

# **Collaboration is the key: Making a difference in our schools through integrative and progressive practice**

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*What is the value and shape of collaborative practice for the teacher librarian in schools? This paper will look at definitions of collaborative practice, relevant research, the critical role of the teacher librarian, information process models and the underpinning pedagogy of learning communities, information literacy and constructivist learning. It will present a range of strategies at the macro level for developing opportunities for collaboration with teaching staff and library colleagues and at the micro level, strategies to enable the collaboration to occur in an effective and integrated way once avenues of communication and other forums have been set up*

*We must raise the bar in our thinking; libraries and librarians enhance the total development of our society. If we do not seek to strengthen the link between libraries and the classrooms, the real losers will continue to be our students who miss access to current materials for information, recreational reading and team teaching by the class teacher and the librarians.*

*We are also aware that we are living in an information-driven age where we must be on the cutting edge of technology. In light of this there must be a major paradigm shift by administrators, classroom teachers and librarians especially those who are of the view that libraries and librarians are not as important as other educational institutions.”*

*The library should be an integral part of the school's reading programme and that collaboration should exist between the classroom teacher and the librarian for the creation of units and lessons that link content, information literacy and technology literacy.*

Quoting Mrs Ellen Grant (2006) Coordinator at the Teachers Resource Unit in the Department of Education on Nevis

We as teacher librarians are link people, the connectors to making the paradigm shift towards an integrated curriculum happen for our students, our colleagues and our schools. However, we cannot do it alone: it is achieved through the support of the school principal, collaboration with others, belief in ourselves and a vision for the future.

The substantial body of research developed over the past ten to fifteen years on the relationship between effective school libraries and student academic performance has validated a number of significant factors, one of which is the central need for collaboration between teacher librarians and classroom teachers (Lance, 2002) (Appendix 1). Collaboration is the key for a teacher librarian to work successfully in integrating information skills into the school curriculum and to become a vital cog in the teaching and learning cycle within the school. The performance of students improves when teachers function as teams; this concept is also supported by organizational theory models such as those of Covey, Drucker and Senge (Leonard, 2002). Teacher collective learning and shared work have a powerful impact on student learning (Leonard & Leonard, 2003). How do we make it happen? What strategies can the teacher librarian use to develop opportunities for collaboration with teaching staff? This paper will look at definitions of collaborative practice, relevant research, the critical role of the teacher librarian, information process models, and the underpinning pedagogy of learning communities, information literacy and constructivist learning. It will present a range of strategies at the macro level for developing opportunities for collaboration with teaching staff and library colleagues, and at the micro level strategies to enable the collaboration to occur in an effective and integrated way once avenues of communication and other forums have been set up. These arise out of my professional practice and experience and that of colleagues.

### **A definition of collaboration**

The American Information Power initiative emphasizes the purpose of collaboration through its significant effects: “Effective collaboration with teachers helps to create a vibrant and engaged community of learners, strengthens the whole school program as well as the library media program, and develops support for the school library media program throughout the whole school” (Information Power 1998, quoted in Small, 2002). The process can become contagious.

Collaboration is based on “shared goals, a shared vision and a climate of trust and respect” (Muronago and Harada, quoted in Russell, 2001 and Small, 2002). It is a strong 21st century trend and a vehicle for school renewal. Collaboration is embedded within the social constructivist learning theories of educators such as John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky (Monteil-Overall, 2005, Leonard & Leonard, 2003, Henri & Asselin, 2005). In particular Vygotsky’s concept of the “zone of proximal development” where more mature and capable people such as teachers guide those who are less advanced within a socially constructed learning experience is significant (Monteil-Overall, 2005) and has been employed by Carol Kuhlthau in her Zones of Intervention within the Guided Inquiry process. Monteil-Overall (2005) contemplates a number of definitions of collaboration including that of Schrage: “Collaboration is a process of shared creation: two or more individuals with complementary skills interacting to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have come to on their own. Collaboration creates a shared meaning about a process, a product or an event... Real innovation comes from the social matrix” and she then comes up with a revised definition: “Collaboration is a trusting, working relationship between two or more equal participants involved in shared thinking, shared planning and shared creation of integrated instruction. Through a shared vision and shared objectives, student learning opportunities are created that integrate

subject content and information literacy by co-planning, co-implementing, and co-evaluating students' progress throughout the instructional process in order to improve student learning in all areas of the curriculum." (Monteil-Overall,2005). Collaboration creates a third space between people, a space where creative synergy develops; it is also an effective strategy for professional learning.

### **Models of collaboration**

Collaboration is a complex concept as well as a process. Monteil-Overall (2005) has developed four models based on work done previously by David Loertscher; these describe different levels of collaborative relationships.

**Model A: Coordination** involves people exchanging information or sharing time, resources or students to help one another.

**Model B: Cooperation/Partnership** requires a stronger level of commitment and a greater level of intensity than Model 1. It is underpinned by a philosophy of teamwork and cooperation and may involve the school library in gathering resources to support a classroom teacher's activities.

**Model C: Integrated Instruction** involves "shared thinking, shared planning and shared creation of integrated instruction". There is an integration of both content and information skills instruction. Responsibility is shared in the creation of a meaningful learning experience and a synergy develops that results in a much richer learning activity or unit of work.

**Model D: Integrated Curriculum** refers to where the process of Model C is implemented across the entire curriculum with all teachers in the school planning, teaching and assessing a unit of work where subject content is integrated with library information literacy instruction (Monteil-Overall, 2005). The strengths of this model are independent learning, a process approach emphasizing skills, knowledge and attitudes, joint negotiation of curriculum between teachers and students and active construction of knowledge with the teacher as facilitator (Bartlett, 2005).

These models can be useful to gauge the level of collaboration in various situations. The ultimate goal is to move towards an integrated curriculum.

#### **PEACE Model**

The PEACE (Plan for Excellence in A Collaborative Environment) model developed by Miami Spring Elementary School, Florida illustrates levels of collaborative planning and the pyramid shows a progression from the base to the top, of the development of a more integrated curriculum. (Farwell, in Butt & Jameson, 2000) (Appendix 2).

### **Pedagogy underpinning collaboration**

#### *A.Learning communities*

The notion of the information literate school community is related to a range of concepts such as Senge's "learning organisation", the term "community of learners" employed by Brown and Schön, and Cooper & Boyd's "collaborative learning

communities” (Henri & Asselin, 2005). Henri (2005) clarifies the significance of the learning community in relation to collaboration: “Community is something that transforms thinking within the school... Collaboration and collegiality are key measures of community well-being and are partial indicators of the existence of an information literate school community... In essence an information literate school community places a significant priority on transforming information into knowledge and in turning knowledge into information...” The principal is a critical factor in the learning community as he inspires the school with a common vision and promotes a consistent philosophy of education. The effective principal encourages collaborative partnerships and the sharing of areas of expertise to enrich and optimize student learning (Henri 1988, Hay & Henri, 1995, Oberg & Henri, 2005). In addition, recent research validates the school library as an important instrument of school improvement (Hartzell, 2003)

Six hallmarks of a learning community are that, “the principal and teachers...:

- Create continuous learning opportunities
- Promote inquiry and dialogue
- Encourage collaboration and team learning
- Establish systems to capture and share learning
- Empower people towards a collective vision
- Connect the organisation to its environment” (Watkins & Marsick, 1993, cited in Henri & Asselin, 2005).

These hallmarks dovetail well with the work of school libraries. Although collaboration is a key indicator, we must recognise that collaboration is neither valued nor sought by all teachers; it can be seen as a threat.

### *B. Constructivist pedagogy*

Teacher librarians work within a constructivist framework in the belief that students learn best when they construct their own knowledge. Teachers and teacher librarians construct new learning experiences which allow students to extend themselves and create and reorganise knowledge. Constructivism is a highly influential theory of cognitive growth and learning (Bartlett, 2005). The library is an extension of the classroom but is an environment that allows more independence and self-directed learning and certain student-centred constructivist pedagogical strategies marry well with information skills such as problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning and project-based learning. These strategies are optimised by collaborative practice (Robins et al, 2005).

### *C. Information literacy*

Information literacy is foundational to the concept of lifelong learning. An information age school needs “to be built on the centrality of information literacy” (Mackey & Jacobson, 2005) because “information literacy is a meta-outcome in the learning process” (Ratteray, quoted in Mackey & Jacobson, 2005). For twenty years

teacher librarians have used information literacy frameworks to help students understand the research process and to communicate information literacy pedagogy. Various models exist including Kuhlthau's research-based Guided Inquiry model, the NSW Information Process model, Eisenberg & Berkowitz's Big Six, Gwen Gawith's six stage Action Learning approach and Herring's PLUS model. However, the professional thinking is shifting to see this generic approach as often too limited and limiting for developing deep thinking and critical engagement with information (Todd, 2007). However, Ross Todd (2007) encourages school libraries to become "intellectual hotbeds of discontent", places where debates can rage and active exploration of and deep engagement with ideas takes place.

There is much literature about librarians' understanding of information seeking and use but it is vital that these approaches meet students' understandings and their needs in order to support deep and active learning (Limberg, 2005). Limberg's research noted concerns in the study of information seeking; however, these were not addressed by teachers explicitly through instruction, particularly critical reflection, formulation of questions, time management, critical evaluation of sources, analysis of information and synthesis of material (Limberg, 2005). There is clearly a need for teacher librarians in their collaborative work in the information literacy field to work with classroom teachers to address deeper cognitive needs and help students build within themselves these higher order thinking skills (Todd, 2007).

#### *D. Resource-based learning*

During the 1980s Ken Haycock developed and promoted Cooperative Program Planning and Teaching (CPPT). This revolutionized the teacher librarian role in Canadian schools and became an avenue for putting resource-based learning into practice (Henri, 1988). Haycock clearly elucidated the role of the participants in collaborative instruction: "Teaching involves three professional functions – the ability to diagnose learning needs, to design programs to meet those needs, and to assess the degree to which the program has been successful. For the teacher librarian to be successful, these are done in conjunction and consultation with the classroom teacher." (Haycock, 2003). CPPT is an early incarnation of collaborative practice in the field of resource-based learning.

#### *E. Technology*

Technology has in recent years transformed schools and the opportunities for learning for all. Lee (Henri & Asselin, 2005) asserts that the "key feature of a learning community is that it is networked" but the factor which transforms and empowers the school as an online community is really "the way that schools use an educational rationale to drive that objectivity" (Henri & Asselin, 2005). Knowledge sharing is "the key force behind the learning organisation" (Hawamdeh, cited in Henri & Asselin, 2005) and of course networking can facilitate this greatly. "Knowledge sharing is strong when community and collegiality are valued" (Henri & Asselin, 2005) but these factors need to become deeply embedded in the school's culture. When a learning community reaches this point, the educational value of technology will be realised.

## **Mindset and role of the teacher librarian**

### *Information specialist*

Teacher librarians are a critical factor within a school that has a collaborative focus as they generally have a comprehensive umbrella view of teaching and learning across the school because of their whole school focus, the intersection of many subject areas with the library, as well as highly developed information skills. Teacher librarians need to be Renaissance men and women with skills in many fields which bridge both the arts and sciences. Despite all the evidence linking school libraries to raised student achievement, Todd believes that the primary underpinning factor in this is the “transformational actions of the school librarian” (Todd, quoted in Kenney, 2006).

### *Self belief and readiness to meet the challenge*

We must believe in ourselves as teacher librarians and our professional value to our schools. Our role also demands humility because so much of what we do is in partnership and in support of others to propel the educational vision of our schools. We know that we do not have all the answers and that we need to work in collaboration with classroom teachers who are experts in subject content to provide the best learning environment for our students. It involves an equal partnership between the classroom teacher and teacher librarian. We need too to believe in the role that the library plays for all students and staff. We want to see positive change in our schools, intellectual growth in our students and increasing sophistication in their ability to access, organize, evaluate and transform information and to drive improvement. Joyce Valenza (2002) argues that “a good librarian is one of the best educational bargains around”. There is no denying that the choice for the library to collaborate and to become a dynamic force in the school will lead to hard work for the teacher librarian and a steep learning curve. It requires an approach of flexibility, a willingness to take risks and a commitment to personal lifelong learning; this is fundamental to the success of collaboration with the library. This is not the choice for a teacher librarian wanting an easy working life.

### *Change agents to drive the paradigm shift*

Teacher librarians need to be prepared to be change agents. Gandhi put it this way: “We must be the change we want to see in the world” (quoted in Rosenfeld, 2006). We need to take on the risk ourselves, have a vision for change, look for strategic opportunities and also develop strategies such as the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) (Austrom et al 1989) to negotiate and alleviate concerns of others in the process

of changing the school culture to bring others along with us. We need to identify the inhibitors or barriers to change and the enablers in order to move forward.

Kuhlthau's research (1993 cited in Henri & Asselin, 2005) acknowledges three main inhibitors and four enablers in primary programs to collaborative teaching and learning. More have been added from the work of Monteil-Overall (2005) and Mackey & Jacobson (2005). The enablers need to be in place in each school and the inhibitors need to be addressed.

INHIBITORS TO COLLABORATION	ENABLERS IN COLLABORATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team approach to teaching</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confusion of roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared constructivist approach to learning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poorly designed assignments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared commitment to lifelong learning</li> </ul>
<p><i>Kuhlthau, cited in Henri &amp; Asselin (2005)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competence in developing learning strategies and activities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resistance to moving beyond traditional roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible timetable</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of awareness of students' information needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal support</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of institutional support for collaboration and information literacy</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief that teaching information literacy is the job of library staff</li> </ul>	<p><i>Monteil-Overall (2005)</i> <i>Mackey &amp; Jacobson (2005)</i></p>

### *Advocacy*

Related to the notion of being a change agent is that of advocacy. We need to sell the idea of collaboration. One potentially powerful way is to promote the research into the links between effective school libraries and student academic improvement.

### *Transformational leadership*

A transformational leader is one who is relationship-oriented, enlisting others in a vision for learning and travelling on with them in the process. It means working from within and alongside in a positive, motivational and participatory way (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989). An interesting finding in recent research relating to teacher librarian

leadership is that positive effects of library programs increase significantly if the teacher librarian's role is expanded to include curriculum and leadership involvement well beyond the library (Lance, 2002). Harada (2002) also asserts that there are integral links between collaboration and leadership.

### *Manager and program administrator*

A major role of the teacher librarian is the responsible management of a large whole school facility, a very visible metaphor for the school's existence as a learning community, as well as the delivery of services and the development of effective reading and information literacy instructional programs.

### *Vital attributes*

A collaborative mindset requires the teacher librarian to be a person who is eminently approachable and who is willing to forge links and connections between people and with resources, and who can flexibly apply a range of teaching and learning strategies. It is a demanding choice but deeply rewarding and one that will help to cement the library's ability to make a difference in the school. Oberg (1999) regards vital qualities of the teacher librarian to be excellent communication skills, willingness to take initiative, confidence, leadership qualities, and being a risk taker. Monteil-Overall (2005) believes a willingness to share is very important in collaboration. Establishing collegial and trusting relationships (Loertscher, 2003, Monteil-Overall, 2005) is also foundational.

### *Instructional partners with knowledge of our school's culture*

Oberg (1995) reminds us that the collaborative teaching experience can be seen as both expensive and high risk by teachers and school librarians in terms of time, effort and changing one's practices; integrating technology increases the price and the risk factor. Oberg advises that school librarians develop knowledge of the current teaching practices of their schools, the school's culture and also the skills, knowledge and attitudes teachers bring to the collaborative table, to help make the process more painless. Oberg (1999) asserts that the input of the teacher librarian into the collaborative process can result in "creative and imaginative learning experiences" for students. The positive result of collaboration is the development of shared goals. "The way that teachers work in effective schools is characterized by shared goals, teacher collaboration, teacher learning, teacher certainty and teacher commitment" (Rosenholtz, 1989 in Oberg 1995)

### *Teachers with commitment to authentic student learning*

We also need to think of our students and reinvent ourselves to meet the needs of the new generation. We have to recognise that our students are so-called Millennials with many opportunities for learning within school and without and we need to acknowledge and adapt to the changing face of literacy and the range of multiliteracies evident today. We need to see teaching as a political activity where we empower our students to become critically-informed and perceive underlying agendas and address issues such as "social justice, globalization and ethical use of information" (Henri & Asselin, 2005). We can transform the learning community of the school into collaboratories (Lunsford & Bruce,



quoted in Henri & Asselin, 2005) which meet the needs of “digital natives”; these collaboratories exhibit “values and practices already held by teacher librarians: shared inquiry, intentionality, active participation and contribution, access to shared resources, technologies and boundary crossings” (Henri & Asselin, 2005).

### *Mastery of technology*

Use of information and communication technologies is central to this concept and requires us as “digital immigrants” to develop our capacity in using ICTs. In schools teacher librarians are often the “human link between technology and knowledge” (Valenza, 2002). The implications for the teacher librarian are to remain informed and up-to-date with both technology and pedagogical thinking to assist teachers in integrating technology into the classroom. It may involve anything from developing a basic familiarity with PowerPoint and website construction to an understanding of wikis and blogs and other communicative forms of technology. It may mean investigating systems for the digital streaming of multimedia or developing school-based publications.

### *Collaboration and networking with library colleagues*

Collaboration with other teacher librarians is never a waste of time. It is vital for encouragement, advice, support and remaining up-to-date and informed. How can we do this sufficiently when we are often isolated in our schools as the only teacher librarian? Participating in active teacher librarian listservs such as OZTL\_NET (Australia) and LM\_NET (USA) allows us to cross-pollinate ideas with other teacher librarians and receive professional wisdom and insight from a wider spectrum of people. The wealth of insight and help available via these electronic means is extraordinary. We need to take any opportunity we can for professional development, conferences, one day events or even organizing the sharing of ideas at the regional or local level and then disseminate this through our libraries and schools. Reading professional journals also is helpful to learn from the wise and experienced and to keep up with research findings and even contributing articles ourselves. Collaboration can be taken to a higher level, such as a project where a district group or school team sets up a common resource bank for schools which might be available as a website or on a CD-ROM.

## **Macro-strategies to create opportunities for collaboration**

### *Inspecting the architecture of our learning community*

Firstly, in creating opportunities for collaboration we need to get to know our teaching staff and their perceived needs. We have to understand our school’s culture and map the inhibitors and enablers to collaboration. Then we can attempt to address these, lobbying for the enabling aspects to be in place such as principal support and flexible scheduling and then addressing the concerns recognized as inhibitors. If the school situation is already conducive towards collaboration, we can offer to a classroom teacher or a faculty our help as an instructional partner with a difficult topic or curriculum area

by suggesting ideas and resources and planning, writing, teaching and assessing a unit of work together. We have to be prepared to take risks here.

### *Identifying the focus areas of the school*

Strategic thinking is needed around integrating the library into the heart of the school. Every school is unique with different emphases. What are the priorities and educational emphases of your school? Where does the school perceive its focus or perhaps weaknesses to lie? Identify these and think about how the library can dovetail into helping meet these needs and improving the community for all its members. Examples of possible school focus areas are integrating technology, differentiating the classroom for gifted students and/or those with disabilities, low literacy levels, lack of reading, plagiarism issues, racial minorities, gender education, assessment, curriculum design, collaboration and information literacy.

### *Strategies for building collaboration around technology*

Wherever your school is on the technology spectrum, it is certain that the intention will be for the school to acquire more computers and more up-to-date technology. A teacher librarian can slot into a number of useful roles in this scenario.

Set up or join the Technology Committee of your school. Be a voice in a technology vision for the future for your school. If appropriate to your school, the committee could conduct an audit of staff technology skills, plot these in Excel to show skills and perceived training needs across departments of the school and create a training plan. Develop a five year plan which includes acquisition of technology, training in its use and strategies for maintenance. Investigate different potential systems such as learning management systems, content management systems, school library databases, information databases and school databases.

Be informed; liaise with other teacher librarians to find out what is useful new technology and helpful approaches for integrating it into lessons. Develop competence in software applications and either write or find simple instructions for students on using technology such as PowerPoint, developing a website, and using online databases.

Help integrate technology into teaching and learning. Take risks! Be the bridge/moral support/technology coach in the class to help staff develop comfort and confidence in using new technology such as:

- Blogs as reading journals, like Class Blogmeister
- Forums, discussions on issues related to a topic being studied
- Wikis; also for meetings ideas and minutes of a committee
- Digital streaming software such as ClickView
- Subscription databases and E-journals.

Work collaboratively with the subject teacher to design and teach units of work incorporating ICTs; for example, we recently worked with our History faculty and eight senior classes on a task where they had to develop an interactive online museum of artefacts showing different aspects of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Provide an electronic "toolbox" for the school community – pdf files on skills which can include citation and referencing, how to use PowerPoint (and other software), developing a website, using Inspiration and using online databases. These files can also be used as instruction sheets to give to students.

### *Develop a library website to centralize access to information resources*

Building a website to centralize access to library resources such as the library catalogue, online databases, instructional tutorials, reading lists, hotlists of websites for particular topics and pathfinders can generate new interest in, enthusiasm for and awareness of the wealth of resources available through the library (Terry & Spear, 2003). It also makes the library one without walls, able to be accessed from anywhere. The design of the information architecture of the website is critical to the function and must be well-planned. A school library website is a powerful tool for students and staff and also acts as an online advocate for the library and its services.

### *Use a content management system to manage the online classroom*

Content management systems (CMS) such as WebCT, Blackboard or Moodle (free open-source software) come into their own for managing a digital learning environment (Terry & Spear, 2003) and offering course home pages for the online classroom. With an online facility like this for the school's intranet, it is easy to manage web-based projects, upload assignments, link websites, send messages, include instructional tutorials and integrate calendars. It also affords access from home, school and other locations.

### *Strategies for building collaboration around curriculum*

The healthy goal for a school is to have an integrated curriculum like Model D with a significant level of collaboration across the school. All schools have a curriculum specifying what teachers need to teach their students; some are more prescribed than others. How can we contribute to the development of curriculum and be at the cutting edge of thinking about teaching and learning in our schools? A curriculum committee which is a visionary think tank about the nature of teaching and learning, assessment for learning, and strategies for dealing with issues in the school such as plagiarism and the fostering of higher order information skills, will be a rich and worthwhile forum for

teacher librarian involvement. With our unique perspective of the school we may be able to share some insights.

### *Strategies for building collaboration around special learning needs*

We can assist in differentiating the curriculum for gifted learners by supporting them individually, providing resources to extend them and also supporting their personal interest extension projects. We can also integrate into a CMS a learning management system such as LAMS – Learning Activity Management System (Macquarie University). This can be particularly helpful for assisting students with special needs. Useful generic types of modifications such as templates and scaffolds can be put on the library website or staff material area for all teachers to access, to help them cater for the needs of those in their classes who need extension or modification. In collaborative instruction it is important to plan modifications of the task for special needs students with more explicit scaffolding, simplified instructions, vocabulary, and employing lower levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy for fact-finding rather than deep thinking. Recently one English teacher and I sat down with the Lord of the Rings research task that all Year 8 students will do and we modified it significantly using the strategies above.

### *Strategies for building collaboration around building a reading culture*

Reading is a foundational skill for all students. Negotiate the introduction of a reading programme such as Literature Circles or Drop Everything and Read (DEAR). At St Andrew’s all classes from Year 3 to Year 9 come for two weeks of Literature Circles lessons where we cycle through silent sustained reading, discussion groups and writing reflective responses; this can result in substantive conversation. It also sets up a very powerful ongoing dialogue about reading across the school and with the library staff. Recently with a low ability class, I set up blogs on Class Blogmeister for the students to write their reading responses; this was done quite enthusiastically. Teacher librarians can develop book lists for levels and genres, promote reading through displays, competitions, and book club websites. We can promote the notion of “literary learning”, integrating fiction into information units, to help build context and reading skills and heighten interest especially for History.

### *Strategies for building collaboration around literacy*

Literacy is also a critical issue in schools. Rosenfeld (2006) affirms the need for teacher librarians to be “literacy advocates”. Join the Literacy Committee to be an advocate. Integrate information literacy and digital literacy into the literacy approach as well. Develop publications or webpages which can be used by teachers and students as

models, such as text types, citation, the information skills process, and evaluating of resources. At St Andrew's we have developed literacy files of strategies for teachers which are called The L-Files. In addition a Year 7 program called Learning to learn was developed, followed by RAW - Research and writing which is integrated into a research unit for all Year 8 students, and lastly WOW - Working on writing, targeted at improving the writing of Year 9 students. Two more publications directed towards Seniors are planned: CARS - Citation and Referencing Skills and HOTS – Higher order thinking skills. These will become part of a school literacy website.

We developed the RAW booklet by choosing the NSW Information Process model as a scaffold, and then built a generic workbook around it with strategies to assist guided inquiry across the curriculum, for example:

DEFINING	concept maps, questions, understanding instructional words
LOCATING	list of library and other general resources, access points, pathfinder
SELECTING	notemaking and organizational strategies, evaluating websites
PRESENTING	PowerPoint Do's and Don'ts; tips for visual and oral presentations; use of language, essay writing, scaffolds
EVALUATING	self evaluation

The RAW booklet has been very useful as a research skills reference and has become the foundation for a collaboratively taught unit of work in the library.

### *Develop an information literacy Scope & Sequence*

A scope and sequence of information and technology skills lends credibility to the process of collaboration and demonstrates clearly the intentional and incremental nature of the teacher librarian's interventions in building skills in students. It provides substantial justification for the collaborative process if it is needed and also provides a helpful guideline for teacher librarians and teachers in staging the introduction and consolidation of particular skills. It demonstrates that we as teacher librarians have a clear direction and mandate for developing information skills in students especially if integrated with syllabus documents. Resources such as ILPO – Information Literacy Planning Overview are helpful in formulating these.

School library staff can also use curriculum mapping to keep a record of the collaboration that occurs with classroom teachers and the skills that are taught. This assists in demonstrating the significant work that is occurring and also allows one to see where there are gaps in teaching information literacy skills. Evidence-based practice is useful for collecting one's own evidence of differences the library may have made in teaching and learning (Todd 2003).

### *Strategies for building collaboration around reducing plagiarism*

We need to promote ethical scholarship and make it clear to students that they need to write in their own words. It is best to reduce plagiarism at the stage of instructional design. We can offer suggestions and interventions for rich tasks and

construction of questions that allow little scope for plagiarism such as comparison/contrasting, taking an unusual angle on the question, group work, and explicit instruction in reference and citation skills.

### *Strategies for building collaboration in designing integrated units of work*

Loertscher (2003) suggests that in planning units of work we begin with the relevant outcomes or state standards and use these to set clear goals for students, then draw upon resources and technology of the library and beyond, collaborate with other staff and expect this will lead to a dispersion of collaborative experiences across the faculty and school. In addition the assessment of learning should take into account both product and process. Collaboration with teaching staff to create units of work that cover syllabus content and that are meaningful and intentional, create the opportunity for a successful and graduated research experience. Generally these are resource-based research tasks which integrate information skills and technology, elicit higher order thinking skills and minimise the opportunity for plagiarism. They allow students to embed and refine transferable purposeful skills – thinking, information skills, problem-solving and critical evaluation of resources.

The classroom teacher brings understanding of students' abilities and weaknesses and expertise in the content to the partnership; the teacher librarian brings a thorough understanding of the information process and a variety of resources to help construct a successful research experience. As time goes on, the teacher librarian and teacher develop an arsenal of instructional strategies, templates and scaffolds and can employ a variety of approaches: information process units, Blooms-based units, stations, the Rainbow /Jigsaw technique/ Expert groups, web-based units such as Webquests and PowerPoint units. At the time of presentation examples will be given of a unit of work investigating the mythology behind *The Lord of the Rings* and a PowerPoint task on astronomy for secondary science.

From a library point of view, seeking to develop collaborative instruction around assessments is very helpful because this approach allows all students in the school to be taught information skills embedded in their subject content and new staff in the faculty to be mentored in these approaches. Even to begin small and develop a strong relationship with one faculty will have a significant effect.

### **Micro-strategies to support collaboration**

#### *The shape of the collaborative instruction process*

Typical stages of collaborative planning involve discussion of the outcomes of the task, its nature (assessment or class task), length, due date, the area of research, possible questions, and the type of model that will suit the task and maximize the achievement of the outcomes.

The next stage is the formulation of the task with the development of the draft and with library staff ensuring sufficient resources at appropriate levels to meet the demands of the task - books, periodicals, electronic databases, websites. The draft unit is sent between the faculty and the library until it is satisfactory to all stakeholders. Often a task like this can be used in subsequent years with minor alterations and improvements after re-evaluating any problems or lack of clarity for students.

The library staff assemble the resources, copy the worksheets, upload the task and other electronic resources and links to the online class space, and book the library so that the teacher can come to the library and all is prepared.

The teaching phase works as a partnership with the librarian usually explaining the task, the location of the resources and strategies for approaching aspects of the task and the teacher adding whatever is needed to clarify. The introduction to the topic is significant and requires thought, putting the activity in context and linking it to prior learning. Often narrative or interesting trivia or setting the task up as a problem or mystery to be solved can heighten motivation. In one task looking at the relationships between Aboriginal people and settlers, we hung the whole concept on an exciting expedition into the red heart of Australia and read a picture book covering this story at the start. The classes were generally extremely quiet and engaged. One must see the introduction as a motivational talk to inspire students to want to explore the information and find out more, to feel excited about learning and exploring ideas. You can also reassure them about the cyclic nature of the research process and the universal feelings of uncertainty at the start. Instructional interventions will be needed at times using modelling, guidance, explicit instruction, demonstration, and questioning.

At the end both partners should be involved in the assessment. A debrief at the end to evaluate the unit is time well-spent. It is always worth making the corrections immediately and keeping good version control.

### *Useful idea resources for the teacher librarian for planning*

It is useful to have a planning folder with idea prompts, with earlier units of work, a Blooms Taxonomy wheel with verbs/activities for each level, a collaborative planning proforma, scope & sequence of information literacy and digital skills, syllabus documents, an Information skills planning sheet and other items like critical thinking strategies and multiple intelligence matrixes as prompts to help us think more creatively and from a broader pedagogical standpoint.

### *Useful equipment resources for the library involved in collaborative instruction*

Very useful resources to facilitate the smooth operation of collaborative instruction are a set of assignment shelves to which you can attach relevant labels eg Year 11 Sparta, Year 7 Middle Ages. These are invaluable for allowing students to find easily resources which are on closed reserve because they are in use for assessment tasks for

several classes. Spare book trolleys are also invaluable too for moving relevant resources quickly to the allocated teaching area.

### *Collaboration with students*

To collaborate with our students in the process of their learning, we need to help them see the library and its services as a useful and responsive place, a step to their success and higher achievement. We must pay special attention to the ambience of the library; it must be a welcoming, positive and stimulating place. We must seek to develop the whole person and provide for recreational interests and also nurture reading. All that we do is for our students and our colleagues; we do not want them to lose out and so we must continue to “raise the bar” through refining our collaborative instruction.

*"We must raise the bar in our thinking; libraries and librarians enhance the total development of our society. If we do not seek to strengthen the link between libraries and the classrooms, the real losers will continue to be our students..."*

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Elizabeth Greef is the Head Librarian of St Andrew's Cathedral School in Sydney, Australia, a K-12 library serving 1200+ people. She is Australian but has lived in Africa, the Middle East and Europe. She has served as the Regional Director for Oceania and has presented at several conferences and written for professional journals. Elizabeth enjoys reading, genealogy and travelling and likes to share good food and conversation with friends and family.

## Appendix 1:

### RESEARCH EVIDENCE – SCHOOL LIBRARIES DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

KEITH CURRY LANCE ET AL

Research across 16 American states validates these findings.

Lance: Students demonstrate higher levels of academic performance where library staff:

- Are qualified
- Plan and teach collaboratively with the classroom teacher
- Teach information literacy
- Provide one-to-one tutoring for students in need
- Develop a quality and varied collection of resources
- Integrate up-to-date technology into teaching and learning
- Co-operate with other libraries
- Provide inservice programs for teachers on information literacy, resource-based learning and integrating technology
- Have support staff
- Receive the support of the principal
- Manage networked technology
- Raise funds successfully

The second Colorado study has identified four major direct library predictors of academic achievement:

- School library program development
- Collaboration work of library staff
  - Co-operative planning with teachers
  - Teaching of information literacy skills
  - Provision of inservice training to teachers
  - Identification of relevant and useful materials for teachers
  - Support of networking linking library to classrooms
- Technology
- Flexible scheduling

An indirect predictor is the extent to which the school librarian is involved in whole school leadership activities outside the library

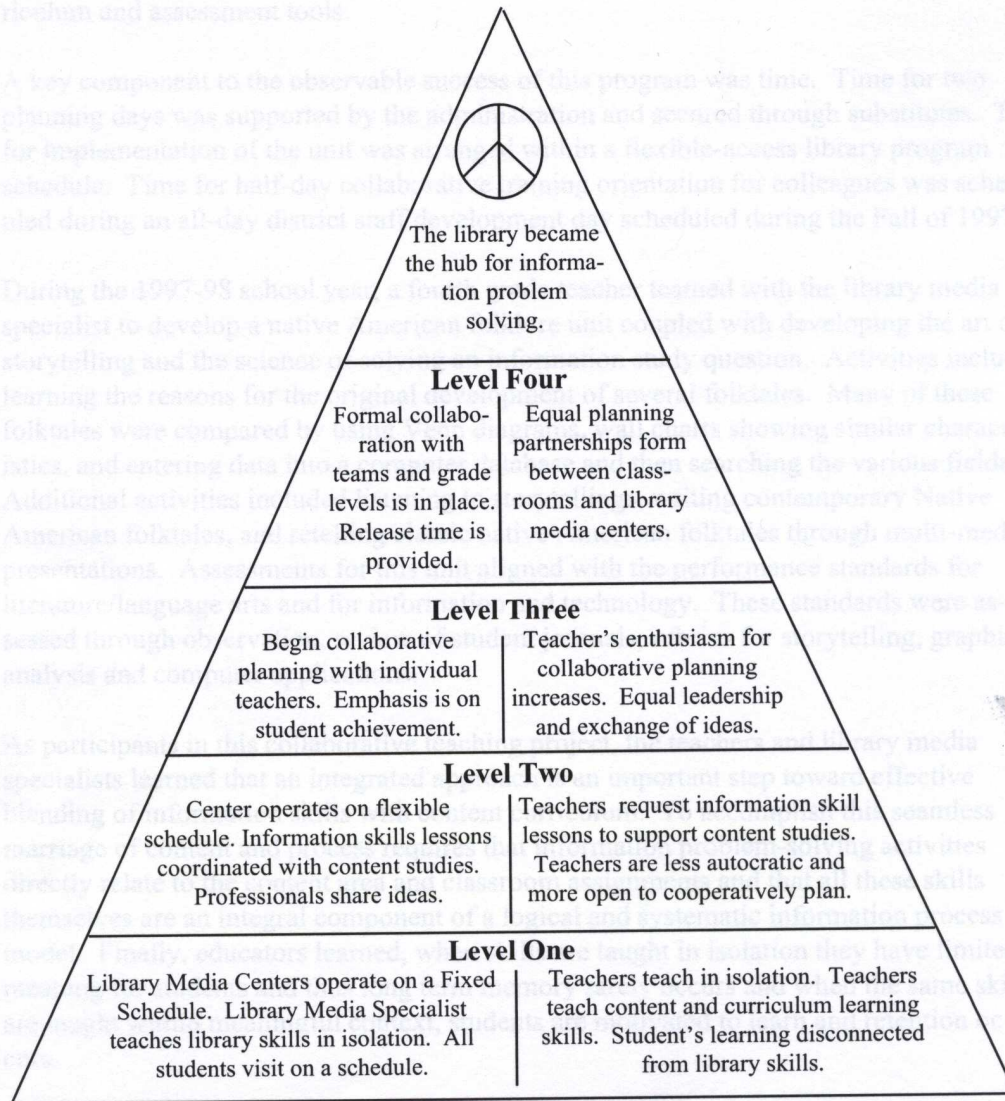
In summary, the better funded, the better-resourced and the better-qualified the library and its staff, the better the results for student academic achievement.

Lance, Keith Curry 2001, *Proof of the power: Recent research on the impact of school library media programs on the academic achievement of US public school students*, ERIC Digest ED456861, viewed 14 March 2007. Online <[www.ericdigests.org/2002-2/proof.htm](http://www.ericdigests.org/2002-2/proof.htm)>

For current state of research in 2006, see *School libraries work!* 2006, Scholastic, viewed 30 March 2007,

<[http://librarypublishing.scholastic.com/content/stores/LibraryStore/pages/images/slw\\_06.pdf](http://librarypublishing.scholastic.com/content/stores/LibraryStore/pages/images/slw_06.pdf)>

**Appendix 2:**



(Farwell, 1998, 26)

PEACE (Plan for Excellence in A Collaborative Environment) Collaboration Model, developed by Miami Spring Elementary School in Miami, Florida (Farwell, 1998 in Butt & Jameson, 2000)