Pam Spencer Holley Scholarship 2009

The generous scholarship enabled me to attend my favorite library conference, American Association of School Librarians. “Rev Up Learning” was held in Charlotte, North Carolina in November. Even before arriving I knew the conference attendees were going to be active participants online connecting with each other sharing, and networking. Months ahead AASL sent out information with login instructions, and suggestions for AASL sites, blogs, and other electronic networking opportunities.

I was fortunate to attend a Preconference session “Using Guided Inquiry to Accomplish 21st Century Learners”, presented by Carol Kuhlthau, and her daughters Ann Caspari, and Leslie Maiotes. I was so pleased to be in attendance, and have the opportunity to better understand guided inquiry. The presenters’ interest and enthusiasm was infectious. Because of them I knew exactly what themes I would be looking for in sessions.

The keynote speaker Danah Boyd discussed the evolving ways we network and socialize. She believes school librarians must be on the leading edge of using these networks to enhance, and engage student learning. Joyce Valenza, and a large cast of librarians had seemingly endless, great ideas for technology usage, and social networking. They presented so many other great ideas I could not keep up with it all in my notes.

I focused on sessions that explained and discussed assessment, collaboration, research, collection development. And of course, a session with Kauhlthau, Manoites, Caspari that add to my understanding of guided inquiry. An added benefit was the chance to have brief conversations in hallways with the “Rock Stars” of school librarians!

As every other conference I have attended my favorite part of the conference is the opportunity to develop professional and personal relationships with fellow Fairfax County school librarians. I had the good fortune to be one of six in a minivan traveling to Charlotte. We shared, had competitions to see who could find answers to questions, particularly eating establishments on I-81, on their iPhones the fastest, and laughed. I learned so much in the 14 hour car ride, all of it priceless.

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