**Katie Douglas**

**ISTC 601: Field Observation**

**Middle School Media Specialist**

I observed and interviewed Theresa Connors a middle school Media Specialist at Mace’s Lane Middle School in Cambridge, Maryland. She got her library media certification from Indiana State University (online).  Since she already had a master’s she only needed an endorsement program.   It was 27 credits but only certified teachers could go through this program. Theresa taught English in middle school and high school for 16 years prior to becoming a media specialist and she has now been a media specialist for the past four years.

Mace’s Lane has approximately 600 students in grades 6th through 8th. Both Media Specialists have been at their school for the past several years. Mace’s Lane is currently under school improvement by the state. They have approximately 60% FARMS students.

Theresa Connors describes her job from the description from Human Resources. “Teach research and information literacy skills, maintain inventory of books and AV equipment, assist students in locating books to check out, train staff as needed in using technology, trouble shoot tech equipment and act as a liaison between staff and IT department, maintain collection by weeding and repairing books, analyze the collection to prepare budget request, and to purchase books in indentified need areas to maintain currency of collection.” Her mission for the past several years was to change the perception of the library and make it a more inviting place. Her goals for the past year have been to collect data to ensure that her collection is meeting the needs of the students and faculty and to increase the usage of the media center by content area teacher for research-type projects. Theresa is also working on implementing a writing lab program to serve students on a pull-out basis to improve writing skills in all ability levels.

Teresa Connors has a flexible schedule. She partners with many teachers for research units. She also schedules language arts classes to come in every two weeks for book talks and book check out. For collaboration, she doesn’t have anything going on at the moment but earlier this year she collaborated on research projects with various content teachers.  She taught note taking, citing sources, MLA style, how to search the internet effectively, how to use Google advanced search, World Book Online, SIRS, and evaluating sources for reliability and relevance.  She said it is really nice because if she is overloaded with administrative work she doesn’t pull classes for a couple days to catch up. Theresa follows the Dorchester County Media Handbook which contains our collection development policy. This policy helps her with the weeding of the collection and ordering books.

Theresa does not do student volunteers because my experiences with them haven’t been good.  She has found that after a few duty days they get bored with straightening shelves and she doesn’t feel comfortable having them shelve books or run the checkout.  So there isn’t much they can do to help her.  Some other media specialists use student helpers but she finds it is more work for her to find them suitable chores than it is to have no aides.  She doesn’t have any support staff but if there is an extra sub in the building she sometimes get their services to shelve books but this is not on any kind of regular basis.

Theresa does not have a budget each year.  She asks for money and get any that is left over from the other spending.  One year it was $1600, one year $3000 but neither is an amount anywhere close to what she needs, even for maintenance.  She has not begun any type of fundraising because this is only her second year in that school. She does have a book fair twice a year and does get the profits from that.