

Crowd Sourced

Teacher-librarians are talented time benders, often juggling several tasks at once or working to stretch quiet moments to think up ways to deliver programs, team teach or promote the library. They are busy people. So when I reached out to the members of the Association of Library Coordinators of Ontario (TALCO) for suggestions on managing time in the school library, it was no surprise that few members responded. They just don't have the time!

Luckily, I did receive a few responses to share:

Kate Johnson-MacGregor, teacher-librarian at Brantford Collegiate Institute in Brantford, Ont. and past president of the Ontario School Library Association, sent this reflection via email: "As TLs, our time is always in demand by someone: the teacher who wants to book time to bring in a class, the new student who needs help with the printer, the person who has forgotten their network login and password, or the one looking for 'a book. It's blue.' Sometimes I feel like I only write my to do list to remind myself that I'm never going to complete those tasks. The thing I've discovered over the past five years is those distractions are actually the MOST IMPORTANT part of the work I do. Balancing the budget, completing the paperwork, re-shelving the books — these are undoubtedly part of my job and cost minutes and hours of every day. But building relationships with students, staff and the community and being the person who can always be counted on to help? Priceless."

Anna Szumilas, teacher-librarian at Senator O'Connor College School in Toronto, Ont., provided two useful lists. First are the time savers: using databases to search for credible evidence, collaborating with classroom teachers to lessen the load and running a library club so students can help with daily tasks. Second are the time stretchers: readers who get "into" their books and forget where the time has gone, activities where students are in the zone – chess, board games and makerspaces – and meditation.

Peter Graham, teacher-librarian at St. John the Baptist School in Bolton, Ont., offered this confession of how he handles time-related stresses: "When I'm stretched in too many directions and don't have time to fulfil all of my commitments, I call Hermione and ask to borrow her time-turner! In all

seriousness, being a 'one thing at a time; kind of guy, I tend to make notes (stickies, on my phone – paper disappears on me!) about the projects I need to get done. Then I can focus on one a time. This way I can do the job with the focus that works for me, and (mostly) not forget the other tasks on hand."

Meanwhile, I was able to track down two teacher-librarians from the Toronto District School Board who have used technology and computer resources to manipulate time AND space.

Julia Zwaan, teacher-librarian at Birchmount Park Collegiate Institute, has brought into the school celebrated chef Jamie Oliver and humanitarian Rosemary McCarney, partnered with schools in Kawartha Pine Ridge District School to run White Pine book clubs and facilitated a real-time dance class with students in Ghana, Africa, through interactive video conferencing.

She began about 10 years ago at George S. Henry Academy, using a Boys Literacy Grant to purchase the necessary equipment to run a video conference. She estimated it cost about \$20,000 to purchase everything needed. But it was worth it because video conferencing brings subject curriculum to life by providing access to real-world experts. "It's all about building bridges of inclusion and taking students to places they wouldn't be able to go," said Zwaan. "Video conferencing opens window to the world."

When Zwaan moved from George S. Henry to Northview Heights Secondary School, she had to leave behind all the video-conferencing equipment. Undeterred, she was able to persuade two companies – AVI-SPL and Polycom Canada – to lend her the equipment that she needed. Now at Birchmount Park, she is starting over with a laptop. But she is determined to come up with a better solution because video-conferencing equipment allows everyone in the room to participate in the experience compared to a handful huddled around a laptop.

Usually, the video conferences were run out of the school library but when they connected with Jamie Oliver, the whole school participated by gathering in the cafeteria and the gym. When Rosemary McCarney came to the school,