

DO THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

OLA's READING PROGRAMS

Sya Van Geest



If we teach our children how to read, but none of them want to,
have we done our job?*

It's a question that resonates for teacher-librarians.
That's part of our mission –
to link a child with a book he or she *wants* to read.

*A question asked by Professor Steven Layne in *Life's Literacy Lessons*. International Reading Association, 2001.
Above: The 2003 nominated authors at the tenth Silver Birch ceremony get ready to hear their readers announce the winners.

PARENTS COMMENT

Non-fiction for fun

It's fun

My child read more

Still talking about Toronto Festival

Promotes Canadian literature

Please continue

Reading is a complex learning enterprise. Teachers have toolboxes full of tools and strategies to assure the acquisition of reading skills. But a special and unique contribution teacher-librarians bring to the reading enterprise is offering reading programs aimed at making children and youth want to read. The OLA reading programs are designed to do just that. They are intended to promote reading as free choice; they are not designed for classroom instruction or curriculum support. They come with prepared organization supports that make them an efficient and effective means for a busy teacher-librarian to encourage reading.

DO THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence that they make a difference. Those of us using the reading programs in our schools or those who know children participating, have exciting stories to tell. Over the years there have been workshops at Super Conference that attest to their efficacy. There is the excitement of the Awards Ceremonies and the breakfast celebrations at Super Conference. In addition, we have OLA's provincial perspective with the ever-increasing numbers of participants and voters and the expansion of the programs from the first, the Silver Birch of a decade ago, to five programs currently under scrutiny. Just visit the OLA web site <www.accessola.com> and follow the links through Headlines or Reading Programs. There is excitement there! All are a testament to their positive impact.

DOCUMENTING EVIDENCE

A Snapshot of Silver Birch and Red Maple 2003 in Two Schools

This year, three of us set out to collect some data to measure the Silver Birch and Red Maple experience at two different schools in Guelph. It was not meant to be an exhaustive study but a start that will continue next year following some

careful summative assessment. This is essentially a snapshot of this year's programs.

The Schools

Both schools are French Immersion and English, situated in an established part of the city of Guelph. Both teacher-librarian positions are half time on paper, but since half of that is designated to covering planning time for classroom teachers, the reality is .25 library. Both schools had brand new teacher-librarians this year, both new to their schools, Carolyn Forde and Beth McEwen. Both teacher-librarians were taking School Librarianship Part I AQ courses. Both are wonderful teachers, keen and passionate for kids, teaching and reading. Both readily agreed to participate in the reading programs. Both schools had the same volunteer – a former public / school teacher-librarian of many years, someone intimately involved with the reading programs and specifically Silver Birch at the same site for the past three years.

Test Site 1: Silver Birch at EDWARD JOHNSON

Edward Johnson, a K-5 school, has a strong reading history and culture. Two years ago a local French Immersion school, Brighton Street Public School, merged with Edward Johnson. Brighton Street brought with it a history of Silver Birch participation that dates back almost to Silver Birch's inception. It was lack of funding that made teacher-librarian Joyce Thompson skip year one. But Joyce was determined. "I immediately recognized the potential of Silver Birch to enhance my work in creating a 'community of readers through the school library,'" she stated recently. Joyce moved her Book Fair to the fall and used the proceeds to buy Silver Birch books the next year. It is important to remember that this is a French Immersion school so from the start Silver Birch reading was voluntary and extra-curricular and established as a Club just for fun.

Different books ~ styles and genres

Love the conferencing approach

Instead of computers, TV

Led to book talk at home

Authors were available

Fosters love of reading

Led us to the public library too

Four years ago my granddaughter, Alison, was in grade 4, and she loved that Silver Birch Club. But Joyce was retiring. Her replacement was half time in two different schools with a little of this and that sprinkled into her timetable during planning time periods and the only teacher-librarian time at Brighton Street following afternoon recesses. Silver Birch was not even on her radar screen nor was it on mine at the time until I received Alison's cry of dismay that Silver Birch would not be there for her in grade 5. Alison was well aware that her grandma was president of OSLA at that time and that her grandma loved her and books with a passion. Besides, it happened to coincide with my retirement. So of course I volunteered, and contacted Betty Jordan, the new teacher-librarian with the impossible timetable. Betty was wonderful. Of course she would back a Silver Birch Club, and, with the support of the principal, we made a presentation to School Council together for funds. We would work together to conference twice a week -Wednesday lunch was Silver Birch Club for grades 4 and 5 and Friday noon for grade 6. The profile and popularity accelerated. Soon it was impossible to keep up with the conferencing at noon and classroom teachers were open to me visiting their classes and talking books with small groups of students.

Two years ago that school merged with an English school, Edward Johnson. The School Council of the closing school expressed a strong desire that Silver Birch money be carried forward. Betty and I made a June presentation to a combined School Councils meeting. The continuation of Silver Birch was assured with expanded support for other reading initiatives.

Edward Johnson brought to the table its own unique feature to promote reading. February was designated as their Reading Month with special programs, one through the school library - a lit-

eracy event with community guests reading and sharing their favourite books and stories throughout the school.

There was a natural blending of the two with Silver Birch launched during February Reading Month. Several new initiatives have been added through the school library over the last two years, e.g., a highly successful bilingual chapter-book reading for grade 3, modeled after Silver Birch with conferencing, voting and awards components; Blue Spruce picture books studied in primary; and Reading Versus Screening for grades 1 and 2, a family partnership complete with ballots, certificates, prizes, and student/parent assemblies. In addition, we copied the Ottawa Secondary staff Read Poster idea (*Teaching Librarian* Spring 2000). The staff response to posing for read posters was phenomenal, with family and teddy bears and friends, etc., and teacher-librarian Betty's talented daughter completed a wonderful ISU in her grade 11 Media Studies course – a win-win project all around.

This past year, new teacher-librarian Carolyn Forde prepared for February, adding personal touches (e.g., the Guelph Storm hockey players were delighted to pose for Read posters and participate in this year's literacy event thanks to Carolyn's connections to the team; her student library club designed and painted her a colourful Reading sweatshirt).

There is a buzz in the Edward Johnson community about reading throughout the year and Silver Birch is one of the highlight programs.

Test Site 2: Red Maple at KING GEORGE

Red Maple was at King George Senior School last year but it was so low profile that few students seemed to know about it. This year was like

The OLA Board of Directors has approved adding the pilot programs, Blue Spruce for kindergarten through grade 3 and White Pine for high school. A new adult program for senior high school and colleges and university students will be added in 2005. Also approved was a single fee approach. Registration is \$20 whether a school is offering one or all programs.

starting afresh with Red Maple organized in a systematic manner with well-thought out structures and special events. One of the first things done was asking the principal for her support in September, which she gave immediately and enthusiastically. Money was received from the School Council.

Teacher-librarian Beth McEwen presented Red Maple at a staff meeting in the fall with the schedule of presentations in the school library later in November, complete with book talks, readings and the history of Red Maple in the province. This was followed up by morning announcements, (often read by the principal), and special displays.

Beth McEwen's warm, open, and welcoming rapport with students made this new club, the Red Maple Reading Club an appealing new addition to the many extra-curricular activities at King George. Each Wednesday at lunch the students met in the library for conferencing. Students were clustered in groups by book. It was difficult for the two of us to keep up, especially following the winter break holiday, but soon there were students who had read all ten. That qualified them to become conference leaders. Beth and I ran a workshop to teach them how to conference and they designed interview questions for each book to guide their talk.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose this year was five-fold.

1. To measure students' participation in Silver Birch and Red Maple reading programs in two different schools.
2. To calculate the total number of books read.
3. To compare the participation and reading preferences of boys and girls.
4. To compare fiction and non-fiction reading in Silver Birch.
5. To document these reading programs as seen through the eyes of students, parents, and classroom teachers.

Note: This was never meant as an exhaustive study but a start and both sites will pursue a similar log and expanded reflection by parents, students and teachers next year.

General guidelines for Silver Birch and Red Maple as we offered it:

1. All reading was free, voluntary, and extra-curricular.
2. Students conferenced each book when read, not to test but to facilitate their analysis*.
3. Books were recorded as read after successful conferencing.
4. Students who successfully completed all books were taught to conference their peers, and created interview questions to guide them.
5. Since school library budget could not afford this program, special funding was sought and acquired.
6. Readers participated in award celebrations with peers and authors, in school and OLA Awards Ceremonies Toronto.

*Students could also respond to a book through e-mail to teacher-librarians or volunteer or submit a written response. Only a handful chose an option other than conference.

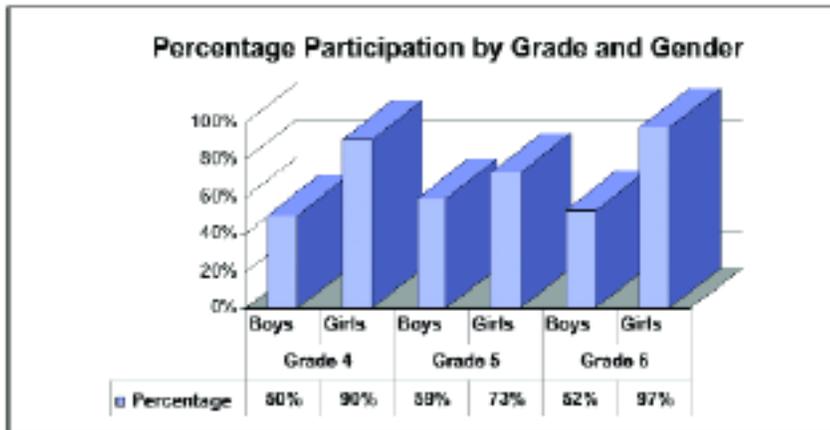
See charts at right to see:

- Percentage participation by grade and gender
- A profile of the readers and what they read
- A breakdown of the interest in fiction vs non-fiction



Silver Birch Award program at EDWARD JOHNSON SCHOOL

PARENTS' SURVEY



The parents' survey was limited this year to the families of the 40 children invited to attend the Silver Birch Awards ceremony in Toronto. They received a questionnaire asking about the impact of Silver Birch on their children and recommendations for improvements. Thirty-one parents responded, itself a testament to their enthusiasm. Next year a more thorough survey is planned. The comments were enthusiastic about the impact on their children, indeed the whole family. The recommendation that was repeated over and over was to please continue and a few suggested more copies of the books.

Reading Profile

Case Study

Vol Students	# of Participants	Percent	# Ballots Cast	Read all 20	# Fiction Read	# Non-Fiction
53 Grade 4's	35	66 %	27	9	142	168
49 Grade 5's	32	65.3 %	33	8	137	191
54 Grade 6's	42	77.7 %	30	9	148	182

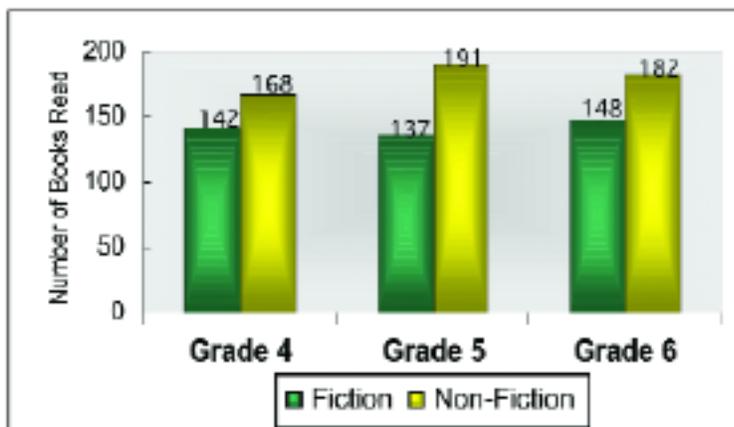
However, the latter comment was always qualified with a recognition of cost along with other solutions such as public library borrowing, purchases for home library, pleasure that students spent their allowance to buy their own or asked for Silver Birch books as gifts.

The following aspects were identified and received most positive remarks:

- introduces different books, styles and genres
- reading instead of computers, TV or video games
- led to book talks at home
- love the conferencing approach
- fosters a love of reading
- promotes Canadian culture, sense of identity
- authors were available
- led us to the public library too
- gave us good books to buy for our home
- reading non-fiction for fun
- non-fiction especially led to wonderful family talk
- still talking about the Toronto Festival
- my child read more
- it is fun
- promotes Canadian literature

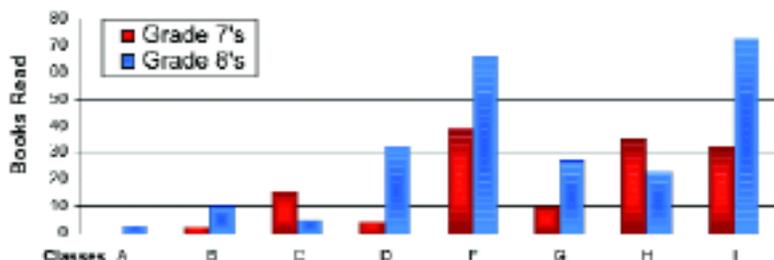
TOTALS	157	109	69.4 %	90	26 students	427	541
Jr. students		participants	participated	ballots cast	read all 20	Fiction read	Non-fiction

Silver Birch Fiction and Non-Fiction Reading

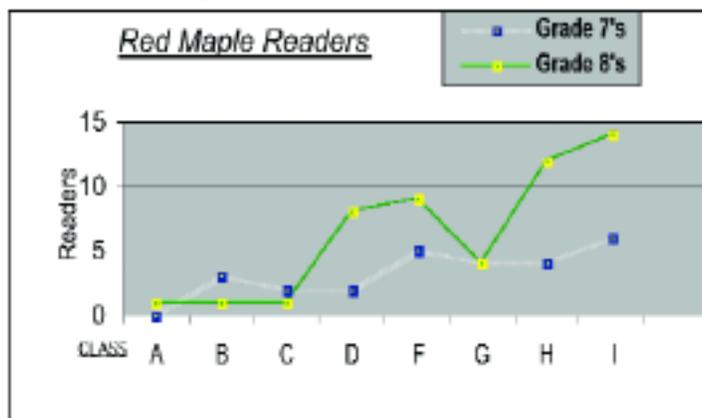


The Red Maple Award program at KING GEORGE SCHOOL

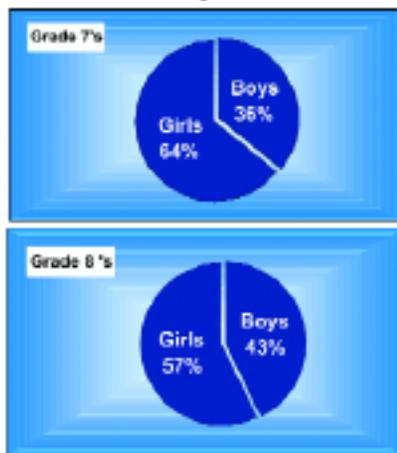
Red Maple Novels Read



Reading Record of Red Maple Club



Readers by Gender



~ 34 grade 7 students qualified to vote
 ~ 22 or 64 % were girls
 ~ 12 or 36% were boys
 ~ 6 students read all 10 novels (1 male, 5 females)

~ 35 grade 8 students qualified to vote
 ~ 20 or 57% were girls
 ~ 15 or 43% were boys
 ~ 9 students read all 10 novels (3 males, 6 females)

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT RESULTS AT EDWARD JOHNSON:

- 109 students out of a total 157 juniors participated in Silver Birch
- Close to 1000 books were read and conferenced in three months
- 124 or 13% more non-fiction books were read than fiction
- The older the grade the greater percentage of girls participated – growth from 50% in grade four to 97% in grade six
- Boys percentage of participation remained about the same – 50%, 59%, 52%
- Greatest participation in French Immersion – 92.7%
- 25 students read all 20 books
- Readers very keen to talk books
- Total school community show a great love for Silver Birch

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT RESULTS OF RED MAPLE AT KING GEORGE:

- 69 students chose to join a Reading Club in a school with many other choices
- 34 grade 7s and 35 grade 8s read and conferenced
- Greatest participation in French Immersion classes
- 79 students read and conferenced 370 novels
- 21 students read all 10 novels
- Students were very keen to talk books
- Talking books gave a common topic of conversations among young teens who may not normally mix

MOVING FORWARD

- Assess and enhance last year's procedures.
- Entice more students to read through various strategies such as:
 - design more visible displays throughout the school, e.g., post leaves winding through the halls with student name and book as read
 - profile readers, e.g., photograph students documenting certain milestones – those who qualify to vote or read all books; congratulatory announcements and letters to parents

Last Words from our Young Readers

- profile programs, e.g., enhance and increase communication with teachers, parents, School Council, local press
- establish students' advisory committee
- Monitor mid-October OLA's press release for books nominated for awards and get started with purchases, processing, displays, own reading, advance notice to alert parents, share with local bookstores for their displays and orders, etc.
- Increase links with public library. Increase student public library membership.

RANDOM THOUGHTS

Students who participated loved it. Both new teacher-librarians were impressed with the response and saw the programs as an effective and efficient way to meet their library program objectives. We plan to continue measurement of the evidence but in a more thorough manner. For instance, we need more insight from those students who did not participate and find out why in more detail. We want to ask students, teachers and parents what can be done to get more readers. We plan to better share the results with the greater community.

In the end, participating students, their parents and teachers, most frequently lauded the first two guidelines governing the programs – one, the commitment to make these programs a fun, non-threatening, extra-curricular reading program and second, the positive role of talking about the books as the best assets. It gives new meaning to the oft-repeated adage, "Reading is a social activity."

IMPORTANT NEXT STEP: LINKING TO EQAO

The obvious next step is to link the Reading Programs to EQAO achievement results before and after the reading programs. Common sense and other research studies make the link, but we need evidence. What an exciting Masters or PhD thesis! Anyone out there game?

Meanwhile, there is one thing we can all do, and that is to keep stats about the OLA reading programs at our schools. Think of it! There are a total of 1,360 unique stories to tell and places to

***It actually made me read fantasy
and I do not like fantasy.***

***I liked the non-fiction
about real things.***

***Love conferencing
with my friends.***

I read more books than I ever expected to!

***My mom and dad
liked to see me read.***

I read 20 books – Wow!

***My friends encouraged
me to read.***

***It got me to read books
I would not normally read!***

I liked the different types of books.

***The books filled
my imagination.***

***I learned neat facts
about earthquakes.***

I get to vote for the winner.

collect the evidence – 1,360 being the number of schools, registered this year in Silver Birch and Red Maple. In addition we had 232 public libraries to add to the data. I wonder how many children and youth read this year because of these reading programs? What is the total number of books read in Ontario?

Want the Support Material?

For a copy of the complete PowerPoint slides with notes, log onto the OLA Web site or e-mail Sya Van Geest <syavg@rogers.com>.

The PowerPoint is intended for a broader audience and places the reading programs within the context of the objectives of a school library program founded on solid research with summaries of current notables such as Krashen, Beers, Booth, Jobe and Kropp. These slides are ideal for

selecting, revising and editing to suit various audiences. They have been used for School Council, community groups, Rotary Club, staff meeting, parents' group and this past spring at the OLA Breakfast Panel Discussion at BookExpo Canada 2003. You are invited to make them suitable for your audience.

In addition, e-mail Sya for information and support materials for the other reading programs.

THE LAST WORD: CAN WE MAKE CHILDREN WANT TO READ?

Here are two anecdotes that answer yes!

My second granddaughter, a keen participant in our local grade 3 chapter-book reading, told me with great relish that when her lunchroom supervisor told her class that she would make them take out their books to read if they did not quiet down, the class broke into spontaneous applause. "Not much of a threat was it Grandma?" she chuckled.

Her French Immersion classroom teacher has commented for a second year, "I can't believe it. They come in reading. I have to ask students to put away their books so I can start class." She always finishes with, "What a wonderful dilemma!" ■

Saunders Ad

NBS Ad

Looking Back on Looking North

I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the joint CLA/ALA conference in Toronto from June 21 - 23, with a pre-conference session June 19 - 20. A number of the sessions I attended focused on research about our role and impact, which is the theme of this issue of *Teaching Librarian*, so I thought it might be useful to share these sessions with you.

CONNECTING SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND LITERACY PROGRAMS

Ray Doiron, Ph.D. (raydoiron@upei.ca)

Ray Doiron, a noted educator, researcher, author, and speaker, is one of the leading figures in the Canadian school library community. I knew his session would be worthwhile and I was pleased to discover a session so well grounded in research — and research well beyond that with which I was already familiar.

Doiron established the context for connecting literacy and school libraries, explored the current understanding of literacy, discussed the relevance of school library programs, and shared examples of literacy/school library connections. He suggested that school libraries provide the environment in which students develop and practice literacy skills of all types, through both research and personal reading, using resource-based learning. Doiron also emphasized the role school libraries play in creating and passing on cultural heritage and national identity, exposing students to diverse perspectives, meeting student needs, and empowering students. A suggested reference list was distributed (see “How School Libraries Support Reading Development” on page 43).

This presentation expanded my understanding of both literacy and of the role of the school library in literacy — understandings I plan to share within my school and district and with the other teacher-librarians in my district.

EDUCATION FOR TEACHER- LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE 21st CENTURY

Jennifer L. Branch, Ph.D.
(jbranch@ualberta.ca)

Jennifer Branch is the co-ordinator of the Teacher-Librarianship by Distance Learning Program offered by the University of Alberta. I attended this session because of a personal interest in the topic and was pleased to discov-



Brenda Dillon
reports
on the June 2003
CLA/ALA
joint conference



er a session thoroughly grounded in research about teacher-librarianship. School librarianship research shows clearly that the impact of school libraries on student learning and achievement is tied at least in part to the availability of competent, qualified teacher-librarians who are involved in collaborative instruction. It follows, then, that individuals interested in becoming teacher-librarians, or practicing teacher-librarians interested in improving their qualifications, need a way to do this. And one way is to participate in the distance learning programs offered by the University of Alberta.

Programs offered include a diploma in teacher-librarianship, a Masters of Education in Teacher-Librarianship, and a Ph.D. program. The distance education model means these programs are available to teacher-librarians everywhere - including Ontario!

**DEVELOPING THE RESPECT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS:
OUR FIRST BIG CHALLENGE**

Dianne Oberg, Ph.D. (doberg@ualberta.ca)

Dianne Oberg is a professor at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education and the editor of *School Libraries Worldwide*, the journal of the International Association of School Librarianship. A noted educator, researcher, author, and speaker, she has done considerable research on principals and school libraries.

We already know that good school libraries have a positive impact on student achievement and learning. This presentation focused on the role played by the school principal in a good school library. D. Oberg presented both her own research and that of others and the conclusion was obvious: school principals play a critical role in school libraries.

Oberg went on to say that it's necessary for teacher-librarians to gain the respect and support of their principals by building credibility, communicating effectively, and working to advance school goals. The research makes clear that this isn't optional - if we want good school libraries, we must have the support of our principals.

**AASL AND CSLA JOINT FORUM:
RESEARCH IN SCHOOL LIBRARIANSHIP**

● ***Powering Achievement: How School Librarians and Library Programs Make A Difference***

Keith Curry Lance, Ph.D., director, Library Research Service, Colorado State Library and University of Denver, Denver, Colorado
Keith Curry Lance presented a brief overview of the state studies (Colorado, etc.), highlighting the major findings and discussing the implications of this research for education policy and practice. This presentation served as a good introduction for anyone unfamiliar with Lance's work and a useful review and update for everyone else.

● ***Seeking Information for School Purposes on the Internet***

Holly Gunn, Teacher-librarian, Sackville High School, Nova Scotia
Let's have a quick show of hands please, how many of you have heard some variation of "if we have the Internet, why do we need school libraries/teacher-librarians?" I'm sure there were a lot of hands up. I know I've heard this question and, judging from the number of articles on the topic, I know I'm not alone. Well, here's some research you can use next time someone asks you the question. Holly Gunn looked at the strategies and techniques used by high school seniors when searching the Internet for school information. She found that in schools without teacher-librarians, students used few of the strategies and techniques associated with effective Internet searching. When asked how they had learned, these students said they had taught themselves or learned from peers. In other words, far from rendering teacher-librarians unnecessary, the availability of the Internet means students need access to someone who can teach them how to search the Internet effectively, and that someone is a teacher-librarian.

● ***Meaningful Research Projects: Perspectives from High School Students***

Lois Barranoik, Ph.D. Candidate Elementary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta
Lois Barranoik investigated the experiences of a teacher and a group of students while completing a senior English research project. Students are more likely to complete a research project successfully if the project is meaningful to them and choice, relevance, reflection, and application are essential components. Teacher-librarians can play a role in both the creation and the process of meaningful research assignments.

- ***The Impact of the Replacement of Teacher-Librarians with Library Technicians on School Library Programs and Services: A Provincial Study***

Ray Doiron, Faculty of Education, University of Prince Edward Island

Ray Doiron conducted this study at the request of the Nova Scotia teachers' federation. He discovered a significant decline in Nova Scotia's school libraries with regard to staffing, services, collections, and instructional programs. Non-teachers, and sometimes volunteers, were performing instructional tasks. Basically, at all levels of the school system there was evidence of serious misunderstanding of school librarianship and information literacy instruction. In other words, keeping school libraries open while getting rid of teacher-librarians does not support student learning and achievement.

- **Information Literacy Education for Pre-Service Teachers: Does it Make a Difference?**

Jennifer L. Branch, Department of Elementary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

Jennifer Branch concluded from this study that the education of preservice teachers does make a difference to their understanding of information literacy and their ability to integrate ICT into their teaching. It's important to note that this preservice education involved immersing these preservice teachers in a resource-based learning environment, information literacy, and the research process. This has implications for the education of preservice teachers.

- ***An Essential Connection: How Quality School Library Media Programs Improve Student Achievement in North Carolina***

Dr. Robert Burgin, president, RB Software & Consulting, Cary, North Carolina

This study of North Carolina's public school libraries corroborated the findings of previous studies, such as those done by Lance. Although the information provided by this study isn't new, it's important to have the earlier results confirmed in yet one more jurisdiction. Each study confirming these results makes it a bit more difficult for policy makers to argue that the studies have been limited to apply to their particular jurisdiction.

CONCLUSION

Although personal stories can be powerful, it's also important to know the research being done in school librarianship. Attending these sessions gave me the opportunity to improve my knowledge and understanding of this research so I can share it with my colleagues and with school and district administrators. ■

How School Libraries Support Reading Development

A Suggested Reference List

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Note: For on-going professional reading on literacy and school libraries, read Literacy Links written by Marlene Asselin and featured in every issue of Teacher-Librarian: The Journal for School Library Professionals.

—Ray Doiron, Ph.D., Faculty of Education, University of Prince Edward Island, raydoiron@upe.ca, ALA/CLA Joint Conference, Toronto, June 2003

Peter Rogers: Quiet Inspiration

Interview by Dianne Clipsham

“The Faculty of Information Studies Alumni Association, University of Toronto, is pleased to announce that this year’s winner of the Alumni Jubilee Award is Peter Rogers, BLS ’69, MLS ’74.”

Peter has been the recipient of many honours during the past 30 plus years in his illustrious career in Ontario’s libraries. He currently is president of the Trustees Group of OLA, where his quiet inspiration is, once again, making a difference. *The Teaching Librarian* caught up with him to review his experiences in school libraries...

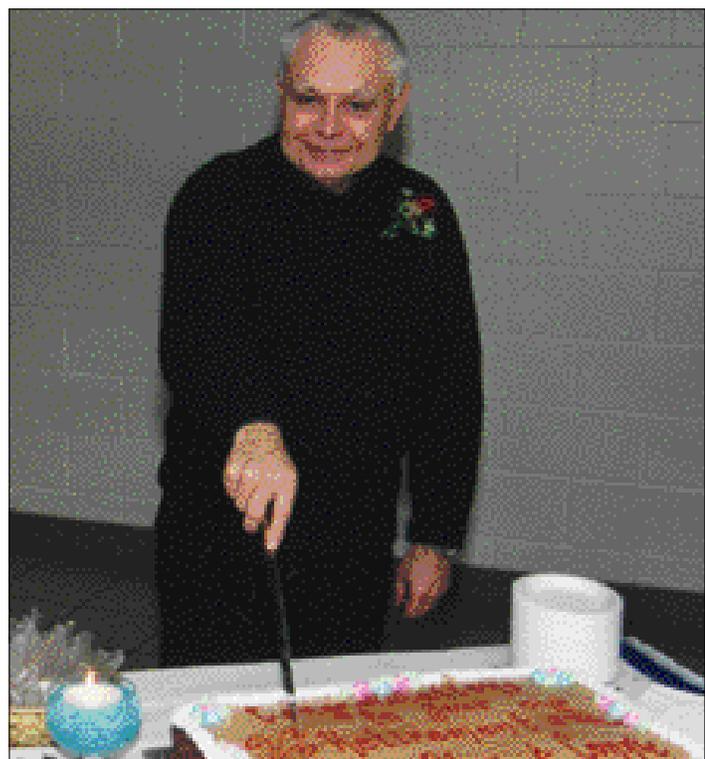
TL: How did you get involved in school libraries in the first place?

PR: After graduating with my BLS in 1969 and an honours degree in English and History, I was offered a job substituting at a Catholic Secondary School in Hamilton for a grade 13

English teacher on leave. I was also given some library periods to work with a nun who had been there for a few years and had some sort of knowledge of libraries. The principal, Fr. Ronald Cote, saw the significance of school libraries in the emerging curricula (*Living and Learning*, or the Hall-Dennis Report, with its focus on the child was just coming into prominence). Thanks to both of these strokes of luck, by Christmas of my second year I was in charge of the library. There was no looking back!

TL: For how long have you been involved, and in what capacities?

PR: I have been involved in school libraries since 1969, and worked in three high school communities (Bishop Ryan, Cardinal Newman and St. Mary’s Catholic Secondary Schools) and in seven actual libraries – now that’s a long story – one building at BR, two at St. Mary’s and four at CN. I held positions as chairperson of communications, and program head, library resource; these positions both disappeared with cuts. I represented my board on many occasions but never as a paid consultant. Provincially, in 1983, I chaired Ideashop (OSLA’s conference before Super Conference), and was twice president of OSLA. I also chaired the OLA Task Force on Co-operation between Schools and Public Libraries.





Peter Rogers is pictured here when he was OSLA President, 1983-85. He subsequently became OLA President in 1988-89. After becoming Chair of the Hamilton Public Library Board, he went on to become President of the Ontario Library Trustees' Association in 2002.

TL: Tell us about any outstanding moments for you in your career.

PR: There have been many:

Meeting and introducing people such as W.O. Mitchell, Sue Hinton, Timothy Findley, Kevin Major, Nino Ricci, Margaret Atwood (I spent an hour with her alone in her hotel room in Niagara Falls) was certainly classic.

As chair of the Hamilton Public Library Board, I spearheaded a local task force on cooperation. It was through that group that we brought together three school boards, three public library boards, Mohawk College, and McMaster University, along with a number of commercial partners, to create the Hamilton Wentworth Information Network (HWIN). This model of cooperation helped land us a \$660,000-Ministry grant to create a technological infrastructure and a resource-sharing framework which still operates today and has provided our school libraries with a base that would never have been accomplished and supported otherwise.

My last outstanding moment was my retirement reception where my grade 9 math teacher, my grade 13 Italian teacher, Fr. Cote, (who was my high school principal and who also hired me), my director of education, my long time friend and mentor Larry Moore from the OLA, my Chief Librarian from the Hamilton Public Library, and many friends were all in the same room. That was neat!

TL: Can you share your dream for school libraries in Ontario?

PR: It is my dream that we will have school libraries in every school in this province, including Native schools, that we will have

well-educated and effective teacher-librarians who have been supported by Ministry of Education regulations. I also firmly anticipate an Information Studies curriculum embedded in all courses with clear expectations that are measurable and are reported to parents. I see the day coming when information literacy will become a regular part of both student education and all teacher professional training.

TL: Can you share your favourite reads or viewing habits?

PR: In the last few years I have graduated from young adult novels (which I always enjoyed, especially after meeting their authors) to concentrating on adult Canadian material that we also used in our OAC English program, such as Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall On Your Knees*, David Adams Richards' *Mercy Among the Children*, Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News*, Timothy Findley's *The Piano Man's Daughter*, Guy Vanderheage's *The Englishman's Boy*, Nino Ricci's *Lives of the Saints* and Shyam Selvadurai's *Cinnamon Gardens*, to name just a few. What great literature we have here in Canada! I am anticipating enjoying Yann Martel's *The Life of Pi* next. ■

Adele Kostiak, Lynn McLeod on the School Library / Public Library Cooperation Task force that Peter chaired in the early '90s.

