Learning Resource Centre Orientation

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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Fall means exciting new beginnings and fresh starts in educational contexts. Why then was I dreading offering orientation to my high school learning resource centre to 175 new grade nine students? I was tired of my usual scavenger hunt orientation which sent students scurrying to all corners of the library to familiarize themselves with available services and materials. Time for a new approach, but… what? I did not want to stand before them droning on about what they could and could not do in the resource centre. Inspiration came to me in the form of a multiple choice quiz presented in PowerPoint which requires students to read and choose the best solution while learning about the resource centre. As a student volunteer advances the slides, I am free to wander amongst them offering clarification, jokes, and jujubes to those who are brave enough to guess an answer.

Unlike my scavenger hunt orientation, this introduction to the library encourages positive behaviours and literacy skills. Students actively engage in reading the slides silently or sometimes aloud for variety. Instead of racing to find clues and sabotaging the scavenger hunt for other students to ensure they won, students in table groups cooperatively seek the right solution. The wrapped candy rewards encourage students to participate in a group of unfamiliar peers and, along with the silly answers in the multiple choice questions, set a light-hearted tone.

This idea was the solution for me this September for seven orientation sessions. Feedback from both students and staff about the activity was positive. In separate sessions, I also offer an orientation to the use of computers in high school and an activity to help students choose a book they will enjoy based on a cover study and genre categories. Through these introductory activities, I am satisfied that students received the right impression and consistent information about the library as a learning space.