SCHOOL LIBRARIES

FUNCTIONS AND CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS

by Helga Hofmann

(Public City Library Frankfurt am Main, Germany / School Library Department)

Lecture in the conference “School Libraries as Learning and Information Centers”, May 18/19 2007
Organised by Goethe-Institut Libanon, UNESCO Office Beirut, LBBY, Lebanese Library Association
www.goethe.de/schoollibrary-conference
School Libraries as Learning and Information Centres

Functions & Conditions of Success

Helga Hofmann, School Library Department
Frankfurt City Library, Germany
Let's talk about School Libraries!
Let‘s talk about School Libraries!

... and their functions
Functions
Functions of the School Library

- Cultural Centre
- Information Centre
- Media Centre
- Learning Centre

- Subject of Studying
- Meeting Point at School
- Communication Centre
- Place of Reading Promotion
Functions I

- Cultural centre
  - School Library Days
  - Workshops / Projects
  - Exhibitions ...
Functions II

- Information centre and media centre
  - Information retrieval
  - Access to information in various media formats
  - Circulation of media
  - Access to school information and information outside of school
  - Guidance when needed (for students and teachers)
Functions III

- Learning Centre
  - Flexible learning centre for classes, groups and individuals
  - Extension of the classroom

- Subject of studying
  (Library competence)
Functions IV

- Meeting point and communication centre
  - Different learners
  - Personnel groups
  - Students and staff
  - Student association
  - Clubs and afternoon activities
  - Involving parents
  - …
Functions V

- Reading promotion
  - Author’s reading
  - Reading competition
  - Reading aloud on a regular basis
  - Polls
  - Quiz
  - Library weeks
  - ...
Conditions of success

Important factors to establish a successful school library
Important factors to establish a successful School Library

- Concept
- Facility
- Collection
- Budget
- Schedule
- Staff
- Library organization
- Reading promotion activities
Important factors to establish a successful School Library

Selected Factors
- Facilities
- Collection
- Concept
Facility I

Architecturally central location in the school
Facility II

- Make the school library a pleasant and welcoming place for students, staff, parents
- Organize places for different areas e.g., class instruction, group work, private study/reading
- Decide on appropriate furnishings as required

Guidelines (German Panel of Experts „Library & School“)
- Size depending on ➔ students ➔ media collection
  ➔ min. 30 sqm per 1000 items / minimum 100 sqm
Facility III

- Entrance
  (media check in and check out)
  - Telephone
  - Fax
  - PC
Facility IV

- General reading, browsing, listening, viewing
- Circulation collection (shelves)
Facility V

- Reference and electronic information / Internet
  (non-circulation materials)
Facility VI

- Special displays, e.g. for
  - Periodicals
  - Picture books
  - CD / DVD
  - Brochures
  - Games
  - Exhibits
  - ...
Facility VII

- Group instruction area
- Individual sitting / Places to relax
Media collection I
Media collection II

The collection …

- reflects the diverse needs, interests, and learning styles of all students and **all subjects**
- contains a broad range of resources
- contains resources that cover a wide range of interests
- contains resources with varying levels of difficulty
- includes resources in a variety of formats
Media collection III

The collection …

- contains a robust collection of current books and other print materials
- contains a rich and age-appropriate print periodical collection (newspapers)
- contains audio, video, dvd, digital, online resources, and games
The collection …

- contains resources in global languages with special emphasis on languages appropriate to the needs of the student population and the demands of the curriculum
- considers student preferences

→ To build up the media collection teachers and the librarian should work together closely.
The collection …

- contains resources for curricular and recreational needs
Guidelines (German Panel of Experts „Library & School“)

- **Media units:**
  - 6 to 10 yrs: 700 - 1000 items per 100 students
  - 10 to 18 yrs: 1500 – 2000 items per 100 students

- **Fiction : Nonfiction (ratio):**
  - 6 to 10 yrs: 50 % : 50 %
  - 10 to 18 yrs: 40 % : 60 %

- **Nonbook media (CD, DVD, databases …):**
  - 6 to 10 yrs: 10 %
  - 10 to 18 yrs: > 20 %
Media collection VII

- WEED IT!
  - Weeding is a basic part of the collection development process
  - In the School Library it is especially important to keep the collection current and reliable
  - Getting rid of the old is just as important as acquiring the new
  - 5-10% p. a. (German Panel of Experts „Library & School)
Concept to support the teaching and the school’s curriculum

- Educational philosophy: the library media program is fully integrated into the educational program, e.g.,
  - School’s action plan
  - School’s mission statement

- A school library is a matter that concerns the entire school.
Concept to support the teaching and the school’s curriculum II

- A library concept is crucial to the success of any school library work

- The school library concept
  - sets priorities (e.g. functions, activities)
  - enables sustainability
Thank you

very much for your attention!