

Columbus Diocese	
St. Catharine School	
Martha Schindler	Donna Brennan
Titles: "Teacher In-service: Library Resources and Designing Instruction and Assignments" and "Library Resources and Information Questions"	

When Mrs. Brennan and I discussed applying for the ILILE grant, we talked about many different topics that would be appropriate to explore with our staff and students. We settled on the topic of our Follett Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) since it is crucial to doing research and so fit as a necessary extension of our Social Studies unit for the students. It seemed to be a welcome topic for many of the staff. I have been in the process of doing our retrospective conversion for two years and just disposed of our card catalog at the end of last school year, so we thought that this workshop was timely for the staff. In library classes, I start instruction on using the OPAC in second grade because that is when the students start to do research projects with parental assistance and need information on specific topics. I help them with their searches and they gradually get more and more independent in performing them.

In working on a budget for our proposal, we consulted our Principal and some teachers. We decided that all teachers and students would use a video camera for classroom projects and performances (and would fit our summer workshop lessons and our student OPAC plan). For the remaining grant money, we decided that library and classroom materials supporting teacher units would be most beneficial to students and teachers.

Setting a date for the staff workshop was difficult. Our staff meetings are devoted to our Accreditation process, which needs to involve all staff members and must be done in a timely manner. After much calendar searching, we settled on October 29, a teacher workday at the end of first quarter. Our principal offered to have lunch catered for us so that we could use our time to best advantage. We made the workshop optional for that day, saying we would schedule a make up before or after school at teachers' convenience but all teachers chose to attend on the 29th except for two who were absent for medical reasons.

Donna and I prepared a packet for teachers with a sheet defining and explaining information literacy, a survey/evaluation/practice sheet, and samples of print options of searches. Donna operated the Smart Board while I did the talking and demonstrating. We led the teachers (and Principal) from finding the OPAC icon on the desktop through keyword, title, author, subject, series, call number, power (Boolean), and Accelerated Reader searches. We used the keyword "stars" to begin so that we could demonstrate the

need to refine a search since we got figure skating and football “stars” along with the solar system “stars.” Also, this topic is common to our most reluctant participants. We had a good discussion and many questions about searching in general and the particular (and impressive) capabilities of our Follett system.

We demonstrated how to look at a Marc record to judge if a particular item was appropriate to the topic and level of the student audience and how to use the Book Bag feature to compile a bibliography. I did assure the teachers that this workshop was for information literacy purposes and NOT because I did not want to do the searches and compile the materials for them! Many were relieved, they told me later.

The final thing that we wanted to demonstrate was the links on our home page to the Columbus Metropolitan Library and the Bexley Public Library. Several of the teachers were not familiar with using these on-line catalogs. Those who were veteran users suggested ways that they used these catalogs in their planning.

We then asked the teachers to answer our questionnaire and perform some searches of their own to practice their skills and also to help with collection development in areas of interest to them. All performed at least a couple of searches but only one was willing to turn in her survey that day. The rest wanted to think about topics that they wanted to seriously consider but did not have time to do that day. Teachers were told that we would use most of our grant monies to buy materials that were needed to enhance classroom texts or support special projects that they might want to do this year for which materials were lacking in our existing collection. Our Principal was very supportive of the teachers’ requests, saying in the workshop that we would use money beyond the grant money to honor the time and effort that they would spend in this planning.

The results of our workshop have been far-reaching. The initial response was excellent with everyone saying that they had improved in searching to some degree with most noting that they were not familiar with the Book Bag feature of OPAC and that they would definitely use this feature in their work. I have noticed that many of the teachers submit Book Bag printouts for item requests, rather than the usual scrap of paper with a topic. Several teachers still discuss with me units that they are planning and ask me to pull everything that I think would be relevant. One says that it helps in the brainstorming stage since I think of materials that take her in a direction that she hadn’t considered when we have materials on her students’ level on a particular aspect of the topic. I have also noticed that recently teachers have sent students to the library to do OPAC searches for library materials to expand topics that they are discussing in class.

With the fifth graders, I did a review of OPAC as part of our unit on the Big 6 information literacy model. In our pre-assessment, about half of the students said they were not comfortable with their searching abilities and needed practice in finding items using the call number. In our review, I called on these students to assess understanding and perform searches and actually practice finding specific items. The parts of OPAC new to fifth grade students were power search and Book Bag, so we spent the most time exploring these features. I reviewed reading the MARC record, showing the students

how to judge the appropriateness of the item for their use and touching on the parts that they would be needing when writing a bibliography.

I talked with the students about their assessment. I told them I would be observing them using the OPAC in our everyday use of the library as they chose materials for classroom and personal use and that their formal evaluation would be in the form of a video in which they would teach others how to use our OPAC. When I suggested that I would like to offer our video to another school that has the Follett system, I met with huge resistance. They were very uncomfortable with the idea so we discussed and settled on doing the video in segments that I could use as an overview with younger students. They remembered how helpful OPAC was as a tool for finding just the right Accelerated Reader book for their fourth grade reading log and how much it helped in deciding on a topic for second and third grade research projects and were willing to help with this library instruction. I had to promise to never show it to another school or older students in our school! They loved the challenge of using the new camera and doing a storyboard of their scenes. Our technology teacher is looking forward to teaching them how to edit and enhance the video in her classes. Many students volunteered to be the cameraperson, even after they were told that they would have to read the instruction book and pass a test to qualify! We are looking at our future stage and technology crew!

We are still working on our video but I am pleased with their work and with it as an assessment tool. It provides a positive way for me to work with individual students who need review and practice and helps those students with advanced abilities or special writing or technology abilities to shine as leaders and peer mentors. Mrs. Brennan and I have found a nice balance with using different students for the play they are writing and producing for our social studies project and for this video project and its storyboard. As is always the case, the challenge with a library project is having the students for only thirty minutes a week and having lots of interruptions with most free days falling on fifth grade library days. We have had to be creative in coming up with additional time for students to work on these projects. Mrs. Herrel, our technology teacher, has been invaluable in sharing her time (class and personal) and talents with us.

The grant monies were actually spent on a video camera, a class set of books for fifth grade on sections of the country that will make this unit of study easier and a set of movies on folktales and puppet making with children. The need for these last resources resulted from the second grade teacher's OPAC search for her unit on trickster tales and a school artist-in-the-school performance that highlighted puppets and storytelling.