Creating A Reader-based Digital Gallery: A Case Study on NEHS Library

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School libraries are knowledge centers and platforms for teachers and students in campuses. Readers can be resource takers also producers under the implement of school knowledge management strategy. The NEHS library created a reader-based digital gallery to catch readers' eye ,to inspire their participation , trying to make a Library 2.0 platform for 3000 k-to-12th readers, to make them not only readers but also writers, not only resource takers but also producers and sharers. Action Research is the approach to practice with for 2 years. Changes happened to readers. Precise evidence and criteria need more efforts and further research

Introduction

Schools are knowledge-based learning organizations. A school library is the aggre- gation of what learning activities implements. It is not only the knowledge–based center, but also the interactive platform of resources. New metadata can be produced when knowledge management strategy is carried out. A school library should be the best place for teachers and students to read and study on campus. Anyone skilled at utilizing the library is not only a key-holder to the gate of knowledge but also a creator, participant and an active producer.

Senior high school students in Taiwan barely enjoy reading due to the pressure of the Entrance Examination. They seldom enter the school library to enjoy reading. Instead, they stay in the library for hours to prepare for tests. Students regard the library as a self –study corner which needs to be quiet and not annoying. They are busy preparing for quizzes, too busy to appreciate or to

create. They're textbook- readers, appreciating passively and taking limited-advantage of the library's offerings.

As the concept of "Web 2.0" began with a conference brainstorming session between O'Reilly and Media Live International, the web became more important than ever. Web2.0 emphasizes online collaboration and sharing among users. Library 2.0 calls for user's participation and feedback in content development and maintaining of library services, that is, a Library 2.0 reader is expected to be active and empowered.

Motivation and questions

National Experimental High School (NEHS) in Hsinchu, Taiwan was built in 1983 for educating kids from 4 to 18 years old, while providing an environment to implement educational experiments. There are 5 departments in NEHS: the kindergarten, elementary, junior high, senior high and bilingual department. Visitors can always see a variety of   learning activities happening among K-12 students using diverse curricula, including the unique "Class Library Time". It started in 2002 due to the Grade 1-9 Curriculum Program[1] and was set up for K-9th students. Each class spends an hour per week in the library to learn how to use the library or to read freely.

In 2005, NEHS set up a display area in the library for students' work, such as History reports and paintings. Students paid little attention during the display, paper files were left when the exhibition closed. Students used to go into the library, checked out books, read test books and left. Groups entered, sat down, opened books, chatted, waited and left. Most of them were isolated paper- readers, egocentric service-receivers and users who left the library noisy and disordered.

What strategy could be implemented to catch readers' eyes? What could a library manager do to inspire readers' passion to actively participate, to create , and share ? Can a library stimulate and broaden readers' devotion to learning? Is it possible that a library can changes readers' reading habits to match the Web2.0 trend? Answers to these questions need research.

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[1] http://teach.eje.edu.tw/9CC/about/about3.php

Research method and processes

For answering the above questions under real educational surroundings, to practice the principles of Action Research （Jean McNiff, 2006）for 2 years should be the way. To follow processes below to shape an atmosphere of participation, interaction, collaboration, creating, and sharing will lead us to find out keys to problems listed above:

1. Interactive platform setting

In October,2005, the NEHS library manager, author of this paper, brought her idea to ask for technical aids from the school Computer Center. By brainstorming and cooperation, the first digital gallery, NEHS Imagery[2], was constructed. Different departments were invited to exhibit works of students or staff.

2. Facilities supplementing

Digital camera, HD video camera, NB and software about photo-or DVD editting or management were purchased from November,2005 to March,2006.

3. Manpower enhancing

Two librarians took on-the-job training courses for 12 weeks at the National Digital Archive Project[3] to learn about digitalization of archive, the trend of e-reading and Web 2.0 from November,2005 to July,2006 . A parent volunteer who was good at website composing was recruited in November, 2005. Dozens of parent volunteers were recruited, organized and given in-service training from September, 2005 to February, 2006. A 60–member parent-volunteer team was organized and on the way. Teachers were invited to provide students' works. K-12 students were persuaded to show successful work, such as theme posts, wood carving, oil paintings, colorful- pen drawings, traditional Chinese paintings between August,2005 and March,2007.

4. Data gathering

Photos and videos were taken by the library manager. A homepage of the library website was reconstructed by librarians and parent volunteers with hundreds of hours' teamwork from March, 2005 to October, 2006. 75 Class

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[2] http://140.126.248.108/cpg135/index.php?cat=10003
[3] http://www.ndap.org.tw

Library Time was evaluated and recorded every week since December,2005. The result was posted on the newsletter board every Monday.

5. Presentation forms changing

New books were displayed in different ways. They were on the shelves, in photos, in book reviews and in HD video form. Materials to teach young kids how to use the library well were presented by words, oral instruction, photos and animation. What happened at Class Library Time was recorded in photos. Volunteer services from students, retired teachers or parents were taken into pictures, recorded in HD and presented on NEHS library website from November, 2005 to March,2007.

Outcomes

By practicing principles of Action Research and following processes above, we earned outcomes:

1. A reader-oriented digital gallery is constructed.

In December,2005, the NEHS Imagery was the first reader-oriented digital gallery among senior high school libraries. Its content diversified and burgeoned. There are 41 albums, 1634 pictures nowadays[4]. All performers are readers or users in the NEHS library. All content of the digital gallery was readers' own work, including oil paintings, color pen drawings, torn-paper stuck articles, traditional Chinese paintings, theme posts, wooden carvings, picture books and art therapy articles.

Other works are memories of activities. They are parent-volunteer services, student community services, volunteer in-service training, part-time jobs during summer vacation, volunteers' cultural field trips, special visitors, reading club meeting, interschool model projects.The rest of the contents reinforced student understanding of the library, such as what the library is, what books are on display now, science fiction theme reading, new special collection, the new face of the old library, people in the   library and what's happening in the NEHS library.

2. Readers' attention is gathered

From December, 2005 to March, 2007, there were 38000 clicks viewing the NEHS Imagery according to website counting, compared with only a few hundred before the new initiative. During the same period, 28000 searching

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[4]   http://140.126.248.108/cpg135/index.php?cat=10003

were recorded, compared with only 4000 before. All data shows readers' attention is more focused and their motivation is inspired.

 3. Library homepages is refreshed

The original NEHS library homepage was set in 1998 under a Library Automation Project. It was contracted out, linked to Transtech Company Cybase System, designed by outside- campus computer programmers. The school Computer Center could do nothing to solve problems or fix the system. Servers in the library broke down one by one from July to November in 2005. The school Computer Center supported renewing servers and librarians took over reconstruction of the library homepage and website.

To reinforce the reader-based digital gallery, the library manager, author of this paper, contributed the main framework. With the aid of a parent volunteer, a new website was created. Icons, such as "Art Gallery, Teacher database, Lay out, New Book Review, Google Book Search " were set to the library website in February,2006. The new homepage and website got readers' attention.

To provide readers more convenience and variety in learning, we collected and categorized more databases as soon as the homepage was renewed. The On-line Reading item stood for e-reading promotion. The Library Video Box (5) consisted of 3 videos ready to tell how unique the new book was, how student volunteers served and what they thought about their community service. To catch reader's eye, we animated what happened in the library and brought out the latest edition homepage: http//lib.nehs.hc.edu.tw/page/sun666.htm

4. "Loving NEHS Library" plan started

The NEHS library average check-out and return per semester is 69000.Compared   to the number in the same size school, readers here deserve the name "book-worms"However, no short writing or essay from NEHS was found in a Nation-wide Internet Reading and Writing Competition from 2005 to 2006, that means NEHS readers were just readers, neither writers nor creators.To enhance NEHS readers' writing ability and encourage them to share what they read and write, "Loving NEHS Library" plan started in February,2007. We plannedit by brainstorming among different subject teachers, set a new platform for 1st to12th   grade students to upload what they write, what they think about what they read. The number of short writings is

increasing from zero to 189 in two months. All readers' writings are posted on "NEHSLibrary blog"[5]

Findings and problems

Findings

We can see the findings behind the outcomes:

1. The behaviors of computer using or searching are changed

Readers used to peek for chances to play games or do MSN in the library. They asked librarians where the books were. Nowadays, readers click the NEHS Imagery to appreciate works for over 30000 times, they read the online databases for homework or projects for over 1500 in 3 months . They ask teachers how to reserve books, what database is just for their homework. The average search counting before 004 was 7600; it was 11000 in 2005 and 19640 in 2006. The book reserving online jumped from 60 to 635 a semester. The e-readers are becoming out.

2. The content and process of reading are changed.

NEHS readers used to read textbooks for tests. Paper reading was their best choice. They paid no more attention to what happened around them. They were ego-centered students, passive paper-readers and service-receivers. Nowadays, they are producers of the online galleries of their work. Under clicking, they find kinds of databases for their reports or project, such as "American Memory" for American History, "Taiwan Memory" for local history and literature. They upload what they write to the library mailbox and actively create the website content. They open their eyes to their surroundings. They are online readers, who appreciate the productive, collaborative process.

3. The NEHS library refreshed website is multi-functional. The website is not only a platform for readers to search for resources, but also for readers to create, to produce and to share what they put out. It is the bridge between readers and writers, for recipients and providers of knowledge.

4. The NEHS library is well-promoted. Readers' attention is focused by putting them under the spotlight. At any time or place, they can find themselves on the

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[5] http://www.wretch.cc/blog/NEHSlibrary

website, click and appreciate works in the NEHS online gallery . They are the writers and sharers of reading reviews. They call friends' attention to new content on the online gallery and the website.

5. Library Class Time becomes enjoyable . Readers and teachers have thanked the library team for the cleaner and quieter reading space. 700 readers per day now come to the NEHS library to enjoy their Library Class Time in the wider and brighter library. Readers behave well, leave the library orderly for the next class to use. These outcomes are not only due to the digital gallery but also to the library volunteers' services. Being aware of volunteers as the key library personnel, readers sense volunteers' service and respond with good behaviors.

6.A reader-based online gallery or website is not the patent of computer experts. The NEHS Imagery or website which gathered readers' attention was the result of brainstorming and team-work of volunteers and three middle-aged librarians. These librarians majored in Education, Accounting and Library Science. With hundreds of hours of hardworking and efforts, the reader-based digital gallery and homepage were built up. There is no end point for a reader-based digital gallery , no short cut to set a perfect library website. Three librarians, who operate a 3000- reader, 75- period Library Class Time every week ,will burn out without professional development.7.The reader-based digital gallery did inspire students and teachers at the NEHS campus. The websites of the Bilingual and Elementary Department changed from textual to pictures in 2007. The short writings is popping out on the NEHSLibrary blos.

Problems

Besides the findings above, here are problems need further research:

1. What is the criteria to assess performance and then claim "Readers' reading habits are changed." ?
2. How to state he/she is the one that is a taker- and- giver, reader-and-writer or a user-and –producer? What is the baseline of the NEHS library website which is multi-functional and is functioned?
3. How to improve " An enjoyable reading space improve readers' library literacy"?
4. How can we sustain readers' passion ? How much attention is enough to   start development? Can we say the reader-based digital gallery is now the very base to enrich the content of library website? Has it been organically developed to be

the Library 2.0?

5. How to improve that a Library 2.0 –oriented digital gallery or homepage will make the reading habits change?

6. How to inspire and sustain librarians' passion is for almost all senior high school library managers in Taiwan?

Conclusions and suggestions

Senior high school libraries in Taiwan didn't get legal status until 2002[6]. Budget and manpower are always in serious short supply. Due to the passionate commitment of many school library managers, school libraries have become more vital in recent years. The senior high school managers have attended IASL Anniversary Conferences since 2005. They earned the honor to organize the 2007 IASL International Forum in Taiwan.

The National Experiment High School(NEHS) is a K-12 bilingual school. Three librarians , 60 parent volunteers and 55 student volunteers serve 75 library classes per week to meet the needs of 3000 student-readers and 200 parent-users. Using the collaborative teamwork, the NEHS library set up the first reader-based digital gallery. There is no definite evidence to prove the reader-basted digital gallery or website did change readers from paper-reading to e-reading oriented, from passive readers to active writers, from resource receivers to output producers. You can see vital developments in the NEHS library and among its readers. Huge searches continue, thousands of readers surf the library website, hundreds of short writings are uploading to the library mailbox, databases and resources are accumulated to enrich readers , content of the website is enriched, bringing our library closer to Library 2.0 .The NEHS library readers are now inspired to enjoy reading.

To address issues more precisely, we need to design model evaluation criteria. To induce readers' interest, gather their attention to follow steps forward Library 2.0, we need to encourage librarians with much more support. The first digital gallery in a Taiwanese senior high school library, the digital gallery has transformed from passive system-based to active reader-based, from one- way to interactive communicating. The library resource or website is no longer fixed inorganic; with the readers' partici-pation, it grows and develops vitality. What indices will best evaluate the perform- ance? How can readers'

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[6] http://www5.sysh.tc.edu.tw/rule/highlaw.htm

passion be activated? How can readers' output converge? All we have to do is make more effort, giving mutual encouragement, doing further research and evaluation to march senior high school libraries toward Library 2.0, in other words, to be more reader- based. By practicing school library knowledge management strategy, readers are not only library recipients; they are also knowledge producers and sharers.

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