

Research Question(s): "What is the impact of a library media program, specifically librarian-teacher collaboration, on student learning?"

The Context, Rationale, and Review of Literature: Impact of credentialed librarians in elementary school (1st time in 18 years due to prop H funds)

American Association of School Librarians May 2006 position paper states: *"School library media centers are classrooms in which school library media specialists teach and students and teachers learn. In school library media centers, students read, utilize print, non-print, and technology resources, and learn to evaluate and use information for projects and reports efficiently, effectively, and ethically, with the goal of developing lifelong learning and literacy skills and strategies. In school library media programs, classroom teachers and school library media specialists collaborate for instruction and support the development of each other's teaching skills."*

In 1987 five school librarians traveled to the 75 elementary schools, spending one day a month in each of their assigned sites. In June 1988 this program was eliminated from the SFUSD district budget. So since that date elementary schools in San Francisco have not had credentialed school librarians. (Two or three schools used a variety of other budget sources to fund school librarians over the years.) For over 18 years, elementary students, teachers, parents and administrators have had no idea what a quality school library program looks like. San Francisco unfortunately is not unique in this: California ranks last in school libraries. Thanks to funds from Prop H this fall many elementary school libraries have a credentialed school librarian for one day each week.

Recent research from over 20 studies* makes a strong case for increased literacy with strong school libraries, credentialed staff & adequate materials. *According to the Toronto Star, researcher Donald Klinger has discovered a modest but clear link between the presence of a credentialed librarian and student achievement: ". schools (in Ontario) without trained teacher-librarians were more likely to score lower on grades 3 and 6 reading tests. Schools with teacher-librarians had proportionally more students who scored the highest levels on Grade 6 tests." California, consistently last or nearly last in the US in reading, ranks dead last with respect to librarians, with one for every 4,500 students. The national average is one for every 900 students.*

Stephen Krashen, Sent to the Los Angeles Daily News, April 7, 2006
Better grades? Thank a librarian Libraries tied to student achievement Study makes case for training, funding Apr. 7, 2006 TESS KALINOWSKI EDUCATION REPORTER Toronto Star *The first Canadian study linking school libraries to student achievement indicates that better libraries improve student test scores and add to kids' reading enjoyment. The Ontario School Library Association says the research, released yesterday, is the evidence it needs to make a case for more trained school librarians and better-stocked shelves..."There's such a clear link between libraries and student achievement I don't know how the minister (of education) can ignore it," said association president Michael Rosettis...Klinger's study of 800 elementary schools and about 50,000 students...U.S. studies have shown a link between student achievement and well-staffed, well-stocked school libraries.*

In 1987, when I traveled to 16 SFUSD elementary schools each month I had several tasks to accomplish. These included, in order of importance:

1. Collection development: weeding obsolete materials and ordering appropriate new books. I had to read and review current books, school library journals, and attend school and public library review meetings on children's literature. Each school had unique collection needs such as

language (Chinese, Filipino, Spanish, Russian); special needs, range of reading levels and site specific programs.

2. Program development: I developed a monthly calendar of suggested literacy programs, based on cultural and literacy events. This was sent to each principal with a sign up sheet four classes per school during each monthly visit.

3. Library administration: I established and maintained policies and procedures for each site (or adapted/revised those already in place). I arranged the library, including literacy displays and bulletin boards, realia and age appropriate library signs.

In September 2005, I faced the same tasks, though the priorities have altered. I was hired as computer integration teacher. In the fall Prop H funds paid for one day per week as library media teacher. The principal supported developing quality information literacy programs, allowing me to work in the library with all classes during computer time. Located near the Pacific Ocean, R L Stevenson serves 459 K-5 students, including students who are recent immigrants, speak a language other than English at home, are in special education and gifted programs. 49.4% are eligible for free or reduced lunch. 11.8% are designated Special Education and 7% are designated GATE. 40.% of the students are English Language Learners (ELL-LEP/NEP). ethnic makeup of Stevenson includes 63.8 % Chinese, 3% other Asian, 11.8% Other non white, 2.4% Latino, 3.3% African American, 8.3% Other white .2% American Indian and 7.2 declined to state. We have identified improving student writing as a school wide goal in our site plan. ELL and special education students also need support in all areas of literacy: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The school library had been kept clean and orderly by a dedicated group of parents. They also had systems and policies in place for circulation of books staffed with parent volunteers.

One teacher said, **"We don't need a librarian, because we already read to the children in class."** Only 2 teachers, in their professional life, had ever worked at a school where there was a credentialed school librarian. The principal, however had worked with credentialed library staff and was supportive.

As I looked at the small, clean library, I noted the crowded shelves, the lack of "kid appeal" displays, old bulletin boards and teacher materials crammed on the top of all the counters. I immediately moved all teacher materials to the "text book room", then began weeding the shelves. Many, many books dated from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. One immediate clue was books with dull, blue or green professional binding. The last time any books were sent to the bindery in the district was in the 1970s!!! By removing old, obsolete, inaccurate and stereotyped materials, it is easier for students to find books and to evaluate the collection to see what new titles are needed to support literacy and curriculum.

I also brought in realia and displays. Every month, I arrange theme book displays on shelves and tables. I changed bulletin boards to reflect monthly literacy themes and asked teachers to display student work in the library. I purchases age appropriate signs, including Dewey and "READ" ABCs.

Each month I communicate with the staff with a one page memo about resources, themes, calendar of events and online databases available for school and home use. I also developed a school library website. I surveyed teachers for key themes, lessons or special projects that they

were planning for the semester.

Initially I have found that the new teachers to the site are most open to collaborative lessons. They are also the teachers that have displayed student work in the library.

Data Collection: Lessons are from two third grade classes: a factual animal report and a Native American project. Both lessons took about 3 weeks to complete in October 2006.

First research project: Factual animal reports, third grade Each student chose animal from teacher list of endangered species. Reports included responses to specific questions: physical description, food, habitat, special characteristics. Sources for information included animal books in classroom and library, teacher selected websites. Students did not cite sources. Despite the "cut and paste" aspects several papers included delightful student voice "I may have never felt a cheetah's fur but if I had I would think it was soft." "Hey once a bald eagle died because of me...one of them was after me and charging at me when I was sitting down and I dodged him. He hit the ground and died."

Second research project: Native American project, third grade After extensive research on Native American history and culture, each student created an original dance. This project combined research, social science and art. Library lessons for students included:

1. Information literacy: finding, using and communicating information effectively. In the final project synthesized research facts on Native American culture to create original dances.

2. Primary resources: students examined photos, maps, drawings and realia. In final project each group included primary resources photos.

3. Graphic organizers: several lessons focused on Venn diagrams to gather and compare/contrast information. Students worked in groups reading non fiction articles then recording compare/contrast facts. In final projects students used Venn diagram for two animal dances. They listed number of performers, movements, colors specific to each dance and also what characteristics dances had in common.

4. Rubrics: Library lessons have short rubric: what we will study today. At the end of each lesson we review what was learned. For this project students completed a "Native American Dance Checklist" that included group names, details on number of performers, costumes, colors, movements, dance order.

5. Citation: Every time students use materials in the library, we discuss citations: title, author, publisher, publication date. Students record citation information as they take notes from print, electronic or media sources. In projects, students cited sources for factual information.

6. Literacy: Each library lesson includes reading, writing, listening and speaking. When teaching note taking, students are encouraged to specify "facts" or "opinions". Additional lessons included creating poetry. In final projects, students created original dances. They wrote short factual descriptions of their dances.

Analysis of student work

1. Research: Factual animal reports, third grade
This lesson was a fact finding/copying project.

2. Research: Native American project, third grade
This lesson encourages students to "think" about information they found rather than "cut and paste" facts. For this lesson, higher level thinking skills included: using primary resources, compare and contrast using graphic organizer, drawing conclusions from data, integration of

information, citing sources and student rubric.

In comparing these two lessons, it is striking how much more students used critical thinking skills in the collaborative lesson. As confirmed by many national studies, a library media teacher with a variety of library resources in collaboration with the teacher, has a substantive impact on the quality of student work.

Data Collection: Weekly library lessons over a 14 week period January-April 2006 Twenty one classes are scheduled each week on a fixed schedule. Some weeks had holidays, so fewer classes are scheduled. Data was gathered from calendar notes on program support, collection development, library environment and communication.

1. Librarian initiated, prepared, taught lessons(218)

Information literacy skills, research techniques: image search, famous person search, online dictionary, timeline; literacy including reader's theater, book talks and poetry; content areas: Science and Social Science. Theme research for Lunar New Year, Carter G. Woodson, African American Read In, Winter Olympics, Valentines, Rosa Parks, Read Across America, Suessville, Women Inventors, Cesar Chavez, metaphor poetry

2. Teacher request, librarian prepared & taught lessons(24)

15 word processing; 9 electronic search for specific topics: rainforest animals, deserts, Galapagos Islands, American Revolution, biography

3. Collaboration: teacher and librarian plan, develop, teach and evaluate lessons together (18)

Photosynthesis, History of Photography, Martin Luther King, JR & service learning, African American Inventors, Salmon Sally Environmental issues, butterfly life cycle

Analysis of data

1. Librarian only lessons focused on K-5 themes, cultural and calendar events. Each lesson was developed for specific grade level in content, reading level and interest. Lessons integrated information literacy and computer skills. Literacy skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking were emphasized in lessons. Knowledge of curriculum, standards, child development, student interest informed the development of these lessons. Rubrics and evaluation included notes on "what to change", "what to do again next time".

2. Most teacher requested lessons were for word processing, "typing". Usually the teacher did not specify a content for the lessons. Two first grade teachers had students write 2-3 sentences prior to coming to the library and requested that students learn to "type on the computer". First grade students needed two class sessions to complete this. Nine teachers requested specific lessons. Some made requests a week in advance. Most asked for special topic search a day or two before scheduled class. One second grade teacher asked that students research "Galapagos" as class came to library!! Lessons did not always integrate literacy, information literacy and computer skills. Planning time was minimal. These lessons had no formal evaluation built in.

3. Teacher and librarian met to plan lessons, including content, standards, evaluation, format, timeline, roles, etc. Teachers usually introduced the lesson in class, forming cooperative groups and discussing components of activities/projects. During the library visit, classes investigated a variety of sources, print, non print, primary and electronic as well as selecting appropriate research tools, including note taking and citing sources. Library based class work usually took 2-3 weeks. Often classes presented and displayed final projects in the library. Teacher and librarian met at the end of lesson to briefly evaluate and make suggestions for future lessons.

(Add bar graph)

14 weeks
total classes 260
librarian only 218
teacher request 24
collaborative 18

Analysis of Calendar Notes:

Program Support: The principal is very supportive of the library program and has provided excellent suggestions for encouraging change in climate and attitude at the school. She supported necessary changes in policy and procedures (i.e. fines had been collected for overdue materials, this was not district policy.) Staff that is also new to the site have been more open to collaborative lessons. During the 2nd semester teachers expressed more interest in collaborative lessons and also requested more resources.

Collection Development: Three of the parents that volunteer each week in the library have commented on the quality of books ordered. They also are more aware of worn, old books and set them aside. Several teachers said that new titles were helpful for curricular lessons. Parents, teachers and students have commented on the displays of new titles as well as thematic displays each month. One parent enthusiastically talked at the PTA about changes in the library, including automating the collection.

Library Environment: Initially several teachers and parents expressed concern over changes in library set up. (The old out dated card catalog was still being used by students.) Students find books much easier with age appropriate signage. Parents have said now that all materials are filed by Dewey system it is much easier to find items. Each month a class has displayed work in the library.

Communication: The monthly newsletter informs teachers of new resources, monthly themes, website links and up coming events. The library website has new links each month. As teachers request a topic or theme, the links are added to their special area under "Teacher and Class Pages". Several teachers have used these links in classroom lessons and for individual student work.

Summary and Conclusion:

Preliminary Findings

1. The quality of student work is very different when a lesson is collaborative. The focus shifts from specific answers to questions (fill in the blank research) to student response to open ended questions that encourage depth of student engagement, critical thinking skills and often lesson evaluation by students. The time frame for students was similar to a 'cut and paste" lesson. A collaboratively planned lesson demands more time for teacher and librarian to meet before, during and after the lesson. This is a real change for most teachers who generally do not have the time or resources to plan collaborative lessons with a credentialed library media teacher.
2. Teachers have not worked with a credentialed librarian and did not have a clear perception of role as a collaborative fellow teacher. Also the library had been staffed by volunteer parents who

checked books in and out. Teachers at this school wanted "computer lessons" such as "typing" and word processing. Computer lessons had not been tied to classroom work or information literacy. The librarian introduced lessons that modeled integrating technology with classroom curriculum and information literacy skills had not been part of the school pedagogy. Several teachers responded to these lessons and began to work on collaborative lessons with the librarian. A small number of teachers continue to request "typing" and other lessons not related to curriculum or integrated into classroom learning.

3. The support of the administration is essential. With a strong working relationship with the administrator, it is easier to introduce changes, integrate library media programs in school site plan and offer on going professional development for staff.

Policy Implications

1. Substantive funding for Pre K-12 library media teachers, with an established budget for books, media and electronic resources and equipment, program and supply budget, library support services. As a next step, I would like to work with Sheldon Gen, SF State professor in policy administration, to develop a survey for all Prop H librarians. I would like to use survey in fall and again in spring, focusing on four areas: library programs, collection development, environment and communication. This survey could provide a baseline of programs and a guideline for improving policy and procedures.

2. Professional development for teachers and administrators on importance of and use of library media teachers and quality programs. Collaborative teaching is a key to student learning. District staff development has not addressed this in the past. Most teachers and administrators have never worked with a credentialed library media teacher and have no idea what a quality library program is! Library media teaches can provide professional development programs featuring the 21st century library media resources.

3. Inclusion in college and university teacher preparation programs on importance of and use of library media teachers and quality programs

4. Equity and access: Upgrade school library facilities (the heart of the school), including rich print and media collection, state of the art technology for wireless internet, on line age and content appropriate databases, streaming media, presentation equipment, video conferencing, podcasting, etc. Parents, administrators, teachers and students should be made aware of national studies on quality library programs. They can compare their school library facility, staff and resources with model programs. Elementary school librarians provide key resources and information literacy skills for 21st century students. Libraries are more important than ever. It is not whether we can afford libraries, but whether we can afford not to have quality resources for all students. "The state now invests only 3% of the national average in school libraries. Nearly all children in the US master the basics of reading. To get beyond the basics, children need access to books, and for many children, libraries are their only chance. Instead of spending more on measuring the problem, we should make the most obvious investment and use some of the extra money for libraries." Stephen Krashen

* "Research is mounting that young people and teachers are at risk if they lack the types of information technology that a strong library media program can deliver." Lance, Keith C., and David V. Loertscher, *Powering Achievement: School Library Media Programs Make a Difference*. San Jose, CA: Hi Willow Research and Publishing, 200.

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AASL Position Statement on Instructional Classification

<http://www.ala.org/ala/pressreleases2006/may2006/AASLInstructionalclassif.htm> Issued April 2006

AASL supports the inclusion of certified school library media specialists as part of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) "Instruction" classification. School library media centers are classrooms in which school library media specialists teach and students and teachers learn. In school library media centers, students read, utilize print, non-print, and technology resources, and learn to evaluate and use information for projects and reports efficiently, effectively, and ethically, with the goal of developing lifelong learning and literacy skills and strategies. In school library media programs, classroom teachers and school library media specialists collaborate for instruction and support the development of each other's teaching skills. Multiple research studies, more than 60 since 1965, have affirmed that there is a clear link between school library media programs staffed by state-certified school library media specialists and increased student achievement (Library Research Services Web site at <http://www.lrs.org/impact.asp>).

School library media specialists are recognized by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) as teachers whose teaching can be measured to meet standards for professional teaching excellence and by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) as teachers who are critically important for student achievement (<http://www.nclis.gov/info/schoollibraryactivities.html>). School library media specialists are teachers who serve as crucial partners in ensuring that states and school districts meet the reading requirements that are part of No Child Left Behind (P.L. 107-110). In Part B, Subpart 1, Section 1208 of No Child Left Behind (P.L. 107-110), Instructional Staff is defined as "principals, teachers, supervisors of instruction, librarians, and school library media specialists".

Despite the vital role school library media specialists play as teachers and collaborators with classroom teachers, NCES classifies school library media specialists as "Support Staff-- Instruction" rather than "Instruction" along with classroom teachers. School library media specialists were placed in the instructional support category by NCES in the 1950s and, despite the evolution of school library media specialists' work from book warehouse managers to instructional leaders and partners, school library media specialists remain in this support staff classification. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and NCES conflict in their classification of school library media specialists.

Failure to classify school library media specialists as instructional staff and to recognize the impact of state-certified school library media specialists on student achievement, especially in reading, may result in a critical loss of funding for library positions and resources and a dangerous deterioration of library services for our nation's children. AASL will take a lead role over the next several years to communicate with state and national government leaders as well as the leadership of educational organizations about the importance of, and the role played by, school library media specialists in student achievement.

Scholastic Administrator [http://www.scholastic.com/administrator/may06/articles.asp?article=Library May 2006 Not Your Father's Library](http://www.scholastic.com/administrator/may06/articles.asp?article=Library%20May%202006%20Not%20Your%20Father's%20Library) By Matt Bolch "ADVICE FOR ADMINISTRATORS: Hire the right person. Your librarian should be your information technology scout, your trainer, your visionary. Your librarian should be your partner in furthering your community's learning and professional development goals. Make sure that person comes equipped with a dedication to teaching and learning, as well as 21st-century teaching and communication skills."