

PLANNING TO ATTEND

Super Conference?



HERE ARE SOME TIPS FROM VETERAN ATTENDEES!

COMPILED BY MARY CHISHOLM

Karen Morrow, Teacher-Librarian at Bayside Secondary School (Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board), has two pieces of advice.

1. If you have signed up for a session and it's not meeting your needs, then leave and try another or go to the Expo. Time at the Super Conference is precious and presenters will understand.

2. Bring a spouse or friend so you have two extra suitcases for books. But, seriously, I would recommend that participants regularly check the Expo author schedule so that they may prioritize what authors they would like to meet and which books they would like to acquire. As well, Super Conference is a good opportunity to connect with authors. Emailing an author often results in an opportunity for a brief meeting during the conference and that kind of networking is so beneficial.

Kate Johnson-McGregor, Teacher-Librarian, Assistant Dept. Head, English, Coordinator, BCI Laurier Program at Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School (Grand Erie District School Board), says there are so many awesome things to do at Super Conference. And as OSLA co-planner, she has lots of ideas. Here are her top five:

1. Chat with the people sitting next to you in a session, standing in line at the bar at the All Conference Party, or browsing in the Library Marketplace (the onsite store) – especially if you're new to Super Conference. If you see someone you "know" from Twitter or a presentation, definitely strike up a conversation! The human connections are what make libraries (and the Super Conference) awesome!

2. Attend a session presented by someone outside your stream! It's amazing how much we can learn from one another. The ideas and challenges in other kinds of libraries are often still very relevant.

3. Volunteer to convene a session. It's a great way to begin to get involved with the OLA and session conveners are always needed!

4. Bring your administrator for FREE if you're working in a school library. The Super Conference is a fantastic way to help admin learn about the incredible value of a properly staffed, properly resourced library learning commons in a school.

5. Wear comfortable shoes. The convention centre is huge and you'll easily get in 12,000 steps a day!

Diana Maliszewski, Teacher-Librarian at Agnes Macphail Public School (Toronto District School Board), is an OSLA co-planner, and some of her conference advice reinforces what already has been said, but some is slightly contradictory. It's up to you to experiment! Her tips are:

1. Wear comfortable shoes and have layers of clothes you can add or remove.

2. Go over the program and make note (in whatever way works best for you) of the sessions you want to attend.

3. Don't beat yourself up if you cannot attend every session you hope to see. Some things occur at the same time. Although you are allowed to leave a workshop for whatever reason, session hopping because you want to "catch it all" can be risky because it sometimes means you just get bits and not the full experience. Also, do not underestimate the learning that happens in casual conversations in the hall, on the Expo floor, or at the social events. Sometimes the learning there is even richer or more personal!

4. Capture or document your learning (and your connections made) somehow. You will need to advocate or demonstrate why it was worth all that money for you to attend. ■