

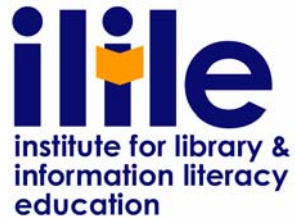
FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

National Research Grant

We have this great library, but how can it be used?

**Promoting library awareness, information literacy skills and teacher/librarian
collaboration through systematic teacher training**

February 2004-December 2004



**Institute for Library and Information Literacy Education (ILILE)
Kent State University**

December 2004

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Kent State University
314 Library
Kent, OH 44242-0001

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT – FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT
February 2004-December 2004

We have this great library, but how can it be used?

Promoting library awareness, information literacy skills and teacher/librarian collaboration through systematic teacher training

Project Director	Name of Project Director Terry Cypher Rihl Lory Monaco-Stevenson	Title Library Media Specialists	Telephone Number (703) 781-2764/5
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BUDGET REPORT:

Date	Budget Item	Amount	Total submitted to ILILE
	Budget submitted to ILILE		
	Project Total:		

EVALUATION COMPOSITE

Provide the Total Number of Participants involved in the project:

_____ Students – specify grade level or academic level:

Grade 3	June 2004= 107	Nov 2004= 98
Grade 4	June 2004= 61	Nov 2004= 44
Grade 5	June 2004= 159	Nov 2004= 68
Grade 6	June 2004= 83	Nov 2004= 129
	Total June= 305	Total Nov= 339

_____ Teachers/Faculty – specify grade level, content area and/or academic discipline:

June 2004= 65 November 2004= 30

2_____ School Library Media Specialists

- _____ Administrators
- _____ Support Staff
- _____ Other (specify) _____

Through this research study, the researchers attempt to prove that regular systematic teacher training will increase: library awareness, use of library materials, and the incidence of collaborative planning between the LMS and classroom teachers. By reaching these goals with the classroom teachers, the library awareness will increase and use by students will also increase because their classroom teachers will have the experience and knowledge to integrate information literacy skills into the classroom curriculum.

NARRATIVE REPORT (3-5 pages)

Description of Program – provide narrative summarizing the program

In the spring of 2004 the researchers surveyed teachers and students at Fort Belvoir Elementary school to gauge awareness and use of library materials and services. The researchers, who are also this school's library media specialists, then began to design and implement systematic teacher training and library promotion.

The major component of this study became the design of a professional development course training teacher to become more efficient library users. The course would also stress the importance of teacher/librarian collaboration and its positive effects on student success.

After writing the course syllabus and gaining approval to offer the course from the school division's Office of Staff Development and Training, the course was offered as part of the Fairfax County Public Schools Academy class system (that is open to any professional employee of Fairfax County Public Schools). Other library media specialists were encouraged to take the course, provide the information to their own schools, even tailoring it to meet particular school needs. The course can be replicated throughout the K-12 spectrum.

This idea was developed after it was realized that increased collaboration was needed with teachers to encourage independence among staff and students in using the library.

The researchers made ongoing outreach effort to teachers, parents, and students to promote library usage. They attended grade level meeting and worked with teachers to develop or improve research projects.

Purpose of the Program – explain why this project was created and implemented

This project teaches teachers to become more efficient library users. The proposal was to design a systematic curriculum to inform and teach teachers how to use the print and electronic resources available in the library. This effort will carry over to enhancing student performance in, and encouraging students to go to, the library to utilize the wide array of resources available to them. Studies have shown that students who are frequent users of the library and who have a good grasp of library skills score higher on standardized tests. By training teachers to be effective users of information, and by closely collaborating with teachers on their classroom goals, library media specialists ensure that current teachers and future teachers take advantage of, and learn how to screen for, appropriate and critical information.

Goals and Objectives – identify the goals and objective for the project and describe how they relate to ILILE goals and objectives

- Providing a course to prepare existing teachers and school library media specialists to be more effective library and information resource users.
- Producing a replicable model for curriculum development and delivery through which PK-12 teachers, library media specialists, administrators and students work collaboratively to promote academic success through information literacy skills.
- Developing instruments to assess information literacy competencies and develop protocols to analyze data relating to utilization of information resources.

This research project met all four areas of ILILE focus:

- **Education and Training** for inservice teachers and library media specialist to use information resources to enhance teaching and learning
- **Curriculum Development** integrating school library awareness and information literacy skills into curricula and continuing education opportunities
- **Promotion and Outreach** to engage in library and information literacy promotion and outreach activities to improve school library media specialist's effectiveness in working with other educators to integrate information literacy into K-12 education.
- **Research and Evaluation** by engaging in field-based action research on school library use and information literacy strategies and to identify authentic methodologies to assess the integration of information literacy into the curriculum

Activities/Methods – summarize the specific activities and methods undertaken to create and implement this project
Efforts to collaborate and train Ft. Belvoir teachers followed these steps:

1. Show teachers the physical layout of the library and highlight useful features.
2. Develop a research form that the teachers could use to give the library media specialist an idea of needs and goals for the project.
3. Develop library lessons that are aimed at teachers to show use of equipment in lessons, lesson plan help sites, professional resource library, articulating the need for close collaboration with media specialists, how to access and use electronic media and which medias work best with which projects.
4. Collaboratively developed information literacy lessons aimed at the students. These lessons would include the online catalog, library layout, Dewey Decimal system, other filing systems used, and the whole gamut of how to do and gather research resulting in the successful completion of a research project.
5. Develop a curriculum for a 1 credit continuing education course (FCPS academy course) (Teachers receive 30 Virginia recertification points and 1 non-collage credit) Syllabus included in appendix
6. Design survey for teachers, staff, and students to assess level of library knowledge.
7. Conduct pre and post surveys of teachers, staff, and students to verify usage and library/research knowledge.
8. Present curriculum to teachers as part of the FCPS Academy offerings. The course was offered to teachers in August 2004 in one location. It is being offered again in February/March 2005 in two locations.
9. Gather data from surveys, circulation statistics, computer logs, and curriculum evaluation forms to finalize research report.

Research Outcomes – identify the research methodology employed in this project and evaluate the results; include quantitative and qualitative information

Using student and teacher surveys, library schedules and circulation statistics, we were able to see a dramatic increase in the number of collaboratively planned lessons. During the months of September, October, November of 2003 we taught a total of 30 lessons to grades 1-6. These lessons were done collaboratively in a teacher by teacher method. Some of the teachers would seek out lessons with the librarians but we did not have all the classes in a grade level collaborating with the librarians. Most of the lessons in 2003 were single day lessons with little follow up. The lessons did not always relate to what was being taught in the classroom at that time and though we tried to incorporate information literacy skills into these lessons, we were not always able to teach these within the lessons. Planning was not always done in advance as sometimes teachers showed up in the library and announced they were here for “research” and could we “show” the students what/where to go for information. During the 2003 school year we operated on a half fixed schedule and half flexible library schedule. Dictionary, thesaurus, online library catalog, and research skills were topics which were covered in the 2003 lessons. We did not do any whole grade level planning. Due to the size of our school, we operate more on a high school level model with grade level team and curriculum leaders rather than individual teachers covering all curriculum areas as is frequently the case in smaller elementary schools. All of our grade levels from kindergarten through sixth grade have between seven and twelve classes in each grade.

After our summer course raised the awareness level of our teachers, we were able to get whole grade levels to meet with us in planning meetings. We have taught 180 collaboratively planned lessons so far this school year. We were able to get our administrators to agree to a completely flexible library schedule. We have been able to schedule all 1200 students (through classes) in at least once a week for circulation. We have met with all grade level teams to plan library lesson programs. The library lessons have been separate from any circulation visits by classrooms. Genre, dictionary skills, thesaurus skills, online library catalog, electronic databases, print resources, dewey decimal arrangements, cornell notetaking, map skills, bibliography, use of primary documents, and holidays around the world were all covered in structured multi-day lessons. The research oriented lessons were followed by several days of research visits to the library at times when librarians were available to help individual students.

In the case of the second grade where research skills are taught at a lower level, the teachers asked us to do the geography unit for that grade level. We developed multi day lesson plans covering all curriculum required geography skills and incorporated books from our collection in simple country/continent reports from groups of four second grade students at a time at the end of the unit. Teachers reported a high level of satisfaction with this approach to library literacy skill teaching. In addition, students and teachers were made aware of a little used corner of the library. The atlas and geography books were used extensively in the lessons as were electronic geography resources. The entire sixth grade researched explorers developing posters and a journal about their assigned explorer within the same three week time period. The research process from getting started and gathering materials from both print and nonprint resources through notetaking and bibliography was systematically taught by the librarians over a period of several days. This approach proved to be more effective than last year when the collaboration on a similar explorer project was only with individual teachers at different times and without much knowledge of the project rubrics. This year teachers provided a written assignment rubric in advance of the lessons enabling us to pull materials, ensure that research computers were working and providing ample study space. We are also encouraging teachers to plan with us before they prepare their own assignment sheet. Though we designed a "joint planning sheet" we found that teachers felt burdened with yet another piece of paper to plan around so we use the "planning" sheet for our own library purposes to ensure we understand the scope of the lesson/project. Most of the time we "interview" the teachers and fill out the planning sheets for ourselves. The sheets do serve to give teacher and librarian a framework for the project. As of this date, we have not yet started our collaborated project with fourth or third grade and have only covered two of the fifth grade classes. These grade levels will be doing projects in the latter half of the school year.

Using our grant purchased laptop and projector, we constantly demonstrate how to use electronic resources for the whole group instruction (particularly helpful with the geography lessons). We now have nine LCD projectors in our school and so many requests for projectors that we can't possibly order enough to cover all requests. We have demonstrated the use of a video visualizer to our staff and shown how to use it in doing lessons and with conjunction with other pieces of equipment. We have four visualizers in the school with one in constant use in an inclusion third grade class and one in constant use in an art class. After the visualizer demonstrations our requests for this type of equipment increased also.

Through our circulation statistics did increase this year (Sept – November) over the same period last year, the increase was 1%. We do limit the number of materials that may be checked out at any one time by students and whole grade level projects, books and materials are placed on reserve and are not available for checkout. We believe that we may have maxed out on circulation as we consistently have the highest circulation rates of any school in Fairfax County Public School District (over 95% in all grade levels). We have seen an increase in the number of nonfiction books which have been checked out and we attribute this to diligent efforts to instruct teachers and students about the Dewey Decimal system and the subjects found in different categories.

The use of the subscription databases among teachers and students is rising. Our subscription databases include Marco Polo, Grolier Online products, BigChalk Databases, SIRS Databases, Gale products, and Ebsco/Searchasaurus. Overall the increase from September, October, November of 2003 to September, October, November of 2004 is about a 10% increase. Teachers and students are steadily using the more appropriate subscription databases rather than internet surfing for information.

Another impact on collaboration with teachers has been the flexible schedule which has meant competition for lesson time among grade levels and teachers and forced planning to be done in advance. This results in better prepared lessons and projects and helps ensure successful completion by students. Collaboration has forced the forging of relationships between teachers and librarians and moved librarians into the beginning and end year school wide curriculum meetings. More than ever, we are now seen as an integral part of student and teacher development.

Other Results – note any additional results learned in the project that were unanticipated or supplementary

We learned several things in doing this project that will be useful as we administer our library program or even continue providing a professional development course to teachers. We prepared a video which we intended to show to the staff in our building as a way of letting them know about the resources in the library. Preparing for the video and filming ourselves moving through the sites took longer than we expected it would take us. After completing the video, we found that there were updates/enhancements to the databases that we did not cover in the video. In addition, our school system purchased additional sites and enacted new partnerships that expanded our electronic information offerings. So the speed of incoming and developing information sites impacted on our good intentions of getting the staff up to date on all of our offerings. Though we did some broadcasting of the video, we now recognize that it needs to be updated with the various enhancements and additional features now available to our school system. A video (or a CD) does allow a school staff member who wants to know about the resources available to explore our materials either in the classroom or at home at a convenient time. The making of such a video may also be better served at the district level rather than at just the school level. We will update our video and explore ways for the video (or CD format) to be replicated outside of our building.

The surveys proved to be such a useful tool for the library (and the school) that we will continue to regularly survey our patrons about library procedures, etc. With the success of return for the library survey, our administrators have also proposed surveys for the whole school in the area of community/school relations and communications. The need to develop precise survey questions, tally large numbers of returns, review results, analyze the results and publicize those results has also been impressed upon us. We now are researching methods for electronic surveying and tally sheets. Due to some of the responses to the survey we have also enlarged our school discussion about free reading versus directed reading time in the classroom.

As our collaboration with some teachers has begun to be noticed, more and more teachers are coming to us at the very beginning of their assignment process. One teacher came in recently to tell us that she wanted to do some science reports with her fourth grade class and wanted to know what we would recommend for class reports! She actually asked what science topic would be best supported by our collection! This rarely happens so early in the assignment process. Sometimes, we don't even know about assignments until a class arrives in the library to do the research.

The deadlines on this kind of grant effort impacted our course presentation and surveys. The grant timetable did not coincide with the school year. It would be better for a school based grant if the timetable could run from July of one year to June of the following year. Our efforts for library literacy were interrupted by the summer break. As our students are from 99% military families, our December survey may have been skewed by the fact that our students moved into and out of our school over the summer break. Having a grant period that runs on a more traditional school schedule would lend more credence to the findings in that it would help ensure that that school population (students and teachers) would be a basically stable population for that study year.

One of our course participants suggested that we offer a version of our course to our fellow public and military post librarians to familiarize them with our holdings. We have begun outreach to the public/post librarians and have found much common ground and a need on all sides for closer collaboration to benefit the students and families in our area. We are now developing plans for partnerships with these other libraries to extend everyone's resources. Concerted, collaborative planning among the three local library institutions can mean enhanced learning and expanded resource availability for the community.

We have developed the library literacy course, materials, and liaisons with the electronic resources representatives. These course outlines, support materials and contacts will make it much easier for any other school librarian to present a library literacy course to school or community members. Our hope is that as others present the course, we will cover our whole school district with up to date information regarding resources and methods for increasing information literacy skills. We will again present the course on literacy training in February of 2005. One of our August 2004 course participants, a librarian, will be offering the same course in April of 2005 at her end of our school district. Her course will also be advertised in our school system course offerings book and she has already begun to advertise the course and its benefits among her school staff.

We have attempted to get usage statistics for the electronic databases that we utilize as a school system directly from our database providers but we have run into difficulties with getting these statistics for our particular school. We will address this with our district library supervisors and our database representatives to see if there is a way to isolate statistics for one school. However, the return on our surveys was so successful that we feel we received authentic information about usage in this method.

Anecdotal Information – provide relevant personal reflections on the project and its processes

In working on our grant we have learned that we need to work on the physical layout of our collection and we need better signage in the library. Our collection needs weeding to provide more shelf space and to allow for better shelf flow for library sections. Follow up on suggestions generated from our course participants has led to changes in marking our shelves and supplying library shelf guides to students wishing to use the nonfiction section. We need to investigate ways to minimize the effect of our atrium circulation area which seems to enhance noise levels. Promoting the use of “quiet voices” has been a major rule review for our kindergarten classes. We are striving to make our library a quieter and welcoming environment without constant verbal reminders for quiet. We continue to strategize on ways to accomplish this goal. We will continue offering our course and doing our surveys. The survey has been an invaluable instrument that we have used in working with our teachers and our administrators. Other librarians have used our information elsewhere in the county.

We have noticed a shift in attitude about the library media specialists from teachers. We are much more accepted as educational team members that we were last year. Our educational role has been highlighted and we have done a better job in educating others about the administrative demands of our jobs as well. Gathering materials for and advertising our course has led to increased collaboration with other librarians and a sense of a rising self esteem as an educational partner not just a support provider in the schools. The support and encouragement of our administrative team has been instrumental in providing us with the latitude to experiment within the learning process here at Fort Belvoir. Our principal, Jane Wilson, and our assistant principals, Charles Rascoe, Pat Raich and Nancy Bradley, have offered guidance, assistance, continued interest, and positive feedback as we moved through the phases of our grant plan. We are grateful for their confidence in us and their willingness to let us take advantage of this opportunity.

If there were any follow up funds to this grant, we would like to apply for those funds to purchase another LCD projector and video visualizer as well as procuring Survey Monkey, an electronic survey software package that would enable us to conduct and tally our surveys in a more timely, efficient manner. We were not quite prepared for the enormous time commitment that was needed for this grant effort. Course, material, report, and survey preparations took far more time than we had anticipated when we first approached our grant opportunity. Time management was also more crucial than we first realized as we continued our regular library duties even during summer school in addition to working on our grant efforts. As we finish this grant report, we are both exhilarated by the successes we have been a part of and exhausted by our efforts. We look forward to a holiday break and we sincerely thank the ILILE for this opportunity to enhance our Fort Belvoir Elementary School library program and extend our own professional development.

Appendices – please include any appendices related to your project

- Copies of surveys
- Charts reflecting the research outcomes
- Circulation statistics
- Copies of comments
- Course descriptions and offerings
- Course syllabus
- Course evaluation summary