

Volume 12, 2009
ISSN: 1523-

Approved December 2009

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Introduction

function of the school library program in terms of four distinct roles to be performed by the teacher-librarian: information specialist, program administrator, teacher, and instructional partner. The latter two roles receive the strongest emphasis throughout the guidelines.

However, the importance of the instructional role of the teacher-librarian remains largely unrecognized by many educators despite repeated findings linking school library programming (including instruction by professional teacher-librarians) to increased student achievement (Lance, Hamilton-Pennell, and Rodney 1999; Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Pennell 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2005; Lance, Welborn, Hamilton-Pennell, 1993; Research Foundation 2006; Rodney, Lance, and Hamilton-Pennell 2002, 2003; Todd, Kuhlthau, and Ohio Educational Library Media Association 2004). It has also been argued that *single* testing has served to move school libraries away from the educational core because libraries do not readily support *single-answer* types of educational measurements (Lehman 2007). Lehmann insightfully compares two major contributing factors to the school library crisis as districts nationwide face budget cuts that call into question “the role of the librarian—not to mention media centers themselves.” Those two factors commonly thought to threaten school libraries are the Internet as part of the “changing nature of information” and the movement toward *single* testing. Of the two, Lehmann was adamant that *single* testing was the “poison pill for school libraries,” noting that librarians easily adapt to technology and the “democratization of information,” but the real problem is an assessment system that prioritizes *multiple* answers that identify a single “correct” response rather than contemplation, research, thoughtfulness, and multiple perspectives—all vital elements that a library can bring to a school. This is the challenge that we face. Our school librarians are the keepers of the progressive flame. They are the “guides on the side,” helping students to find information, make

phrasing that every library media center “shall be supervised by a licensed/certified media specialist who works with students, teachers, and administrators” (281 Iowa Admin. Code, 12.5(22) 1997).

In 1995, the requirement was officially dropped from the Code of Iowa. Eleven years later former Governor Vilsack signed HF2792, the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program Act (2006), which returned to law the requirement for each school district to have a school librarian and an articulated sequential K12 media program.

From 1996 to 2007, there was a 29.3 percent decrease in the number of school librarians in Iowa, a reduction of 206 positions, decreasing from 703 in 1996–97 to 497 in 2006–7 (Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Basic Educational Data Survey 2007). The reduction of teacher

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the two communities. Pseudonyms have been used to represent the Pembroke and Odessa schools. It was purposefully selected because it is a school district that had been operating without a qualified librarian for at least five years. Approximately one-fourth of Iowa schools were in this situation in fall 2006, when the teacher-librarian requirement was reinstated.

Eight elementary teachers, one noncertified library associate, and four school administrators participated in this study. With only one teacher per grade level from kindergarten to sixth grade, each classroom teacher and a reading teacher from the study school participated. Six teachers had been with this district for fourteen to twenty years and had been in this building together seven years. Four teachers had never taught outside the district. Only two teachers were new to this district. One had taught four years (two of those at Pembroke), and the other was completing her first year. The library associate had only worked at this school for two months, was a licensed teacher, and had eighteen years of secondary teaching experience with library coursework.

The Pembroke principal was the newest administrator in this district. She had more than twenty years of experience in elementary and reading education. The Odessa Elementary principal had taught five years in another district and had been a principal for fewer than five years at this school. The secondary principal had taught in another district for eight years and had been the secondary principal at this school for less than five years. The superintendent had taught for four years.

Given the data from these conversations, I identified fifteen tasks that and coded them to designate the teacher function. One task was identified as the partner function. Seven tasks were coded as “information specialist.” Six tasks were coded “program administrator.” Eleven additional topic categories were created to code topics and issues that did not fit within the tasks of any of the four teacher librarian roles, such as the qualifications of a teacher librarian versus a library associate, part-time or full-time positions, school funding priorities, and school library legislative issues.

Data Analysis

Question 1: Vision and Reality

To what extent do the teachers and administrators feel their ideal vision of a school library program is being realized through their current program?

Participant groups’ visions of a school library program differed according to their job functions. Teachers’ and administrators’ ideas were nearly polar opposites. Most teachers’ comments (83 percent) emphasized the teaching role of the teacher librarian, followed by some discussion about the information specialist role (13 percent) and an indication of very little knowledge of the instructional partner role (4 percent). In contrast, the administrators’ statements placed the

The second finding about participants' vision and reality for library programs was that their ideal visions were uninformed by state (e.g., Iowa Department of Education 2007b) or national school library guidelines "to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information"

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Question 2: Understanding the Teacher Librarian Role

To what extent do the teachers and administrators understand the professional role and function of the teacher librarian?

librarian? Our librarian? Does anyone know? Does she help? Does she suggest books? Or, does anyone know?"

The secondary principal didn't discriminate between the expectations of a library associate and a professional teacher-librarian. Ironically, he said he wished that the associate had more time to go into classrooms to do booktalks and to have more time to teach students how to do research using library databases, such as EBSCOhost.

Only two teachers and two administrators out of the thirteen participants were discerning maintainers; they understood the professional qualification differences but assumed that an associate could maintain things as well as a professional did, or they assumed that an inferior program was the best they could do for their school. The superintendent showed that he understood the difference between the qualifications for a library associate and a professional teacher-librarian, but he joked that in his district, a library associate would ideally be doing everything a certified teacher-librarian would do. Despite their lack of training, he believed they must know what is in the libraries and communicate about that with teachers. He realized that they lacked the knowledge of what is out there beyond the library, but he felt that they were maintaining things within the libraries.

"The step we're not jumping over is that, we're maintaining right now with library associates. You know I have three libraries, and if I were to have a certified teacher librarian in each of those buildings, it would be a big financial undertaking. Maybe it's just jumping that hurdle, of diving into the idea that we are going to have certified librarians in our libraries. . . . That's what I'm stuck on, do we spend that extra money, when we're maintaining now?"

Not only were participants misunderstanding the professional roles and functions of teacher librarians, all participants doubted teacher librarians in their district would be sustainable without a state mandate. The superintendent was unwilling to pay for three certified teacher librarians when it was not mandated, even though he knew it would benefit student instruction. He explained that they could be using other resources in instruction to keep classes from getting stagnant. He described the ideal library as a "constant breath of fresh air" through communication between the librarian and teacher about new ideas and resources.

The superintendent wavered about whether or not a teacher librarian would make a difference instructionally. He wanted a high level of excitement and communication about resources to support the classroom to take place between the teachers and the library associates, but he conceded that maybe the teachers weren't excited about the library because they didn't have certified teacher librarians.

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could look like with this program. And just being able to point out the differences. And I don't know how you do that, whether that's a superintendent meeting, or what that is, but just somehow show them what it could look like because a lot of them don't know."

Question 3: Expectation for Library Support of School Improvement

To what extent do the teachers and administrators expect the school library program to support literacy, technology, and other content learning for student achievement and school improvement purposes?

The responses about library support for the curriculum exemplified four themes depicting the disconnect between the school mission and the school library program: (1) literacy programs without the support of a school library program fail to provide students reading guidance; (2) tech-savvy students lacked the information skills needed to find and evaluate technological sources; (3) content instruction and research skills were taught separate from the school library, without the challenge of inquiry learning; and (4) school improvement initiatives were implemented without a consideration of essential school library resources.

The teacher participants talked more about literacy programs (43 percent of coded curricular related statements) than they did about any other curricular area. The district attempted to improve their students' reading comprehension scores with at least four new, nationally known reading programs or initiatives over the past five years. Each one, in some way, served to separate reading materials from the library.

The teachers spoke passionately about their disappointment over the dismantling of their Reading Counts program during the past school year. They were quick to list the components of the Reading Counts program that they felt had benefited their students. The first thing the teachers missed about Reading Counts was having the office associate help students choose books located in the office because there was no room on the library shelves. The second aspect the teachers mentioned was the motivation the students experienced seeing how well they can do on the tests: "It's just like running, it's like an athlete or something." A third component mourned by the teachers was the loss of the separate collection space in the office for new Reading Counts books when the books were moved to the library. A fourth component the teachers missed was the students' ability to independently check out books from the library.

reading books and that not having these books in a library gives struggling readers a bad opinion of reading and libraries. Another teacher said she did not see teachers taking their students to the library; rather, she saw teachers give their students leveled books to take home to practice their reading. This teacher also compared these libraries according to three issues: organization of

“This year, I’ll be teaching the states. I don’t have books on the states. .I.mean I have encyclopedias in my room from like the 80s, you know, early 90s, that I know are going to have outdated information. So, I guess, to me the library’s role is to have updated information, more so. Obviously quality but updated. . .I.might go down to the library and say, hey, we’re going to be working on this region. Could I check out these books, and hopefully the librarian would be able to . . . take me to them or show me how to find them and . . let me check them out and make them available to my students.”

Though initially confused by the question about the role of library programs in supporting school improvement initiatives, a few teachers suggested there was a need for support for reading. One teacher mentioned the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills references sources test that is sometimes given to students. Another teacher mentioned that there was a school technology goal that would relate to the library, and another said the library was simply enrichment.

The administrators agreed that the library program should support school improvement, but they differed in their beliefs about whether that support was obvious. Three administrators stated the library was important to content; one explained her knowledge ~~is~~ supported evidence for school library programs and said the connection of the library program with the school improvement agenda was a “boon”; one noted the importance to academics, rigor, and relevance; and one connected libraries to literacy

Most notable was the Odessa Elementary principal that was incensed about how the lack of library resources was preventing lower social economic status (SES) students from obtaining the background knowledge essential for them to improve their scores in vocabulary, comprehension, and any other area in which they might test poorly. She emphasized inquiry as well as reading motivation and reading to learn for building background knowledge. Specifically, “The best way to improve students’ background knowledge is to get them really engaged in reading something that they care about.”

She believed her students’ SES was related to their lack of background knowledge and that background knowledge was related to standardized test scores. She was clear that the solution was to “fix it” with information and to motivate students through things “they want to know about.” Finally, she offered that this plan would “eventually increase their reading achievement, and bridge the gap for SES status.”

The combination of her recent professional reading and her experience in a previous district with a full-time teacher/librarian in each building and a \$12,000 annual library materials budget caused her to consider her school’s unfunded school library program as she began to understand the discrepancy between the two districts’ library budgets, staffing, and services. She launched into an extensive discussion about her professional reading of Robert Marzano (2004). She wanted students to have opportunities to participate in inquiry ~~or~~ selfstudy situations, but she knew that to do that, the school library would need books at all reading levels on any topic in which any student may be interested.

She also made it clear that student inquiry should be ongoing. She stated ~~that~~ it played a large part in it, but she offered no concrete solution to make libraries and background knowledge stronger. She placed the blame on political injustices and unfair school funding practices, but given the elusiveness she saw in her argument, she didn’t see anything that could be done.

“There is a certain amount of injustice there when you look at school funding in a place like [former district] and you think about school funding here. It’s not right. And I never thought really about how unfair it is because I never thought about it through a

Three themes emerged from the data analysis about participants' visions and expectations: (a) a minimal role for school library programs in the vision and reality of participants; (b) the invisibility of the professional instructional role of the teacher-librarian needed to increase program sustainability; and (c) a disconnect between the school library program and school improvement initiatives, specifically in literacy, technology, and core content areas. The program was absent from the core mission of schools, and the general expectation was that minimal change would occur. The discussion of the results connects these themes with four relevant areas of literature: stakeholders' perceptions and expectations of school library programs, evidence of school library programs' influence on student learning, supports and obstacles to successful school library programs, and the role of school libraries in a democratic education.

Theme 1: Limited Visions Depict a Minimal Role for School Library Programs

The first theme from the data is the minimal role for school libraries in the vision and reality of participants. Most participants' ideal visions for a school library program were uninformed by state or national school library guidelines (e.g., AASL and AECT 1998; Iowa Department of Education 2007b). The literature confirmed that stakeholders' perceptions of school library programs are disconnected from national school library guidelines (Dorrell and Lawson 1995).

Theme 3: Standardized Assessments Disconnect Libraries from Curriculum

The third theme arising from the data for this case study is the disconnect between the school library program and the mission of the school implemented through school improvement initiatives, particularly literacy, technology, and other content areas.

Literacy Requires Physical and Intellectual Access to Libraries

Teachers said the lack of reading guidance and school library selections was the missing piece of their implementation of Guided Reading independent reading.

Technology-Savvy Students Need Information Skills

Seven of the thirteen participants made connections between their lack of technology instruction and the need for technology-savvy students to learn information skills in conjunction with library-research and Internet resource evaluation skills.

Content is King, Libraries are Strictly Supplemental

Only one participant, a principal, in this case study described the library as essential for content learning.

Current School Improvement Threatens Libraries

All participants assumed that the school library program was important to the district CSIP; however, it made no mention of the school library program as a resource or collaborative strategy for reading guidance, information skills, or technology instruction. The CSIP technology goal was for students to “select and use appropriate tools and technology resources to accomplish a variety of tasks and solve problems across the curriculum.” The district solution to “close this 3(r)3(i).

supports and obstacles to implementing the new state telehealth and school library program requirements is in table 2. Although the supports indicated in this study are hopeful considering the degraded condition of this school library program, the obstacles regarding perceptions of the library as nonessential for instruction or content learning outweigh the desires for reinstating the school library program in this school.

Table 2. Supports and Obstacles to Implementing New State School Library Requirements

Supports to Implementing State Requirements	Obstacles to Implementing State Requirements
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and intellectual access for students to library materials. Teachers raised issues with policies restricting students to mere weekly checkouts or limited library facility access (e.g., hallway passage restrictions) and limited promotional spaces and programming as rationale for their use of the literacy programs such as Reading Counts, Guided Reading, and classroom libraries. Consequently, the way these programs were implemented in this district necessarily circumvented the nonfunctioning library, thus further reducing physical and intellectual access to library resources.

Recommendations

This study has led to the following recommendations for local, state, and national leadership for the sustainability of school library programs:

1. Local school districts and the state should mandate district school library collection guidelines as well as state collection guidelines (Johnson 2004) and state school library program guidelines (Iowa Department of Education 2007b) to ensure that students have physical and intellectual access to high-quality school library collections.
2. The state accreditation agency should visit schools to enforce the program requirements.
3. Local school districts and the state need to mandate an adequate budget to ensure students have physical and intellectual access to central school library collections.
4. The state should increase the minimum teacher-librarian staffing requirement in the Iowa School Library Program Guidelines to one full-time teacher-librarian per school with up to 750 students and an additional half-time appointment for every 500 students beyond the first 750, as specified in *Plans for Pages* (Johnson 2004).
5. Local school districts and the state need to mandate the inclusion of school library program goals into the CSIP, require that the teacher-librarian be a CSIP team member, and mandate library supports to goals and strategies.
6. School administrator preparation programs and professional development is needed to incorporate training in school library program expectations and the leadership necessary to meet those expectations.
7. Teacher-librarian preparation programs and professional development should be implemented to incorporate extensive leadership training about how to work in partnership with educational administrators to meet state and national guidelines for school library programs.
8. School administrator and teacher-librarian preparation programs need to be created to join with the state in providing professional development and support tailored for the administrators, teachers, and teacher-librarians in districts without an understanding of a school library program.

Future Research

This case study school did not have a teacher-librarian in the district; it should be replicated in a school with a traveling librarian and in a similar size school with a full-time teacher-librarian and an established school library program. The research about social marketing for libraries (Immroth and Lukenbill 2007) should also be implemented to benefit educators with visions of what their schools would look like in the future.

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Appendix A. Educator Questionnaire

Please complete the following information. Your participation is voluntary and respondent anonymity is guaranteed.

College Degrees:

____ BA/BS Area(s): _____

____ MA/MS Area(s): _____

____ PhD/EdD Area(s): _____

____ Other Area(s): _____

All areas of certification (e.g., endorsements): _____

Grade level taught during the 2006–7 school year: _____

Other grades taught: _____

Total years of experience in current grade level assignment: _____

Total years of experience teaching at current school: _____

Total years of experience as an educator: _____

Describe any experiences (positive or negative) you've had with libraries in general, meaning any type of library, public, school, college? _____

How did you first find about the reinstatement of the Teacher Librarian and School Library Program requirement into the 2007 Iowa Code?

When did you find this out?

____ During the past few weeks ____ 1–3 months ago ____ 4–6 months ago ____ 6–12 months ago

Appendix B. Focus Group and Interview Questions

Teacher Focus Group and Interviews

1. What thoughts come to mind when you think about libraries in general (any type)?
2. What do you think the ideal school library program would be like?
3. Tell me about your building's school library program, either in the past or in the present. How has the program changed through the years you've taught here?
4. In what ways does your school library fit your ideal description?
5. Suppose that your school was hiring a certified school librarian as a teacher with teaching certification and the state endorsement as a teacher-librarian. What skills or abilities do you feel this person must have?
6. What responsibilities do you feel this person should assume first, and next?
7. How do you view the library program role in early literacy?
8. How do you view the library program role in content learning, e.g., science, social studies, math, or information research skills?
9. What would be your preference for the organization of library books? Would you prefer to see them in the library or in the office?
10. How do you view the library program role in school improvement activities, e.g., in light of the discussions at your school about testing data?
11. What, if anything, would keep you from using a school library?

Focus Group Topics Initiated By Teachers and Improvised Questions

1. What expectations do you

Appendix C. Data Codes

Roles of the Teacher Librarian

AD—Program Administrator

CM—Information Specialist / Collection Management

P—Instructional Partner

T—Teacher

Program Administrator

ADVis Visioning (Library Program)

ADCom Communication (Public Relations)

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Research on instructional technology teaching methods and critical literacy in school libraries
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