
Title	Library graphics
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Library Graphics

YEAP LAY LENG

Libraries are primary sources of information in the schools. Students look to the environment for the required information. To achieve this, school libraries need a coordinated system of signs and displays to reflect organisation and effective communication.

There are a variety of printed materials (posters, flyers, brochures, newsletters, reports, and stickers) that school librarians can prepare to publicise the libraries and promote their images. The print media provide popular promotional materials as they are visible and tangible. Whatever the messages may be, the print media should work towards attracting the attention of library users long enough to get the messages across. The aim of publicity is to inform, influence, and persuade. The processes to achieve them have to be continuous and repetitious rather than a once a year, once a month, or an ad hoc affair.

Posters rank among the foremost print media for library displays. Traditionally they are favourite attention getting devices for announcements, reminders, directional signs, and campaign messages. Unfortunately, posters have been used as decorations in the school libraries and have ended up as only that. Posters, being hardy perennials are effective carriers of information and if well executed and suitably displayed, the messages can win attention, stimulate interest, reinstate images, promote campaigns, direct locations, change attitudes, and remove stereotyped, outmoded, and cliché-ridden images of school library.

Posters, which are captioned pictorials and symbolic presentations, are better remembered than words. 'They are make complex and abstract ideas more meaningful and concrete. They can affect emotions and attitudes' (Brody, 1984). Persuading changes of attitudes among library users is an important goal of message design in library displays. Attitudes, being latent are not observable, yet they provide direction to students' actions and behaviours (Simonson, 1984).

The messages are usually formulated and interpreted from three common kinds of symbols, namely,

- pictorial symbols, which combine elements like lines, shapes, colour, and texture to provide realism to the objects the pictorial symbols are to represent.
- language symbols, which consist of letters, words, and numbers. They may be less appealing, but they interpret, reinforce, and bridge ideas of the visuals.
- graphics symbols, which modify, adapt, and simplify the pictorial and language symbols. They allow for a quick interpretation and understanding of the messages visually illustrated.

Picture research has greatly influenced the way posters should be designed. Studies by Bovy (1981) and Brody (1983, 1984) found that bright colours, vivid visuals, humour, high contrast, comic effects, and inserted printed questions can be effective attention getters in the presentation of visual displays. Word-picture displays, i.e. pictures accompanied by textual materials further increase the comprehension of the messages and enhance recall.

If library communications are to be read at all, the headlines must have instantaneous appeal, and be catchy, concise, and competitive in appearance. To assist school librarians use euphemisms, construct catchy headlines, and eliminate wordiness in their posters the following references, though dated can be handy:

- Harry Shaw (1975). Dictionary of problem words and expressions. New York : Mcgraw Hill.
- Eric Patridge (1977). A dictionary of catch phrases. London : Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Rosemary Courtney (1983). Dictionary of phrasal verbs. Hongkong : Longman.
- Susan Lloyd (1982). Rogets' thesaurus. Great Britain : Longman.

It is unlikely that school librarians would tolerate the use of poorly designed information to publicise the library and its collection, when they themselves are not likely to recommend, purchase or encourage the use of poorly designed library materials. Who then is going to turn out these properly designed quality posters? Few schools can afford to have the services of design experts. Library graphics become the responsibility of school librarians who may or may not have the knowledge of design principles. The end products may be amateurish. This would downgrade all the efforts put into library publicity and promotion. In short, efforts to project the school libraries' images should, to a large extent be through every piece of printed medium that the libraries distribute and display.

Realising the state of library graphics in some school libraries, examples of quality posters prepared by Julia Goh Cheng Neo and Judy Wee Hian Ai of St Hilda's School are selected for sharing in this article. The themes of the posters are the reading promotion campaign and library 'signage' (wayfinding signs). Karen Claus and James Claus coined the term 'library signage' (Pollet & Haskell, 1979). It is now an accepted and familiar term used by the design and architectural circles to describe a systematic approach to the preparation of signs and their related components for the library environment. Both themes are best promoted through posters as they convey the messages immediately and visibly. The messages are not new, but Julia and Judy have given the posters a different presentation and interpretation to create a mood, advertise, attract, and to communicate. Their collection of thematic posters stressed on the visual coordination of library graphics in terms of the content.

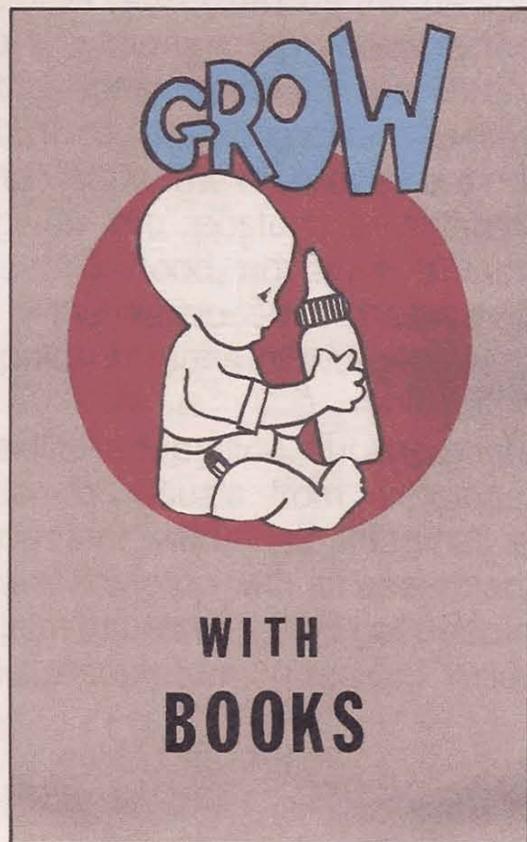
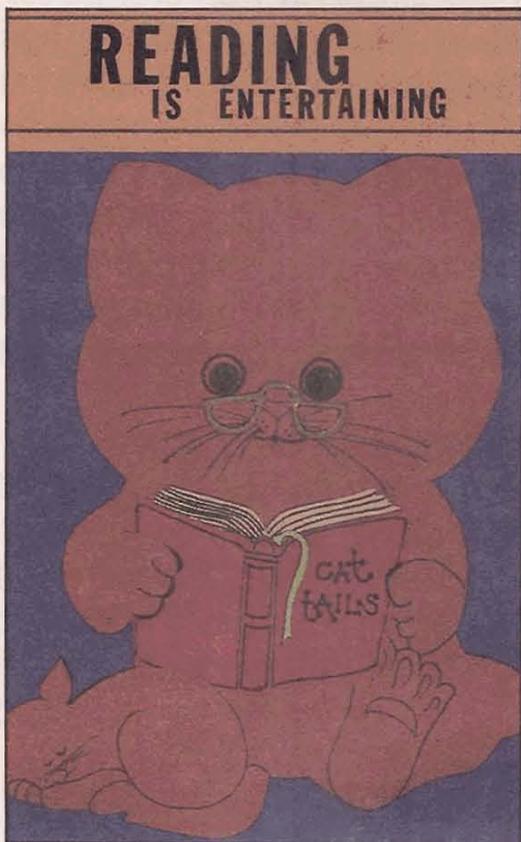
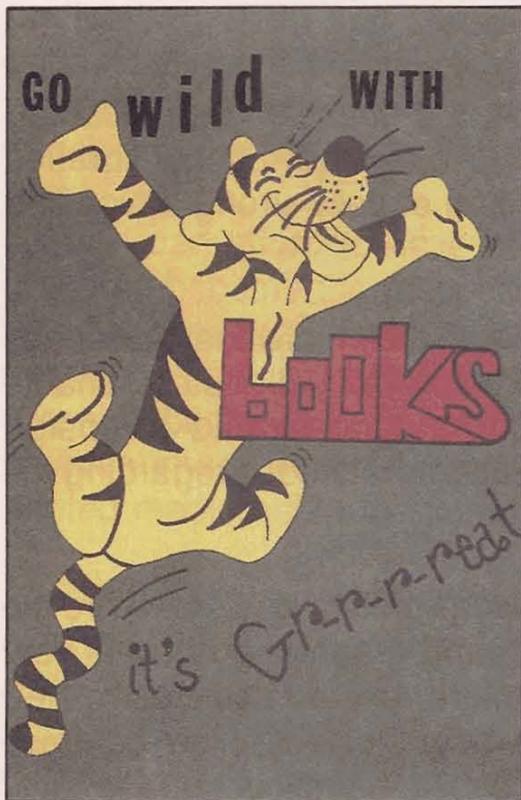
Through their careful planning, skillful adaptation, cut and paste techniques, and creative modification of visuals from clippings, magazines, books, scrap books, together with their imaginative application of graphic design, they have come up with an exemplary collection of thematic posters in their joint efforts to ' . . . to get people into the library, satisfy them, and make them return,' (Franklin, 1980, p. 1).

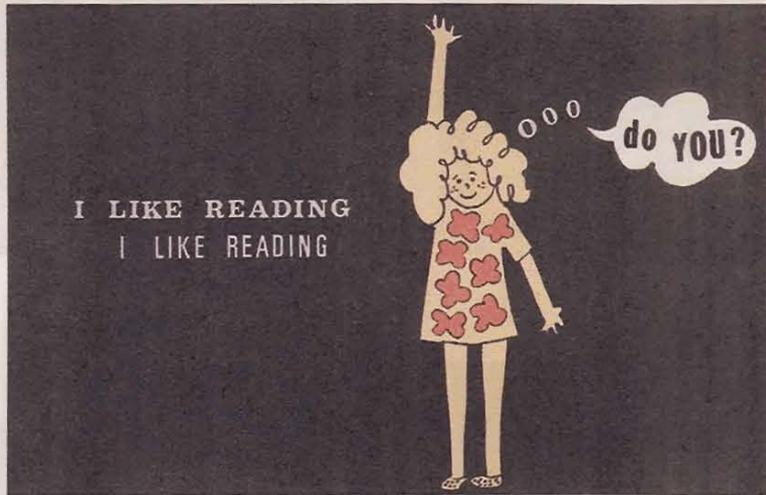
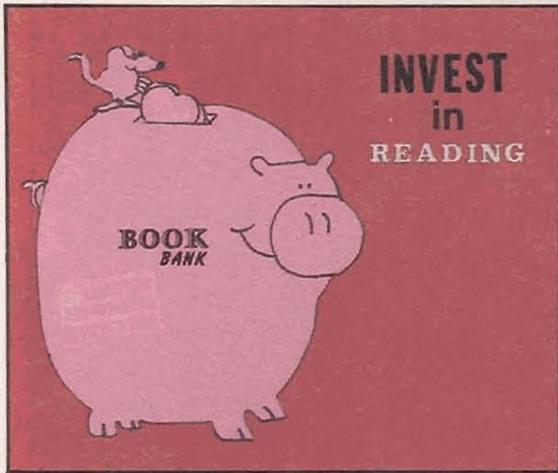
Reading promotion campaign

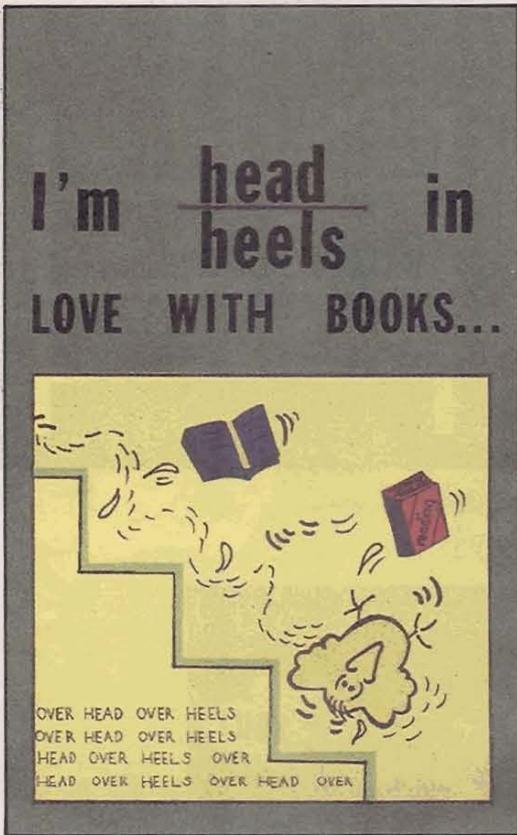
This is an annual campaign in the form of the 'Reading Promotion Month' to encourage the public to read. School libraries are strong supporters of the occasion and equally strong advocates of the message.

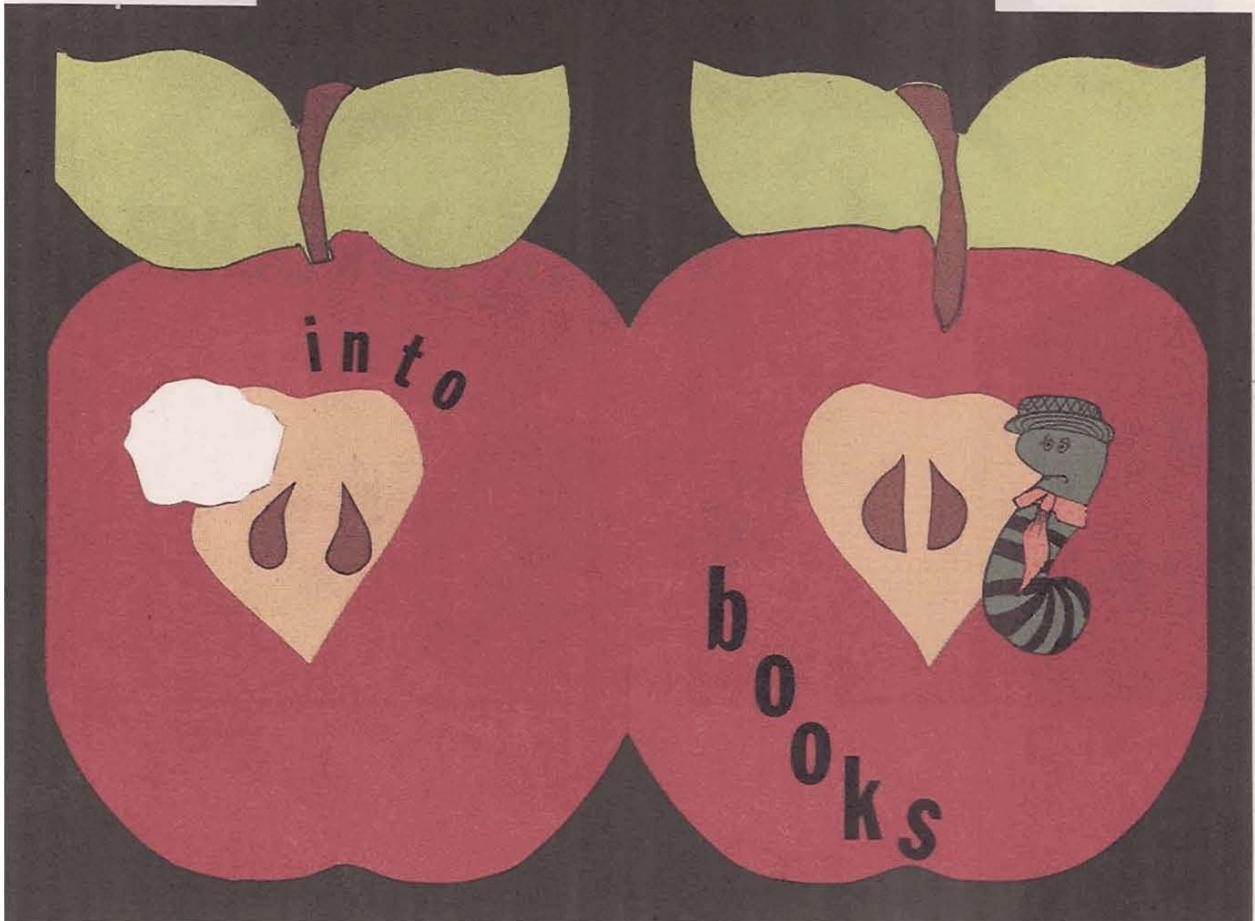
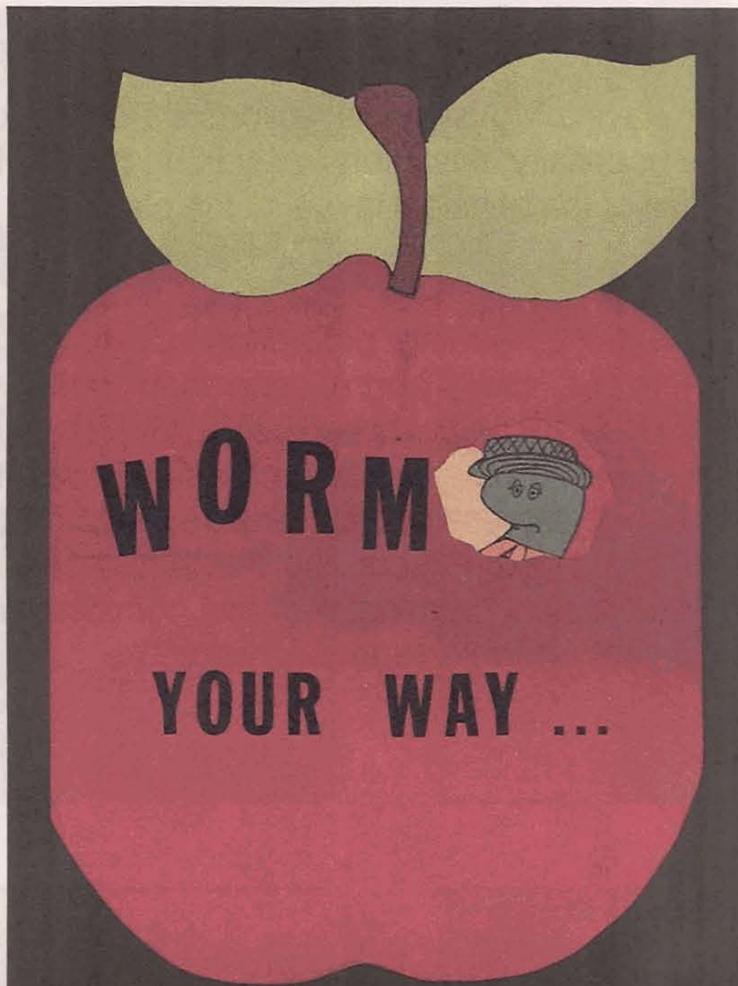
The different visual presentations with their individual messages allow for the continuous and repeated display of the posters, enable frequent changes of them, and provide a concentrated campaign towards persuading a change in the students' attitudes regarding the importance of reading.

The illustrations are examples of word-picture posters where the arrangement of the pictorial, linguistic, and graphic symbols is very much influenced by the findings of picture research studies related to the use of graphic elements like bright colour, high contrast, humour, comic effects, catchy, and concise headlines.





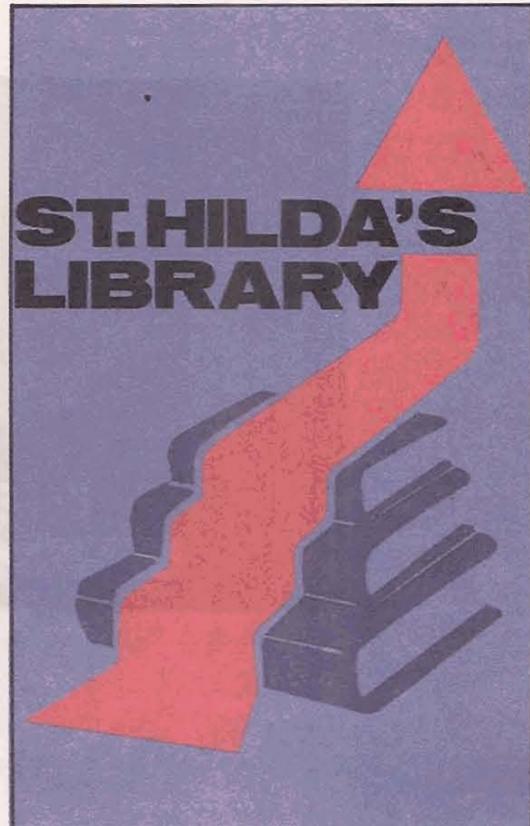
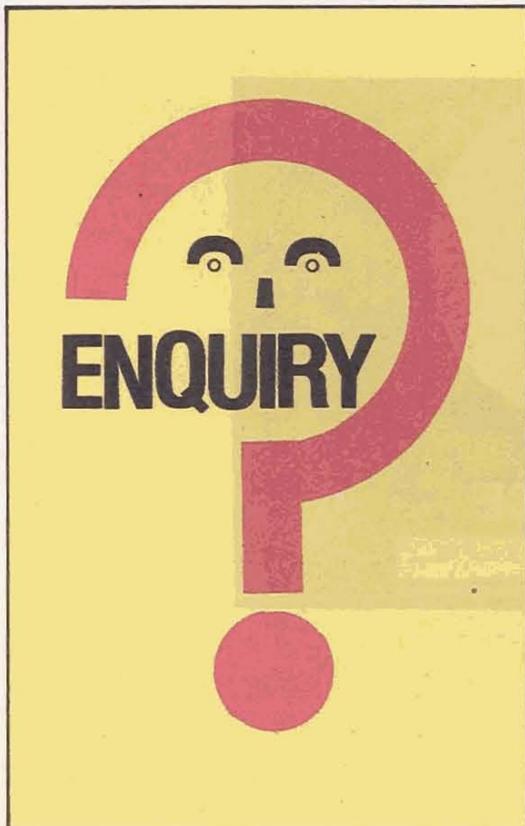
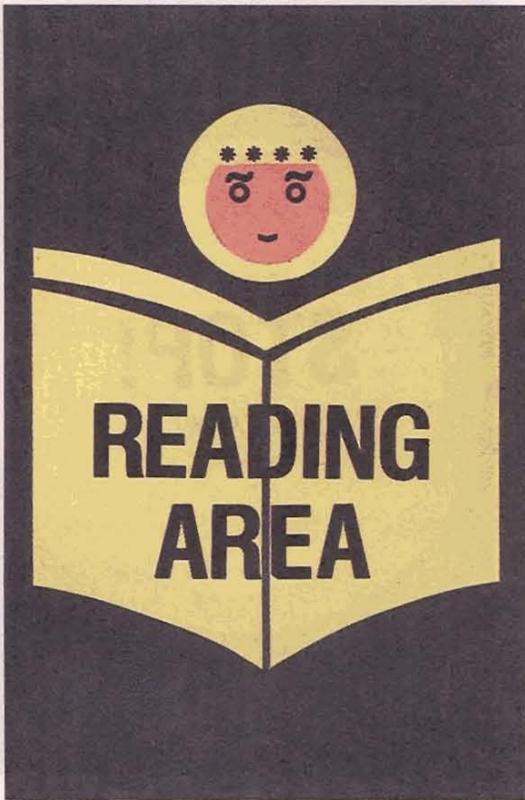


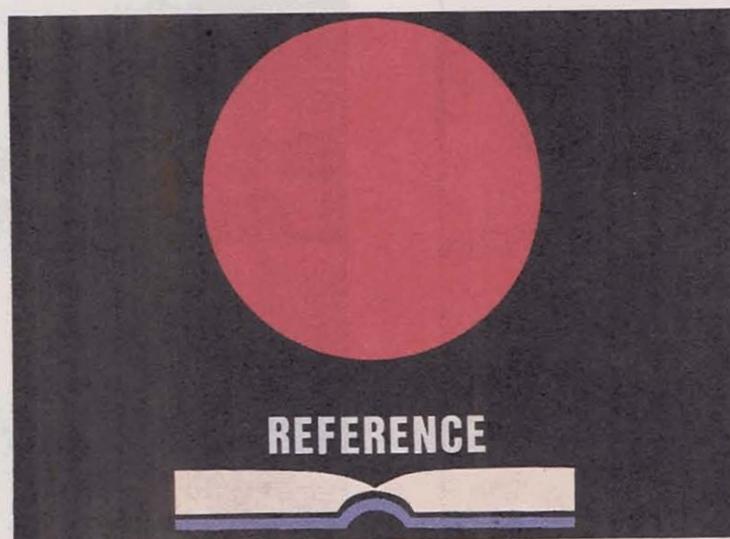
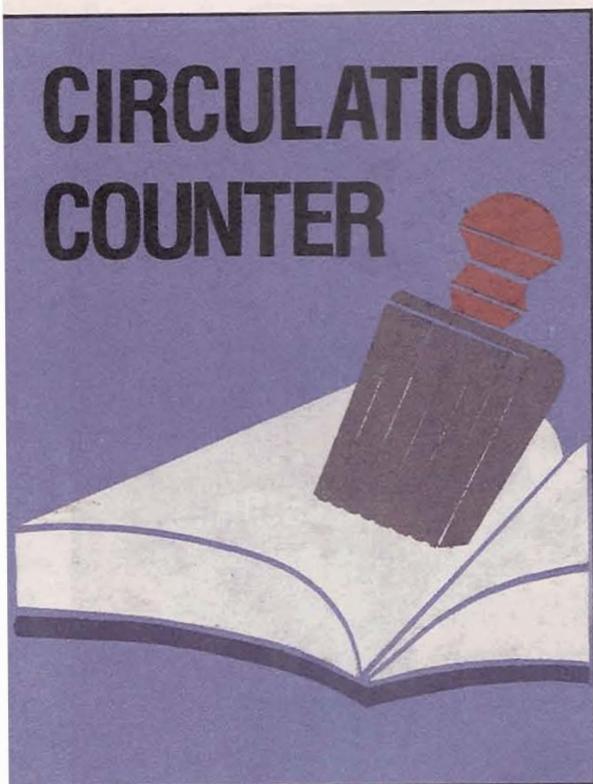


Wayfinding Signs

Displaying wayfinding signs is so basic that school libraries tend to ignore its necessity, mistakenly assuming that all library users have a good sense of the physical layout of the place and the location of the materials.

Assuming that the reading promotion campaign succeeds in getting people into the library and making them return, wayfinding posters are essential to help library users find their way, follow instructions and directions, avoid embarrassing situations, save precious time, reduce aimless search, enable meaningful browsing, lower frustration levels of the users and the library staff, encourage confidence in independent learning, and feel comfortable enough to want to turn their first visit into repeated visits.





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