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RSM 541

Summer 2011

Literature Review on an Action Research Project

**Topic Description**

The focus of my action research is collaboration between school librarians and teachers. After meeting with the librarians at my school, it was apparent to me that collaboration with the teachers is quite limited. Only a small percentage of teachers come into the library to utilize its resources—most are English teachers and a few are Social Studies and Science teachers. However, even with these teachers using the resources, actual collaboration with the librarians has occurred with a mere handful of them. At my school, collaboration within content areas has proven valuable to student success. I believe that increasing collaboration between teachers and librarians would also affect student achievement. If increased collaboration were to occur, lessons designed around inquiry based learning would be created, thus encouraging further use of library resources. These learning experiences would lead students to not only recognize the wealth of information around them, but also teach them how to best access and use this information in the most effective way to suit their needs.

**Annotated Bibliography**

Bilyeu, L. (2009). TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS Collaborate IN LESSON STUDY. *Knowledge Quest*,

38(2), 14-19. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

This article describes the process of establishing a collaborative relationship between teachers and school librarians by implementing Lesson Study. Lesson Study is a teaching model which includes phases of creating, implementing, and reflecting. This reflective data then becomes the foundation to rework the lesson and teach it again, yielding better student success rates. In order for strong collaboration to occur, it is necessary to set up meetings for teachers and librarians to discuss their educational experiences and get to know one another. Real life examples are given describing how lessons were developed as a team, as well as how they were presented to the students. While collaborating, reflection and data collection is necessary because it leads to discussions on how to improve the lesson for future use, in order to better increase student understanding. Ultimately, it is shown that collaboration, combined with reflective practices, can in fact have an impact student achievement.

Buzzeo, T. (2010, October). Strength in Numbers. *School Library Journal,* 56(10), 38-40.

This article details the necessity of data-driven collaboration, a process in which the goals of joint projects are based on student test results. The author describes the steps to this method as well as cites an example of how a middle school librarian carried out this strategy. There is great importance in looking at standardized or individual classroom student test data—by doing so the team can focus on two to three standards or skills that need to be addressed. Analyzing the test data enables the teacher and librarian to work together to create projects that encourage student practice and growth of the targeted skills. With the combined efforts of teacher and librarian, the students increased their skill sets and therefore their achievement was positively impacted. Data-driven collaboration proves to teachers that librarians are available to work with them in order to address student learning deficits as well as to design creative solutions.

Canter, L., Voytecki, K., Zambone, A., & Jones, J. (2011). School Librarians: The Forgotten Partners. *Teaching*

*Exceptional Children*, 43(3), 14-20. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

This article addresses the need for developing collaborative relationships between special educators and librarians. Students with special needs have reached academic success with the aid of special educators. However, the authors note that few special educators seek the assistance of librarians to enhance their lessons. Several detailed steps and examples are given, ensuring that special educators feel confident to approach the school librarian and develop a collaborative relationship. The readers come away with strategies to successfully establish a working relationship with their librarian. In turn they, or any educator, can apply these suggestions to their own situation and in turn reap the benefits of the librarian’s knowledge of information literacy skills. It is only after this relationship is formed that the two can successfully plan ways to increase student achievement.

Cooper, O., & Bray, M.. (2011). School Library Media Specialist-Teacher Collaboration: Characteristics,

Challenges, Opportunities. *TechTrends*, 55(4), 48-54.  Retrieved from ProQuest Education Journals.

Having teachers view the librarian as a fellow teacher is crucial in order for teachers to accept the librarian as a collaborator. The authors stress that building collaborative relationships does not happen all at once, and moreover, they do not happen with everybody. It is a process that takes time to develop, but the benefits of establishing these relationships are numerous. These collaborative relationships allow teachers to access new technologies that they might not be familiar with, as well as to design lessons that directly seek to develop students’ information literacy skills. The authors mention real world scenarios that highlight the impact of school/administrative support for the library program itself. Librarians must be seen as collaborators and leaders, thus solidifying the strength and worth of their library program. The article describes challenges (and solutions to them) that might arise when fellow educators/administrators seem unresponsive to the librarian’s attempts to establish collaborative relationships. It is clear that despite the environment, librarians must keep positive about their efforts towards collaboration and ultimately stay on course with their goal.

Eby, H. (2010). If You Give a School a Teacher-Librarian . . . *Literacies, Learning & Libraries,* 3(1), 28-31.

Retrieved from http://albertaschoollibraries.pbworks.com.

If collaborative relationships are established, students will benefit in a variety of ways. Some highlights of collaboration include activities that integrate technology, assignments that are inquiry skills based, as well as instruction that is differentiated for students. The author also stresses the importance of collecting data throughout the collaboration process. It is imperative for the data to act as evidence which shows that by utilizing collaboration, there was an increase in student achievement, thus making the library a true keystone to the school environment.

Frazier, D. (2010). School Library Media Collaborations: Benefits and Barriers. *Library Media Connection*,

29(3), 34-36. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

This article showcases the need for collaborative relationships between school librarians and teachers. Outlined in this article are the benefits of collaboration for both teachers and students, proving that the whole school community is affected in a positive manner from the formation of such relationships. The article also presents obstacles, such as time and technology limitations, that make collaborative relationships difficult to establish. However, for each predicament presented, the author offers insightful, detailed suggestions to combat these barriers. Overall, the reader is given the knowledge that the road to collaboration might be difficult, yet the benefits of collaboration should provide motivation to overcome these setbacks.

Gess, A. (2009). Collaboration: Finding the Teacher, Finding the Topic, Finding the Time. *Library Media*

*Connection*, 27(4), 24-25. Retrieved from EBSCO*host*.

Teachers often state that time is a major factor in why they do not collaborate with school librarians. With the pressure or standardized assessments, they do not see working with the librarian, or taking their students to use the library’s resources as a top priority. However, in light of new information literacy standards, it is the librarian’s duty to help students develop information literacy skills which will directly affect their success on standardized tests. The article warns that collaboration is truly a team effort—the teacher and librarian must be eager to work together and have a common goal/learning outcome in mind. Furthermore, it is evident that collaboration is only successful when it is thoroughly planned out. Both parties must choose a topic that supports the information literacy standards that are of focus. Once the created activities are implemented, student achievement data is collected, and reflection occurs between both parties, collaboration is at its best potential for increased student success.

Montiel-Overall, P.. (2010). Further Understanding of Collaboration: A Case Study of How It Works with

Teachers and Librarians. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 16(2), 31-54.  Retrieved from ProQuest Education

Journals.

This case study details the process of establishing successful collaborative relationships between elementary teachers and school librarians. The study notes that although research exists regarding how school libraries impact the success of a school as well as regarding the effectiveness of teacher to teacher collaboration, there is little evidence that suggests librarians are being used to their utmost potential as true collaborative partners. The goal of this research was for the participants of this study to enter into collaborative relationships with the librarian and take the relationship from low level collaborative practices to those on a higher level (full integration of the librarian as well as information literacy skills into teacher lessons). Overall, the study concluded that collaboration takes time and energy. From this study it is clear that several things must occur: teachers must be made aware of the knowledge/tools that the librarians have to offer, relationships must be established and given time to grow, and in the end commitment of both parties is necessary in order to create lessons that encourage students to think critically about the information they are given. If these things do come to fruition, there will ultimately be a positive impact on student learning.

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| Literature Review: Collaboration between School Librarian and Teachers | | | | | | | |
| Source Information | | | Article Focus | | | | |
| Author | **Title** | **Year** | **Benefits of Collaboration** | **Obstacles to Collaboration** | **Strategies to Improve Collaboration** | **Impact on Student Achievement** | **Importance of Gathering Data/Evidence** |
| Bilyeu, L. | TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS Collaborate IN LESSON STUDY | 2009 | **🗸** |  | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** |
| Buzzeo, T. | Strength in Numbers | 2010 | **🗸** |  |  | **🗸** | **🗸** |
| Canter, L., Voytecki, K., Zambone, A., & Jones, J. | School Librarians: The Forgotten Partners | 2011 | **🗸** |  | **🗸** | **🗸** |  |
| Cooper, O., &  Bray, M. | School Library Media Specialist-Teacher Collaboration: Characteristics, Challenges, Opportunities | 2011 | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** |  |  |
| Eby, H. | If You Give a School a Teacher-Librarian . . . | 2010 | **🗸** | **🗸** |  | **🗸** | **🗸** |
| Frazier, D. | School Library Media Collaborations: Benefits and Barriers | 2010 | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** |  |
| Gess, A. | Collaboration: Finding the Teacher, Finding the Topic, Finding the Time | 2009 | **🗸** | **🗸** |  | **🗸** |  |
| Montiel-Overall, P. | Understanding of Collaboration: A Case Study of How It Works with Teachers and Librarians | 2010 | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** | **🗸** |

**Closing Thoughts**

These articles have certainly opened my eyes to the scope of teacher librarian collaboration. I now know that this issue has been and continues to be a topic of interest in the school library community. Individually, the articles offered slightly different perspectives on collaboration, but all of them provided me with insight as to how important collaboration can be to the success of the students and furthermore the school overall. The articles have demonstrated interesting strategies to go about setting up collaborative relationships, as well as some solutions to realistic problems that can arise when trying to form such bonds. As someone who is training to be a librarian, it was well worth it to see how actual professionals deal with this issue in their day to day life.

The information that I have read certainly aligns with my action research focus of: *How can an increase in the collaboration between classroom teachers and the librarian affect student achievement?* The benefits to students, including increased student achievement as mentioned in several of the articles, is enough for me to want to give collaboration a try. From reviewing the literature, I think that I have a sound grasp of what collaboration is, what it entails, and how to go about successfully establishing collaborative relationships with teachers. The literature shows that the road may not always be easy, but to me it seems that the possible benefits outweigh the roadblocks along the journey.