

I spent the better part of the first term developing long term goals for the library and for my own professional development. Essentially, I wanted to create a research-centred library where students would be challenged to develop organizational and higher level thinking skills. I wanted to offer students and staff a meaningful and relevant learning centre which would inspire them to come to the library more frequently and to make use of the print, electronic and personnel resources which we had to offer. I wanted to make the library not only responsive to the needs of our school community but a learning centre in the school, one which in fact could set the direction and pace of change. This was an exciting time for the library. We were becoming fully automated and working on on-line support and resources for students and staff. However, I had to face the reality that my position in the library was in fact part-time. This translated to just one seventy minute period in the library in the first term. The tasks before me seemed insurmountable at best.

I had set high standards and expectations for myself and the library and I had to cope with the fact that I was new at the job, new at the school and doing a full-time job on half-time. Needless to say, there were many late nights and busy weekends. Despite these very real and imposing external limitations, I experienced much success in my first year as a teacher-librarian. Both staff and students noticed the changes to the physical set up of the library and to the curriculum being taught in the library and more importantly, their positive feedback through encouraging comments or evaluation surveys did much to keep up my spirits whenever I felt overwhelmed. The support and encouragement I received from my school's administration, staff and from my library technician for my library vision were essential in fueling the energy and stamina needed to get through those first few months.

Although there were not many opportunities for real "teachable moments" in the library for me in the first term, there was one particular experience which I will always remember. One day a rather distraught OAC student approached me to ask if I knew anything about Plato which would help her in her history assignment. I remember my words exactly, "well aren't you in luck." I had just finished writing my thesis for my Master of Arts in Teaching and as it happened the topic was an

analysis of *Plato's Republic* and *Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. She asked if she could read my thesis and if I could help her understand Plato's theories. Over the next few months this young lady came to the library every Friday after school to discuss Plato's works and theories in the true nature of a teacher-student dialogue. She read not only my work but she read Plato's works as well. Through our dialogue and professional interaction she not only came to a comprehensive and impressive understanding of Plato's theories, I believe that she actually developed higher level thinking skills herself. Her project on the concept of the tripartite individual in Plato's work was both scholarly and articulate. It earned her an outstanding mark and the confidence to go on to university knowing that she had the ability to decipher and comprehend complex theories of philosophy. Even her subject teacher came to me to thank me for assisting in the development of this student's cognitive development. What greater measure of success can there be for an educator and a teacher-librarian? Like all strong structures, a solid foundation for the library and for my position was laid in the first term. It was from this point that I could now grow.

It was after this experience that the Father Bressani Library truly came to be perceived as a research based library. More and more in the second term, I had research-based classes being run through the library in various subject disciplines and the best public relations for the library curriculum became the students and staff themselves. Students who came to do research were guided through a systematic process almost ensuring success and teachers came to me and said "I heard what you did with X's class, can you do that with my class." Once again what greater encouragement and measure of success for a teacher-librarian can there be?

Increasing this first year as a teacher-librarian I have seen a shift in the culture of the library program at my school. Our library has become not only busy and popular; it is a place of research and intellectual interaction for both staff and students. In essence, the library has begun to become truer to the vision and goals I had aspired to in September. Perhaps this has something to do with the enjoyment I derive from my chosen vocation. If so, I hope that it is in some ways contagious and continues to spread to our staff and students in the coming years. ■ ■ ■