Role The role of the librarian in the MYP

Librarians in IB World Schools offering the MYP play a vital role in collaborative curriculum development and implementation. It is important for librarians to familiarize themselves with all key MYP curriculum documents including the following.

- MYP: From principles into practice (August 2008)
- MYP subject-group and personal project guides
- MYP: A guide to interdisciplinary teaching and learning (May 2010)

Librarians have an overall view of the curriculum and, in particular, of students’ information literacy needs and lifelong learning skills development. It is also important to involve librarians in:

- unit planning
- resourcing units
- planning for and mapping ATL (approaches to learning) skills
- promotion of academic honesty (including such skills as referencing).

Unit planning and resourcing

Librarians can play several roles and become involved in the whole process of unit planning. As resource experts, librarians can help teachers to plan for the resources students will use in their learning experiences (see the “Resources” section of the unit planner). Librarians’ knowledge of resources and of students’ skill development is also helpful in assisting teachers with the planning for assessment tasks. The fact that interdisciplinary teaching demands space, support and a collaborative climate makes working together with other teachers and the librarian especially beneficial.

ATL skills development

Librarians’ expertise in ATL (approaches to learning) skills makes them a vital asset in planning for the integration of these skills into the curriculum. Librarians can work with teachers to ensure the vertical and horizontal planning for the use of ATL skills in all subjects. The planning of ATL skill areas can then be used to integrate them into unit plans. Librarians are also valuable in helping teachers to develop inquiry skills across the curriculum. Inquiry goes beyond research skills and delves deeper into critical thinking, creativity and collaborative skills. A librarian should have a strong understanding of inquiry; this can strengthen unit planning as well as horizontal and vertical planning.

The librarian’s role in teaching

The librarian’s role can be seen as one that goes beyond the library or media centre. Librarians can be a valuable resource in planning, but also in team or shared teaching. As a result of collaborative planning, librarians can be involved in co-teaching lessons where students are learning information literacy skills in the context of their units. An emphasis on how students use information (for example, through critical thinking, synthesis and forming opinions) is vital and is central to inquiry. Collaborative teaching with the librarian need not be restricted to the library but can take place in any learning spaces within the school.

Resourcing the curriculum

The librarian plays a vital role in working with teachers to ensure that the curriculum is supported with a variety of current, relevant resources that meet subject aims and objectives. Librarians should also ensure that the school is supplied with resources that reflect the variety of student learning styles and interests, as well as the language profiles of the student body. After being involved in the initial planning stages, and following discussions with teachers about students’ needs, librarians can help to select resources that support student learning and allow students to move quickly through the locating phase into working with information and gaining deeper understanding. This can be achieved by preparing resource lists that include print materials, websites, videos and other relevant resources to be placed on class wiki or blog pages.