



and language areas;

- to improve the level of computer literacy for both teachers and students;

- to develop research skills using a wide range of resources—books, video, other multimedia, computer software programs such as HyperStudio, Internet and e-mail;

- to improve research and thinking skills by using the appropriate techniques (i.e. dot-jot note taking, mind maps).

Each of the three teachers has a role in determining expectations, planning and preparing activities and evaluation. The model matches very well with the school's mission statement, which includes a focus on the integration of computers and information technology.

There are many advantages to this style of program delivery. The staff gain increased skill and knowledge in using new technologies and a wide variety of resources. The students have greater self-confidence in using the library and lab. Triad helps level the playing field for inner-city students, many of whom do not have a computer at home. There is enhanced cross-curricular learning, and everyone involves loves the lower pupil-teacher ratio.

You may be thinking that this sounds almost too good to be true. How is this possible? Sharon Thurston, the recently retired principal from Pringdale Gardens, says that the triad worked at Pringdale for these reasons:

1) Staffing: "As an inner city school, we were allocated an extra teacher;"

2) Widely Held Vision: "The staff as a whole chose each year to put that extra person into the computer lab. This allowed for the triad to exist on paper."

3) People: "The classroom teacher, the com-

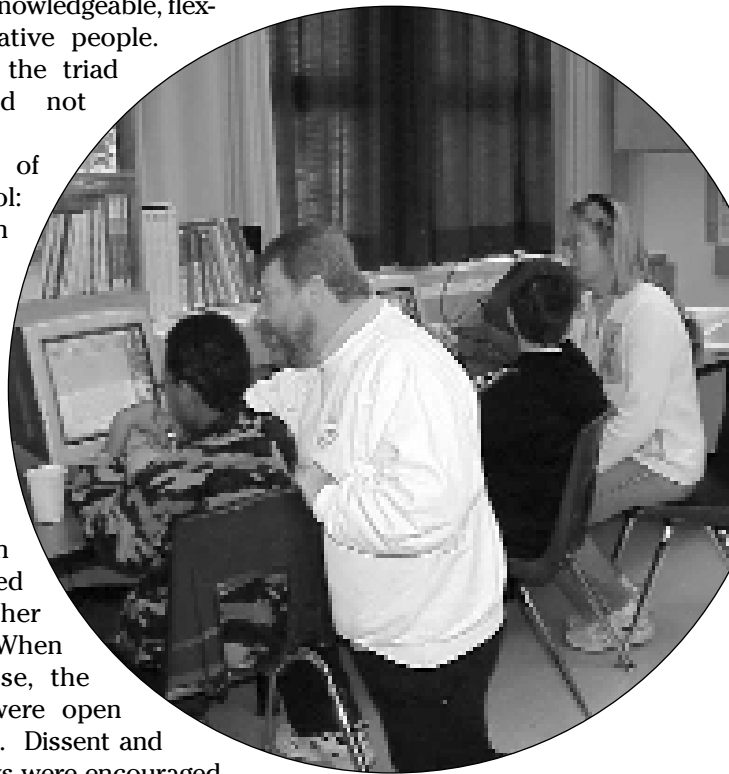
puter lab teacher and the teacher-librarian were very knowledgeable, flexible, collaborative people. Without this, the triad simply would not have worked."

4) Culture of the School:

"Everyone on staff was committed to making school exciting for children. People contributed in different ways and each person was respected for his/her strengths. When problems arose, the discussions were open and respectful. Dissent and divergent views were encouraged in order to come up with the best possible solution. In fact, this model was recognized in 1999 with a "Network of Innovative Schools" Award for excellence."

With the tight staffing and budget models, only grade-teacher collaborative planning is scheduled into the day now, so planning with the teacher-librarian and ICT teacher must occur during lunches or after school. However, despite the challenges the triad program faces, staff and students are very pleased. Donna Budgen, a teacher who has had both roles of teacher-librarian and lab instructor, says: "The wonderful thing about triad is that computer skills are not taught in isolation, as they are in other schools. The kids are drawn to the technology, but it is more valuable when paired with the library."

If only more schools had the same sort of vision and commitment to library working in conjunction with, instead of in competition with, the computer lab, we would not have the crisis we have today! ■



**Check out** the Triad model at Pringdale Gardens at <http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/pringdalegardens/page3b.htm>. Special credit goes to Leslie Waters for making most of the Web site and Scott Baker for the most recent updates.