

“The basis of their reading experience”: Progress on Reading to Learn in Hong Kong Primary Schools

Po Shan Susana Lau
Teacher Librarian
HKIED Jockey Club Primary School
Hong Kong

Peter Warning
Lecturer
University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

A key government education policy in Hong Kong is Reading to Learn, introduced in 2000. Cultivating an independent reading habit is identified as one of the “Seven Learning Goals” to be achieved by 2014. This paper reports the results of a small-scale pilot study designed to inform a more comprehensive future survey implemented jointly by the Education and Manpower Bureau and the Hong Kong Teacher Librarians Association to measure the effectiveness of Reading to Learn.

Introduction

“Were we to choose our leaders on the basis of their reading experience and not their political programs, there would be much less grief on earth.”
Joseph Brodsky (Nobel Prize acceptance speech, 1987)

A key government education policy – one of the “Four Key Tasks” – in Hong Kong is *Reading to Learn*, introduced in 2000. Cultivating an independent reading habit is identified as one of the “Seven Learning Goals” to be achieved by 2014 (EMB Education & Manpower Bureau, 2004). To provide support for *Reading to Learn*, government-funded primary schools in Hong Kong have been encouraged to appoint teacher librarians (TLs). The duties of the TLs are to manage their schools’ libraries and promote *Reading to Learn*.

This paper reports the results of a small-scale pilot study designed to inform a more comprehensive future survey implemented jointly by the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and the Hong Kong Teacher Librarians Association (HKTLA) to measure the effectiveness of *Reading to Learn*.

Background to the Study

Despite successive government budget deficits since 1997, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government demonstrated a commitment to maintain investment in education. In the 1998/1999 Budget, 19% (about HK\$50 billion) was directed

to education; more than other public expenditures such as social welfare (10.6%), housing (16%) and hygiene (11%). In the 1999/2000 Budget there was an increase of 8% in education funding even though government revenues were reduced (HKSAR, 1999). Also, as the 21st Century beckoned, the government decided to introduce extensive reforms aimed at improving education.

Reading to Learn in the Hong Kong education system

Hong Kong educational reforms conceived since 1998 were driven by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC). Concurrently, the Education Commission (EC) reviewed the objectives and structure of education in Hong Kong. *A Holistic Review of the Hong Kong School Curriculum: Proposed Reforms* (EMB Education & Manpower Bureau, 2001) proposed a new educational direction, aimed at 'fostering students to be the life-long learners' and transforming Hong Kong into a knowledge-based economic community. However the report did not stress the importance of reading promotion in educational reform, although it is referred to in the 'Chinese Language Learning Area' of the document. It mentioned enhancing students' balanced and integrated learning experience of the four macro-skills of language learning, ie listening, speaking, reading and writing. Also, 'flexible use of learning resources from textbooks to diversified learning resources' was referred to. There was no explicit focus on good reading habits or reading.

In 2000, CDC released *The Way Forward in Curriculum Development: Consultation Document* (Curriculum Development Council, 2000). It signaled a major move towards reading as an important tool for cultivating the students' learning abilities as autonomous life-long learners. There are more than 18 explicit references to the roles of reading in the curriculum. The importance of reading had been recognized and was now on the formal education agenda.

The report, *Learning to learn: life-long learning and whole-person development* (Curriculum Development Council, 2001) included the creation and nurturing of good reading habits in students as one of the 'Seven Learning Purposes' to be achieved within ten years. It also recommended the promotion of 'Four Key Tasks' – 'Reading to Learn', 'Project Learning', 'Moral & Civil Education' and 'Information Technology in Education' - in all learning areas to aid students in developing independent learning abilities.

This required not only changes in students' behaviours, but also changes in the behaviour of educators. The report listed expected outcomes, including skills, strategies, attitudes, motivation and habits. The focus was to encourage a beginning reader to develop into an intermediate reader, and then into an advanced reader, fostering students to be independent learners. The Library Unit in the Hong Kong Education Department stated in the teaching kit *Reading to Learn: The promotion of a reading culture at school*:

"Competence in and the love for reading, is essential for school success and life-long independent learning. Through regular exposure to quality reading materials of various disciplines and expression of their reading experience, students will learn to construct knowledge, share experiences, ideas and feelings with others, develop new insights and perspectives, and communicate with others" (EMB Education & Manpower Bureau, 2002).

It is explicitly stated that reading is not solely within the domain of language study. TLs are tasked to provide learning and teaching resources, library services to support the curriculum, promote *Reading to Learn*, and collaborate with teachers in the cultivation of information literacy.

The stated objectives of *Reading to Learn* are to:

- Improve students' language proficiency, which is essential for communication, and for academic and intellectual pursuits
- Develop students' thinking skills through understanding and constructing meaning from what they read
- Achieve a quality life through reading for diverse interests, pleasure and needs
- Cultivate an open mind towards different opinions, ideas, values and cultures; and enrich their knowledge and broaden their understanding of life in order to face its challenges. (EMB Education & Manpower Bureau, 2002)

Purpose of the Study

In recent years the EMB has encouraged schools to create the post of TL. In 2001 the post of TL was added to each subsidised primary school (TLs were introduced into secondary schools in 1979). The staffing allocation to schools who appoint TLs was increased. A fully supported, two-tiered (certificate and diploma), part-time training program which articulates into a bachelor degree has been developed, and in-service training has been expanded. This has led to an increase in the number of TLs in Hong Kong. A result is also a large number of new TLs who have been implementing the *Reading to Learn* program with a limited amount of experience. There has been no general survey or review conducted on the effectiveness of *Reading to Learn* to provide information on its progress and guide TLs to address deficiencies.

In August 2005, the Hong Kong Teacher Librarians' Association (HKTLA) invited Mrs Fanny Law, then Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower, and the Senior Curriculum Development Officer of Life-Wide Learning and Library (LWLL) to attend a joint meeting. Core members of various school librarian associations and TLs from secondary, primary and special schools attended. They expressed their opinions and reflected on their experiences and difficulties in promoting *Reading to Learn* to the EMB representatives. They also expressed their views on the professional development of TLs.

The policy document states that:

“With proper guidance and support, [students] should be expected to progress from a 'Beginner' to an 'Emergent' and eventually to a 'Proficient Reader'.” (EMB Education & Manpower Bureau, 2002)

The Permanent Secretary suggested that the HKTLA conduct an overall survey with LWLL to measure the effectiveness of promoting *Reading to Learn* in schools. The HKTLA could then use its position as the peak local professional association to make recommendations to the government to improve implementation of *Reading to Learn*.

The Permanent Secretary had been visibly supportive of the creation of school libraries. Before the educational reforms began, she urged the creation of TL posts in primary schools, provided in-service training, and promoted the learning of information skills in schools to match curriculum reform directions. The HKTLA endorsed Mrs Law's suggestion and plans to advise and assist the EMB in conducting the proposed survey. This current study is a pilot to inform the broader official HKSAR study. It addresses the issues at a theoretical level and reports the results of a small scale survey. Based on the results of the pilot survey, the general survey can be modified in terms of its direction, format and questions.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to review the implementation of *Reading to Learn* in five primary schools. It compares the targets of the *Curriculum Report 2001* with the survey results, draws initial conclusion, and comments on whether *Reading to Learn* meets its planned effectiveness, at least for the surveyed schools. The data, conclusions and recommendations will be submitted to the EMB.

Methodology

This study was informed by a review of the international literature on reading programs. Five teacher librarians and 210 Primary-Five (nine-year-old) students from five primary schools were surveyed, interviewed and engaged in focus group discussion

Students were divided initially into two groups representing 'active readers' (10 or more items borrowed from the school library over the last 12 months) and 'inactive readers' (less than 10 items borrowed over the last 12 months) based on their school borrowing records. This resulted in 48 students being identified as active readers and 162 students being identified as passive readers. Preliminary testing indicated that many of the students originally placed in the inactive readers' group were actually active readers, who obtained their reading materials from sources other than the school library. This did not emerge from the school library circulation data. On the basis of this additional data, membership of the groups was adjusted. Of the 210 participants, 149 (71%) were identified as active readers; 61 (29%) were identified as inactive readers. To address ethical issues, formal prior permission to participate in the research was obtained from the students' parents.

The data were analysed and the results of the two groups were compared. To identify if significant progress in the adoption of reading habits had been achieved, the overall results were compared to a 1997 survey (Boys & Girls Clubs Association, 1999) of 3,858 students from 36 primary and secondary schools, which predated the introduction of the *Reading to Learn* program.

The librarians completed a survey and were interviewed by telephone to provide additional background to their survey responses. The students' questionnaires employ 'pre-arranged answers' which use different scales of measurements to weight the tendency of the students towards reading. Central tendency is used as the method of measurement. The librarians' open ended responses are recorded, using the mode as the criterion of measurement.

Table 1
Summary of data gathering instruments

Respondents	Data collection	Number
Passive readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Focus group interviews 	61
Active readers	Questionnaire	149
Teacher Librarians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Phone interviews 	5

Rationale

Primary-Five students were chosen as the target student group based on their ability to understand the questionnaire. They were initially divided into ‘active readers’ (those with good reading habits) and ‘passive readers’ (those without good reading habits) based on their school library circulation records. The purpose of the questions was to clarify their reading behavior and surface differences between the two groups, explore the reasons for passive reading behavior, and suggest interventions to improve the situation. TLs are the key school personnel driving and promoting *Reading to Learn*. They are best placed to identify impediments to reading and share strategies and techniques for encouraging reading.

Literature review

The scholarly and professional literature on reading, reading habits, reading programs and associated issues is voluminous. This review of the literature is mainly confined to published sources that informed the study.

Role of reading in contemporary society

In 2000, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) undertook the first Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) to assess 15-year olds’ reading, mathematics and science, and problem-solving capabilities in more than 30 member countries, and some non-member countries, including Hong Kong. The PISA report concluded that students attaining grade 5 reading abilities may lead knowledge workers in the future (Qi, 2003).

A range of studies have correlated improved language and writing ability to reading habit. Some studies have focused on reading as way of acquiring English as a second language. This has a particular application to Hong Kong, where the language spoken at home is usually Cantonese, but students are also expected to become fluent in Putonghua (Mandarin) and English. Early research by Elley and Mangubhai (1981, 1983) provided evidence of significant improvements in English language use and academic performance by elementary students in Fiji. This research was later repeated in Singapore, which bears many close comparisons to Hong Kong, with similar results (Elley, 1991). Krashen (1993) concluded that free voluntary reading or sustained independent reading results in better reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical development.

McQuillan (1994) reported that students considered extensive reading to be more beneficial for language acquisition than grammatical instruction. Dupuy & McQuillan's (1997) research replicated McQuillan's earlier findings.

Issues for cultivating the reading habit

Learners' existing reading skills and strategies, attitude and motivation towards reading are key issues for cultivation good reading habits. A critical finding is that interest in reading often decreases as children grow older (Ruddell, 1997). This means that providing early instruction in reading skills is important (Robb, 2000). Attractive reading activities and suitable reading materials can maintain motivation to read. Children can engage in reading activities continuously if they have sufficient attitude, reasons and aims (Metsala, 1996). For students to be motivated, they need to feel that the activities are meaningful and worthwhile (Good & Brophy, 2003; Hancock & Betts, 2002). Student's beliefs about their competence and their expectations for success are also linked to their levels of engagement in reading (Tompkins, 2006). This means that reading activities should accommodate the various levels and starting points for different levels of readers, eg some competition triggering the desire to improve compared to the others by reading (Wigfield, 1997).

Student motivation to read can be increased by membership of a supportive network of relationships (Akey, 2006). This is echoed by Alderman (2004) who stresses the social aspects of group reading activities. So building a network of teachers, parents and students can be a powerful way to encourage students' reading habit.

Teachers' attitudes and their instructional approaches are crucial in determining whether students engage in reading (Tompkins, 2006). Developing a structured approach to reading can increase the adoption of the reading habit. For example, Pearson *et al* (1992) suggests a nine-step approach. However associated tasks should be creative and stimulating to engage the students (Turner & Paris, 1995). Teachers can guide reading programs and select materials on particular themes and encourage students to participate in collaborative reading and share reflections on their reading with classmates and teachers (Robb, 2000).

Measuring reading motivation and progress

The measurement of students' motivation to read relates to their participation and performance in reading activities, such as their choice of activities, sustainability of participation and insistence on their preferences (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Therefore, the evaluation can reflect the participation frequency and the time consumed by students' reading activities. Students' interests and their perceived value of reading also can be reliably observed.

Findings and Discussion

The research questions addressed by the questionnaire were:

1. Do school library circulation records accurately reflect the reading behavior of students?
2. How/why do children become active readers or non-readers? Do family background factors and/or school environmental factors affect their adoption of a reading habit?

3. What can motivate non-readers to engage in reading?

Table 2
Questionnaire results

	Selection 1		Selection 2		Selection 3		Selection 4			
1. How often do you read books (except text books), newspapers, magazines or web resources?	More than half-hour every day (15%)		About one hour every week (56%)		About one hour every half-month (19%)		About 1 hour per month/never (10%)			
	Identified as <i>Active Readers</i>				Identified as <i>Non-readers</i>					
	71%				29%					
Category	Active reader	Non-reader	Active reader	Non-reader	Active reader	Non-reader	Active reader	Non-reader	Active reader	Non-reader
2. Which kinds of material do you like to read most?	Books		Magazines		Newspapers		Web resources		Multi-media	
	70%	26%	10%	22%	6%	14%	6%	14%	8%	24%
3. Where do your reading materials come from?	School library		Public library		Bought by parents		Borrowed from others		Others	
	8%	14%	52%	20%	20%	22%	6%	14%	10%	34%
4. What are the first 2 activities you usually do during school recess?	Read in classroom or library		Play and chat with classmates		Eat snacks		Rest, play ball games or meet teachers		Homework and study	
	8%	3%	25%	46%	10%	22%	31%	20%	26%	9%
5. What are the first 2 activities you usually do in your leisure time?	Read books/newspapers/magazines		Watch TV/listen to radio or music		Play games/electronic games/toys		Tutoring/join interests courses		Read web resources/e-mail	
	26%	4%	36%	37%	21%	43%	5%	5%	12%	11%
6. Do your parents encourage you to read? (eg go to the public library, bookshops with you, buy you books, set the reading time, read stories to you etc.)	Support strongly		Support usually		Average		Do not support		I am not sure	
	36%	15%	31%	23%	22%	34%	2%	2%	9%	2%
7. Why do you read books (other than textbooks)?	Personal interests		Assessment purpose		Assignments tasks		Project learning		Others' request	
	71%	17%	7%	26%	15%	34%	4%	17%	3%	6%
8. Which 2 arrangements do you think can motivate you to read more?	Books introduced by teachers		More reinforcement of reading		Offered by school timetable (eg 30 mins/day)		More reading promotion activities in school		Reading as a item of academic assessment	
	22%	25%	25%	28%	21%	15%	23%	15%	9%	15%

Research question 1: The EMB's assessment mechanism for active and non-active readers

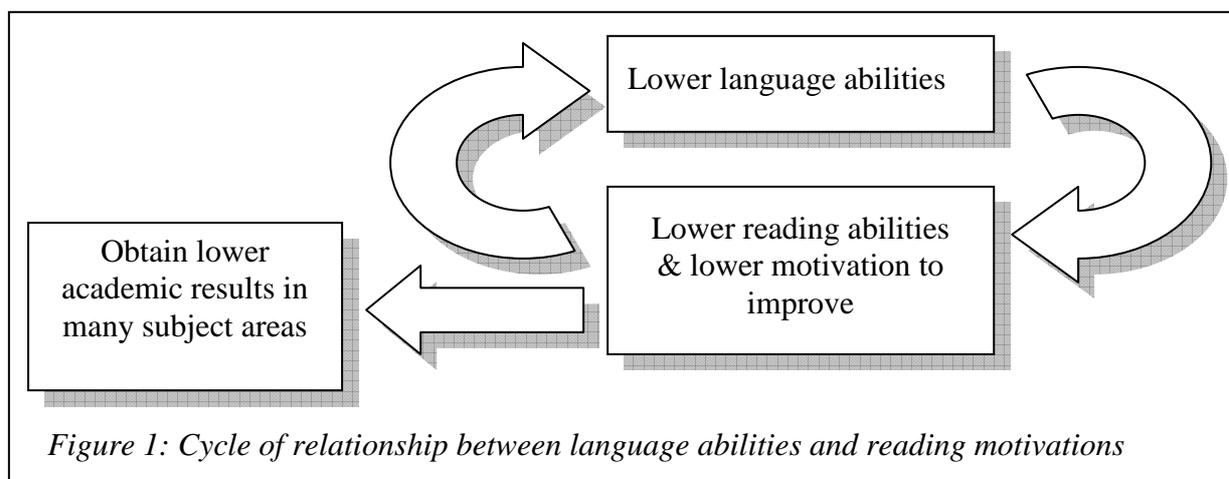
Borrowing frequency is used as the evaluation tool to assess the effectiveness of reading programs in Hong Kong schools. Schools are required to report borrowing activity statistics to the EMB annually. However, the survey results indicate that school library circulation data do not reflect students' reading habits. Student respondents who did not borrow books from the school library are not necessarily passive or non-readers. A majority of active readers (92%) source their reading materials in other ways; they use the public libraries (HKPL) and/or reading materials purchased by their parents. The school library is not the major source of their reading materials.

29% of students surveyed do not read every week, representing passive or inactive readers. However the EMB assessment mechanism of categorizing on the basis of school circulation records does not reflect the reality of students' reading habits.

Research question 2: How/why do the children become active readers or non-readers?

School factors. There is a clear link between reading behaviour and academic performance. Only 18% of students who are not active readers are in the advanced classes in their school compared to 53% of active readers.

Students who have lower language abilities cannot perform as well in coding, encoding, memorizing and lack the skills of reading strategies (Ho, 1996). That can retard their learning. Past failures and negative experiences of reading may contribute to non-reading habits. Hong Kong students may use defensive tactics to avoid bad feelings (Dweck, 1986). If they do not try, their academic performance and motivation for learning (reading) can fall further behind their classmates (Tompkins, 2006). Lower motivation to read negatively affects learning abilities particularly in academic areas and may lead to lower results in subject areas. It becomes a vicious cycle for the non-readers (see Figure 1).



Reading strategies and language abilities should be provided to students through training and experience in language lessons. Some experts in language learning suggest that reading abilities can be improved by a combination of considerable literary reading and essay

writing (Ho, 1996).

Reading promotion should not be the sole responsibility of TLs, it should be a whole-school approach. TLs play the roles of reading coordinator and leader. However, principals and management committees in schools often treat them as subsidiary teachers and library assistants. They are often expected to devote most of their library time undertaking routine library tasks and paperwork. Increased participation in curriculum planning is very important for promoting reading and reading to learn. The results of the TLs' questionnaire indicate that they habitually consider themselves to be minor staff ("small potatoes") with a lack of autonomy and influence. Lack of support from their schools and government are perceived as the main barriers to promoting reading.

In the active readers' group 47% of students are in normal classes and 53% are in advanced classes. More than half of the students in normal classes enjoy reading. In the focus group interviews, reasons for this were explored. It emerged that even for students with good reading habits, the types of reading materials are significant. For many students, a major part of their reading materials consist of comics, toy books and graphical magazines.

It surfaced in the focus group interview that reading materials in school libraries are neither adequate nor sufficiently up-to-date to satisfy the needs of active readers. The public libraries provide a larger loan quota and longer borrowing period than school libraries. HKPL also provides a larger and more pleasant reading environment. Improvement in school library services and collections can be a major way to encourage students to engage in reading. Additionally, stronger collaboration between schools and the HKPL should be explored.

Students' allocation of leisure time is another consideration. More than half of the students in the non-readers' group spend their leisure time playing games, chatting and resting. Well-planned extra-curriculum activities can provide competition for these activities by promoting reading in appealing ways.

Family Factors. Active readers are supported to read by their parents, such as reading together at home, purchasing books and encouraging them to read. Students in focus group interviews presented a proud and happy image of family support. The disparate nature of parents' support in the two groups is evident. When parents provide more support, their children's motivation to read is increased. Parents' involvement in selecting suitable reading materials is important. But over meddling in selecting reading materials can block children's interests (Tang, 2003). In a Taiwanese survey, parents suggested that obstacles to their children cultivating a reading habit were heavy school workload, not enough interests, poor home environment and parents lacking space and time to read with their own children (Li, 2003). With more supportive resources, including time, concerns, encouragement and funds from parents, children showed better results in their reading habits.

It has long been recognized that expectations and supportive attitude can sustain positive behaviors by students (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). "Students' relationships with parents, peers, friends, teachers, mentors and others can have profound effects on their achievement and social motivation" (Santrock, 2004). To provide the right balance of challenge and support, a positive emotional climate to internalize their parents' values and goals, modeling motivated achievement behavior (Santrock, 2004) and specific experiences (Wigfield & Asher, 1983) are effective ways to cultivate children reading at home.

Research Question 3: Motivating interest in Reading to Learn

Mirroring the Taiwan reading survey (Li, 2003), surveyed students prefer to spend time in entertainment both in school and at home. Entertainment includes playing and chatting, enjoying audio-visual programmes on TV or Hi-Fi. Reading is the low choice in questions 4 and 5. At both school and home, non-readers did not choose reading as a leisure activity. Most (88%) prefer to spend their time to playing, chatting and enjoying entertainment in school. Active readers demonstrate more balance in choosing leisure activities.

Active readers have better reading performance at home. Allocation of time is a zero-sum game. Reading needs to offer something to students to compete with other activities. For educators and parents to promote reading, paying more effort to compete with multimedia entertainment is a vital strategy.

For Question 7, personal interest is defined as an internal motivation to read. Assessment, assignments and projects are external drives to develop a reading habit. 71% of active readers and 17% of non-readers chose personal interests as reasons to read; other students in both groups chose assessment, homework tasks, searching resources and requests from others as the main reasons for their reading behavior. These reasons can be termed instrumental goals of reading. Achievement motivation has been stimulated by the cognitive perspective, such as setting goals, planning and monitoring progress toward goals (Santrock, 2004). Achievement motivation includes intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Extrinsic motivation involves incentives such as rewards and punishments. Instrumental goals of reading are related to the extrinsic motivation of achievement motivation.

To improve extrinsic motivation, optimal experiences can involve feelings of deep enjoyment and happiness that occurs when students engage in some related activities and achieve success from some appropriate challenges (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Instrumental goals of reading can provide optimal experiences for students. Rewards provide an incentive to engage in tasks for controlling students' behavior and also to promote students' feelings of competence (Bandura, 1982). Students' external motivation can transform into intrinsic motivation. Rewards include verbal rewards, praise and positive feedback enhancing students' intrinsic motivation (Cameron & Pierce, 1996). Intrinsic motivation involves self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1994). Researchers found that students' internal motivation and intrinsic interest in school tasks increase when students have some choice and opportunities to take personal responsibilities for their learning (Stipek, 2002).

More than 25% of students in both groups welcome the reinforcement of reading promotion activities. Providing a timetable for reading and teacher instructing reading are also accepted by about 25% (22% & 26% respectively) of students. 'Do not agree to spend time in their occupied recess periods', was a view raised by students in focus groups. Logically, if there is enough time arranged for students to read in lessons or some fixed reading time, there is no reason to expect them to read in recess times.

"More reading promotion activities in school" is also a choice some favour (15% & 23%). "Reading as an item of academic assessment", was only chosen by 15% & 9% respectively. If students perform poorly in assessment they may face serious consequences; including blame from parents and teachers, or losing privileges. For some students with lower

language abilities, the assessment will further depress their self-esteem and self-efficacy, and also raise their anxiety (Santrock, 2004). Brookhart (1997) and other assessment experts identify motivated, active learning is an important goal of instruction; assessment should match appropriate learning goals and targets. For assessing reading to learn, approaches to classroom assessment include:

- Using some performance-based assessment
- Examining higher-level cognitive skills rather than focusing on content knowledge
- Using multiple assessment methods
- Using computers as part of assessment (Hambleton, 1996).

It is obvious that the current mechanism used by the EMB is unreliable as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of reading promotion programs in schools. There are many factors affecting the reading habits and borrowing frequency in school libraries. Readers can obtain their reading materials from many sources other than from their school library. Observation of students learning behavior, recording anecdotal notes of literacy events, conferencing with students, collecting students' work samples and portfolio programs (Tompkins, 2006) are better ways to measure reading.

In the focus group interviews, students with good reading habits communicated that the amounts and types of the reading materials, library size and decorations, environment and facilities, opening hours, borrowing quotas, allotted borrowing period and support-staff quality all influence their use the school library. They want to read more graphical and updated current fiction and other books, but they usually cannot be satisfied. There are insufficient materials and copies provided, and they are likely to be old. Students may spend more than four weeks waiting to obtain popular reading materials. Students expressed the view that the school seems like a castle storing many literate and academic books. Therefore, many students migrate to the public library. Providing some inclusion in choosing library's materials, policies and services in can give them sense of belonging in library and also increase motivation to read.

Conclusion and Recommendations

No evidence of improvement in reading habits

Based on the results of this study, the writers cannot conclude that promotion of *Reading to Learn* in Hong Kong primary schools has been successful. A broader survey of Hong Kong primary schools needs to be carried out. Based on the results of the target schools in this research, there is no evidence that reading habits and frequency have improved since the 1997 survey (Boys & Girls Clubs Association, 1999). From the BGCA survey, 70% students would be classed as active readers by the criteria applied in the current study.

Collaborative relationship between subject content and Reading to Learn

As indicated by the results, students perceive reading as a way to improve language

abilities, beneficial extra-curricular activities, increase knowledge and obtaining interests. But they surface doubts about choosing reading as an aid to solve difficulties met in daily life, understanding others' life situations and experiences, and helping to set goals for their futures. Reading plays instrumental or entertaining roles.

Practical ways of promoting *Reading to Learn* need to be addressed. For example, reading strategies can be cultivated by language teachers in classroom reading and comprehension activities. Literature study, resource-based learning and problem-based learning are also channels to connect reading to learning. The whole-school approach involves all subject teachers engaging in promoting reading. It is important that teachers' mindsets include promotion of reading. An integrated plan to develop reading in the school curriculum will increase the probability of successful reading cultivation.

Government support to schools

The EMB is a critical force for driving educational reform in Hong Kong. They establish the directions, goals and structures of curricula and provide resources to schools. They also monitor the progress of reform.

All five teacher librarians surveyed reflected a lack of support either from the EMB or from within their own schools. They claim that their school administrators do not understand the role of the TL. Reading as one of the four key tasks has been a curriculum goal for eight years in Hong Kong primary schools. Being in a relatively early stage of development, it needs seed resources to establish and develop. Standardizing school library development policies, increasing support in visible and material ways, monitoring school library services, and providing clear direction for promoting information literacy within the curriculum are necessary for developing *Reading to Learn*.

Professional development of teacher librarians and subject teachers is also a vital concern. The five TLs reflect that it is difficult to promote reading in school when they have a lack of status compared to subject teachers. Qualified TLs should have their professional status recognized if they are to exert influence. The EMB has addressed this situation by supporting certificate and diploma courses but the implementation is not uniform throughout Hong Kong.

The EMB also needs to establish a more effective evaluation system to replace the current mechanism. This can include components such as continuous monitoring, digital reading habit records & analysis assessment, and the evidence of reading promotion in schools. The targets for evaluation should include students, teachers, TLs and parents. Effective evaluation tools can provide updated and accurate information to improve the implementation of *Reading to Learn* and communicate to students the status of their reading ability and related performance.

References

- Alderman, M. K. (2004). *Motivation for achievement : possibilities for teaching and learning* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist*, 37(2), 122-147.
- Boys & Girls Clubs Association. (1999). *Re Tong Ji Qing Shao Nian Zhong Wen Ke Wai Yue Du Yin Jiu Bao Gao*. Hong Kong: BGCA.
- Brookhart, S. M. (1997). A Theoretical Framework for the Role of Classroom Assessment in Motivating Student Effort and Achievement. *Applied Measurement in Education*, v10 n2 p161-80 1997.
- Cameron, J., & Pierce, W. D. (1996). The Debate about Rewards and Intrinsic Motivation: Protests and Accusations Do Not Alter the Results. *Review of Educational Research*, v66 n1 p39-51 Spr 1996.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Creativity: An Overview. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 2, 337-342.
- Curriculum Development Council. (2000). *Learning to Learn: the Way Forward in Curriculum Development. Consultation Document*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Curriculum Development Council. (2001). *Learning to Learn: Life-long Learning and Whole-person Development*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1994). Promoting Self-Determined Education. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, v38 n1 p3-14 1994.
- Dupuy, B., & McQuillan, J. (1997). Handcrafted books: two for the price of one. In G. M. Jacobs, C. Davis & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Successful strategies for extensive reading* (pp. 171-180). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Dweck, C. S. (1986). Motivational processes affecting learning. *American Psychologist*, 41(10), 1040-1048.
- Elley, W. B. (1991). Acquiring Literacy in a Second Language: The Effect of Book-Based Programs. *Language Learning*, v41 n3 p375-411 Sep 1991.
- Elley, W. B., & Mangubhai, F. (1981). The long-term effects of a book flood on children's language growth. *Directions*, 7, 15-24.
- Elley, W. B., & Mangubhai, F. (1983). The Impact of Reading on Second Language Learning. *Reading Research Quarterly*, v19 n1 p53-67 Fall 1983.
- EMB Education & Manpower Bureau. (2001). *A Holistic Review of the Hong Kong School Curriculum Proposed Reforms*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- EMB Education & Manpower Bureau. (2002). Reading to Learn. from <http://cd.emb.gov.hk/readingtolearn/eng/resource/Foreword2.htm>
- EMB Education & Manpower Bureau. (2004). Seven Learning Goals. from <http://www.emb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeid=2366&langno=1>
- Good, T. L., & Brophy, J. E. (2003). *Looking in classrooms* (9th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Hambleton, R. K. (1996). Advances in assessment models, methods, and practices. *Handbook of educational psychology*, 899-925.
- Hancock, V., & Betts, F. (2002). Back to the Future: Preparing Learners for Academic Success in 2004. *Learning & Leading with Technology*, 29(7), 10-15.
- HKSAR. (1999). Analysis of Public Expenditure by Policy Area Group. from www.budget.gov.hk/1999/est1999-2000/english/file5.htm
- Ho, M. K. (1996). Teaching Strategy for Improving the Reading and Writing Ability of Secondary School Students With Inferior Academic Results-" Read More and Write More"(Article written in Chinese). *Education Journal*, 24(2), 81-96.
- Krashen, S. D. (1993). The Case for Free Voluntary Reading. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, v50 n1 p72-82 Oct 1993.
- Li, S. Y. (2003). Yue Du: Xin yi dai zhi shi ge ming. In R. Qi (Ed.), *Yue du : xin yi dai zhi shi ge ming* (Di 1 ban. ed.). Taipei Shi: Tian xia za zhi gu fen you xian gong si.
- McQuillan, J. (1994). Reading versus Grammar: What Students Think Is Pleasurable and Beneficial for Language Acquisition. *Applied Language Learning*, v5 n2 p95-100 1994.
- Metsala, J. (1996). How children's motivations relate to literacy development and instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 45(8), 660-662.
- Pearson, P. D., Roehler, L. R., Dole, J. A., & Duffy, G. G. (1992). Developing expertise in reading comprehension. In A. E. Farstrup & S. J. Samuels (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (2nd ed., pp. 145-199). Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Pintrich, P. R., & Schunk, D. H. (2002). *Motivation in education : theory, research, and applications* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Qi, R. (2003). *Yue du : xin yi dai zhi shi ge ming* (Di 1 ban. ed.). Taipei Shi: Tian xia za zhi gu fen you xian gong si.
- Robb, L. (2000). *Teaching reading in middle school*. New York: Scholastic.
- Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom : teacher expectation and pupils' intellectual development*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Ruddell, M. R. (1997). *Teaching content reading and writing* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Santrock, J. W. (2004). *Educational psychology* (2nd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

- Stipek, D. J. (2002). *Motivation to learn : integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.
- Tang, S. H. (2003). Yue du dui yi sheng de hou chu. *Modern Education Bulletin*, 66.
- Tompkins, G. E. (2006). *Literacy for the 21st century : a balanced approach* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education/Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Turner, J., & Paris, S. G. (1995). How Literacy Tasks Influence Children's Motivation for Literacy. *Reading Teacher*, v48 n8 p662-73 May 1995.
- Wigfield, A. (1997). Reading motivation: A domain-specific approach to motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, 32(2), 59-68.
- Wigfield, A., & Asher, S. R. (1983). Social and Motivational Influences on Reading. Technical Report No. 288 (pp. 72).

Author note

Susana Lau is Teacher Librarian at the HKIED Jockey Club Primary School in Hong Kong. She is also a Commissioner of the Hong Kong Teacher Librarians' Association. She has been a TL since 1998.

Peter Warning is a lecturer in information management at the University of Hong Kong. He has been involved in the education of TLs since 2002, at certificate, diploma, bachelor and master levels. He is currently working on a project investigating reading programs in rural China.