

#### 4. Teach note-making skills

Students at all levels should be expected to use visual organizers to record their information in stage 2 of the research process. Organizers provided and taught by the teacher-librarian can include checklists, columns, charts, and directives, come in many shapes and sizes, and can be adapted for various grade levels.

Some senior level organizers provide sections for both analytical skills, including a section for the student's point of view and ideas explored, and a place for the evidence gathered from research to support their view. Students are involved in higher level thinking skills when note making is part of the research process.

Teacher-librarians can stress the importance of note-making skills when planning research units with other teachers, and can help students realize that note-making skills result in better understanding of the topic and reduce the likelihood of plagiarism.

#### 5. Be clear and consistent with consequences.

It is important that students are treated fairly and consistently when caught practicing academic dishonesty. As stated above, consequences should be jointly determined by the teacher-librarian and other staff at the beginning of the year, in writing, so there are no surprises, "Cheating and plagiarism are less likely to occur if students believe that cheaters will face consequences. Such measures are effective directly, because they deter would-be dishonesty, as well as indirectly, because they assure students that their peers will not resort to dishonesty, and thereby remove a commonly given reason for cheating and plagiarism. (Strategies, McGill)

#### 6. Design authentic assignments.

I believe this is the single most effective way of reducing plagiarism, and that it should begin in elementary school. Teacher-librarians must collaborate with teachers to plan research assignments which require authentic learning rather than simple copying.

This "...involves educating teachers that an effective research assignments require original reasoning by the student. Research which is simply 'about' a topic leads to copying. But activities and tasks which ask for conclusions, ask for answers to interesting questions, ask for comparisons, ask for solutions to problems, ask for points of view all lead to original writing. These kind of assignments help kids narrow a topic, focus effort, and call for higher level thinking." (Johnson 87)

Teacher-librarians are in a key position to ensure that the research process is inherent in all collaboratively designed assignments and that staff recognize the difference between a low level assignment and those that are authentic and require critical thinking skills.

#### 7. Model ethical behaviour.

Walk the talk. If staff copy videos illegally or fail to acknowledge borrowed materials, how can they expect students to do otherwise? Handouts should acknowledge borrowed sources. We should point out to students that licenses have been purchased and that copyright permission has been granted. This goes a long way to setting the tone of academic honesty.

#### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

There are many methods that can be used to detect plagiarized materials, which will also assist in lowering the number of incidents. These range from a search on Google to purchasing an anti-plagiarism product, and although these definitely do work, they are after-the-fact and can be somewhat time consuming. To teach students the real value of practicing ethical behaviour, the strategies discussed above, although certainly not exhaustive, will make a huge difference in the quality of work done by the students at our schools. ■

## REFERENCES

Johnson, Doug. (1997) *The Indispensable Librarian*. Worthington, Ohio: Linworth Publishing.

Lathrop, Ann and Kathleen Foss. (2000) *Student Cheating and Plagiarism in the Internet Era: A Wake-Upcall*. Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited.

"Strategies to reduce cheating and Plagiarism." (2003. 9 June 2003) Academic Integrity at McGill University. <<http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/strategies/>>