

Innovative Techniques for Promoting Literacy and Creativity in The Library

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Introduction

The library is the hub of learning. It is the core of the school and the community that supports the holistic development of the students to become lifelong learners. Gone were the days where the face of the library was a silent place. It is now reinventing itself as contents become more accessible online, especially during this Covid-19 pandemic. In other words, the libraries are becoming a learning commons. This means that we don't rely only on printed materials. Still, we also explore digital technologies and other sources to sustain and provide a continuum of services that encourages collaboration, innovation, literacy, and creativity among our library patrons.

As libraries start to offer services and programs in reimagined ways, they also include the layout, book categories aside from DDC, and spaces in the library. The librarians explore their creativity and innovations and recognize the need to think out-of-the-box to allow the libraries to operate in a more open, free-thinking work environment that invites and welcomes more patrons. Lev Vygotsky believed that creativity starts from a childhood imagination which progresses to a thoughtful mode of thinking during adolescence that combines inner speech and conceptual thinking that finally reaches maturity in adulthood. This suggests that powerful imagination is our key to create new possibilities to provide better services to our library patrons.

Today, I am delighted to share our library's innovative techniques for promoting literacy and creativity that help to increase the learners' likelihood of embracing reading and building literary skills. The subject is focused on two parts: from face-to-face (f2f) to digital learning and enhancing library spaces and book categories.

From F2F to digital learning

Virtual storytelling. The librarians from other parts of the world are invited to virtually tell a story to our students. Students are engaged in asking questions in

higher-order thinking skills. They interact with the storyteller and enrich their cultural awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension skills in the process. This is also a no-cost activity to support the students and to collaborate with fellow librarians.

Curated free online resources. The librarians attend the timetabled meetings of the teachers. In this way, they gain more insights into the resources to support the teaching-learning process. Since printed materials are not available during the whole year lockdown of school libraries, the librarians must be innovative to curate free online resources to support the units of inquiry and subject matters of the teachers and students. Curated online resources are saved in the school's online portal for the patrons to explore.

Pedagogical approaches. The librarians must embrace change from a lecture teaching with PPT to a student-centered- activity by exploring different pedagogical approaches such as Mentimeter, Padlet, breakout sessions in Teams/ Zoom. This allows passive learning to become more interactive, where live streaming of responses is shared for collaborative discussion.

Enhancing library spaces and book categories

Genre book stickers. The librarians created genre stickers for the fiction books. The sticker with a corresponding picture that represents the genre is glued at the spine of the book to identify the book's genre instantaneously. This innovative strategy helps the patrons in selecting the text of their choice quickly and efficiently. Moreover, a bulletin board display near the fiction area shows the definition of the genre to understand the term well.

Color-coding. The librarians came up with a color-coding scheme for the library collections. For instance, yellow is assigned for the fiction books, red for the references, and so on. This helps the patrons to proceed directly to the library area where they can find the book. More so, this does the work of the librarian easier when shelving the resources.

Thematic bulletin boards. The librarians promote the library by regularly updating the bulletin board displays. Displays are themed-based, such as mental health awareness, sustainable development goals, religious and language month celebrations, and so on. It is also supported by the collection of books displayed in a designated library area where the students can grab, read the book, and relax.

No fixed walls dividing the sections of the library. The idea of no fixed walls is identical to open doors. This allows the students to meet the librarians at their most convenient time to seek help related to library matters. They become more at ease and comfortable sharing their academic concerns without judging their capabilities. A sense of respect and openness is promoted in the process. In addition, the students subconsciously develop their communication skills to explain, clarify and justify their statements without fear.

Celebrating the students' artwork. The librarians invite the students to display their artwork (e.g., paintings, clay pots) in the library. This is one way to celebrate the students' achievements and to feel proud of their output. On the other hand, parents are pleased to see their child's work displayed in the library, which prompts them to encourage their children to show their personal best. This innovative activity makes the library alive and cost-effective in terms of interior decoration.

BINUSIAN reading level. The BINUSIAN reading level program supports struggling students to read at their own pace regardless of their age. Easy reading, chapter books and non-fiction books are randomly selected from the library. The head librarian designed criteria and invited interested parents to help the library sort out the reading materials from Reading level 1 (lowest level) to reading level 10 (highest level). Criteria of the book categories include the font size, word count, texts (CVC patterns, phrases, sentences), illustrations, vocabulary, etc. Teachers use this reading program to assist their students' reading needs and at the same time celebrate their reading achievements.

Allow me to end my talk by quoting David Ogilvy, "In the modern world of business, it is useless to be a creative original thinker unless you can also sell what you create. Management cannot be expected to recognize a good idea unless it is presented to them by a good salesman". I say, let us be all good salesmen. Let our innovative thinking touch lives of the students and promote literacy and creativity. Let us inspire others to embrace the library as the fountain of learning.