipped library. Librarians spent a great deal of time simply trying to locate where research materials on a topic might be found.

⁴ Having worked as a reference librarian at a private university in the United States, this author has dealt with inadequate, sometimes scandalous lack of preparation shown by students entering a tertiary institution.

⁵ Greenberg, Karen; Mark, Paula; Integrating Library Research Skills into the Basic Course Curriculum; ERIC 1986, ERIC Document # ED273996

Today even small universities and secondary school libraries normally have a range of electronic and computer based reference materials that contain huge amounts of research. Larger universities have multiple databases covering almost every conceivable field of knowledge many times over.⁶ Some of these are updated daily and allow researchers to find huge amounts of information. Researchers can access electronic reference materials provided by the library from their office or home. Services such as the Internet Public Library even provide answers to reference questions via the Internet⁷. The problem has, in a sense, become reversed. The question librarians have to answer is no longer “Where do I find it?” but rather “How do I sort through all of this?” or “How can I tell which sources are truly accurate and contain reliable information?”

For example, if someone searches the ERIC database using the word “Inclusion” and limits the search to only “Full-Text ERIC Documents” which is a specific search then more than 70 hits are received⁸. If a researcher in the ERIC database searches using only the word “Inclusion” with no modifiers, then 9732 hits are received⁹. If a researcher searches for the word “Inclusion” on the Internet using the Yahoo search engine, 96 hits are returned. Many undergraduate professors only require 15-20 references for an entire 10 to 12 page research paper. Thus, students must now, more than ever, be taught how to evaluate the reliability of what they find as well as how to find what they are looking for. Librarians call this set of skills “Information Seeking Behavior”. Information Seeking Behavior (IFB), as with music and many other skills, is effectively taught through practice. The best place to practice IFB in school is the school library. To succeed at

⁶ For example, the University of Hong Kong subscribes to over 1500 electronic databases at a cost of several million dollars.

⁷ <http://www.ipl.org>

⁸ This search was conducted on August 13, 2002 using the advanced search mode.
http://ericir.syr.edu/Eric/adv_search.shtml

⁹ This search was conducted on August 27, 2002 using the simple search mode.
<http://www.askeric.org/plweb-cgi/fastweb?search>

university, a university bound secondary student should be able to access, research and process information compiled and reported upon by others. Being able to do this means that less time is wasted duplicating the work of others, finding the information needed and helps the researcher to gather more information to avoid mistakes. That is the purpose of teaching information seeking skills.

Beyond preparing students for a university, there are other compelling reasons that libraries need to be integrated into a school's curriculum. The pace of discovery and creation of information appears to be accelerating. Although this may only be a function of more people working to discover new things, it is still true the average person is exposed to much more information today than even 25 years ago. This means that people have to make decisions faster because people are receiving information faster. By integrating the school library into the school curriculum, students can be taught how to better manage the flow of information to which they are exposed. Learning how to organize the data found by research is a basic element of critical thinking skills. At a basic level, there is not much difference between assessing the value of an advertised product and assessing the value of published report. Even those students who are not planning to attend university are constantly doing informal research. Research, either formal or informal is the basic occupation of almost every human almost everyday. Thus, teaching research skills should be an important part of any education. Research skills are, co-incidentally, one of the things that professional librarians have traditionally been trained to know. Whether the purpose of an education is to prepare a student for a university or to simply equip them to live in today's society, research skills are basic to living.

The case for integrating a school library into the curriculum as part of the education reform is obvious. However, what things are necessary to allow a library to be integrated into the school

curriculum? To answer this question, it is necessary to look at how the job of the school librarian has changed in the last two decades and how the school library has developed in that period.

The Changing and Unchanging Role of the School Librarian

As libraries have automated and reference materials have migrated away from bound paper, the librarian's role has expanded to include more areas.¹⁰ In part, this is because as libraries have automated the librarian has been freed from task such as manually cataloging and tracking due dates and other chores that formerly consumed a large portion of the time of the staff in an un-automated library. In addition, as new technology is adopted from time to time, it has become increasingly important that library patrons be instructed in the use of new media, which requires the librarian to exhibit mastery of information in new formats. New media formats require maintenance and different electronic interfaces, librarians have to become more technologically skilled to stay abreast of these changes. Yet, in other important ways the role of the librarian has not changed at all in a very long time. The librarian in a library that is integrated into a school's curriculum has several roles that have not changed at all since the creation of libraries.

First, the librarian is an administrator. A library that is integrated into the curriculum is going to have a collection development policy that requires the librarian to actively manage the budget in such a way that the needs of teachers and students are met. The process of determining what should be obtained, locating a source, and actually obtaining materials requires a combination of interpersonal communication, logistical and organizational skills normally present in an administrator. The librarian administrates the library budget, the collection development process, and the use of the library by various classes and the automation and online systems required by a modern school library in the early 21st century.

¹⁰ Simpson, Carol; *The School Librarian's Role in the Electronic Age*; **Teacher Librarian**, v25 n5 p38-39 May-Jun 1998

Administering the library's collection development program is the most complex of these administrative responsibilities because it is not simply buying a box of books once or twice a year. Collection development includes setting short, medium and long-term collection development goals. The librarian should know the basic trends in reference materials and have a plan to acquire new reference materials. These plans should be written so that progress can be measured but flexible enough to change with unforeseen changes in the school student population and school financial conditions. Good school librarians are good administrators.

Second, the librarian in a school with a library that is integrated into the curriculum is an evaluator. Teachers may know, in a general sense, what they need or want in the library but probably do not know where to find the material or which bibliographic item is the best one for the school. It is the librarian's job to use teacher suggestions to compile the best list of bibliographic items available for each assignment and the best available items for purchase within the budget. To do this, the librarian must be able to quickly evaluate several sources to find the best item for the school library. Good librarians evaluate bibliographic items to find the best source.

Third, the librarian in a school with a library that is integrated into the curriculum is a facilitator. The librarian aids the teacher and student in discovering the information available in the school library. By making it easy for teachers to know what is available in the library the librarian allows the teacher to assign more projects that develop independent thinking skills. It is the librarian provides, acquires and maintains the majority of resources for the students to perform research. A librarian facilitates learning.

Fourth, the librarian is a teacher. The librarian in a school with a library that is integrated into the curriculum should be responsible for formal Bibliographic Instruction, answering reference questions, and teaching students and teachers how use automated library systems on an "ad hoc" basis. Doing this better prepares students for the university settings, reduces the time they spend

on homework and helps teachers to teach more efficiently. Teaching is an integral part of the librarian's job.

Fifth, the librarian in a school with a library that is integrated into the curriculum is a technician. The rise of electronically delivered reference sources and automated cataloging systems means that librarians must have the technical knowledge to deal with the computerized system essential to maintain the modern library. Additionally, the librarian is a technician in that while such task as cataloging has become automated, it has not disappeared. The librarian must still possess the requisite knowledge of cataloging systems, indexing, abstracting and information gathering that were needed years ago. The tools and media used have changed but the task has not. The school librarian must understand the use of technology in the classroom.

Sixth, the librarian in a school with a library that is integrated into the curriculum is a professional. It is a common myth among non-teachers that anybody can teach and that teaching is an easy job. Among school administrators, at least many in Hong Kong, it appears to be a commonly held myth that anybody can be a librarian. Look at the previous five characteristics of a librarian and it becomes clear that the librarian should be trained as a librarian. Good schools do not generally hire non-qualified teachers. Librarians need to be qualified and trained.

Beyond the job requirements, a librarian in a curriculum-integrated library is going to be proactively looking for ways to expand, modify and adapt the services provided by the library. The librarian should always be trying to discover ways that will more thoroughly meet the informational needs of students and teachers. To put it simply, the librarian must not be chained to the reference desk or the cataloging table. Teachers are busy; they need their time to grade, prepare and plan lessons. The librarian should proactively contact and liaise with the teachers so that the library can better meet the needs of the school curriculum.

The Changing and Unchanging Role of the School Library

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on computers in the field of education. It is tempting to confuse a computer lab with a library that is integrated into a school's curriculum because many modern libraries rely upon computer-based sources. This temptation seems to have aided-and-abetted by some in the field of computer science who foresee, or think they foresee the coming computer driven information revolution and are not hesitant to prophesy the death of libraries and librarians.

In a limited sense, this prophecy has come true. As mentioned above, the advent of electronic reference systems has revolutionized library reference rooms. The computer, and more specifically the Internet, has become many students' first choice and sometimes the only choice for finding and gathering research material. This is problematic for several reasons. Most students using the Internet do not evaluate any web site they visit. Indeed, especially with free web sites, there is very little way to evaluate the currency, accuracy or reliability of the data collected. Because most the Internet pages are not peer reviewed or edited by any one except the owner it is difficult to be able to trust the information.

There are subscription sites with good reference materials and electronic editions of newspapers abound but most of the Internet is created and maintained as a hobby, unprofessional, non-academic, shallow and sometimes factually wrong¹¹. It does not take an educated person long to find out that much of the Internet is little more than rumor and opinion. While rumor and opinions have their place, they should not be allowed to replace high quality research. The free Internet is not a substitute for, but a supplement to authoritative, subscription services such as those by Gale Research, H.W. Wilson, EBSCO, and Newsbank and others. Subscription based databases such

¹¹ Laura Sessions Stepp; **Washington Post, The (DC)**; *Point, Click, Think: As Students Rely on the Internet for Research, Teachers Try to Warn of the Web's Snares*; July 16, 2002 Edition: F Section: Style Page: C1

as these found in a library are not normally available to the public. The Internet will not replace a library because the Internet is not organized or cataloged, as are libraries. One is never sure what information is available on the Internet or of the currency or reliability of the information presented. Libraries are organized, cataloged and maintained to provide accurate, reliable and current information. Doing this is part of the job of a librarian.

While a computer Science teacher may be trained and have expertise in research skills, it is more likely that a computer science teacher will have skills in programming, system maintenance and other skill needed by a computer scientist. A computer teacher is not a librarian even if the modern library has many computer-based resources. To say that the computer will ever replace the library is on one level as silly as saying that Literature will replace Algebra. Literature and Algebra are different subjects. They exist to serve different functions and do different things. While libraries use computers, they are not computer labs. The library that is integrated into the school curriculum is not a computer lab, even an electronic library because librarians do not generally teach students how to perform computer programming. A computer teachers and Information technology professionals do not normally provide reference service and catalog information.

Whether the information needed is contained in an electronic database or a paper-based system is irrelevant. This is still an activity that is conducted in a library and the librarian's job is, as detailed above, to aid in the acquisition of information seeking and finding skills.

Ten Attributes of a library that is integrated into the curriculum

To this point, the concept of a curriculum-integrated library has been presented in a rather negative fashion. While it is important to discuss what differentiates a library and a librarian from other areas of the school and other professionals who work at the school, it is necessary to describe what attributes define a school library that is curriculum-integrated. Integrated libraries, like other areas of curriculum, will vary slightly from school to school with the needs, architecture

and floor plan of the school and the personality of the teachers, librarians and administrators involved. However, they are going to have some common traits. While these could be broken down in many ways, there are at least ten attributes for curriculum libraries. Not all libraries have all of these in equal measure and often times compromises have to be made in some areas. Nevertheless, if a librarian is seeking to integrate a library into a school curriculum, most of these traits are going to be conspicuously present.

First, and most importantly, students are going to be able to transfer skills learned in library bibliographic sessions directly to classroom assignments¹². The best-known approach to teaching transferable study and research skills is known as "The Big Six" which is a set of six information seeking and finding skills¹³. These broad categories are the basic starting point for building independent research skills.¹⁴

Second, teachers will have input into the collection development process¹⁵. There are several reasons that collection development should be done this way but the foremost is that no one can be an expert in all fields. By soliciting the expertise of teachers who have greater knowledge of their field than the librarian the librarian is, effectively making the teacher a partner in collection development which not only leads to a better library but can ease the librarian's work load. More than this, the students have better materials to work with and teachers can feel appreciated because they have a voice in improving their school.

¹² Hunter, Connie; Application of Information Skills through the Use of Integrated Curriculum; ERIC, 1994 ERIC Document # ED371735

¹³ Eisenberg, Michael B.; Berkowitz, Robert E.; Information Problem Solving: The Big Six Skills Approach to Library & Information Skills Instruction; 1990, ERIC Document # ED330364

¹⁴ Online ICS study Guides are viewable at URL <http://www.ics.edu.hk/library/Studyguides.htm> (Readers should also remember that Study Guides serve as an outline to larger topics not a complete course in themselves and are therefore of limited length.)

¹⁵ Hunter, Connie; Application of Information Skills through the Use of Integrated Curriculum; ERIC, 1994 ERIC Document # ED371735

Third, students will use the library more frequently because it will contain materials that are useful to them and they will know how to access those materials. That means they will probably complete assignments more completely, faster and at a higher academic level¹⁶.

Fourth, teachers will use the library more because the library will meet more of their supplementary curriculum and continuing certification needs. This has several advantages to the students, the teacher and the librarian. If teachers use the library more, they are better aware of what materials and services the library holds and provides. This in turn helps them give better coverage of their subjects. It makes them aware of what sort of materials the library needs to purchase and helps the librarian tailor the collection to fit the needs of the subjects taught. It also allows the teacher to make research assignments on topics for which the library has materials available. Having teachers in the library more often also provides an informal source for answering reference questions, which makes the library a more useful place for all patrons.

Fifth, a library that is integrated into the curriculum is going to be a vibrant part of the school. It is going to be a place where more students enjoy coming and where their education is advanced. The library will, in fact become an extension of the classroom giving teachers and students a more varied and flexible learning environment.

Sixth, a library that is integrated into the curriculum is going to be a multi-discipline facility that caters to all subjects and all students. The library is more than a fiction reading room or a periodical index or room with a dictionary. A library is every student's classroom and the librarian is every student's teacher regardless of grade.

¹⁶ Gifford, Vernon; Gifford, Jean; Effects of Teaching a Library Usage Unit to Seventh Graders; ERIC, 1994; ERIC Document # ED254230

Seventh, a library that is integrated into the curriculum is going to have a collection that is more likely to be adequate to allow students to complete research projects and assignments. This will require an automated library system.

Eight, a library that is integrated into the curriculum is going to be physically large enough to house the collection and to seat an adequate number of students. Numbers to figure the size of a library based upon school size are hard to find. Based on this author's experiences, about 3.5 square feet (1/3 Square Meters) per student is the minimum needed. Thus, a school with 900 students would need a to have a library of at least 3,000 actual square feet. A better number would probably be at least 3,500 square feet. This gives room for the needed shelving, seating, storage, computers and furniture needed to house a library adequate for that many students.

There appears to be some informal consensus among librarians that, again numbers are tricky, to be integrated effectively into the curriculum, a school library should have at least 75 to 100 books per student. This is a tricky statement because it assumes that the books are adequate in grade level, currency and language to the students and subjects taught at the school involved. Nevertheless, the number is a good one because it provides for a range of books on many different topics for each student. Using this number a school of 900 hundred students would need between 75,000 and 90,000 books. When numbers like this are presented, the need for a large amount of floor space in the school library is clearly seen. In this author's experience, this is the most commonly seen flaw in school libraries. They are just not big enough to do the job that the school requires of them.

Ninth, a school library that is integrated into the curriculum is going to have a budget that is adequate to maintain and build the collection. Budgets are tricky things and each school has different circumstances. However, in general the budget needs to be known to the librarian so that they can plan how to develop the library. The budget should be flexible enough to allow for

unexpected expenses and it should grow at a pre-determined rate based upon the student body size. An example of a budget like this can be seen in Appendix "A".

Tenth, A library that is integrated into the school curriculum is going to have adequate staffing levels. It does not matter how efficient the school librarian is, how knowledgeable, how dedicated or how competent an individual librarian is, if the librarian is unable to meet a significant amount of the reference, research and reading needs of the students and staff, the library cannot be fully integrated into the curriculum. As with floor space and the number of books in the collection, the number of library staff needed is somewhat difficult to find. Based on this author's experience, a good number seems to be one librarian and three library assistants for a school library that serves about every 1,000 students. This number appears to allow for sufficient floor coverage for reference, adequate staffing for task such as shelving books and story-time while still providing time for administrative task. Good volunteers should be used if available and can significantly improve libraries services.

International Christian School of Hong Kong:

A Case Study in Integrating a School Library into the Curriculum

The first part of this paper explained the theoretical and logical reasons that a school will benefit from having a library that is integrated into the curriculum. The second part will examine the process of improving integration of the libraries at the International Christian School (ICS) of Hong Kong.

Background of the School and Library

ICS is a private independent school in Hong Kong. That means that its graduates do not sit for the local public examinations and the school receives no governmental subsidy. There are three campuses, separated by a distance of several kilometers, which provides a K through 12 education using a modified American curriculum. This year

there are about 650 students of all ages attending the school. English is the medium of instruction and all students are required to be able to speak English. The student body is 85% Chinese and most of these are children of returned Chinese who were born overseas.

The libraries are, fully automated except for the Kindergarten, which is a new facility and is still under development. The school maintains three libraries, the Upper Grade Library (UGL) at the secondary school, The Ruth Martens Memorial Library at the Elementary school and the Kindergarten library. There is one full time librarian at the UGL and one ½ time paid library assistant at the Elementary school. The library also utilizes four parent library volunteers, two of whom have been volunteers for more than three years. The total number of bibliographic items cataloged at all campuses is just over 15,000 items, though much of this is kindergarten material.

When this author became librarian for ICS in 1999, the previous librarian had just completed automating the UGL catalog and had laid the groundwork for automating the Elementary library catalog. A Local Area Network (LAN) had been installed school wide the year before which allowed students to access the OPAC from any school computer or from home via the Internet. All of this meant that the ICS library was in a position to begin the task of integrating itself more thoroughly into the curriculum because the basic resources needed had been done.

Areas of Curriculum Integration in ICS Libraries in 1999

In the last section of part one of this paper, ten attributes of a curriculum-integrated library were listed and discussed. The UGL exhibited numbers 1, 2, 3 and 5 of those attributes everyday. The previous librarian in conjunction with teachers had made an organized effort to conduct formalized Bibliographic Instruction (Attribute No. 1).

The UGL was completely cataloged in the Dewey Decimal System, which allows students and teachers to quickly locate materials that the library held¹⁷. Teachers had a great deal of input into the collection development process and were, in some cases, eager for the library to acquire new materials (Attribute No. 2). The library was heavily used by students both as a place of study and as a retreat for conversation before and after school. Not only did formal study occur in the library but also informal learning as students exchanged ideas and built and developed interpersonal skills (Attribute Nos. 3 & 5). In areas where the librarian perceived a weakness in the collection, a block checkout of books on certain topics from the Hong Kong Public Library to supplement the ICS library holdings would be made. This effectively allowed the library to come closer to exhibiting Attribute 6 in that the library was broadly able to provide adequate resources to meet the students' research needs. Considering the time involved in installing an automated catalog in even a small library, the UGL library was fairly well integrated.

Areas of Non-Curriculum Integration

While in several important ways the libraries at the UGL were mostly integrated, the other ICS libraries were far from being integrated. The deficiencies were more severe in the elementary libraries and have become the primary focus for library improvement. Additionally, the automation of the catalog made it difficult to use the block checkouts from the Hong Kong Public Library because the library no longer uses cards and pockets or keeps a manual file of checkout material. So, the deficit nature of areas in the collection became harder to cover.

¹⁷ This is not as trite as it sounds because the author has seen one International School Library in HK with a higher tuition than ICS, a better building and a good reputation where the books were arranged by genre in a non-automated system.

In almost every case, where the ICS libraries have achieved some measure of curriculum-integration, it occurred at the UGL. In 1999, ICS had three libraries and two self-contained campuses. One campus, located in Lai Yiu district, operated Grades K-7 while the other campus, located in Kowloon City district, had Grades K-12. The Kowloon City campus had two libraries: one for elementary students and one for secondary students. Yet, there was only one librarian and one part-time volunteer for the two campuses. With two discreet self-contained campuses, there was a need for additional library staff. Providing reference and collection development services to a library that does not have a librarian is an impossible task.

The Lai Yiu campus was smaller and considered a temporary location until a larger and better single location for a unified campus could be found. As such, the Lai-Yiu campus had a volunteer librarian who was only available two days a week. For the most part, books had to be checked out by teachers and there was little or no bibliographic control. Reference materials were almost non-existent at the Lai-Yiu campus. It was automated separately by volunteers using a different set of circulation parameters and who did not necessarily know what had had been done at the UGL, which meant that the two libraries had to maintain separate catalogs because the circulation parameters were different. The Lai-Yiu collection was almost completely inadequate to the needs of the students.

Another problematic area was the Elementary Library at the Kowloon City Campus. It was un-automated and the card catalog was out of date, as new cards had ceased to be typed when the UGL automation started. The majority of this collection was old, in poor physical condition and the shelving was inadequate to house and maintain the

materials on hand. In many ways, this collection was worse than the collection at the Lai-Yiu campus, which, though limited in scope and undersized, was automated and attractive because it was newer and for the most part had purchased new materials rather than developed from donation.

While the UGL functioned with a fair degree of integration, there were several problems. Commons to all three libraries that kept them from being better integrated into the curriculum.

One, the ICS libraries did not have a collection development plan. In fact, it was apparent that for the most part, the library had been built by donation and by the purchase of discarded materials from schools that had closed. This meant that much of the material was outdated and in poor condition.

Two, except for the Lai-Yiu Library, the libraries had insufficient seating and floor space for an entire class to use the library or for adequate shelving. ICS limits class size to 25 but the UGL could only seat 14. The Elementary Library had no seating so the students had to sit on the floor.

Three, the libraries were under-staffed in that it was seldom possible for the librarian to visit the Lai-Yiu campus. Besides, the librarian had to spend on average two days per week in the Elementary Library and had to leave the UGL unmanned and students unsupervised.

Four, the ICS libraries had inadequate, and in some cases potentially dangerous shelving to hold the collection because the shelves were unstable, did not have adjustable shelves and were neither fixed to the wall or cross-braced. All of the shelving was made from plywood with non-adjustable shelves. The chairs in the UGL were of an

inexpensive folding model and prone to collapsing if used by a person weighing more than 65 Kg.

Five, all the collections except for the Elementary Library were too small for the number of patrons served. While nominally large enough, the elementary collection was extremely worn and unattractive.

Six, and most importantly, the ICS Libraries did not have a defined budget, a written procedures manual or an identifiable mission statement, or a defined philosophy or purpose in relation to the mission of the school. Without these, it was difficult to make even tentative plans regarding the development of the library.

The purpose here is not to cast blame upon previous librarians and school administrators. ICS operates under very strict financial constraints and the founders of the school did not expect or plan for the rapid growth of the school. They had also never started a school before and therefore the situation that the author found in the ICS libraries was not because the administration did not care about having a good library at the school but because they did not know what was needed and had very little financial choice. The issue is how the ICS libraries could move from an unacceptable level of curriculum-integration to a more acceptable level of curriculum-integration given the limitations inherent in the situation.

Steps toward Curriculum-Integrated Libraries

It should be stated that the steps delineated in this paper were not taken quite so sequentially as their appearance in print will make them appear. In actuality, the process was considerably more organic or holistic in nature with several steps in process at once but it is helpful to divide the process into somewhat artificial steps so that it is easier to describe the process

involved. This is especially true in that there were three libraries on two discreet campuses involved.

Step One: The Five-Year Plan.

The first step in achieving a more curriculum-integrated library was to write a five-year plan that listed the deficiencies of the libraries and set forth priorities and method for improvement. This plan was presented to the Head Master, the secondary principal the Lai-Yiu campus principal, the elementary principal and the School Management Committee. This plan, which was 13 single spaced pages long, delineated the problems seen in the library by both the previous librarian and the author so that the librarian and school administrators would have a more exact knowledge of the scope of the problems involved. The five-year plan next prioritized the problems according not just to severity but also by solvability and by campus. Finally, the plan listed several steps that could be taken to improve each problem and help achieve a better state of curriculum integration.

Step Two: Facilities Improvement

The very first thing that needed to be done was to find a way to improve the facilities in the UGL and the Elementary library. The UGL needs to replace a set of wooden shelves that held the fiction collection. These shelves contained approximately 32 running meters of shelf space. They were overflowing with books shelved on top of the shelf unit. These shelves were also unstable and the shelves were too narrow and not adjustable. The only thing that kept them from falling over was that they could be leaned against each other and brackets had been fitted to keep them from falling apart.

After talking to the Head Master, it was agreed that if suitable shelving could be found at a reasonable price, then it would be possible to order new shelving. The librarian contacted the Hong Kong Baptist University archive because while he had been employed there the archive had purchased new shelving. The archivist gave him the contact number and 72 meters of double-

sided, narrow footprint shelving were purchased along with 24 stackable chairs. Before the shelving could be installed, it became necessary to redesign the floor plan and to make a decision about seating. It was going to be impossible to add both more shelving and more seating given the size of the table in the UGL and the long, narrow shape of the room.

The old shelving with its non-adjustable shelving was moved to back wall and used to store video. The new shelves provided not only enough room to alleviate crowding in the fiction collection but also extra room for college advising materials and oversized reference materials. The result was that the library became easier to use because materials were easier to find. After the shelving arrived and was installed, the library received an unexpected benefit in that the light gray color, which matched the library tables, made the room look brighter and therefore larger and more pleasant. The total cost for this was just over HK\$20,000 It was the second most expensive part of the program.

Step Two: Library Service Improvement at the Lai-Yiu Library

As mentioned above, the library at the Lai-Yiu campus was almost completely inadequate for the school. The major two problems in this library were staffing and reference. Staffing seemed to be an intractable problem in that the school was not going to hire a librarian or librarian assistant to work at the campus. The only option left to help with staffing was the use of students and extra volunteers to help. The 7th grade English teacher was contacted and she agreed to add a session on the Dewey Decimal System to her literature unit. Seventh grade students were then allowed to volunteer to reshelv books for all classes at lunch. This improved the students' ability to find materials and gave the other library volunteers time perform other library duties. Another step in improving library service was to find another volunteer to help in the Lai-Yiu library. The wife of the computer teacher was more than willing to help two days a week. This meant that the library at Lai-Yiu now had two adult volunteers and three seventh-grade students to shelf books. While it would

have been better to have a paid staff member, this was still a major step in creating an effective library at the Lai-Yiu campus. There was no cost to the school for these improvements as everything was done on a volunteer basis.

Step Three: Reference Materials

The lack of reference materials at all ICS libraries was the next major area that had to be looked at in order to achieve an acceptable level of curriculum-integration was to improve the reference materials available at all campuses. This was problematic from a budgetary standpoint in several ways. However, the major issue was that the Lai-Yiu campus had, for all practical purpose, no reference materials available. Even if some funds could be found, there would not be enough funds available to solve the problem in a meaningful way.

The answer in this case was the Internet, which was at that time being touted as the newest reinvention of the wheel. Publishers were placing encyclopedias on the Internet free at that time, thinking that they could use advertising cover the cost of producing the material. At the Lai-Yiu campus, the library shared a room with the computer lab. There were 24 student use computers in the library. A web page was created that contained links to various online reference materials.

This gave the students a much larger range of material than previously available. This system began to break down when the Internet bubble burst 18-months later but it bought important time for the students and gave the teachers options and materials for assignments. The Internet pages were also inadequate at the Kowloon City campus that did not share a computer lab with the library. The Kowloon City campus contained a larger selection of reference material so the problem was not as acute.

The Elementary library was the place where money could be spent and where funds could potentially become available. While the Elementary library had a large collection of reference

materials, much of what it had was out of date. After consulting with the Elementary principal, it was decided that US\$800.00 could be spent as a special purchase for improving the elementary reference collection in each of the next two semesters. This was important to the Lai-Yiu campus because the school was planning to move that campus to a new location and combine it with the Kowloon City elementary school. Therefore, the library at Lai-Yiu would become the new Elementary Library. While the money provided was not enough to purchase new encyclopedias, it did buy a large amount of other materials. Over half of the materials in the Elementary Library reference collection were replaced. This step significantly improved the reference and research capacity of the libraries for a cost of USD\$1600.00

Step Four: The Budget

In 1999, the ICS libraries worked under a vague budgetary system that was not written down and not very well supervised. While there was some flexibility in the system, the lack of a defined budget also caused many problems when trying to achieve a better degree of curriculum-integration. For example, if there had been a set budget for reference materials then much, if not most of the precious section, could have been avoided. The reality was that teachers were allowed USD\$200.00 a semester for library development materials. While the librarian was the one to order these materials, he could not append the budget if the teachers did not wish to purchase anything. Furthermore, he could not suggest or manage the list the teachers provided. When approached about the situation, the previous Head Master refused to allow it to be modified or changed.

It was obvious that the librarian had to find a way to work within the existing system in a way that would maximize the library budget but would not actually change the system. To help correct this problem the book order process was automated. Rather than using paper bound catalogs to compile orders, the librarian asked teachers who wanted to order materials come by

the library to talk about their needs. The librarian then compiled the order using the Follett, Titlewave system online for the teacher. Additionally, the librarian would encourage teachers to use their money rather than simply letting it disappear into the general fund at the end of the year. Math teachers were encouraged to purchase periodicals or to pool their funds with an English teacher to buy reference material.

This practice helped to reduce the time that teachers spent looking for library materials and unified the books purchased into an order from a single vendor, which required fewer purchase orders and paperwork from the accounting department. This system, by coming closer to spending the whole budget, also almost doubled the amount of money that the library actually spent on collection development in the first year. It was implemented without actually increasing the budget.

There was a considerable resistance to this system by both some of the teachers and by the former Head Master. The former Head Master, without actually saying so, felt that the school need to save money and some of the teachers simply preferred to use paper bound catalogs. However, the teachers that actually used the new system saw its benefit and the principals of the Elementary School and the Secondary School were early converts to this system. This system remained in place for three years from 1999 to 2002. In the fall semester of 2002, the library received an actual budget, which could be published and manipulated to meet the needs of the teachers and students.

Step Six: Re-evaluation and Adjustment

As the program to achieve a greater degree of curriculum integration was put in place, it became clear that policies would have to be re-evaluated and adjusted. Integrating library services into the curriculum of a school is a dynamic task that never really ends. New teachers bring different emphasis and personalities to bear on the process. Each year, the librarian updates the written policies and procedures that have been developed through this process and evaluates how

well the process has been brought forward. The ICS libraries are still not, and may never be, as fully integrated into the curriculum as the students need. However, as the school prepares to build a new larger building in 2005, the process is in place that will, hopefully, allow the students to have the ability to learn the information seeking skills they need.

Conclusion

Educational systems are always changing. It is important for educators to realize that school libraries must change as well. If the teaching of research skills and critical thinking skills is deemed important, schools should seriously examine their library system. Is it integrated into the curriculum? Do teachers use it for personal research? Do teachers make assignments based upon library holdings? Is the librarian a professionally trained individual? Is the library adequately funded? Is there a written collection development policy? Is the library automated? If the answer to most of these questions is "no", it is perhaps high time for the school to institute a new program to improve its library.