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Two Heads Are Better than One: Influencing Preservice Classroom Teachers' Understanding and Practice of Classroom–Library Collaboration

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Abstract

Two Heads Are Better than One: The Factors Influencing the Understanding and Practice of Classroom–Library Collaboration proposed to identify the factors involved in educating future K–8 classroom teachers about collaboration for instruction with school library media specialists (SLMSs). This longitudinal study monitored the growth of teacher education students' understandings of collaboration through their preservice education, student teaching, and first year of classroom teaching. The participants were enrolled in a teacher preparation program facilitated by the researcher, a former SLMS. The goal of this mixed-methods case study was to suggest critical components of preservice education, student teaching, and first-year teaching experiences that influence novice classroom teachers' classroom–library collaborations. This article provides an overview of the study, a review of relevant literature, and the data collected, including findings from four surveys as well as other data sources. This study shows that interventions during preservice education were important influencers. However, the findings clearly indicate that the educators serving in K–8 school library positions and the supports, or lack thereof, for classroom–library collaboration during student teaching and first-year classroom teaching were the most influential factors in determining whether or not these beginning educators collaborated with SLMSs for instruction.

Introduction

Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning focuses the work of school library media programs on nine information literacy standards for students and identifies three spheres of influence for school library media specialists (SLMSs): literacy, technology, and collaboration (AASL and AECT 1998). The role of the SLMS as an instructional partner with classroom teachers is clearly specified. Although quantitative research studies in sixteen states and one Canadian province have shown a positive correlation between student achievement and the work of full-time, certified SLMSs (Library Research Service 2007), the practice of classroom–library collaboration is not as wide spread as it could be.

The willingness, the eagerness, and the ability to collaborate are equal responsibilities of the classroom teacher and the SLMS. One of the barriers to classroom–library collaboration is that preservice classroom teacher education emphasizes individual interactions between teachers and students rather than collaboration among teams of educators who jointly design, deliver, and assess curriculum (Hartzell 2002). The participants in this study, however, engaged in collaborative lesson planning, implementation, and assessment throughout their preservice coursework. They were schooled to expect collaboration with their SLMS and classroom teacher colleagues, and they were prepared to engage in this level of collegiality for the benefit of student learning and the betterment of their own professional development. These new educators are among the 2.2 million that the U.S. Department of Education predicts will be needed over the next decade (Howard 2003). They are new classroom teachers who, according to the National Education Association, are at risk of leaving the teaching profession within the first five years, in part because of the lack of support from colleagues, administrators, and parents (NEA 2006).

Unlike many of their fellow novices, these new teachers entered their profession with high expectations for classroom–library collaboration during their student teaching and first year of classroom teaching; they entered the profession with a predisposition toward classroom–library collaboration for instruction. This case study set out to determine which learning experiences, called interventions, during their preservice education most influenced these new teachers' understanding and practice of classroom–library collaboration. The study also delineates the response from the school library community to the study participants' high expectation for collaborative teaching with SLMSs working in the field. The findings of this study help the school library profession identify strategies for influencing receptive new colleagues toward the practice of classroom–library collaboration.

If school library professionals recognize that the SLMS's ability to significantly impact student achievement is contingent on effective collaboration with classroom teacher colleagues, then this study provides the profession with a novice classroom–teacher perspective on the support he or she expected and needed in the field. This information helps SLMSs better meet the instructional needs of new classroom teacher colleagues. This study recommends components of preservice teacher education. More importantly for the school library profession, it also points to strengths and weaknesses in the school library community with regard to exemplary collaborative practices.

Research Questions

The meaning of the word collaboration was critical to analyzing the data in this study. The following definition appeared on each of the four survey instruments: "Collaboration occurs when educators co-design, co-plan, co-teach, and/or co-assess curriculum-based lessons or units of study" (appendixes A, B, C, and D). The survey questions evolved as the study participants matriculated through their teacher preparation program, their student teaching experience, and their first-year of classroom teaching; each set of questions built on the questions from the previous survey. The overarching question for this study was, what are the factors that influence preservice and first-year classroom teachers' understanding and practice of classroom–library collaboration? Each of the four surveys focused on the participants' developing knowledge and practice of collaboration:

- What were preservice classroom teachers' prior experiences with school and college libraries? When they began their teacher preparation program, what was their understanding of the roles of SLMSs and their initial knowledge of and experience with classroom–library collaboration?

- Which of the classroom–library collaboration-focused learning engagements (interventions) during their preservice education influenced preservice teachers' thinking about school library media programs, the instructional role of SLMSs, and the benefits of classroom–library collaboration?
- Which behaviors of SLMSs, preservice teachers, and their mentor teachers influenced the study participants' understanding and practice of classroom–library collaboration during their student teaching experience?
- Which behaviors of the SLMS, novice teachers, and their classroom teacher colleagues influenced their understanding and practice of classroom–library collaboration during their first year of classroom teaching?

Review of Relevant Literature

Collaboration is a buzzword in education today. The concept and practice of teaching and learning in communities of practice is in resurgence. Educational leaders have been extolling the benefits and impact of professional learning communities for many years (DuFour and Eaker 1998; Sergiovanni 1994), and many principals today are inviting faculty to consider the importance of collaborative practices in their work. Two recent studies focus on the potential of collaboration between preservice classroom teachers and K–12 students' families and communities to positively impact student success (Flanigan 2004; Kidd, Sánchez, and Thorp 2004). A significant number of studies describe collaboration between the student and teacher and the mentor and teacher during the student teaching experience (Acheson and Gall 2003; Beck and Kosnik 2002; Graham 1999; Phelan, McEwan, and Pateman 1996). To date, however, there are no published studies that focus on the practice or efficacy of developing preservice classroom teachers' understanding of classroom–library collaboration.

Throughout their careers, educators are expected to cooperate or collaborate with grade-level colleagues, their administrators, and other certified or licensed faculty, such as SLMSs, special education teachers, school counselors, speech and language pathologists, social workers, and psychologists. Cochran-Smith identifies "opportunities to work with other educators in professional learning communities rather than in isolation" (2004, 391) as one of the necessary conditions to retain high-quality teachers in the profession. Future teachers can and should be challenged to think in terms of teaching and learning within a community of adult learners who will support and improve each other's professional work.

Like all educators, preservice teachers have been apprenticing for their profession since kindergarten. Their beliefs about teaching are generally well formed before they enter the university (Pajares 1992). This prior knowledge affects what preservice teachers learn in their teacher preparation courses. "These preconceptions come from years and years of observing people who taught them and using this information to draw inferences about what good teaching looks like and what makes it work" (Hammerness et al. 2005, 367). One of the challenges of preservice education, then, is to prompt future educators to question their preconceived notions about what constitutes effective teaching.

Cook and Friend (1995) charge university faculty with the role of modeling collaboration during teacher preparation programs. Observing collaborative teaching can support preservice teachers who may not be aware of collaboration practiced by their own K–12 teachers, if they indeed practiced it. For many, the idea of collaborating for instruction may be a new construct in their teaching framework. This creates a need for consciously planned instruction and well-articulated integration of information and learning experiences that highlight the part classroom–library

collaboration can play in K–12 students' learning as well as in teachers' teaching and professional development.

The correlational research studies that document the positive impact of SLMSs and school library media programs on students' achievement on standardized tests should be of interest to every educational stakeholder. In several of these studies, namely Colorado (2000), Oregon (2001), New Mexico (2002), Indiana (2004), and Illinois (2005), library program development and collaborative teaching are aspects of quality library services that can affect students' standardized test scores (Library Research Service 2007). Classroom–library collaboration can help schools meet local, state, and national goals for student achievement.

It seems logical that if preservice teachers practiced collaboration or classroom–library collaboration during their preparation program, they would be more likely to integrate these practices into their future classroom teaching. A program in which preservice classroom teachers and SLMSs practiced co-planning, co-implementing, and co-assessing lessons and units of instruction would be the ideal environment to promote this practice. As that was not available to the participants in this study because their courses met in the evenings, I required preservice classroom teachers to collaborate with one another. They developed lessons and units of instruction that included opportunities for co-teaching in order to challenge the construct of teaching as interactions between a single, isolated teacher and individual or groups of students. I reasoned that, if they accommodated collaboration into their teaching construct, these preservice teachers could enter the profession prepared and experienced in this method of instructional design and delivery and could seek to replicate this practice with SLMSs in the field. They would then integrate this model into their professional work.

Description of the Research Context

There were fifteen participants in this case study when it began. One dropped out of the study before completing the post–student teaching survey; fourteen participants completed all four of the surveys. The participants were juniors in the 2004–05 academic year and seniors during 2005–06. They were enrolled in an undergraduate teacher preparation program offered by a state university in Arizona at a statewide campus in their local community. They entered the program having earned an associate's degree or two years of course credits at the community college. During their teacher preparation program, the majority of the participants were working full time outside of education. The study participants attended two years of evening classes and conducted one semester of student teaching. Before they engaged in student teaching in the spring of 2006, they experienced forty-five hours of teacher aide practicum, working in classrooms with students and classroom teachers as part of their education coursework. All of the study participants remained in this geographic area to conduct their student teaching, and twelve out of fourteen began their teaching careers in this state in the fall of 2007.

As a faculty leader for this teacher education program, I facilitated five courses for the study participants. Four of our classes met in a school library. I integrated the resources of the library into all of theses courses. I constructed collaborative learning engagements and offered classroom–library collaboration information in these students' junior writing course, their early literacy course, the elementary curriculum course, and their social studies methods course. These interventions were designed to influence study participants' values, expectations, and eventually, their collaborative teaching practices. I was responsible for helping students find classroom placements for some of their teacher aide practicum experiences. I supervised the university classroom course during their student teaching, but I had no input into the location of the study participants' student teaching placements.

My beliefs about the value of classroom–library collaboration for students, classroom teachers, SLMSs, administrators, and school cultures come from my graduate education in school librarianship. They also come from reading Information Power (AASL and AECT 1988, 1998), other school library literature, and twelve years of experience as a collaborating elementary and high school SLMS. I shared my values with the study participants along with the research studies that suggest what my practice has shown me—K–12 students, classroom teachers, and SLMSs benefit from classroom–library collaboration. I showed collaboratively designed, implemented, and assessed classroom–library lesson plans, sample student work, and gave testimonials. I shared with the study participants my belief that collaborating with my classroom colleagues transformed our teaching practices, accelerated our professional growth, and helped us provide students with high-quality, information-rich learning experiences. I believe these learning experiences propelled K–12 students forward as information literate, independent learners who understood, as they matured, the role of information in a democratic society. For me, classroom–library collaboration is fundamental to effective twenty-first-century education. The study participants were clearly aware of my bias.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis for the Components of this Study

The study participants volunteered to respond to three online surveys and one paper and pencil survey. The first survey was administered at the start of their undergraduate K–8 teacher preparation program as they were beginning their education coursework in their junior year. The pre–preservice education survey (appendix A) focused on the participants' prior experiences with school and college libraries and librarians. It also accessed participants' understanding of the roles school libraries and librarians can play in instruction and their knowledge of or experience with classroom–library collaboration. In addition to closed questions, the pre–preservice education survey included an opportunity for participants to elaborate or clarify any of their responses. This invitation was offered on all four of the surveys.

At the end of the second year of the teacher preparation program, before they began student teaching, the study participants took the second online survey (appendix B). These survey questions sought to identify which of the interventions during their teacher preparation program had made an impact on their understanding of classroom–library collaboration. Excerpts from participants' reflection journals, class papers or exams, and other written communication provided additional data beyond the questions on the first two surveys.

Participants participated in the third online survey at the end of their student teaching experience (appendix C). This survey focused on the participants' actual practice of collaboration and their awareness of other educators' collaborative practices in the schools where they served as student teachers. Specifically, they were asked to share if and how they worked collaboratively with the school's SLMS, if their mentor teacher or other educators in the building collaborated with the SLMS, and if there were structures in place within the school schedule that provided time for collaborative planning and teaching with the SLMS. This survey instrument and the one that followed included an open-ended question that asked respondents to provide a list of factors that influenced their decision to collaborate or not to collaborate.

Participants had the opportunity to volunteer for a focus group interview, which was audiotaped. I made field notes during the group interview and transcribed excerpts from the audiotape. The interview included open-ended questions that invited participants to go beyond the survey questions to elaborate on the personal meaning they ascribed to these learning experiences

(Rossman and Rallis 1998; Seidman 1998). Focus group participants were invited to give videotaped testimonials.

Finally, the participants took the fourth and final survey after their first year of actual classroom teaching (appendix D). The survey was provided in hard copy format via U.S. mail or electronic format via e-mail. The questions from the third survey were repeated with the participant as the classroom–library collaborator. The open-ended question regarding support or constraint for collaboration was included to yield data related to the interventions participants had experienced during their preservice education.

The close-ended question responses were tabulated, and the data were shared in terms of percentages. The open-ended questions and the interview data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I did not have preconceived notions about what would most influence participants' understanding and practice of classroom–library collaboration. My qualitative research goal, therefore, was "to reach a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences" (Rossman and Rallis 1998, 85). Although this case study ultimately involved a small number of participants, their experiences shed light on the supports and obstacles experienced by novice teachers in relationship to their practice of classroom–library collaboration.

Interventions

During the first year of the study participants' preservice education, I integrated information, research studies, and hands-on learning experiences with collaboration into four of the study participants' courses. We deconstructed a classroom–library collaborative unit plan. I arranged for a panel discussion presentation by teams of classroom teachers, SLMSs, and principals. We deconstructed classroom–library lesson plans, and I shared anecdotal information about the impact of these lessons on students and educators. I co-facilitated a simulation of a classroom teacher and SLMS planning session and demonstrated the resulting cotaught lesson.

Classroom–Library Collaborative Unit Plan Deconstruction

During the second course I facilitated for the study participants, Integrated Literacy I: Developmental Literacy and Language Arts in the Elementary School (fall semester 2004), we deconstructed a classroom–library unit plan I had co-taught a few years previously with a team of first-grade classroom teachers. The focus of the lesson was oral language experience (nursery rhymes); the organization of instruction was small-group centers. I shared with the preservice teachers highlights of the planning process and together we examined what and how students learned in this unit of study. After our discussion, the study participants were asked to work with a partner to create a Venn diagram that showed their understanding of the benefits of collaboration to students and to teachers as compared with a single teacher striving to teach these same concepts with a small group, center format, or with a whole-class organization for instruction.

All of the participants' Venn diagrams showed they deduced that when educators collaborate they generate more ideas and creativity and can cover more learning standards or integrate more material. They felt that these learning activities would be more interesting to children because of the variety. Preservice teachers noted that children could receive more one-on-one attention and instruction, and one group pointed out that students wouldn't have to wait as long to have questions answered as they would with just one teacher. One group observed that there was shared responsibility between the adults for guiding and monitoring the children's work. Two out

of ten diagrams noted that working toward a common goal was a positive aspect of this model. Three groups felt that the collaborative structure was more time and effort efficient.

Only one team specifically noted that children would learn better. Considering their pre–preservice education surveys in which 100 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that collaboration should result in higher student achievement, one might expect more groups to cite this benefit. This finding, however, is consistent with research related to preservice teachers' readiness. Research has shown that new teachers, and by extrapolation preservice teachers, tend to focus on their own actions within the classroom rather than on what children are learning (Hammerness et al. 2005, 400).

Reading the Research and Classroom–Library Panel Presentation and Discussion

During the first few weeks of the participants' elementary curriculum class (spring semester 2005), I invited a panel of classroom teacher, SLMS, and principal teams from two schools to share their collaborative work with our class. One of the texts for this course was Loertscher and Achterman's book Increasing Student Achievement through the Library Media Center: A Guide for Teachers (2003). Before the panel visit, the study participants had engaged in discussions related to classroom–library collaboration. I had provided a mini-lesson that focused on the distinctions between cooperation and collaboration as well as a review of the benefits to students, including achievement, and to teachers, including collegiality and professional development. Students individually prepared a list of questions in advance of the panel discussion, which began with a presentation by each school's team.

During their presentation, the panel shared standards-based collaborative lessons and unit plans, research strategy handouts in K–5 student-friendly language, graphic organizers, and student assessment rubrics. In addition, the teams also passed around samples of students' learning artifacts and shared student work that was published on the Web. The classroom teachers and SLMSs shared their experience of collaboration from both personal and professional perspectives. The principals shared the value they place on these collaborative practices and the many ways they support these learning and teaching opportunities in their schools.

Although the preservice teachers asked few questions during the presentation itself, their concerns were evident in the question-and-answer period. Although the unmistakable focus of the panel and that evening's class was clearly collaboration and the majority of the students had brought prepared questions on that topic, many of their questions were related to interviewing for jobs, offering advice to new teachers, and delving into political issues in education, such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the focus on high-stakes testing, and standards-based instruction.

After the panel presentation, students made astute observations in their response journals. The following examples are representative of the range of comments:

- "I cannot imagine why teachers do not jump at the prospect of having someone brainstorm ideas, help with lesson planning, and provide a new perspective on the classroom curriculum. As stated by one principal, 'Teacher and school library media specialist collaboration provides higher achievement. The librarian is the only one who impacts all the children leading to academic success and works with every single teacher.'"

- "When teachers can brainstorm with someone who has a different background and skills, they have the ability to create great things."
- "Each teacher and school library media specialist had many stories and examples about how collaborating enabled them not only to come up with more creative lesson plans, but also to better assess themselves and the quality of their lesson. Having another person's perspectives and observations is enormously helpful."
- "I learned that you are never alone; there is always someone there to help."
- "I was impressed with how much the teachers and principals value their librarians and were very picky when choosing one for their school."
- "Before this class, I never thought it would be 'okay' to ask a librarian to collaborate. It hadn't crossed my mind that a librarian would even do so. It is possible that I feel this way because during my elementary experiences, my teachers would basically dump us there [in the library] for lesson planning time."

These responses indicate that the study participants' paradigm of classroom teaching as a solo experience for individual teachers was affected by this intervention, and they were positively influenced toward classroom–library collaboration by the panel discussion.

One possible way to improve the impact of the panel could have been to ask SLMSs to invite novice, rather than veteran, classroom teachers to be on their presentation team. The depth of the curriculum planning and instruction demonstrated was exemplary. It may have been too sophisticated for preservice teachers, who may have had trouble picturing themselves in these scenarios. In addition, the study participants' assignment for that week had been to compose a letter of interest for a teaching position; their focus on interviewing and landing a job was the natural result.

Additional Interventions Data

One of my objectives for the interventions in the study was to infuse the participants' preservice teacher education program with collaboration concepts and collaborative teaching strategies. To that end, students revisited this learning and teaching model often. I included an essay question related to our exploration of collaboration on the final examination for the elementary curriculum course: "Compose a definition of collaboration. Then write a paragraph about the benefits of classroom-teacher and school library media specialist collaboration." Participants' responses about the benefits of collaboration clustered around various concepts (table 1).

Table 1. How Study Participants Defined the Benefits of Classroom–Library Collaboration (N=15)

Concepts	**Times Mentioned by Individual Respondents (Percentage of Participants)**
More individualized attention for students	11 (73%)
Increased ideas	9 (60%)

Increased/integrated resources	9 (60%)
Increased creativity	8 (53%)
Broader perspectives on curriculum	7 (47%)
Support for planning	5 (33%)
Shared responsibility for curriculum	3 (20%)
Increased potential for success	2 (13%)
Lesson/unit assessment	2 (13%)
Increased student achievement/motivation, Integrated curriculum, Modeling partnership or teamwork, Professional growth for teachers, Support for curriculum standards	1 (7%)

These data reflect the responses of the students who were participants in the study rather than all of the students in the course. The participants understood the benefits of collaboration for students. In their teacher aide practicum experiences, they had occasion to work one-on-one and with small groups of students, and realized that lowering the student–teacher ratio assisted both students and teachers. More than half of the participants noted access to more ideas, integrated resources, and increased opportunities for creativity. Another of the most encouraging concepts was the understanding that collaboration results in broader perspectives on curriculum. If these benefits became values for these preservice teachers, the likelihood that they would practice collaboration with colleagues, teacher-librarians, and others could increase.

On the other hand, only one of these preservice teachers mentioned student achievement as a benefit of collaboration. Although achievement can be inferred from some of the other concepts, particularly individualized attention for students, it was surprising that more participants did not specifically cite this benefit. This was especially unexpected since one of our texts was Increasing Student Achievement through the Library Media Center: A Guide for Teachers (Loertscher and Achterman 2003).

We continued to read the Loertscher and Achterman text in the social studies methods course, the final course of their first year in the program (spring 2005). We continued our collaboration conversations and worked with Information Power's information literacy standards for students (AASL and AECT 1998) in our social studies explorations. On the final examination for that course, I provided a scenario in which the social studies standards had changed for sixth grade and the textbook did not address a particular concept or historical event. I asked the students what they would do. Six out of fifteen students (40 percent) said they would attempt to collaborate with colleagues; only four (26 percent) mentioned collaboration with the SLMS. The infrequency of a classroom–library collaboration response indicated that they had yet to integrate classroom–library collaborative work into their curriculum problem-solving schema.

Practicing Collaboration in K–8 Classrooms

Collaborative learning engagements and projects were integrated into all four of the courses I facilitated before the study participants' student teaching experiences. Partners worked collaboratively on many assignments and small groups of up to five people worked on large scale projects such as year-long planning and designing curriculum units. Role play was used to learn and review some of the skills and strategies for collaborative work. In addition, I served as a mediator for groups that solicited my facilitation when communication broke down. As in life, sometimes the groupwork was more productive than at other times. Some students were more comfortable working in teams than others; some surprised themselves by having positive collaborative experiences. Reflecting on the collaborative process and the impact of collaboration was part of every rubric in which this model was utilized.

These are some comments study participants made about their co-planning and co-teaching:

- "Another important thing that I learned is that you need to allow for different teaching styles. When you work with a partner, it is imperative! The division of labor is another thing. I need to know that I have it all done before I can relax. [My partner] does great work, but works best under pressure. I still think it was good for us to work together. After all, we will be working [in schools] with different people all the time."
- "As far as collaboration is concerned, two heads are better than one; some of the ideas we used I could have never thought up on my own."
- "Through collaboration, we also realized how important using various types of resources and different types of assessments are."
- "Collaboration is two-fold. The positive side is new fresh ideas, help, and also a different perspective on a topic. The negative aspect is personalities. The positive areas surely outweigh the negative; however, it [personality] is still something to consider."

Although it was suggested that students work with a partner in their fall 2004 teacher-aide practicum experiences, only four students did so. I provided opportunities for these two teams to share their opinions and positive experiences of co-teaching. In the spring of 2005, thirteen of the fifteen participants in the study conducted their fifteen-hour teacher aide practicum experience with a partner. For the most part, these co-teaching experiences were successful as evidenced by the students' feedback on their observation lesson reflections and the anecdotal comments they recorded in their practicum journals. As a result, I revised the post–preservice education survey to include a question about the impact of collaboration during the practicum (appendix B).

The Case Study Surveys

Fifteen undergraduate preservice teachers completed the online pre–preservice teacher education survey in the fall of 2004 at the beginning the first semester of their teacher education program. After completing their coursework, the same fifteen also took the post–preservice education survey online in December 2005. Fourteen of them took the two remaining surveys in May 2006 at the conclusion of their student teaching experience and in June 2007 at the end of their first full year of classroom teaching. Of the fourteen who took the final survey, one had stayed at home with her baby and did not teach. Another had spent a semester abroad and conducted her student teaching while her cohort colleagues began their first year of classroom teaching. These two respondents' surveys were not included in the final survey data and analysis.

Pre– and Post–Preservice Education Surveys: Data and Analysis

On the pre–preservice education survey, the first set of survey questions was designed to access participants' experiences with libraries as K–12 students. In their own K–12 student careers, all but one student attended elementary and middle schools with libraries; all of their high schools had libraries. A total of 87 percent of the participants described themselves as regular library users in elementary school. Nearly one-third (27 percent) reported that they regularly used the library during their middle school/junior high years, and 40 percent said they used it sometimes. Only 7 percent were regular library users during high school, with 67 percent reporting that they sometimes used the high school library. Only 7 percent indicated that their classroom teachers always worked with their SLMSs; 53 percent reported that they worked together sometimes. However, only 13 percent noted that SLMSs played a key role in their own educational experience.

Except for the section described above and the intervention questions, the pre– and post–preservice education surveys were identical. This redundancy was designed specifically to determine the change in respondents' understanding of the roles of SLMSs and school library media program in instruction. Table 2 provides a comparison between these data sets.

Table 2. Pre– and Post–Preservice Education: Questions Related to the Roles of School Library Media Specialists in Instruction, N=15 (pre) and **N=15 (post)**

Question: School library media specialists should be responsible for	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Don't Know**
teaching reading.	1 (7%) **1 (7%)**	3 (20%) **6 (40%)**	10 (66%) **6 (40%)**		1 (7%) **2 (13%)**
teaching research skills.	2 (13%) **6 (40%)**	11 (73%) **7 (47%)**	2 (13%) **2 (13%)**		
teaching every area of the school curriculum.	**2 (13%)**	1 (7%) **4 (27%)**	7 (47%) **7 (47%)**	6 (40%) **2 (13%)**	1 (7%)

There was only a small change in expectations for SLMSs' responsibility for teaching reading and research skills. After I taught the eight-week Literacy I course, which focused on reading comprehension strategies and included a great deal of exploration of classroom–library collaboration to meet these instructional goals, the study participants participated in the sixteen-week Literacy II, a reading instruction course that focused more on teaching decoding skills. That course was taught by a reading specialist who served at an elementary school without a SLMS. Reframing this question in terms of "reading comprehension" might have yielded different results. It is surprising that, by the end of their teacher preparation program, all of the respondents had not come to believe that SLMSs were responsible for teaching research skills.

However, there was a 33 percent increase in the number of study participants who agreed when asked if SLMSs "should be responsible for teaching every area of the curriculum."

Table 3 shows these preservice classroom teachers' constructs related to the roles of SLMSs in instruction and in instructional support both before and after participating in their coursework. The pre–preservice education survey was especially important information because it indicated their preconceptions that would need to be challenged, modified, or changed.

Table 3. Pre– and Post–Preservice Education: Questions Related to the Cooperative and Collaborative Roles of School Library Media Specialists, N=15 (pre) and **N=15 (post)**

Question: School library media specialists should	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Don't Know**
help classroom teachers find materials.	6 (40%) **9 (60%)**	8 (53%) **6 (40%)**	1 (7%)		
help classroom teachers design and plan lessons and units of instruction.	**5 (33%)**	4 (27%) **8 (53%)**	9 (60%) **1 (7%)**	1 (7%) **1 (7%)**	1 (7%)
help classroom teachers co-teach lessons and units of instruction.	**3 (20%)**	7 (47%) **12 (80%)**	6 (40%)		2 (13%)
assess students' learning on projects in which they have taught some or many components.	2 (13%) **3 (20%)**	9 (60%) **12 (80%)**	3 (20%)		1 (7%)
provide in-services for classroom teachers to help improve teaching practices.	1 (7%) **6 (40%)**	6 (40%) **7 (47%)**	7 (47%) 0		1 (7%) **2 13%)**
school library media specialists should help classroom teachers learn new technologies.	3 (20%) **8 (53%)**	8 (53%) **5 (33%)**	3 (20%) **1 (7%)**		1 (7%) **1 (7%)**

The most significant change in these preservice classroom teachers' perception of the role of classroom teachers was in the areas of co-designing, co-planning, and co-teaching lessons and units of instruction. Their surveys indicated a high level of understanding of the role of SLMSs as instructional partners. Preservice teachers raised their expectation for materials support from the school library media specialist. These data also indicated that these educators came to see SLMSs as support for professional development by providing in-services for classroom teachers to help them improve teaching practices.

Table 4 provides data related to questions about library programs, principal support, and the impact of classroom–library collaboration on student achievement. At the end of their preservice

teacher education, 87 percent of the study participants strongly agreed that student achievement should increase when classroom teachers and SLMSs collaborate for instruction. The final question on the pre–preservice education program survey asked participants if they had seen classroom teachers and SLMSs collaborating for instruction. Nine respondents (60 percent) said they had not, four (27 percent) said they had seen classroom–library collaboration, and two (13 percent) answered "don't know."

Table 4. Pre– and Post–Preservice Education: Questions Related to the School Library Media Programs, Principal Support, and Student Achievement, N=15 (pre) and **N=15 (post)**

Statement:	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Don't Know**
School library media programs should be a critical part of the literacy program of the school.	9 (60%) **13 87%)**	5 (33%) **2 (13%)**	1 (7%)		
School principals should set the expectation for classroom–library collaboration.	4 (27%) **4 (27%)**	7 (47%) **10 (66%)**	2 (13%) **1 (7%)**		2 (14%)
When school library media specialists and classroom teachers collaborate for instruction, student achievement should increase.	9 (60%) **13 (87%)**	5 (33%) **2 (13%)**	1 (7%)		

Table 5 provides the data from post–preservice education survey questions related to the university classroom interventions. All of the participants "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the classroom-teacher/SLMS/principal panel was an effective way to influence their thinking about classroom–library collaboration. Their own experiences of collaborating with classmates on assignments and in their teacher-aide practicums were also significant influencers, as were my testimonials. It is interesting to note that collaborating with the mentor teacher during practicums was the least influential of these measures. It may be that some practicing mentor teachers did not possess highly developed collaborative skills or a value for this practice. In a culminating question about collaboration experiences, 67 percent said they "strongly agreed" that collaboration experiences during their preservice education increased the likelihood that they would engage in classroom–library collaboration. The remaining 33 percent "agreed."

Table 5. Post–Preservice Education: Questions Related to University Classroom Interventions Related to the Practice of Classroom-Library Collaboration (N=15)

Question: During my preservice education,	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Don't Know**
the texts I read about classroom–library collaboration influenced my thinking about the role of school library media specialists.	8 (53%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)		
guest speakers' testimonials about classroom–library collaboration influenced my thinking about the role of school library media specialists.	9 (60%)	6 (40%)			
the instructor's testimonials about classroom–library collaboration influenced my thinking about the role of school library media specialists.	11 (73%)	4 (27%)			
my own experience collaborating with classmates on assignments increased the value I place on collaboration.	12 (80%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)		
my own experience collaborating for instruction with a classmate during my practicum increased the value I place on collaboration.	8 (53%)	5 (33%)	2 (13%)		
my own experience collaborating for instruction with a mentor teacher during my practicum increased the value I place on collaboration.	4 (27%)	7 (46%)	1 (7%)		3 (20%)
my own experience collaborating for instruction with college instructors increased the value I place on collaboration.	6 (40%)	7 (46%)	1 (7%)		1 (7%)

Post–Student Teaching Survey: Data and Analysis

In the post–student teaching survey, study participants were asked to answer questions based on their actual experience serving in the apprentice teacher role. In this survey, the response choices changed from the "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" ranking system of the first two surveys to a "yes," "no," "don't know," or "not applicable" response. Thirteen students completed this survey in May 2006. One student who completed her student teaching in the fall of 2006 took the survey in December 2006.

The respondents conducted their student teaching experiences in schools with libraries with varying levels of professional staffing; one conducted student teaching in a school without a library. (It should be noted that Arizona is the state with the highest percentage of charter schools. The vast majority of those schools do not have libraries on their campuses. This fact had an impact on this survey and a significant impact on the final survey.) Table 6 shows the level of school library staffing support and program schedules at the schools where the study participants conducted their student teaching. Thirteen out of the fourteen participants in the study conducted their student teaching semester in elementary schools. All of these schools with library programs were organized on a fixed schedule in which classes had a specific time to visit the library each week. The only flexibly scheduled program was the single middle school library.

Table 6. Level of Professional Staffing in Student Teaching School Placements (N=14)

Full-Time Certified School Library Media Specialist	Half-Time Certified School Library Media Specialist	Paraprofessional Serving in the Role	No Library	Fixed Library Schedule (All Elementary)
8	2	3	1	12

Table 7 details the study participants' post–student teaching responses to questions related to the cooperative and collaborative roles of the SLMS. Thirteen out of fourteen respondents, or 93 percent, reported that they did not collaborate with their SLMS during their student teaching. No one in this study co-planned a lesson or unit of study with a SLMS. Only one reported that the SLMS assessed student work, and only one reported that the SLMS co-taught a lesson or unit of study with him or her. A total of 64 percent of the participants in the study noted that the SLMS cooperated with them by helping them find materials. One reported that the SLMS taught her to use new technologies.

Table 7. Post–Student Teaching Survey: Questions Related to the Cooperative and Collaborative Roles of School Library Media Specialists (N=14)

Question: During my student teaching experience,	**Yes**	**No**	**Don't Know**	**Not Applicable**
the school library media specialist was responsible for teaching reading.	1 (7%)	10 (72%)		3 (21%)
the school library media specialist was responsible for teaching research skills.	6 (43%)	5 (36%)	2 (14%)	1 (7%)
the school library media specialist was an educator responsible for teaching every area of the school curriculum.		11 (79%)	2 (14%)	1 (7%)
the school library media specialist helped classroom teachers find materials.	9 (64%)	4 (29%)		1 (7%)
the school library media specialist helped me design and plan a lesson, lessons and/or a unit of instruction.		13 (93%)		1 (7%)
the school library media specialists co-taught lessons or units of instruction with me.	1 (7%)	12 (86%)		1 (7%)
the school library media specialist assessed students' learning on projects for which she/he taught one or more components.	1 (7%)	12 (86%)		1 (7%)
the school library media specialist provided in-service training and offered other forms of professional development for me and/or other classroom teachers.	2 (14%)	10 (72%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
the school library media specialist helped me or other classroom teachers learn new technologies.	1 (7%)	11 (79%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
I observed or heard that other classroom teachers collaborated with the school library media specialist.	1 (7%)	12 (86%)		1 (7%)

Table 8 shows data related to the library program, principal support, and student achievement. Only three school schedules provided classroom–library collaborative planning time during the

school day, and none of the principals established an expectation for classroom–library collaboration. Only one respondent reported collaborating with the SLMS, but two reported that student achievement increased when they collaborated with the SLMS. It should be noted that 43 percent still felt that the school library media program was a critical part of the literacy program at the school.

Table 8. Post-Student Teaching Survey: Questions Related Library Programs, Principal Support, and Student Achievement (N=14)

Question: During my student teaching experience,	**Yes**	**No**	**Don't Know**	**Not Applicable**
the school library media program was a critical part of the literacy program of the school.	6 (43%)	7 (50%)		1 (7%)
the school schedule provided time for classroom–library collaboration.	3 (21%)	10 (72%)		1 (7%)
the principal at the school where I did my student teaching established an expectation for classroom–library collaboration and to provide planning time/support for collaboration.		9 (64%)	4 (29%)	1 (7%)
I noticed that student achievement increased when I collaborated with the school library media specialist.	2 (14%)	4 (29%)		8 (57%)

Post–Student Teaching Open-ended Question, Focus Group Interview, and Individual Testimonials: Data and Analysis

The online survey allowed participants to contribute as much information as they wanted in open-ended question dialogue boxes. I used a constant comparative coding method to analyze these data. An overarching concern during student teaching was the feeling of being rushed and overly busy. Study participants came face-to-face with standards-based lesson requirements, the impact of standardized testing on their instructional decisions, and the time they could allot for various aspects of instruction. As one participant wrote, "There is so much curriculum in those required textbooks that there is little time left to do much else." Another said, "Since everything was new to me, I know that I haven't taken advantage of many of the things that [were] probably available to me."

Beyond the sense of being overwhelmed, the participants noted that the most frequent interactions with SLMSs were around acquiring resources for their teaching. Many commented on the support they felt when the SLMS recommended and provided them with books and other materials to shore up their lessons and units of instruction. When commenting on their SLMS's work with students, most respondents mentioned read alouds as the primary content of weekly library lessons. Three mentioned support for students' research projects, but that support did not

include collaborative planning or co-teaching. One admitted that she didn't know what students did in the library because she did not stay with her class. One said, "I felt the librarian was there strictly for students, not for the teachers!!!" Another wrote, "I do not believe that the school where I did my student teaching is aware of or would encourage classroom–library collaboration."

Study participants were invited to participate in a small-group focus interview after they completed the post–student teaching survey. Eight people participated. The focus group session was audiotaped and transcribed. The discussion began with the survey questions selected for tables 7 and 8. Participants responded to the questions as well as to each other's comments. Several noted that there was no formal time during the school day for collaboration with colleagues. One person noted that this was a problem with the fixed schedule; the SLMS was never "free." As a result of personality conflicts, the librarian's inexperience or qualifications, or scripted reading programs, several noted that their mentor teachers did not think the library had much to offer.

Many noted that "library time" was a "special" for which they were not responsible and that they had no real knowledge of what children did in the library. The exception was the person who student taught at the middle school level. Although she pursued the SLMS at first, that SLMS responded to her needs, taught her to use library software, and later sent her curriculum support materials without being asked. She could talk with the SLMS during her planning period during the school day, and she actually took her students to the library for instruction in research. She did not, however, collaboratively plan or co-teach with the media specialist.

All eight participants were invited to provide testimonials on the connections between their university classroom and student teaching experiences. Five of the eight volunteered. I videotaped their responses to questions that were raised during the small-group focus interview. Respondents talked about which interventions during their preservice education helped them value classroom–library collaboration as well as their actual experiences while working in the field during student teaching.

Four testimonials centered on the interventions related to classroom–library collaboration. One participant described the collaborative planning session and team-taught science lesson as an intervention that prepared her to seek out collaboration during student teaching. Three of the participants talked about the classroom teacher, SLMS, and principal panel as an intervention that influenced them positively toward classroom–library collaboration. One of the three noted the benefits to classroom teachers in particular. Another also talked about multigenre text sets at various reading levels as valuable resources that media specials can provide. Yet another noted that working with her classmates on collaborative projects predisposed her to working collaboratively.

Five participants discussed their experience with the SLMS or classroom–library collaboration during their student teaching. Two talked about approaching the SLMS. The elementary media specialist pointed to books on the topic of study and did not offer any help. The middle school media specialist provided the student teacher with a tour of the library, instruction on how to use the online catalog, and ultimately, anticipated her needs by sending her timely unsolicited resources.

One study participant observed the SLMS working with her mentor teacher. However, the SLMS was half-time at the school and had a full and fixed schedule. The student teacher was unable to schedule a time to meet with her much less teach with her. One cooperating teacher informed the student teacher that they followed a scripted reading program, had all of the materials they

needed, and would not need to work with the library. Another participant noted that the person serving in the role of SLMS was not certified, possessed little knowledge of literacy, and did not show a willingness to collaborate.

The testimonials suggested that these preservice teachers were positively predisposed to seek out and participate in classroom–library collaboration. At the elementary school level, there were numerous impediments to actualizing this practice. Only the middle school student teacher had a positive, cooperative experience with her SLMS. Interview questions and the participants' testimonials can be accessed here.

Post–First-year Classroom Teaching: Data and Analysis

Fourteen respondents returned the post–first year classroom teaching survey. Two of the study participants did not conduct their first year of classroom teaching in the 2006–2007 school year, so their responses were not included in these data. Of the twelve remaining, eleven study participants taught at the elementary level; one taught at a junior high school.

Table 9 shows the staffing and library schedules in the schools where study participants taught their first year. All three of the participants whose schools did not have libraries served at charter schools. Two first-year teachers served in the same elementary school; that school had a flexibly scheduled library program, as did the middle school where one participant taught. The remaining six (elementary) school library media programs operated on a fixed schedule; two of those had paraprofessionals serving in the SLMS role. (Note: In Arizona, staffing school libraries with a certified professional is a district-level decision; there is no state-level requirement.)

Table 9. Level of Professional Staffing and Type of Schedules in First Year of Classroom Teaching Schools (N=12)

Certified School Library Media Specialist	Paraprofessional	No One in the Role/No Library	Fixed Library Schedule
7	2	3	6

Table 10 provides data related to the cooperative and collaborative roles of SLMSs. (The data of the three respondents who taught their first year in charter schools without libraries and therefore without SLMSs are included in tables 10 and 11.) Even though these first-year classroom teachers entered schools predisposed to value and seek out classroom–library collaboration, only three of them experienced it in their first year of teaching. Three of the participants reported that they observed or heard that other classroom teachers collaborated with the SLMS; two of these three taught in the same school. In their view, only 50 percent of SLMSs were responsible for teaching research skills and none were responsible for teaching reading. Three said their SLMS offered in-service training or other professional development opportunities; only two respondents, or 17 percent, learned new technologies from their SLMS. A total of 83 percent of the study participants reported that the SLMS helped them find materials. Using the criteria set out in Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning (AASL and AECT 1998), only two school library media programs were aligned with the guidelines for quality programs established by the American Association of School Librarians.

Table 10. Post–First Year Classroom Teaching Survey: Questions Related to the Cooperative and Collaborative Roles of School Library Media Specialists (N=12)

Question: During my first year of classroom teaching, the school library media specialist	**Yes**	**No**	**Don't Know**
was responsible for teaching reading.		10 (83%)	2 (17%)
was responsible for teaching research skills.	6 (50%)	5 (42%)	1 (8%)
was an educator responsible for teaching every area of the school curriculum.		10 (83%)	2 (17%)
helped classroom teachers find materials.	10 (83%)	2 (17%)	
helped me design and plan a lesson, lessons and/or a unit of instruction.		12 (100%)	
co-taught lessons or units of instruction with me.	2 (17%)	10 (83%)	
assessed students' learning on projects for which she/he taught one or more components.		12 (17%)	
provided in-service training and offered other forms of professional development for me and/or other classroom teachers.	3 (25%)	7 (58%)	2 (17%)
helped me or other classroom teachers learn new technologies.	2 (17%)	9 (75%)	1 (8%)

Table 11 provides additional data from the first year of classroom teaching survey. Just one respondent noted that the principal set the expectation for classroom–library collaboration. Only three reported that collaborative planning time was part of the school day; two were in the same elementary school, one was at the middle school. Although they all agreed or strongly agreed on the post–preservice education surveys that student achievement should increase when SLMSs and classroom teachers collaborated for instruction, only one of them had this actual experience in the field. Even with this low level of library program integration, 58 percent reported that the library was a critical part of the school's literacy program.

Table 11. Post–First Year Classroom Teaching Survey: Questions Related to School Library Media Programs, Principal Support, and Student Achievement (N=12)

Question: During my first year of classroom teaching,	**Yes**	**No**	**Don't Know**
the school library media program was a critical part of the literacy program of the school.	7 (58%)	5 (42%)	
the school schedule provided time for classroom-library collaboration.	3 (25%)	9 (75%)	
the principal set the expectation for classroom-library collaboration.	1 (8%)	9 (75%)	2 (17%)
I noticed that student achievement increased when I collaborated with the school library media specialist.	1 (8%)	6 (50%)	5 (42%)

Post–First Year of Teaching Survey Open-ended Question: Data and Analysis

The final question on the post–first year teaching survey was, "Please list as many of the factors as possible that account for your involvement in a classroom–library collaboration or for your lack of a classroom–library collaboration experience" (appendix D). I used the constant comparative method to analyze these data.

There were three first-year classroom teachers who reported collaborating with their SLMS: two at elementary level and one at middle school. One elementary classroom teacher described two research projects in which the certified SLMS, working with a flexible schedule, took a prominent teaching role by working with small groups of students on a rotating basis to help them "research information and organize it with a graphic organizer." This teacher then guided the children in composing rough drafts and reported that "the school library media specialist helped me a great deal with my weakness of teaching writing." Another first-year teacher who taught in the same school and worked with the same SLMS noted that the SLMS responded to her requests for collaboration by presenting her with lesson plans related to the topics the class was studying. The media specialist then worked with this teacher's students in small groups. The second teacher noted, "It would have been helpful to co-write [lesson] plans."

The other collaborating first-year elementary teacher who served with a professional SLMS reported that initiating classroom–library collaboration was "dependent on the classroom teachers." In this school, classroom teachers were not required to stay in the library with their students, but this first-year teacher elected to do so on occasion. This teacher reported that she appreciated the SLMS for asking what the students were learning and "tailoring her lessons toward that most of the time!" (This SLMS provided mini-lessons to students every other week.) This new teacher also noted that she worked with her SLMS on one research project during her first year of classroom teaching; she did not provide details. This SLMS and the middle school

media specialist were two of the three that provided inservice professional development for classroom teachers.

The first-year middle school teacher reported that working with the SLMS made her lessons "more interesting and relevant for students." She appreciated being able to get the students "out of the classroom into a different environment." This teacher also noted that she did not collaborate with her SLMS more often because "too many classes were using the library" and "the librarian was overworked." This person noted that learning about collaboration during her preservice teacher education was one factor that accounted for her involvement in classroom–library collaboration.

Two of the remaining three study participants who served with certified SLMSs taught in the same school. Their library was staffed by two half-time SLMSs. Their students were given thirty-minute weekly library lessons. Both reported being assigned to the same librarian who "is bitter and unapproachable" and "has retired every year for three years . . . and will be back again next year!" Each one hoped to be assigned to the other SLMS during their second year of teaching at the school.

The other classroom teacher who served with a professional SLMS reported that the lack of time to talk with her SLMS prevented her from engaging in classroom–library collaboration. She pointed to a general lack of planning time in the elementary school day and to the fixed library schedule as barriers to collaboration. The two respondents who served with paraprofessionals noted that these people were not qualified "to teach curriculum" and that the "lack of resources" didn't make the library particularly useful. One wrote, "No one (classroom teacher) that I have worked with has ever worked [collaborated] with a school library media specialist. They are shocked that such a thing exists! There seems to be no importance placed on the library and its staff and their possible role in students' reading and learning. What a huge loss." Along with the charter school classroom teachers who did not have the benefit of school libraries or SLMSs, these respondents' answers pointed to woefully inadequate state- and district-level school library staffing policies and did not shed light on the practice of classroom–library collaboration.

Similar to the post–student teaching survey, this final survey showed that interventions about classroom–library collaboration conducted in the university classroom predisposed novice teachers toward expecting to work as collaborative partners with SLMSs. Still, what happened when they arrived at the schoolhouse had a great deal more to do with the qualifications, practices, and personality of the SLMS and the supports or constraints placed on classroom–library collaboration by the library schedule than did classroom teachers' prior learning about collaborative practices. It may very well be that further study of the careers of these classroom teachers could reveal the latent effect of their preservice learning, but that is beyond the scope of this work.

Conclusion

It seems to make sense that introducing preservice classroom teachers to the benefits of classroom–library collaboration and making a case for implementing this model through practice could speed its institutionalization. Helping preservice teachers to collaborate effectively in their preservice teacher education programs should prepare them for collegial work in schools and for career-long development as professionals. Whether those collaborations are with grade-level colleagues, SLMSs, or other school faculty, staff, and families, the interventions set out in this study will serve novice teachers well. "Working together in communities, both new and more experienced teachers pose problems, identify discrepancies between theories and practices,

challenge common routines, draw on the work of others for generative frameworks, and attempt to make visible much of that which is taken for granted about teaching and learning" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999, 293). Working well in collaborative communities of practice is good for educators, and it's good for students.

Although qualitative studies are not generalizable, the findings of this case study suggest the interventions offered in this study were positive influencers toward classroom–library collaboration. School library media educators and practicing SLMSs can support the collaborative goals of the profession by influencing preservice classroom teacher educators to integrate collaborative practices as well as specific information and experiences of classroom–library collaboration into preservice education. Offering panel presentations similar to the one described in this study is one way to reach out to colleges of education to impact the thinking of preservice classroom teachers about classroom–library collaborative teaching.

However, this case study also suggests that there are significant constraints in school learning communities and in the practice of school librarianship that thwart classroom–library collaboration. The lack of a library or of professional staff limited classroom teachers' access to resources, co-planning, and co-teaching. Although flexible scheduling has been shown to support collaboration (Donham van Deusen and Tallman 1994), fixed scheduling is commonly practiced in elementary schools and was noted by study participants as a barrier to collaborative planning and co-teaching. Although the participants may not realize the impact of their response, only one reported that a school principal set an expectation for classroom–library collaboration. When this practice is not an accepted and expected aspect of school culture, there is less of a likelihood that it will occur.

Although SLMSs "must become proactive in articulating their roles, [and] they must also be ready to explain how their programs are related to education reform initiatives and to the skills students will need to succeed in the twenty-first century" (Shannon 2002), they must also be ready to do the hard work of advocating for retaining professional school library media positions and administering effective school library media programs. Increasingly tight budgets put professional library staffing in jeopardy, particularly in states such as Arizona, where SLMSs are not mandated. Advocating for and achieving flexible scheduling and collaborative planning time are essential if SLMSs expect classroom teacher colleagues to value the role of SLMSs in instruction. Professional SLMSs and these supports for professional practice simply must be in place if educators are to co-plan, co-teach, and co-assess effective classroom–library lessons and units of instruction.

While there is agreement that students and teachers must achieve a high level of literacy and should excel at information problem-solving, it is not as widely accepted that classroom–library collaboration is among the most effective strategies for teaching literacy and information literacy standards. An understanding of collaborative teaching practices, supported by the research on the positive relationship and impact of classroom–library collaboration on student achievement, has not yet reached critical mass and succeeded in privileging this model. The lack of a mandate for professional SLMSs and for libraries in all schools as well as the lack of understanding of classroom–library collaboration on the part of school principals put classroom teachers at risk of not integrating classroom–library collaboration into their professional work.

The Japanese concept of jugyou kenkyuu, or "lesson study," has proven to be effective in achieving school improvement in that country (Marzano 2003). This type of job-embedded professional development involves teams of educators field testing specific techniques and observing each other doing so in their own classrooms. Team members then provide one another

with feedback and recommendations for modifications for teaching with those techniques in the future. Classroom–library collaboration can support this model without creating the need to hire substitute teachers to release colleagues so they can observe one another's teaching. The SLMS's opportunity to impact colleagues' practices while they improve their own is a little-acknowledged or studied potential of the profession. This is one way classroom–library collaboration can be of service to new educators in particular and to school learning communities in general.

The rapid-fire change of twenty-first-century life in the United States impacts our schools. Novice as well as veteran teachers need and will continue to need support for negotiating changing curriculum, instructional practices, and policies. In school restructuring, the most powerful impediment to reform is teacher isolation (Lieberman 1995, 10). The organic nature of the classroom–library collaboration model offers the potential for on-site professional development integrated into the daily practice of classroom teachers and SLMSs (Moreillon 2007a, 2007b). Leaders in school improvement and staff development acknowledge that opportunities to field test new teaching strategies are critical to their adoption by classroom teachers (Marzano 2003). Classroom–library collaboration can provide effective job-embedded professional development because feedback and ideas can be exchanged between two (or more) professional colleagues as they co-teach and co-assess new instructional strategies.

Decrying classroom teachers' lack of understanding of the value of classroom–library collaboration is pointless if school library media programs and SLMSs are unable to provide instructional partnerships. Structures, such as flexible scheduling, joint planning time, and an expectation for collaborative work, must be in place before educators can actualize these values in their teaching practices. Changing these disabling factors should therefore be at the forefront of SLMSs' advocacy for the efficacy of the profession.

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