

The Library is My Environment for Learning...

By Julia Weaver

Quiet. Comfortable. Abundant in resources. Are you thinking library? Maybe. Truthfully, though, it is impossible to grasp the meaning of the word “library” by listing its qualities in such mundane terms as these. Sure, the library is conducive to learning, but what does that even mean? As an undergraduate scholar at Meredith College, I have spent countless hours in the Carlyle Campbell Library, endangering my wrists with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome by typing late into the night and stretching my brain until it is reading words backwards from trying to comprehend dozens of peer-reviewed articles at the same time. The library’s subtle touches of organization and design make it at once cozy and practical, a place where any student can come to expand her knowledge.

Imagine that it’s a dreary Tuesday and you have a meeting with your Thesis advisor. Or perhaps you need to dash into the library for a couple of hours in between classes to cram for a test you should probably have been studying for since day one. Whatever the case, the library brings students of all walks of life into one environment where they can learn at their own pace with comfort and ease. Rows upon rows of Dewey Decimal delight swim in front of your eyes as you glide up and down the aisles of books on every floor of the building. Tantalizing titles jump out at you as you scan for the best choice. The organization of a library is clearly no mistake. Hours of diligence go into creating this highly efficient system of resource materials, microfiche access, fiction, non-fiction, science fiction, and on and on. The real kicker, though, is that I bet you never thought about it that way. Think of all the type A personalities it must take to put together a functioning library. Are you tired yet? The meticulously planned but seemingly effortless layout of the Carlyle Campbell library creates a learning environment that allows students to feel proud of their navigational skills and less concerned about their looming deadlines.

Along with the systematic organization of a library is another important component: the element of design. For advice on which of the numerous quiet study rooms to choose, all I really need to do is ask one question: what's your favorite color? Chances are good that there is a study room that will fit your needs. The semi-recent redesign of the library is exquisite. There are cute, cozy couches now. There is a bright blue study room with beautiful wrought iron furniture and black and white pictures dating back to who knows when. A vending machine has even been added for caffeine fiends. You could argue that all you need to study is a hard desk and a light source, and the library certainly has those, but can you honestly say that you wouldn't rather sink into a plush chaise lounge and burrow into some thick stacks of research? Even for the average reader, the library seems to have gotten exponentially 'cooler' over time, but for an avid reader like myself who simply cannot seem to quit wanting to learn, the floors of the Carlyle Campbell library invite intense research, rigorous encyclopedia searching, and late night dates with Microsoft Word. Oh, and P.S.: did I mention that the library is completely online now? Even when the library doors are closed, students can virtually access its plethora of pages and learn on their own terms, in their own time. It's pretty intense.

Bottom line: the library is an unbiased friend. The library doesn't care what you wear, how long it has been since you've showered, or what you choose to do on the weekends, as long as you give it some TLC every once in a while. The concept of the library is a little bit like the children's story *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein; you can use the library as much as you want, and no matter how long you go between visits, it will always, *always* be there for you. And sure, people might say that the Carlyle Campbell library is too small for a women's liberal arts college, but I'd rather be lost in my own thoughts than be actually lost in a maze of towering bookshelves that I can't make sense of or get out of. Wouldn't you? Now get to the library. I'm sure you have some homework to do.