STEPS TO COLLABORATIVE TEACHING
by Rhonda Butt and Christine Jameson

Collaboration Defined

According to *Information Power*, "Collaboration – working with others – is a key theme in building partnerships for learning. Collaboration is essential as library media specialists work with teachers to plan, conduct, and evaluate learning activities that incorporate information literacy. Furthermore, it [collaboration] is critical, as they [library media specialists] work with teachers and administrators to build and manage collections that include all formats and that support authentic, information-based learning." (Chicago AASL and AECT, 1998, 50).

"According to the experts [of information literacy] collaboration is a process to reach goals that cannot be reached as efficiently by acting alone. As a process, collaboration is a means to an end, not an end in itself" (Bruner, 1991). It is a process where each participant is seen as an equal partner. It is truly a non-hierarchal relationship. Each partner understands the other's strengths and weakness and together they capitalize on their strengths and learn from each other.

In August 1994, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the American Library Association, sponsored a five-day institute for 15 teams of middle school teachers, administrators, and library media specialists to prepare student-centered learning units. The following school year these teams implemented their units and assessed both the change in student learning and in instructional planning and design. This assessment reflected upon the evolution of the planning levels and degrees of partnership leading to collaborative planning and to the delivery of instruction and facilitating of learning.

These team reports described two levels of partnership that precede true collaboration. The first is "cooperation." "Cooperation is information, with no commonly defined goals or planning effort. Information is shared as needed" (Mattessich and Monsey, 1992, 7). The library media specialist and the teacher cooperate loosely with each other and each works independently toward bi-curricular goals. The second is "coordination." "Coordination suggests a more formal working relationship and the understanding of missions" (Mattessich and Monsey, 1992, 7). The teacher-library media specialist partnership coordinate planning and teach together. The third is "collaboration." "Collaboration is a much more prolonged and interdependent effort. As Wimer and Ray (1994, 24) note, collaboration changes the way we work. Collaboration moves from:
- Competing to building consensus,
- Working alone to including others from different fields and backgrounds for joint comprehensive planning,
- Thinking mostly about activities and programs to thinking about larger results and strategies,

- Focusing on short-term accomplishments to requiring long-term results, and
- Independent learning goals and objectives to shared goals and objectives"
   (AASL, 1996, 2).

Successful collaboration by teachers and library media specialists depends on several essential elements:

1. Mutual understanding of each partner's instructional goals and perspectives,
2. Universal understanding of all curricular goals and content objectives,
3. Successful connections between information literacy and content-related objectives,
4. Persistence of the collaborative partners,
5. Administrative support of common planning time and common delivery of instruction, and
6. Supportive scheduling (Wolcott, 1996, 9-14).

David Loertscher believes three fundamental components need to be in place for viable collaboration to exist:

1. The teachers and the library media specialist cooperate in the creation, execution, and the evaluation of topical studies and units of instruction.
2. The library media specialist is a part of the teaching team. Likewise, the teacher is an integral part of the library media program.
3. The library media specialist knows in advance the precise requirements of and the deadlines for assignments which involve library media center materials and services (Loertscher, 1999, 76).

Loertscher recommends the following components which lead toward successful collaboration:

1. Keep records of collaborative teaching units. The teacher and library media specialist should meet annually to update and evaluate these lessons.
2. The library media specialist should attend departmental or grade level meetings so he/she is aware of upcoming teacher units. The library media specialist can then outline suggestions or collaboration.
3. The library media specialist should be aware of how all teachers wish to use the library media center and facilitate the sharing of teaching units between and among teachers.
4. The library media specialist should be an active member of the district curriculum committee so he/she can plan for materials and units that will be used in the new curricula.
5. The library media specialist should be sensitive to teachable moments to initiate collaborative planning. When a teacher requests materials on a specific topic, suggests a plan to teach the topic together in the library media center, or asks for assistance with selection of materials appropriate for a unit, a professional teachable moment opens the door for building a collaborative relationship.

Scheduling Influences the Level of Partnerships

While flexible scheduling offers the most supportive scenario for collaboration by the library media specialist and the classroom teacher, success within a fixed schedule is still possible. In a school with a fixed schedule for library media programming, collaborative teaching can occur during a class's regularly scheduled library time, if the professionals pre-plan the lesson and if the teacher accompanies his/her students to the library. Also, the fixed schedule supports professional planning during regularly scheduled preparation/ planning time, if professional plan times coincide for the teacher and the library media specialist.

With flexible scheduling, teachers and library media specialists are free to make optimal use of each other's time and materials, because the library media center is available at all times for diverse purposes. This planning for instruction is scheduled by mutual agreement. Planning may include activities that involve the entire faculty team, teaching teams, groups of team leaders, or single teachers paired with the library media specialist. When the library media specialist plans with classroom teachers for the development and implementation of quality learning, there is a greater assurance for intellectual access to information by increasingly independent student learners and for each student to become proficient in the assessed thinking skills of information problem-solving (Haycock, 1988, 30).

Value of Collaborative Partnerships

The value of collaborative partnerships between teachers and library media specialists on student growth in content and skills is unquestionable. Through observation and reflective study, educators document numerous personal experiences, where collaborative planning and integrated implementation of information literacy skills and content goals and objectives stimulated higher achievement on test scores and longer retention of abilities, as well as transferability of learning in both the library and classroom skills and concepts (Stripling, 1995). Stuart Smith and James Scott's research data shows that collaborative professional practices positively impact student performance. In reflection, Smith and Scott conclude that students in schools, where adults model a collaborative work environment, are more likely to demonstrate cooperation in the classroom and are more likely to achieve at a higher level (Smith and Scott, 1990).

In 1994, Connie Hunter described a program, where students did not transfer and apply information skills learned in an isolated situation to their classroom assignments. Analysis of the probable cause data by the school's staff led to two interventions. First, access to the library media center changed from a fixed schedule to flexible scheduling on a needs basis. Second, collaboration between the library media specialist and the classroom teachers resulted in integrating information skills into classroom curriculum. Follow-up evaluation showed students involved in these interventions regularly applied information skills to all future classroom assignments. Students were eager to go to the

library to learn a skill or find a resource that helped them in an assignment. Hunter's anecdotal data, expressing feelings of those students, is best summed up by one student: "It (library learning experiences) means more now that it related to our classwork" (Hunter, 1994).

Strategies for Successful Collaboration

"In order to implement the integrated model effectively and gain maximum benefits, both teachers and library media specialists face two problems:

- How to select the best opportunities within the scope and sequence of the content curriculum with which to integrate, and
- How to design instructional units that motivate students to learn and use information problem-solving skills effectively" (Berkowitz, 1994, 32).

Collaboration may depend on teachers and library media specialists trading roles to understand clearly what each teaches. For instance, "the library media specialist may have to . . . attend a teacher's lecture" or "the teacher may have to participate in an inservice training for on-line searching" (Loertscher, 1988, 26). Understanding the roles of their collaborative partner is only a first step to successful collaborative efforts. Next, both partners need to actively involve themselves in the collaborative design of instructional units. The classroom teacher ensures that the content and timing meet the core learner objectives of the curriculum, and the library media specialist, acting in the instructional-consultant role, ensures integration of information problem solving in a meaningful and challenging way.

Carol Ann Haycock suggests the following questions for teachers and library media specialists to ask as they plan collaboratively for instruction:

1. How long will this unit take?
2. Why are we doing this?
3. What are the transferable concepts or processes we want students to develop?
4. What specific concepts do we want students to learn?
5. What specific activities can be planned to accomplish this?
6. How will the students extract and gather information?
7. How will the students record the information?
8. How will the students process and organize the information?
9. How will the students produce their findings?
10. How will the students be evaluated, and how will each of us be involved?
11. How can we bring the evaluation process to a conscious level in the minds of the students so they can develop self-evaluation habits (Haycock, 1992).

By answering these questions, the collaborative planners will create a thorough, effective

learning experience for students. Students will understand that learning does not take place in a vacuum but takes a full range of resources and a wide spectrum of results. Students will reap the benefits from increased creativity and originality of ideas and end-products.

In 1996, a team of teachers and their library media specialist from Central Middle School in Edmond, Oklahoma prepared a series of reports that substantiate Haycock's premise. Specifically, they shared "Our teamwork and collaboration provided teachers the opportunity to use creative ideas to ignite a continued interest in the project" (AASL, 1996, 3). These creative learning activities included games, puzzles, demonstrations, imaginary tours, storytelling, videos, food tasting, students becoming teachers, creative writing, music, and other successful approaches to enrich teaching and stimulate learning.

The following strategies provide examples of planning for collaborative teaching:
1. The library media specialist should be involved with planning and writing of local district standards in conjunction with state and/or national standards.
2. The library media specialist should attend departmental or grade level meetings so he/she is aware of upcoming teaching units. The library media specialist can then outline suggestions for collaboration.
   Example: The library media specialist at a high school may attend weekly or monthly department meetings. The department will share progress of units and may give demonstrations of new media (e.g. an online system or web site). Since the goal would be to incorporate information and technology skills into students daily learning, projects and times for library cooperation could be outlined.
3. The library media specialist should keep records of collaborative teaching units. The teacher and library media specialist meet annually to update and evaluate the lessons.
   Example: The high school history teacher and library media specialist teach a unit they've taught in the past. They adapt to presenting new resources (such as more online sites) to their students. This year, the media specialist increases involvement by helping evaluate oral presentations of projects at the end of the unit.
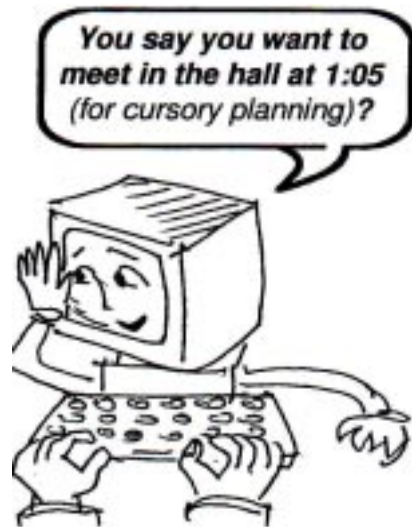4. The library media specialist should be aware of how all teachers wish to use the library media center and facilitate the sharing of teaching units between and among teachers. Meeting regularly helps facilitate sharing.
5. The library media specialist should be sensitive to teachable moments to initiate collaborative planning. These teachable moments include times when a teacher requests materials on a specific topic, suggests a plan to teach the topic together in the library media center and/or to evaluate materials together for their appropriateness to the unit.
   Example: The third grade teacher has requested materials on Japan for research. The library media specialist helps the teacher gather the materials and then joins the teacher in the classroom to teach students how to cite their sources.

Levels of Involvement in Collaborative Planning

David Loertscher identifies several levels of involvement for the library media specialist and teacher. They are listed as part of the "The Library Media Specialist's Taxonomy." The first four levels require little collaboration (not included here) the last seven show increased involvement and collaboration:

5. Cursory planning: Informal and brief planning with teachers and students for library media center involvement – usually done in the hall, the teachers' lounge, the lunchroom, etc. (e.g. Here's an idea for an activity and new materials to use. Have you seen . . ? Can I get you a film?) True collaborative work cannot happen on the run in the halls.
6. Planned gathering: Gathering of materials is done in advance of a class project upon teacher request.
   Example: A second grade teacher requests books containing poetry about trees for a class tree study and writing project.
7. Outreach: A concerted effort is made to promote the philosophy of the library media center program.
   Example: The library media specialist holds an LMC open house during free choice inservices to show teachers materials and resources for use.
8. Scheduled planning in the support role: Formal planning is done with a teacher or group of students to supply resources or activities for a previously planned resource-based teaching unit or project.
9. Instructional design level 1: The library media specialist participates in every step of the development, execution, and evaluation of a resource-based teaching unit. Library media center involvement is considered as enrichment or supplementary activity.
   Example: The teacher and library media specialist plan a lesson that teaches techniques for using the index of reference books. The library media specialist introduces the lesson in the classroom. The class then moves to the LMC where students use book indexes to help them in researching a project on Native Americans. The classroom teacher is then fully responsible for evaluating the results of their research.
10. Instructional design level 2: The library media center staff participates in resource-based teaching units in which the entire unit content depends on the resources and activities of the Library Media Center program.
   Example: The teacher and library media specialist plan a unit where students compare social problems of today with those 100 years ago. They jointly teach

subject matter and information skills and together they assist students with research. The library media specialist is then involved in critiquing student presentations and writing formal evaluations. Both the teacher and library media specialist are involved in assessment of content and form.

11. Curriculum development: Along with the other educators, the library media specialist contributes to the planning and structure of what will actually be taught in the school or district (Loertscher, 1988, 10).

Administrative Support of Common Planning Time

The availability of a common planning time, although difficult to attain, is ideal. Teachers usually have limited planning time available to them, and this time may not mesh with any unscheduled time the library media specialist may have. Supportive administrators provide management assistance that fosters time for collaborative planning. The administrator needs to tailor the released planning time to the school culture. Some creativity may be necessary when adjusting time commitments, so teachers and library media specialists have enough time to thoroughly plan units. The administrator could:

1. Hire substitutes to rotate among grade levels to relieve teachers for sufficient time to plan.
2. Schedule a weekly planning time one day after school when all teachers in each grade level plan together.
3. Organize a core of volunteers to do many of the library clerical routines to relieve the library media specialist for joining teacher planning sessions.
4. Support work-study programs or internships for students enrolled in job training programs or earning community service credit. When these students become proficient in library office tasks or in assisting children in using library resources, the library media specialist will be freed for collaborative planning.
5. Hire support staff to do routine library clerical and management tasks, as well as equipment service and repair needs. With the support staff in place, time is available for professional planning.

6. Foster a school culture that provides opportunities for collaborative discourse on best teaching prac tices, design, and research. Organize monthly sharing sessions, to which the classroom teachers bring their curricular goals and long-range plans.
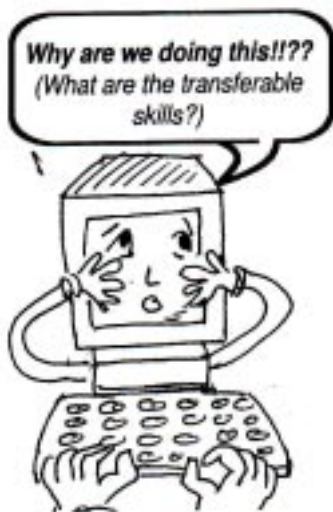
In 1998, Miami Springs Elementary School was fortu-nate to have a supportive administrator who recognized the value of common planning time for teachers and library media specialists. Through a Library Power grant funded by the DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund, the school received enough funds to implement weekly collaborative planning days. "Each day . . . provide(d) three two-hour blocks for grade level plan-ning with substitutes rotating through the classes at each

of the grade levels" (Farwell, 1998, 25). The principal recognized the library media specialist "as a teaching partner, an information and resources provider, and an expert in media [and information problem-solving]" (Ibid, 27). With this change in the professional roles of the library media specialist and with time for collaborative planning, the library program and its curriculum changed from nonessential to the vital hub instrumental in acceleration of learning and measurable growth in achievement, for all students. The library media specialist became a verbal curriculum-mapping guide directing teachers across grade levels for effective networking of ideas and resources (PEACE, n.d.).

School administrators who understand fully the complex but essential role played by the library media specialist will nurture and promote collaboration between the library media specialist and teachers. To be an active nurturer of an information-based student-centered library media program, the principal needs (1) to be noticeably engaged in motivating, monitoring, and modeling ongoing support of collaborative planning, (2) to be intimately involved in the implementation of team instruction, and (3) to be assertively supportive of flexible usage of the library media center. To accomplish these goals, the principal must be aware of library use patterns, must regularly communicate with the library media specialist and teachers, must sit in on collaborative planning sessions, and plainly stay informed. To assist the principals in mastering these critical tasks, the library media specialists should keep their principals informed of their program's activities by sharing a weekly schedule, preparing a short weekly or monthly report, and by offering invitations to exciting student-centered learning activities.
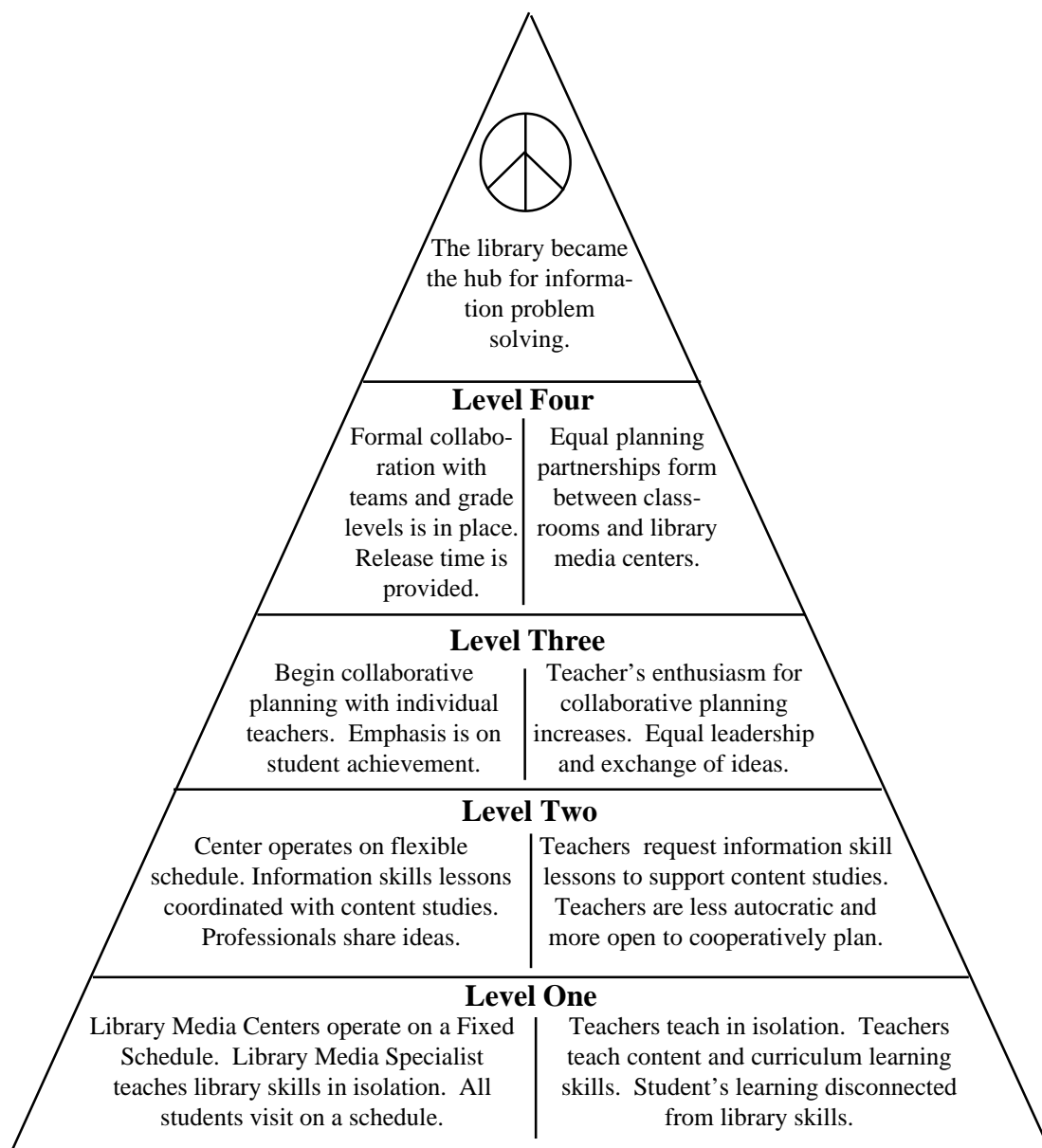
Models of Collaborative Teaching
DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Library Power Initiative
Loertscher's principles for library media specialists direct involvement in instructional planning and delivery and ALA's and AECT's 1988 edition of *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* guided the structure for 1988 DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Library Power Initiative. Throughout the last decade this initiative provided $45 million for a school reform model designed to improve the teaching and learning within struggling elementary and middle schools. This reform model accelerated student achievement by building relevant and current library collections, by training teachers and library media specialists to collaboratively implement information problem-solving, and by renovating the libraries with current technology and aesthetically pleasing facilities. The participating school districts were required (1) to meet stringent resource selection criteria, (2) to commit local funds for labor costs for library media center renovations with materials paid for by the grant, (3) to employ full-time certified library media specialists in each school, (4) to operate the library media program on a flexible schedule, and (5) to promote and direct collaborative planning and delivery of instruction by teacher-library media specialist teams (Tastad and Tallman, 1998, 18). In 1998, the National Library Power Program includes nineteen participating sites and over seven hundred schools throughout the United States. Library Power became a formidable driving force for initiating and continuing support for professional collaboration between library media specialists and their classroom teachers.

Many models for collaborative planning evolved within the Library Power Schools. One outstanding model is PEACE (Plan for Excellence in A Collaborative Environment). PEACE is the collaborative planning design implemented by Miami Spring Elementary School in Miami, Florida. The design is a pyramid with isolated teacher and library media specialists parallel planning at the base and with three progressive steps toward the ideal of team collaborative planning at the top.

"At the pinnacle of the pyramid, the peace sign dominates, symbolizing that the previous steps are now automatic and that the skills required to implement and operate this program have been internalized by the staff and students" (Farwell, 1998, 27). A diagram of this model follows:

The library became the hub for information problem solving.

Level Four

| Formal collaboration with teams and grade levels is in place. Release time is provided. | Equal planning partnerships form between classrooms and library media centers. |

Level Three

| Begin collaborative planning with individual teachers. Emphasis is on student achievement. | Teacher's enthusiasm for collaborative planning increases. Equal leadership and exchange of ideas. |

Level Two

| Center operates on flexible schedule. Information skills lessons coordinated with content studies. Professionals share ideas. | Teachers request information skill lessons to support content studies. Teachers are less autocratic and more open to cooperatively plan. |

Level One

| Library Media Centers operate on a Fixed Schedule. Library Media Specialist teaches library skills in isolation. All students visit on a schedule. | Teachers teach in isolation. Teachers teach content and curriculum learning skills. Student's learning disconnected from library skills. |

(Farwell, 1998, 26)

This diagram provides a visual perspective of collaborative planning and instruction that provide students relevant, challenging research assignments and ongoing fun activities that promote curricular goals and objectives and that provide teachers and library media specialists with effective and inventive collaborative planning sessions for energized meaningful use of resources, both instructional and human (Farwell, 1998, 27).

Madison Metropolitan School District Collaborative Planning Workshop 1998
During the Spring of 1997, the Library Technology and Communication Department sponsored a collaborative planning workshop for teacher-library media specialist teams. This staff development opportunity encouraged teachers and library media specialists to bridge district curriculum standards for Madison's library media program with state and district content standards. It motivated these professional teams to design relevant curriculum and assessment tools.

A key component to the observable success of this program was time. Time for two planning days was supported by the administration and secured through substitutes. Time for implementation of the unit was arranged within a flexible-access library program schedule. Time for half-day collaborative training orientation for colleagues was scheduled during an all-day district staff development day scheduled during the Fall of 1997.

During the 1997-98 school year, a fourth grade teacher teamed with the library media specialist to develop a native American folklore unit coupled with developing the art of storytelling and the science of solving an information study question. Activities included learning the reasons for the original development of several folktales. Many of these folktales were compared by using Venn diagrams, wall charts showing similar characteristics, and entering data into a computer database and then searching the various fields. Additional activities included listening to storytellings, writing contemporary Native American folktales, and retelling classic native American folktales through multi-media presentations. Assessments for this unit aligned with the performance standards for literature/language arts and for information and technology. These standards were assessed through observation, review of student journals, rubrics for storytelling, graphical analysis and computer applications.

As participants in this collaborative teaching project, the teachers and library media specialists learned that an integrated approach is an important step toward effective blending of information skills with content curriculum. To accomplish this seamless marriage of content and process requires that information problem-solving activities directly relate to the content area and classroom assignments and that all these skills themselves are an integral component of a logical and systematic information process model. Finally, educators learned, when skills are taught in isolation they have limited meaning for students and thus long term memory rarely occurs and when the same skills are taught within meaningful context, students are motivated to learn and retention occurs.

In Conclusion
Through collaboration, the library becomes an extension of the classroom in which individuals, small groups, and entire classes of students use a variety of resources and technological tools to learn content objectives. The library media specialist is viewed as an integral member of an instructional team. The library media specialist becomes an advocate for improved student literacy, a facilitator of information problem-solving, and a catalyst for student-centered learning. The library media specialist becomes a proactive advocate for storytimes, reading contests and booktalks, and joins with classroom teachers to ensure that students read good books, read for information, and read for pleasure. The library media specialist teaches students and staff alike to compose an information problem, to search, cull, analyze, and manage data, and to present their information solution in a format (print or multimedia) and design appropriate for their audience. The library media specialist with the teacher places an emphasis on learning rather than teaching. Together they assist themselves and their students to become effective, independent learners who are prepared for ongoing learning throughout their lives. "This modeling of cooperation and shared roles provides positive examples as the entire school begins to view the library as the hub of the school" (Miller and Anderson, 1996) and the library media specialist as a catalyst for school reform.

"Opportunities for collaboration are not enough in and of themselves. Shared work that is not skillfully done can be nonproductive . . . The leadership skills needed [by the library media specialist and all parties] for collaborative work involve the ability to develop (1) a shared sense of purpose with colleagues, (2) facilitate group processes, (3) communicate well, (4) understand transition and change and their effects on people, (5) mediate conflict, and (6) hold a keen understanding of adult learning from a constructivist perspective" (Lambert, 1998, 18). With these abilities in place the library media specialist with their teachers and administrator build mutual trust, listen to others' views and ideas, question together, give and receive feedback, and teach collaboratively.

Resources

American Association of School Librarians. *Collaboration*. Chicago: American Library Association, Fall, 1996.

American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1998.

American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*. Chicago: American Library Association and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1998.

Aronson, Judi. "Cultivating the Seeds of Collaboration." *School Library Media Activities Monthly*. (XIII, September, 1996, 32-33+).

Berkowitz, Bob with Max Stoner and John Don Vito. "Collaboration: Partnerships for Instructional Improvement." *School Library Media Activities Monthly*. (10, March 1994, 32-35).

Bruner, Charles. Thinking Collaboratively: *Ten Questions and Answers to Help Policy Makers Improve Children's Services*. Washington DC: Education and Human Services Consortium, 1991.

Farwell, Sybil. "Successful Models for Collaborative Planning." *Knowledge Quest*. (26, January/February, 1998, 24-30).

Haycock, Carol Ann. "Cooperative Planning." *Emergency Librarian*. (16, November-December, 1988, 29-32).

Haycock, Ken. "Research in Teacher-Librarianship and the Institutionalization of Change." *School Library Media Quarterly*. (Summer 1995).

Haycock, Ken. "What Works" Teacher-Librarians Affect Student Achievement." *Emergency Librarian*. (21,2, November-December, 1993, 33).

Hunter, Connie. *Application of Information Skills Through the Use of Integrated Curriculum*. Chicago: Saint Xavier University, 1994.

Lambert, Linda. *Build Leadership Capacity in Schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998.

Loertscher, David. *Taxonomies of the School Library Media Program*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1988.

Mattessich, Paul W. and Barbara R. Monsey. *Collaboration: What Makes It Work: A Review of Research Literature on Factors Influencing Successful Collaboration.* St. Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1992.

Miller, Donna P. and J. Lynn Anderson. *Developing an Integrated Library Program.* Worthington, OH: Linworth Publishing, 1997.

PEACE (*Plan for Excellent in A Collaborative Environment*). Miami, FL: Miami-Dade County Public Schools, n.d.

Smith, Stuart and James Scott. *The Collaborative School.* Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearringhouse on Educational Management, Univesity of Oregon, 1991.

Stripling, Barbara K. "Learning-Centered Libraries: Implications from Research." *School Library Media Quarterly.* 23 Spring 1995.

Tastad, Shirley and Julie Tallman. "Library Power: Vehicle for Change." *Knowledge Quest.* (26, January/February, 1998, 17-22).

Van Deusen, Jean Donham. "Prerequisites to Flexible Planning." *Emergency Librarian.* (23, September-October, 1995, 16-19).

Winer, Michael and Karen Ray. Collaboration Handbook: *Creating, Sustaining and Enjoying the Journey.* St. Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1994.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. "Collaborative Planning Workshop: Using Curriculum Standards to Foster Teacher/Librarian Collaboration." *Information and Technology: Implementing State & National Standards.* Madison, WI: September 25, 1998, 27-32.

Wolcott, Linda. "Planning with Teachers: Practical Approaches to Collaboration." *Emergency Librarian.* (January-February, 1996, 8-14).