My Experiences As A First-Year Teacher-Librarian

Lisa Filiatrault

As a new teacher-librarian, I feel challenged and stimulated by my new position. I have spent 15 years cocooning with foreign language literature, art history, the latest print-making techniques and graphic design. Officially, I am a teacher-librarian now. I am also a life-long learner in the true sense. I find myself, after one month in a brand new position, beginning to metamorphose. I am growing. The library is growing.

I am both amazed and perplexed each day at the vast quantity of learning that takes place in my classroom – by the students and by me! I feel very much a novice and entirely inadequate most days. Nonetheless, the challenge and stimulation I experience each minute of my busy day inspire me to be the best I can be now while continuing to strive towards teacher-librarian utopia. (We all need lofty ideals!)

The library that has adopted me is in an old school with plenty of natural light. In order to take full advantage of it I decided to re-arrange the stacks. This turned out to be a massive undertaking alleviated substantially by several unsuspecting students! The most daunting task was weeding the very old, bound periodicals, which covered the entire surface of a 75-foot long wall. (I'm still working at it!)

It is impossible to deny the profound effect technology has had in the library. One can draw the parallels between an online search engine and a human one (a.k.a. the teacher-librarian!). Technological literacy goes hand-in-hand with information literacy. The explosion of information that is the internet, coupled with online databases, creates a real need for a savvy patron. These skills are not innate, as some adolescents would argue, but require the professional training and instruction of a qualified teacher-librarian. Technology is an integral part of my library and in addition to teaching technological literacy skills, I take an active role in the professional development of my colleagues. I believe very strongly in making technology a tool that is seamlessly integrated into the curriculum.