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Research Question:

What is the impact of a library media program, specifically librarian-teacher collaboration, on student learning?

Context for Research:

"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

California ranks last in school libraries. Recent national research from over 20 studies* makes a strong case for increased literacy with strong school libraries, credentialed staff & adequate materials. My action research looks at changes in student work, programs and resources when a credentialed library media teacher is working in the elementary library. I work full time at an elementary library as computer integration teacher and Prop H librarian. Thanks to funds from Prop H this fall many elementary school libraries have a credentialed school librarian for one day each week.

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, experience 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.

2. Professional development for teachers and administrators on importance of and use of library media teachers and quality programs.

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

4. Upgrade school library facilities (the heart of the school), including rich print and media collection, state of the art technology for wireless internet, video conferencing, podcasting, etc.

Next Steps:

1. 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!

2. Equity and access: 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

3. 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.