

an electronic handbook will assist them with research skills, information management, and the generation of projects. This electronic resource will be available to teachers and students in September of 2004.

There are many ideas which can be developed into projects which will help students and which will also promote and advocate for the school library program and its teacher-librarian.

As well as working for the kids, work for your colleagues. Offer and lead a workshop to assist new teacher-librarians or seasoned teacher-librarians. Professional development is ongoing for all teacher-librarians and offers not only opportunities to breathe excitement and zeal into library programs, but also into the soul of the teacher-librarian.

On the other hand, if a workshop is offered, attend it. Participate joyfully. Find ways to incorporate even more positive experiences into your library information centre.

Another idea is to lead a workshop for new teachers or for specific departments to train them in using resources, new software, or on-line databases. Grand Erie has recently subscribed to Turn-it-in, an anti-plagiarism on-line database. As site administrator for this program, I will be training the staff and students of my school on its use.

Local workshops and meetings provide the good stuff. So do the offerings of OLA's Education Institute and Super Conference. These provide the opportunity to meet new colleagues, to interact with great new ideas, and to regenerate yourself. These are exciting venues for new and seasoned teacher-librarians, as well as for aspiring teacher-librarians, consultants, and administrators. The vitality shared at these events carries participants



through the school year. They give us so many new ideas to try, experiences to share, and good, old-fashioned camaraderie. (It's also a lot of fun!). If you have a topic of excellent practice or a workshop to share, why not write up a proposal to present it at Super conference or in the Education Institute?

If you are a seasoned teacher-librarian who has presented workshops, you might be an ideal candidate to teach an Additional Qualifications course through a local university. If a large time commitment is not possible, sometimes the co-ordinator of a course will bring in guest speakers or workshop leaders thus using a variety of instructors in the course. Make your interests and abilities known to course co-ordinators. I have been fortunate enough to be the instructor of School Librarianship Part 1 last spring, and I will be running a variety of workshops for both Parts 1 and 3 this fall for a local university.

Challenging times can also be exciting times. Strategies abound to strengthen our professional role, to promote our school libraries, and to assist the students in this province. Be resourceful, be savvy. Communicate the message clearly and strongly. You have many skills and insights to offer to students, to community and to colleagues. Promote your profession. Share your ideas. Work with students. Work with communities. Advocate the important role you and the school library play in the lives of students.

Be the gardener who nurtures the soil to bring it back to its natural richness and who rids the garden of the cut worms. Prosperity is ours: all we have to do is plant the seeds, grow the ideas, and reap the crop. When and where will you begin to seed your garden? ■