

President's Message

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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SSLA President



SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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Another school year is almost over, and much has been accomplished by the Executive of the Saskatchewan School Library Association. Thanks to the dedication of this diverse group of individuals, the SSLA is being reshaped to address the challenges of the 21st century.

Teacher-librarians are information specialists who must cope with a world that is constantly evolving. In a few short years, the World Wide Web has moved beyond a collection of websites to Web 2.0 tools for online sharing and collaboration. Furthermore, a plethora of digital devices has invaded our personal and professional lives. While many of us are overwhelmed by these changes, children, teenagers, and young adults have embraced them. As a result, educators have been forced to rethink their teaching practices to better meet the needs of their clientele.

Many of the activities undertaken by the Association this year were designed to help teacher-librarians adapt to their changing role. With the help of a Special Projects Grant from the STF, a secure, interactive SSLA website was developed that provides members with valuable information and social networking opportunities. In addition, the Association's professional journal, *The Medium*, was moved to an electronic format for posting on the website. This prudent, cost-saving measure brought the journal into the modern age and made it more palatable to the next wave of teacher-librarians who, like the digital generation that they serve, prefer to access information and conduct business online.

Showcase 2008 presentations sponsored by the SSLA in Regina and Saskatoon provided educators with strategies for designing authentic assignments to engage today's learners. Critical and creative thinking, essential questions, and technology integration using Web 2.0 tools were key components of the sessions. The collaborative partnership between the teacher and the teacher-librarian was highlighted, and attention was drawn to the integral part teacher-librarians have to play in a changing educational and technological landscape. The sessions were well received, and presentation notes were posted on the SSLA website's wiki.

Showcase 2008 occurred in February, and during the course of its conference planning, the SSLA discovered that many school divisions were putting their energies into presentations and/or were diverting their professional development funds to the STF's province-wide event. It was therefore decided that a one-day workshop prior to Campus Saskatchewan's Tlt Summit was a viable alternative to a full conference. Prairie Spirit School Division's Library Group undertook the project, and Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan were contracted to present a session called *Building a Culture of Inquiry in the Library* in Saskatoon on May 14. Strategies for helping students formulate quality questions requiring higher-order thinking were shared, and a rationale for making inquiry learning a priority in our schools was offered.

As president of the SSLA, I wish to thank the SSLA Executive and the Association's representatives on other provincial boards and entities for their commitment and hard work over the last year. In particular, I wish to acknowledge outgoing Executive members Sylvia Regnier and Violet Smotra-Cook. I also thank Stacey McConnell, STF Special Subject Council Assistant, and Milton Block, STF Executive Assistant, for their ongoing support and advice.

Joan Miller

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