

2009-2010 Learning Events

Saskatchewan School Library Association

THE MEDIUM – FALL 2009

Carlene Walter
SSLA President-Elect



SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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During the past two years, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education has been committed to a process of renewal with the goal of producing curricula documents with a new vision and format. A key element that permeates the renewed curricula is the emphasis on inquiry –fostering in students the “inquiring habits of mind that lead to deeper understanding of their world and human experience” (*Saskatchewan English Language Arts Curriculum*, 2009).

The American Association of School Librarians’ document, *Standards of the 21st Century Learner* (2007), echoes this shift to a culture of inquiry in which students gain or create knowledge and apply it in new situations. Students are encouraged to think critically, draw conclusions, and make informed decisions. A goal for students is to participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society while pursuing personal and aesthetic growth. Curricula and other related documents advocate a “shift from a transmission-oriented pedagogy to a more open, inquiry-based mode of teaching and learning” (Bruce and Bishop 2002).

The Saskatchewan School Library Association Conference Committee, comprised of Jacqueline Helman, Carlene Walter, and Jennifer Climenhaga, are also offering professional development opportunities on the inquiry approach to learning. Three 2009-2010 online Learning Events will feature Harvey Daniels, coauthor of *Comprehension & Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action*, and Bill Prentice, English Language Arts Consultant for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. These two well known speakers will focus on the topic of inquiry and its impact on both student achievement and the role of teacher-librarians.

January 7, 2010

Inquiry As A Stance

Bill Prentice

January 12, 2010

Inquiry Circles In Action

Harvey Daniels

February 9, 2010

Continuing the Conversation - Inquiry Circles In Depth

Harvey Daniels

In the first session, educator Bill Prentice will discuss a critical aspect of an effective English Language Arts program – the engendering of student questioning, inquiry, efficacy, and self-reflection. Prentice will discuss how teacher-librarians can play a critical role in equipping students with powerful cognitive and communication strategies to address a variety of texts and to actively construct meaning.

In his two sessions, author Harvey Daniels will discuss the foundation for inquiry circles by chronicling the current research and practices behind comprehension instruction and classroom collaboration. Daniels will present four types of inquiry circles: mini-research projects, curricular inquiries, extensions of literature circles, and open inquiry projects. Participants will explore the intersection of comprehension, collaboration, and inquiry in order to explore rich content, build knowledge, question, and take action in the world.

As both teachers and learners themselves, teacher-librarians nurture collaborative relationships in order to engender deeper thinking, view issues from other perspectives, and critically exchange new found knowledge. The SSLA online Learning Events provide teacher-librarians with the opportunity to learn in this manner. Vygotsky (1986) describes learning as a social process. Therefore learners should be provided with rich opportunities for discourse in order to support evolving understanding and to promote critical intellectual rigor. The Learning Events delivered virtually via *Elluminate* allow participants to interact with the speaker and other participants through text, audio, and polling options. For participants who favour a face-to-face environment, learning pod locations will be situated conveniently throughout the province.

Participants can attend the Learning Events where the speakers will challenge them to “develop the critical thinkers and learners who are effective contributions to their local and global community (Harada and Yoshina, 2004). Tuition for SSLA members to all three sessions is \$60.00. Other participants are welcome for a slightly higher fee.

To register, please download the SSLA Registration Form (http://ssla.ca/learningevents/learningevents_2009_2010.htm).

REFERENCES

American Association of School Librarians. (2007). *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*. [Online]. Retrieved August 10 2009 from http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/learningstandards/AASL_LearningStandards.pdf

Harada, V. H., & Yoshina, J. M. (2004). *Inquiry Learning Through Librarian-Teacher Partnerships (Information Skills Across the Curriculum)*. Worthington: Linworth Publishing.

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Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and Language*. Rev. ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.