

## Collaboration that counts

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## Understandings about the nature of the work

- The effectiveness of the library media program must be measured by what students learned as a result of their experiences.
- There is a clear relationship between professional training and informed practice.
- The funding, structures, and policies of the library media program must support the articulated learning goals and related job descriptions.
- In virtually every school the principal controls opportunity.

## What work should look like in the Library Media Center

“The school library is about empowerment, connectivity, engagement, interactivity, and its outcome is knowledge construction. This must be at the centre of our philosophy, the mandate for our role, and the driver of all our day-by-day teaching and learning actions.”

-- Ross Todd

## Mission of Library Media Center

***The school library media program is a catalyst for intellectual inquiry, personal connection, and communication.***

## So, what's the problem?

“As is so often the case in 'can-do' America, and especially in education, we are headlong in pursuit of answers to questions we haven't even asked. We are busy implementing solutions to problems that we neither fully understand nor agree on. We are operating on assumptions or perhaps even myths.”

-- *Making the Grade*

## Obstacles that surface from our work with students

## Striving for competency

Transfer of learning is the cornerstone upon which education should ultimately rest. In its broadest sense, transfer of learning is basic to the whole notion of schooling. If there is no transfer at all, students will need to be taught specifically every act that they will ever perform in any situation [which is impossible]. (Bigge & Shermis, 1992).

## Commonly cited reasons why students aren't more successful

Examples:

- Inability to analyze/interpret texts and events; students end up just retelling
- Note-taking method makes it difficult for students to access/remember key ideas in the text
- Failure to use the research process if not prompted to do so
- Treats every research task the same -- failure to stop and consider: what does this question/task/problem demand?
- Presents information without connecting to own ideas

## Commonly cited reasons why our students aren't more successful in Information Literacy

Your Reasons:

## Where does your authority come from?

"True authority does not come from the superintendent, principal, or even the teachers worked with every day; it comes from a very large achievement gap. . . The chasm between the academic expectations for learners and the current achievement levels of students within the schools."

-- Zmuda

## Worried about effectiveness of our schools

- Approximately one-third of students in the U.S. do not graduate after four years of high school.
- In the nation's most recent study of high school dropouts:
  - 47% of dropouts said that a major reason for dropping out was that classes were not interesting;
  - 70% said they were not motivated or inspired to work hard; and
  - 81% of dropouts said there should be more opportunities for real world learning
- One-fourth of first-year college students fail to return for a sophomore year due to poor preparation in high school.

## Obstacles that surface from our work with staff

## Summary of research findings on collaboration

1. Teachers do not consider their schools to sufficiently exhibit expectations of or support for regular, high levels of collaborative involvement.
2. Teacher work continues to be characterized by competition and individualism and lacks the type of trusting, caring environment that is more conducive to collaborative practice.
3. There needs to be greater articulation of underlying values and beliefs about educational practice that is tempered with respect for diverse professional opinions and practices.
4. Teachers are dissatisfied with scheduling and appropriations of time, which often serve to deter collaborative practice.
5. Teachers need professional development directed at improving their collaborative skills.

## Summary of findings continued

- "Enigmatic to this apparent universal recognition of the inherent value in maintaining routines of professional collaboration and in the ostensible thrust to create cultures of collegial engagement is that, for many schools, this idealism may not match the reality."
- "The impediments to sustaining norms of professional collaborative practice seem as troublesome today as they did decades ago (see Lortie, 1975; Goodlad, 1984)."

## Summary of findings continued

"The obstacles to collaborative practice today are hauntingly similar to those reported years ago. Teachers still complain that the scarcity of opportunities to collaborate is promulgated by increasing work demands and decreasing time availability. They also continue to lament persisting negative mindsets about the actual desirability of shared work and the resistance to moving beyond the traditional models of teacher relationships."

## Summary of findings continued

"The distinction is important and it may be time for district level administrators and policymakers to unequivocally communicate expectations of the former to current and potential school-level administrators. School principals who continue to personify traditional leader traits in the currently emerging educational environment not only minimize professional growth, they may also optimize student mediocrity."

## Research citation

- Leonard, L. & Leonard, P. (2003, September 17). The continuing trouble with collaboration: Teachers talk. *Current Issues in Education* [On-line], 6(15). Available: <http://cie.ed.asu.edu/volume6/number15/>

## Cooperation

- Informal, largely autonomous relationship
- Few defined goals
- Minimally organized effort to work together.

## Coordination

- More formal arrangement exists
- Requires a higher degree of planning, open communications, and a division of roles
- Done in order to achieve particular instructional objectives

## Collaboration

- More long range in scope, more time intensive, and requires comprehensive planning
- All parties share both the power and risk.
- Full commitment is made to integrating information literacy skills into curriculum

## Truths about collaboration

- Collaboration is a voluntary action that is anchored in a common goal for student learning.
- Effective collaboration requires commensurate contributions from each participant.
- LMS and teacher/specialist share responsibility, authority and accountability for the collaborative effort and the result.
- Because one LMS cannot meaningfully collaborate with everyone, he/she works strategically to have the greatest impact on student learning.

## What evidence do you have in your school (and district and state) that your library really matters in the instructional landscape?

- Mission statement
- State expectations of LMC programs (defined outcomes, guidelines)
- Physical features of the school
  - ✓Calendar, schedules
  - ✓Meeting structures, committee compositions
  - ✓Building layout
- Allocation of resources

## So, what is my job? What would I look like if I was doing it?

**YOUR DESIGN TASK.** Write one to two measurable statements of what you would see if you were fulfilling the vision of what a library media specialist should do. . .

1. Clearly defining what students are expected to learn
2. Appropriately measuring and communicating student learning
3. Leveraging resources to scaffold learners to raise achievement
4. Working in concert and collaboration with district, building, and classroom initiatives

## #1: Clearly defining what students are expected to learn

- Need for technical capacity in the discipline (technical vocabulary, procedural fluency)
- Need for conceptual understanding (constructing meaning, making judgments about quality)
- Need for transfer (create new knowledge, apply learning to new situations)
- Need for metacognition (make judgments about attitudes, beliefs, sense of accomplishment)

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## #2: Appropriately measuring and communicating student learning

- **Assessment of learning**
  - Summative assessments designed to report achievement
- **Assessment for learning**
  - Diagnostic and formative assessments designed to inform teacher's instructional design and student's learning process
- **Assessment as learning**
  - Self-assessments designed to promote learning about learning so that learner can make strategic decisions about future learning

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## #3: Leveraging resources to scaffold learners to raise achievement

- Analysis of student assessment data to identify learning problems
- Evaluate the nature of the problem (technical, conceptual, procedural, metacognitive)
- Troubleshoot how to raise achievement for each learner to impact overall achievement

## Need for planned instructional interventions in the LMC

- What are the big achievement concerns evidenced in student work in the LMC?
- What impact do gaps in this area have across classrooms?
- How do you scaffold the learning to close the gap?
- How do you know if the design had the intended effect?

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**#4: Working in concert and collaboration with district, building, and classroom initiatives**

- Need to embody the work of the school in your environment
  - Focus on standards-based curriculum anchored in the “big ideas” of the discipline
  - Focus on results and data-driven decision making
  - Focus on literacy and numeracy
  - Focus on preparing students for the 21st century (global focus)