

2011 AASL Conference Highlights Theresa Galloway

I have been in education for 25 years and have had the opportunity to attend many meetings, workshops, conventions etc. But, by far, this was the most valuable professional event that I have ever attended.

I had high expectations about this event and was not disappointed. I found that attending the sessions challenged me as a media specialist and reaffirmed some of the things I am already doing professionally. As with any conference, some sessions were better than others...but I gained new knowledge in every event I attended.

I was so excited to get to the exhibit hall. I met and talked with several authors and was so anxious to get back to my school to share their stories and their wonderful autographed books with my students. Every author I met was so “real” and engaging. I also had the opportunity to attend the Reader’s Theater sponsored by MEMO. What an honor to hear these talented authors read from their own books. It was hard to tell who was having more fun...the authors or the audience. During their break and after the event books were available to purchase and the authors graciously signed our books.

It was also fun touching base with Mary Casanova, who I was “snowed in” with at Spotlight on Books a few years ago. What a weekend that was. To be snowed in with Debra Frazier, Mary and Charlie Casanova, and Jim Trelease was something I will never forget. We sat relaxing by the fireplace and I listened and learned from these wonderful people. D.J. McHale was there too, but came later because of the blizzard.

I attended part of Robert Berkowitz’s presentation on the Big 6 and how to allow and empower students to make decisions regarding their learning. Since I am currently enrolled in a Big 6 Webinar, I decided to change venues and attend another session on collaboration. I learned ways to build relationships that fostered collaboration with classroom teachers and other members of the teaching staff. This is especially important as I work with staff and students on 21st Century Skills.

Then I joined a session called “The Best Websites for Teaching and Learning: Inquiry, Standards and Curriculum. There was so much that was covered in that brief time frame that I had to just listen to the presenters and then investigated the sites when I returned home. A few of the sites are: Tagxedo, Kerpoof, Edmodo, Khan Academy, and Exploratorium. My challenge now is to find the time to learn more about and use these new sites.

Later I attended a session that showed innovative ways to match technology with reading, offering ideas to enhance current reading programs in the schools.

Probably one of the most relevant and timely sessions that I attended was one that teamed librarians and teachers with instructors from the University of Central

Missouri They collaborated to see how RTI (Response to Intervention) works in schools and how librarians should be a part of the RTI team.

Before I left for the convention I poured over my AASL Program Guide. I think that I almost had it memorized. There were so many sessions that I wanted to attend. Those that I attended were very good. But all in all, I think the parts of the conference that were the best for me happened in the convention hall. I learned so many things from vendors and authors and fellow librarians. I came away with wonderful ideas to pursue. The time to collaborate and connect with like-minded professionals was invaluable to me.

I thank you for this opportunity to learn more about myself as well as my profession.

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