

LAS LEARNING ALERTS

Library Association of Singapore



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The LAS Learning Alerts, an initiative by the Training and Development Committee, aims to keep librarians informed about the latest trends and updates within our library network.

Please contact us at training@las.org.sg if you wish to contribute materials for LAS Learning Alerts.

User Experience, Design, and Service Innovation

In this issue, we bring insights about designing Libraries and spaces from our colleagues working in public schools in Singapore. In two interviews, our guests share about some of the design considerations kept in mind to ensure Library spaces remain relevant and modernised in the context of our public schools, and how important it is that our users remain at the core of what we do in Libraries.



Heng Huey Bin
Principal Librarian
(Children & Teens)
National Library Board

Tell us a little bit about yourself!

Growing up, I had not thought about becoming a librarian even though my dream was to be able to contribute to the community. After graduation, I chanced upon a librarian position and I chose to be a librarian so I could engage with and contribute to the community. I joined the National Library Board in 2000.

Now I'm a Principal Librarian who leads the strategic planning, development, and implementation of Children and Teens Programmes across all Singapore public libraries, including developing Learning Focus Areas, service roadmaps for Children, Tweens, Teens and Children from the Lower-Income Families, and Read@School - a whole-school reading programme for primary and secondary schools.

I have sat on the Standing Committee for the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section (C&YA) since 2019. This is my second term that I'm serving in the Section, which is ending in 2027. It has been an eye-opening experience working in the IFLA C&YA Section, learning from other international library professionals and contributing to the promotion of library services for children and young adults all over the world.

My latest projects for the Section include the creation and translation of Guidelines Infographic i.e. a shortened 1-page infographics of the complete revised Guidelines for Library Services for Children Aged 0-18 in other languages (including 7 official IFLA languages), Country Coordinator for Singapore for the 3rd edition of The World Through Picture Books (WTPB), part of the editorial team for IFLA C&YA newsletters and review of the Guidelines for Library Services for Children Aged 0-18 for its 3rd edition.

How did you get involved with MOE and NIE's Redesigning School Libraries project?

My affinity with MOE and NIE's Redesigning School Libraries project went way back to the Read@School project where I have worked closely with MOE to deliver a suite of customisable reading activities aimed to encourage every student to be a reader. Our close working relationship extended to a pilot programme from 2018 to refresh school libraries to create more reading, learning, and discovery opportunities for its students by reviewing its library spaces and programmes. This included working with a few schools including Bedok South Secondary School to review and redesign their library spaces.

It was also through the Read@School project where I got acquainted with NIE Associate Professor Loh Chin Ee as she started her research studies on the relationship and role of physical library space design in promoting reading and learning in Singapore schools as early as 2015 - how the intentional design and optimisation of school library spaces can influence and enhance reading culture, student engagement and learning experiences.

I would say it was our common goal of building a reading culture in schools to encourage reading and learning among students that led us to come together in envisioning the school library of the future and hence my involvement with MOE and NIE's Redesigning School Libraries project.

What is your role in this project?

As a collaborator, I represented NLB and played the role of an enabler by:

- Aiding the discussions on library redesign between NIE, MOE and NLB through the recommendation of NLB content, services and speakers on topics related to supporting reading and learning in schools from 2016.
- Cross sharing of NLB's pilot programme (since 2018) for the refresh of school libraries and the school library planning framework.

These would later contribute to the shaping of Designing School Libraries of the Future study (2020-2024).

- Through NLB Innovation and Digital Media TMO – Technology team, brought in NLB Digital Books Display (eReads) to schools for the Designing School Libraries of the Future study (2020-2024).

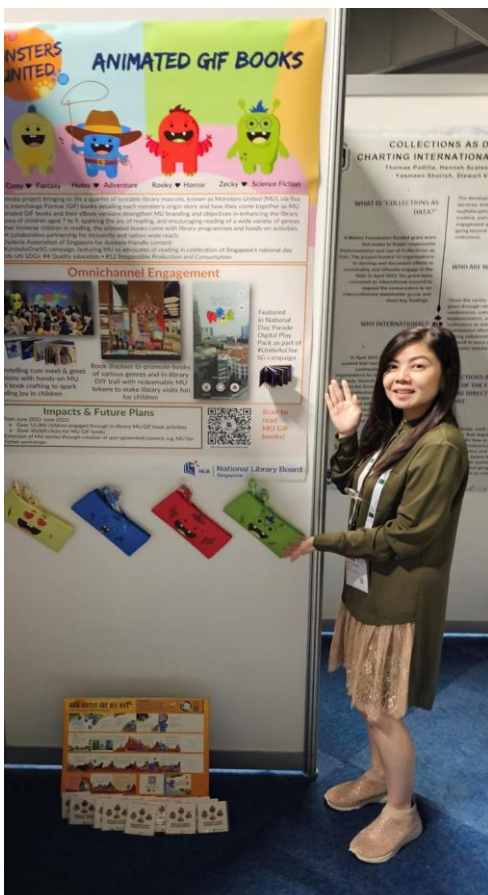
What are some of the challenges you faced?

Due to the scale and length of the project, the key challenge is having to communicate with different stakeholders and updating each party (external and internal) of the latest developments relating to the various aspects of the design of school libraries over time, especially during the initial period when COVID hits.

How has your involvement in the project informed your professional practice?

“School libraries of today, often referred to as the heart of the school, are vibrant, human-centered spaces that promote camaraderie and the exchange of ideas. They are responsive, adaptive, and evolving in an ever-changing informational and technological landscape. Their influence pulses throughout a school and can be felt well beyond the walls of the designated library space: in the hallways and classrooms throughout the school, and even in the community at large.”

~ Trudeau, A. A. (2023). LEADING FROM THE HEART in the School Library. Knowledge Quest, 51(3), 34–39.



The quote above echoed the vision of the project and resonated with me.

Being in this project has not only enhanced my knowledge of the school library ecosystem, schools and has also reaffirmed the importance of school library design on students' reading and learning. This highlights the need to keep school libraries current, modern, and relevant to meet the evolving needs of students who spend substantial time in schools and opens up the potential of further collaboration with school libraries on a larger scale. By combining our expertise between school and public libraries, we can systematically transform school libraries into future-ready spaces that actively nurture reading cultures as well as support educational excellence and personal pursuit of interests.

**Sharing by
Ms Gina Foo**

**Subject Head
Literature in
English
Cedar Girls'
Secondary
School**



Tell us a little bit about yourself?

I'm currently serving as the Subject Head IC of the library at Cedar Girls' Secondary. However, I was not involved in the redesign project which concluded in 2022.

How has the design-thinking process impacted your school and the library?

Guided by the process of Design Thinking, student and staff needs were considered in the revamp of the library. A group of students initiated the process of design through the study of other library designs in 2019 and research into the needs of the student population. As Cedar envisioned the curation of the library with student voices at the centre of it all, we involved our students every step of the way so as to ensure that we were building a library that is and will continue to be relevant to them.

The aims of the design-thinking process included redesigning our Library Space as a hub of activity, a place for collaboration and learning and a place for building knowledge. In addition, we wanted to redefine the use of library spaces to engage our students in multiple literacies, taking into account that reading will be different in the current digital landscape. As a result, since the re-design, the library has remained a popular space for students to read, study and unwind.

What roles do student library ambassadors play in shaping and maintaining the library's activities and environment?

The student library ambassadors help ensure that our collection remains relevant and updated by suggesting books that their peers might be interested in. They also help with planning and putting up book displays or book-related activities in the library that will appeal to their peers.

How have the library's zoning strategy contributed to its usability for different purposes like study, reading and collaboration?

- Pods for quiet discussion shut out the sound generated in other spaces designed for collaboration, such as the amphitheater.
- The librarian sits at a circular table at the entrance, allowing her a 360-degree spatial view of the lower ground floor.
- The cramped study tables that used to fill the ground floor are no longer in sight. Instead, the upper level of the library is used for study, with individual study cubicles that have charging points to meet the digital learning needs of the students.
- Multiple purpose conference room with flexible furniture and wall spaces which can facilitate collaboration.
- Retail display strategies used to display fiction books and featured non-fiction books prominently on the curved shelves, new arrival shelves, and the main aisle leading to the staircase which leads to the study area. Similar strategies are used to prominently display digital offerings such as subscriptions on iPads and e-books on Kindle.
- Amphitheatre to make the library a hive of activities and to bring students to the area for impromptu discussions and rehearsals
- Strategically placed sofas to encourage students to lounge around to relax or read.
- Low cafe-style tables to create a relaxing atmosphere for short discussions and leisure reading.



Learning Resources



IFLA Trend Report 2024

The IFLA Trend Report 2024 is a key resource for information professionals, offering insights into emerging trends shaping the knowledge and information landscape. It explores seven major trends, including AI's transformative impact, the evolving role of trust in information, and the challenges of digital equity. The report also presents scenarios illustrating possible futures and provides practical tools to help professionals navigate change. With an emphasis on adaptability, sustainability, and foresight, the report equips libraries and information institutions to proactively shape their role in an uncertain future.



2025 EDUCAUSE AI Landscape Study

The 2025 EDUCAUSE AI Landscape Study highlights AI's growing influence in education, revealing both opportunities and challenges for information professionals. While 57% of institutions see AI as a strategic priority, gaps in funding and policy readiness persist. With AI literacy and workforce training becoming key focus areas, information professionals—including librarians, archivists, and knowledge managers—can play a critical role in supporting ethical AI adoption, data governance, and digital equity. The study also underscores a widening digital divide, emphasizing the need for inclusive AI strategies to ensure equitable access to AI tools and knowledge across diverse communities.

The Training and Development Committee welcomes contributions of materials from your institutions to share with fellow professionals. We welcome job aids like checklists, templates, practice notes, flowcharts, step-by-step guides, quick references, documentation, etc.! You can now access the LAS Training Materials Repository via this link: <https://www.las.org.sg/wp/member-portal/members-only-training-materials>

Upcoming webinars and conferences:

International Symposium on Open Access Acceleration Project

<https://www.waseda.jp/library/news-en/2025/01/28/24222/>

11 March 2025

Ono Auditorium in Waseda University & Online

An awareness-raising event to consider how we can contribute to the world in disseminating research results.

In-person or Online

Simultaneous interpretation available.

Computers in Libraries 2025

<https://computersinlibraries.informationtoday.com/2025/default.aspx>

25-27 March 2025

Hyatt Regency Crystal City
Arlington, VA

Computers in Libraries 2025, hosted by Information Today, Inc., brings together global library professionals to explore the latest in technology and innovation. The event focuses on tools and strategies to enhance both digital and human-centered library services across all sectors.

ACRL 2025

<https://web.cvent.com/event/98632c12-9bee-4ab5-bb05-5fcf69f453a4/summary>

2-5 April 2025

Minneapolis Convention Center
Minneapolis, MN & Online

Join academic library professionals at ACRL 2025 to explore the latest research, innovations, and best practices. This hybrid conference offers a mix of keynote sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities designed to enhance your library's impact.

Upcoming webinars and conferences:

19th CONSAL General Conference & Meeting 2025

<https://consalxix.my/>

16–19 June 2025

World Trade Centre (WTC) Kuala Lumpur

The theme for CONSAL XIX is “Inclusive Knowledge: Bridging Divides, Empowering All” with the tagline “Leveraging Inclusivity, Empowering Humanity.”

Please be informed that there will be also a free Pre-CONSAL XIX 2025 entitled on 16 June 2025 at WTC Kuala Lumpur. (WTCKL).

2025 Southeast Asia Libraries of the Future Summit

<https://www.elsevier.com/events/conferences/all/sea-libraries-of-the-future-summit-2025>

25 June 2025

Bangkok, Thailand

This summit will delve into how libraries can leverage Artificial Intelligence to create smarter, more personalized services while embracing sustainable collection development practices. From optimizing digital resources to ensuring the longevity and accessibility of knowledge assets, the summit will empower libraries to build collections that meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

Registrations open in March 2025.

ALA 2025 Annual Conference & Exhibition

<https://2025.alaannual.org/>

26-30 June 2025

Philadelphia Convention Center

1101 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107

Connect with forward-thinking librarians from around the globe and explore new possibilities for the future of libraries. This dynamic event brings together thousands of library professionals and friends of libraries to exchange innovative ideas and turn them into impactful action.