

reading were marks to cover up.

But the difference I made for that staff was that they urged their students to pay attention to me – "He is a reader – he can make a difference to you." When I slowly learned not to wear that tie, I believe that I lost some of the differences they saw in me and may have lost some of the importance they afforded me and my mission.

The Child

I have chosen that word carefully. The student comes next. It is the child that we have tried to lose in all our talk about co-operative teaching and learning. It is the child that so many teacher-librarians want to serve as they identify the library with stories and reading and booktalks. It is the child that we touch when we help them make a point, find a formula, discover a truth. The child is the object of the books we buy for their intrinsic worth rather than their relationship with the curriculum.

It is this role that offers incredible opportunities to make a difference yet demands no accountability, no measurement of any kind. This is pure joy, the reason so many teacher-librarians are in the business yet realize that the joy is fleeting, subject to outside influences. This is the problem – how to defend a program that has no specific goals, no written objectives, no direct evaluative procedures and no feedback.

The Student

This is the object of our program. This is the teacher-librarian building a collection of materials to support the curriculum, the teacher and teaching. Here the satisfaction is achieved through the teacher who identifies the instructional needs of her flock and calls on the teacher-librarian to assist her in meeting those needs. The teacher-librarian will assist students to engage not only the library but assist student to move into the internet and beyond for answers and more questions. The teacher-librarian will make a difference to the school's program as much as to individuals. The measurement will be almost totally dependent on the teacher-classroom interaction - a measure of planning and design. This formality is often

missed, leaving the teacher-librarian outside the processes of the classroom. Making a difference becomes less a personal result but one that recognizes the whole school endeavour.

The Principal

It has long been a mystery to me why principals are willing to turn the library over to the "teacher-librarian" and never worry again. That trust may simply be recognition that they know nothing about the role, or that they truly recognize the form and function of the library in the school. Whatever it is - trust or ignorance - most of the school librarians I have known, have nurtured that force so that they can make a difference to the school. The few school librarians who I thought failed their mission seemed to never find that trust. That may be it! Without that quiet assurance that leads everyone to think that we know what we are doing we are doomed. It is a matter of force of personality combined with some very selective training at the hands of those "trusted" teacher-librarians who taught us.

The Teacher-Librarian

Some get their kicks from personal interaction with kids. Some delight in providing quality resources for the school. Some find truth in developing incredible co-operative learning programs with other teachers in the school. Some offer themselves for office in local, provincial and national bodies committed to improving the lot of the teacher-librarian and the role of the school library in learning. Some try to do it all.

The task is unbelievably rewarding. But there are some individuals who should never have taken on the role. They do not understand how much they have to give to make those differences. Perhaps they liked the idea of the library as refuge when it is truly a learning centre into which they must plunge as both teacher and librarian. I once told a trustee that I had the best of all possible positions: my own library, my own program, the whole school! Power!

Who knows that you make a difference?

You do. ■ ■ ■