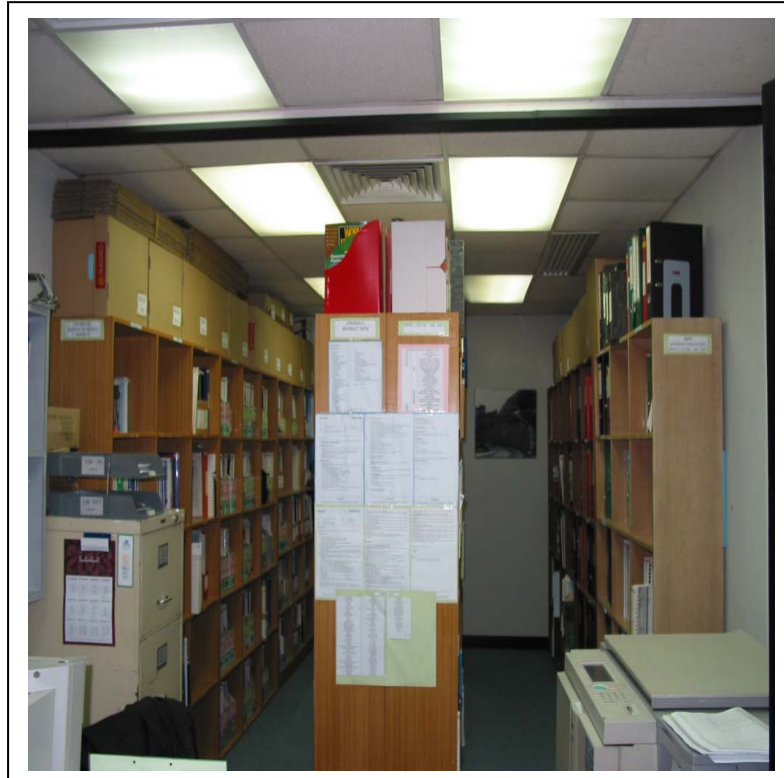


STRIVING HARD TO BE PROFESSIONAL?



By

Katrina Dang Fung Sim

I have never dreamed of achieving any awards in librarianship. In fact, I only hope that I can be recognized as professionals by my clientele or by the world. Although sometimes I feel very depressed on working as a librarian, I believe that if I insist on continuous learning, dedicating to this profession, I will surely succeed one day. Awarding The Heleni Linton Bursary in 2002 is one of the landmarks in my life. This award not only helps me improve my finance, but also encourages me to further my study in librarianship so that I can undoubtedly add valuable contribution to the society.

From teacher to library assistant

I changed from a teacher to a librarian after I made a crucial decision five years ago. My ambition has not changed yet. I am eager to contribute to the society I live and grow. The ever-growing population and decline of reading culture in Hong Kong urge me to think of the importance of a library, and particularly, a librarian. As a result, I made up my mind to further my study in librarianship and quitted my teaching job. I was glad that I was given the opportunity to work as a library assistant in an academic library. My main duties were providing services in the circulation counter, doing the newspaper-cutting regularly, arranging journal binding and recording the periodicals. Due to the automation and implementation of School Library System (SLS), I learned MARC record through copy cataloguing. It was very useful for me since I took the Certificate Course for Library Assistant at the same time.

However, I felt very depressed because I needed to do many clerical jobs. I didn't know why the librarian even assigned me, a library assistant, to work as a clerk in the administration department some of the days. Did the librarian admit that librarianship is not a profession?

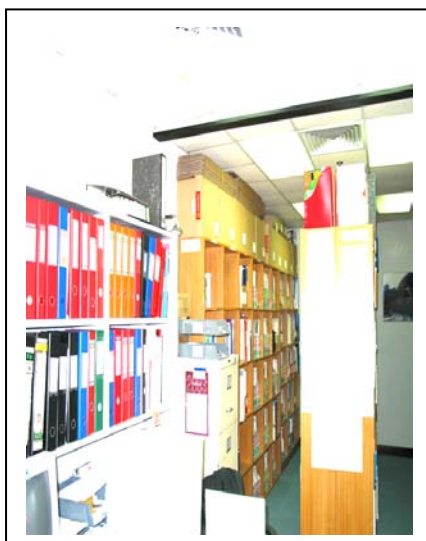
From library assistant to librarian

I had never given up and I worked very hard to finish my Certificate Course. In 1999, I worked as a librarian in a centre library. It's very challenging to me since I was in charge of two libraries, one in a community centre and one in a youth centre. My main duties were acquisition, classification and cataloguing works, making statistics reports, annual budget reports, planning and organizing activities, arranging stock-taking and providing training to library assistants and volunteers. I was able to develop the management and supervision skills and apply what I had learnt in the Certificate Course. At the same time, I started my studies in the Diploma and Bachelor Course in Library and Information Science.



Unfortunately, the centre supervisor arranged me to handle lots of non-library jobs like holding a camp, Speech Competition and Writing Competition. Sometimes, I wanted to give up because I had not been recognized as professionals and I couldn't affect public perception of the work of the librarian.

From center library to special library



Now, I work as a librarian in an engineering consultant firm. I learn more on reference work and online database searching in this special library. I also find myself a free library database on cataloguing library materials. I have been spending a lot of time and putting much effort on changing the colleagues' perception on me. I understand that many librarians are viewed by the public as "performers of visibly clerical tasks" such as circulation, reference checking and shelving. Most people do not know about the

specialized training of librarians and the work that goes on behind the scenes to

keep a library running.

Sometimes I felt very insecure about my profession and have the feeling of not being valued by others. But, I realize that I need to begin to change their perception that the library profession holds an inferior status. Once I let everyone know that librarianship is something to be proud of, that the profession of being a librarian is worthy, then the idea that the library profession's status is in trouble will begin to die out.

From working to learning

It was so difficult to me since the Certificate Course covers many topics.

Lecturers spent half time on teaching cataloguing and classification. I had an examination at the end of the year and I remembered it was a painful and unforgettable experience in my life. However, apart from cataloguing and classification, I learned more knowledge on reference works, acquisition, Chinese cataloguing and referencing, teacher librarianship, reader services, copyright, privacy and automation. Together with on the job training, those knowledge proves to be my valuable assets.

I spent The Heleni Linton Bursary on studying the Diploma and Bachelor Course in Library and Information Science. I learned much management competencies and skills in this course like financial management and human resources management. Besides, it covered collection management, library supervision, information management, information society issues and performance evaluation in libraries and so on. Through these courses, I gained the ability to think creatively, be proactive in ensuring my own profession development, synthesize experience so as to generate ideas and become reflective practitioner. The most interesting one to me was the effective subject on Information Superhighway. It provided me a general introduction to the Internet and the international computer information networks. I learned how to develop pages (using HTML) for the World Wide Web and I felt so satisfied when my first webpage was developed.

Striving hard to achieve my goal

As a librarian, I hope to be as a pioneer to learn from time to time and get updated information continuously through life-long studies. In the future, if

possible, I hope to teach the library course with my experience on teaching and my knowledge on librarianship. I also hope to work in other countries to broaden my horizons in libraries in a global sense. I believe, "Failure is not really a failure, unless you are giving up, accepting your failure, and refusing to try again." If I insist, I believe I can succeed.