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ITT Technical Institute Learning Center

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The history of ITT Technical Institute's Learning Resource Center in Tampa, Florida began in August of 1991 when I was hired to assume the development of this center. It was one of the greatest challenges I have ever faced. I had just received my Masters degree in Library and Information Science from the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida and had never worked as a professional in a library of any sort. I have to admit that this challenge scared me a little but I was eager to face it and fulfill the goals set by ITT Technical Institute and myself.

ITT Technical Institute is a technical college offering 2 and 3-year programs including associate and Bachelor of Science degrees in Computer-Aided Drafting and Electronic Engineering Technology. The bachelor program in CAD was just recently added to our school in December of 1997 and is called Computer Visualization Technology. It teaches students about 3-D animation, Web page development, GIS instruction, typography, and multimedia design. This school is just one of a nation-wide system of 62 technical schools which offers students a vast education and opportunity for career change and/or enhancement.

For all practical purposes, this Learning Resource Center started in the summer of 1991 and was located on the 3rd floor of our previous building on Memorial Highway in Tampa, Florida. It was situated within an office and extended into what was once a classroom. It housed old textbooks donated by the instructors, a few periodicals, and only 2-3 computers for student use. It was a very small area and the students were never quite sure whether it was an office or a resource center. I started to promote it by placing signs throughout the school, having library oriented pencils and bookmarks placed within the center for students, and began the process of ordering new materials. My goal was to expand the library physically as well as educationally. Within a couple of months, an area on the first floor of our building was remodeled to house the library. I moved into the new area and was on my way to a fully functional solo library. I had new bookshelves put in, a copy machine strictly for student use, a cataloging system (using the Library of Congress Subject Headings), and a total of 8 computers with dot-matrix

printers for student use. My book collection grew rapidly as did the periodical holdings. I started receiving newspapers from major cities across the nation, joined the Tampa Bay Library Consortium, and began my journey into membership within other library affiliated professional organizations. I became a member of SLA (Special Library Association), ALA (American Library Association), FLA (Florida Library Association), and SIS (Suncoast Information Specialists). My memberships to all of these organizations are still current and extremely beneficial.

By June of 1992, ITT Technical Institute was relocated into a brand new building just down the street from our old building on Memorial Highway. The new building was designed to house more classrooms, laboratories, offices, etc. than the old building with additional square footage allotted for future expansion. The library was much bigger than the previous one and had more room for students to study and utilize the computer equipment. Since our move, I have continued to build this library by updating the computers and printers, adding TV/VCR units, and cassette tape players for a wider multi-media experience. We are currently working on having the library computers networked and adding Internet accesses for our student body. Our periodical collection has grown to 120 subscriptions ranging from technical journals to business, economics, and weekly news magazines. Our book collection has reached a total of 1200 volumes and utilizes almost all of my available shelf space. These books are geared mainly toward the technical programs of study here at ITT. We have a very specific technical offering, much larger even than our local branch of the public library. I don't have much to offer our students in the realm of leisure reading; however, I have started a small collection of science-fiction titles. I feel that this genre allows for leisure reading yet still employs a variety of technical ideas (i.e., robotics, artificial intelligence, computer science, electronics, etc.) I am trying to expand my electronic media collection by acquiring more reference materials via CD-ROM. When we finally do receive the Internet, our opportunities will grow immensely for information access.

Staff, faculty and most importantly, our students on a daily basis use this library. It is open from 7:30am-9pm every Monday through Friday and on Saturdays from 8am-2pm. I am the only professional staff member but I receive assistance in the evening hours from a college work-study student. We have come a long way from that office on the 3rd floor and we have no intention of stopping now. I know my physical space limitations won't allow for expansion but I will work diligently on

my electronic acquisitions and keeping our equipment updated as much as possible. Promoting the use of this library will also remain a constant facet of my job.

Being a solo librarian has been a wonderful experience for me. It has taught me a great deal of responsibility, offered me exiting opportunities such as being assistant editor of the "Flying Solo" newsletter distributed by the Solo Librarian Division of SLA. I am also a volunteer book reviewer for the well-known periodical, Library Journal. I have developed a great rapport with our students, which, I feel has added to the ambience of our warm and friendly library. I think of our library being large in all it has to offer and I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this library's growth.

Stacey Reasor
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