Tracy Richter

Reflection 4.1

**4.1. Networking with the library community**

Candidates demonstrate the ability to establish connections with other libraries and to strengthen cooperation among library colleagues for resource sharing, networking, and facilitating access to information. Candidates participate and collaborate as members of a social and intellectual network of learners

**Artifacts**

 1. [ISTC 789 Journal 2R](../ISTC789/ISTC%20789_Journal_2R.docx)

 2. [ISTC 601/ ISTC 651 Field Visits and Interviews](../../Field%20Observations%20%28Elementary%26Middle%29.docx)

**Relevance**

 It can be isolating as a school library media specialist in a school because you are not on a “team” like general education teachers are. Therefore, it is so important to network and communicate with other library media specialists in your county, and even across the country. I know how important it is to collaborate and I have experienced the benefits of it first-hand, therefore I will be sure to stay in communication with other media specialists to continue to enhance my professional learning community.

 In my high school placement in Howard County, I had the opportunity to attend a countywide professional development day with media specialists from all levels. I was able to meet other media specialists and start making connections that I can network with in my future. It was great to see that other media specialists are obviously very good friends and keep in touch with each other. You can learn so much from other professionals, and as a media specialist it is vital to do so because you are not a part of a “team” like other general educators are. In my future, I will take these meetings as an opportunity to make connections face-to-face and continue to network with them, to share ideas and information about our profession. I attended a “flipping the classroom” professional development session during this meeting, and everyone was so knowledgeable about different topics. It was wonderful to experience this kind of professional and collaborative learning. I can’t wait to form lasting relationships with other media specialists in the future county I work in, because I will not take them granted. I plan on communicating through social networks, meeting face-to-face, etc. to collaborate with other media specialists, so that we can learn from each other and work together to improve our schools and our library services.

 Near the beginning of my graduate coursework, I had the opportunity to go and visit school libraries and interview the media specialists there. This was not only a great introduction for me to see both elementary and secondary school libraries, but it was also a way for me to get a feel for what these media specialists do every day. I was able to learn so much from them, in the short time that I spent with them. I learned about how they run their library, what classroom management strategies they use, how they collaborate with teachers, and so much more. Other pieces of advice they gave me were to make clear rules and expectations for the students, to always be approachable and flexible, and attend any department meetings that you can to collaborate with other teachers. It makes such a difference to see what you have learned about in courses, applied to the profession and to see it in action. It made everything more meaningful for me and it gave me a great opportunity to start making connections with other media specialists. I plan on going to another school to visit with a media specialist after I graduate, to take the opportunity to collaborate and observe them in action before I have a library of my own. Any opportunity that I have to talk with and collaborate with another media specialist, I will take it, because the benefits will be everlasting.