



The Indispensable Librarian: Surviving (and Thriving) in School Media Centers in the Information Age

Doug Johnson
Linworth, 1997 (Professional Growth Series)
Paper, 8 1/2" x 11", 163 pages, bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-938865-64-1

Doug Johnson points to the rapidly changing nature of teacher-librarianship and emphasizes that, while challenging, this time of change is also a time of opportunity. And, he argues, teacher-librarians need to take advantage of this opportunity by making themselves indispensable.

In *The Indispensable Librarian*, Johnson tells us how we can do just that, in chapters covering Mission, Planning, Influence and Public Relations, Technology, Personnel, Curriculum, Budget, Facilities, Policies, and Staff Development. He also includes a list of highly recommended reading.

The Indispensable Librarian is... well, indispensable. While the original 1997 publication date means some of the technology specifics are out of date, the situations, issues, and philosophy are still current. Each reader will no doubt have a favourite chapter. Mine was chapter 7 – Budget. Johnson does a superb job with both the philosophical and the practical aspects of budgeting and this chapter alone was worth the price of the book. Anyone involved in designing a new school library or renovating an old one will find the Facilities chapter invaluable. The content makes *The Indispensable Librarian* a must read and Johnson's personal, humorous style makes the reading a pleasure.

The Indispensable Librarian should be part of every district professional collection. If that's not possible, teacher-librarians should buy copies for their school collection or, if budgets are too limited, purchase personal copies.

■ Brenda Dillon

The Indispensable Teacher's Guide to Computer Skills: A Staff Development Handbook, 2nd edition

Doug Johnson
Linworth, 2002 (Professional Growth Series)
Paper, 8.5" x 11", 195 pages.
ISBN 1-58683-109-7

The Indispensable Teacher's Guide to Computer Skills is not a computer or software manual. Instead, it is a framework for staff development. As in the first edition, Johnson discusses effective staff development; covers basic and advanced com-

puter skills and Internet skills for teachers; deals with assessing staff development efforts in this area; and provides examples and handouts in an appendix. In this new edition, he adds introductory material, expands some topics (e.g. search tools; presentation software), adds new topics (e.g. time management; graphics; home/school communication), and includes a new section called 'Rubrics for Leadership'.

This staff development manual will be very useful to the person(s) responsible for providing technology inservice to staff. And Johnson makes quite clear that he thinks the teacher-librarian should be this person, or should at least be part of the staff development team. *The Indispensable Teacher's Guide to Computer Skills* is, in effect, a curriculum document for technology-related staff development.

At the district level, the person responsible for staff development should certainly have a copy of *The Indispensable Teacher's Guide to Computer Skills*. The person responsible for technology planning and implementation should certainly read this book as a reminder that the important issue isn't really which network configuration or applications suite is chosen, but whether this technology becomes a productivity tool for teachers. There should also be a copy of Johnson's book available at the school level for use by those responsible for staff development. If the teacher-librarian is involved in the planning or delivery of staff development related to technology, then it would be a good idea for the teacher-librarian to have a school or personal copy.

■ Brenda Dillon