Kristen Schlies

Reflective Journal

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 I found my time spent with Rhonda Ramey at St. Luke very beneficial. I was interested to see how things run there since it is a similar environment that I work in daily. It is a PreK-8 school, but she has two separate media centers. There is one in the lower school building and one in the middle school building. I only have one spot for PreK-8.

 I was able to watch their morning broadcast which was very helpful, because I was serving on a media center planning committee for our high school and we are very interested in having a live morning broadcast. Since St. Luke's campus is very spread out like ours at St. Anne-Pacelli, a similar set up could work. I passed the information about equipment and software along to my other committee members. Rhonda and I talked a lot about technology. They were able to get a smartboard in every classroom and we discuss how they used Title money to pay for training the teachers. Rhonda does not necessarily train the teachers, but helps set things up for the training that they need. She shared contact information for training with me and we discussed Neos. This is a product offered by Renaissance Place for AR testing. We also talked about the student response systems that they just purchased. She said they have started a technology fee for each student so they can keep their technology up to date. This was something I discussed with the technology team that I serve on at my school and something we'd like to pursue.

 When I visited Eileen Lynch at Double Churches Middle School, we discussed Grant writing and ant the grant she had gotten for iPods and a cart. This is based on the percentage of military student that your school serves. I will be looking into this, since we have a high percentage of military students. Another thing that Eileen does that I love, is she prints a READ poster with software she purchased from ALA for each student when they reach the one million word count in AR. The students picks the style of poster and the holds a book of their choice and the Eileen creates the poster. The posters are laminated and displayed in the cafeteria. At the end on the year the student takes them home. I know my students would love this.

 I spent my elementary hours in my own media center under the supervision of Julie Williams and my principal, Gayla Arrington. Some things I had pick up from Julie were how she arranges her AR books. I rearranged where the kindergarten through second grade find their AR books. They are now arranged by reading level, and the children can quickly find they level of book that they need. I also started making baskets of AR books for the teachers to have in the classroom, so when they student needs another book, they can quickly get one since we are not in the same building.

 I trained the teachers how to set goals for each student based on their Star Reading test. This is something Julie and I had discussed. It was our first year with Star Reading. Setting goals for the children really increased their AR participation. Our school read over 4,000 more books than we read as a school last year.

 I collaborated with a third grade teacher on a fairy tale unit and had a lot of fun with fractured fairy tales. Julie had shared her love of fractured fairy tales with me. I had the students use the Read, Write, Think website to create their own fractured fairy tales. They used PowerPoint to create picture books.

 At the high school level I worked with Patricia McMahon at Kendrick. I found this very interesting because she has fifty-one years of experience. She took the time to show several of us how to repair books and properly put Mylar covers on them. That is the first time I have seen that done and I had been doing it wrong. She gave me a tour of her library and what stood out the most was the fabulous book room she had of all the book sets that she has purchased for teachers. This was an example of a collection that supports the GPS. Patricia was also very helpful with sharing articles from professional journals. She had made copies for all of us working that day. These articles discuss current trends like ereaders. I also worked with Natasha Torres at the Academic Success. She showed me how to set up a collection analysis through Titlewave. I did not know about this and will call them to get that set up. Natasha uses that to help her decide what to order. The analysis will show you where you really need books and also offer suggestions. It will not suggest books you already have. The other useful tip I picked up from Natasha was a type of book cover that I have never seen before. It is called an Easy Cover and it is for soft cover books. When it is applied, the book feels like a hard cover book. I will buy these and apply the covers to many of our AR books to make them last longer.

 I always enjoy working with other media specialists and find them so willing to share their knowledge and skills. It is interesting to see how different people do different things. I arrive with no preconceived ideas about their program and honestly can say have not experienced any negatives. We all work in completely different environments and everyone must do what works best in their situation. I find that everyone reevaluates what works and what doesn't at the end of each year. After being in my job for two years now, I have found that I can now share some of my experiences with the media specialist. I had own person tell me this time that she learned a lot from me. That was a good feeling.