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Editors' Note: Sharon's audio essay was broadcast February 9, 2006, as part of the "I Am Your Child's Teacher" program, an ongoing series at KJZZ, the National Public Radio affiliate in the Phoenix area. You can read more about "I Am Your Child's Teacher" at <www.kjzz.org>.

My name is Sharon Ewers, and I am a teacher-librarian at Arcadia High School in Phoenix, Arizona. You can probably picture me in your mind, you know the stereotype—glasses, practical hairdo, shoes with laces—but what you may not know is that I am your child's teacher. We live in the information age, and it's my job to make sure that your children grow up to thrive in a world

that requires not just knowledge, but the ability to tap into vast collections of information.

I know, I know, the kids are already experts on the Internet. The kids know how to instant message. The kids type on their cell phones with one hand. But did you know that a major national study showed that high school students were actually less adept at finding information on the Internet than typical adults (Borzo 2005)?

Teacher-librarians are more important than ever. Sure, we still do what you think we do: we help kids find just the right book, we show students how to use a catalog to find books on their own, we help students find answers to homework questions, and we teach whole classes about how libraries are organized.

We also teach kids about books. Most of us became librarians because we loved to read. We know that reading is the key to success in school. In fact, studies in sixteen states have demonstrated that children do better on standardized reading tests if their school has an effective library program. We'll stop at nothing in our quest to get your children to leave our libraries with books in their hands. We spend hours making sure that we purchase great books for your school libraries. We think as bookstores do when setting up displays to convince your children to take a book home. We read to groups of elementary school children, making our voices sound like squeaky little squirrels or gruff lions to bring the stories to life. Ask your children—they'll tell you that the librarian at their school really knows books!

But in 2006, we also teach what's called information literacy. We teach

your children not only how to find information but also how to figure out if it's the kind of information they need. We teach them that not all information is created equal, and that some sources are better than others. We teach them to be intelligent searchers and smart users. We show them that the Internet is a virtual gold mine but that it takes a skilled miner to find the gold.

By now, you may realize that teacher-librarians have to be experts in technology. Yes, we have climbed out of the dusty bookshelves of old to become some of the true movers and shakers in the digital world. Even the director of technology at Google thinks librarians are savvy. He said in 2004 that it might be

“about 300 years until computers are as good as, say, your local reference library in doing search” (Pogue 2004). Teacher-librarians are good at searching, but we are also strong believers in the old Chinese proverb about fishing: “If you give a man a fish he will eat for a day. If you teach a man to fish he will eat for a lifetime.” We teach your children the skills they will need to live and thrive in the twenty-first century. Information literacy isn't a luxury—it's a necessity in today's world.

If you're lucky, your school has a strong library program. Stop by today to see what's new. If you think you'll find a dark, dusty pile of books, expect to be surprised!



Sharon Ewers has been a Teacher-Librarian at Arcadia High School in Phoenix, Arizona, for eighteen years; for the past ten years, she has

concurrently served as Lead Librarian for the Scottsdale Unified School District. Sharon was the Arizona recipient of the Follett School Librarian of the Year Award in 2005.

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