

## Finding a Vision Through Others

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During my first year of teaching I remember thinking that it also might be my last. I loved the students in my class but I didn't love my job. That may sound a bit odd, but let me explain.

I think first jobs are usually a hard adjustment, at least for me, this was certainly true. I had an overwhelming feeling that the job and location were not where I ultimately wanted to be. I never really established a routine and certainly never felt settled. Going to school everyday and trying to make that day interesting was my primary goal; however, something was missing. I never saw beyond that year; I never tried to build resources for the future because I had no vision of the future.

Finding what I wanted proved to be the real challenge but the lessons I learned that first year were invaluable. I came to realize what I wanted, and what I didn't.

Three years later, as I sit in my classroom looking at the empty desks and the animal décor I know that my future includes teaching. I attribute much of this to my recent discovery that God has given teachers one of the most valuable tools, each other.

At Cariboo Adventist Academy (CAA) I have the privilege of working with some of the best and most dedicated teachers anywhere. There may be a mixture of amateurs and pros teaching here but the one characteristic we have in common is a desire to do something special.

One person alone can have just so many ideas or be just so creative, but put five elementary teachers together and you will never suffer from a creative drought. My classroom is really a combination of all the other classrooms in our school. Over the past two years I have borrowed (or perhaps stolen because I have no intention of giving them back) ideas from several of my fellow teachers. From the calendar on my bulletin board to the baskets for completed work, to the yearlong theme decorations, I have found ways to incorporate other teachers' ideas into my own classroom. If I see something I like from grade three, I use it. If there's something I think will work from grade five, I use that too. There is nothing that can't be adapted for grade seven and eight as far as I am concerned. Sometimes it may be just a concept or it may be a new system for doing a certain task. This year, for example, I let go of the way my daily plan book was organized and adapted one some of the other teachers use. It saves me time, space, and is efficient in every way.

In addition to borrowing and trading ideas, there are certainly more advantages to having other teachers around. After school ends, one can frequently find several of the teachers congregated in one classroom rehashing the day. We recall tales of the day, offer suggestions for certain students, and discuss upcoming events or whatever else happens to be on our minds. We rely on each other. We help each other. This group of teachers has given me that much needed vision for the future.

I am building resources for years to come. Even if those years don't include CAA, I know that this is still what I want to do. Preparing things thoroughly the first time so that they can be used a second time is worth all the effort. It's extremely exciting to me (now in my third year of grade seven and eight at CAA)

to be able to pull out plans I used in my first year and have them ready to use again. When everything really starts to come together, you won't need to be told you are doing a good job because you will already know.

The teachers I work with have made me want to be a better teacher. And now I know that if I leave here, I will be taking with me things that no college course could ever teach. The passion for any job has to come from within. I just needed a little help in finding that passion. I now not only love my students but my school and the people I meet and work with everyday.

If you are lucky enough to be working with other great teachers - use them. If you aren't, find one and drop in on their classroom every once in awhile. You'll probably be really glad you did.