

The Library's Role in a Whole-School Approach to Collaborative Inquiry

This year, at *Father Michael Goetz*, a focus on inquiry has been shaping the way teachers and students are using our school library. On a daily basis, teachers are bringing their classes to the library to take part in activities that promote critical thinking and problem-solving. A culture of inquiry has been born and is beating a pulse that permeates the entire school. Teachers across subject areas - dance, English, ESL, French, History, Math, Physical Education, Religion, and Science - have engaged in learning-focused conversations with the teacher-librarian to co-create inquiries that align teaching with current professional practices.



FMG Library , May 2014
Miss Baker, student teacher for Mrs. Reeder, co-facilitating a math inquiry on similar triangles.

A vision for 21st century learning is outlined in *Together for Learning, School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons*, (a document created by the Ontario School Library Association), which details the necessary response in education to the new learner – a learner who is growing up in a media-saturated environment to which she expects to have immediate and easy access. She wears multiple personal electronic devices, learns new technologies rapidly, constantly multi tasks, and is used to learning informally (OSLA). It is imperative that we respond to our new learners so that school life is meaningful, stimulating, and prepares them appropriately for their future in a rapidly changing world.

At *Father Michael Goetz*, as the role of teacher-librarian continues to shift towards the role of consultant and collaborator, the library has now become a catalyst through which inquiry is modeled and used on a regular basis. Mr. Angel, in reference to his Grade 10 Applied English class, provided feedback on an exit ticket: "I felt the inquiry went very well. It was interesting to see opinions form, then change through discussion". Mrs. Porto, in regards to her 12 University Exercise Science class, stated, "Students were focused and engaged," while Ms. Ruscica noted about her Grade 9 Applied English class, "Students responded very well to all the activities and they supported each other in their groups". Students have also provided feedback on exit tickets. One participant from Mrs. Reeder's Grade 10 Applied Math class commented, "this was very beneficial because it was a lot of hands-on activity and very easy to understand," while another stated, "I think it was very beneficial because you learn more if you work with a group of people".

Teachers from across subject areas, grades and levels have been extremely receptive and have taken shared practices back to their classrooms where students further engage in the inquiry process.

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