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Together We Can... — pg 8
We are a profession full of passion, hard work, and revitalization. We continually talk about the critical importance of teamwork and a collaborative environment in order to develop a successful school library program. Often, our first concept of collaboration is the relationship between the school librarian and classroom teachers, but that is not the only collaborative relationship necessary for success. Another collaborative relationship vital to successfully meeting the needs of our patrons is the partnership between the school library and the university.

The relationship between the school library and academia has historical significance; it is well respected, and it is utilized to various degrees by every practitioner. In many ways it is an under-appreciated relationship by the pre-service practitioner, practitioner, and academic. However, it is a critical connection in the service to our students, teachers, and community.

When I look back on my early years in the profession, I can point to one pivotal moment when I made the first great leap toward thinking about my role as a school librarian in a more global manner. It is when I reached out to a university professor for help. I was nervous because I had never taken a course with him, so we had no relationship; yet he agreed to consult with me on a project I was developing for my students. Ten years later, we have worked together many times, including writings, presentations, a state library impact study, action research, and much more. We grew to respect each other and rely on each other’s expertise, and we developed a model for a high level of practitioner–university collaboration.

The relationship between practitioners and academics helps form what we will be, who we are, and who we will become. It is critical to the continued growth and development of the school library profession and programs. There are various types of relationships between practitioners and academics, and all of them are important in their own way. A very loose analogy can be made between relationships among pre-service school librarians, practicing school librarians, and academicians and the levels of collaboration between the school librarian and classroom teachers. Just as in teacher–librarian collaboration, all levels of collaboration have value and are important—even critical—to the development of the profession.

Cooperation

Cooperation is the beginning of the relationship. It is the historically traditional relationship we see between student and professor. This is where a pre-service or a practicing librarian engages in learning opportunities designed and instructed by university staff offered face-to-face or virtually. It begins with the pre-service school librarian learning the craft before taking on the exciting challenges of a school library. The pre-service and academic professional form a bond in their efforts to build the foundation of an effective school librarian. Further learning might occur as the practitioner
realizes there is still much to learn and seeks to continue to improve throughout his or her career by taking more courses and attending workshops offered by the university. This relationship builds the foundation for future collaborations.

Coordination
Coordination involves communication and consultation. It is a shared goal of teaching and learning, so others can learn vicariously through your experiences or expertise. This is when either the practitioner or the professor is consulted to gather knowledge or gain advice. It could be a professor interviewing the practitioner. It could be the school librarian asking the university department to review her action research results. It is communicating what you have learned through your experience or research to others. It might be a blog post, a webinar, a journal article, a live or recorded web broadcast, conference presentation, or other means of communication.

Collaboration
Collaboration involves a true partnership of learning, creating, and communicating. It is working together to research, develop an idea, interpret best practices, collect data, analyze the results, and communicate and share the results with others. It includes shared goals and working as a team to make plans together to achieve the goals and support each other throughout the process. This could involve an action research effort, putting a best-practice theory into action, or developing a grant for a school library community. It is a true partnership with the expertise and strengths of each necessary to achieve the mutual goals. Each has a responsibility and role in the partnership while working together to make plans and achieve them. It is a shared vision, yet the different perspectives complement each other as there is more than one approach to a topic, problem, question, or process.

When the job entails working with people, especially young people, best practice for the profession quickly becomes complicated. According to Larry Johnson and Annette Lamb, “evidence-based practice involves using scientifically-based research to guide educational decisions regarding teaching and learning approaches, strategies, and interventions” (2007). It is only through practitioner–university partnerships that we will continue to meet the diverse needs of our community’s young people. The patron’s needs are perpetually evolving, such as the needs that diversify with technology, alter based on advancements in learning, and require adjustments for cultural differences.

We are like a family. The relationship between practitioner and academician is one of mutual respect. We rely on each other for advice and support. We depend on each other. But, as often happens in a family, the relationship has been taken for granted. Let’s have an intervention.

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Work Cited:
The field of school librarianship is sometimes erroneously described as a “lone ranger” profession when, in fact, one of the most ubiquitous terms in school library publications, materials, presentations, and conversations is “collaboration.” We are continuously encouraged to collaborate with classroom teachers, students, administrators, community organizations, parents, and public and academic librarians. Over time, these conversations have generated an impressive list of examples and models for collaborative projects to which school librarians may refer for guidance. Beyond one-time collaborative efforts, I have dedicated much of my career as a school library researcher to the concept of the collaborative partnership, “a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship that is nurtured to meet both professional and educational goals” (Green and Green 2014, 100). Within a collaborative partnership, mutual trust and regard are built over time, and those involved in such a structure can articulate and employ strengths, skills, and resources available to both partners.

Developing Collaborative Partnerships between School Librarians and School Library Educators

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These articles invite you to consider the possibilities of partnering with school library educators and other higher education faculty to extend the reach of your school library program.

The theme of this issue of Knowledge Quest is collaborative partnerships between school librarians and school library educators in higher education. While past issues of KQ have highlighted the research conducted by school library educators on various aspects of school library practice (for example, see the January/February 2015 issue, guest-edited by Dr. Carol A. Gordon), many of the writings in this issue focus on long-term collaborative relationships between these two groups. These articles provide excellent examples for developing collaborative partnerships that bridge research and practice.

Kaye Dotson, a school library educator at East Carolina University, and Christine Clark, a school librarian in North Carolina, developed a rich collaborative partnership that prepared and supported Christine as she became a leader in professional development at her school. Their article describes how Christine used a variety of resources—including resources at East Carolina University—to learn and grow as a technology leader. With the support of ECU, Christine was able to provide professional development opportunities for educators within and beyond the walls of her school.

My hope is that these discussions will also exemplify the need for school library educators to continuously pursue collaborative partnerships with school librarians that go beyond data collection and analysis.
Susan Grigsby of Forsyth County (GA) Schools, Jennifer Helfrich of Gwinnett County (GA) Public Schools, and Christa Deissler, a school library educator at the University of Georgia, describe a year-long collaborative partnership between school librarians, school library media coordinators, and school library educators in the state of Georgia. The work of the Georgia School Library Media Consortium resulted in a professional-evaluation instrument that advocates for strong school library programs—and does so in a language and format accessible to K–12 administrators. The instrument developed by the consortium is available as an online exclusive.

Meghan Harper, a school library program coordinator at Kent State University, and Liz Deskins, a high school librarian, engaged in an action research project to assess and advocate for innovative design changes in Liz’s school library, a relatively new space. Liz realized she needed data to make the case for these changes—changes that would support the prolific use of technology at her campus. This partnership helped Liz with funding and data analysis, and, in the process, strengthened her voice within the school community.

Eileen Schroeder, a school library educator at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and Stacy Fisher, a school librarian, describe advocacy and professional-recruiting efforts in Wisconsin through a partnership called Wisconsin’s Emerging Roles of Librarians (ERL). Eileen and Stacy were instrumental in the establishment of ERL, which comprised educators from the University of Wisconsin School Library Education Consortium, members of the Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association, and staffers at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The ERL worked with exemplary school librarians to recruit future school librarians, as well as inform teachers and administrators of the changing nature of school librarianship and its impact on student academic achievement.

Craig Shepherd and his team at the University of Wyoming present an exciting and unique approach to collaborative partnerships between higher education and school librarians. In this article, the authors discuss establishing and conducting a program that provided pre-service teachers with service-learning opportunities in school libraries. The possibilities suggested by this project, which combined the resources and expertise of school librarians and teacher educators, will inspire you! Pre-K–12 students, pre-service teachers (some in the early stages of their training), and school library programs all benefited from the collaboration.

These articles invite you to consider the possibilities of partnering with school library educators and other higher education faculty to extend the reach of your school library program. My hope is that these discussions will also exemplify the need for school library educators to continuously pursue collaborative partnerships with school librarians that go beyond data collection and analysis. Like wings on an airplane, research and practice cannot function without the other.

But wait! There’s more! I’ve described only some of the collaborations and topics explored in this issue. Be sure to check the table of contents; in this issue we have food for thought for everyone!

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Work Cited:
Introduction

Developments in technology, standards implementation, and legislative demands open avenues for school librarians to transition to leadership roles focused on learning (Todd and Kuhlthau 2005). More than ever, the concept of leadership for learning resonates with school librarians. “Library media specialists are in the right place at the right time to play a significant role in the transformation of teaching that must occur in K–12 education” (Zmuda and Harada 2008, 18). The school librarian has an understanding of the curriculum and has access to ongoing professional development to learn new skills and concepts.

School librarians today find greater opportunities to influence with purpose through modeling leadership and through instructive, facilitative, supportive ways of mentoring staff. This circumstance enables the visionary librarian to be a guiding force within the school. The shift seen in education over the past two decades, with new and expanded access to technology and other digital resources, has presented challenges to the traditional classroom teacher. This shift can be addressed through a combination of identifying practitioner needs and meeting those needs through partnerships with graduate educators and programs.

School reform to accommodate student needs and take advantage of emerging resources has become a nationwide focus. Personalized learning and other pedagogical efforts abound in schools today but depend first upon education of the teacher. Student learning is dependent on teacher learning; therefore, reform often begins with teacher education and/or professional development. It has been a challenge for schools to meet teachers’ needs for information about and personalized training on effective use of new technology. School librarians who have ongoing training to develop and hone new skills can fill this gap with librarian-led professional development targeted at specific needs of identified teachers.

How can a school librarian lead? What types of professional development can the school librarian present that will be most effective for teachers? School librarians teach and lead classroom teachers, helping teachers effectively integrate 21st-century skills into instruction for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Teachers are preparing children for jobs that have not yet been created, a circumstance that places a staggering weight on teachers and school librarians. To successfully create a society of thinkers, collaborators, and workers who are not afraid of failure, school librarians must take on both the roles of “guide on the side” and “sage on the stage” and show teachers how to do the same. However, as pointed out by Vishwas Chavan, “Early on in my professional career, I realized that you can’t develop
all the competencies you need fast enough on your own” (2012). Thus, we recognize the significance of partnerships as school librarians make it a personal mission to “teach the teacher.” Partnerships with graduate school educators can be a rewarding place to start.

One of the most difficult roles, especially for young beginning school librarians, can be that of teaching the teachers. New librarians recognize the many skills their fellow teachers already have. It can be intimidating to think that they, beginning librarians, who may not have much (or any) classroom teaching experience, can offer experienced, seasoned teachers something they don’t already know. However, if school librarians are to be full collaborative instructional partners who model, share, and promote effective principles of teaching and learning with other educators, librarians must acknowledge their own roles, engage in professional development, and offer professional development to other educators.

It is important for graduate schools to prepare future school librarians for all their roles, including leadership in professional development. The efforts of graduate educators to provide intentional, strategic, and ongoing opportunities for students and practitioners to develop in-service training sessions or training tools will help school librarians feel prepared to step into the roles of facilitator and professional development leader as they advance through their careers in school librarianship (Dotson and Dotson-Blake 2015). Additionally, if graduate school faculty members maintain contact and interactive partnerships with practitioners—especially school librarians who have recently begun their careers—the novices will get continued and ongoing support; the graduate educators will gain insights that allow them to become even better instructors of pre-service school librarians; and university facilities and resources will be more widely used. Interactive partnerships among graduate educators and novice school librarians support both entities in multiple ways. Of course, the ultimate beneficiaries will be K–12 students. Helen Keller described this mutual support well: “Alone we can do so little; together, we can do so much” (Blaydes 2003, 112).

**Reality of Practice**

School librarians in North Carolina are rising to the challenge to meet the needs of teachers and students. For example, in the 2014–2015 school year all Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools implemented Google Apps for Education. The Google Apps for Education suite includes Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Forms, Google Calendar, Google Sites, and Google Classroom. Teachers and staff were not familiar with all these applications, and an opportunity presented itself for librarians to become the in-house experts at their schools. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) offered professional development courses on the Google Apps for Education; these classes were offered over the summer as well as throughout the school year. To begin the process of becoming a technology leader, school librarian Christine Clark went to her principal, explained the new Google Apps for Education push, and asked to be allowed to attend the training sessions. In return, she would provide professional development at the school level every two weeks and also on a by-appointment basis.

After attending the training, offered both online and in lecture format, Christine first used the applications in her own school library while working with fourth-graders. Each CMS library was given thirty Chromebooks, thus allowing 1:1 in the school library. At the point that Christine felt comfortable with all the Google Apps for Education, she took on the role of school technology leader, presenting professional development on the Google Apps for Education to all staff at staff meetings, before school, after school, and by request. Since this was a hands-on learning experience, staff were able to ask questions and leave with new ideas and skills to implement in classrooms with the ten Chromebooks allocated to each classroom.

As the staff became more familiar and comfortable with Google Apps for Education, Christine began introducing other ways classroom teachers could use technology in their classrooms. She created an open line of communication about technology, thus making this professional development ongoing. While the Google Apps for Education suite continued to be the major focus for professional development for the staff at her elementary school, Christine also presented professional development on other resources, supported by her ongoing interaction and conference attendance with her former graduate school educators.

She experienced and then shared with other educators at her school resources, tools, and strategies to support and enhance teaching and learning: Kahoot!, Compass Learning, Genius Hour, flipping the classroom,
Blendspace, Nearpod, e-book resources, Chromebooks, iPad apps, and websites and online research resources accessible via the Chromebooks and iPads. Christine also, in partnership with graduate program conference planners, supported her graduate program by sharing her presentation with alumni and attendees at a conference sponsored by the university where she had earned her master's degree. She found that her role as school librarian increasingly included providing professional development focused on technology and serving as the technology leader in the school, mirroring some aspects of what she saw in graduate-level librarian educators.

The Process
How did Christine develop her process? She had already developed the “bones” of her process as a result of her professional graduate training at East Carolina University where all students are required to identify a need for professional development for school staff. Thus, for all training Christine delivered, she began with a question that reflected a need of faculty members, administrators, or students. For example, teachers in her school had been exposed to Google Apps for Education, but it was apparent that the staff at her elementary school still needed more hands-on training to use Google Classroom effectively. Following identification of the need, Christine delved into her own research and self-development (from conferences, professional learning networks, Twitter chats, and partnerships with other professional technology and school librarians around the country). She improved her skills, giving her the confidence she needed to teach the teachers. She became consistently active, both participating in and facilitating sessions at the annual East Carolina University Librarian to Librarian Networking Summit, North Carolina Reading Association Conference, North Carolina Association of Elementary Educators events, and CMS district professional development.

When Christine felt fully prepared to teach the veteran teachers in her school, she created interactive presentations on Google Classroom and shared these with her faculty, initially at staff meetings. These presentations included step-by-step directions, as well as hands-on activities that allowed the teachers to leave with something they could immediately use in the classroom, a practice that research shows to be the most meaningful for effective professional development. Research proves that teachers learn through interaction with peers within a nurturing environment (Tienken and Stonaker 2007) and that teachers also appreciate new knowledge that can be immediately applied in their own work environment (Brown, Dotson, and Yontz 2011). These professional development sessions satisfied those needs as teachers gained skills and knowledge to meet the demands of teaching to comply with district mandates. Christine gained the satisfaction that comes from having developed the skills and knowledge to teach and lead others. She also has the knowledge that, as a result of her ongoing personal training and partnerships with other professional librarians, her impact upon the students through daily interaction as well as teaching their teachers has been—and will continue to be—significant.
Christine’s involvement in the graduate program and ongoing partnership with graduate school educators at East Carolina University enhanced her level of confidence and supported her efforts in becoming the technology leader at her school. The evaluation instrument used by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for school librarians (referred to as “media coordinators”) highlights the school librarian’s role as the technology leader in the school and the need for ongoing learning to support this role. This state-level emphasis on technology leadership is an additional impetus for beginning school librarians to teach teachers who have more experience—who may, in fact, have been teaching for twenty-five years—and offers some comfort to novice school librarians who may be hesitant about stepping into the role of technology leader. Christine admitted that enacting the role was intimidating, but, because of her interactive partnership as a student, practitioner, planner, and presenter with graduate professors, she was encouraged, supported, and prepared to fulfill this obligation.

Moving Forward

Using technology in the classroom for learning is no longer new and innovative; it is expected and even demanded. Teachers may not be as comfortable with technology as their students are. Nevertheless, K–12 teachers still have a responsibility to employ technology tools in multiple ways to teach and foster students’ development of 21st-century skills and enhance researching, learning, and creating. School librarians can be instrumental in the process. However, just as students’ and teachers’ needs are changing, so are the needs of school librarians. Collaborative partnerships with opportunities to hone skills and strengths and to discover new resources are more important than ever before.

Graduate-level educators working with school librarians can open doors and provide these opportunities and resources. One example of support is access to teaching resources centers in
These partnerships directly support goals expressed in professional literature. In Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs (2009) and in ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians (2010), the significance of teaching to support learning is emphasized. Specifically, Standard 1: Teaching for Learning from ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians addresses this concept. The American Association for School Librarians suggests that an important mission for school librarians is to ensure personal growth through ongoing exposure to conferences, journal articles, webinars, presentations, and membership in professional organizations. School librarians are expected to exemplify the vision of being lifelong learners. They must intentionally commit to and model this behavior for their stakeholders. School librarians who actively build partnerships with other professional educators and work and conduct research with graduate-level educators will always have significant information and practices to share.

Implications
School librarians who work in partnership with graduate-level educators in action research, presentation development, and sharing experiences find opportunities to mentor and model for each other. Through these partnerships, both are able to broaden their own personal experiences, increase their range of impact, and continue to learn, each enriched by the perspectives of the other. For graduate-level educators this sharing with and learning from practitioners is especially important in today’s rapidly changing school environment.

Fortunately, research proves that school librarians and graduate-level educators are, in fact, doing this sharing (Brown and Dotson 2007; Dotson, Dotson-Blake, and Anderson 2012; Dotson and Grimes 2010; Oakleaf and Owen 2010). Further, in addition to the more-traditional forms of personal development, which include conferences, retreats, workshops, and classes, school librarians are rapidly turning to electronic discussion lists, blogs, webinars, wikis, Nings, and other evolving online tools and resources, making it easier than ever to maintain contact after graduation (Brown, Dotson, and Yontz 2011; Warlick 2010).

As school librarians are in many cases the representatives sent from their schools to resource- or technology-related professional development sessions, they have an obligation and an opportunity to return to the school and share the new information, methods,
practices, and theories. These experiences and personal learning activities can be enhanced with continued coordinated partnerships with graduate-level educators seeking both to gain knowledge from the field and also to support the preparation and professional success of their students.

Conclusion
In our age of accountability in education, professionals within the school community must strive to assess their own impact and share their individual professional work for the academic success and development of students. To this end, school librarians are well positioned to enhance and support the academic success of students by moving beyond the library and toward teaching the teachers. The prepared and confident school librarian is a professional with a unique skill set and a strong position at the heart of school progress. It is important that confidence and the ability to lead school-wide professional development are engrained in the school librarian's professional identity. These attributes can be strongly supported by ongoing involvement and partnerships with leaders in library science graduate programs. Together, we can do so much.

Kaye B. Dotson is an associate professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Professions at East Carolina University. Her scholarship and research focus on the evolving role of the school librarian and the impact of leadership, collaboration, and clinical training. Her goals include facilitating training for school librarians to serve as change agents through leadership. She is the author of Developing Library Leaders: The Impact of the Library Science Internship (VDM 2009).

Works Cited:

Christine Clark is a school librarian in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, K–12 public school system. Her mission is to inspire innovative 21st-century learners and instructors by establishing and sustaining a creative and collaborative library space where cutting-edge technology is accessible to both students and staff.
A Seat at the Table

K–12 and Higher Ed Collaboration to Align Evaluation Instruments for School Librarians and Teachers

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When program coordinators at the university level, library coordinators at the system level, active members of the AASL-affiliated state-level organization, and building-level practicing school librarians work together, the collaboration builds a bridge from theory to practice.
In 2013 Georgia passed House Bill 244 in response to the state’s Race to the Top (RT3) application requirements. The bill was passed to “revise certain provisions relating to annual performance evaluations; [and] to provide for the development of evaluation systems for teachers of record…” (Georgia General Assembly 2015). The bill became law on July 1, 2014, and the resulting evaluation instrument was called the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). Twenty-six school systems in Georgia were part of the original RT3 application; these systems educate about 40 percent of the state’s public school students (Georgia Dept. of Ed. 2014). In preparation for the passage of HB 244, those twenty-six systems used the first five months of 2012 to implement the TKES and LKES (Leader Keys Evaluation System) as a pilot program; Gwinnett County Public Schools, the largest system in Georgia with 134 schools and more than 170,000 students, was a part.

Gwinnett County Media Services Responds to TKES

With the teacher evaluation system about to begin a pilot in Gwinnett, across the county school librarians (called “library media specialists,” “media specialists,” and “teacher librarians” in Georgia) were concerned and unclear about how their performance would be measured in the upcoming years. In response to this concern, the Media Services and Technology Training team at Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) began work on an evaluation instrument for school librarians. During the summer of 2013, a small group of GCPS school librarians met several times to research existing school librarian evaluation instruments from around the country. Unfortunately, many of these instruments relied heavily on standards for classroom teachers and attempted to fit school librarians into those categories. At this point, the group’s objective changed from adopting an existing model to creating their own instrument. The initial evaluation instrument that came from those summer meetings was based heavily on AASL’s Standards for the 21st-Century Learner as well as both TKES and LKES. The inclusion of LKES was a deliberate choice since often school librarian evaluation instruments reflect only the instructional portion of the job when, in fact, that position has many aspects that involve leadership roles and responsibilities.

After the summer group provided a basic framework for the Media Specialist Effectiveness Measure (MSEM), the draft of these standards went to Gwinnett’s Media Leaders. The media leaders group consists of twelve school librarians from across the county who are invited each year to help shape and guide district initiatives through workshop meetings. During the 2013–2014 school year, the media leaders reviewed and revised the standards, developed rubrics, and created a resource bank for administrators and school librarians to use during evaluations. During this development time, the GCPS Media Services team was working with the human resources department and gathering feedback about the process. Once the standards were finalized, they were presented to the school board, and the GCPS Media Services department was granted permission to begin a pilot.

Training was offered in August 2014 to all evaluators (principals or assistant principals) through both face-to-face and online training. Even though 2014–2015 was considered a pilot year, the majority of Gwinnett’s schools used the new system to evaluate their school librarians. During the school year feedback was gathered from school librarians and evaluators. A focus group of principals was convened to participate in more-intensive discussions about both the standards and the evaluation process itself. Additional input from the Georgia school library leader consortium (described below) was considered as well. The feedback went to the media leaders who made final adjustments to the standards. The finalized MSEM will be the evaluation instrument of record for all school librarians in Gwinnett for the 2015–2016 school year.

Great Minds Think Alike

The work in Gwinnett County was proceeding at the same time that Georgia guidance counselors created their own document that aligned with TKES, and many of Georgia’s library leaders and practitioners were feeling and hearing the same concerns that had been expressed by GCPS school librarians. Phyllis Snipes, associate professor in the Library Media/Instructional Technology degree program at the University of West Georgia, contacted these leaders and began floating the idea of creating a consortium to take a look at TKES and how it could be applied to represent school librarians in a way that was meaningful and appropriate to the expected job functions. During the course of these conversations, it became clear that Gwinnett was already ahead of the curve with its evaluation instrument, and GCPS Media Services agreed to join the consortium and use the GCPS document as a starting point for developing a statewide instrument. As a result, a consortium of Georgia school library leaders was formed to take the pilot document from Gwinnett County and transform...
The consortium first met at the University of West Georgia in September 2014 to look closely at the school librarians’ version of TKES that Gwinnett County Public Schools had created and began working as a team to modify and adjust the standards to make them universally applicable to all K–12 school librarians in the state. That first meeting raised many more questions than answers as the group discussed the evolving role of the school librarian and the factors driving that evolution. The group wrestled with questions about the instructional role and how to measure the impact of that role in the currently accepted forms of standardized tests. Among the questions were:

- How could an instrument be written that would fit both the high school librarian, who is on a flexible schedule and primarily involved in research instruction, as well as the elementary school librarian, who is locked into a fixed schedule with prescribed curriculum over which the librarian in the field has no control?
- How could the instrument accurately reflect professional practice in a school without adequate funding and with the resulting aged collection?
- How could we write a document that could be fair to both the fully funded, professionally staffed libraries in our state and those schools that had chosen (through charter or other status that allowed personnel waivers) to hire noncertified librarians and withhold funding?

As the group that became known as the Georgia School Library Media Specialist Consortium began its work, we realized early on that we had to make sure we addressed things that administrators need to see when they come in to observe the person who serves in the role of the school librarian. Since Gwinnett had already created a working document that was faring well in their pilot, the decision was made to compare it with other instruments currently in use and apply the best of them to Gwinnett’s evaluation tool. The group met in face-to-face meetings and also worked asynchronously on a shared Google Doc to edit Gwinnett’s work, transforming it into a document that could be universally applied throughout the state. The instrument that was written was designed to align closely with TKES so as to prevent the need for intensive professional development for evaluators, while still addressing the unique functions of the school librarian. The final face-to-face meeting was held prior to the GLMA Summer Institute. The group worked at that meeting to provide a glossary and artifacts for evaluators and to put the finishing touches on the final evaluation instrument. The ten standards included in the final document are:

1) **Instructional Leadership:** The media specialist fosters the success of all students by serving on decision-making teams in the school, providing professional development, and contributing to a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to school improvement.

2) **Instructional Partnership:** The media specialist collaboratively plans instruction and develops the media program using state and district curricula and standards, instructional calendars, effective strategies, resources, and data to support teachers and address the differentiated needs of all students.

3) **The Role of Reading:** The media specialist promotes reading as a foundational skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment.

4) **Information and Technology Literacy:** The media specialist plans and provides instruction that addresses multiple literacies, including information literacy, media literacy, and technology literacy.

5) **Effective Practices for Research:** The media specialist teaches and models developmentally appropriate best practices for learning and research.

6) **Program Planning and Administration:** The media specialist develops and implements a strategic plan and vision for continuous improvement of the media program and to support the learning goals of the school community.

7) **Positive Learning Environment:** The media specialist provides a well-
Through this process, relationships and ties were strengthened between district leaders and preparation program faculty, and trust was built. This process has assured district leaders that the preparation programs around the state are **aligned in philosophy & mission** and are producing young professionals for the field who will help lead their schools in the development of 21st-century learning environments.

managed, safe and welcoming environment that includes flexible and equitable access to physical and digital resources, is conducive to learning, and encourages respect for all.

8) **Collection Development**: The media specialist supports the curriculum through selection and management of resources that meet the needs and interests of patrons.

9) **Professionalism**: The media specialist fosters the success of students by demonstrating professional standards and ethics, engaging in continuous professional development, and contributing to the profession.*

10) **Communication**: The media specialist fosters the success of all students by communicating and collaborating effectively with stakeholders in ways that enhance student learning.*

*Standards 9 and 10 carry the same title and contain similar wording as standards 9 and 10 in TKES.

In June 2015 that media specialist evaluation instrument, “Media Specialist Keys Effectiveness System,” was presented to the Georgia Department of Education for approval.

**Collaboration in Action**

In the field of school librarianship, collaboration is more than just our catchphrase or latest buzzword. Collaboration is at the very core of what effective school librarians do (Bush and Jones 2010; Moreillon and Ballard 2013). As such, it was only appropriate that we would embrace collaboration across multiple aspects of practice, including not only school librarians themselves, but also school
library educators, school district leadership, and the state’s school library professional organization. Having all of these points of view represented in the consortium strengthened the value of the end product.

One important group to include in the conversation was school library educators. All initial preparation programs for school librarians that are accredited by NCATE (now CAEP) must align their curriculum with the ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians. At the national level the preparation standards and the practice standards are highly aligned. It was important that we continue this alignment at the state level. While AASL’s Empow-ering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs and Standards for the 21st-Century Learner were the foundational standards for the in-service school librarian point of view, ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians provided an important perspective to incorporate into the new instrument. This inclusion was important to make sure that new school librarians who are entering the field can seamlessly transition from their initial preparation into practice.

Collaboration between K–12 practitioners and higher education faculty is especially beneficial to school library educators who are in constant need of staying connected to the realities of practice. While these educators are highly aware of the importance of assessment and evaluation of their own students in terms of the standards that must be addressed in preparation programs, it is important to make explicit connections between preparation and practice.

On the flip side of this relationship, the collaboration provided a tremendoius benefit to district leaders who are in regular need of highly qualified, well-prepared school librarians. Through this process, relationships and ties were strengthened between district leaders and preparation program faculty, and trust was built. This process has assured district leaders that the
preparation programs around the state are aligned in philosophy and mission and are producing young professionals for the field who will help lead their schools in the development of 21st-century learning environments.

One of the benefits of having district-level leadership involved in the consortium was their close connection and understanding of what principals and other school-level leaders would need from the evaluation instrument. As was mentioned above, this new instrument for school librarians was developed shortly after a new evaluation system for teachers in Georgia was developed and implemented. It is difficult enough to make sure that principals know what quality school librarians should do; evaluating them accurately would be an even greater challenge. Therefore, the group felt that it was important for our new instrument to be aligned with the tools principals were already learning and planning to use for teachers.

Finally, at the very heart of this whole project are the school librarians themselves. The last time a state-wide common assessment instrument for school librarians was developed in Georgia was 1989 with updates in 2002 and 2006. However, use of a common assessment across the state was far from a reality. At the time this consortium was working, at least five different instruments were in use (or not in use!) across the state; these ranged from the media specialist evaluation that was over eight years old, to standard teacher evaluation instruments, to a modified teacher instrument, to no official evaluations at all. School librarians around the state were at a point of great frustration with little sense that school administrators were getting guidance from any state entity that could have provided individual schools with information on how this new system of evaluation for teachers (i.e., TKES) would affect school librarians.

Tearing Down the Silos

When program coordinators at the university level, library coordinators at the system level, active members of the AASL-affiliated state-level organization, and building-level practicing school librarians work together, the collaboration builds a bridge from theory to practice. The consortium’s creation of the media specialist evaluation instrument built just such a bridge and provided a forum in which all of these levels of service had an opportunity to be heard. Whether or not this instrument is actually sanctioned or adopted by the Georgia State Department of Education is almost secondary to the fact that these lines of communication were opened, and we now have a document that aligns with what we do and outlines the level at which we are expected to perform. Throughout this process, all of the consortium members consulted with colleagues in other areas of education, and the tool became an advocacy piece that started conversations that might never have happened otherwise. The library coordinators involved in the process are committed to continuing the conversation with their colleagues at the district level so that if the instrument is not adopted we can still advocate for its use as both an evaluation and advocacy tool on a system-by-system basis. The work of

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Jennifer Helfrich is currently the coordinator of Media Services at Gwinnett County (GA) Public Schools in Suwanee. In 2011 she was named Gwinnett County Middle School Teacher of the Year. She has served on AASL’s Best Apps for Teaching and Learning Committee and Standards and Guidelines Implementation Committee.

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Throughout this process, all of the consortium members consulted with colleagues in other areas of education, and the tool became an advocacy piece that started conversations that might never have happened otherwise.

**Works Cited:**


**Recommended Resources:**


using action research to
assess and advocate
for innovative
school library design

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Introduction

This collaborative project was designed to use action research to assess and advocate for innovative design changes in a school library. The high school library was in its fifth year of service, and yet the layout of the library was not meeting the learning and technological needs of 21st-century high school students.

The purpose of the codesigned study was to create a more useable space and make the school library an indispensable part of the school. The school librarian realized the configuration of the library was outdated and not conducive to the prolific use of technology in the school. However, due to the relatively new construction of the library and high school, the librarian believed support within her school community was necessary to make any changes to the existing space.

Ohio, like many other states, has experienced declining state support of education, and many schools have closed libraries and eliminated school librarian positions.

In 2006 the Hilliard City Schools library program received the AASL National School Library Program of the Year Award for its superior teaching, resources, and services. The district had fulfilled award criteria with employment of a licensed school librarian in each of its twenty-one buildings.

Times have changed and library services have been curtailed, with the elementary librarians serving two buildings, the loss of assistants at the middle school, and the loss of a second librarian at each of the high schools. These changes helped to precipitate the need for an action research plan before beginning any change. A suburban school district with over sixteen thousand students, Hilliard is considered an "excellent" district according to the Ohio state report card. However, the district has faced cuts to its budget, a circumstance that has adversely affected school library programs and services.

All librarians must systematically and continuously meet the challenges of an increasingly digital online world. To prioritize and manage their resources, school librarians must assess the relevance and provision of library resources and services. Action research is a natural fit for systematically evaluating and documenting thoughtful improvements in school library programs. These activities enable school librarians to demonstrate and share their value, garner support, and advocate for their role in the academic achievement of students. Advocacy for school library programs has become essential.

In the Hilliard Bradley High School, gathering supportive data and documenting input was viewed as critical to enable the school librarian to make changes to the high school library’s physical space. The librarian, although not new to the district or the field of school librarianship, inherited the newly designed high school library physical space and was reluctant to request alterations or additions to the space and existing resources without justification.

Collaboration and Partnership

The collaboration in this action research project was a natural progression of ongoing dialogue and partnership between Liz, the librarian at the high school, and Meghan, the faculty coordinator of the school library media program at Kent State University. Participation and active engagement of both parties in the state-wide school library professional organization, Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA), the state AASL affiliate, inspired the foundation of collaboration and, ultimately, friendship. Attendance at conferences, presentations, and professional development venues spurred conversations and led to other collaborative endeavors such as copresentations, sharing of resources, information, and expertise; and the hosting of Kent State school library practicum students within the Hilliard district. In winter 2013 Meghan conducted a professional development workshop for OELMA: Savvy School Library Design to Facilitate 21st-Century Literacy Skills and the Common Core. The workshop sparked dialogue and was the seed that grew into the collaborative project described here. Meghan’s background as a K–12 school librarian and administrator and her experience with school facility renovation, technology integration, management, and advocacy at the district level—combined with current research and publication on evaluation of school libraries—made her a willing and interested partner to investigate the innovative design. Her experience with research-design methodology and access to a university-funded online survey tool were advantageous as well.

Context

The library space was originally designed for students working individually; it was not the innovative learning space needed to best meet the needs of students who visited the school library to work collaboratively and to use multiple forms of handheld technology.
The action research project sought to gather input from high school faculty members and students about improving school library usage, availability of resources, and providing opportunities for collaborative learning using a variety of technology. School librarian Liz’s goal was to transition the space considered a “media center” or “school library” into an “innovative learning center.” Another goal of the project was to identify need for additional spaces such as a makerspace or high-tech production space.

**Why Action Research**

As noted by researchers Jody Howard and Su Eckhardt, “The action research method of problem solving is a continuous process, a spiral that lets the librarian reflect on a problem, analyze the problem through the collection of data, implement an improvement to that problem, and then begin the process all over again: Reflect, Analyze, Implement” (2006).

The iterative process of reflecting, analyzing, and implementing paralleled Liz’s goals of making small changes and gathering documentation to justify action and determine priorities in the design changes at her library. Action research was determined to be the best methodology to investigate the design issue because inherent in action research is a cyclical progression of evaluation and improvement.

**Research Process**

A three-tiered data-gathering approach of structured observation, surveys, and focus groups was established to document and provide context to analyze results from the surveys of teachers and students. The structured...
The iterative process of reflecting, analyzing, and implementing paralleled Liz’s goals of making small changes and gathering documentation to justify action and determine priorities in the design changes at her library.
observation and documentation were developed to identify and categorize students’ and teachers’ use of technology and resources within the library, traffic patterns within the library, and requests made by students and teachers, and to note the predominant activities within the library throughout the school day.

The online survey was codesigned and launched using Qualtrics software. (Kent State University currently subscribes to Qualtrics services.) Qualtrics is a leading technology–service company that provides services for use in both market research and in academic institutions nationwide. The survey design and project were approved by the University Research Internal Review Board.

All of Meghan’s graduate courses include instructional modules on evaluation and assessment. She incorporates opportunities for graduate students to apply action research methodology to issues and topics discussed in her courses. These instructional resources provided the framework for the action research project described here. The step-by-step action plan was adopted from Sharon Burger and Mary Ann McFarland’s article “Action Research and Wikis” (2009).

Burger and McFarland’s action plan steps are listed below. The statements reflect the recommended steps; the clarifying questions were added by the authors while developing the project plan. The italicized text briefly describes how the step was done at the high school library being studied.

1. Identify the purpose of study and problem statement.

What are the issues in your library?

The issues at the high school were determined via structured observation and dialogue. These initial thoughts and observations became the basis for the development of the survey questions.

2. Collect background information on topic based on problem statement.

What has caused the problem? What information needed to be gathered to frame the scope of the problem?

What is the context of the issue?

What qualitative methodology could be implemented to gather needed information and data to inform the action research process and design?

Data gathered through informal analysis, observation, and anecdotal responses captured by the librarian enabled the researchers to identify the scope of the design issues. This data informed the development of the surveys that were used to identify facility issues that needed to be addressed.

3. Review current literature on this topic.

What are possible sources of information? Innovative learning spaces were the overarching topic; what subtopics informed the librarian’s thinking about this issue?

The current emphasis on makerspaces, the school library as a learning commons, and the critical need for advocacy were discussed and investigated.

4. Formulate questions based on problem statement.

What information do you need to gather?

This step was critical in determining the focus of the surveys. Survey questions were designed both to gather new information and to support observations made by the school librarian during the structured observation.

5. Collect data from more than one source (triangulate data).

Who (library stakeholders) should be involved? How will you find out? Best sources of information to be gathered in your setting? Other appropriate assessment tools?

Liz, the school librarian, determined that students and teachers should be surveyed and that an informal meeting with the building administrator would also serve as a data source. One of the key points of this step was to determine if other assessment practices were already in place and if existing resources could be tapped to provide more contextual data. Liz identified several sources of existing assessment data to tap. Data gathered from her integrated library system included circulation records for specific categories of resources; the automated attendance system tracking library visits also provided statistical data.

To identify gaps in the current library learning space and to solicit ideas for a more innovative collaborative space for learning, Liz and Meghan codesigned and launched two online surveys: one for students and one for faculty.

After the faculty survey had been created, a link to the anonymous survey was sent to faculty members via e-mail. The student survey was shared by means of the students used to sign into the library; every student who visited the library had to use that site. Adding one more step to the sign-in process was easy. Each survey consisted of ten questions that paralleled those asked of teachers, e.g., “What kind of space would you like to see created in the school library?”

6. Organize data.

What reports and charts would be useful? What issues, factors, and variables have emerged in this initial data gathering? What data could be gathered at your setting and how would the information be most effectively presented?
In this step, dialogue centered on how data gathered in step 5 could be presented and what data would be most effective in communicating the value of the library and connecting with library stakeholders.

7. Interpret data.

What are commonalities among data results? Disconnects? What do you think will be found? Predictions?

During this stage, all available data was evaluated; observations, survey data, notes from meeting with administrator, and follow-up informal focus-group meeting notes were compared.

8. Draw conclusions and plan for future.

What additional questions were unanswered or emerged during the action research study? How can the information be used to inform school library initiatives and education? Build awareness? Create change? Identify connections to overall library or institution service?

Addressing these questions focused attention and dialogue on identifying gaps or unanswered questions that remained from the initial investigation stage. Dialogue also focused on what was learned and how this information could be shared with stakeholders and used to demonstrate value of the school library program.


What have you learned from the process? Implications for the future? What do you hope to learn from evaluating the use of your library?

This critical step focused on future plans for gathering more data, sharing with key stakeholders the results of the initial phase of the action research project, and, specifically, looking at setting up the second phase of "reflect, analyze, and implement."

Findings

Results of the initial survey findings inspired changes (described in the next subsection) that resulted in increased student usage and affirmed the importance of the school library program in the learning process. The action research project enabled Liz to fulfill the roles of program administrator, instructional partner, and leader in her school.

The surveys also demonstrated the value of the school library program and library services.

Several interesting items surfaced because of the survey. First, there was clarification about how students currently used the school library; the vast majority used it as a place to use the desktop computers to complete schoolwork. While many had smartphones, they preferred the library’s technology. In response to a survey question about number of visits to the library, many indicated that they visited two or more days a week, and more than a few indicated that they visited daily. When students were asked what type of learning spaces they wanted, two types of work spaces were preferred: one designed for collaboration and one designed for quiet independent work. All students suggested more power outlets for technology. A small number of students responded positively to the idea of having mini-lessons available throughout the year, focusing on new technologies. It was gratifying to find that one of the noteworthy or "best" aspects of the library was considered to be the library staff. Liz and her assistant strive to ensure the library is an inclusive and welcoming environment. Both assert that students know library staff members are there to provide any type of academic support necessary for students’ academic success. More than one student stated that the school library was the respondent’s favorite place in the building!

An unintended result of the survey was illuminating how school faculty perceived the school library and the librarian’s role in the learning process. While Liz was concerned that her services were underutilized, results from the faculty survey stated otherwise. Faculty responses indicated they used the school library for its course-specific resources and appreciated the opportunity to send students who needed help with support or resources beyond the online resources available. Faculty also indicated they desired laptops available for student usage (surprisingly, this was not something students rated highly). And faculty members appreciated the librarian's knowledge and willingness to collaborate with them.

Implementation

As a result of the first survey changes have already been made:

• A laptop cart has been assigned to the school library (now referred to as the "media center") for in–library use. This resource draws more students to visit and allows them to use technology to complete projects. The laptops also promote collaborative work, something faculty members are expecting more often as new coursework is designed.

• Seating has been arranged in groupings, with a collaborative work zone, quiet work zone, and a reading zone. There are also floor seating pillows and beanbags for those students who work better in less formal seating. (This auxiliary seating is very popular,

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and students move it all over the school library!)

- Speakers were installed, and a variety of music is played throughout the day.
- Charging stations were purchased and strategically placed around the room, incidently creating more opportunities for students to work collaboratively.
- The wall-mounted televisions were moved for greater opportunities for viewing, although they are currently used primarily for displaying school news.
- The print collection also underwent change to encourage more circulation. Graphic novels and manga were moved to the fiction section that had already been genre-fied. This move resulted in an increase in print circulation!

Sharing and Dissemination of Results

Although the action research project is in its second phase of "reflect, analyze, and implement," the initial success in achieving the project goals has been noteworthy. Many schools as they struggle with increasing deficits and diminishing revenue look to consolidate and streamline services and personnel while addressing the influx of technology. Thus, an interest in library design and renovation is being stimulated, with "the initial success innovative learning spaces" now a project in the second phase. Because of this interest, plans to share the results of this project included presenting at the OELMA EduConference Innovative Learning Spaces in March 2015 and at AASL in November 2015.

An important takeaway for anyone desiring to make a positive and well-received change is to be sure to "measure twice and cut once" as carpenters say.
**Future Plans**

Future plans include launching a survey in the fall to illuminate further facility design enhancements. The unveiling of the LIZ (Library Innovation Zone) space takes place this fall. It will be a high-tech area with additional tech tools and opportunities for videography, editing, Skype or Google Hangout sessions, student-led lunch and learn mini-lessons, and more as determined by the student steering committee created to design the space. The space exemplifies the district initiative of "student voice and choice" in learning opportunities and will provide the entire student and staff communities another way to implement this plan.

To build a wider scope of supporters, the next survey will solicit input from parents and other members of the community. Questions still to be answered include: How can parents and the greater community be reached most effectively? Are the most-effective means for outreach a stronger Web presence, interactive social media, or something else?

The greater community also includes district administration, curriculum leaders, and school board members. One more question remains: How can funding be obtained for further changes to make this flexible space even more responsive to the needs of its users? Ideally, the survey responses will contain some constructive ideas.

There are and will continue to be exciting changes at the Hilliard Bradley High School library, thanks in no small part to this collaboration between the school librarian and a professor who teaches pre-service librarians. The exchange of information and willingness of both parties to share their expertise was of benefit to all involved. Liz’s desire to implement well-considered change, as well as the benefit of a friendship, personal and professional, paved the way for creation of the action research plan and surveys.

**Advice for Other School Librarians**

An important takeaway for anyone desiring to make a positive and well-received change is to be sure to "measure twice and cut once" as carpenters say. Spend the time to research, question, collaborate, and discuss before beginning to develop a cohesive plan for change. Connect with others in the field of school librarianship. Two heads are better than one! Bring in your key stakeholders—faculty, students, administrators, and parents—because creating advocates for the library helps ensure that the school library is the hub of the school community and beyond.
Liz Deskins is the high school librarian at Hilliard (OH) Bradley High School. She is incoming president of the Ohio Educational Library Media Association and the coauthor (with Christina Dorr) of Linking Picture Book Biographies to National Content Standards: 200+ Lives to Explore (Libraries Unlimited 2015). She is a member of AASL’s 2015 National Conference Committee.

Meghan Harper is the coordinator of the school library media program at Kent State University and codirector of the Virginia Hamilton Conference on Multicultural Literature for Youth, the longest running national conference of its kind. She publishes research in the area of school library facility design, assessment and evaluation, and information literacy. She is a member of AASL’s Standards and Guidelines Implementation Task Force.

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Communicating the Emerging Roles of Librarians to Teachers Through a Collaborative K-12 and Higher Education Partnership
How can practicing school librarians and library educators help teachers and administrators understand what school librarians can do to positively impact student achievement and encourage schools to support these roles?

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School Librarians in Wisconsin

Ask teachers in a variety of schools what the role of a school librarian is, and you will get a different answer from every teacher you ask. Teachers’ perceptions are based largely on the school librarians with whom they have interacted in their own schooling and in their careers as educators. Some see the school librarian as the person who checks out books. Others see the librarian as the person who gathers resources for units. Teachers may see the role as that of a person who reads to children, conducts reading-promotion activities, and recommends books. Some may say the role is to be the person who teaches skills to classes each week or who works with students on research skills during a unit. Many will say the school librarian is the person with technology knowledge who keeps other educators abreast of new tools and strategies and helps when things don’t work. While all of these responses may reflect facets of the job, none fully defines today’s school librarians and the roles they can play in supporting learning, developing students’ (and teachers’) 21st-century skills, and helping lead the way as schools develop a new learning environment. As the profession seeks new recruits, how do prospective candidates view the job?

In the midst of financial challenges and the need to support technology integration, districts are required to make difficult decisions about priorities that impact the world of school librarianship when library positions are eliminated or become shared between multiple schools. As many school librarians reach retirement age and fewer individuals enter the profession, a number of districts are struggling to bring in qualified professionals and are recruiting from among their current teachers.

At the same time, the field has evolved to incorporate more technology integration, curriculum leadership, collaboration with teachers to develop students’ 21st-century skills and meet Common Core State Standards, professional development, and support of multiple literacies, in addition to traditional librarian roles. However, this reality is not the image of school librarians held by many principals and the teachers they are recruiting. In some school districts, librarians haven’t yet adopted some of these changes or are spread thinly, so they can’t fully meet all these responsibilities and help their teachers and principals see what is possible.

How can practicing school librarians and library educators help teachers and administrators understand what school librarians can do to positively impact student achievement and encourage schools to support these roles? In an effort to help fill open positions and continue moving the profession forward, how can current school librarians and library educators identify good teachers and convince them that school librarianship is a viable career option?

In Wisconsin school librarians are required to have a teaching license before becoming certified as school librarians, so focusing on attracting experienced teachers interested in a second license is important to growing the profession. Wisconsin school library licensure has been available through one of the two ALA-accredited on-campus programs, through UW-Milwaukee’s online program or through four comprehensive state colleges that offer school library state-accredited licensure programs. As of summer 2016, the on-campus programs will be reduced to just the two ALA-accredited master’s programs and one of the comprehensive state college programs. In the late 1990s, to meet the needs of teachers spread around the state who want to become school librarians but are not within reasonable driving distance of one of the on-campus programs, the University of Wisconsin School Library Education Consortium (UWSSLEC) was created to supplement the on-campus programs. The University of Wisconsin campuses at Whitewater, Eau Claire, Oshkosh, Madison, and Superior banded together to offer all the coursework in a hybrid format (i.e., a single two- to three-day meeting per class with the rest online). This program was tailored to the needs of practicing teachers moving into the field, with particular focus on recruiting teachers from remote areas so they could continue working as teachers while studying school librarianship.

Emerging Roles of Librarians Program

Planning

In 2010 the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) responded to rapid changes in school libraries by convening the Wisconsin School Library Summit: Envisioning 21st Century Learners and School Library Media Programs. Summit participants discussed the future of school libraries in Wisconsin. During the summit, several workgroups were created to address specific needs in the field. Since then, AASL has developed new standards for preparation of school librarians, and Wisconsin adopted an Educator Effectiveness model for teacher evaluation, bringing about additional changes.
In 2014 a workgroup that, at the summit, had been assigned the task of creating a current job description for school librarians reconvened to update job description materials created in 2010 and to create new materials that would be useful to school librarians participating in the Educator Effectiveness evaluation model. As the group began its work, discussions about the need for advocacy generated ideas about what could be done to preserve and restore librarian positions in schools, how highly qualified teachers may be encouraged to enter the field, and how small districts can restore library services by identifying and recruiting existing staff members who can become certified as librarians while on the job. The group wondered, "Could we do something fun in the summer that would help accomplish these things?"

As an answer to the workgroup’s question, the authors of this article, representing library education and the K–12 librarians in the workgroup, formed a leadership team, brainstormed ideas with the DPI library consultant, and proposed a program called Wisconsin’s Emerging Roles of Librarians (ERL). The ERL program was supported by the state’s library education consortium (UWSSLEC), the Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association (WEMTA, the state professional organization), and the state Department of Public Instruction. The program included a summer workshop, offered in three locations around the state.

The workshop was designed to educate teachers—and, subsequently, their administrators—about how the roles of school librarians have evolved, share the positive impact these roles can have on student achievement, and provide hands-on experiences to help participants develop knowledge and skills they could take back to their classrooms in the fall. To encourage an interest in entering the field, participants would also be given information about certification programs and provided with contact information for practicing school librarians who were willing to answer questions, host school library visits, and act as mentors.

While the leadership team worked to secure funding and facilities, another team was formed to plan and implement the workshop: the ERL Librarian Team. This team of eight innovative educators with exceptional skills in a variety of areas was created using a process similar to a fantasy football draft; invitations were sent to librarians with various areas of expertise and degrees of experience, from all areas of Wisconsin and from schools of different sizes and grade levels. The resulting group was an energetic team of powerful collaborators with skills in a variety of areas, including inquiry learning, technology integration, instructional teaming, personalized learning, fiction and nonfiction literature, professional development, and leadership. The team’s responsibility was to develop and lead a curriculum for the workshop that would provide classroom teachers with an understanding of the position, offer opportunities for hands-on learning, inspire increased collaboration with librarians upon return to their schools, and encourage information-sharing and advocacy with administrators.

The eight ERL Librarian Team members considered AASL’s Standards for the 21st-Century Learner.
and ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians while designing sessions that would both introduce teachers to best practices in school libraries and engage them in the kind of activities a teacher might do with a librarian. The eight team members brainstormed major topics for the workshop, including inquiry and collaboration, technology integration, support for personal interests and reading, and leadership and administration. The planners then divided (based on interest areas) into teams of two to four librarians. Each small planning team developed activities, collected resources, and gathered authentic examples of work school librarians in Wisconsin do that positively impacts students and teachers. All materials were uploaded to a Google Site that was shared with participants and their administrators.

Strong partnerships and effective communication between K–12 librarians, higher education programs, DPI, WEMTA, and regional educational agencies (cooperative educational services agencies or CESAs) were vital to the success of the planning process. With guidance from the leadership team, each organization provided skills and resources and collaborated effectively. For example, UW-Whitewater and UWSSLEC provided funds for the ERL Librarian Team to meet for planning, supported stipends and travel expenses for workshop planning and presentation, funded publicity, and provided food for workshop participants. DPI provided participant stipends that helped cover travel costs. CESA 2, CESA 5, and CESA 10 provided flexible learning spaces, supported by current technologies. Those same groups worked with WEMTA to develop and carry out publicity and recruitment, activities which included notices to e-mail discussion lists and online newsletters that reached district administrators, curriculum directors, WEMTA members, and DPI groups; a letter to all district administrators and curriculum directors in Wisconsin; and e-mails and postcards to all of the state’s school librarians.

**Implementation**

Practicing school librarians and administrators nominated potential workshop participants based on attributes the librarians and administrators felt contribute to success as a school librarian. Nominations from principals included the following descriptors: good teacher (talented, dedicated, diligent, veteran), technology skills, literacy/literature focus, collaborative, good team member, innovator, leadership skills, lifelong learner, passionate, engaging personality. Nominated participants then completed a pre-workshop survey to share their reasons for attending. Examples include the following:

- Interested in learning about the field and possibly moving into it (twenty–three responses)
- Currently in or moving into a librarian position before completion of certification (five responses)
- Love technology, want to learn something new to relay to other staff, want to advocate for the position, etc. (one to two responses)

Three workshops were offered, with a limit of twenty participants registered for each workshop. The first two, in southern and central Wisconsin, filled to capacity. The third, in northern Wisconsin, filled to approximately fifty percent capacity. Three to four ERL
The workshop was designed to educate teachers—and, subsequently, their administrators—about how the roles of school librarians have evolved, share the positive impact these roles can have on student achievement, and provide hands-on experiences to help participants develop knowledge and skills they could take back to their classrooms in the fall.

Librarian Team members facilitated and led each workshop; the library education faculty member and the DPI library consultant provided additional support. Participants were given a graphic organizer arranged into boxes for recording information to be used when returning to their schools. The box titles represented some of the major themes for the day, such as support for students, support for teachers, leading, managing, and needed qualities.

The following is an outline of workshop content and activities.

**Opening Discussions**—The ERL Librarian Team facilitated discussions about how roles of school librarians have evolved in the face of a changing economy and pervasive technologies. Participants worked in small groups to discuss what the roles of school librarians were when the participants were in school compared to school librarians’ roles today, and then shared their thoughts and ideas with the whole group.

**Collaboration and Inquiry/Support of Curriculum and Student Learning**—The ERL Librarian Team shared an overview of how school librarians can effectively collaborate with classroom teachers. Next, they discussed the inquiry process, technology tools that support inquiry projects, and selection of and access to resources that support the curriculum through the physical and virtual library. Participants practiced using some of the tools (e.g., online field trips, Chrome apps and extensions, various tools for creating content and sharing learning with others). They also explored collection-development sites and online databases.

**Literature and Literacy/Personal Learning Interests**—Participants learned how school librarians promote reading through quality collection development, book talks, events, and other activities. The ERL Librarian Team shared how they meet students’ personal learning interests in a variety of areas through competitions and makerspace activities. Participants were encouraged to try various activities, including coding, creating circuits using Makey Makey devices, making origami boxes, and producing videos using an iPad and green-screen effects.

**Program Facilitation and Leadership**—The ERL Librarian Team shared how a day in the life of a school librarian is different from that of a classroom teacher and explained how leadership and building influence are...
vital components of a school librarian’s position. They shared roles librarians play in professional development for classroom teachers. Participants discussed their own professional learning needs and had the opportunity to begin to build a professional learning network using social media that would help to meet those needs.

**Moving Forward**—The library educator outlined options for licensure and shared information on programs around the state. Participants were asked to take information from the workshops back to their administrators in the fall and completed an exit survey.

**Impact**
A comparison of pre-workshop survey results with survey results from after the workshops indicates an increased understanding of emerging roles of school librarians in Wisconsin.

The participants recognized the pieces that could allow the school librarian—with specialized expertise, collaboration, and leadership skills—to help shape the entire learning environment.

Registrants had been invited to complete a pre-workshop online survey that asked them about their reasons for attending and what they identified as the most important responsibilities of the school librarian. Thirty-four of the forty-eight registrants completed this survey, each listing three or four responsibilities. The roles most often mentioned by respondents included the following:

- Teaching, research guide/coach (twenty-eight responses)
- Support of reading: fostering love of reading, literature appreciation, reading promotion, supporting literacy (twenty-four responses)
- Development and management of collections (twenty-five responses)
- Technology support and integration (seventeen responses)
- Program administrator (fourteen responses)
- Collaboration with teachers (eleven responses)
- Information specialist/resource for teachers (eleven responses)

Individuals also mentioned supporting a love of learning, nurturing creativity, and providing new avenues for learning. The majority of the responses focused on traditional roles of teaching, literacy support, and collection development, but there was some appreciation of the school librarian’s role in supporting appropriate uses of technology, working with teachers to support learning, serving as a resource expert, and supporting students as they become creative lifelong learners in personalized learning environments.

While fifty participants registered, only about forty participants attended one of the three workshops, and thirty-five completed a post-workshop survey before leaving the site. They were asked how their perception of the school librarian’s roles had changed, which things they were taking away from the workshop that would be useful to them, and whether they were considering seeking licensure. Many said they had a new appreciation for the emerging roles of the school librarian, and some said the workshop reaffirmed what they thought school librarians should be doing or expanded that view in some way. Participants mentioned the following roles as new to them:

- Leadership and bringing about change (eight responses)
- Collaboration with teachers (nine responses)
- Technology support and integration (eight responses)
- Professional development (six responses)
- Teaching (four responses)
- Advocacy (two responses)
- Supporting reading (two responses)
• Selecting and providing resources (two responses)
• Engaging in school-wide initiatives (one response)

While many came into the workshops understanding the role of the school librarian in teaching skills, supporting reading, and developing collections, the workshops helped increase the number who saw technology integration, professional development, and leadership roles as important. A number of participants said they didn’t realize how many hats a school librarian wore or the amount of work in the job. The participants recognized the pieces that could allow the school librarian—with specialized expertise, collaboration, and leadership skills—to help shape the entire learning environment.

However, what wasn’t reflected in the responses on rethinking school librarian roles was how these leadership, professional development, collaboration, and technology roles could allow the librarian to help change the types of learning occurring in schools. Librarians support the development of skills in creativity and innovation, allow learning to be personalized for individual students, encourage a hunger for learning, and take learning outside the world of the classroom. For those entering the library education licensure program, future coursework addresses how combining these emerging roles with that of a change agent can support educational reform and the mission of schools.

Survey results also indicated potential impact on enrollment in school library programs in Wisconsin. When asked if they were considering moving into the school library field after the workshop, twenty-four said yes and nine said maybe. As of May 2015 eight workshop participants were enrolled in the UWSSLEC program; several others were still considering enrolling or seeking enrollment in another library education program.

ERL program participants were not the only benefactors of the workshops. Each participant was asked to take knowledge of librarians’ roles acquired in the workshop back to their administrators to start a discussion about what librarians can do to support students and teachers. Administrators were sent letters after the workshops to inform them of their nominee’s workshop completion and to expect information-sharing on their return.

In addition, participants increased their knowledge and skills in a way that had the potential to strengthen collaboration with their current librarians upon the participants’ return to school. Six of the participants commented in the post-workshop survey that they learned many things they could use in their own classroom or ask for in collaboration with their own school.
The workshops have also benefitted members of the ERL Librarian Team and library education programs. Members of the ERL Librarian Team developed a strong professional network through workshop planning and implementation, building their own areas of expertise, and learning from each other. They continue to remain in contact to share ideas, have done a presentation at the WEMTA annual conference, and will present at a conference sponsored by the state’s school and district administrator organizations. Several have also taken on mentoring participants.

UWSSLEC and the on-campus library education programs have experienced an increase in the number of students enrolled, as mentioned above, and have also incorporated ideas and examples presented at the workshops, from makerspace examples to technology tools in the inquiry process to literature-support ideas to effective library websites. Members of the ERL Librarian Team have also volunteered as guest speakers in library education classes and as host sites for practicum placements.

Finally, the planning and implementation of the workshops has strengthened partnerships between the library education programs, the Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association, regional education agencies, and experienced professional school librarians. As Wisconsin moves forward with developing a revised job description and tools for librarian evaluation and as library education programs change to meet the needs of the state and the profession, the lines of communication and sharing have been strengthened by these workshops.

The ERL program met its original goals of developing and leading workshops that would provide classroom teachers with an understanding of the position, offer opportunities for hands-on learning, inspire increased collaboration with librarians upon return to their schools, and encourage information-sharing and advocacy with administrators. As a result of the workshops, almost forty more teachers across Wisconsin have an enhanced idea of the emerging roles of librarians and could take ideas back to their schools to start the discussion of how the knowledge and skills of the school librarian are vital for development of 21st-century skills and supporting personalized learning. The ERL program will continue to communicate to teachers in Wisconsin the emerging roles of school librarians while advocating for vital school librarian positions in our schools.

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ECOLLAB AD
FOSTERING TECHNOLOGY-RICH SERVICE-LEARNING EXPERIENCES between School Librarians and Teacher Education Programs

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BY FORGING PARTNERSHIPS WITH TEACHER-PREPARATION PROGRAMS, SCHOOL LIBRARIANS CAN PROVIDE FIELDWORK SITES RICH IN TECHNOLOGY WHILE HELPING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS UNDERSTAND HOW SCHOOL LIBRARIES SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING.

Service Learning

Service learning provides an authentic outlet for learners to apply knowledge and skills. More specifically, Joseph A. Erickson and Jeffrey B. Anderson defined service learning as a way to combine community service with academic expectations (1997). Anderson later referred to service learning as both an educational philosophy and instructional method (1998). Service learning offers a wide variety of potential activities. Volunteer and community service are at one end of the spectrum while internships and field-based activities are at the other (Butin 2003).

Within the context of teacher education, however, teaching residency or student teaching may be different from service-learning activities because student teaching focuses on providing an opportunity for university students to develop their teaching skills as opposed to giving back to the community. A service learning activity should focus on the needs of Pre-K–12 partners and provide outlets for service participants to apply and refine related skills (LaMaster 2001). Both student teaching and service learning are field-based activities, but the emphasis and intent are different. “Service learning practice and scholarship is predicated on the belief that both the process and outcomes of service learning are universally beneficent” (Butin 2003, 1678). Thus, forming a partnership between the teacher education program and a service participant is a cornerstone to implementing service learning.

Library Perspective

School libraries are untapped resources for fieldwork by pre-service teachers. According to Amy Bitterman, Lucinda Gray, and Rebecca Goldring (2013), a majority of paid staff in public school libraries in the United States are state-certified teachers, and most of those school librarians provide both
technology and regularly scheduled library sessions to elementary and secondary students. Many school librarians have expertise in pedagogy and standards-based curriculum development, both for information literacy and for technology integration. Melissa P. Johnston (2012) noted that school librarians are expected to serve as technology leaders within their schools and that they are frequently overlooked in this role by researchers and academics.

By forging partnerships with teacher-preparation programs, school librarians can provide fieldwork sites rich in technology while helping pre-service teachers understand how school libraries support student learning. Service-learning opportunities in school libraries also open the door for future collaboration between school librarians and researchers. More pragmatically, pre-service teachers can provide additional support and knowledge for ambitious technology programming in school libraries. For understaffed libraries, the efforts of a few service-learning volunteers can allow the school librarian to enrich existing lesson plans or even add additional sessions or after-school clubs.

**Teacher Education Perspective**

Locating service-learning activities can be challenging for teacher education programs. Because local school districts are frequently asked to participate in research, residency programs, and other initiatives, they may be reticent to commit to new activities. The focuses of courses also influence needs and contexts for service learning. For example, pre-service teachers in diversity-focused courses are best served by experiences involving multicultural and ethnic expectations. How a teacher focuses lessons in a culturally homogenous setting can differ greatly from lessons in a culturally diverse setting; e.g., lessons at a public school on a Native American reservation may focus more on local events than lessons at an urban school that takes a more regional approach. Similarly, those in technology-integration courses need experiences that include exposure to common classroom technologies and the literacies, policies, and procedures associated with their uses. Yet Marlene Asselin (2000) found that few teachers knew about information, media, and technology literacies or how they related to the role of school librarians. Teacher educators should seek opportunities to connect pre-service teachers with in-service librarians and address this gap. Rebecca Hunt and Lara Luetkehans noted "by initiating library-classroom collaboration early in a teacher’s development it is possible that student teachers will embrace the school librarian as an instructional partner throughout their career" (2013, 14).

**Partnership Development**

Based on these needs, faculty at the University of Wyoming began conversations with school librarians about the feasibility of pre-service teachers volunteering in authentic settings to gain technology-integration skills. Because pre-service teachers in a technology-integration course were beginning their degree programs, they were not at a point where they could assume primary instructor responsibilities. Since stakeholders wanted pre-service teachers to be actively involved in lesson implementation, they focused on informal, after-school programs.

To examine feasibility, test curricular ideas, and explore available resources, university faculty volunteered in after-school clubs during one semester. During this experience, school librarians and university faculty determined the experience would be mutually beneficial. Pre-service teachers would gain authentic technology-integration experiences, and librarians would receive consistent help. Pre-service teachers would need background checks prior to entering local schools; to allow for processing time, stakeholders decided to start the experience eight weeks into the university semester.

Next, one section of the course pilot-tested the experience at two elementary and one K–9 school. Pre-service teachers signed up for after-school experiences based on their availability and their subject and grade-level interests. Pre-service teachers were asked to sign up for an hour a week and volunteer for a minimum of eight weeks. No more than five pre-service teachers were allowed to volunteer for the same timeslot in each program. School librarians evaluated pre-service teachers’ professionalism (33 percent of the final grade) during the experience. By default, pre-
service teachers received full points on this criterion, but librarians were asked to take attendance and report problems.

During the pilot test, librarians indicated that they also taught regularly scheduled technology-related courses (e.g., word processing, library and Internet research, typing, digital story production) and wondered if future volunteers could help during those school times. Including these technology courses provided more openings for volunteers and better accommodated university schedules.

Following pilot tests, additional schools were invited to participate, and the experience was opened for all sections of the technology-integration course. However, fine-tuning of the experience continued. School librarians suggested allowing fewer volunteers (two or three) during in-school courses to better ensure that pre-service teachers actively participated in the lessons (as opposed to observing in the background). They also recommended reducing the minimum number of visits from eight to six to accommodate planning days, assemblies, and field trips.

**What Worked**

**Library Perspectives**

School librarians welcomed the influx of pre-service teachers for a variety of reasons. The program provided regularly scheduled, reliable extra staffing support, lowered the teacher/student ratio, and allowed the exploration of new technologies and faster testing/reviews. The experience allowed school librarians to share the value and impact of school libraries with pre-service teachers who might not have seen a school library in action. It also led to conversations about practical use and challenges with technology in schools. Each of these benefits aligned with library goals for curriculum development, collaborative instruction, and the promotion of school libraries as 21st-century learning environments.

Depending on the pre-service teachers’ locations, they volunteered for library/technology classes and/or after-school technology clubs. Although extra support during regular school days was useful to troubleshoot issues, help first-graders log into computers, or navigate websites and databases, the greatest impact occurred during after-school clubs. As clubs grew in size, it became necessary to have extra staffing to help students program Bee-Bots, test Snap Circuit designs, use LEGO Robotics and Windows Movie Maker, and so forth. Regularly scheduled, reliable volunteers made these technology-rich experiences possible for students at the hosting schools. Elementary students were also excited about the opportunity to share their knowledge and play with the “big kids,” which contributed to the popularity and growth of after-school programs. When clubs were not in session, parents and students constantly asked school librarians when they would start again.

Pre-service teachers were also encouraged to explore and review new technologies during their scheduled volunteer hours and on their own time. Obtaining reviews and test results from pre-service volunteers helped school librarians allocate more time to teaching and curriculum planning. Additionally, with the help of volunteers associated with the university, school librarians were able to borrow, test, and integrate technology tools and devices available from the university’s curriculum collection. Recommendations for school technology purchases were then more easily made with documented classroom use and hands-on experience with the tools.

Participating in the volunteer program also gave school librarians the opportunity to share with pre-service teachers the value and importance of school libraries. Many college students were surprised at younger students’ agility with online catalogs, amazed at the busy-ness of the library, and impressed at the number of roles the school librarian was expected to fill. Since the local university offers neither degrees in library science nor a school library endorsement for educators, this was a singular opportunity to market the school library and its importance to soon-to-be K–12 teachers. Numerous conversations before and after volunteer shifts allowed school librarians to impress upon pre-service teachers the benefits of and challenges to technology use in schools.

**Teacher Education Perspectives**

Teacher education faculty identified a number of positive outcomes from this partnership. First, technology-integration tools and strategies often differ between university settings and school contexts. Placing pre-service teachers in authentic settings helped both students and faculty manage expectations and confront common misconceptions in a safe environment prior to high-stakes student teaching.

Second, the partnership with school libraries afforded extended exposure to Pre-K–12 students without encroaching on existing partnerships and resources. Pre-service teachers often reported surprise and amazement at the skills and knowledge displayed by Pre-K–12 students, including
PARTICIPATING IN THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ALSO GAVE SCHOOL LIBRARIANS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES.
navigating the Internet, creating digital stories, and collaborating by means of apps. The placement made use of community resources without further taxing classrooms and teachers already accommodating student observations, practicum teaching, and other field experiences.

Third, the experience allowed pre-service teachers to observe and apply course theory and content. Time spent in libraries, classrooms, and after-school clubs exposed pre-service teachers to technology tools, apps, and resources discussed in class as well as the pedagogical techniques associated with their uses.

Lastly, the service-learning experience extended educator modeling beyond traditional classroom settings. Part of teacher preparation includes helping students adjust to the many expectations they will face as teachers, including dress code, language, and policy requirements. Requiring students to model these expectations during service learning further stressed their importance.

Challenges

Library Perspectives

School librarians hosting the volunteer program learned quickly that they needed to provide orientation and hands-on training to pre-service teachers prior to volunteering. Very few volunteers arrived with in-depth understanding of classroom technology, which was not a surprise but required training. In the absence of a formal orientation during pilot programs, volunteers took disparate and sometimes unacceptable approaches to communication, dress code, and participation. Written guidelines and expectations were established after the pilot programs and agreed upon by all participating libraries. Each school librarian also offered an in-person orientation for volunteers with site-specific expectations. These training sessions were recorded and made available to volunteers unable to attend in person. Librarians shared school rules and expectations, communicated how volunteers should participate in technology activities with children, and asked students for contact information. The ability to contact volunteers in a timely fashion was crucial after the first round of fire and lockdown drills during technology classes. Most pre-service teachers preferred text messaging to e-mail for last-minute notifications, and the librarians adjusted their habits to accommodate this preference.

Once training occurred, it became evident that some pre-service teachers were more prepared and engaged than others. For some volunteers active encouragement and reminders of expectations were required on a regular basis. Others demonstrated a high level of technological competence and pedagogical experience. When planning for a new semester of pre-service teachers in the school library, each librarian built in flexibility and extra time for supervision of volunteers. Sometimes the extra time was needed. At other times, volunteers were self-directed and required minimal guidance.

Another challenge in planning technology lessons with pre-service teachers was attendance. Sometimes background checks of volunteers took longer than expected, requiring participants to find make-up times or complete make-up assignments. Absences were not a major problem, but one that required flexibility when volunteers were sick or otherwise unavailable. This circumstance resulted in some sessions hosting multiple volunteers while other sessions had only one or two. Varying availability across sessions required librarians to build adaptable lesson plans. However, having the volunteers increased the complexity and ambition of lessons and technological experiences in all participating school libraries. When volunteers completed their time, the librarians moved back to working solo, and lesson plans were adjusted to reflect the staffing level.
Teacher Education Perspectives
The challenges faced by teacher educators came from different planning aspects. First, participating school libraries varied in terms of technology use and expectations. Students placed at libraries that included regularly scheduled technology-enhanced activities reported a much higher level of satisfaction overall than those who served in a setting that only occasionally used technology. Generally, elementary schools integrated library instruction into regular school practices more frequently than secondary schools.

Second, working to create an aligned schedule between the school libraries and the university semester calendar posed challenges. School assemblies, bad-weather days, and other events required alterations to weekly schedules, further complicating pre-service teachers’ course and work schedules. Volunteer sessions were also complicated by varied school schedules. Although after-school programs and a few block schedules lasted one hour or more per session, most were thirty to forty-five minutes long. Thus, meeting the eight-hour (and later six-hour) requirement didn’t always correspond with the number of school visits. These differences complicated attendance tracking (reported by school librarians) because some volunteers had to attend more frequently than others during the experience to meet minimum time requirements.

Conclusions and Recommendations
Multiple Benefits
Despite challenges, school librarians, teacher education faculty, and pre-service teachers found the service-learning opportunity valuable. Exposure to technology integration in authentic contexts helped pre-service teachers learn the multiple roles of school librarians as well as the literacies associated with effective integration (Asselin 2000; Hunt and Luetkehans 2013). Volunteers also provided valuable support during school programs, allowed librarians to focus more specifically on their curricular responsibilities, and provided valuable reviews of technology and curricular materials. Thus, consistent with perspectives expressed by Dan W. Butin (2003) and Jeffrey Anderson (1998), volunteers provided direct benefit to community entities. The following recommendations are for those interested in developing similar service-learning experiences between school libraries and teacher education programs.

Identify Purposes
Before approaching teacher education faculty about service-learning opportunities, clearly articulate your goals and purposes for the partnership. What programs or courses might align with these goals? Locating this information will help identify potential contacts and partners. How might this partnership benefit your organization? How might it benefit the college or university? Identify overlap between your goals and the mission of the college or university.

Initiate Conversation
After identifying common goals/purposes, initiate contact. If particular courses or programs align with one or more of your goals, speak with the course instructor. State your interests and discuss whether or not there are possibilities for collaboration. Don’t get discouraged if opportunities are not immediately clear. Try approaching another instructor or program within the college. Additionally, remember that initial conversations will increase awareness of desired partnerships and may lead to future opportunities for collaboration. Be prepared when setting up meetings. Indicate your purpose and maintain the time commitment you scheduled (scheduling additional appointments as needed).

Keep It Simple
As you discuss ideas with college and university faculty and other school librarians, keep activities simple. If the collaboration is successful, it can grow during later implementations. Simple policies and procedures allow stakeholders to focus on the feasibility of collaboration and its benefits and limitations without becoming encumbered with burdensome procedures. Simplicity also helps identify implementation policies and procedures. Identify key stakeholders. Who has a vested interest in the collaboration? What permissions are needed for the partnership to take place? What training is needed for stakeholders to enter the conversation? Regularly refer back to your list of goals. Use these to guide activity creation and avoid project bloat. University faculty may want to collect data on the project or conduct research. What permissions are needed to collect data? Identify procedures and policies within school districts and university settings to which you must adhere during service-learning experiences.

Pilot Test
Pilot-test partnership activities. Taking the time for smaller initial implementations will help collaborators fine-tune partnership details, policies, procedures, and curricular materials. Pilot testing will also identify strengths and weaknesses of your plan so modifications can be made prior to large-scale
implementation. During the pilot test, ask for feedback from involved stakeholders. Insights from various stakeholders provide invaluable information regarding the effectiveness of planned activities.

Celebrate Small Wins
Establishing lasting partnerships takes time and commitment that often involve setbacks and redesigns.

Do not get discouraged when setbacks arise. Focus on your goals for service-learning partnerships. Take time to identify and celebrate small victories as the process moves forward. To maintain stakeholders’ commitment to the partnership and help them realize their contributions have a positive effect, remind them of the progress being made. Ultimately, enjoy the experience as you see it emerge over time.

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Works Cited:
In order to better address the many issues facing school librarians today, Knowledge Quest now includes articles that fall outside of each issue’s theme. This article is the first non-themed article of the new volume. Non-themed articles are submitted to and reviewed by the Knowledge Quest Editorial Board. Articles accepted for publication address the integration of theory and practice in school librarianship and new developments in education, learning theory, and relevant disciplines.

Those interested in submitting a manuscript for an upcoming issue should visit <http://knowledgequest.aasl.org/write>.

**Learning Analytics: Potential for Enhancing School Library Programs**
Introduction

Learning analytics has been defined as “the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for purposes of understanding and optimizing learning and the environments in which it occurs” (1st Int’l Conf. 2010). The potential use of data and learning analytics in educational contexts has caught the attention of educators and policymakers at dramatically increasing rates over the past few years. In 2012 the U.S. Department of Education recognized the value of data mining and learning analytics with the issue brief Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Educational Data Mining and Learning Analytics. In addition, results from a 2013 survey of administrators conducted by the Center for Digital Education (CDE) indicated that 50 percent of administrators “already see improved student outcomes from its use” and 63 percent considered analytics “a priority” (CDE 2013).

Learning Analytics and School Librarian Standards

Given this rising popularity of learning analytics in K–12 education and its potential “to combine historical and current user data to predict what services specific users may find useful now,” school librarians are at a vantage point from which to leverage this emerging discipline to enhance services to patrons, meet their own professional standards, and strengthen existing school library and technology programs (Elias 2011, 4). School librarians in the twenty-first century are tasked with collaborating with classroom teachers to meet school-improvement goals; creating both a physical and virtual learning space that provides 24–7 access to library resources; meeting individual students’ reading, informational, and instructional interests and needs; and serving as leaders for their schools’ instructional and technology programs, as well as for policy development.

With this challenge in mind, it seems critical for school librarians to not only stay abreast of the emerging new field of learning analytics and its implications for school library and technology programs, but also to use the current affordances that this field has to offer.
In this article, I will explore how school librarians can begin to explore the rich set of possibilities that learning analytics may offer the practice of school librarianship within the context of some of the key roles for 21st-century school librarians. These roles have been identified in some of the foundational documents from AASL such as *Empowering Learners* (2009), *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians* (2010), and *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* (2007) as many states’ evaluation standards for school librarians are derived from these documents.

**Program Administration and Meeting Diverse Student Needs**

Using data to inform decision-making is not a novel concept to school librarians. For years, library circulation software has enabled tracking of useful statistical data, such as circulation rates and analyses of collections, to help school librarians stay informed about library usage and aid in collection-development efforts. With a deeper understanding of learning analytics and the ability to use data for meeting learner needs, school librarians can employ this data in more meaningful and productive ways that enable them to leverage its use to adapt programs to support learning outcomes aligned with schools’ goals. For example, school librarians could run a report each month to gauge circulation rates for each homeroom. Students in those homerooms with low or decreased circulation rates could be targeted for programming that encourages them to increase their frequency of independent reading, enabling the school librarian to use real data to tailor library programming efforts to individual needs and make these efforts more purposive.

Future advancements in practical applications of analytics may also assist school librarians down the road with personalization. Recent software developments with library automation products, such as Follett’s Destiny Quest, provide students with dashboard capabilities that enable them to keep track of books they have read and see the top ten items checked out at any given time.

Recent trends in the consumer industry allow online shopping entities such as Amazon to make use of the affordances of predictive and business analytics to predict future consumption patterns based on a customer’s historical data. Perhaps library resource-
management software vendors will soon capitalize on the use of similar technologies to make book suggestions to readers based on their historical circulation data and interests. This application of analytics would allow school library programs to personalize and cater to each user’s individual reading and informational needs. Book vendors will have the capabilities to make suggestions for new book purchases based on a library’s current collection and circulation data. It is hard to imagine this capability is far from reality; businesses are already able to achieve this personalization for individual consumers. Although these features are not readily available right now, school librarians can take an active role in making these practices a reality by encouraging their library automation software providers and materials vendors to provide these personalized services.

Collaboration and Leadership

ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians document the expectation that school librarians must be able to concurrently fill the roles of instructional partner and educational leader to enhance student learning and achievement in their school communities. The U.S. Department of Education maintains that learning analytics can enable educators “to understand entire systems and to support human decision making” (2012, 13). Unfortunately, the Alliance for Excellence in Education in their report Capacity Enablers and Barriers for Learning Analytics: Implications for Policy and Practice stated that the use of data and learning analytics has “not necessarily been able to inform instructional decisions to help ensure equity for individual students” (Wolf et al. 2014, 3). As a school leader, collaborative partner, and curriculum specialist the school librarian should work with school staff members to ensure they have the “knowledge, skills, and professional learning opportunities” to create “a culture of data-informed decisionmaking” (Wolf et al. 2014, 5). In fact, the alliance specifically referenced school librarians as being “critical to their endeavors” for schools and districts (Wolf et al. 2014, 8).

Schools’ increased use of online and blended learning models, coupled with the responsibility of the school librarian to be a partner in helping teachers meet their instructional goals, makes the use of learning analytics a viable strategy to help enhance student learning in these new learning environments. A school librarian who understands how to leverage the use of learning analytics to aid teachers and other support staff in providing individualized feedback and interventions to at-risk students, as well as personalizing instruction for all students, will be seen as an invaluable asset to the school community. In addition, with this increased knowledge about students’ learning behaviors and assessment data, school librarians will be in a better position to acquire and suggest specific information and technology resources to meet students’ individualized learning needs. Empowering Learners maintains that school librarians are responsible for ensuring “collection and information access in the school library support teaching and learning by providing diverse sources of information that match curricular needs” (AASL 2009, 39). Recent advancements in online assessment activity and data visualization capabilities make it easy for school librarians to work with classroom teachers to identify their students’ curricular and informational needs and ensure

School librarians are also in a position to not only further the effective use of learning analytics into their school culture, but also to provide valuable input into important policy decisions that must be made about the safe and ethical use of student data.
that these needs are aligned with evidence from this data.

Imagine a scenario in which a school librarian is meeting in a professional learning community with classroom teachers to analyze data from a recent benchmark test. The teachers see many of their students do not yet meet a particular science objective. This identified deficiency creates an opportunity for the school librarian to begin a dialogue with classroom teachers about instructional partnerships and collaboration. The librarian can suggest ways teachers can work with her to create lesson plans and use library resources to help these students meet the objective. School librarians can seek similar opportunities to strengthen their school library programs and increase their visibility and viability within their schools.

School librarians are also in a position to not only further the effective use of learning analytics into their school culture, but also to provide valuable input into important policy decisions that must be made about the safe and ethical use of student data. School librarians are already knowledgeable about privacy concerns regarding student data; therefore, school librarians should take opportunities to serve on school and district committees in charge of policy development in this area, furthering librarians’ commitment to modeling the ethical use of information and leading policy development.

**Equitable Access to Information**

Increasingly, school librarians have invested time to ensure that their school library programs have a Web presence, enabling students, parents, school staff, and other community members to access library resources 24–7. School librarians can take advantage of free resources like Google Analytics to collect and examine enlightening data on the use of virtual resources. Google Analytics is a learning analytic tool that could be used by school librarians to help them meet their goal of providing equitable access of resources in a variety of formats to all patrons. Wei Fang made a case study to investigate how Google Analytics could be used "to improve the design and content of the Rutgers-Newark Law Library’s main website" to better meet users’ needs and make content more accessible (Fang 2007, 1). The tool ended up providing the librarians and administrators with robust data and reports that enabled them to make better-informed decisions regarding the online services provided to their patrons.

In addition to making resources available through virtual access, according to *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians* school librarians should “develop solutions for addressing physical, social, and intellectual barriers to equitable access to resources and services” to make information equally accessible to all patrons (AASL 2010, 10). Since we are tasked with meeting the diverse needs of large groups of learners, including teachers, learning analytics can provide a clearer picture of who our learners are so we can better accommodate our patrons’ needs.

**Recommendations**

In *Empowering Learners* one of the key roles identified is that of “empowering learning through leadership.” In this capacity, school librarians are expected to “model leadership and best practice for the school community” including being “an early adopter of changes in current educational and technology trends” (AASL 2009, 45). With this charge in mind, it seems today’s school librarian cannot afford to be anything but well versed in the use of data and learning analytics to enhance teaching and learning. Therefore, my recommendation is that, if you are not already familiar with the field of learning analytics, investigate its current use in K–12 environments. A starting point would be to read the resources cited in this article. In addition, take advantage of any professional development opportunities centered around student data and assessment systems that your school or district uses.

Learning analytics is clearly an educational practice that will continue to become a salient feature of 21st-century teaching and learning. Now is the time for dedicated school leaders who are in a position to impact instruction—leaders such as school librarians—to harness the possibilities of these techniques and applications. Learning analytics can, when used appropriately, result not only in a more effective school library program but also benefit the school as a whole.

This article contains only a sampling of ideas and suggestions of ways that data mining and

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**Learning analytics is clearly an educational practice that will continue to become a salient feature of 21st-century teaching and learning.**
learning analytics could be leveraged to enhance the practice of school librarianship. As student data becomes more readily available and the field of learning analytics continues to advance, more opportunities will present themselves. It is the responsibility of 21st-century school librarians to be ready and willing to embrace these opportunities.

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Collaborative Instructional Design for COLLEGE READINESS

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High school seniors’ success in making the transition to college hinges greatly on their ability to perform college-level research. Studies pointing out failure to provide this critical preparation abound (Head 2013; Head and Eisenberg 2010). Helping students make this leap is the topic of much research and discussion between members of the Association of College and Research Libraries and the American Association of School Librarians.

The Kutztown (PA) Area Senior High School was honored to receive AASL’s 2014 Collaborative School Library Award for our project “College Ready: Collaborative Instructional Redesign of the Senior Research Project.” Factors comprising this award included the learning outcomes achieved through the collaborative effort, the collaborative process undertaken, the use of library resources within the project, and the degree to which the project meets the principles of AASL’s Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs (ALA 2009).

Kutztown’s project serves as an example of embedded library practice emerging from a shared need to improve our senior students’ readiness for college-level research. From the outset we understood equipping learners for this task demanded more than a handful of typical meetings between librarian and teachers since “successful embeddedness also relies upon the development and nurturing of collegial collaborative relationships” (Boyer and Kocis-Westgate 2014, 162). In our quest to improve our senior research project, a team comprised of the school librarian and members of the language arts faculty worked steadily from fall of 2012 through spring of 2013 to design and develop a student-centered senior capstone project that incorporated critical information-fluency skills with reading nonfiction, along with metacognitive reflection. While the origin of our project was a desire for consistent information-fluency instruction while addressing rigorous inquiry standards, broader implications emerged from this lengthy process as we saw deeper potential for our targeted learning outcomes and the need to alter the scope and sequencing of our instruction in lower grades.

When the team initially undertook the redesign of the senior project, we wanted to shift the focus of the learning away from just the product (e.g., a written paper) to the inquiry and thinking process needed for deeper rigor. Nonfiction reading strategies and reflection opportunities were required if we were to achieve these objectives. The team worked for six months to design instruction, develop specific learning strategies, and prepare reflection and inquiry process guides. A detailed description of this original collaborative process appears in Kathryn Kennedy and Lucy Santos Green’s Collaborative Models for Librarian and Teacher.
Multiple AASL and Common Core State Standard learning outcomes are met with this renewed learning event. Chief among these are evaluating information, applying strategies to draw and formulate alternative conclusions, making sense of information, collaborating with others to broaden and deepen understanding, and using social networks and digital media to gather and share information. An ongoing emphasis on metacognitive reflection on their own research and thinking processes forces students to slow down, take stock, recognize the importance of the strategies their instructors are talking about, and become more intentional in their actions. When learners develop a fuller awareness of personal learning habits and weaknesses, their heightened level of metacognition may not only help students make a smoother transition to college but may potentially aid future academic achievement (Young and Fry 2008). Integrated elements of visualization (mind mapping, graphic organizers) and reflection are key boosts to critical thinking in this process.

Three online platforms are coordinated to support students through the entire research learning event: Google apps, LibGuides, and the school’s learning management system Moodle. These integrated platforms allow us to seamlessly scaffold learning throughout the process, creating minimal confusion for students as they independently access resources, instructional tutorials, organization tools (such as NoodleTools, Turnitin), reflection prompts, and assessment guides in the form of rubrics. For example, glossary settings within Moodle provide support for displaying a definition of any unfamiliar research term simply by hovering the cursor over the term. Resources such as database widgets within the LibGuides are also directly linked within the Moodle pages for quick and easy searching. The Inquiry Process Guide (IPG) in each student’s Google drive gives every member of the collaborative team access to support students with answers and suggestions and encouraging. The IPG contains all directions, instructional links, rubrics, and reflection prompts from pre-search topic ideas through final reflections after the project is scored. The embedding and comprehensive inclusion of library resources alongside tutorials and other instructional aids ensure that learners are continually guided to higher-quality resources and are able to skillfully navigate and use these resources to meet their research needs. Throughout the project learners are assessed on how efficiently and effectively they are applying information-fluency and critical-thinking skills. Usage statistics of the school’s LibGuides and individual online resources evidence that this plan has been working for the past three school years.

What We’ve Learned

Student data in the forms of final inquiry project scores, reflection postings, and other anecdotal evidence are monitored, and all components of the project are examined and subject to revision every term as we strive to ensure that all parts of this experience are relevant to our students and their learning needs. For the past three years the team has engaged in a continual process of evaluation of each component of our collaboration and has made several tweaks and adjustments to the original learning event. Critical review of our expected outcomes, formative assessments, rubrics, and instruction occurs. Despite any changes, our overarching goal of helping learners see research as a metacognitive process of discovery remains. One way we work toward this goal is by consistently placing more emphasis on the research/inquiry process than on the product.

Despite any changes, our overarching goal of helping learners see research as a metacognitive process of discovery remains. One way we work toward this goal is by consistently placing more emphasis on the research/inquiry process than on the product.
witnessed successive classes move through our system believing that research is primarily a writing process. We need to help students see that writing well is impossible without doing significant thinking. While our inaugural group of students back in 2013 initially pushed back at the notion of the research process being worth more points than the final product, they offered later feedback that they appreciated earning points for all of the hard research and critical-thinking work they were doing along the way. When offered analogies to other coursework they do such as physics or mathematics, they more readily saw the need to place value on the research process, not just the final product. We believe this mindset shift is critical if students are going to be able to master and apply research skills proficiently prior to college.

Confronting the mindset issue caused me to rethink my approach to collaborations with my colleagues as well. Teaching and learning in a one-to-one laptop environment has perhaps inadvertently contributed to this product-focused mindset as it is easy to be enamored with the easily created array of media-rich products. This realization now guides my collaborative conversations away from a product focus. After learning about the big concepts and content the teacher is targeting, my next question no longer is “What are they creating?” but a series of questions:

- “What do we really want students to get out of this?”
- “What’s in it for them?”
- “What makes this project particularly relevant to this group of learners?”
- “Where/how is critical thinking playing a role in this project?”
- “What is the transferrable skill they will take away from this experience?”

When these bigger questions are answered, then the learning product that evidences this learning is more readily (and more appropriately) determined.

Curricular Implications

To address learning needs we discovered at the system level, we have added highly specific information-fluency benchmarks for every grade level K–12. In the senior high school pre-assessments are now used each fall to gauge how well our learners are hitting the identified information-fluency benchmarks. Data from these pre-assessments is used to revamp instruction as necessary for a grade, class, or individual student. We have also adjusted the scope and sequence of instruction for every class level, better ensuring that our seniors are where they need to be when they begin the capstone project—that they understand research as “primarily a thinking process supported by resources and writing” (Boyer and Kocis-Westgate 2014, 171).

Winning Them Over

While our project emerged from a recognized learning need in our school, most collaborations obviously take place on a smaller scale, often with just one classroom teacher and the school librarian. Secondary school librarians in a brick and mortar setting face the problem of time: time to meet with teachers, begin conversations, and establish the personal relationships necessary for successful ongoing collaborative research projects and team teaching within a limited number of days of the school year.

We need to help students see that writing well is impossible without doing significant thinking.

While librarians know the importance of integrating information-fluency standards, our potential collaborators are faced with many other objectives to meet. If we look at teachers’ professional needs, we can establish the relevance of what we as librarians are doing to help them achieve their goals (not just ours). Knowing the school’s overarching mission, individual department goals and objectives, as well as the guiding curricular framework is a crucial first step for winning teacher buy-in.

Review the objectives your colleagues are working toward and consider how these overlap with your own. Start small by sharing great resources for the content area. Teachers are busy; they do not have time to discover all of the great stuff out there. Show off your scouting skills and create supportive digital guides and instruction to support teachers and students in accessing quality resources. Develop digital pathfinders and text sets before they ask because they may never ask! Finding and sharing resources is basic marketing of the library program and your talents! Show teachers how working with a school librarian and mixing library resources and learning objectives with theirs benefit students and boost learning.
Nurturing partnerships through simple conversations about what’s happening in classrooms also provides clues to what a teacher or particular class needs. Information-fluency needs may go unrecognized. For example, in our initial collaboration, we began by looking at shortcomings in previous research projects. Nearly every one of the issues raised by the teachers could be traced back to essential information-fluency, organizational, or foundational reading skills students were lacking. These skills then became critical targets in our project redesign.

Achieving a heightened level of collaboration that goes beyond just introducing resources or teaching a skill and becomes one of codesign and codevelopment of instructional events also demands that the librarian exhibit instructional capital. Teachers deserve equal instructional proficiency in their potential partners. Librarians need to take co-ownership of learning events and successes as well as failures. When the time comes to work with a colleague’s classes, be sure to bring your “A” game. Demonstrate your instructional talents along with your tech savvy by creating engaging learning events that the students find relevant and teachers appreciate. During our senior project, the school librarian and teachers collaboratively present most lessons. We share the responsibility for evaluating student work with assessments we codesigned or codeveloped. This approach helps learners see the equal importance of and connections between their information-fluency, reading, thinking, and writing skills. When teachers see librarians as this type of partner, the stage is set for ongoing professional collaborations. An additional benefit is that we are modeling the collaborative workplace for students as they witness team teaching and our consistency in goals and scoring. Collaboration brings transparency to our work.

What’s Next

While Kutztown’s small collaborative team set out to change one school project, we ended up transforming our practice to one that is highly evidence-based. Taking an instructional-design approach not only looks at broad standards and objectives but also allows us to target specific student needs. Using data from pre-assessments and scoring rubrics across projects I am more capable of determining if transfer is really happening from one learning event to the next. This type of data across projects and grade levels helps us clarify our goals each year and gives us evidence to justify shifts we need to make in instruction and assessment.

If we look at teachers’ professional needs, we can establish the relevance of what we as librarians are doing to help them achieve their goals (not just ours).
A huge advantage of this cycle of data collection and assessment is that it makes clear what students really do or do not need in regard to instruction, allowing us to further personalize the inquiry process. During the 2014—2015 school year I experimented with using a digital badging system within Moodle. Badges represent student certification in various research skills such as using OPACs, evaluating resources, using digital curation tools, documenting sources, taking effective notes, using mind-mapping tools for visualization of information, using social media for research, etc. Instruction challenging students to apply each of these skills is available online. Students are awarded each badge when they have successfully demonstrated the skill by meeting the challenge specific to that skill.

The badging system was tested with a small group of seniors who could work at their own pace to achieve various benchmarks. The dual goals for this class were to complete all of the skills by a certain date and to apply these skills directly in their actual research project. Some of the students were surprised at how difficult it was to motivate themselves to complete the skills and independent research without a teacher constantly pushing them to meet deadlines. These learners came to the realization that this level of independence was more like the experience they will have in a few months when they are college freshmen.

This experiment was a major eye-opener for our team as we realized that while we are arming students with strong research and writing skills, we are not fully preparing our learners for the heightened degree of independence they will need to be successful in college. To begin to address this need, we will be using my badging system in our Student Research Project Moodle course for our Advanced Placement students in the coming school year. These learners will be tasked with working independently on information-fluency skills for research, documentation, curation, evaluation of information, the use of social media for research, and mind-mapping skills. They will be able to work on developing these skills from the start of the year up until the teacher sets the research project assignment. The badges will represent students’ having demonstrated their qualification to conduct their senior research. We’ll see how this plan works. Stay tuned!

Winning the AASL award was a signal that we were going in the right direction for empowering our students to be truly college-ready as skilled and ethical researchers and critical thinkers. Ongoing collaboration will ensure that we continue to offer them highly relevant and engaging learning experiences.

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Connection + Collaboration = SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY IN A LARGE HIGH SCHOOL

Formula for Success
A Familiar Scene in Many High School Libraries

As you look around your learning commons–enabled library, you feel proud that the redesign accommodates collaborative work areas as well as quiet study areas. The school library has enough desktop computers to serve two classes at a time, as well as additional seating designed for working with laptops, iPads, and other BYOD tools (see figure 1). A makerspace full of materials conducive to curriculum–based product development as well as innovative creations by students pursuing their own interests has been established. Teachers enjoy seeing their students’ work displayed and are beginning to create assignments with the makerspace area in mind (see figure 2).

Your library research calendar is full, partly due to pathfinders that have been designed in support of collaboratively planned research assignments. You feel confident that teachers and students use these...
pathfinders in their classrooms, computer labs, and remotely from home, as your database statistics are consistently high. Yet, you feel that you aren’t reaching every department and every teacher. The teaching staff increases each year to accommodate an ever-growing student enrollment, and a substantial rate of teacher turnover results in new faces appearing each year.

A formula that has worked at my school of 2,500 students and 170 teachers involves making a connection with school leaders, who in turn can assist you in your effort to collaborate and support new teachers. These leaders include administrators, the instructional coaches from each academic department, department chairs, and returning teachers who already embrace the value of your technology-rich library program. This group will help you bring the new teachers onboard.

Your strategy here is to jumpstart the collaboration process with new teachers by joining forces with the content leaders. Tidy up your library, fill it with eye-catching displays, and present it as a user-friendly space. Invite the group of department heads to tour at their leisure, connecting each subject-area specialist with specific content areas in the stacks. Encourage them to download a QR app on their phones so they can scan codes for related e-books and databases. Explain that you have digitized the reference section to make it accessible to students and staff from any Internet-enabled location 24–7. All electronic sources support simultaneous use. Use clip-on-the-shelf bookstop section markers (available from library supply companies) to not only support your print books but also to highlight

Starting Point

Begin by connecting or reconnecting with department leaders. Schedule a meeting with the instructional coaches and department heads during in-service week. Send an invitation to your administrators to stop in to see the school library program presented as a critical component of student learning.

Your strategy here is to jumpstart the collaboration process with new teachers by joining forces with the content leaders. Tidy up your library, fill it with eye-catching displays, and present it as a user-friendly space. Invite the group of department heads to tour at their leisure, connecting each subject-area specialist with specific content areas in the stacks. Encourage them to download a QR app on their phones so they can scan codes for related e-books and databases. Explain that you have digitized the reference section to make it accessible to students and staff from any Internet-enabled location 24–7. All electronic sources support simultaneous use. Use clip-on-the-shelf bookstop section markers (available from library supply companies) to not only support your print books but also to highlight

Figure 3. QR code pointing to related Civil War e-books.
QR codes for related e-books and databases (see figure 3). Another idea is to create a sign indicating a related database or website and post it next to special collections such as careers or social issues (see figure 4).

After the tour, present a slideshow illustrating how you can support teachers and their curriculum. The key word here is illustrate. Use pictures of students and teachers in action, using library resources. A picture of you coteaching with a teacher in the school library, classroom, or computer lab sends a powerful message that collaboration is effective, no matter where it takes place—and that you are willing to step outside the library space to provide instruction.

**Introduction of Technology Tools**

Next, introduce two technology tools that you recommend for use in the classroom. For example, like me, you could project the popular Symbaloo tool and show how it can be used with Blendspace, a teachers’ tool for presenting lessons. Explain that the effectiveness of these tools would depend on the quality of the resources collected by three groups: instructional coaches, teachers, and school librarians. The finished product would be a Symbaloo webmix of online resources for teachers, created collaboratively by subject-area specialists, as well as information specialists.

At this point, project an “example” Symbaloo webmix that you have already created for a specific course. Figure 5 shows an example for World Geography. (If you want to get a feel for the user experience, go to <http://schslibrary.symbaloo.com/mix/worldgeography-schs1> and click on a few tiles.) The Symbaloo should contain websites, teachers’ instructional tools, and recommended related subscription databases available through the library’s website. Assure the group that deleting and adding tiles is easy and that you welcome their input. Project an online form that you have created and linked on your library website. Ask the group to list a few favorite subject-related websites, apps, and Web 2.0 instructional tools for teachers. Before you wrap up the meeting, make sure that these forms are submitted to you.

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1 To explore more webmixes created by the author, go to <http://schs.humbleisd.libguides.com/content.php?pid=291788&sid=2397056>.
If your school is fortunate enough to be moving toward a one-to-one technology initiative in which each student is paired with a laptop computer or tablet, use this circumstance to your advantage. Get involved with the selection of apps, websites, teachers’ tools, and, especially, subscription databases. This involvement will ensure that library resources are used beyond the physical walls of the school library.

Follow Up

Explain that you would like to meet with each department chair’s teachers at a future weekly or monthly department meeting. Project an online calendar, fill in each department’s date choice, and send the calendar via e-mail for acceptance. Do not include September in the schedule, as you will be busy with freshmen orientation sessions and will need time to complete the project that is described below.

Share your plan to continue creating course-specific webmixes based on department chairs’ suggestions, as well as on input from teachers. Charge the department leaders with the task of introducing the same form to their teachers at their first department meeting. Remind them that the results would come directly to you for inclusion in the course Symbaloo.

Simplifying Your Plan of Action for Department Meetings

Divide your work into reasonable segments. Think in ones: one department at a time. In this case, it would be the department that chose the earliest date for meeting with you. Look on the bright side. You will have at least a month to get a start on creating Symbaloo while you complete freshman orientation sessions.

Continue referring to the department leaders’ forms as well as the forms sent by their teachers. Create the remaining course-related webmixes, remembering to add your related library databases, e-book collections, etc. The collaborative element is already in place and will gain momentum as the year goes on.

The more proficient you become with the Symbaloo tool, the faster you will be able to work. As you create additional webmixes for the remaining courses, you will find that the research you completed while creating the first Symbaloo will pay off. Copy your first webmix, rename it, and add or delete tiles in support of the new subject area you are working with. You most likely came across tiles that match up nicely with other courses, especially your research databases and teacher productivity tools. (Because you are so organized, as you ran across websites relevant to departments other than the one you’re working on at the moment, you’ve bookmarked the sites for future use.)

Check your library databases for recommended and related websites, borrow content-area textbooks, consult AASL’s lists of best websites and apps for teaching and learning, check out library blogs and websites for ideas, and remember to keep up with library literature. This might seem like a lot of work, but it is an effective way to show (not just talk about) the power of collaboration. Most of all, classroom teachers will begin to view you not only as an important resource but also as a valued instructional partner.

Ready. Set. Go. The First Department Meeting

At your first department meeting, you will find that most teachers are excited about seeing the Symbaloo webmix that was created for the
course or courses they teach. They will feel affirmed when they see their favorite online resources highlighted and delighted to find new ones recommended by fellow teachers. You can also pat yourself on the back because you have successfully promoted your online databases, e-books, etc.

Use your display of the course-specific webmixes as the perfect lead-in to a discussion about research and pathfinders. Show off your library website, direct teachers to your calendar, the sign-up form used by teachers to schedule class visits to the library, and existing pathfinders that have been created for their courses. LibGuides is a great tool to use, but free tools are also available; these include LiveBinders, Weebly, or your district or personal website editor. These pathfinders should inspire your new (and old) teachers to collaborate with you as they plan research projects. Remember to tell them that “Have Librarians, Will Travel” to labs or classrooms to introduce the guides and to work with their students.

The pathfinders can lead into an overview of your subscription research databases. Invite teachers to use them in the classroom as well as for research projects. Take a minute to explain how to access information, making sure that you have sent each database company’s tech support staff identical username and password requests. That way, students and staff have only one username and password to remember and are, therefore, more likely to use these valuable resources throughout the school, as well as remotely from home. Be sure to pass out signs displaying database usernames and passwords; send one to each teacher to post in the classroom. If you have the ability to

All of this outreach and fostering of partnerships takes time and energy and will not be accomplished overnight. However, the payoff is worth the time and effort. Improved student learning and engagement will be outcomes. Teachers can find more and better resources more easily. The library program will gain advocates. You’ve created a win-win-win situation, and next year you can build on this year’s successes!
create posters, design and print a super-sized username/password sign for each of your school’s computer labs. Finally, include an overview of your online catalog. Show as many features as time allows, paying special attention to the records for e-books and references to related databases.

**Reflect. Revise. Repeat.**

Once you’ve presented at one department meeting, reflect on what went well, what teachers’ were most interested in, what didn’t capture teachers’ attention, and how you can apply what you learned at the first meeting as you prep for presentations at other departments. Consult the calendar and begin working on the Symbaloo webmix for the next department. At this point, you have become an expert at creating these visual portals and can work more quickly. Be prepared for an increase in pathfinder requests, scheduled time in the library, and collaborative teaching sessions in classrooms!

**Including Elective Courses**

In a high school, teachers of elective courses are sometimes overlooked because they don’t necessarily teach state-tested material. However, they certainly have comprehensive benchmarks to achieve. These teachers are often some of the most talented and inspiring teachers on staff. Imagine creating Symbaloo webmixes highlighting the best art, music, auto tech, culinary arts, health, and medical resources. Include these instructional coaches in your back-to-school meetings and watch as your pathfinders start to reflect the amazing work of these teachers, many of whom are among students’ favorites.

**Ensuring Administrative Help with Library Initiatives**

As you become a valued leader in your school, your administrators will seek you out to speak at school-wide meetings. Ask for a fifteen-minute slot during one of the back-to-school staff meetings or one soon after the school year begins. Give a short introduction to the school library program, pointing out a teacher resource page or section on your library website. Be sure to include laminating or poster-printing services, so that you can establish yourself as a team player. (Yes, I know you are busy, but once you’ve trained a few student aides to print and laminate, they’ll teach others, enjoy the process, and feel like insiders at the library.)

This opportunity to talk to assembled teachers will also give you a sneak preview of their curriculum. End with a five-minute library orientation slideshow using PowToon, an engaging free slideshow tool (one of AASL’s picks for a best website for teaching and learning) that encourages the use of animation elements. Although my PowToon slideshow was designed for freshmen orientation, I have found that adults also can enjoy and learn from this humorous introduction to the school library program. Your goal here is to present your library in a positive way, as an essential resource for teachers as well as students.

**Reaching Teachers**

You will feel good that you have informed all staff members of your desire to help them be successful by integrating technology into their teaching. The level of success will be determined by the number of teachers who decide to include you as a teaching partner. All of this outreach and fostering of partnerships takes time and energy and will not be accomplished overnight. However, the payoff is worth the time and effort. Improved student learning and engagement will be outcomes. Teachers can find more and better resources more easily. The library program will gain advocates. You’ve created a win-win-win situation, and next year you can build on this year’s successes!

**Lessons Learned and Pointers for Successful Collaboration and Integration of Technology**

My thirty-five years of school library experience at various grade levels has resulted in the following top-ten list:

1) Show rather than talk about how to integrate technology. Use content-specific examples. Explain what expertise the teacher shared, as well as the part you played.
2) In the beginning, plan to do the lion’s share of the work while prepping for collaborative lessons. As time goes on, teachers will feel more comfortable with the collaborative process and will be more comfortable with stepping up their level of involvement.

3) Remember that “new” teachers on your staff are not always teachers new to the profession. Many experienced teachers come to you with varied library experiences, not always good. Be patient and positive with them. Go the extra mile to help them, especially with library services such as laminating or designing and printing posters. You will gain knowledge of their curriculum, as well as their trust.

4) Don’t always expect teachers to come to you in the library. Travel to their classrooms or school computer labs. Make yourself accessible.

5) Study benchmarks and course content. Remember that we are not expected to be a content expert in every area but should know how to locate state- and district-required benchmarks.

6) Be on the lookout for new technology tools so that you can continually present new ideas at school department meetings—even district-level meetings. Offer to present with district subject coordinators so that technology and library resources will be included. Gear your presentations to specific content areas.

7) Get to know your students! They are a great source of information about what is going on in the classroom. For example, if a student asks for books on social issues topics, e-mail the relevant teacher with a link to the Opposing Viewpoints website. Offer to come to the teacher’s classroom to give students an overview.

8) Don’t assume that all teachers understand the value of subscription databases or that students understand the importance of evaluating websites.

9) Make the library the printing capital of your school. This service is not only a source of revenue for the library, but it can provide you with an ongoing bird’s eye view of the curriculum. Our students’ economic situations vary widely; we try to keep printing costs low for students. Each student can print five black and white pages per day for free; additional pages are 10 cents. Color printouts are always 50 cents each. This money is placed in the library activity fund and is used to help pay for replacement cartridges.

10) Recognize teachers who use the library: shout-outs at faculty meetings, pictures in newsletters, fun awards given for whatever you can think of: most check-outs, most library time, most-creative projects, etc.

Rest assured that your efforts will not go unnoticed and will continue to gain momentum. Periodically inviting your administrators and members of the community in to see the library in action might even result in some positive outcomes. Take a look at the SCHS Library Website at <www.humbleisd.net/Page/26005>, book blog (linked to the website), and Twitter handle (@SCHSLibraryNews) for more ideas; notice that the library staff has increased to two full-time librarians!

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Recommended Reading:
"I’m New Here..."
Making Friends, Staying Strong, and Having a Fantastic First Year as a School Librarian

Carolyn Stenzel
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Introduction

Fresh out of library school, I headed to rural southern Virginia ready to start my library career. Having prepared to work in public schools in a large suburban county outside of Richmond, I had never expected to be a solo librarian. However life had other plans, and I found myself heading to a private girls’ boarding school in need of a library renovation. I found myself weeding thousands of books, picking out furniture and color swatches, organizing student library assistants, and hosting decade nights where students dressed up, had a dance party, and perused our weeded items from each decade (see figure 1). I really needed advice, help, and the feeling of being connected to other librarians.

Be Your Own Friend First

Of the many things my high school girls have taught me, one of my favorites is the acronym FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), defined as “a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent” (Przybylski et al. 2013, 1841). In this spirit, I’ve coined a new term: FOBO (Fear of Burning Out). It’s so critically important to practice self-care as a new school librarian, especially if you are without an assistant. Taking care of your soul, spirit, and body is just as important as anything you do in your library. While what you do to prevent burnout will vary based on your priorities, I encourage all new librarians to be extremely careful to continue to make time for family, friends, and whichever activities bring peace and joy. The library, however wonderful it is, can never make up for an unbalanced and unhealthy life.

Self-reflection is also an important piece of the first-year puzzle. Taking fifteen minutes to sit each month...
Taking fifteen minutes to sit each month and think through what has been successful and what goals you want to continue to pursue can make a big difference in your library program and in your mental health. It is important to know what you want to do and to remind yourself of things that are going well. When things aren’t the way you envisioned, frustration can set in. Having a notebook where I wrote monthly goals and “Greats” (things that I was proud of and things that worked) really helped me to see that great things were happening, even when I felt discouraged (see figure 2).

**Taking the Show on the Road**

Since I was a solo school librarian in a very rural area, I had to work extra-hard to find library mentors and colleagues. Luckily, I am a member of several professional organizations such as VAAASL (Virginia Association of School Librarians), AISL (Association of Independent School Librarians), and ALA/AASL. I am so grateful for the ways in which these associations, their e-mail discussion lists, and conferences have impacted my ability to stay current in the field. I am able to network with other school librarians in similar situations, and it is so nice to have new friends who love the same things that I love! The face-to-face connections made by volunteering in professional organizations are phenomenal. No matter where you are, you can find real-life library friends. The best thing I’ve done for professional development has been reaching out in person to other librarians. Whether through visiting libraries at my vacation destinations or simply asking nearby librarians to share coffee and talk books, the relationships that I have formed have been transformative to my professional practice. Blogs, Twitter, and webinars have also become very important parts of my professional development. It’s amazing what wonderful ideas you can get from your online peers, and you can do it all for free in your pajamas!

I have seen so many instances where advocacy is extremely difficult for younger professionals. It seems that we have a sense that we aren’t yet all we need to be to provide exceptional service to our students and that we “don’t have enough to brag about yet.” Push through this discomfort! Your

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**Figure 2. List of Goals/Greats from my first month on the job.**
ideas are valuable, and people really do want to hear them. Present at a conference; try writing an article or blog post; volunteer for a committee assignment in your local library association; call the librarian at your neighboring school and set up a coffee date; don’t just follow along, but comment on a Twitter chat. You have so many options to put yourself out there, and even baby steps will take you a long way in your professional development.

Carolyn Stenzel is the Library Department chair and Upper School librarian at the Holton-Arms School in Bethesda, Maryland. She is a member of AASL and is the Independent Schools Committee Chair for the Virginia Association of School Librarians. She was awarded the AASL Frances Henne Award in 2014. You can find her on Twitter @CarolynStenzel.

Whether through visiting libraries at my vacation destinations or simply asking nearby librarians to share coffee and talk books, the relationships that I have formed have been transformative to my professional practice.

Work Cited:

Recommended Reading:

FIRST YEAR DOS AND DON’TS

Don’t give up the things that make your life full and balanced.

Do focus on a few good things, not 500 so-so things.

Do make some changes; I read blogs for two years before starting Twitter.

Don’t forget about your goals and greats.

Do think about the amount of time you have to commit.

Don’t wait for people to come to you; be proactive!

Do make specific plans about when you’ll work on your professional development. For example, I read blogs on my phone while walking my dog.

Don’t be a lurker. You have something interesting to say. Other librarians want to hear about your experiences. Don’t just follow blogs—write one. Don’t just join Twitter—participate in a Twitter chat

TWITTER CHATS
#vaslchat
#macgyverlibrarianship
#tlchat
#libchat
#teacherwellbeingchat
I listened to children and discovered (shockingly) that tweens did NOT want to be read to or sit and watch a show. They wanted to have an adventure.

CBC COLUMN

First of all, thank you, school librarians. I love performing educational enrichment programs for you and your students. I liken it to being a grandparent: I get to come and have fun with the kids but then ride off into the sunset before there is any diaper-changing to do. As such, I am grateful to the multitudes of librarians whose patronage, support, and advice have helped me develop and enhance my slate of programs. Now, in return, let me share some tips I have gleaned that may help you make your librarian/producer partnerships function more smoothly.

Three of the important elements for developing a good librarian/programmer partnership are the same as those for building any good relationship: communication, preparation, and cooperation.

**Communication**

I began my career in library program development at the behest of my publisher, who encouraged (prodded) me to perform at schools and libraries to promote my first published work, *Will Allen and the Great Monster Detective* (Rogue Bear Press 2007). My publisher found many librarians who were willing partners, but my challenge was to produce a program that met the needs of my book’s tween-age audience and those of my constituent librarians.

The solution was simple: I listened.

I listened to children and discovered (shockingly) that tweens did NOT want to be read to or sit and watch a show. They wanted to have an adventure.

Then I listened to school librarians. Many expressed that, due to cutbacks and curriculum changes, they had far less time with students but more that they were required to teach them. In particular, they were frustrated about being short on time for one of their primary functions: teaching how the library is organized and how to locate books on different subjects.

In response to those needs, and keeping in mind my philosophy that kids learn by doing, I created my Monster Hunt Library Skills-Building Adventure Program, in which kids have a grand adventure, but unknowingly learn library research skills at the same time. In this program participants must locate books in the library that contain hidden clues that will help them track down and

**Always Feed the Clowns**

And Other Tips for Building Better Partnerships between School Librarians and Providers of Educational Programs

*Jason Edwards | Jason@RogueBearPress.com*
capture a lurking monster! Each child has a separate set of clues to find and learns how to find books in the fiction, nonfiction, and biography sections at the student’s own pace. This program has been so overwhelmingly popular that I have now performed it at over one hundred schools and libraries across the nation. Kids love the Monster Hunt because it is tons of fun, and school librarians love it because it teaches vital library skills in a single session—a big boon to many time-strapped librarians.

But if effective communication from my perspective means listening and responding to my constituents’ needs, the flip side is that librarians must be able express those needs. To do so requires another key element of a good partnership: preparation.

**Preparation**

Any educator will agree that there is no substitute for doing your homework. A librarian’s homework for facilitating good educational-program partnerships primarily involves determining students’ needs and researching providers who will meet those needs. Ask yourself the following questions.

*Who is the program for and what are their needs?*

The audience for an educational program is a prime determinant for what program is appropriate. After all, the academic, social (and, yes, entertainment) needs of children vary wildly. As such, most enrichment programs have a specified target audience.

*What should be the primary learning goal?*

Entertaining children is wonderful, but kids can get entertainment virtually anywhere. School and library enrichment programs should be educational as well. But determining educational objectives depends upon the needs of each audience. What programs are age-appropriate? What curriculum objectives might be supported? What academic deficiencies could be remediated? Answer these questions to know what kind of program to seek out.

*Who is the right partner?*

Once the educational objective has been identified, it is time to do some research. You can review program information by going to trade shows, asking around, or searching the Web, but regardless of where you find answers, the questions remain the same: Is a program out there that meets my
Although I modify my content to be reliable, and willing to work with you to meet students’ needs? Are you comfortable working with this person? This last point is particularly thorny. Know yourself (and your administrators), and get a feel for the character of your performer. In my case, if potential hosts are not comfortable with a bit of mayhem, my programs are not a good fit. Although I modify my content to suit the needs of different audiences, a performer cannot please everyone. Talk extensively to performers and involved parties, and find a good match. The effort can save you a lot of grief later.

The process of seeking program information is up to you. In my experience, a great number of librarians contact me as a result of recommendations from fellow librarians. On the other hand, many of the librarians I work with didn’t even know my programs existed until they researched programs online. Until you begin your search, you never know what you may find—or where.

Cooperation

Preparation for the program need not fall entirely on your shoulders. Classroom teachers and the appropriate specialist should be involved in integrating the program into the broader curriculum. (A writing workshop? Involve the composition teacher!) And asking the performer to brief teachers, provide supplemental materials such as lesson plans or teachers’ guides, or communicate with program sponsors is not outrageous. As I mentioned earlier, a lot of program bookings come as a result of referrals, so performers like me have a great deal invested in making the program a success. Therefore, most of us will go to surprising lengths to help prepare you and your school. If we can do something to help, don’t be afraid to (politely) ask. Conversely, don’t act put off if performers have any (reasonable) requests—say, for a water bottle or a couple of saltines. As busy as all school librarians are, if you want to build good partnerships with program providers it is well worth your while to spare a few moments to develop a rapport with the performer.

After all, even P. T. Barnum, whose life depended upon keeping his man-eating lions well fed, always made time to feed the clowns, too.

Jason Edwards is an award-winning author/ “edutainer” with over thirty years of experience developing innovative ways to entertain, instruct, and inspire children. Even his Chronicles of the Monster Detective Agency books are more than just frighteningly funny adventure stories; they are designed to help children confront their fears and to model ways to control anxieties. Jason’s deft touch at addressing children’s issues in a nonthreatening manner has earned him the Mom’s Choice Award for family-friendly media and an endorsement from the Anxiety Disorders Association of America (now known as the Anxiety and Depression Association of America). In addition to writing, Jason travels to schools and libraries across the nation performing his Monster Hunt Library Skills-Building Adventure program and his Destination: Inspiration InterACTIVE StoryCrafting Workshops. Jason lives in New York with his wife, daughters, and a rabbit named Bunniford who never comes when called. Learn more about Jason at his website <http://j81502.wix.com/MonsterAuthor>.