

COLEGIO AMERICANO ANAHUAC
“CAPITAN ALONSO DE LEON LIBRARY”

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INTRODUCTION

This document is not an exhaustive research. It is simply an overview of the library which intends to make a general assesment of its current status in order to state an action plan for the next three months. But despite of the lack of being treated at depth, this document is made with the fine idea to manage the library in such a way which meets the overall Total Quality commitment of the whole institution which it is stated in the bibliography reviewed. It took a sole interview with Ms. Ma. Teresa Adell, Ms. Patricia Manzanares and Ms. Maribel Rivera Hurtado and also a half hour attending the library as a visitor and two complete working days. After three months this document will be surely treated at depth.

It contains five sections. 1. Objectives, which states the objectives of this document. 2. Assesment, which explains the current situation of the library but only at

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the surface because an exhaustive diagnostic would take longer. 3. Results Expected, which explain what are the results the administration, the teachers, the students and the head of the library will expect during these months and by the end of June 2000; these are according with this diagnostic only. 4. Requirements, which tell about the material and economical resources needed in order to accomplish the results expected; at first glance the library needs a lot of things, but only the more important at the moment are considered. 5. Bibliography, it is a basic bibliography reviewed to do a more formal document, although it was not read thoroughly the author's experience it is the most important value added.

A remarkable note is that this document is not treated as a personal matter, but as a professional one instead. When talking about a professional librarian it means either female or male, so the reader will not feel pressed to accept it as a dialog between the author and the reader, but rather as a well thought project which is based on accepted universal quality standards; and it is even applicable to any other education institution based on quality standards similar to Colegio Americano Anáhuac. Library and Information Sciences, the B.A. the author holds is a professional matter, besides his over 5 year experience on the field, which 4 were devoted to do external information consultancy --outsourcing-- to university, college and corporate libraries; his B.A. in Applied Linguistics-Didactics up to the fifth semester; his 1987-8 school year spent in the Owen Valley High School in Spencer, Indiana, USA and his over 10 year experience on the ETL and translation professions.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this small document are to show the Board of Directors of the Colegio Americano Anáhuac:

1. That the library “Capitán Alonso de León” has to be taken into consideration in the same way other institution's departments are taken as one the most correct and integral ways on the meeting of the rigid Total Quality objectives of the institution overall.
2. That hiring a professional librarian devoted exclusively to information and library activities is one of the best ways towards the achievement of the institution's overall Total Quality commitment.
3. The capacity of the author to express himself in a formal written way and his professional initiatives and desires to build at once a library which meets the Total Quality objectives of the institution.

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ASSEMENT

1. In general the actual library is not seen as it has to be; as the international quality standards for school libraries state it, the ones only the professional librarian masters them. It is everything but rather a library. Now it is a talking room, now a kindergarten-like room for cutting and pasting papers, now an audivisual room, now a language laboratory, now a testing room, etc. Everything but not a library. And the vision most of the users has of it is that of the place for the punished students where the librarian do not work at all and she/he is always available to do any auxiliary non-library activities. But it is not the quiet place surrounded of a comfortable environment suited to read for academic or professional support, research or fun.
2. There is not a book catalog, neither in printed cards, nor automated in computer and in this situation users cannot find the right book easily.
3. The afluency of library users who come to do research for their academic support it is very low if not existing at all.
4. The majority of the students who come to the library do so because they were punished, not because they have an important need of information to help them further their readings to be excellent students; they come in with a library report.
5. There are not fixed hours where the students come to the library guided by their teachers and on the break hours they do not come to the library. In this way the students are not trained to use the library for academic purposes on a regular basis.
6. There are too many auxiliary non-library activities –such as cutting paper, pasting someone else's posters, drawings, etc.-- which consume too much time of the librarian and she/he does not have plenty of time to do the actual professional library activities.
7. There is not a language laboratory in the institution and the library is used for that case and the use of the cassette recorder is very loud and disturbs the silent environment of the library and the users need silence.
8. Several teachers send their students to do non-library activities –kindergarten-like, such as to cut paper in the cutting board, to draw on papers, to paste on boards, etc.—and some work along with them and they talk too much and the silent environment is disturbed and besides they demand too much attention from the librarian, but not for professional library activities.
9. There is not a vertical file useful to file important and recurrent clips of information as from the news.
10. There is not an appropriate audivisual room and some teachers come and use the library to use the overhead projector.
11. There is not too much documentation to promote the library services and because of this there is not too much use either.

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12. Teachers do not use the library services at all –the only use they do is non-library, like requesting paper, markers, pasting tapes, audiovisual appliances and the like--, and if they do not use as a support for their classes, their students will not either.
13. The collection is very disorganized due to the lack of a catalog and a very solid signaling.
14. The library's facilities and furniture are not the most adequate and besides the fact they do not meet any standard they are out of fashion.
15. The chair of the professional librarian is anti-ergonomic and if any anti-ergonomic furniture is a problem, for a professional librarian is even more considering the long length of time to do her/his professional activities.

RESULTS EXPECTED

1. In general, the user community of the Colegio Americano Anáhuac will find the professional librarian as the most suited bridge between their information needs and the information world; a proactive information helper not only a reactive one.
2. The professional librarian will maintain a constant communicative campaign with the administration, coordinators and teachers so all they will be informed of the activities the library is carry on. This will be done on a regular basis by means of meetings, memos, circular letters and other means. It already began with the public presentation of the professional librarian to elementary and middle school students and their teachers.
3. The professional librarian will firmly promote the library services so the students will come in to the library on a free, enthusiastic and regular basis --not punished. Teachers and academic coordinators play an important role in this promotional task. This an everyday activity and it takes a lot of time of the working day.
4. The professional librarian will establish library policies, procedures and regulations in cooperation with the administration, coordinators and teachers –perhaps in cooperation with students' parents. The administration will have to include the professional librarian as part of the Total Quality teams of the institution in order to achieve the quality objectives in benefit of the whole institution. This takes a lot of time and it is a team work.
5. The professional librarian will maintain constantly well arranged the current 1, 800 book collection so users will be able to find the right book in the right place. This activity takes most of the part of the work day and it is to be done everyday. At the moment will be done following the same pattern followed by the prior librarians, but then following international standards of classification.

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6. The professional librarian will create a well organized Vertical File which will contain current articles and other periodical information which appear on newspapers, magazines or other resources to keep updated not only students but also administration and faculty on recurrent information needs.
7. The professional librarian will begin a standardized cataloging of the books; to create the records which describe the content of the books and to add them to the library computerized catalog; if accepted by the administration the creation of this kind of catalog instead of the one of printed cards. If accepted this task will take most of the working day and it has to be done on a daily basis.
8. The professional librarian will begin along the cataloging process with the assignment of subject headings to book records so users will find books by means of scientifically standardized subjects. If accepted this task will take most of the working day and it has to be done on a daily basis.
9. The professional librarian will revise and continue with the classification of books based on international standards; to put a tag to the books which tells the right shelf it belong to. If accepted this task will take most of the working day and it has to be done on a daily basis.
10. The professional will create standardized formats on MS-Excel to keep a constant and precise statistics of all the daily library activities, such as type of users, type of information read, type of books required for buying, type of suggestions, etc. All of this to show results to the administration on a graphical way of the library development so the best decisions to improve the library services may be done.
11. The professional librarian will try to encourage teachers and coordinators to implement a Library Tour Program where the students come to the library on a regular and consistent basis to do research work during school hours guided by their teachers. This will have as a result to introduce students to the so called “information culture” where students begin stepping beyond the classroom to further their knowledge. By doing so they become lifetime researchers in a smooth fashion and put aside “the textbook culture”; and this is what a library is indeed all about.

REQUIREMENTS

1. The administration should be aware that the library is to education what water is to a fish. It is a core department in an educational institution and it demands well suited facilities, and constant budgeting for good library and information resources. It is a living organism in constant growing. So, the institution in order to meet its Total Quality commitment has to give the same importance it gives to its teaching departments and faculty. This is the main requirement expected, that the administration be convinced of the need that the institution would be more successful

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than what it is now if equal and proportional attention is devoted to library. This result would come from a constant cooperative work among the professional librarian and the administration, heads of the academic departments, teachers and students or students's parents if it is the case.

2. It is important all the teachers and coordinators change their actual view of the library and give to it its real value as one of the most important tools to accomplish an education job of quality; library is even more important than physical education or cultural courses or activities. It is not more important than pedagogy itself, but what is the end of education if not a well conducted use of information and library resources? Education is not understood without information. Education is provide by a teacher, information by a professional librarian.
3. The actual librarian's duties should be reconsidered. The auxiliary and non-library activities such as helping most of the working day to other deparments on their own duties or lending or providing educational materials should not be done by the professional librarian. Any auxiliary activity should be devoted for library purposes only. There are many core library activities that even if once they were well implemented more library staff would be required.
4. It is necessary to have an automated book catalog. It is cheaper and easier to have an automated catalog than the one of printed cards. The system proposed is the same it has been already considered --the Mexican library automated system SIABUC 2000-- and which the institution already posseses on CD-ROM.
5. As a minimun, the library should have three microcomputers: one for the professional librarian and two for the users. The one for the librarian has to be one of the best since most of the professional library activities are done with a well equipped computer --CD-ROM drive, multimedia and speakers, Internet access, E-mail, MS-Office, etc.--, the ones for the students do not require to be a marvel ones, they will be used only to search the computerized catalog, not for typing or Internet activities.
6. It is neccesary to have a printer exclusively for the library since many print-outs are produced in the library. Besides it will not have to be closed every time a print-out is needed.
7. It is a very important requirement to have as soon as possible a conection to the Internet for the library exclusively for professional library activities for several reasons: a) it is the most important way of communication nowadays; b) it helps the professional librarian to find current information resources for all user community -- students, teachers, administration and for her/himself too-- so they can have cutting-edge information for their academic and decision making support.
8. The administration have to buy some basic standarized materials to organize the books and other information resources: a) AngloAmerican Cataloguin Rules, b)

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Encabezamientos de Materia, c) the latest edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification System, d) etc.

9. It is a must to have one or several library suggestions mailboxes in the library or in the halls so users –students and teachers as well—can express freely their suggestions to improve the library services, to buy new books or materials and to introduce new technologies they may have back home such as Internet and they may find them useful to the library and to improve the information and education quality of the whole institution. Besides it is an easy way to have feedback from the users the library is committed to and a simple way to publicize its existence and importance.
10. The administration should consider the need of investing on the library facilities and furniture: librarian's chair, carpets, new shelves, tables, chairs, etc. to create a more harmonic working and reading environment so the library would be more attractive to users.

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