Community Junior Secondary School Libraries in Botswana: A Case Study of Their Programs and Needs for Teacher-Librarian Training

Julie I. Tallman

Department of Instructional Technology,
University of Georgia, United States

Andrew J.B. Metzger and Boemo N. Jorosi

Department of Library and Information Studies,
University of Botswana, Botswana

The authors report on the status of the school library and its place in the curriculum in 13 Botswana community junior secondary schools located in northern and northeastern Botswana. During November 1999, the study took place during site visits to the schools that had a teacher-library intern receiving training through the School Library Certificate Program in the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Botswana. The authors used semistructured interviews, observations, and journals to provide the data for the descriptive qualitative study. This article is a report of the findings and the recommendations to the Department for changes in the school library curriculum.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to report on a study of selected Botswana community junior secondary school (CJSS) library programs carried out during site visits to these schools in October 1999. The intent of the study was to note the condition of school libraries and their resources, their use, and their place in the curriculum of community junior secondary schools. The Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Botswana planned to use the findings to strengthen the teacher-librarian curriculum. The schools participating in the study were those where the Department of Library and Information Studies had teacher-librarian interns working during the spring and summer school terms, 1999-2000. These students had completed the first semester of their school library certificate program.

The chair of the school library certificate program, Andrew Metzger, chose the included schools because of their location in the northern and northeastern part of the country where visits could be scheduled within a week's tour (see a list of the schools in the Appendix). Three of us from the Department made the tour: Metzger, Boemo Jorosi, a Department lecturer involved with the teacher-librarian program, and Tallman, a Fulbright

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Senior Scholar assigned to the Department. Before our trip, we requested permission to interview the schools' headmasters, a group of classroom teachers at each school selected by the headmaster, and the teacher-librarian intern. We focused our questions on the condition of the library; the school personnel's philosophy toward information literacy and the library, particularly the headmaster's; the use of the library; and the teaching methods used by the classroom teachers. We also wanted to know about plans for introducing computers to the library program and having teacher-librarians work with their colleagues to include information literacy skills in the curriculum.

Background on Botswana Libraries

Now in its fourth decade of independence, the Southern African country of Botswana has always advocated the value and importance of information as one of the most important foundations of democracy. Since Independence, the country has invested in the University of Botswana's library to make it one of the best university libraries in Africa. Its third of a million volumes, new automated cataloguing system (INNOPAC), and huge new library addition with space for dozens of Internet work stations has created 21st-century library sophistication.

Botswana also has invested in a public library system through the Botswana National Library Service (BNLS), which has provided dedicated service to city and rural information seekers throughout the country. Assigned by its charter the responsibility for organizing and staffing libraries in the country's senior secondary schools, the BNLS has developed the initial materials collection for both senior and junior secondary libraries and has staffed the senior secondary libraries with its personnel. The Botswana Ministry of Education has supported CJSS libraries and advocated staffing with teacher-librarian trained classroom teachers allocated a small amount of time in their schedule to take care of library responsibilities. For the most part, these teacher-librarians have traditionally had almost a full load of classroom teaching responsibilities as well as their library duties. The BNLS supplemented the certificate programs for training teacher-librarians by organizing and running three- to five-day workshops that emphasize practical skills.

Primary schools have been financed and governed by the communities where the schools are located. Village councils have furnished the primary school buildings and provided all supplies. Not only have the villages not had a tradition of library service or a reading culture because of the oral heritage, most have not been able to afford the supplying and staffing of a school library. Recently, the Botswana Ministry of Education announced its intention to provide libraries at the primary level, but the funding has not yet been allocated. Unless students have attended a private English-medium primary school, entry into a CJSS combined immersion into the English language and the first experience with a library. At the time of writing,

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Botswana has only four public primary schools with libraries. In Gaborone, the school's Parents-Teachers Association built a library at Lesedi Primary School. In Selebi-Phikwe, there are three public primary schools with libraries built by the head teachers from surplus amounts obtained from the schools' development funds.

Teachers in Botswana public primary schools use the national language of Setswana as the language of instruction, which for many students from non-Setswana speaking tribes is their first experience in a language immersion program. During the students' last two or three years of primary education, English classes are added to their schedule in preparation for attendance at CJSS and instruction in English because of its official-language status for Botswana. For non-Setswana students, the switch to English has meant that they were placed in their second-language immersion program.

Since their inception, the Ministry of Education has built each of the CJSSs using the same type of architecture. It has constructed campuses with multiple modular buildings that house two to four classrooms or a library and several classrooms, staff housing, and an administrative building. Recently, the government also funded a separate building for a computer laboratory. Because the Ministry has had the total responsibility of hiring teachers, it has had the right to assign teachers a placement anywhere in the country where they are needed.

The Ministry has supported the staffing of CJSS libraries with teacher-librarians who work part-time in the library, but keep most of their classroom teaching responsibilities, usually English classes. As of this writing, the Ministry has not granted extra remuneration for being a teacher-librarian or recognition as a senior teacher. Because class sizes average from 40 to 45 students, heads have not had sufficient staff to allow the teacher-librarian much reduction in classroom teaching for library responsibilities.

BNLS provided each CJSS library with an initial start-up book stock, after which the schools have added to the resources using the annual vote (budget appropriation) of P30 (each pula equals approximately 20 cents US) per pupil. BNLS librarians have chosen the initial materials without the schools having a voice in the types of materials provided. Basing the library budget vote on student numbers has severely disadvantaged the smaller schools.

Schools also seem to have suffered an extraordinary rate of book theft. When the library had no burglar bars or adequate supervision, book loss has been enormous. Consequently, heads frequently have been tempted not to spend the vote on library materials and to keep the library locked. It has been suggested to the Ministry of Education that it designate within itself a consistent school library supervisory unit to maintain quality in school libraries. Until this happens, the quality of the library program and resources will continue to depend on the interest of the school head, faithful allocation of the library vote to purchase new resources, and availability of a well-trained teacher-librarian with enough released time and enthusiasm to work on the

library program. Consequently, as a study team, we set out to find out how many of the CJSSs we were to visit met all three of these criteria.

Methodology of the Study

We decided to use the comparative case study approach for the CJSSs on our tour following Merriam's (1988) process for the individual case study. This approach allowed us to take each school as an entity, investigate the environment for the library program and the program itself, and then compare the cases with each other for general trends and findings. An ethnographic approach was taken in the study of the library program and participants in their indigenous surroundings (Leedy, 1997). Although we did not spend extensive time at each school, we immersed ourselves in the rural areas and villages of Botswana in order to understand the conditions for each school. We chose to write the findings of our visits as a narrative of our lived experience to convey to the reader an understanding of these areas of Botswana, as well as what the schools were like. Through the narrative, we described the environment of the trip, the schools, and conversations with the heads, teachers, and teacher-librarians. We focused on the "human lived experience and the physical, political, and historical context of that experience" (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992, p. 1) as the most appropriate way to create an image of school libraries in Botswana. In addition, because the experience was unique for Tallman with her Western orientation, the narrative took on the structure of an autoethnography to enable her to give her experience a voice (Reed-Danahay, 1997). We intended that the narrative of the tour experience itself should provide a context for the placement of these schools in the Botswana physical geography, as well as in educational, cultural, and ethnic groupings. Our purpose, in addition to reporting the study, has been to aid the reader's understanding of the people, environment, school problems, and school assets for each school visited.

Participants

At each of the participant schools, we had a teacher-librarian intern training in the Department's school library certificate program. Each head and teachers agreed to the visits and interviews. We interviewed the head and teacher-librarian individually, but met the group of teachers using a focus group approach. We used the following questions as semistructured prompts:

1. What role would you like the school library to play in your curriculum?
2. How do your teachers and students use the library?
3. Describe how the teachers in this school promote student learning.
4. How do the teachers promote student reading for study and for recreation?
5. Describe how the school is responding to Vision 2016.
6. Describe your definition of information skills and strategies.

7. How have you talked about information skills and strategies as a teaching staff?
8. What methods do you use to teach information skills and strategies?
9. How dependent is the curriculum on information resources in addition to textbooks?
10. How do teachers use the library and information resources to prepare their teaching units?
11. How does the head encourage teachers' and students' use of library resources?
12. How do teachers encourage students' use of library resources?
13. What kinds of teaching strategies are most predominant among the teachers in this school (lecture, group work, worksheets, projects, etc.)?
14. How many of your courses have projects instead of, or in addition to, exams?
15. What kinds of assignments are usually required (tests, reports, worksheets, projects)?
16. How do teachers expect students to learn (facts/concepts, lectures/discovery)?
17. How is curriculum planning done in this school (group/individual/ partnerships/collaboratively)?

We purposely held to semistructured sessions hoping to hear voluntary information about the atmosphere surrounding the library and the potential for change in library use and improvements. Tallman took notes during each interview to record as carefully as possible the responses of all individuals. She takes full responsibility for her interpretation of the interviews with her background as an American school library researcher immersed, by then, in the Botswana academic culture.

The limitations of her perspective included her short stay in Botswana (2½ months) before the trip. Her literacy background in English as a first language also influenced her perspectives, as did her ethnic and cultural experiences in Western written literacy traditions. In addition, her immersion in United States school library traditions, her academic training and teaching experiences in school library media curriculum at the university graduate level, and her years of service as a school media specialist/librarian in the US contributed to her perceptions.

Counterbalancing these limitations were the advantages we provided in analyzing the library programs through an understanding of information literacy and how it could add to student learning. We helped each other analyze what we saw for the Department's curriculum revision efforts. Tallman's awareness of and background in international education provided a source of support for our cultural understandings and attitude perspectives. During her two months at the University of Botswana, she had already accumulated many teaching experiences that were building her knowledge of the Batswana (people of Botswana) and their multiple cultures. Tallman

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had met Ministry officials and had participated in school library continuing education workshops at the invitation of the Ministry. She was considered a senior member of her University of Botswana Department and given equal voice as if she was a permanent member of the Department.

Narrative Journal of the Tour

Introduction

A substantial part of this narrative journal was from Tallman's journal written during the CJSS trip. These passages related experiences from the traveling itself, inspections at the schools, exchanges with people, interview data, and her impressions. Several major themes from the interviews emerged from the narrative. The extent that CJSSs served as immersion programs in English influenced readiness for students to learn the content and concepts required at CJSS level. The extent to which the national curriculum requirements demanded speed of content delivery to prepare students for the leaving exams taken at the end of the CJSS years meant that poorer English speakers and writers were left behind early in their CJSS education. Large class sizes averaging 40 to 45 students were a national norm.

Lack of a reading culture and lack of time for the teacher-librarian interns to work on library problems, along with the poor facilities and resources found at most of the schools, affected the libraries' usefulness. Lack of staff understanding about the connection between good libraries and student learning seemed to slow efforts for rapid improvement in the library situation. But the teacher-librarians were eager to create a good program, and the school heads welcomed our visit as an opportunity to support the library program philosophically. After the first day of visits, we witnessed similar problems for the library program at all the other schools we visited, regardless of rural or urban settings. To this extent, the narrative has been shortened, with most of the attention focused on the first three days of the trip.

October 31, 1999

We left this morning at 9:00 a.m. with colleagues Julie Tallman, Andrew Metzger, and Boemo Jorosi, lecturers in the Department of Library and Information Studies, riding in a Ministry of Education Toyota 4 x 4 with a Ministry driver. Metzger is in charge of the teacher-librarian certificate program, and Jorosi has written a manuscript on teacher-librarians needing an intensification of management training.

The trip today was a long, flat 1,000 km: from Gaborone to Francistown to Dikwe to Gweta to Nata to Maun. We traveled fast, close to 150 km per hour because of the 1,000 km we had to cover today. Patience was required because government-owned vehicles could only gas up at government fuel docks, which were sometimes closed, which meant searching the local village for someone to help us. Metzger was nervous about driving into the

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night because of the elephants and giraffes wandering onto the road we were taking. We were lucky today—no close calls.

November 1

The first school we visited today was west of Maun in a small village of Herrero people. These people speak the Herrero language and raise cattle for their living. The school was on the outskirts of the village and impressed me. We paid a visit to the teacher-librarian intern who showed us the room she was beginning to convert to a library. Metzger nodded approvingly at the security bars on the windows and the good doors to the room.

Piles of books lay on large tables in the middle of the room, part of a shipment of donated materials distributed by BNLS. We browsed through and found 1960s romance novels from junior high schools in the US with identification marks remaining. Although we recognized the good intentions of the donors, we knew that these students needed contemporary high-interest low-level nonfiction information resources suitable for their curriculum and beginning readers of English. Fiction material needed to be relevant to their lives or useful in the curriculum to supplement the English and social studies curricula. We wished the money spent on shipping these books could have been spent on buying new and appropriate materials for these students.

From the intern we learned that the library did not have many users, except for English classes that had a scheduled library lesson period. The intern told us that most teachers used textbooks because the library did not have good resources even though she was able to start purchasing new materials. With teachers using the lecture system like the teachers who had taught them, the students had few assignments that required them to use library resources. This teacher-librarian would like to plan collaboratively to help teachers vary the content delivery method, but had too heavy a classroom teaching schedule. However, the intern expected to have a computer in the library after she completed her second coursework term at the university. This would help with library work and additional information resources.

The school had not yet connected with the Internet. When we asked the headmaster why, he told us that the school had an Information Botswana Internet account, but the telephones were not yet strung and connected. As soon as this happened, the school would activate the connection. The head informed us that the Ministry paid for the account, so he did not anticipate a problem financing the account.

When we met with the group of teachers, we heard about some of the difficulties they had in teaching their classes. Their classes were large, around 40-45 in each class. This was the size of classes dictated by the Ministry with a corresponding allocation of teachers.

The social studies curriculum had a research project written into it that required students to go into the communities and collect information using a questionnaire designed by the Ministry curriculum planning team. The stu-

dents had to process and present their findings themselves. Topics were preset and dealt with transport, housing, identity, and so forth. The purpose of this project was to teach students basic research skills. Unfortunately, the students seemed dependent on their own resources without enough scaffolding or support in learning these skills. There did not seem to be time in the curriculum to emphasize instruction in the type of skills that would have helped them achieve more success with these projects. Nor was there a way to accumulate the information they collected in a database for future students to use. Our teachers felt that asking students to learn how to succeed with someone else's questionnaire, making acknowledgments, reporting findings, and making recommendations was much too advanced at this point in the students' careers.

Each of the teachers talked about teaching styles and how they approached their curriculum. With large classes and an intense curriculum, the system almost demanded that students sit and listen to the teachers. The teachers told us that they had to be the font of information because there was no time in the curriculum to teach skills, debate, or practice critical thinking. They described their students as "not confident, not empowered to feel free to talk in the teacher's presence—it scares them. Move away and they are free to discuss." The students looked to the teacher as the only person who knew all. So what others said was wrong, even parents, unless their teacher agreed. One teacher reported that "at the primary level, students are not allowed to express themselves. By CJSS level, it is a habit" not to speak out.

Cultural literacy took a large chunk of teacher time with these students. Their families' rural lifestyles did not permit students to have exposure to many elements in contemporary urban life that found a place on the leaving exams. One teacher used the example of expecting students to know what a train looked like and how it worked. But his students had never seen trains, nor did they have audiovisuals in the school to show them how trains worked. In this school, no teacher could take any common cultural knowledge for granted except for the village experience. With this as the students' background and having English as the students' third language, these teachers had a difficult content delivery problem.

One teacher at this school was familiar with computers and worked with students and teachers on the computers in the lab. The teachers were hopeful that computers would help cultural literacy when they were connected to the Internet, because the teachers viewed the leaving exam as culturally biased toward urban students. Urban students in other schools usually had access to village life, but the village students rarely had access to urban life, which created a considerable cultural divide. We heard a story of a group of students going to a supermarket for the first time. They were afraid to put their groceries in a basket for fear of being accused of stealing.

School #2, a boarding school, was nearer Maun. The library was better stocked than that of the first school, but suffered from some of the same

problems. It was open for library orientation only for form 1, the newest students. The intern taught information skills in his English curriculum. Each of the nine English classes in the school had one period a week for library use. This teacher-librarian intern was fortunate to have a library assistant and student monitors. He taught 31 English classes in his load and had only nine free periods, during which he found himself marking papers from his classes. Library work was in addition to class work.

This intern told us that he thought his teacher-librarian role was central because of the new teaching methods being pushed by the Ministry, specifically student-centered and resource-based learning. One of the things he did to work with his teachers was to look ahead at the syllabus and prepare books for students' use. Last year, he held a workshop hoping to build teacher confidence in using the library by demonstrating how to use reference resources and how to integrate the library in the curriculum. He remarked, however, that teachers did not give assignments that made use of the library. Only the form 3 students came during their social studies community research project.

He commented that some of his teachers read, but offered no active reading promotion to their students. When we asked him about information skills and strategies for teaching these skills, he looked puzzled as if not aware of what these strategies might be or what information skills were. Most of the time, his instruction included the care of books: how to open books, how to use markers for books, and how to find books. He was not invited to department meetings, nor had he asked to be invited, although his head supported the library. At that time, there was one computer on campus for teachers to use, but not students, and no mention had been made of having a computer for the library.

When we talked to the teachers, we learned that the school was built in 1996. They described some of the teachers as using the lecture method and others as having the students do mostly problem-solving. The students preferred to be given information rather than locating it themselves or discovering concepts.

Most books in the library were at a higher reading level than the students' capability. The teacher-librarian intern had ordered some large-print books hoping to help students with their English, but did not have any high-interest, low-level materials for students. Basically, the students used the library for entertainment.

These school staff members, like the teachers in School #1, considered the leaving exams as culturally biased against their students. Maybe 20 out of 120 of their students could read any English when they first came to the school. Even when they made efforts to read, the students did not comprehend what they had read. Most teachers spoke Setswana as a vernacular language and switched from English to Setswana when students did not

understand difficult concepts. This made the English vocabulary used for those concepts on the exams difficult for students to recognize.

Of the teachers attending the interview, the art teacher said that the library was not important for teaching art. His students sculpted, drew, and wove baskets after examples they had in their environment. The new Setswana language teacher said her students were not strong readers in Setswana because it was a second language to them. Their vernacular languages were Herrero and Kalanga. The agriculture teacher spoke of the need for a desirable collection of agriculture materials and pointed to an empty shelf where the agriculture books should have been located.

The teachers talked about how they were trying to adopt student-centered teaching methods by having students work in small groups solving problems and then presenting their solutions to the class. These teachers were trying to promote more student discussion of their assignments. Most of the teaching centered on the students moving through the curriculum to pass the tests, making lecturing the dominant method.

Later, when we talked to the deputy headmaster (DHM), we learned that the school was purchasing computers for business studies, the business office, and the school secretary's office. The DHM said that the teachers taught to exams as well as teaching project-based curriculum. He was referring to the social studies project in form 3. We began developing a sense that this one project convinced staff and administration that their students were engaged in project-based education. Tremendous emphasis was placed on the social studies unit, and the resulting project was checked by outside moderators. Anywhere from 20% to 50% of the students' total mark came from this project.

In the DHM's opinion, the school had to follow the syllabi objectives, even if some of them were shallow and did not go into detail. The teacher was responsible for creating content depth and for rearranging the syllabus objectives to make sense. New teachers coming into the school had been introduced to the information part of the syllabi at college and were aware of a variety of teaching methods. The DHM hoped to send the experienced teachers back to workshops to learn about teaching methods such as resource-based teaching, student-centered learning, and project-based methods. The DHM said that the teachers were ready to have the teacher-librarian as part of the subject content panels to advise on resource use.

When we started our journey this morning, we wondered what the day would be like. We were traveling 100 km southwest of Maun where the setting became most memorable for me. The sparse vegetation was surrounded by a whitish sandy soil, stripped bare by browsing cattle, donkeys, and goats. Expanding desert seemed to be pushing on the land.

Small enclaves of mud rondavels (round one-room houses) and square and rectangular mud buildings were set back some distance from the road to form family compounds. Around the compounds, the families piled sticks

and brush tied together to make fences to keep the animals away from the houses. They also built stick-and-brush fences for corrals to keep the live-stock safe at night. Sometimes the compounds had standpipe tanks, signify-ing bore holes for water. But the livestock had to walk for long distances to grazing lands, only returning to the compound for water. The land seemed flat as far as we could see, broken only by small rises. Increasingly, we could see cellphone towers every 20 km or so apart.

The day was hot with the wind blowing off the Kalahari Desert frequently creating wind funnels of dust along the roadway. We rolled up our windows to prevent the pervasive dust from entering our truck in trade for sweltering in the heat. When we arrived in the villages, we took roads that seemed to sink into sand. The sun beat down in waves of heat rising up from the ground. Later at 6:30 p.m., it was not unpleasant to sit outside while I wrote this journal. We liked the location of our hotel on the edge of a dry riverbed. Upstream were several pools of water remaining in the riverbed that the local children used as swimming holes. Further on downstream, we spotted fencing that held zebra and wildebeest to one side of the water hole with cattle, horses, donkeys, and goats on the other side.

Thinking back about our visits to the schools today, our questions elicited increasingly frank answers. One of the headmasters agreed to think about placing a computer in the library, but did not express many thoughts about what a library should do for the curriculum. He wanted the teacher-librarian to be given a position as one of the senior teaching staff so he could boost salary and allot more time for library work.

We thought the teachers at both schools were forthcoming about the challenges they faced in teaching their students. Three were aware of stu-dent-centered learning techniques and outcomes-based education teaching strategies. They acknowledged it was difficult to change their teaching meth-ods because of the need to teach to the exams, the language difficulties, and the large classes. The teachers wanted to know how students were supposed to work on solving problems for assignments when they had to spend most of their time translating the assignments into their vernacular to understand them.

One of the teachers reported that students expected teachers to be the expert and depended on them for information. Even parents were wrong if the teacher gave contradictory information. But students would not par-ticipate in discussions if teachers were within hearing. One teacher left the room to allow students more discussion freedom only to have the head quiz him about why he was not in the classroom lecturing.

Teachers also struggled with the poor quality of library book stock to fit their needs. At the second school the Setswana language teacher told us that she needed books on idioms and proverbs in Setswana. The agriculture teacher needed materials to help his students do practical projects like managing their own plot of land and studying vegetable growth. This teach-

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er was concerned with educating his students in the financial questions surrounding agriculture and animal problems. But he had no information resources to help his teaching or his students.

These teachers also emphasized that the book stock should fit the reading levels of the students. We openly wondered if BNLS constructed the initial book stock list based on traditional Western sources for school libraries and if it took into account the special rural needs and English language needs of the schools we visited today. We thought that these schools should spend what little money they had on content materials directly relevant to their curriculum needs and student reading levels rather than buy the general reference tools traditionally recommended for Western school libraries.

November 2

This morning again found us in Maun, one of the Safari capitals of Botswana. We were now starting to see rural Botswana, the African part hidden by Westernized Gaborone, struggling to gain an urbanization of amenities and facilities. This was the Africa of women carrying huge burdens of goods on their heads in an incredible balancing act, men driving donkey carts loaded with jugs of water and brush for fires or to line cattle stockades as fencing. This was the Africa of walking miles and miles. We felt so strange in our truck, seemingly miles from anywhere, whizzing by mothers with babies on their backs who asked for rides in the heat of the day. We saw dozens of people lined up anywhere on our journey thumbing rides. They had come out of nowhere, so they must have already walked a long distance. We saw pickup trucks crammed with people riding in the back.

Last night, Metzger and Tallman talked about the problems of school libraries in Botswana. He reported that suggestions had been made to the Ministry of Education that they have a separate officer who would take charge of all the school libraries. However, Metzger was told it would take about 10 years to establish such an office. He bemoaned situations where the Department trained a teacher-librarian and then the Ministry transferred the person to another school that already had a teacher-librarian. Meanwhile, the former school was left without a teacher-librarian again. Tallman learned that many teacher-librarians, with the lack of remuneration or recognition of the efforts they had made on behalf of school libraries, did not include their school library training on their job résumés. Because the Ministry could transfer teachers around at will or by request, Metzger had appealed to the Ministry to keep current with who had teacher-librarian training. Metzger had worked and was working hard for more recognition of this training and for making certain that people who had the training were moved to schools where a teacher-librarian was needed.

We were fortunate to have Jorosi, a citizen of Botswana, with us. He was from the Francistown area about 500 km directly north of Gaborone. Jorosi and the driver led the tour and found our schools for us. Today was a

traveling day from Maun to Francistown, a distance of 500 km. The remoteness of the schools started me thinking that courses in Internet resources, database use, local identification and production of resources, information location, access and use strategies, and critical thinking strategies would help teacher-librarians who worked in these schools. We were also beginning to think that the collection development courses needed to show teacher-librarian interns how to fit resources to the curriculum needs and reading levels of students.

These students needed critical thinking skills in the form of question designing and question analysis, problem-solving processes, and strategies for organizing thinking. They also needed help in connecting their heritage of oral literacy to learning demands and teaching styles. An interview with an oral literacy expert at the University of Botswana convinced me that students who were raised on oral literacy traditions had a hard time implementing the kind of critical thinking required for analyzing concepts dependent on written expression. These students seemed to think in story form, with hierarchies of knowledge and repetition of ideas and happenings. Words did not represent process. The students also did not have as many vocabulary options for expression of ideas in their oral vernacular as did print-literate people. Vocabulary was more confined to story forms appropriate for oral information heritage. A course in thinking skills for orally dependent students might help these students make the transition.

November 3
It was now Wednesday night after a long day of school visits. This morning we left early for schools close to the Zimbabwe border. We again asked about teaching strategies, the role of the school library and the teacher-librarian, computers in the library, and book stock matching the needs of the students. We asked whether the teachers required students to use resources and whether the curriculum was textbook- and test-driven. Our data were beginning to be repetitious from school to school.

We were struck by the difficulties that the immersion in English created for the students and their teachers, with at least half the students entering CJSS having tremendous problems. At the schools today, where students belonged to the Kalanga, Ndebelle, and Tswana tribes, the headmasters and deputy headmasters reported that some of their students had difficulty writing their own names, spelling it differently any number of times. Because of guaranteed education, primary schools had passed all students, even the youngsters clearly failing a subject. Their language difficulties would later cause them other academic problems.

School #3, the first school we visited this morning, did not have telephone lines connected to school grounds and had built a 1990 classroom partition in the library building. The building has had to serve double use as both a classroom and a library. If we pictured an average sized classroom in an

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older building in the US, we would have a good estimate of the size of the library building. This school had eight classrooms for 12 classes and had no promise from the Ministry to support additional buildings. Even simple repairs were hard to maintain, and the school was overdue for painting and repairing cracks in the walls.

The teachers were trying to work alternative teaching methods into the way they presented material to students. Staff development took place through school-based workshops, with the head of each department coordinating what the teachers were covering and the strategies they used. The school had a high turnover of teachers and now had many recent education graduates. The only computer on school grounds was located in the head's office, not accessible to staff.

At School #4, the headmaster described the library as a place to use resources, read more, and expand one's knowledge. His staff was young, with not enough qualified teachers. Most of the time, his teachers gave students the information they needed. More than half of the students had problems with understanding and writing English. He suspected that the students thought in Kalanga, could express their thoughts in Setswana, but had problems with English. On the national exam, his students sometimes knew the answer, but were confused by the way the question was written.

The head reported that most of his teachers were not interested in learning or reading on their own. Once their education training was over, they did not continue to read, and consequently did not model a reading culture for the students. Most did not even know about the major education issues that confronted the country. The curriculum itself was a problem in that it was designed by people in Gaborone who, he felt, were unfamiliar with the needs of rural areas. At the time of the interview, he did not have computers in the computer lab.

At School #5, the deputy headmaster talked about the teaching staff's efforts to establish a reading culture. They had a library committee of students, but still could not get most students interested in reading. The teachers used the library for research or booked it in advance to use the videotape machine with their classes. Fifty percent of the students in his school had problems with English. Some had problems writing their names and needed remedial teaching. Consequently, the school had arranged special lessons where these students could concentrate on reading and writing and not the syllabus. Only by form 3 did the students have adequate English skills to access the library books.

School #5 covered an inner-city area with 50% of its students from families economically below the poverty line. Nevertheless, the head had started a development plan, with some individuals donating computers. Teachers participated in collaborative teaching by inviting teachers from other topics to guest lecture when a topic demanded their expertise. Each subject area was represented by a teacher on the library committee to help

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the teacher-librarian order materials. Still, the teachers used lectures to impart information and content concepts.

At School #6, south of Francistown in a rural area, the head described the library as the information center for the school, a place to find out the news and read newspapers, a place to develop an appetite for reading, and for teachers to use it for their research. But when the library was not supervised, the students could not use it. The head said the library was not efficient now and was not effectively used, but they had continued to struggle a long time to get it in order.

The teachers reported the same types of problems as the other schools. Here even the teachers seemed to have some difficulty with oral English. The headmaster said that, "To be honest, most teachers find it difficult to converse in English for a period of time or they don't have the language, feel insecure, too shy to speak in English, won't contribute in meetings. It's cyclical. They communicate mostly in Setswana."

At School #7, also located south of Francistown, the library was not yet in operation. At this school, booksellers had come to display materials for teachers to choose books. Although the library was not yet in operation, it looked pleasant with new carpet. Teachers used the lecture method because "we have D students. Only 2-5 students per class are active learners. Some cannot spell their surnames and demonstrations don't work." The feeder primary schools drew from rural and small village areas. When these students were forced to speak in English, they kept quiet because they couldn't speak the language well.

By the end of this day, we had decided from what we heard that the national CJSS curriculum assumed that students had a common cultural knowledge and the rudiments of a strong English language base. For example, the science curriculum for students of middle-school age and with little command of English required the same kind of concept comprehension that their teachers had only recently learned in education courses for their teaching diploma. The social studies project sent students into the villages to interview parents and elders on contemporary issues using preconstructed questionnaires that took away student ownership of the experience.

Two of the seven libraries had computers in the library, albeit older models. Some schools were paying an Internet service provider, but were not yet connected because of lack of telephone lines. There appeared to be a culture of inability to do something unless the government approved or provided the money. These schools needed English-as-a-second-language (ESL) materials desperately for both students and staff. The materials in English we have seen so far have been old and much too difficult, many times with totally irrelevant content. It has been painful to see such a scarcity of books that the schools were reluctant to discard totally inappropriate books in order to have something on the library shelves.

November 4

Today we visited three schools with many of the same problems, including generated electricity and no telephones. To get to School #8, we had to travel over back roads where only a four-wheel drive vehicle could keep us from sinking into the sand. Sometimes the driver would take a turn that looked like a few ruts in the sand winding among homes. Sometimes, the road would turn into a main road with heavy trucks mixing with donkey carts. At one junction, we drove through a watering place for cattle, but the pump wasn't working and hundreds of cows were bunched in the road. It is hot during these days, and riding in our truck felt like sitting in an oven.

School #8 was new and had no books in its library, having not received its initial book stock from BNLS. The main thrust for the library was construction of the burglar bars on the windows of the library to protect the book stock when it did arrive. Students at this school were described as intelligent, but not prepared and with poor English skills. The head is worried that the library will receive books that are too advanced.

School #9 was a rural school south of Selebi Phikwe. To get to it, we had to travel along the border of South Africa on dirt roads. The head bought one computer last week and had been worrying about getting a surge suppressor to protect the computer from generator surges. Normal teaching at this school was teacher-centered, with the head trying to encourage a more student-centered approach that would increase library use.

Most of the teachers seemed uncertain as to what student-centered teaching methods meant other than having students find supplemental information to the content given by the teachers. If they asked questions to help students discover answers, their students had a problem deciphering what the questions required them to do. These teachers thought that following the syllabus for the exams almost guaranteed failure for the students with poorer English abilities. There were currently few resources in the library for science, mostly old books, and only two or three books at all in the Setswana language. But we sensed that this school had enthusiastic teachers who had ideas but no resources to use.

School #9 had an I-Mac in the main office, a laser printer, and a photocopier. The head described the library as a resource center that should contain audiovisual materials as well as books and should have a full-time teacher-librarian with a much stronger library vote (budget for materials). But as of this interview, the school had only time for the teacher-librarian to be an English teacher first and a librarian second. Although student-centered lessons were written into the curriculum, the lecture method was used. The head did not feel that much was learned by the children, 530 of them with an average of 42 per class. Unfortunately, the school had to use the library vote (budget) to clear debt from other sources. Thus the library was not fully stocked and did not have many reference books except for encyclopedias. Even though computers were promised as far back as 1994-1995, the com-

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puter lab was empty. There were no plans to put a computer in the library when they finally arrived because the old computer that belonged to the Humanities Department was usually kept in the library. Any spare money the school might have had for computers was being saved for a school vehicle. When asked about a reading culture at the school, the head shook his head and said he doubted that the teachers read.

When we interviewed the teachers at this school, we heard more talk about the poor English abilities of the students. The English teachers had brought students to the library, but at this school they realized that the library was in such poor condition that they stopped doing so.

November 5

Our last day arrived. We went to the Serowe area today, described as the world's largest village. School #10 had fewer students than they were supposed to have, some classes with only 30-36 pupils. Even with the "shortage of pupils," the head told us that he had too few teachers to cover the classes. Thus he was having a hard time giving the teacher-librarian intern released time from classroom duties to work in the library.

The head thought that the library should be the center of knowledge for the school. He classified this library as being moderately stocked. But the students, here as elsewhere, were not used to libraries and were poor English speakers and writers. With most of the subjects, the teacher provided the information and made the students find out more about the content. To help them, the teachers prepared question guides for students to use. All subject teachers taught library skills, but there was nothing in the curriculum that showed teachers how to teach library skills. They had to rely on the teacher-librarian to help.

The library did not have a computer, for security reasons. Actually, the school owned four computers: in the headmaster's office, the business office, the staff room, and the secretary's office, but it was not connected to the Internet for financial reasons. The computer lab was not ready, and this was blamed on the contractor and the Ministry. Even the library was partitioned for a class to share space, creating security problems for the materials when the teacher-librarian was not there. Money problems were serious, with the school needing to construct a new staff house and constantly to repair poor playing fields.

The teacher-librarian reported that some teachers read, but others did not like reading. Even when they made book orders, they did not borrow the materials. Some teachers had never been to the library. She suggested that magazines and newspapers were needed in the library to create a more relaxed atmosphere. She had written a letter to the head asking for subscriptions to *Newsweek* and *Time*. No one had yet asked her to teach a library orientation class. Next year she would try to schedule classes for library periods and give form 1 students a brief orientation.

At School #11 this afternoon, a variety of materials were needed but not present. When students first came to school for form 1, the English teachers had them tell stories in English to see who spoke competent English. On campus, outside of class, all communicating was done in English on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The students could speak Setswana on Tuesday and Thursday. But this process did not always succeed; the teachers liked to use the vernacular language too.

The school did not yet have computers in the lab. Teachers had an old machine, and the head and the secretary both had machines. The library building had its windows fixed just last month, but shelves were still broken and the door lock was not working. Visual inspection indicated fewer books available than we had heard and no security. No one would promise help for the situation. We discovered that the school had never before had a teacher-librarian, and no one had any idea how to run the library. Until now the library had been used as a classroom.

Conclusion

Similar problems that prevent the establishment of good libraries seemed to plague all the Botswana community junior secondary schools that we visited. Some of these issues could be addressed with more training for both teachers and teacher-librarians, but some of them appear to need the Ministry's efforts to support effective solutions.

A major reason for non-use of libraries at the CJSS level was the effect created by even such scarce library materials as were available being unsuitable for the de facto English immersion programs. With the students' weak abilities in written and oral English, collection development should focus on ESL materials and curriculum support materials that fit high-interest, low-level reading abilities. Adding to the urgency behind these suggestions, the following additional problems were mentioned at all the schools we visited (not in priority order):

- Weak preparation of students during primary school for their immersion into English at the community junior secondary level;
- English as a second and third language for students;
- Rural location of many schools cuts them off from electricity or telephone connections;
- Large class sizes of 40-45 students;
- Heavy class teaching loads for the teacher-librarian;
- Lack of resources and equipment for the library;
- Library budgets spent on nonlibrary needs;
- Teachers and teacher-librarian interns unfamiliar with strategies and methods for implementing resource-based teaching, student-centered learning, and project-based teaching methods now being advocated by the Botswana Ministry of Education;
- Reliance on the lecture method with teachers as the knowledge experts;

- Pressure to teach for the leaving exams;
- Nationally prescribed curriculum with little flexibility for local teachers to try different approaches;
- Undeveloped recognition of the place of the library in the curriculum;
- Necessity to keep the library locked when the teacher-librarian is teaching in a content area;
- Security problems for library stock.

It is interesting that many of these problems are similar to problems experienced in other school libraries around the world. How to address them and create a curriculum integrated school library program has been the object of research in a number of countries. Of course, Botswana problems have a cultural and political personality of their own, recognition of which should be at the center of any solutions proposed. However, the rest of the world's school library community could learn from the efforts expended in Botswana and their results.

Recommendations for the Curriculum in the Teacher-Librarian Certificate Program at the University of Botswana

1. Stress a collection development approach that emphasizes materials created for students learning English as their second and third languages. Introduce teacher-librarians to high-interest, low-level reading materials that would support students' learning requirements more effectively.
2. Give teacher-librarians help and experience with designing and using computer databases to store information, creating Web pages to connect with the world, and using e-mail to find international experts and students around the world. Have them make books on local topics and create photographic images with digital cameras to help their colleagues and students take advantage of the rich resources available through local experts.
3. Introduce students to strategies for creating change and marketing the library to help them push for more time allocation in the library and more support for the workload. Along with this recognition should be an appropriate salary adjustment and recognition as a senior teacher.
4. Have teacher-librarian students learn about, understand, and gain experience with resource-based learning, student-centered learning, and project-based techniques to use even with large classes. While acknowledging that the lecture method in some cases is important to retain, help students scaffold lectures with resources that support the content learning objectives.
5. Refocus the teacher-librarian certificate program around the administration and management of libraries that stock and create materials that encourage discovery learning. Have students participate and analyze curriculum created by the Ministry in order to extract

content needs. Have students compare materials that they think should be in the book stock with materials on the recommended initial stocking list prepared by BNLS.

6. Have students work intensively with the Internet to discover its increasing resources, along with development of criteria to evaluate accuracy and appropriateness.

7. Help teacher-librarians strengthen their English language skills so that they can work with teachers and students where necessary.

8. Emphasize African-content materials that would help teacher-librarian students find materials directly relevant for their students' studies.

Acknowledgments

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Author Notes

Julie Tallman, PhD, an associate professor at the University of Georgia Department of Instructional Technology, served as Fulbright Senior Scholar with the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Botswana during the school year 1999-2000. Her interests include her Botswana experience, online distance learning, teacher-librarian development, information literacy, and mental model research for teaching-learning events.

Andrew J.B. Metzger is a senior lecturer in the Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Botswana, in Gaborone, Botswana. He is also the Course Tutor for the Certificate in School Library Studies Programme offered by the Department. His research interests are in school libraries, children's literature, and African bibliography and librarianship.

Boemo Nlayidzi Jorosi has been a lecturer at the University of Botswana in the Department of Library and Information Studies since 1994. Before that, he worked as assistant librarian in the library of the same university. He is

presently a doctoral student in the Department of Information Science at Strathclyde University, Glasgow. His research interests center around information management in organizational contexts, training and education of library and information workers, school library management, and curriculum issues in school libraries.

Appendix

Schools visited	Location	Teacher-Librarian
November 1, 1999		
1. Ngami CJSS	Sehithwa	Ms. M. Mongunda
2. Motopi CJSS	Motopi	Mr. R.N. Modongo
November 3, 1999		
3. Batanani CJSS	Mapoka	Ms. C. Mlotshwa
4. Ramoja CJSS	Ramokgwebana	Mr. T. Saul
5. Selowe Hill CJSS	Francistown	Mr. K. Mafhoko
6. Tashata CJSS	Francistown	Mr. K. Kedumele
7. Tonota CJSS	Tonota	Ms. B. Tsheko
November 4, 1999		
8. Motlhasedi CJSS	Tobane	Mr. M. Nkutlwang
9. Mokobeng CJSS	Chadibe	Ms. O.O. Ntakhwana
10. Radisele CJSS	Radisele	Ms. G. Koketso
November 5, 1999		
11. Metsimasweu CJSS	Serowe	Ms. E. Fredy
12. Boipelego CJSS	Serowe	Ms. M.B. Ramaabya