

The School Library's Role in the PIP Curriculum

The Purpose of the School Library and the Role of the Teacher-Librarian

The School Library:

- is the core of a life-long learning community;
- supports traditional and emerging literacies (e.g. print, media, digital);
- provides a balanced collection of learning resources;
- ensures linkages and partnerships within the school, local, and global communities (OSLA, *OSLA Policy*).

The Teacher-Librarian has a three-fold role:

- curriculum development and leadership;
- information management;
- collaborative program planning and teaching (OSLA, *OSLA Policy*).

Rationale for Inclusion of PIP Students

The School Library is an inclusive learning environment, one which supports the learning needs of all members of the school community. While the full realization of such a learning environment requires time, effort, staff, and money, quite a lot can be accomplished with shared vision, goodwill, and a welcoming attitude.

All students, including those with developmental disabilities, should be provided with the opportunities, instruction, and assistance necessary to learn to use the School Library, to develop information literacy and research skills, and to develop a love of reading. The goal is to help students become lifelong learners and readers who can – and will – take full advantage of the wealth of leisure and learning opportunities provided by public libraries.

Considerations

Collaboration

Collaboration is essential! Usually, this collaboration is between the Teacher-Librarian and the classroom teacher. When working with PIP students, it's important to involve ERWs and other support staff as well. Collaborative planning gives students the benefit of a great deal of combined experience and expertise.

Resources

Teacher-Librarians make decisions about resources based on need, which is generally determined through collaborative planning. If there has been no planning, then there will be no resources.

And it's important that this planning be done in advance to allow time to identify appropriate resources, locate vendors, prepare orders, wait for shipping, and receive, process, catalogue, and shelve the items.

Given that School Library funding generally ranges from woefully insufficient to completely non-existent, please consider allowing the Teacher-Librarian to use some PIP funding to purchase the resources identified during collaborative planning sessions.

The School Library Program-at-a-Glance

Orientation and Library Skills

For PIP students, the standard grade 9 Orientation session is not sufficient. Instead, a Library Orientation and Skills program should be offered. While this program can be introduced as a self-contained skills unit, it should then be integrated into the rest of the School Library program (which should, in turn, be integrated into the PIP curriculum) so students will have an opportunity to develop, consolidate, and generalize the library skills they are learning.

This Orientation and Library Skills program includes:

- Introduction to the School Library (e.g. location, organization, hours, staff)
- Library Citizenship (e.g. appropriate behaviour, library rules);
- Library Resources (what's available);
- Library Skills (e.g. asking for help, locating resources, borrowing materials)
- The Public Library (transition from school library use to public library use).

Information Literacy and Research

Information literacy and research skills are the skills that allow students to identify an information need, develop a strategy to meet that need, locate appropriate resources, access and synthesize information, and share what they've learned. These skills play an important role in the development of self-esteem as well as in the development of self-advocacy and independent living skills.

Research projects give students an opportunity to both apply and further develop language and communication, information literacy, and computer skills. These process skills, once learned, can be applied to any content. Research skills are also a good way to enrich content being taught in the classroom.

Reading

The focus of the Reading section of the program is the development of a love of reading such that enjoying books becomes a viable leisure activity.

The Reading program can include activities such as:

- reading (independently or with support)
- using audiobook/book sets;
- read-alouds;
- enjoying illustrations.

Workplace Experience

The School Library can serve as a Workplace Experience placement. This placement is particularly suitable for those students who are not yet ready for an outside placement.

Links to the PIP Curriculum

The School Library – and the Teacher-Librarian – can provide authentic learning opportunities and a variety of resources which will help add depth, breadth, and richness to the PIP curriculum. These are just a few examples.

KEN: Religion/Language and Communication Development

- opportunities for research projects (on any number of topics), which will allow students to practice and further develop the reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills they are learning
- research projects can also extend, enrich, deepen topics introduced in class

KMM: Numeracy and Numbers

- due dates provide opportunity to practice calendar skills
- practice putting items in numerical order (e.g. encyclopedias) – could be daily or weekly task, wouldn't have to be formal Workplace Experience

KHD: Social Skills Development

- opportunities for interaction with both staff and students in an inclusive environment
- opportunity for practicing self-advocacy skills – learning to approach others to ask for help (e.g. to locate resources)
- opportunities for learning to take responsibility (e.g. due dates)

KSN: Exploring Our Environment

- explore School Library as part of school community
- develop skills necessary to use public library
- then explore public library as part of community exploration

KCC: Transit Training and Community Exploration

- incorporate transit training into trips to public library

KTT: Computer Skills/Information Technology

- move beyond the PIP suite (type documents in Word, use Publisher to make brochures, class newsletters..., create PowerPoint presentations)
- learn basics of internet use, online safety, and etiquette

KGW: Exploring the World of Work

- Workplace Experience placement

KPF/PPL: Personal Health and Fitness/Physical Education

- opportunities for research projects on topics such as the human body, diseases, healthy living, sports...

KPH: Choice Making for Healthy Living

- choose to use public library – and have the necessary skills
- reading as a leisure activity

Works Cited

Ontario School Library Association. *OSLA Policy on the School Library Information Centre and the role of the Teacher-Librarian*. 8 Feb. 1996. 12 June 2008
<http://www.accessola.com/osla/bins/content_page.asp?cid=630-636-660>.