

Catherine Thompson partners with

career studies

career studies

career studies

career studies

career studies

In the 2000-2001 school year, I taught 2-1/2 courses, the half being Career Studies. The following year, as full-time teacher-librarian, I approached the Career Studies teachers about collaborating on a unit which would combine the Career Studies curriculum with the teaching of advanced research skills. There was never enough time to do an in-depth presentation about all of our print and electronic resources during our annual grade 9 library orientation sessions. Since the course is mandatory for all grade 10 students, I saw the collaboration with Career Studies teachers as an opportunity to teach students advanced research skills relatively early in their high school careers. Such a collaboration would also address the dismay I had often felt upon observing students of visiting classes racing to our limited number of computers to research with internet search engines, before I had the opportunity to introduce the carefully selected encyclopedia sets, books and online databases pertinent to their topic of the day.

The unit, The Career of a Prominent Canadian, encompasses the curriculum strands: Personal Knowledge of Management Skills and Preparation for Transitions and Change. Students are asked to select a Canadian individual whom they admire. They are to find at least five different types of sources to assist in the preparation of a written assignment and a poster display. They are also expected to prepare a proper Works Cited page.

The five different sources include an encyclo-

pedia, a book, an online database article, an online encyclopedia article and a web site. Several books about famous Canadians have been purchased to supplement those in the collection. The digital projector, which I was fortunate enough to acquire, is an excellent tool to demonstrate how to access our on-line databases and encyclopedias. With the projector, I am able to show them how a proper Works Cited page is prepared, as well. All hand-outs for students are assembled in the Ontario Library Association's research folder; students are encouraged to keep the folder for future assignments and essays.

The partnerships with the various teachers have differed. Most of the teachers I approached were quite receptive to the idea, and my knowledge of the Career Studies curriculum helped give me credibility. Some teachers used the exact assignment I prepared. Others used only two of the three parts, while another requested that I teach research skills and the Works Cited component but in concert with a different assignment. A willingness to be flexible to the needs of the teachers was crucial to the success of these collaborations. My offer to mark the Works Cited pages was gratefully accepted by most teachers. If time permitted, I spent some time discussing how to evaluate the quality of web sites. I also demonstrated some quality vs some bogus web sites, an exercise which both amused and surprised students and teachers.

I am pleased to say that since the initiative began, I have observed more and more students using our on-line databases as a starting point in

Editor's note:
Cathy's unit in its entirety will be featured as a curriculum pull-out in our next issue.