

Creating A Reading Culture In NP

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A series of Library initiatives to promote reading has resulted in 3,577 more books borrowed among Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students, according to findings by the NP Library.

Mrs Leo-Lim Bee Ang, manager of the Library's Reference department, said in an e-mail interview, "The loan [rate] for lifestyle books increased by three percent for the period between April to October 2005 as compared to the same period last year."

She added that students preferred popular titles in the life skills, hobbies and creativity and innovation categories.

This increase came after a round of measures to promote reading in NP beginning nearly a year ago.

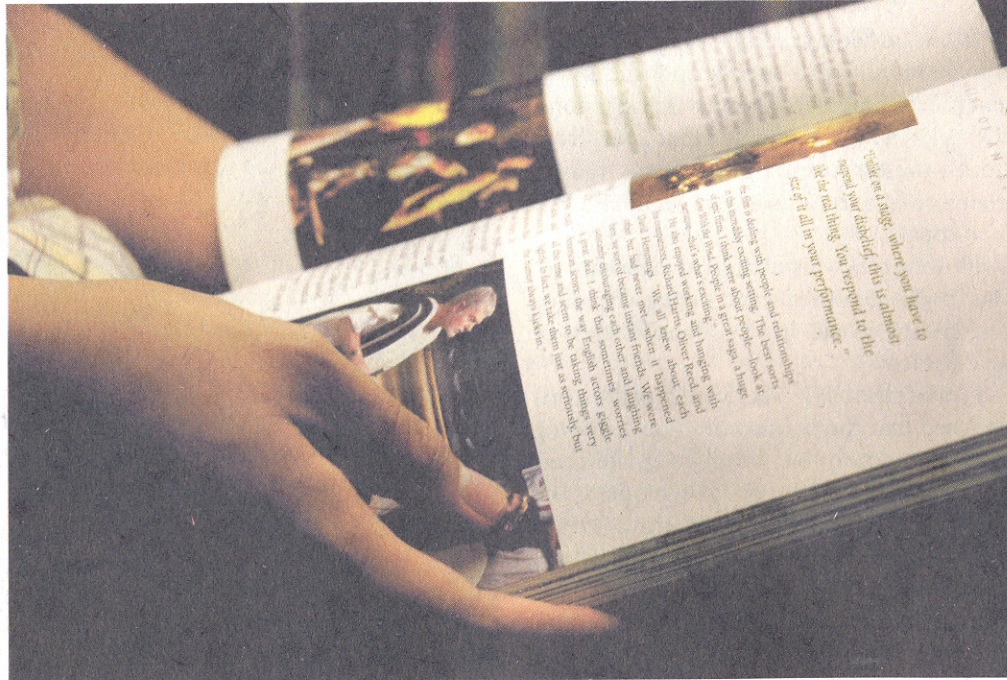
Mrs Leo-Lim explained that these efforts were made as the Library's goal to "ensure that every student is a borrower" has not been met.

The initiatives aimed "to increase students' awareness of the wide array of resources in the Library so that they will use them for their study, research and personal needs," she added.

Different approaches were used to "reach out to students".

Some of these activities included the month-long "Box-of-Loans" promotion that ended in August. Book loan slips were dropped into a box for prizes.

"Rewards such as printers and thumb drives [were] given as incentives and students [needed] to fulfill some requirements such



BOOK READERSHIP INCREASES: More students are reading books from the NP library after a series of promotions and contests. (Picture: Low Youjin)

as borrowing a certain number of books or submitting a book review before they [were] awarded the incentives."

Cheong Ming Hui, 18, second-year student from Business Studies (BS), enjoyed the activity. "I borrow[ed] more from the Library when this contest was launched and realised that our Library actually has a wide range of books. The school Library is now one of my usual hangout[s]."

According to Mrs Leo-Lim, the Book Fair at NP Orchard in August was the most successful activity. She stated that in the past, selections for new titles were done by Library and NP staff.

In the case of the Book Fair, however, the Library decided to give students a chance to help determine the purchases.

At the Fair, vendors were invited to showcase their books and students could "browse, select and borrow titles of their interest on the spot". These books were then "purchased and added to the Library".

Tan Yi Da, 17, a first-year BS student, agreed that the Book Fair was "a great success". He said, "I would like to convey this kind of promotion to my secondary school's library."

Other than the increased loan rate, the Library has also successfully "helped

to inspire students to explore, discover, [expand] their horizons, [broaden] their outlook and [improve] their communication skills" through its activities, she said.

She believed that through reading, "students can improve their general knowledge... stimulate their creative minds... [and] books about life skills will provide inspirational stories and theories that will help motivate students to do better in their studies or personal lives".

Lye Rong Fang, 23, a final-year Banking & Financial Services (BFS) student, felt that his horizons had been broadened through the Library's initiatives.

"My knowledge on the Library's range of books has certainly improved tremendously after participating in the initiatives organised by the Library."

Despite generally positive responses, there were still students who remained unaware of the Library's promotional activities.

Tan Ze Rong, 19, a second-year student from Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE), confessed that he would not be interested in participating even if there was the lure of prizes to be won. He said that he seldom read and does not like to read.

Students who have missed previous Library activities can look forward to a slew of new ones, such as displays at the Internet Cafe in the Library, focusing on bestsellers and award-winning fiction.

Mrs Leo-Lim explained that the displays were aimed at "stimulating students' interest, thereby encouraging loan".

And come January 2006, the Library will be inviting authors and industry professionals to speak on lifestyle topics. 