Drivers’ Ed for Collaborators: Overcoming Roadblocks, Hazards, and Detours

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David L. Lawrence Convention Center
Room 320/321
Drivers’ Ed for Collaborators: Overcoming Roadblocks, Hazards, and Detours

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DEFINITIONS

Collaboration: What is It?

"Collaboration is a way of thinking and relating, a philosophy, a paradigm shift, an attitude change. . . The result is a sense of shared ownership, shared responsibility, shared success."

~ K. K. Bishop

Collaborative Planning: What is it?

Collaborative planning results when two or more equal partners set out to create a unit of study based on content standards in one or more content areas, a unit that will be team-designed, team-taught, and team-evaluated.

THREE STEPS TO INSTRUCTIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Cooperation

In COOPERATION library media specialists and teachers work independently but come together for mutual benefit. Their relationship is loose.

Coordination

In COORDINATION, there is a more formal working relationship and an understanding of shared missions. Library media specialists and teachers do some joint planning and communicate more.

Collaboration

In COLLABORATION, the partners have a prolonged and interdependent relationship. They share goals, have carefully defined roles in the process, and plan much more comprehensively.
The Library Media Specialist’s Taxonomy
by David V. Loertscher

1. NO INVOLVEMENT
The LMC is bypassed entirely.

2. SMOOTHLY OPERATING INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE
Facilities, materials, networks, and information resources are available for the self-starter delivered to the point of need.

3. INDIVIDUAL REFERENCE ASSISTANCE
The library media specialist serves as the human interface between information systems and the user.

4. SPONTANEOUS INTERACTION AND GATHERING
Networks respond 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to patron requests, and the LMC facilities can be used by individuals and small groups with no advance notice.

5. CURSORY PLANNING
There is informal and brief planning with teachers and students for LMC facilities or network usage—usually done through casual contact in the LMC, in the hall, in the teacher's lounge, in the lunch room, or by e-mail. [For example: Here’s an idea for an activity/Web site/new materials to use. Have you seen…? There's a software upgrade on the network.]

6. PLANNED GATHERING
Gathering of materials/access to important digital resources is done in advance of a class project upon teacher or student request.

7. EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH/ADVOCACY
A concerted effort is made to promote the philosophy of the LMC program.

8. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOUR MAJOR PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS OF THE LMC PROGRAM
The four LMC program elements—
collaboration,
reading literacy,
enhancing learning through technology, and
information literacy—are operational in the school. The LMC is on its way to achieving its goal of contributing to academic achievement.

9. THE MATURE LMC PROGRAM
The LMC program reaches the needs of every student and teacher who will accept its offerings in each of the four programmatic elements.

10. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
Along with other educators, the library media specialist contributes to the planning and organization of what will actually be taught in the school or district (Loertscher 17).


OVERCOMING ROADBLOCKS, HAZARDS, & DETOURS

School Culture

“The most promising formula for successful information literacy instruction is a combination of an energetic, knowledgeable, open-minded, and committed library media specialist; a flexible, confident, team-oriented staff; a risk-taking principal who understands change, how to manage both people and budgets, and the advantages and needs of an integrated resource-based instructional program; and a system for providing regular, collaborative planning time during the school day”


A Wise LMS Will:

- Enlist trust
- Practice patience and responsiveness
- Participate in leadership teams
- Join curriculum, technology, and textbook committees
- Attend regularly scheduled grade-level or department meetings
- Value individual strengths and differences
- Be flexible with time and place
- Watch for the OH YEAH’s!

Scheduling Patterns

SCHEDULES THAT POSE CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATION

- Fixed Schedules in Elementary Schools
- Both Block and Traditional Schedules in Middle Schools and High Schools
- Lack of Time in Teachers’ Days
- Lack of Common Planning Time for Teachers and LMS’s

A Wise LMS Will:

- Create a School Library Committee of faculty
- Participate on school-based teams that plan schedules
- Watch for flexibility within the established schedules while working toward change
- Schedule a weekly planning day
- Designate 2 flexible months a year to start
- Regardless of schedule patterns, ask for time for collaborative planning (rotating substitutes for teachers, library substitutes, volunteers, off-site planning)
- Watch for the OH YEAH’s!
Administrative Support

**RESEARCH FINDINGS SHOW THAT:**

“Collaborative planning requires a knowledgeable and flexible teacher-librarian, with good interpersonal skills and a commitment to integrated information literacy instruction, and the active support of the principal . . . the principal is the key factor in developing an effective and integrated school library program.”*


**A Wise LMS Will:**

- Put your supportive administrator in the limelight
- Toot your horn about your own successes
- Keep your administrator in the loop with monthly reports, collaboration logs, and copies of units
- Invite your principal to collaborative planning meetings
- Share current best practice articles
- Form a one-on-one book club to read and discuss *Information Power 2* and set joint goals for implementation
- Ask your principal to establish a schoolwide expectation for collaboration
- Ask your principal to design evaluations for collaboration
- Ask your principal to include collaboration in correspondence with staff, highlighting examples of effective library collaboration
- Request opportunities for you or other speakers to educate and inform staff about collaborative practice and its benefits through inservice
- Offer to address the administrative team and/or the School Board about the importance and effectiveness of libraries
PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FROM THE FIELD

Working with a Fixed Schedule

❖ Visit classrooms on prep periods to see what’s going on
❖ Ask classroom teachers to supply curriculum topics and calendars
❖ Connect to classroom curriculum as often as possible
❖ Design LMC curriculum based on classroom calendars
❖ Collaborate with specialists

Communication

❖ Send out a flyer listing materials
❖ E-mail re: materials of interest to teachers
❖ Distribute curriculum mapping survey & initiate curriculum mapping interviews
❖ Supply copies of content standards outlining which ones you can help to teach
❖ Be visible
❖ Ask kids what they are studying, then approach teachers with ideas for collaboration
❖ Eavesdrop on teacher conversations then make suggestions for collaborations
❖ Join grade level or department teams at lunch time
❖ Attend team meetings
❖ Verbally share your successes with other teachers
❖ Write thank you notes to collaborators

Display of Materials

❖ Host a “Library Breakfast, Lunch, or Tea” when new materials arrive
❖ While the budget is not yet depleted, invite a vendor in to display materials teachers can recommend for purchase

Creative Incentives

❖ Host grade level/team library lunches (Chinese!—Jerry Sulli)
❖ Full day of classroom substitute for teacher-LMS planning
❖ Free book to the first teacher to schedule a collaborative planning session
❖ Ask for “10 points on the rubric” (Loertscher)

Teacher Inservice

❖ Host technology training workshops: OPAC, digital camera, scanner
❖ Design training sessions for databases and other Internet resources which might be employed in collaborative units
❖ Offer an “introduction to collaboration” workshop in your building or plan one with an LMS colleague on a district staff-development day across buildings

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Persistence and Commitment

- Continue to knock at the door of unwilling colleagues believe in future opportunities
- Begin with “baby steps” and build on those successes
- Refine efforts, no matter how “wobbly” they seem, into better, more collaborative and successful projects
- Celebrate and “advertise” every collaboration