

10. Does your collection reflect the diversity of your school as well as the world?

The issue continues to be the availability of diverse resources. Teacher-Librarians are passionate about diversity not only in their collection but in presentations, displays, and author visits. Identifying global, social and cultural issues, and adding a variety of resources, reflecting groups directly connected to the issues and including creative and journalistic narratives, broadens the diversity of the collection.

11. What is your understanding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's connection to education?

Teaching our students about the past is essential. Younger students need the ideas of respect and fairness to be included in any learning about the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Evidence of the work done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is seen in the curriculum, in resources available from our booksellers, in PD offered by our boards and unions, and in the awareness of educators that schools play a critical role in promoting an inclusive society. Current and historical content must be dealt with honestly and must include not just people of Indigenous heritage but their ideas, their issues and their solutions.

12. Who is a member of your personal learning network and how do you connect?

WHO?: Contacts from our professional library associations: OSLA, Canadian Association of School Libraries (CASL), other TLs, school board advisors and support staff, and online course (M.Ed, AQ) connections — both colleagues and instructors.

HOW?: Twitter and other social media, phone calls, email, texting, coffee, school library visits, online folder sharing, school board organized events — both professional and social, Super Conference, and of course, meetings.

13. How do you uphold and promote intellectual freedom?

As the provider of resources in most schools, teacher-librarians can open the doors to intellectual freedom for their students. Managing personal bias and providing access to many and varied sources of information creates a space where freedom to choose is not an “add-on” or an event, but part of the school and school library culture. That being said, we need to spread our understanding through: lessons in digital citizenship and inquiry skills, encouraging self-directed learning, creativity and curiosity, makerspace activities and events, proactive information about personal selection of reading material and intervention if necessary, intellectual freedom lessons linking to human rights and government, Freedom to Read Week events, modelling or offering lessons in credibility of sources, censorship and political repression, and collection development including relevant resources.

14. Are you happy in your role as a teacher-librarian?

There are things that would make the job better: support of administration, working in a full-time position, a better budget, but respondents said yes, yes and yes; it is the best job.

Goodbye my friends and fellow teacher-librarians. Rita is retiring. Perhaps Rita will travel the world seeking out obscure libraries in exotic places. Perhaps she will spend the cold winter months on a beach with the books recommended but never read. Rita could become part of an organization helping to develop libraries in schools not as lucky as ours. Maybe the future will include mentoring a new teacher-librarian or offering services as a volunteer in a library that needs someone like Rita. The future will have many books and much reading and talking about books and fond memories of the time with you.

*Read on,
Rita*