Katie Douglas

ISTC 601

“Happy Days” Reflection

 Last year was my first year at Hurlock Elementary School as a Media Specialist. Before this I taught 6th grade Language Arts in Talbot County. I was out on maternity leave from having my son and the principal from Hurlock called me and asked me if I would like to try something different. I debated it because I loved 6th grade and was very happy but after having my son my priorities had changed and I liked the idea of only driving 5 minutes instead of 45 minutes. Honestly, one of the real reasons I took it was because I thought I would have to spend less time doing schoolwork at night and more time with my son. Was I wrong! In the elementary school library you teach classes full time and run a library. I am responsible for the teaching of all the technology. I know spend more time at night completing school work and never have a moment’s piece during the day. On the plus side I can take a book and do ANYTHING I want with it. No more worrying about standardized tests and grading. I like the freedom that I have. My main priority is to make sure that all the students in the school love reading and that by the time they leave me in 5th grade they have the appropriate skills that they need for middle school. I love it. My day is very full and there are times that I want to go in a corner and not speak to anyone but I am very happy. There are days that I want to put in a transfer to middle or high school because it is so hard running a library and writing five lesson plans each day but I am not ready to give up teaching my classes. I love having the influence of kids and making them want to read. It is the highlight of my day. I have an average of 200 checkouts a day and the kids are begging for more. I am overworked and I am always exhausted but it is worth it.

The dissatisfactions are all the same lack of funding and the workload but that is just the way of education. I don’t know of any school system that has everything that they need. You make do with what you have. I have to talk up the books that I have and if I do get a little bit of money I spend it on books that I KNOW the kids will want to read.

When I started this last year I had no training but I am glad I didn’t. I learned on my own and with the help of the public library across the street. I call on them a lot for stupid questions, like how to cover a book. I came into a library that was really bad because that had an instructional assistant in their for the past three years. This was fine because I could dig right in and make changes. As far as the technology since I taught 6th grade I know what I wanted my 6th graders to know when they came to me so that is how I teach my technology. I am always going to different workshops about technology and explore online for different ideas. Last week my 1st and 2nd graders learned how to use Microsoft Word and my 3rd-5th graders are completing research projects and then creating Power Point Projects. My kindergarteners just saw a PhotoStory of their class projects so I feel that I am moving forward with the technology.

I agree totally with the “top five” satisfaction parts of the top. My favorite one though is connecting kids with reading and lifelong learning. I love collaborating with teachers but I don’t have much time to do it. I only have one planning a day and that is to do library stuff but I often give it up to teach lessons with teachers. I really enjoyed this article and found it nice that librarians out there have the same feelings as I do.

Katie Douglas

“Expedient, but at What Cost?” Reflection

“Expedient, but at What Cost?” article could not have come at a better time because I just placed a huge order from Follett and it made me thankful for the decisions that I made. Last year I got rid of over 1,000 books because they were non-fiction books from the 70’s. I laughed and said if it has the copyright date of before I was born it was gone. This had never been done and it needed to be. The kids loved it because I scratched the barcodes off and explain that the information may not be correct and they shopped away. A lot of kids that did not have any books in their class were able to take them home.

After I did this I did an analysis report and sent it to my supervisor showing her that although I weeded most of my books were over 10-20 years old because money had not been given to my library. We also only had 10,000 books and I have a school of 450 students. This paid off each school is taking a turn getting $30,000 in capital funds and my library was one of the first on the list. Although, this seems like a lot of money with the shape my library was in I could use a lot more. It was hard to know where to begin but when I did the suggestions from Follett I was not happy. It was not suitable for my population so I did it another way. I divided the money in half (early childhood and upper grades). I took the curriculum and the interests of the students and used that to order. For the early childhood grades I used a lot of reviews from SLJ. However, I used a lot of Follett’s review sources and that makes it night. The reason I ordered from Follett was because if it is Follett Bound it is guaranteed for life and this is important especially when ordering Dr. Suess books that never get old to kids. This was a very exciting but time consuming task and I know that I will never get money like this again so I want to make sure it is spend wisely. I am glad that this article reinforced my ideas.