Learning is always a social activity. That’s what makes it magical. We can’t know things without the help of those who came before us and those who are around us. Libraries have an extra bit of that learning magic because they allow us to learn from books, computers, librarians, teachers, students, and community members—all in one building. We gather at the magic place to read, to share what we’ve learned, to gab, to write, to look for jobs, to laugh, to sit in silence, to think.

I make sure that my students get to know the Jefferson College Library. Once a semester, I bring all my Composition classes there for an hour of excellent instruction from the librarians. Students gain invaluable skills for navigating a sea of knowledge in the books and journals and databases in order to write their research papers. They also get to know the people who will be there to answer their questions when, after a proper interval of procrastination, the actual work on the research paper begins in earnest two weeks later.

I’m there, too, learning right alongside my students. I usually do a scholarly presentation once a year. Occasionally, I’m in the stacks; sometimes I’m at the computers with the students, scouring databases. I check out movies for my Film Appreciation class and put some of my own films on reserve for students. When it came time to clear out my movies before the library closed for renovation, I realized that I’d put half my collection on reserve. That’s okay. They were probably in better hands at the library.

Ultimately, though, it’s the librarians who make the Jefferson College Library magical. Director Lisa Pritchard, Joe Kolburn, Joette Klein, and Elizabeth Steffen (among others) have always been kind and wise in their stewardship of library resources—and in their interactions with myself and my students. Learning is a social activity, and we couldn’t ask for better people to conduct and organize it. I’m excited to see what they’ll do with the brand new welcoming spaces, with the redesigned and rejuvenated Jefferson College Library. No doubt it will be even more magical.