<table>
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<th>Building a reading school through the school library: A case study of Commonwealth Secondary School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Redesigning Pedagogy International Conference 2017, 31 May – 2 June 2017, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised by</td>
<td>National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore</td>
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Building a Reading School through the School Library
A Case Study of Commonwealth Secondary School

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Design Thinking

A method for practical, creative resolution of problems and creation of solutions. It is a form of solution-based, or solution-focused thinking with the intent of producing a constructive future result.
Design Thinking
5-Step Process

- Empathise
- Define
- Ideate
- Prototype
- Test
Empathise
A.) Needs Finding & User Journeys

To better understand the needs of our possible users:

- active users, non users
- language teachers, non-language teachers
- older staff, younger staff
- IT-savvy staff, non-IT savvy staff

We investigated these needs through a full day observation:

- 2 students: (i) active user (ii) non active user
- 2 teachers: (i) young, passionate teacher (ii) senior, traditional teacher
- Objective: To develop insights about each user
Student 1 Needs

**HMW provide S1 with leadership opportunities?**
- Needs more opportunities to show leadership ability.
- Needs more opportunities to take ownership of library.
- Needs more responsibility.
- Wants to delegate his role.

**HMW allow S1 to experience more greenery?**
- Wants plants.
- Needs seating areas.

**HMW enable S1 to share his ideas?**
- Needs a space to share ideas.
- Needs a green platform to display ideas.
- Large TV display.

**HMW make the library more attractive to S1?**
- Glass walls for open effect.
- Wall art.
- Movie/documentary room.
- Place for group discussions.
- Needs a platform to facilitate a discussion.

**HMW enable S1 to more easily interact with his peers?**
- Wants a space to interact with peers.
- Needs a discussion area.

**HMW**
Teacher 1 Needs

**HMW enable T1 to relax in school?**

- Needs a relaxing corner.
- Michael needs a working room.

** HMW provide a space for T1 to do solitary work?**

- HMW provide a space that is uncluttered.
- Needs a bigger personal space.

** HMW allow T1 to meet with people more?**

- HMW provide a space for meetings.
- Needs to socialise more with other older people.

**HMW make T1's life more exciting?**

- Enable more exciting lessons.
- Make marking more exciting.
- Space for meetings.
- Place to mingle with students.
Empathise
A.) Analysis of User Journeys

Analysis of the user journey enabled us to generate insights about each user (eg. ideas and patterns about the user throughout the day)

Here, we were trying to identify user needs:

- What might users need?
- What might users get out of the library?
- We bore these 3 areas in mind when looking at insights: people, places, programmes
Library Space
Answering User Needs via

Place  Programme  People
Planning

User Needs

Implementation

Place
Programme
People
Empathise

B.) Needs Finding & Organisational Goals

- School Vision, Mission, Values
- School Frameworks
- ELL Vision
Empathise

HMTL promote in-depth learning in various subjects?
- Spaces for subjects e.g. subject-based books
tutor
- Subject-based months run by departments

HMTL enable teachers to learn/grow professionally?
- Allocated space for teachers only - meetings/discussions
- Curriculum enhancements (e.g., for ODL learning)
- Original programmes tailored for different disciplines (e.g., teaching)

HMTL identify reading materials for students?
- Hot Reads shelf (books to be returned)
- Recommended backlit for different levels - based on genres
- Range of readers - some titles tiered

HMTL enable access to a wide range of resources?
- Documentary films
- Archived news

HMTL solicit greater assistance in running programmes?
- Different people, man the helpdesk
- Need a project team + project officer
Empathise
Putting it Together

Diagram:
- School Vision, Mission, Values
- School Frameworks
- ELL Vision
- User Needs

Arrow pointing to the Library section.
User & Organisational Needs

Implementation

Place  Programme  People
Upon reviewing the needs of the users and our school, we prioritised the insights and defined the function of our library:

- What is the key purpose or function of the library?
- What programmes and activities would take place in the library?
- What would the rhythm of the library look like?
- What are some key design principles?
  - In helping us have a keener understanding of what constituted good key design principles, we researched public and school library spaces around the world that were successful in their outreach to their users.
Upon reviewing the needs of the users and our school, we prioritised the insights and defined the function of our library:

**Key priorities that arose:**

- Love of reading
- Accessible and open space
- Peace and quiet
- Ownership of learning
- Purposeful conversations
- Bright and beautiful
- Enhanced awareness
- ICT use
Define
Key Outcomes for the School Library

Secondary considerations (good to have, seasonal demand)

- Develop interests & passion
- Creation not just consumption
- Exciting, enjoyable events
- Student-led programming
- Instructional programme support
- Chill-out bakery / cafe
- Learning hub
Define
Building the school library’s identity

Our definition of the main purpose of the library:
  ● Diverse resource repository
  ● The ‘Cave’
  ● Hub for passion-driven student pursuits

Encapsulated by our library theme:
  ● Read
  ● Learn
  ● Discover
Define
Building the school library’s identity

Promoting arts & cultural awareness

- Asian Arts Forms (puppet-themes, puppetry...)
- Art Exposure Bookbinding/ Scrapbooking
- Die-cut/ Letterpress/ Embossing/ Engraving
- Poetry Writing
- Jewellery/ Costume Design based on books
- Make-up/ Hair (Historical)
- Calligraphy/ Typography
- Penmanship/ Calligraphy
- Origami in Math
- Sketching/ Drawing/ Anime
- Year Long Food/ Cultural Fair
- Musical
Define
Building the school library’s identity

Programming Solutions

Promoting love of writing

Asian writers focus
Scriptwriting workshop
Humour writing satire on current world affairs
How to make a travel journal
Blogging workshop
Creative writing mentorship
Dramaturgy
Screening/poetry/puppet political satire
Define
Building the school library’s visual identity

Design principles
● Accessible and open
● Multi-purpose
● Flexibility
● Modern
● Clean & cosy
Ideation
Putting it all together

Ideation process:

● mapping out the library space
● determining the layout
● determining how to make the space more open
● determining zones required in the library
● identifying type and quantity of furniture required
● sketching how the items might look like
● considering atmospheric variables in the library
Ideation
Putting it all together

Some features of our proposed solutions:

- Large but not imposing bookshelves
- Display opportunities
- Diverse & comprehensive collection
- Circular bookshelves
- Individual nooks
- Meeting rooms
- Amphitheatre, open space for performances
Prototype
Testing the ideas

- Prototyped the layouts with wooden blocks
- Tested the height of the furniture in the space
- Tested the size of the zones
Commonwealth Sec Library has been in test mode from July 2016. The library is in a constant state of change and refinement.
Enjoy reading! Home of Commonwealth Secondary School's Library, Singapore
Need your reading fix or a place to study? Our #roweslibrary is open in the holidays. Note that we are closed in the final week.

Holiday Hours

29 May -16 Jun (Mon - Fri)
8 am - 4:30 pm

19-23 June
Closed
What can we learn?
1. Meaningful design and planning considerations impact use of library.
2. Type and quality of library programming impacts students’ use of the library.
3. Things must be visible.
Policy

Programme

Practice
Q&A