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Ideas for evidence-based practice:

1. Keep a log of the different activities you do with classes and try to get feedback from the students as to how the library program is helping them
2. Keep a list all your contact with teachers and your professional collaboration with them
3. Use a flip camera or even your cell phone to take short videos or pictures of classes working in the library
4. Create tutorial videos on using technology (easy to do with Smartboard recorder). Post the videos online. YouTube keeps track of number of views for each video
5. Create surveys for students and collect data on how the library has helped them
6. Keep your library webpage current with recent activities
7. Run reading clubs, including Forest of Reading through your library

Teacher-Librarians should be aware of, and support, new initiatives from the Ministry of Education such as the Growing Success document (edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growSuccess.pdf), especially the section that deals with assessment. When collaborating with teachers you can use assessment strategies suggested in this document to help prepare lessons with the outcome in mind.

Literacy continues to be at the forefront of education and the librarian is key in supporting struggling students, such as the reluctant male reader, with a wealth of relevant reading strategies. Many schools have literacy committees that target students with literacy difficulties and work through such strategies to help them. I encourage teacher-librarians to advocate for the importance of libraries through their participation on these committees.

Numeracy is also another major initiative. School libraries can support numeracy by providing students with research skills,

helping them search online databases and properly navigate the Internet to work through numeracy-type questions which often come up in math, science and geography. Teacher-librarians can also help by learning how to use math-based computer applications such as spreadsheets and/or other graph generating software themselves so that they are prepared to help with any questions the students might have. The teacher-librarian might also try presenting a class with a “how-to” tutorial, or work with students on-on-one. Every school has a Parent’s Council which usually meets once a month. I suggest that teacher-librarians try to go to a few meetings a year to do presentations highlighting all the positive learning experiences in the library. This will not only promote your school library within the parent community, it might also give you a chance to showcase your initiatives to your Principal, who generally attends the council meetings. This year a new initiative from the Ministry of Education centres on financial literacy. The OSLA applied for and received a grant to create on-line resources to support financial literacy for grades 7-12. I will email out the link for the resources early next year.

Being able to discuss what is happening in the school library to administrators, and relating to initiatives from the Ministry, goes a long way in advocating and showing how relevant your school library is. By being aware of new Ministry initiatives and helping teachers implement them also shows the teacher-librarian an an educational leader in the school.

The OSLA continues to develop resources for the promotion of the Together For Learning document. We encourage all teacher-librarians to discuss the vision of this document with both fellow teachers and administrators. Do not forget to visit our website togetherforlearning.ca and help share ideas. This important document clearly shows what a modern school library or learning commons should be, and discourages the image of a school library being simply a place to check books in and out.

After the October provincial election, Laurel Broten was selected as the new Minister of Education. The OSLA will try to arrange a meeting with her to make sure she understands how important school libraries are and what challenges

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