



Celia Nichols

Two teachers + One media centre

One morning recess in February, 2000, Cliff Kraeker, a grade 6 teacher and computer whiz at my school, Prince Charles Public School in London, made a bee-line for me, past dozens of students. He exclaimed, "If we can get renovation money to combine the old home economics and shop rooms down the hall, and create a new Media Information Centre, will you move there and be my teaching partner? You can run the print side and I'll design a computer lab. It'll be amazing! Say yes!"

In the space of the seven seconds it took for my jaw to come up off the floor, my mind said: "Yikes! Move all these books? Keep up with this hyperactive techno-wizard? So where's the money coming from? What my mouth said was, "OkaaayyYes! Let's go for it!"

After three years, many thousands of dollars (more on that subject later) and gazillions of hours of labour, we have forged a very effective partnership combining a great library with a state-of-the-art technology lab. Our workplace is truly a media centre worth visiting!

Cliff and I work really well together. We respect each other's opinions, work styles and

abilities. Our talents and strengths are different but complementary. Between us we have 52 years of teaching experience (whew!) in 11 different schools covering a multitude of assignments at many grade levels. Effective partnerships start with mutual respect; Cliff appreciates my love of books, my patient and caring manner with children (especially little ones!) and my flexibility in dealing with colleagues. I am in awe of his exceptional facility with all things technical, his knowledge of the curriculum and the myriad creative ways he combines the two.

My primary goal is to get kids reading more books more capably, for pleasure as well as for information. There is nothing that matches the look on a kid's face when I produce just the book he or she wants. It's thrilling to watch the excitement as a group of students delves into the new books display featured regularly in our library. And how I love to hear a kid announce proudly, "Look at what I have read!" Encouraging pupils to find appropriate and interesting books, and then expanding on those horizons increases pupils' literacy as well as their self-esteem. At our school, reading gains are popping out all over as children are given the opportunity to easily access updated, top-quality materials at their individual levels.

And my very favourite part of the job of teacher-librarian is sharing the exquisite plea-

