Change and Renewal
@ your library®

Parkdale Collegiate Library
Giannone Associates Architects
2007 OLA Library Building Award Winner
Great New Reader’s Advisory Titles from Libraries Unlimited’s Genreflecting Series

This book is intended to help you start and maintain a graphic novel collection, and more importantly advise readers about the genre. It describes more than 1,400 titles; and organizes them according to genre, subgenre, and theme.

Genrefied Classics: A Genre Guide to Reading Interests in Classic Literature
By identifying the primary appeal and genre characteristics for approximately 400 classic fiction works, and organizing titles according to these features, this guide helps readers find the type of books they enjoy reading; and it helps promote classics to teens.

Encountering Enchantment: A Guide to Speculative Fiction for Teens
Speculative fiction—fantasy, science fiction, and paranormal fiction—is a major area on teen reading interest. This guide organizes by genre, subgenre, and theme hundreds of titles, mostly published within the last decade, along with classic works that are commonly available in libraries and popular with teen readers.
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**THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN** is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association. It is published three times a year to support OSLA members in providing significant and effective library programs and services. The Teaching Librarian promotes library program and curriculum development that further the objectives set out for students and teachers by the province, school boards, administrators, teachers and parents. It fosters effective partnering with teachers and administrators, and provides a forum where teacher-librarians can share experience and expertise.

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**THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN**

- V. 14, no. 3 “Media @ your library”  
  Deadline: February 16, 2006
- V. 15, no. 1 “People @ your library”  
  Deadline: May 11, 2007
- V. 15, no. 2 “Inclusion @ your library”  
  Deadline: October 5, 2007

Articles of 150–250 words, 500 words or 800–1300 words are welcome. Articles, when approved, should be accompanied by good quality illustrations and/or pictures whenever possible. Text must be sent electronically, preferably in a vs Word (or compatible) file. Pictures can be printed or digital (minimum size and quality are 4” x 6” and 300 dpi, and in JPEG or TIFF format if electronic). With photos which contain a recognized individual, please secure the individual's permission in writing for the use of the photo. Photos taken at public events, or crowd shots taken in a public place do not require permission from the subjects. All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length and style. Journalistic style is preferred. Articles must include in the body of the text the working title, name of author, and e-mail address. OSLA reserves the right to use pictures in other OSLA publications unless permission is limited or denied at the time of publishing. Any questions about submissions should be directed to the Editor of *The Teaching Librarian*:

TL.mail@accessola.com

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At the beginning of a new calendar year, people often find themselves in the mood to re-examine their lives and priorities and resolve to make positive changes. Our theme for this issue, Change and Renewal @ Your Library, may help arouse such reflections.

It could be something physical—such as Pat Garrow’s article on invigorating her library’s layout with a vibrant mural—or something personal, such as David Corbett’s suggestions for preparing for your upcoming retirement. Janine Schaub’s entertaining exposé may help avoid your burn-out by renewing yourself with enriching pastimes. You may want to alter your timetable (see Karen Jostiak’s journey to flexible scheduling), or the way you deliver your Silver Birch program (take a look at Peggy Thomas’ explanation of the changes to the OLA’s Forest of Reading®). You may find yourself challenged by Kathy Kawasaki or Kimberly Hughes to try out a technological innovation, like RSS feeds or a new library listserv.

Whatever your area of interest for change, hopefully this issue will entertain, inform and inspire.

Note: The Professional Resources column will be taking a short hiatus this issue and return in Volume 14 Issue 3, Media @ Your Library.

“It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory.”

W. Edward Deming

“If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude. Don’t complain.”

Maya Angelou

“We live in a moment of history where change is so speeded up that we begin to see the present only when it is already disappearing.”

R.D. Laing
As teacher-librarians, we're used to working without the support and camaraderie that department colleagues can provide—each of us is usually the only teacher-librarian in the school. This makes it particularly important for us to make the effort necessary to stay in touch with our colleagues and with the world of school librarianship.

One way to connect with colleagues is through listservs. Of course I'm a member of the OSLA listserv, but it's also interesting to make connections outside of Ontario, and outside of Canada.

SCHLIB is a listserv for those who are interested in resources and opportunities for teachers and library staffs in Manitoba—and beyond. Although intended originally for Manitoba teacher-librarians, SCHLIB does accept registrations from outside the province and many of the postings have relevance for the rest of us. Check it out at http://merlin.mb.ca/mailman/listinfo.cgi/schlib.

Speaking of listservs worth checking out, don't forget about LM_NET, certainly one of the largest listservs for the school library community. Check it out at www.eduref.org/lm_net.

It quickly becomes obvious that many of us, across Canada and around the world, are dealing with the same issues. Why start from scratch? Build on work that's already been done.

For example, advocacy is an issue for teacher-librarians around the world. Check out the School Library Advocacy Kit from IFLA (the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) at www.ifla.org/VII/s11/pubs/s11_AdvocacyKit.html. The Australian School Library Association also has an online advocacy kit, which can be downloaded from the ASLA home page, www.asla.org.au.

In general, you can stay in touch with international school librarianship through IASL, the International Association of School Librarianship. While I've found my IASL membership worthwhile, the Web site is public and available for free—check it out at www.iasl-slo.org/.

There's a wealth of information, links to loads of resources, news... it's a great portal to international school librarianship.

Of course, it's also important to stay in touch with the school library world in Canada. I do that through my CASL (Canadian Association for School Libraries) membership. Although the newsletter and listserv are member benefits, the Web site is available to the general public—check it out at www.cla.ca/casl/index.html. Here, you'll find links to the National School Library Day page, as well as to the now online journal, School Libraries in Canada.

Speaking of CASL, it's of particular interest to Ontario's teacher-librarians that four of the six members of the 2006-2007 CASL Executive are from Ontario: President Sandra Hughes, retired; Past-President Marlene Turkington, Thames Valley DSB; Secretary-Treasurer Diana Gauthier, retired; and Councilor Mark Kaminski, Toronto DSB. They deserve our congratulations and our support as they work to provide national leadership and a national voice for teacher-librarians.

Congratulations also to Rose Dotten, another well-known figure in the Ontario school library world. Rose has been awarded the first CLA/Ken Haycock Award for Promoting Librarianship.

We are members of local, provincial, national, and international communities and it's important to stay in touch at all those levels. And that, of course, is why The Teaching Librarian includes this column, School Library World!
Dear Rita,

I have a very practical concern. I am a department head of a library in a small rural school with a limited budget. Reading and literacy are promoted heavily in the school and the library; as part of this focus, I run quite a successful reading program. Every year I buy anywhere from five to seven copies of each of the year’s White Pine Forest of Reading® nominated books. We have about 40 students who sign up for the program; from the end of November until the end of April, these books are constantly being signed out. The problem comes after the winner has been announced, at which time only the odd title still circulates well enough to justify having two copies in circulation. The others simply take up space until I eventually delete them, which feels like money ill-spent.

I’m quite sure that other teacher-librarians must have the same problem. Do you have a solution for me?

Yours in frugality,

Penny

Dear Penny,

It seems you live up to your name! All kidding aside, in these days of limited budgets, your concern is very real and I’m sure, shared by many. It relates not only to White Pine but to all the reading programs. I did a quick little jaunt to a few local school libraries and picked the brains of some of my colleagues. Do not despair; there are solutions:

◆ check with the English, Special Education Departments and credit recovery classes to see if the teachers would like to use the extra titles for read alouds or literature circles, or the co-operative learning strategy “novel in an hour.”

◆ if there is a particular subject connection to a book (e.g. historical fiction), you might want to suggest that this resource becomes part of the subject area’s curriculum.

◆ you could try selling your used copies to other schools in your Board who do not participate in the Forest of Reading® programs. Many TLs have a bit of fine money or a little petty cash on hand and would appreciate buying gently used copies.

◆ use the books for other extra-curricular reading clubs (e.g. Boys’ or Girls’ Reading Club)

◆ perhaps you could run the White Pine program in conjunction with another school, using their books from the previous year. You wouldn’t have the benefit of voting with the official White Pine members, but you could run a very successful reading program this way.

◆ if your school runs a USSR program, you might want to put the extra copies of the books in the classroom reading bins.

◆ would it be possible for your readers to hold a fund-raiser of some sort to offset the cost of running the program?

◆ see if your local public library would be willing to “partner” with you for the White Pine program.

Do you have any school library concerns or gripes? Need advice? Just ask Rita! She’s reliable, reasonable, rich in experience... and always right! CONTACT RITA at rita@accessola.com You’ll never regret it!
She’s reliable, reasonable, rich in experience ...and always right!

◆ another suggestion is to appeal to your school council for financial support. Most parents involved in the school community would be more than willing to promote literacy in this way.

The OLA’s Forest of Reading® program is so beneficial, and offers such excellent novels for our readers, it would be a shame to stop running it in your school. It is my sincere hope that you are able to find the funds to continue offering it for your students.

Maybe our readers can send in some other ideas to rita@accessola.com that I can share.

All books unlock things, but they don’t all come with keys like this one!
One of the great challenges we have as teacher-librarians is keeping on top of such matters as the ever-evolving world of information, ideas for collection development and new directions in curriculum and instructional practice. We exist in a dimension of change. As information and literacy leaders in our schools, we seek professional development opportunities that will keep us abreast of innovations and address the realities of our role.

The Education Institute has responded with a program that gives you what you need, where and when you need it. Taking advantage of current technologies, courses are offered in many forms, from audio conferences to Web conferences and on-line courses. This year’s course calendar has more offerings for teacher-librarians than ever before. The fall line-up included no fewer than 12 courses or workshops aimed specifically at teacher-librarians, dealing with topics ranging from reading programs to instructional design to the new literacies of a Web 2.0 world.

But don’t restrict yourself to school-specific offerings! One of the great strengths of the Education Institute is the opportunity for us to participate in programs from other library sectors. Learning from our library colleagues will help us to make connections for our students to the world of information and reading beyond the doors of our schools.

**How does the Education Institute Work?**

The Education Institute was originally created by the Ontario Library Association but is now being run for members of all of the provincial and territorial library associations of The Partnership. Programs are developed from coast to coast. All programs are delivered virtually, giving you a far more varied choice than might be available locally, and at the same time saving you time and money.

**On-line courses from your desktop:**

Typically these courses run for a period of a few weeks. Each week you receive an e-mail with the lessons and resources, followed up with an audio conference between the instructor and other participants. You are also part of a Web-based bulletin board system, to foster discussion amongst participants.

**Audio Conferences:**

An Education Institute audio conference brings a group together for an hour of instruction and discussion. Charges are by site, not by person, and any number of people can participate at a site without extra charge. This structure not only gives you a cost advantage, but also an opportunity to bring you together with your local colleagues, providing a departure point for further discussion and planning.

**Web Conferences:**

A Web conference is really an enhanced version of the audio conference. The presenter’s computer desktop is broadcast to your computer over the Internet, giving you the opportunity to see live demonstrations. You don’t need any special hardware or software, just an Internet connection and a phone. As with audio conferences, there is no limit on the number of people who can

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For more information about what the Education Institute has to offer you, visit the Web site at http://www.thepartnership.ca/education.
participate, and the charge is by the site. With a data projector, the opportunities for you and your local colleagues are limitless!

**Tips for getting the most out of the Education Institute:**

- Take a thorough look at the course offerings, either in the booklet received through the mail, or on the Education Institute or OLA Web sites. Sessions aimed at teacher-librarians will likely be the first to catch your attention, but have a good look at programs from other library sectors, too. Extending our learning beyond the world of the school can only enhance our professional knowledge and make us better teachers.
- Talk to your local colleagues and plan to participate in audio conferences and Web conferences together at one site. Not only will this save you money, but your learning experience will be enhanced by your own discussions and opportunities for local planning.
- Spread the word. Tell your teaching colleagues and school administrators about sessions of particular interest. Partnering for learning with your peers can only enhance opportunities for collaborative teaching and broaden understanding of the importance of the school library program.
- Voice your needs. If you are looking for professional help on a topic not offered or you have an idea for an Education Institute session, please contact your OSLA Continuing Education Committee.

**Your OSLA Continuing Education Committee:**
Carol Koechlin, Chair
Bobbie Henley
Anita Brooks Kirkland

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**Upcoming Education Institute Sessions**

- **February 20, 2007** 4:00 pm  
  *Histori.ca: The Richness of Canada’s History*  
  Tanya Zaritsky  
  Web Conference

- **February 27, 2007** 3:00 pm  
  *Mother Goose on the Loose*  
  Betsy Diamont Cohen  
  Audio Conference

- **March 1, 2007** 4:00 pm  
  *The Novel Museum: A Hands-on Link to Literacy*  
  Pat Elliott  
  Audio Conference

- **March 20, 2007** 4:00 pm  
  *Web 2.0 Tools for Teaching and Learning*  
  Anita Brooks Kirkland  
  Web Conference

- **March 22, 2007** 4:00 pm  
  *Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through Media Literacy*  
  Belinha DeAbreau  
  Audio Conference

- **March 27, 2007** 4:00 pm  
  *Rethinking School Library Connections: Canadian History*  
  Myra Junyk  
  Audio Conference

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**Watch for the EDUCATION INSTITUTE Spring 2007 catalogue coming in February!**
W
ouldn’t it be wonderful if more
teachers understood our role as
teacher-librarians? Wouldn’t it be
wonderful if they understood and, even
better, were willing to partner with us? I know
I’m not alone in this wishful thinking. Oh sure,
I do a lot of advocacy and work hard to spread
the word, but wouldn’t it be nice if we could
begin with understanding and build from
there?

Of course, when I take a moment to step
back and reflect on the problem, I have to
admit that it’s no wonder teachers find it
difficult to understand our role. This is my
19th year as a teacher, so, while I’m no rookie,
I’m not exactly at the end of my career either.
In terms of experience, I’m at about the same
place as many of my colleagues. When I reflect
on my own experience with school libraries
and teacher-librarians… well, as I said, the
lack of understanding ceases to be puzzling. I
was a high school student at the end of the
1970s. The school had a library, but I don’t
remember any teacher ever bringing us there
to do research. I don’t remember the teacher-
librarian doing any teaching. I do remember
sometimes signing out books for projects and
I remember silent, yes, silent, study halls held
in the library. I graduated from a Faculty of
Education program in 1988, six years after the
publication of Partners in Action, during what
was supposed to be the golden age of school
libraries in Ontario. But the words “teacher-
librarian” and “school library” were never
uttered, not once, at any time that year by any
of the professors, nor did I see—let alone
participate in—any collaborative efforts
between my associate teachers and their
teacher-librarians. I graduated with
absolutely no idea, not a clue, about the
purpose of school libraries or the role of
teacher-librarians. It was only a few years
later, during a chance conversation in a
parking lot after a PD day, with an individual
who happened to be a teacher-librarian, that I
discovered that teacher-librarians were
teachers, not librarians. That conversation
ultimately led me to move from the regular
classroom to the school library. So, seriously,
why should I be surprised when my colleagues
don’t understand my role?

What to do? Should I give up on hoping
they’ll ever understand? Nope, never, not an
option—keep on advocating. I see results!
Working with new teachers, before they
establish habits and patterns, can be
especially useful—they tend to welcome
assistance.

I’ve also tried, over the years, to work with
teacher candidates. However, far too often,
associate teachers want the teacher
candidates to do “real” classroom teaching,
not work with the teacher-librarian to
collaboratively plan and teach a unit or
research assignment. While I can understand
the need to develop classroom teaching skills,
this does have the unfortunate effect of
contributing to a mindset that says teaching
isn’t really teaching unless it’s done by the
teacher alone at the front of a classroom. I’ve
suggested repeatedly to associate teachers
and to school administrators that teacher
candidates would benefit from “mini-
placements” in the school library during their
time at the school, a day or two to job-shadow
and work with me to help them understand
the purpose of a school library and the role of
a teacher-librarian. But my offer has always
been refused, since it’s not a formal
requirement for the placement—and there
was always the implication that I wasn’t a real
teacher anyway.

So imagine my surprise and excitement
when I was contacted by Corinne Laverty, the
Head of the Education Library at Queen’s
University, about hosting a teacher candidate!
Was I interested? Yes! I was on the proverbial
pins and needles until the principal agreed

GETTING TO KNOW YOU:

Brenda Dillon
Hosting Teacher Candidates in School Libraries

Ewa’s Experience

Ewa Pawlowicz

Having recently graduated from teacher’s college, I wanted to share one of the most valuable placement experiences that I had during the B.Ed. program, so that future students have the same opportunity for professional growth as I did.

During the final months of my studies at Queen’s University, I was given the opportunity to choose an alternative placement related to teaching that might somehow benefit me in my profession. I have always been a resource fanatic, squirreling away media, Internet, and book resources that might somehow, someday, be of use to me in the classroom. As a result, it was natural for me to choose a placement in a location where I would be surrounded by resources all day long—the school library. Also, it would give me the opportunity to work with what I consider to be the most valuable resource in the school—the teacher-librarian.

My alternative placement at Philip Pocock C.S.S., with teacher-librarian Brenda Dillon, was one of the most useful and practical experiences of my entire year at the Queen’s B.Ed. program. Not only did I get to work one-on-one with students of varying grades and levels, but I learned how valuable the school library and the teacher-librarian are to students, who are exposed to a large variety of resources and research methods which will be of help to them throughout their entire lives.

The alternative placement with a teacher-librarian has completely changed the way that I plan assignments and structure classes. I no longer centre classes on me, with myself as the source of all information and knowledge. Instead, I centre classes around the students, whom I carefully guide in seeking out knowledge on their own. This has proven to be quite beneficial in my classes, resulting in more classroom participation and a better retention of curriculum material. I sincerely thank my associate teacher, Brenda, who, with her patience and dedication, showed me how valuable the resources we already have can be to our students.

with my request. Waiting paid off and it happened. Yes, I, a teacher-librarian, hosted a teacher candidate for a three-week placement in the spring of 2006!

Cory, in addition to being Head of the Education Library, teaches an optional course at the Faculty of Education on resource-based learning. The teacher candidates who take this course complete all the regular classroom placements and, in addition, do a three-week placement in an alternative setting related to education, such as a public library, museum, gallery, or historic site. OR—and this is the exciting part—a school library!

And that’s how Ewa Pawlowicz, a teacher candidate from Queen’s, came to spend three weeks in the school library at Philip Pocock Catholic Secondary School.

Ewa worked with me as I booked, planned for, taught, and worked with classes in the library. She also participated in a Collaborative Literature Program a colleague and I had designed for her ESL and Ontario Literacy Course classes.

One of the requirements of the placement was that Ewa plan and complete a resource-based learning unit, assignment, or activity. Ewa chose to create a WebQuest for grade 9 geography and I worked with her as I would have with any interested teacher.

Ewa also participated in the everyday business of running the school library—processing books and magazines, working at the Circulation Desk, supervising students and so on. While the goal of this placement isn’t to train future teacher-librarians, it certainly does serve as an eye-opening introduction to a career direction teacher candidates might not
understands how a teacher-librarian can work with her in a partnership from which everyone benefits.

You can read more about Ewa’s time at Pocock in her sidebar to this article.

Colleagues have asked me whether hosting a teacher candidate added to my workload, which is a serious consideration given how busy we are. The answer is yes, but not significantly. Before the placement began, Ewa and I reviewed her learning goals to ensure they were feasible in a three-week placement. Because Ewa was in town during the Christmas holidays (she’s a Pocock graduate and her parents still live in the neighborhood) and because I live relatively close to school, we chose to meet in person; however, this planning could have been done by e-mail or over the phone. During the placement, I had to do some thinking about how Ewa would spend her time, but this wasn’t onerous. I also spent some time working with Ewa on her WebQuest, but this was no more than I would be willing to do with any teacher interested in working collaboratively. At the end of the placement, I completed a Record of Practicum Experience, a form which briefly outlines the

have considered.

During her three weeks in the school library, Ewa got to see resource-based learning in action and was able to develop an understanding of the purpose of a school library and the role of a teacher-librarian—an understanding that will serve her well as she begins her teaching career. Ewa won’t have to depend on a chance conversation in a parking lot to know that school librarianship is a career direction that might be of interest. Nor will she have to feel isolated as she struggles to “cover the curriculum” now that she

New Ontario teachers are surprised to learn that students are expected to explore information finding tools from an early age. Consider one of the inquiry skills for a grade four student studying the middle ages:

Use primary and secondary sources to locate information about medieval civilization (e.g. primary sources: artifacts, field trips; secondary sources: atlases, encyclopedias and other print materials, illustrations, videos, CD-ROMs, Internet sites). (The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–6: Social Studies, 2004, p. 28)

How well prepared are new teachers to address these expectations when their own experience with Web resources may be fairly restricted? A recent study at Queen’s University Education Library revealed that teacher candidates do not understand the concept of information literacy and are not prepared to develop these skills in their own students.

The good news is that they want to learn more about information literacy skills! In support of the development of these skills by new teachers, the Education Library offers a course on Resource-Based Learning. Participants develop inquiry lessons that will de-mystify the research process for their students and hone their own skills as investigators and expert Googlers. They also have the opportunity for an alternative practicum experience, during which they work in library or associated resource environment for three weeks. Liaisons have been made with librarians in public, secondary, and academic libraries, as well as archives, museums, and galleries.
duties and activities of the teacher candidate during the placement. I also chose to write a letter of reference for Ewa, although this is not a requirement.

One thing Cory did want to mention to me is that, because this is an alternative placement, there’s no remuneration. Apparently, associate teachers are paid for their work. Who knew? While I’m not philosophically opposed to payment and would happily accept it if it was offered, the fact that I wouldn’t be paid to serve as a host for this placement really didn’t matter to me. The opportunity to send a new teacher out into the world of education with an understanding of school libraries and teacher-librarians is the stuff of hopes and dreams!

Cory is an advocate for school libraries and would really like to place more teacher candidates in school libraries for this alternative placement. Interested? Contact Cory! More information as well as contact information can be found in her sidebar to this article. If you’ve ever dreamed about being understood, then this is an opportunity you simply can’t pass up!

If you are interested in hosting a teacher candidate in your school library, then please contact:

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HELPING YOU

Global thought brings local action

Heather Myrvold

Not only did “Be the Change” become the unit of study for my partnering project with a grade 6 class, it was a message internalized and applied by these students over the course of the year. This class followed the Children of Conflict WebQuests, www.accessola.com/osla/bethechange/webquest/conflict/index.html, and learned many cruel but important facts about our world.

Several students were recent immigrants to Canada, some from war torn nations. The subject matter was sensitive, yet compelling. After the students completed the Web research about children currently in conflict around the world, they wrote position papers stating their views and feelings about their research. The students did their best writing to date on this assignment because they were so engaged in and passionate about what they learned.

When the ‘children in conflict’ assignment had been completed, these students used the position paper format to try to invoke a change in their own community. They wrote letters to city officials expressing their views about the dismal state of our community playground. They learned that speaking up does make a difference—a new playground has been built!

The students continue to reflect on their experience:

“When I was learning about ‘Be the Change’ I felt awful seeing all the children living in misery. It made me want to create [a] fund-raiser to help those children.” Kulsoom A.

“I felt horrified when I read about the injured children of war. It made me feel thankful and
secure to be living in Canada.” Jasinthar A.

“It made me sad to learn about children who were forced to leave their homes to survive, only to end up as a child soldier.” Ali A.

“I think it’s so unfair that children in some countries are forced to work their whole lives without getting an education.” Faizan S.

The Teacher-Librarian MLIS from San José State University

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School of Library & Information Science
http://slisweb.sjsu.edu
Marnelle Tokio, winner of the OLA White Pine Award in 2005 for More Than You Can Chew (Tundra 2003), is the queen of change, as her many varied roles and occupations can attest. From award-winning author, to horse-jockey-trainee, to X-ray technician, Marnelle has done it all. This spring, she once again reinvented herself, this time as a humour novelist for middle grade readers with Room 207, also published by Tundra Books.

Martha: So Marnelle, are you a “change-junkie” or what?

Marnelle: Yes. I even get a rush out of changing the furnace filter, but like a chameleon, my dexterity with change isn’t a conscious thing. It’s more of a chemical mix of my attention span and lack of patience waiting for the next adventure to begin. I’m addicted to adrenaline and endorphins. I’ve found that doing things I’ve never done before gets my brain to give up the goods, because most of the time what I’m doing scares the crap out of me. Not because I’m afraid to fail. My list of failures is still longer than my list of successes. I’m terrified of standing still, of the world moving past me and me just getting used to it. I don’t want to become a piece of furniture in my own life. So everything is temporary for me. It drives my family crazy. After I finished More Than You Can Chew, I contracted with Tundra to do Room 207. My stepfather commented with non-critical surprise and a furrowed brow, “You have more than one book in you?” My answer was yes. All different stories. For all sorts of ages. Everyday I get to be something new. A ten year old boy in the deep south, stray dog, ping pong ball, bumble bee, the ocean. I’ve finally found the career that allows me to NOT show up to the same environment every morning. The only thing I don’t like to change is out of my pajamas. Flannel is the real reason I’ve been able to hold down this writing gig.

Martha: Ha! I guess we know what you work in, then! -grinning-. Do the p.j.’s help with story ideas, or do you get your ideas first, in the more traditional ways?

Marnelle: My well-loved Christmas jammies with the expired elastic waistband just allow me to sit for long periods of time without getting a sock mark around my stomach. Other than that, they are not much help in the inspiration department. What works for me is the outside of my office and the inside of my head, puddles with gasoline swirling rainbows on the surface, the diamond dance that Georgian Bay does at sunset, talking to people about what makes them angry (because it’s usually a longer list than what makes them happy), movies, movies, movies, and a book a day. I don’t know if my wily ways are traditional. I have a surfboard wrapped in blue lights on my kitchen wall that gave me the idea to write "ride your own wave" in Sharpie marker on its belly while eating egg salad.

Martha: I’m trying to picture that… you slipping words in between the wires and lights as the egg salad dances on your fork. What does your family think about your methods and your “change-junkie status”?

Marnelle: There is no doubt that I provide more entertainment than cable for my family. The constant change thing is exciting, tasty, or aggravating depending on the day. I never cook the same thing twice. And my husband...
Jim is thinking of having a paint roller surgically grafted to his hand as he wakes up with his eyelashes brushing the Farrow & Ball paint brochure many a Sunday morning. We never pay a fortune for our furniture (I've even found several wonderful pieces in snowbanks) so we aren't attached to it financially and when my emotional attachment fades, we just donate it to someone who needs it. All of our daughter's baby stuff—crib, stroller, change table, highchair—went to a women's shelter; bunk beds went to a new family from Ethiopia, a sofa bed to a friend who gave up his bedroom to the niece he had invited to come to Canada from Iran so she could go to school. Change makes me smile. It does test my family and my oration skills sometimes. Often I don't try to explain it. What's the point of a giraffe trying to tell you what it's like to eat thorns with a purple tongue or start life off with a 6-foot drop? But like my long necked friends, I believe in taking the plunge. My greatest compliment ever was when this guy at a party asked me, "What's it like to live on your planet?" And he wasn't even drinking.

**Martha:** I think you're giving us a pretty clear idea of what life is like on your planet. It seems to be quite the happening place! <grinning> So did writing the new book, *Room 207*, feel like "yet another six-foot drop?"

**Marnelle:** More like a leap of faith with a too-long bungee cord. In my opinion, humour is the most difficult thing to write. What each of us finds funny is very individual and specific to our experience, backgrounds, age and/or beliefs. Think about it. You can probably name only a handful of comedians, but hundreds of dramatic actors... because it's easy to make people cry. Drown a puppy or give a kid cancer and everybody's bawling. But kids see the world as a funny place until they watch enough news. Or get past level one on any video game that doesn't start with Mario. I don't "do" the news. If I need to know something, someone who loves me will call and tell me. Nobody in our house plays video games alone. So I can still think like I'm six. My brand of humour can be challenging to edit. Maybe that's why you don't see many books written by six year-olds.

**Martha:** Or at least not published ones, anyway! <laughing>. So it wasn't just another example of "out with the old, and in with the new?"

**Marnelle:** I don't think about the same thing long enough for anything to get old. It's an organic way to keep everything new. I write what interests me... the stuff of life that has both depth and light. But after having to go
diving into many psychiatric rifts to write *More Than You Can Chew*, all I wanted was to swim towards the light. *Room 207* was the chance to do that. Tundra was great not to pressure me to follow up *Chew* with another Young Adult story, although I have to say the YA audience has made their thoughts ABUNDANTLY clear on my choice. I don't mind... reminds me how lucky I am to have this job and an audience as my boss.

**Martha:** So if there isn’t an imminent follow-up YA on the literary horizon, what are your future plans (or is that an unfair question to ask a "change-junkie")?

**Marnelle:** For the next fifteen minutes I’m going to think and write about your question. Then I’m going to try to finish the adult book I’m writing called *MONKEY* so I can buy a horse named TURTLE. I’ll keep telling the story everyday until it’s done. That’s the future that every writer wants.

Oh, and speaking of writing, I know two brilliant writers (not personally). For inspiration, one used alcohol and the other uses sex (until now I never knew the two could be mutually exclusive). The first writer is famous enough that my spellchecker doesn’t question his name (the spellchecker still doesn’t know who I am). Hemmingway said something like this, "It’s easy to write, all you have to do is sit down at your typewriter and open a vein." (And nobody saw his suicide coming?)

The second writer is a guy named Prince. He wrote exactly this:

"Starfish and coffee,
Maple syrup and jam.
Butterscotch clouds, tangerine,
And a side order of ham.
If you set your mind free baby,
Maybe you’d understand."

**Martha:** So what would your advice be, to anyone who wants to write?

**Marnelle:** Listen to those guys. Do what they say. Don’t hang your toes off the dock of your consciousness. Use those tendrils to push off. Forget the leap of faith, of fate. Anybody can do that.

Instead, back-up. Get a running start. Let loose your best war cry, the one that braids your tonsils, and do a huge honkin’ cannonball into the sea of your imagination. That should get them wet. The words. Then they will be dripping, shining, easier to see. Now just write them down.

**Martha:** That’s going to be my new poster for literacy and the writing process! I love it (though I’m not sure my principal will want to hear that tonsil-braiding war cry in my writing class!) Before we go, though... what’s the one question you wish someone had asked you?

**Marnelle:** "Would a million dollar advance be acceptable to you, Ms. Tokio?" And my favourite question to be asked is, "What date are you available to come to our library?"
The organizer, Charting the Preferred Future for Your Library, will help you put some of the research findings into practice. This organizer is intended to be a catalyst for teacher-librarians as we begin to diagnose, assess, and plan improved library programs. In the first column, What the Research Says, are some of the key research findings. The implications these findings hold for school libraries and school library programs suggested in current literature are listed in the second column entitled Implications for Program. The Focus for Action column lists some ideas for your school-based implementation. These suggestions are by no means exhaustive. You will want to add many more for yourself. The last column, Evidence of Success, will, we hope, help you to think about ways you can collect tangible data that demonstrates improved teaching and learning experiences in your school. When gathering evidence, collect both quantitative and qualitative data.”

By this time in the school year, you have a feel for what’s working with your program delivery and what still needs improvement. Many of you may have just come back from attending Super Conference, re-energized and determined to step it up. This might be a good time to delve into Teacher-Librarian’s Toolkit for Evidence-Based Practice again, this time taking a look at the research that has been done on the school library program and its relation to student achievement.

Check out the Home page of the Toolkit to get an overview of this powerful research. From the sidebar, link to an article by Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan called Making Library Programs Count: Where’s the Evidence? From here, link to the organizer, Charting the Preferred Future for Your Library. The following text and chart come directly from the article:

Treasures from the Toolkit

Bobbie Henley
### Charting the Preferred Future for Your Library

Developed from the works of Haycock, Krashen, McQuillan, Todd, Lance, Loertscher & Woolls

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<th>Implications for Program</th>
<th>Your Priorities: Instruction</th>
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As the passage from the toolkit introducing this chart suggests, you may want to use the chart as it is or modify it to create your own version, perhaps by narrowing it down and focusing on one or two areas at a time. The objective is to use these research findings to target those areas where improvement is needed in your own school.

Use the examples given to decide on how you will focus your action, and begin collecting the evidence. As you can see from the chart, there are a variety of methods you can use to collect evidence. More can be accessed in the Here’s How section of the toolkit, under Gather and Document. Of course, the methods and the people with whom you share it are also critical. Go to Communicate and Celebrate for a list of ways to connect your program to student success.

Your toolkit is designed to assist you in these endeavours, by providing links to research, Web sites, articles, strategies and templates. Check it out!

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Where The Grant Dollars Go: Toronto District School Board’s Vendor Fair

Lisa Weaver

In 2006, the Ontario Ministry of Education repeated their 2005 Investment in School Libraries K–12 initiative by providing further financial support to school libraries, through their boards, across the province. This is the “numerical story” of the grant for the Toronto District School Board.

For our 2006 grant, we had 22 vendors provide us with resources, and an amazing team of first pass, cataloguers, and system technicians who ensured the 99 skids were unpacked, sorted, picked, catalogued, and sent out to schools.

TDSB was also fortunate to have a team of summer students who ensured we had 19,8256-plus labels printed for all items as well as many extra summer projects.

This year, a total of 99,128 items and book sets were ordered, by 585 teacher-librarians, each toting a 303 page order binder!

The most popular title (118 copies ordered) was Farm Community from Knowbuddy. Our most expensive set was Enchantment of the World, which includes 92 titles! Our least expensive title ordered was The Bathwater Gang from S&B Books. All orders were done on 52 purchase orders and we received 208 shipments and invoices at the Library and Learning Resources Department this summer.

A big thank you to the Ministry of Education for their support, and to James Saunders and Wayne Sharp for organizing our vendor fair for us in under a week!

Please take some time to forward your Ministry stories to grantstories@accessola.com.
Professional books are an overlooked treasure in many schools. Teacher-librarians carefully choose teacher resource books to meet the curriculum needs and professional issues suited to a specific staff and school. This valuable collection can be overwhelming for some, barely considered by others, and under-utilized by most teachers.

We helped our staff access our treasure trove of professional resources by starting a book club. Our curriculum consultant, Mirella Sanwalka, got the ball rolling by familiarizing our staff with one book, *The Differentiated Classroom* by C. Tomlinson. Several teachers got together to read specific chapters, discuss them, and reflect on best practices. The teachers also set up an on-line forum so that the staff could post questions and answers. Three face-to-face breakfast meetings gave the teachers further opportunities to share ideas.

The main focus of this particular book was differentiated instruction. After years of standardization it was very refreshing to speak about this topic with colleagues. As Tomlinson explains in chapter one of her book, differentiated instruction takes into account the student’s background, experiences, personal interests, culture and learning readiness. This would put the teacher and learner in charge of how learning would take place in their classrooms by becoming aware of the hallmarks of differentiated instruction and carefully selecting which methods of instruction might be most beneficial to a variety of students based on individual learning styles. Upon the recommendation of the book club, the administration asked that the members do a presentation for the whole staff.

My role was to go through the professional collection and bring together or highlight books that could facilitate differentiated instruction at our school. Going through the collection to select materials to present to staff made me more aware of the variety of great resources we already had. After going through the collection I was able to put together a list of sixteen other resources that would lend themselves to differentiated instruction. Even teachers who did not participate in the book study were now able to find out about differentiation in the classroom and also able to access helpful resources to make it possible. The book study and the staff presentation gave me an exciting opportunity to discuss with teachers new possibilities that seemed to flow more easily from the library to the classroom.

Other useful ways of bringing professional reading to the attention of a staff are by including ‘Professional Picks’ as part of the school’s monthly newsletter and highlighting staff favourites on-line. Including mention of professional resources in the school plan is also an effective strategy for raising teacher awareness about the invaluable collection right at their fingertips.

Inviting teachers to take part in professional reading can be refreshing and rewarding. Changing what people have done over the years is difficult; at first as things may not run smoothly when first implemented. The teacher-librarian’s role is to foster new ideas and provide support. Familiarizing staff with various teaching strategies and philosophies and grouping professional literature that is relevant and ready to use can be the difference between a stagnant collection and one that is used regularly and thoughtfully by staff to bring about effective change in our schools.
The theory is this:

Hook them with comics and they’ll move on to something more complex.

It’s a good sales line, but not something I’m entirely comfortable with. You see, my source of employment for the last three years has been to safely deliver appropriate but popular comic books (or, as the mainstream media would have us brand them, “graphic novels”—another line I ain’t so happy to tow) to school and public libraries.

I am eminently qualified to do this. I have been a comic book nerd for the past twenty-nine years of my life. It started with Uncle Scrooge and Hot Stuff, and then moved on to Tomb of Dracula and House of Mystery. From there it was a simple hop, skip and a jump to Spider-Man, (mostly because I could effortlessly relate to poor, ostracized Peter Parker), and The X-Men.

But then something happened along the way. Back in 1983, at the tender age of eleven, I took a chance on an issue of Swamp Thing in which writer, Alan Moore, presented a fairly harrowing tale on the effects of child abuse. And it didn’t end nicely or neatly. His forum for this was a genre comic book. Almost everything else I’d read up to that point had vanished from memory pretty quickly, but this one story stayed with me. From that moment on, I knew I could never again take another superhero comic seriously. I learned to follow not the characters (most of them blandly corporate, unchallenging entities that never really developed), but rather the actual creators of the books I enjoyed. I began investigating alternative comic culture that challenged social norms and the neat ending all tied up with a nice little bow.

Watchmen, Love & Rockets, Ghost World, Maus, Safe Area Gorazde were all significant comic books in my development as a comic book fan.

I think I have yet to read anything, in any medium, as complex as From Hell or heart-wrenching as Jimmy Corrigan: Smartest Kid on Earth. These are serious works of contemporary literature created for a highly literate audience. I am, in fact, living proof that comic book readers will move on to something more complex.

But here is my problem: More complex than what?

I was already a reader. I already enjoyed the process of turning the pages and being in my own world for an afternoon, and I have since I was a child. To read a comic book was different, but just as enjoyable for me as reading a book. So how does one advance from a comic book to a book when the two are quite different from each other? There is nothing to advance to because there are comic books available for every level of reader. To assume that children today will “outgrow” comic books is to simply ghettoize an already marginalized medium.

There are spectacular comic books for young readers, most of them probably far more engaging than the majority of children’s books. The graphic novel series Bone, for example, is probably as good as children’s literature gets—an epic-fantasy similar to Lord of The Rings or the Narnia Chronicles, but without the heavy-handed allegory or religious overtones. Leave It to Chance is Nancy Drew, but with actual character development and jeopardy. They are both thrilling.

Comic books are already complex.

It takes a completely different set of literacy skills to understand the juxtaposition of words and pictures than it does to understand plain text. It’s about pacing and the visual presentation of action and time. It’s about recognizing and comprehending semiotics on a subconscious level.

The majority of adults I know couldn’t make it through a work like Jimmy Corrigan simply because they haven’t developed the visual literacy skills required to understand it. Text has made them lazy, at least in certain regards. I don’t think they’d even know where to begin with a Japanese manga.
But six and eight year-olds, today do. They have developed these skills naturally, through a collective absorption. It’s breathtaking to see them exploring a different culture, or transforming the process of reading into a communal thing through comic book/manga clubs, and they do these things because they respect the medium as its own thing. Comic books engage them; something that most serious literature fails to do. They are current and relevant, and they are the absolute perfect tools for librarians to get children excited about the process of reading, and that, I think, is their greatest benefit.

Of course not every comic book and manga is appropriate for every age group, nor is every prose book, and responsible moderation has to be utilized in both cases. That, to me, is the job of the librarian: to know limits and to offer suggestions and encouragement to expand those limits. It’s my job, as well. The type of material that appeals to a reluctant reader will not appeal to a student functioning at a high literacy level, or one interested in the creative arts, and a distinction between the two must be made. You can’t simply generalize and say comics are all the same, because they aren’t. That’s like saying that all music is the same, or movies, or literature.

Of course there won’t always be a complex story to justify a comic book fan’s choice of reading material, but for some reason, that doesn’t seem to be a requirement of prose genre works. As the late Theordore Sturgeon once said, "Sure, 90% of science fiction is crud. That's because 90% of everything is crud." Comic books are no different. There is, simply put, bad stuff to be found, there is fun stuff, and there is good stuff. “Crud” is popular in every medium.

If readers decide not to move on to *Maus* or *Jimmy Corrigan* or Dostoyevsky or Joyce, then so be it. They don’t have to, as long as they keep on reading. How many adults do you know that have actually read Finnegans Wake? Most readers only consume popular genre fiction. A *Stephen King* or a *Danielle Steele* will always outsell a José Saramago. And perhaps that’s unfortunate, but we still respect those readers and their choices, and yet we repeatedly condescend to comic book readers. I’m no different. The subway still has to be pretty empty for me to pull out a comic book. But I am getting better.

I love comic books and I would have absolutely killed to have had available to me back then the reading material available in today’s libraries. Or at least I would have thought my librarian was just about the coolest thing on the planet. Everyday I ship hundreds and hundreds of graphic novels out to school and public libraries, and everyday, as that dusty old cardboard box fades into the sunset on a nice shiny postal truck, I think to myself, *lucky kids.*
You couldn't wait to retire. Now you've done it and your life feels unhinged. Your calendar and e-mail in-box are empty. Your spouse wants you to do anything that involves leaving the house. You feel guilty for not being productive.

Welcome to retirement. Even those who work part-time after leaving a primary career, as most people now do, face major logistical and psychological challenges. Retirees who don’t anticipate these landmines may learn about them the hard way. But you can prepare for them.

Here are six pockets of turbulence and suggestions for how to avoid them.

1. Where did the time go?
Retired people often say they’ve never been so busy in their lives; however, there’s a difference between being busy and being engaged in doing things that satisfy, help us grow as human beings, or enable us to help others. You may ask, “How did I get swept up in a bunch of activities that, to be honest, don’t excite me all that much?” Certain activities, considered alone, may be good and worthwhile, but what about other demands on your time? Everyone has to strike a balance between commitments and keeping the flexibility that lets us remain in control of our time. A key rule is to reject demands on your time that don’t fit your short- or long-term goals. Volunteering in your old school library or at a local school may help you and them, but may also keep you in the “school librarian” mold, leading to...

2. “I used to be…”
People often make the mistake of allowing themselves to be defined by their careers. If they fail to diversify, they pay the price—unhappiness—when a career is pulled away. For a teacher-librarian, it might take a while to get over the social awkwardness of not defining oneself by one’s career. In reality, you don’t lose your identity when you quit a job. You merely shed one of your identities. Who you fully are, inside, as a human being, is deeper. Look at your identity as a work-in-progress that evolves with you. Ask questions you may have thought were answered once and for all. Who am I? Do I matter? What can I do? New answers yield new purposes when the old underpinnings are pulled away.

3. Loss of work-related social bonds.
Even if you’re making new friends, a key set of relationships with people in your life have changed. Not facing this reality and, as a result, not taking time for proper closure with these...
relationships, can leave you feeling rejected when former colleagues don’t call you up. That isolation can prevent you from moving forward in your life. Build your new networks before you leave your job. Find new social circles. Turn to family and old friends for support and to new friends and colleagues as well.

4. Loss of support systems.
For teacher-librarians and library technicians used to the regulated school day with its bells marking time and support staff being a desk or phone call away, retired life may mean some may lack the discipline or support they need to get through the day seamlessly. Self-reliance is simply the cost of leaving your job. You have to develop these skills. Yes, you have to think big and follow dreams—but you may need to change the toner cartridge on your own too.

5. Fractured households.
Marital strain often follows retirement, which reshapes intimate relationships. When both spouses are “home alone” everyday, tensions often arise. Work keeps spouses apart for much of the week, but removing a job doesn’t mean that the couple has to spend every minute together. Discuss this with your partner beforehand. Figure out how much time you need alone. Decide which activities will be done jointly and which individually. Sparks can also fly when one spouse is primed to de-emphasize work and the other wants to keep putting in long hours. By being open about your feelings and respectful of others you can minimize these strains. Recognize the need to amend preconceived plans and find some middle ground when choices conflict. If it seems tough, remember that you are dealing with essentially a new stage of the marital relationship.

You may feel as though you are cheating your family out of money by not working. Instead of enjoying a movie during the afternoon, you may feel as though you should be at work.

Remember, lots of terrible people have been very productive. And many poets, mystics and saints who left the world better than they found it appeared to do nothing. If you want to feel productive, give some full attention to your gifts, needs and goals, perhaps to the benefit of others. Examine your assumptions. Enjoy whatever you do.

People who have it toughest during the post-career phase of life generally did not anticipate, prepare or plan for it. Sadly, people are still deluded into thinking that rest, leisure, and recreation will be enough or that retirement will evolve by itself. They are at risk of being bored and without a purpose. Find a passion. Live that passion. It may add years to your life.

Finally, remember to introduce change bit by bit. Challenge so-called “facts” and be willing to change habits. See life as new each and every day. Be grateful for it. Find ways to stay energized and optimistic. The evidence shows that such an attitude can make a difference.
This describes the former Eversley School, a one-room schoolhouse built in 1883 to serve King Township. The founders of The Country Day School (CDS) acquired the site in 1972. CDS developed from that day forward into a thriving, JK–12, independent school, but the stewards of CDS were always mindful about preserving the original schoolhouse. It is now a focal point of the school as the location of the fiction and picture book collections of the CDS Junior School Library.

Even on the coldest winter day, the south-facing windows fill the room with sunlight, providing a warm atmosphere to the library. The high ceiling creates openness to the space. Upon entering the library, however, the main focal point of the room was previously a blank white wall. In my quest to bring some original art into the library, I realized this wall was perfectly suited for the vitality a wall mural would provide.
The Headmaster of the School, Paul Duckett, was immediately receptive to the idea of commissioning an artist to create an original CDS wall mural that would reflect some of the local history of the area. He suggested looking for a local artist who had experience in painting wall murals in public places.

Rudolf Kurz, artist, author, and illustrator of the picture book, *The Rats Came Back*, was recommended for his work at local hospitals and community centers. After a visit to his studio in Orangeville, I invited Rudolf to visit CDS in October 2003 to discuss the project. On his initial visit, the artist took measurements, observed the students, and discussed the history of the school. Rudolf liked the proposed location for the mural and was enthusiastic about the project. The initial design concept was an image of an oversized open book that would feature drawings of the Eversley School, the 1848 stone church, as well as other local sites, and would appeal to elementary school-aged children.

A month after Rudolf’s initial visit to the CDS, his preliminary black & white sketch arrived by mail. To my surprise, the design was markedly different from the one that I had envisioned. The open book concept was not in the design, nor was there any image of the schoolhouse! Instead, the design featured three whimsically attired rats absorbed in reading books on a bookshelf. My initial reaction was, “Will the children like it?” and my next question was “Would the Head, Paul Duckett, pay for it since it was no longer the historical design that I had sold him on?”

After a few days of consideration, I realized that the artist had interpreted the space very well. Rudolf had provided an original design that was whimsical and witty with historical references on the spines of the books. The CDS emblem of the “Tree of Knowledge” and the date of the School’s inception in 1972 were painted in a soft color palette. The artist also cleverly disguised an air vent and exit sign by incorporating them into the spines of books.

Similarities to the characters in Rudolf’s *The Rats Came Back* book were evident, given their fanciful attire and intense expressions. I like Rudolf’s book illustrations in *Rats*, but I had some concerns about having such oversized characters that some children, especially junior kindergartners, might find frightening. I asked the artist to soften the snouts of the characters to make them more mouse-like in appearance because if our
During the March Break, Rudolf delivered a colored sketch of his design—three whimsical library mice totally absorbed in reading books on a bookshelf, a snail shell for a bookend, and one long mouse tail coming out from behind a book at the end of the shelf. His illustration truly captured the essence of a library dedicated to children—it was whimsical, witty, and welcoming!

When the children returned from the March Break, Rudolf had his scaffolding young junior kindergarten children found the characters frightening, it would be my worst nightmare. I also thought that children could relate to life-sized library mice. After all, there are several famous library mice characters, such as Stewart Little, and William Steig’s intrepid rodent trio of Amos, Abel, and Doctor DeSoto, to name a few. I knew that the children would be able to connect their imaginations with the mural characters if they could develop a literary personality for them. The mural characters would have to ‘come alive’

“To preserve and renew is almost as notable as to create.”

—Voltaire

in their imaginations; otherwise the artwork would become like wallpaper. The artist agreed to the alterations and began work in his studio creating the full-scale drawings that he would use as templates on the wall for his painting. Meanwhile, I began sewing my costume for next Halloween’s parade, a white dress with large pink polka dots!
erected and was ready to paint. As the children came to the library for their classes, they watched the artist at work. It was as if Rudolf held a magical paintbrush in his hand. Sometimes he would stop and talk to the children about the process he used to transfer his pencil sketches to the wall. Other times Rudolf would listen to his music on headphones or listen in on the lesson.

The mural project brought renewal to our one room schoolhouse library that has continued since the last stroke of the brush has dried. The children learned about the creative connection between pictures and words as they wrote their own stories about our library mice. Children told of their interpretations of what was happening in the illustration. “What do you think they are reading?” and “Why would they have a reference book about cheese?” One group of students did a research project that resulted in an alphabetical listing of cheeses from around the world.

I quickly realized that our library mice would continue to renew our junior school library as long as the children use their imaginations to carry on their own stories about them. To celebrate the completion of the wall mural project, an open house to meet the artist was scheduled for parents and students. A special cake was ordered with the illustration imprinted into the icing on top. Not wanting to spoil the icing illustration, this piece of cake was given to the artist to bring home to enjoy with his own children.
The Wonders of Using a Library Listserv!
Kimberly Hughes

“Does anyone know a Web site where you can type in a subject and it will give you the Dewey number?”

“I need the Dewey number for Nunavut.”

About four years ago, a new tool came into my library for us to use in my job as teacher-librarian that I now take for granted. At first I complained to fellow co-workers that if I didn’t use it every week, it became a hindrance instead of help due to the overwhelming number of other people using this new tool. Then the other day, I lost the use of it and I found myself floundering, unconnected and wondering how I ever worked without it. Just like microwaves, prepackaged frozen dinners and computer cataloging… how did our predecessors survive?

What I’m referring to is our Simcoe County Librarian Listserv. According to Education World’s (ajkids.com) Internet Glossary a “listserv is an e-mail list server, a computer program that maintains lists of e-mail addresses in order that users can participate in an electronic discussion or conference.” It goes on to say that there are list servers for all imaginable topics and I have found, from researching further on the net, literally thousands of them in every language!

Thanks to our innovative library, social studies, geography and history resource teacher, Pat Elliott, and her technologically advanced ideas, we the elementary school teacher librarians became connected! At first, some of us balked at yet another “computer thing” we had to learn, but its simplicity and fast results soon became the answer to a long debated problem… how do we (the teacher-librarians) stay connected?

In our extremely busy and hectic world of being the hub of our schools and for some of us, part time planning teachers as well, the number of ‘how to’ and ‘where do I find’ questions where just becoming too hard to get quick answers for. Then Voila! Along came our sctl@yahoogroups.com and all the professional answers we could possibly want were at our fingertips… literally!

Everything from borrowing copies of novels from neighbouring schools for Literature Circles, to questions like the ones above from

A fast way to find other listservs or other professional ones you can join is to look at the following Internet sites:

Education World—Getting Started on the Internet: Add YOUR Name to a listserv— TODAY!
http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr062.shtml

Educator’s Reference Desk—Librarianship Link
http://www.eduref.org/

Ontario School Library Association—
for OSLA members only
http://www.accessola.com/osla/site/showPage.cgi?page=about/listserv.htm

membership@accessola.com

IECC—a free teaching.com service to help teachers link with partners in other cultures and countries for e-mail classroom pen-pal and other project exchanges.
http://www.iecc.org/
new librarians were now being dealt with in a fast and easy way. No longer did we feel isolated! Although we are an important part of each of our workplaces, we’re still not a part of a division or grade group in our individual schools. With the listserv, we now had a link to other individuals in the same unique situation and could exchange ideas, news, professional tips and sometimes just praise and acknowledgment for a worthy accomplishment! This connection also brings a feeling of power, as with any question from other teachers on staff or from our administration, we can take on the persona of “hero” when we get back to them (generally within a day) with the needed answers or even “your books you need are on the way”!

I even used our listserv when I did a teacher-librarian exchange to Australia! Although a lot of the inquires didn’t pertain to me that far away, I still learned of new sites to use, kept up with the local news and just felt less homesick at times—a definite bonus!

So, even though we seem to be inundated with new technology every time we turn around, I strongly recommend anyone in our sometimes-lonely profession to join or create his or her own listserv. I’m sure you’ll be writing your newfound joy of this fantastic new tool to us soon!

By the way, a few answers we received to the question above were:

“I use 971.95 for my Nunavut books… a trick I like to use when I’m wrestling with my Dewey #s is type the book title into the Toronto Library catalogue… http://hip.tpl.toronto.on.ca/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=#focusfocus they’re bound to have at least one copy SOMEWHERE in their system!

For American titles, there’s always Library of Congress… http://catalog.loc.gov Both allow you to do a subject search as well.”

And

“Not sure what edition we are supposed to be using. This site used the 13th: http://www-lib.nearnorth.edu.on.ca/dewey/ddc.htm”

(Hope this helps you too!)
Sometimes it’s easy to let an opportunity slip through one’s fingers. To facilitate participation in Expedition Africa (part of a partnership with Algonquin College), all of the secondary schools in Ottawa-Carleton District School Board received a camera, microphones, speaker systems, and software to support videoconferencing. Initially, as a teacher-librarian still lamenting the loss of my library technician several years ago, I chose no to get involved. I was content to leave the task of becoming familiar with this technology to members of the tech department and to the teachers who were directly involved in Expedition Africa. I rationalized my disinterest with the thought that old technology and books crying out to be catalogued already overwhelmed me; I didn’t have time to take on the task of learning about more computer gadgetry.

In contrast, when my colleague Mei-Lan Marko, teacher-librarian at Rideau High School, heard that her school was going to receive videoconferencing equipment, she knew exactly where it belonged. The school library and resource centre was the perfect location for this technology, which she has used to facilitate collaborative learning and provide students with unique opportunities to access and share information.

Staff and students at Rideau High School have been engaged in learning how to use videoconferencing technology for many years. Teachers Heather Spratt and Mei-Lan Marko were fortunate to be able to participate in a three-year national project involving six other schools in Canada, the National Research Council, the Communications Research Centre, and other affiliates. Tim Hawes at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board facilitated the use of this new technology at the two Ottawa schools, Rideau and Earl of March. Although using videoconferencing for professional development was the mandate of the LearnCanada Project, curricular enhancement and student participation became natural and exciting offshoots. Various classes and subject areas benefited from these on-line experiences.

In 2001, Rideau participated in a Virtual Classroom Landmines Videoconference in cooperation with CRC (www.crc.ca/en/html/virtualclassroom/home/program/program). Daniel Livermore, the Ambassador for Mine Action, did a presentation on key landmine issues for students in three provinces as part of this conference. Although only seven classes at the school participated in the actual videoconference, everyone became involved because the conference became the focus for cross-curricular activities, including workshops that were presented to 26 classes. Each department was invited to identify a curricular link to the topic and run a workshop on that topic. Morning announcements promoted landmines awareness. The theme of a school dance became “Dance Without Fear.” The entire school was mobilized in the “Rideau Against Landmines” campaign and Mei-Lan Marko’s final comment was, “It was an exhausting couple of weeks, but seeing an entire school community working together to take positive action made it all worthwhile.”
Her belief in this model of learning is evident from events that followed. In 2002 the school was partnered with two other schools from Ontario and schools from three other provinces to discuss the Kyoto Accord. Rideau students benefited from the chance to hear directly from a politician from Alberta who expressed concerns about the negative economic effects of environmental controls on the western energy industry. Students from the west heard from Ottawa politicians and environmentalists. On both ends of the video connection, students got to directly observe politicians dealing with controversial issues in an unrehearsed and unedited forum. Such events provide a very meaningful culmination of research; students can be motivated by a desire to engage in a discussion that is part of the real world beyond the walls of the classroom.

In 2004, Rideau High School explored another dimension of learning via videoconference when Richard Swandel and his ESL class participated in a broadband book club sponsored by the CRC’s Virtual Classroom and the National Library and Archives. The focus was *Hana’s Suitcase*. Students from Rideau and Kangiqsualujjuag, Quebec had an opportunity to interact with holocaust survivor David Shentow while working on a collaborative analysis of the book. This demonstrates how technology makes it possible for people to overcome geographical barriers that would otherwise impede direct communication and information sharing between groups.

This year, with the new equipment conveniently installed in the library, Rideau is one of the schools participating in Expedition Africa. The project will provide live feeds from Africa to help teachers ask and answer questions connected to the curriculum that will make students more aware of the world around them. Among the topics to be explored during this virtual expedition are the proliferation of cell phone use in less developed countries and the changes in the lives of the Bedouin people due to advances in technologies. The expedition will also gather information on topics ranging from the mathematics behind the pyramids to the influence of non-indigenous media in some of the more westernized areas of the continent.

A single videoconference in a school used to be an enormous technical undertaking. With reductions in the complexity of videoconferencing equipment, a videoconference need not be a logistical nightmare. Our board has adopted Isabel, software from Agora Systems (www.agora-2000.com), a Spanish company. Amongst the many other options available are solutions from Polycom (www.polycom.com/products_services/0,1816,pw-4733,00.htm), Adobe Breeze (www.adobe.com/products/breeze) Elluminate (www.elluminate.com) and Microsoft Live Meeting (www.microsoft.com/office/uc/livemeeting/default.mspx). However, once the equipment has been acquired and the software has been installed, the problem of balancing accessibility and the security of the equipment remains. In the Rideau High School Resource Centre, Mei-Lan Marko has designed a cabinet in which she can store a media projector, camera and computer securely but ready for easy deployment and use.

Although it is clear that this equipment can be used in a way that will promote collaborative learning and engage students in real world research, teacher-librarians may be concerned that this additional equipment will be a burden in a time when many of our budgets are shrinking and technical support seems to be evaporating. Nonetheless, the use of this tool is mandated by the OSLA Information Studies curriculum. Listing the expectations for Information Technologies, the guidelines state, “By the end of Grade Twelve students will: participate in videoconferencing to explore a topic and share information on-line.”

In the past, when the necessary equipment was often not readily accessible, it may have made sense to assign a relatively low priority to this expectation. However, it is becoming increasingly likely that students will have to use this technology in their workplaces as businesses respond to increases in the costs and inconvenience associated with travel.
Students may have to use this technology to participate in the interviews that will get them their jobs. It is important for schools to prepare students to use this technology effectively.

In this age of cell phones and high-speed Internet, most students will not be intimidated by the technology. At the same time, most of them will need help to understand how to present themselves and their ideas for the best possible effect. Some useful suggestions for structuring videoconferences in an educational setting are offered by Shawn Allenby on his blogspot dedicated to exploring “best practices, theories and ideas associated with video and Web conferencing in education” (http://vcineducation.blogspot.com). An example of the sort of practical issues he explores is how to involve large numbers of students in videoconferencing while recognizing the practical limitations on the number of simultaneous participants. He emphasizes the importance of “moving away from a video conference being a ‘talking head’ and moving into using it in a collaborative way.”

Once they are familiar with the technology, teacher-librarians can play a pivotal role in promoting its use; they can suggest ways in which videoconferences can complement student research, while providing opportunities for cross-curricular teaching, both within and between schools. While doing this, they can also help students become comfortable with a technology that is likely to become increasingly present and important in their lives.

Students need not be the only direct beneficiaries of this technology in schools. I look forward to using it to communicate with my fellow teacher-librarians. My school is at the eastern extreme of the district. When our subject council meets at school at the other extremity, I spend more time driving to and from that location than I do meeting with my colleagues. Although the refreshments supplied by the host at another school would be far superior to any crumbs I might find at my end of a video camera, I would be more than compensated for any caloric or culinary loss by the savings in gas and preservation of leisure time.

Videoconferencing will never completely replace the face-to-face meetings, which give us opportunities to visit each other’s libraries, but they could allow more participation by people who are constrained from attending meetings by time and distance. The practical limitations on the number of images that can be presented on a screen at one time might mean that teacher-librarians from neighbouring schools might gather to share one camera. Structuring the meetings in this way would allow experienced colleagues to share their knowledge of the technology with novices, thus providing training while dealing with the agenda of a regular meeting.

Inspired by the work of a colleague, I am trying to figure out which books need to be catalogued immediately and which ones can wait. It is going to take time to learn about the videoconferencing technology that has recently arrived at my school. It will be a while before I will stop asking myself, “Isn’t there an easier way to do this?” The experiences of others who have taken the leap, however, demonstrate that videoconferencing can be a valuable technique for generating the enthusiasm and inspiring the questions that will lead students from reading, formal research, and informed discussion to action based on their learning.

Before this new tool can have that desired effect on my students, I will have to figure out where to plug in the video camera. Round green plug, round green socket… I’ll give it a try.
In the beginning, there was only Silver Birch. Those who are currently involved in the selection process for the Forest of Reading® would be amazed to learn that the entire first list was read, selected and promoted in only three weeks. We have come a long way since 1994 and that first program with 8,000 participants. The Forest of Reading® now boasts six programs (four school-based and two for adults) with more than 200,000 participants last year. Selection committees start reading as early as January and, as in the case of Silver Birch this year, read 147 books, 16,232 pages in all, in order to find those special literary gems that become The Forest of Reading® programs.

Throughout the 13 years that the Ontario Library Association has been running the reading programs, changes and adjustments have had to be made. This is to be expected if the programs are to be dynamic and meet the changing needs of the students and readers we serve. This year is no exception. For a long time, it has been a pleasant struggle to produce lists that will reflect the interests of the wide range of readers in each program.

Silver Birch has been the jewel in the crown of the Forest. It has one of the largest groups of participants of the independent reading programs (Blue Spruce is not included in this tally as those students have all of the books read to them by teacher-librarians and teachers), and inclusion on a Silver Birch list now means a best-seller status in Canada for the authors and publishers. Despite the proven popularity of the Silver Birch program, it has always been a challenge to balance a fiction and nonfiction list for readers in grades 4 to 6, meeting the needs of the reluctant or younger reader while also challenging the older and more proficient reader. Many suggestions have been made to change and realign the programs. Discussions have been taking place now for several years. This year we are trying the following changes to meet the needs of the students while also recognizing the constraints and realities of schools and teacher-librarians.

**The New Look of Silver Birch**

The Blue Spruce and Silver Birch programs have been realigned. Blue Spruce now is geared to Kindergarten to Grade 2, with Silver Birch covering Grade 3 to Grade 6. In order to appeal to all of the readers from Grade 3 to 6, a third list has been created, the *Silver Birch Express*. This list is a combination of fiction and nonfiction, aimed at the Grade 3–4 reading level. The idea is to offer this option to all Silver Birch readers, allowing the ESL student, reluctant reader, special need student and the younger students in the group a list that will encourage reading both fiction and nonfiction, which maintaining the prestige of participating in the Silver Birch program like their classmates. All of the books on this list are accessible and will allow all readers to be successful participants/voters.
As in all of the independent reading programs, a reader only needs to read five books out of a list of 10 to qualify to vote.

There will still be a fiction and nonfiction list offered in Silver Birch, but with the slight twist that these books will be aimed at the Grade 5–6 reader, offering a grade-appropriate, challenging list for those students who are more mature and capable. Nowhere is it written that only Grade 5 and 6 students can read these lists. It will truly depend on the capabilities of the individual reader. Certainly a proficient Grade 4 reader will be drawn to the regular lists, just as a struggling Grade 6 reader may be more interested in participating using the Express list.

For those schools that wish to include the Grade 3 students in Blue Spruce still, there is nothing prohibiting this. We only wish to offer options to all readers; it is left to the teacher-librarians to decide what is best for their community of readers.

**Further Changes: the Launch**

In an effort to make the program more exciting, to make the books more accessible, and to give students a chance to personally connect with the authors, OLA intends to have a gala launch of the Forest of Reading® Program. All of the authors from the four school-based programs (Blue Spruce, Silver Birch, Red Maple and White Pine) will be invited to attend on January 31, 2007. The afternoon will be dedicated to celebrating all of the books and authors. The students attending will be encouraged to have books signed and pictures taken. The celebration will honour the hundreds of committee members who volunteer their time to run the program and will involve children, youth, and adults, plus authors, illustrators and publishers.

There will be a nominal charge for the event. Watch the OLA programmer’s Web site for further information. Register early for the programs of your choice, so you do not lose out on this wonderful opportunity!

**And Then Let the Celebrations Begin:**

In the past, all of the individual programs have had their own celebrations during the month of May. This year, we will be having a combined Literary Festival on May 17, with all of the program awards being given throughout the day. We will be taking over Harbourfront, with many activities available to all the festival participants, such as author readings, illustration workshops and writing workshops, to name a few. This will be a ticketed event; further details will be available through the OLA programmer’s Web site.

*If you have any questions about the changes, or wish to comment on the new look of the Forest of Reading®, please contact the OLA office by e-mail info@accessola.com or by phone at 416-363-3388*
Teacher-librarians have the unique opportunity to be dynamic change agents within their library, school, and community. (Belise 2005) However, the perpetuation of leadership myths and hierarchical leadership structures have created a stereotyped image of the role of the teacher-librarian as a caretaker of books, not as a potential leader. As a result, a disengagement of teacher-librarians from leadership opportunities has occurred. Findings suggest the myths listed below encourage hierarchical leadership styles and continue to frighten away prospective leaders.

- Leaders are born, not made.
- Leaders are popular, charismatic people.
- The person with the title or the highest position in an organization is the leader.
- Effective leadership is based on control, coercion, and manipulation.
- Good leaders have more education than other people. (Smith 2006)

Do these lines describe all the leaders you know, or the best leaders? As a result of these misconceptions, potential leaders go undeveloped and unique leadership opportunities are overlooked. What can be done? Research suggests a new style of leadership is needed.

There has been a subtle change occurring in the field of leadership. Outdated hierarchical leadership structures in educational organizations are now being replaced with a more collaborative leadership, which embraces change and reform. (Belisle 2005) The York Region District School Board is actively embracing a distributed style of leadership. Bob Harper, Coordinating Superintendent of Education, suggests distributed leadership focuses on five concepts: supportive and shared leadership, collective leadership, shared values and vision, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice.

Distributed leadership is a valuable notion of management in which everyone will have an active role within a learning community and hold a shared vision with a commitment to student learning and collective learning. How, then, do teacher-librarian specialists connect with the larger learning community and take on a leadership role? I believe part of the answer may be found in leadership training.

Last fall, my traditional image of a leader changed dramatically after completing a Lead Teacher/Department Head Development Series Workshop. The objectives of this program, offered by Leadership Development at the York Region District School Board are to:
• support current and potential school leaders
• build their knowledge base about leadership
• provide practical leadership strategies to be used with teams and departments
• build a professional learning community

Currently, there are no specific leadership workshops for teacher-librarians, with the exception of the additional qualification course Librarianship III. This course is based on the leadership role of the teacher-librarian. Some teacher-librarians who decide to take on the extra responsibility of literacy teacher do receive some leadership training. Training usually focuses on modeling and coaching colleagues. Teachers in the York Region District School Board have the opportunity to take a general leadership workshop not focused on librarianship. I was introduced to a Preparatory Leadership Program only after taking on the added responsibility of Technology Lead Teacher at Wells Street Public School. With trepidation, I wondered how I could have coped with the increasing responsibility in the library setting without my newfound leadership knowledge and skills.

I recommend all teacher-librarians take a leadership workshop. My Lead Teacher/Department Head leadership training has helped me to acknowledge the leadership myths I previously embraced, and has enabled me to create an entirely new perspective of a leader. I learned that anyone can be a leader if they have the right tools. Leadership is about empowering others. Patience, knowledge of emotional intelligence theories, self-motivation and the courage to take risks, are also essential attributes of a modern educational leader.

Teacher-librarians are in a unique position as a collaborating force within their school. With the support of leadership training, teacher-librarians can shatter the traditional vision of the leader and become agents of change by reaching beyond the walls of the library (Belisle 2005). As a leader, in the words of Mahatma Ghandi, “You can be the change you want to see in the world.”

References:


What do librarians do to find a balance between left brain/rational/ cerebral pursuits and right brain/artistic/physical enjoyment? The fictional character Batgirl worked at Gotham City University Library during the day and by night wore a sexy costume, rode a motorcycle and fought crime. There are also many real life librarians that take part in all kinds of wild and wonderful leisure pursuits that defy all stereotypical notions of the information professional.

Imagine networking at the Ontario Library Association’s Super Conference and finding out that you were only one of several belly-dancing librarians. That is what happened to Eris Weaver, a librarian in Petaluma, California. She discovered that there were so many belly dancing librarians that they could create their own interest group at ALA and also a Web site.

The Barbarian Librarian helps people access information on barbarians while dressing for the part. On her Web site she includes pictures of herself in costume and a detailed bibliography of barbarian resources.

The Modified Librarians is a group that provides an on-line forum to discuss the concept and practices of body modification as it relates to librarians as persons and professionals. Yes, many of their tattoos are book-related images.

If you send Linda Absher $12, she will mail you an autographed thong in her capacity as the Lipstick Librarian. She is a wonderfully funny blogger who also maintains a fashion advice Web site where she gives amusing beauty and style tips to librarians.

If you are interested in hearing audio files of birdcalls and learning about ornithology, you
can visit the Radical Birder Librarian at www.geocities.com/birderlibrarian.

Chris Dodge, former librarian at the Utne Reader calls himself the Street Librarian and provides some very interesting articles and interviews with what he calls “radical librarians.” These articles may be accessed at www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/7423/radlib.html

Some librarians are bookplate collectors and specialize in rare and beautiful woodblock prints to decorate their favourite tomes. Examples of bookplates can be admired in the on-line gallery of the American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers at www.bookplate.org or, if you are a little more adventurous you can access the Naked Librarian who specializes in aesthetic bookplates depicting book-loving women in various layers (and not so many layers) of clothing.

As for myself, I have a personal interest in librarians who are adept at balancing work and their private life. I recently learned how to unicycle and at times can be found in the stacks shelving books on one wheel.

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Adrienne Gear, October 2006  978-1-55138-203-6  $24.95
Help children recognize what happens in their heads while they read, with simple applications that can be incorporated into any classroom routine. Chapters on the five powerful reading/thinking strategies — connecting, questioning, visualizing, inferring, and transforming.

Reading the Media: Media Literacy in High School English  
Renee Hobbs, November 2006  978-0-80774-738-4  $31.61
Documents how a media literacy course significantly improved reading comprehension, writing, critical analysis, and other academic skills, and offers practical information for teachers attempting to bring media literacy into their classroom, including lesson plans and activities.

Teens, Technology and Literacy: Or, Why Bad Grammar Isn’t Always Bad  
Paul Fleisher and Donald M. Ziegler, December 2006  978-1-59158-368-4  $39.60
The author discusses how emerging technologies, such as IM, blogging, and chat, affect reading, writing, and communication habits and skills; and how they are creating new communities of learning.
NEWS CLIPPING SERVICES

HAVE BECOME RSS FEEDS:

KEEP UP-TO-DATE AGAIN

Kathy Kawasaki
Remember those old news clipping services you used to subscribe to? Or those newspaper files we used to maintain in school libraries? Most of us dropped them when we began to subscribe to newspapers and journals in electronic database format. It was easy to search for topics and there was more material than we could ever have clipped. Now, another problem has arisen with the spread of the World Wide Web. Specialist Web sites and blogs have multiplied the amount of information and we have lost control again. Not for long, though!

“Really Simple Syndication” is a new format used to syndicate Web content that changes rapidly. Now you can subscribe to syndicated information feeds through a newsreader. No more visiting 50 Web sites every day to find out what’s new in biology. A newsreader will produce one page with the headlines from all 50 sites. Scan the page and choose which headlines you’d like to read. My newsreader is my home page. It provides a quick update every morning when I log onto the Internet. News comes right to my doorstep again!

Blogs and newspapers aren’t the only places you will find RSS feeds. If you repeatedly search for a keyword in a database, you can often subscribe to the RSS feed for the results. If you are trying to keep up with “diabetes” in the journals, try HubMed, www.hubmed.org, a service that lets you search PubMed journals and subscribe to the results page, updated automatically in your newsreader. Try a search in Google News and subscribe to the feed. (Right-click the word “RSS” in the left-side banner.)

How easy is it to use a newsreader? Very easy. On-line newsreaders are free and accessible anytime, requiring only that you register. The oldest newsreader is Bloglines, www.bloglines.com. Open an account and sign in. On your feeds page, click “ADD,” and paste the URL of the feed or the site into the subscribe box. Click “Submit.” The site’s headlines will be added to your page. How do you find the feed URL on a Web site? Look for the little orange RSS/XML buttons or the Bloglines button.

Right-click the button and “copy link location” or “copy shortcut” into your newsreader. Bloglines also has a news “clipping” feature. At the bottom of every post, you’ll find a “clip/blog this” command. Click it and add the article to your clippings folder. It’s great for research!

RSS feeds can clean up your e-mail, too. All those old newsletter subscriptions now have feeds. Read that newsletter when you want to read it. Just look for the RSS button on the newsletter!

Spread the good news. Help your teachers keep up-to-date. Give them a list of feeds in their subject area. I’ve made a JotSpot wiki http://smaug.jot.com with lists of feeds for teachers and librarians. Anyone can edit it. Click the orange EDIT button in the upper-right corner to add URLs. SAVE and we all keep up-to-date!
Making decisions about a library schedule is never easy. There are so many factors to consider: school size, prep coverage, administrative support, and teacher resistance among them. Compounding the problem at our school was the lack of experience on the part of the novice teacher-librarian, and the fact that there had been no library services in place for two years. This is the story of a journey that follows the evolution of a teacher-librarian’s schedule.

My first experience with the school library as a teacher came in my first year. The library position was sandwiched into a couple of prep payback periods shared by myself and another teacher. It was suggested I use my prep payback to provide the junior division with some computer and library time. This quickly evolved into a weekly research period for whatever projects the class was working on. Failing any given topic, we discussed basic computer concepts such as the components of a computer, proper terminology and other basics.

My next experience came as a 75-minute/week administrator. This was my introduction to the real nuts and bolts of the teacher-librarian position. My administrator position put me in touch with team leaders and other colleagues in the school board, and provided leads to training sessions, where I first began to understand the scope of the position. My volunteer ran a weekly book exchange and supplied a wealth of information about the collection as well as the students’ and teachers’ borrowing habits.

I am not a novice when it comes to libraries: I volunteered in school libraries all through elementary school, lived in one at lunch in high school, worked as a shelving clerk at a university library and volunteered at my own children’s school library for six years. However, until I held that administrator position, I had never been aware of all the possibilities for instruction or of the complexities of the scheduling issues.

When I began attending those first training sessions, and spoke with colleagues and team leaders, I realized the possible scope of a teacher-librarian’s role. The role also came with a lot of controversy: the old ‘vision’ of a ‘Shh-shh-ing’ dragon and the new one of a partner with a real input into curriculum instruction and leadership. The library had become a battleground, fighting for staff, funds and the flexibility to work with teachers and students when they needed the library, not when a schedule said that they needed it.

When I took on a .3 position the following year, my first objective was to get staff and students into the library and reacquaint them with this part of the school. After two years of under-use, many had almost forgotten its existence, other than as the dark space at the top of the stairs. To begin, I approached my administrator, armed with circulation statistics and reports about the library’s role in school literacy. He quickly saw my point, and at the timetabling meeting, created a library sign up that was to be booked in the same way as Phys Ed or French. This was our introduction to fixed scheduling, but it was the fastest and least stressful way to reintroduce the school to the library. I used my fixed periods to do book talks, book exchanges and library orientation, all the things I remembered from my own library visits. Then I took it a step further. Gaining more confidence from various trainings and my Library Part 1 AQ, I cornered the teachers while they were in the library, offering to teach research skills, work on projects and partner with them for future units. There was some resistance and hesitation at first, but by the beginning of the third term, I knew things were changing when the Grade 4/5 teachers...
approached me about developing a language arts unit in partnership with them. It was a challenge delivering the unit during fixed visits only, but we made it work.

My administrator also took note, and made the position a .5 the next year and he reduced my prep coverage as well. This left me with a new dilemma. The staff and I were happy with the fixed schedule, but being a small school, I was left with only three extra periods a week once I had booked everyone in for a weekly visit. Research in the field indicated that a flexible schedule was a better model. Published articles by teacher-librarians, those “in the trenches” praised flexibility, stating that “… [it] provides time for students and classes to use the media center whenever library media skills can be applied to a course of study or a class project.” (Stevens Browne and Burton, 1989) The concept appealed to me, but I wasn’t sure that my staff or I were ready to make a leap to open periods. In consultation with my administrator, we decided to make one of the periods an open book exchange for students who found a weekly visit insufficient for their reading needs and presented the other periods to the staff as ‘partnering time.’

It was a concept that was slow to catch on. The first month went by, and I spent my partnering periods dusting and catching up on long neglected administrative chores. I knew this couldn’t continue, so I approached a junior division teacher who I knew was working on a class project and persuaded him to bring the class to the library for those periods. I explained that the students would benefit from our combined experience; that we could help focus their research and that between us, the students would receive more individualized attention. He agreed to try it and soon became a regular user of the periods, even after the project ended.

The intermediate division teachers were next. One took some convincing, but the other was eager for support and soon became my other regular visitor for the partnering time slots. By the end of the year, we had collaborated on a Web quest and finished the experience on a positive note.

At the beginning of the current year, I was met with another surprise. My administrator thought enough of the library program to remove all my prep coverage and give me free reign to timetable as I saw fit. I knew this would give me the opportunity to implement the spirit as well as the reality of the American Association of Librarians Policy Statement, which deems that no timetable shall be in place so that students and teachers can access the library and its resources at any time (AASL Position Statement on Flexible Scheduling). I also knew that if I didn’t schedule in certain classes, particularly the Kindergarten and Primary students, they would receive less exposure to the library and its resources, as the nature of their program is very structured. I finally decided to opt for a modified version of my previous year’s timetable, scheduling all classes for a weekly visit, but providing more partnering periods and scheduling them so that they ran back to back to maximize access to the library and lab.

Doug Johnson summed up my situation in his article about flexible scheduling: “A flexible schedule allows the teacher librarian to work collaboratively with teachers and administration to develop programs that may or may not include regularly scheduled classes.”

He recognized the need for flexible scheduling, but also felt that fixed timetabling had its benefits as well, a point that I have come to appreciate through trial and error.

As to the future, who knows? With the vagaries of budget allocations, I may be able to continue with this type of scheduling or be reduced to a smaller position in the future. I do know, though, that I am happy with the compromise I have achieved and that my staff and administrator share that feeling.
Walter Was Worried
Laura Vaccaro Seeger
Sample Curriculum Links:
Primary Art
Primary Language:
Media Literacy
Summary:
Newly released in paperback, this ALA Notable Children’s Book for Younger Readers is a wonderful combination of alliteration, art and story. The simple, yet surprisingly thoughtful text tells the story of small child’s feelings as a storm approaches. Emotions range from frightened and shocked to hopeful and ecstatic. The remarkable twist to this book is that the letters of the alphabet are used in the creative illustrations to depict the emotions of the characters.

How to Use This Book:
Use the book to discuss the feeling evoked by the artwork in the story. Ask students how the alphabet letters become a subtle part of the overall story told by the pictures. Students can create a “feeling” face by selecting an “emotion” word and incorporating the letters of that word into their artwork (Primary Media Literacy, Making Inferences and Interpreting Messages, 1.2).

Once Upon a Banana
Jennifer Armstrong
Illustrated by David Small
Sample Curriculum Links:
Primary Language:
Media Literacy
Primary Art
Junior & Intermediate
Language: Media Literacy
Summary:
This outrageously crazy picture book plays out the story plays out through a series of rhyming street signs that are blithely ignored by characters in the story. These street signs are meant to enforce lawfulness on city life; however the increasing absurdity is that they have no effect on the growing chaos. This book is reminiscent of the sidesplitting hilarity of a silent film.

How to Use This Book:
Students can create new and improved street signs using their knowledge of what makes an eye-catching media poster. Post the signs on a sequential mural depicting the changes in the story as the characters react to the newly designed signs (Primary Media Literacy, Producing Media Texts, 3.4).

Pick Me Up: Stuff You Need to Know
Jeremy Leslie and
David Roberts
Sample Curriculum Links:
Grade 4–6 Social Studies
Intermediate History
Summary:
This eye-catching reference book provides kids with a current context for classic information. Mimicking the Internet, TV and computer gaming, the diverse contents fuse pop culture with standard informational topics such as history, science and geography. This design arranges information in Web page format with links to related topics on other pages that imitate hot-links. The tone of writing is light, yet the content is captivating and thought provoking. Ever wonder what a pioneer girl might post on her blog? Students will want to delve into this nonfiction treasure to find out.

How to Use This Book:
The Internet-like format of this book is a great way to introduce the concept of blogging. Students could use the book as a model for creating their own blogs, written with the voice of characters of historical significance (e.g. a Grade 3 student writing a blog in the persona of a pioneer girl, a Grade 6 student writing an astronaut’s blog.)
a Grade 5 student writing a blog from the point of view of a significant character in Canadian government. Further integration of technology will occur by incorporating each blog into a slide show presentation (Junior & Intermediate Media Literacy, Producing Media Texts, 3.4).

**The Beatrice Letters (A Series of Unfortunate Events)**

Lemony Snicket  

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Junior & Intermediate  
Language: Media Literacy, Writing

**Summary:**  
Hook your Lemony Snicket fans with something new and different. The Beatrice Letters is a collection of artifacts that makes for a quick read. Letters, a dual sided poster, hidden compartments, and photos give clues to cast light on some of the mysteries surrounding the Baudelaire family’s series of unfortunate events.

**How to Use This Book:**  
Students could work in groups to discuss the effectiveness of the author’s presentation of his work in the form of letters and posters. (Junior & Intermediate Media Literacy, Responding to and Evaluating Texts, 1.3)

They could also evaluate the strength of the clues, and work to interpret the message in the piece of work. (Junior & Intermediate Media Literacy, Interpreting Messages 1.2)

**Surviving Antarctica: Reality TV 2083**

Andrea White  
2006. ISBN: 0-060-55456-8  
(also released as No Child’s Game: Reality TV 2083)

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Grade 4–6 Social Studies  
Grade 7 & 8 History  
Junior & Intermediate  
Language: Media Literacy, Writing

**Summary:**  
It’s the year 2083, when education is provided through mass-marketed television. Students star in Historical Survival, a reality TV show based on historical events. The show has five students who have been chosen to fight for survival in frozen Antarctica as they re-enact Robert F. Scott’s expedition to the South Pole. Constant peril has been written into the script to entertain the public masses watching at home. The current popularity of reality TV makes this a timely and riveting tale.

**How to Use This Book:**  
This book would be a great prompt to get students to create a travelogue illustrating the journey of the characters in the novel. (Junior Media Literacy, Producing Media Texts, 3.4) For more of a curriculum twist, students could create a travelogue based on the journey of characters in a reality TV episode of their own creation (e.g. the journey of an early Canadian explorer, including contacts with First Nations peoples). Intermediate students might consider producing a mock television commercial advertising their student-created “Reality TV show,” (Intermediate Media Literacy, Producing Media Texts, 3.4).

**Cathy’s Book: If Found Call 650-266-8233**

Sean Stewart and Jordan Weisman  
Illustrated by: Cathy Brigg and Shane Small  

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Gr. 7 & 8 Health  
Intermediate Language: Media Literacy

**Summary:**  
The ultimate in current teen-lit, this interactive novel will lure readers into the bizarre and compelling life of Cathy, the seventeen-year-old girl with a mystery to solve. Cathy is failing classes, her friends are annoyed with her, and she wakes up to discover her boyfriend has broken up with her, and that she has a strange marking on her arm. Through clues and hints in the form of letters, diary entries, photos, Web sites and phone numbers to call, readers will be entranced by this unique spin on interactive adventure. Visit Cathy’s MySpace URL or add a blog to Cathy’s Web site at www.cathysbook.com.

**How to Use This Book:**  
Use the novel to discuss the implications of a commercial company hosting the Web site that accompanies this book, and the promotion of the product in the book itself (Intermediate Media Literacy, 1.6 Production Perspectives).
In August 2005, I stepped into my new classroom for the school year: the library. I was ecstatic. I envisioned the library being a lively space, with students and teachers learning and working together. I imagined reading programs coming alive, authors visiting our school, and students of all grades visiting the library at every opportunity. It was heavenly.

As a teacher entering into a new role, I had a vision of what I hoped to accomplish. However, the reality was often far from the picture I had painted in my mind. Although I had taught primary grades for several years, entering this new role put me back in the position of a new and struggling teacher.

When I first entered teaching six years ago, I did not have a designated mentor, but was lucky to be in an environment where more experienced teachers took me under their wings and provided me with both emotional and professional support. They were caring people who saw the need to support a new teacher. They connected me with resources and helped me through challenging situations, enabling me to become a stronger teacher. To this day, I am grateful for their help and guidance. Where would I have been without their support?

Teaching is such a dynamic and complex job that it is easy for teachers entering the profession to feel overwhelmed and frustrated. Studies have shown that over 30% of new teachers quit within the first five years of entering the profession (McCaughtry, 2005).

As a new teacher-librarian taking on a new role within the teaching profession, where do I fit in as part of the learning spectrum? Am I a novice? Am I an expert? Am I both? What types of support is available to help me successfully bridge the transition into this new role?

In the past five months, I learned that one of the most important steps I can take is to connect with a network of teacher-librarians. This connection with others can be an extensive vehicle of support, especially since there is no one else in my school that is in the same role as myself. Without the support of a network, the teacher-librarian experience can become isolating and overwhelming. I must admit that I was quite overwhelmed during my first month in this position, having high goals and little experiences to draw from.

Knowing what I know today about my learning style and my need to experience and observe, I decided to take a proactive role and ask my principal if she could connect me to an experienced teacher-librarian. I explained that observing someone “in action” would greatly help me to establish a vision. My principal strongly supported the idea, and sent out a message to the principals in our neighbourhood of schools. She received a large number of responses and within weeks, I was connected with several outstanding teacher-librarians within the board. I made arrangements to meet with two of them, and my principal supported this endeavour, granted me release time for the meetings, and off I went.

The experience was invaluable. At one school, I observed an open-concept library, and discussed strategies with the teacher-
librarian for running a successful library program. At another school, I observed the teacher-librarian lead a whole class in a literature circle activity, a partnering lesson in science and an enrichment reading literature circle. In both experiences, time was left for debriefing and talking. At the end of each meeting, we exchanged contact information, and kept the doors of communication open for future needs.

The opportunity to observe how other teacher-librarians organize space, plan programs, and collaborate with teachers enlightened, encouraged and energized me to do the same for my library. I needed to see collaboration in action, to talk to someone already doing it, and to understand the challenges and strategies to overcome them. I needed to connect with people who understand what is required to run a good library program in an elementary school.

According to Porter (2003), mentoring is a four-stage process that involves relationship building and trust; assessing and understanding the protégé or “mentee’s” learning style and need; coaching and fine-tuning professional skills; and guiding and weaning mentees to understand and construct their own teaching and learning styles.

The type of mentoring that Porter refers to would work well in a setting where a long-term relationship can be built and maintained. This would require close communication and contact between the mentor/mentee over an extended period of time. In the community of teacher-librarians, is this type of mentoring realistic and achievable? The challenge for new teacher-librarians to have a mentoring relationship is that the relationship will most likely be a distance relationship, especially in small elementary school settings. The commitment to this relationship needs to be strong on both sides; otherwise the relationship may fizzle away over time.

Perhaps a more general and less committed model of mentoring would work successfully in a teacher-librarian community. Opportunities to meet and develop relationships within a network of teacher-librarians could open the door for a more casual type of mentoring to occur, a “nurturing process in which a skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development” (Anderson & Shannon, 1988). In this model, new teacher-librarians can be mentored whenever there are opportunities to interact with more experienced role models.

As a new teacher-librarian, I have found the following types of mentoring environments to be extremely successful and invaluable in helping me to understand and develop a better vision of my job:

1. Mentoring support from the school board. This includes professional development and workshops catered to new teacher-librarians. These workshops focus on giving us the “basics” to do our job well.
2. Mentoring support from area leaders. Early in the year, an instructional leader visited me to analyze my library design and answer any questions I had. The visit, although brief (one to two hours), was very encouraging. I felt the effort had been made for a personal connection, and that someone had seen and understood my unique challenges. This instructional leader kept in contact, and came to help me weed the school library during the next month.
3. Mentoring support from a network of teacher-librarians in the neighbourhood. This type of support can take many shapes and forms—it can be a group of
teacher-librarians meeting together casually, or it can be an organized network based on school location.

4. Mentoring support from a role model.

Along with hearing the theory of a great library program, I needed to see it in action. This is when opportunities to meet and learn from fellow experienced teacher-librarians helped connect ideas with practice. Opportunities to ask questions and to learn from more experienced teacher-librarians helped strengthen my vision and understanding of my role as a new teacher-librarian.

The role of a teacher-librarian is dynamic, complex and unique to each library. It can also be demanding, challenging and isolating. Therefore, the key to a successful transition into the library role is having a strong support system and opportunities to connect with a wider network of people in the same position. It is certainly ideal if mentoring is organized and set up for you, however, if this is not the reality, do not be afraid to seek out opportunities to connect yourself with people who can support and mentor you. It can be the best thing for you—I know it sure is for me.

References


We live in a world that is constantly evolving and changing. As this issue of The Teaching Librarian explores, our school libraries, library programs, and the perception of others toward the role school libraries play in education, are constantly being altered and developed. This is one of the prime reasons why, whether in the face of adversity or prosperity, we must continue to address the priorities that we value. Margaret Mead, who is well known for her work on cultural issues, has stated: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” (Lewis) I truly believe that the efforts of those who value quality school library programs in Ontario will continue to contribute to the changes that we seek in our province.

Reflecting on Our Past
During the past year, as I reflect back on the events that have developed within our profession, the theme of change and renewal is very apparent. There is substantial evidence that our field continues to grow and adapt to meet current demands. Change and renewal are evident in developments within our association, in increased professional learning opportunities, and in the refinement of literacy programs such as the Forest of Reading®. Change and renewal are also apparent at the provincial level, such as in the evolution of Knowledge Ontario and the role which teacher-librarians will have in contributing to the success of this valuable resource. We have also witnessed notable improvement in the response from a number of areas within the Ministry of Education. Our ability to lobby for specific causes has grown stronger through increased collaboration with the Ontario Library Association (OLA) and The Association of Library Consultants of Ontario (TALCO). Our ongoing effort to support research into school libraries and student achievement in Ontario has effectively drawn attention to their important role in student success. In the reflections that follow, I would like to further examine the theme of “change and renewal.”

Ontario School Library Association
President’s Report
Michael Rosettis
A Reflection from the OSLA President

“Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.”

Robert F. Kennedy

Continued Evolution of OSLA
During the past year, it has become apparent that OSLA needed to renew its By-law Object statements. These are the key statements that drive the direction of our association’s actions. Taking time to strategically refocus the direction and the goals of our association has been extremely valuable. Our By-law objects are currently posted on the OSLA Web site www.accessola.com/osla and they
Changes to The Education Institute

A major source of professional development for our members, The Education Institute, continues to grow in variety and content, and now offers increased sessions to address the needs of our membership. Liz Kerr has been appointed as the Education Director for OLA, leading the development of The Education Institute as part of her portfolio. She brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the position, and extensive experience in the field of teacher-librarianship. OSLA has helped to facilitate an improvement to the structure of the OLA Continuing Education Committee, so that it now includes the presence of 3 designated OSLA representatives. Such a structure should help ensure the continued delivery of future sessions that address our member’s needs.

Modifications to the Forest of Reading® Program

This year featured the addition of Silver Birch Express to the Forest of Reading®. It was introduced to address the needs of students in the transition between Blue Spruce and Silver Birch, and provides evidence of the dynamic nature of our library community. Details on Silver Birch Express and the other reading programs are available on the OLA Web site www.accessola.com under the ‘Reading Programs’ link. There has also been a refinement to program timelines to allow for an earlier announcement of the reading program nominees. This has provided participating schools and students with additional time to maximize reading opportunities. Other exciting news for the Forest of Reading® includes an official launch during Super Conference, allowing students an opportunity to celebrate literacy and meet some of the authors. Likewise, a change in the format of the culminating activities is in development, with plans for a gathering at Harbourfront in the spring of 2007, so that all of the Forest of Reading® program venues can be integrated into one large celebration.

The Establishment of Knowledge Ontario

The great news about Knowledge Ontario is that it will provide access to a wealth of digital resources, including components such as Resource Ontario and Our Ontario. Further details about this initiative are available on-line at www.knowledgeontario.ca. Access to these digital resources will contribute to the renewal of the library’s role in our society. These on-line subscription products will provide a better degree of equity to regions of the province that were previously under-serviced. On a personal note, I believe that Knowledge Ontario can be a key component in helping to alter public perceptions of school libraries. Knowledge Ontario requires people in schools to facilitate the effective use of this resource with students. Teacher-librarians are in an instrumental position to become experts in promoting access to this rich source of quality information. Teacher-librarians can act as agents of change and renewal in promoting equitable access to information and digital services throughout the province. As Nelson Mandela has eloquently stated, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can
use to change the world.” (Lewis) We have a central role to play in educating our students and our educational communities, and in ensuring that Ontario learners do not miss out on an invaluable resource that can assist in their development as information literate life-long learners.

Changing Attitudes at the Ministry Level
We continue to witness gradual growth in the positive perception of the role of school libraries in sectors within the Ministry of Education. Signs of support for school libraries are growing, and although sporadic, their cumulative effect brings us closer to achieving provincial changes that will address our areas of concern. *The Investment in School Libraries Grant, Grades K–12* was implemented during each of the past two years, reflecting a growing awareness in the Ministry of the need for designated funding for school library resources. The language in the memos to Directors of Education has referenced key statements, such as recognition of “the importance of Ontario students having access to new and up-to-date materials in their school library collections” and that “access to school library materials helps to improve student achievement.” Premier Dalton McGuinty has also provided public acknowledgment of this recognition of the importance of school libraries. In his June 16, 2006 media release, he stated that “School libraries are places where students can develop a passion for reading and learning... [and] inspire our students and help them succeed.” Additionally, there has been a formal request to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch (CAPB) of the Ministry of Education, from TALCO and OSLA, that revisions in curriculum policy documents feature the inclusion of a statement on the role of school libraries (similar to what was first evident in the Elementary Language document). We are very hopeful that the next curriculum document to soon be released, the Elementary Science curriculum document, will also contain strong statements about school libraries. In addition to the inclusion of a statement on the role and importance the school library in supporting student learning and success, OSLA and TALCO have also requested that the CAPB to include teacher-librarians on the panel for each upcoming curriculum document revision.

**Collaboration between TALCO, OLA and OSLA**
TALCO has recently gained status as an official Subject Association. This is wonderful news, and OSLA congratulates them on their success! This establishes a second Ministry-recognized provincial group to represent the concerns of school libraries in Ontario. Additionally, OLA continues to support our association in countless ways. During the past few months, a concerted effort has been made to collaborate for the benefit of all associations. A prime example of this collaboration is the letter that was written to the Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education, requesting a joint meeting with representatives from OSLA, TALCO and OLA. OSLA Council remains hopeful that our Minister of Education will respond positively to our unified request to meet with her to discuss a number of identified major issues including:

- aligning the second phase of the Queen’s University research on school libraries with the Ministry’s needs for evidence

### TL dateline

**The OLA Education Institute**
March 1 4 pm
One-hour audio conference
**THE NOVEL MUSEUM: A “HANDS-ON” LINK TO LITERACY**
Pat Elliott
Simcoe County District School Bd
OLA member, $54.00 per site
Non-member, $74.00 per site
www.thepartnership.ca

**The OLA Education Institute**
March 20 4 pm
One hour Web conference
**LIGHT THAT WIKI AND PUT A BLOG ON THE FIRE**
Anita Brooks Kirkland
Waterloo Region District School Bd
OLA member, $75.00 per site
Non-member, $95.00 per site
www.thepartnership.ca

**The OLA Education Institute**
March 27 4 pm
One-hour audio conference
**RETHINKING SCHOOL LIBRARY COLLECTIONS: CANADIAN HISTORY COMES ALIVE!**
Myra Junyk
OLA member, $54.00 per site
Non-member, $74.00 per site
www.thepartnership.ca

**The OLA Education Institute**
April 12 4 pm
One-hour audio conference
**COLLABORATING WITH THE REST OF THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL STAFF**
Lesley Farmer
California State Librarianship
OLA member, $54.00 per site
Non-member, $74.00 per site
www.thepartnership.ca

These are just samples from the OLA’s EDUCATION INSTITUTE
The Spring 2007 catalogue came with your Winter ACCESS!
All prices are subject to 6% GST
www.thepartnership.ca/education
discussing the future of designated funding for school library programs and learning resources
- reinforcing the connection between literacy and school libraries
- school library staffing by qualified educators
- cooperation and planning for training and implementation of Knowledge Ontario

Pioneering Research into Ontario School Libraries
We have much to be proud of regarding our efforts to compile and present Canadian data on school libraries and student achievement. This evolution from a reliance on U.S. sources of information to Canadian-based data is significant, as our province continues to iterate the need for local evidence. It contributes significantly to the case for change and renewal in school libraries in Ontario. We are looking forward to the start of the second phase of the research study which should begin early in 2007.

Closing Thoughts
In conclusion, I believe that the OSLA and its members have made significant progress during the past few years. Through lobbying on many levels—school, board, Ministry and provincial—we continue to contribute to the momentum of change. We must strive to sustain our efforts for renewal, for we never know when the next positive change will occur, or which key areas for improvement will materialize. The fact remains that there still is significant room for improvement in areas such as:
- a dedicated Ministry funding model for school library resources
- minimal provincial staffing levels for school libraries
- equitable access to school library facilities and programs across our province
- consistent funding for libraries by principals at the school level
- increased Teacher Federation support, and consistency amongst federations
- a revised Ministry document for school libraries
- Faculties of Education Pre-service training for new teachers that consistently include exposure to the role

of school libraries and teacher-librarians

The list of areas for improvement could continue. Through the efforts of OSLA members and their Provincial Subject Association, we will continue to make progress in addressing important issues, facilitate positive change and renewal, and meet the information literacy needs of the students and staff in our schools. Such a stance is succinctly illustrated by Marion Wright Edelman, founder of The Children's Defense Fund, in her statement: “If you don’t like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time.” (Lewis) As concerned educators in the province of Ontario, we are called to continue improving the learning environment for the future of our students.

As my term as President of OSLA approaches its conclusion, I continue to look forward to the challenges and changes that will certainly evolve in the field of teacher-librarianship and the role of school libraries in Ontario. Like many others, I recognize that at times, change may be particularly slow, with a seemingly endless effort that must be exerted toward an end goal. At other times, change happens much more quickly, and major progress is made with sweeping momentum. Not knowing the pace of the change is challenging, but it also serves to keep life interesting. We do not know what the future holds in store, but for certain, it will involve change and renewal. Our efforts must therefore continue to concentrate on ensuring that the change will be positive, moving us forward so that the role of school libraries and teacher-librarians becomes even more widely recognized throughout Ontario.

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