Advocacy: Reason, Responsibility and Rhetoric

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What is advocacy?

“Advocacy is a planned, deliberate, sustained effort to raise awareness of an issue. It’s an ongoing process in which support and understanding are built incrementally over an extended period of time and using a wide variety of marketing and public relations tools.”

[Canadian Association of Public Libraries 2001.]
Mixed messages

- Promotion & Public relations
  - Who you are, what you do, for whom, when & how

- Marketing
  - Mini-surveys, market research, needs assessment, questionnaires, focus groups, demographics
Advocacy ....

- Uses promotion, public relations & marketing
  - Indicates what is currently offered
  - Influences perceptions by *connecting*
  - Builds effective partnerships, influential relationships, interactive decision-making & collaborative activity
Reason: Attributes of IL community


- School-based decision making
- Creative, integrated curriculum
- Range of pedagogical practices
- Models of lifelong learning
- IL competency awareness
Reason: Attributes of IL community


- Engagement in inquiry learning
- Commitment to knowledge creation
- Collaborative environment
- Knowledge professionals / navigators / tutors
- Adaptive, living & organic
Reason: Uncertain times

“It is one of the paradoxes of success that the things and the ways which got you where you are, are seldom the things that keep you there.”

Reason: Coherence & connectedness

- Sense of moral purpose
- Continuous communication
- Intense interaction
- Flexible vision
- Creative leadership
Responsibility

Is it someone else’s job?

- Teacher / Teacher Librarian
- Education community
- Decision makers
- Students
- Business community
- Community leaders
Principal support


- Encouraging and facilitating the professional development of staff
- Supporting the development of a resource collection that is current and relevant to the curriculum needs of the school
- Advocating and facilitating the development of an information literate school community
Principal evaluation

1. Observation as prime source
   1. Physical facilities
   2. Conversations
   3. Behaviour
   4. Student’s use
   5. Commentary of others

2. Word-of-mouth

3. Formal observations

Responsibility: Steps to success

- Identify potential partners
- Promote a sense of ownership
- Create a shared vision
- Respect difference of opinion
- Plan and assign
- Run ‘good’ meetings
- Maintain regular communication
- Keep community informed
- Express appreciation
- Evaluate your efforts
Responsibility: Sigmoid Curve

Handy, C 1994, *The empty raincoat: Making sense of the future*
Rhetoric: Creating the message

- Curriculum / Syllabus documents
- Education standards
- Government published documents
- Education ‘jargon’ / terminology
- Professional reading
- Professional learning
Rhetoric: Multi-sensory

- What do we want them to SEE?
- What do we want them to HEAR?
- What do we want them to FEEL?
- What do we want them to SAY?
- What do we want them to THINK?

Change perceptions
What can WE do?

- Be ‘visible’ in the learning places/spaces
- Leverage Web 2.0 capabilities
- Tell a ‘learning’ story – from user point of view
- Address forums outside the profession
- Avoid the *victim mentality*
- Act courageously
Synergy

“Combined strategies which capitalize on the center’s strengths (to provide perspective, direction, incentives, networking, and retrospective monitoring) and the local capacity (to learn, create, respond to, and feed into the overall direction) are more likely to achieve greater overall coherence.”