

Developing, implementing, and maintaining a school library program are key areas of a teacher-librarian (also referred to as a TL) position. When a teacher-librarian moves to a new school they must try to understand their predecessor's program and adjust, adopt, or create their own. Montiel-Overall (2005) and Eisenberg and Miller (2002) suggest that a collaborative model must be in place for three to five years to reach its potential. What happens when this timeline is not a possibility, such as when lay-offs occur? For some this yearly lay-off cycle means moving to a new school on a yearly basis and beginning the process of program development anew. Can an effective library program be implemented on a yearly timeline? This paper will examine the components of an effective library program; the various roles of the teacher-librarian; reflect on these components in my own practice; and will end with a plan for implementing these essential factors.

I began my teaching career in 1993. I worked as a Teacher-On-Call; short-term temporary employee; long-term temporary teacher; and finally, approximately seven years ago, I earned my continuing employee status. Unfortunately this did not mean that I had earned a continuing position. Instead I, along with hundreds of others, faced yearly lay-offs. What this meant was that each spring I would receive a lay-off notice and would have to then apply for a new position at a new school. This process was frustrating, demeaning and, understandably, led to poor morale throughout the school district. With each move, I had to work towards developing programs and relationships in a new teaching situation.

In 2002, our school district decided to cut library programs. Teacher-librarians were laid-off and had to then move into other teaching areas. There was a small uproar

and the teacher-librarians were rehired but were only allowed to work at one school site, instead of the typical two, three, or four schools. This new policy opened the door to teacher-librarianship for me. I had always loved school libraries so I applied for a position that had a small amount of library time and, due to a children's literature course I had taken just for fun and an extensive history of school library volunteerism, I was deemed one of the most qualified candidates and accepted the position. One stipulation was that I would have to take coursework in teacher-librarianship.

This led me to the University of Alberta and its multi-tiered program in teacher-librarianship: Open Studies, Diploma, and Master programs. I started as an Open Studies student, thinking that I would only take the basic number of courses required by my district in order to remain qualified for teacher-librarian positions. After one course, I decided that I might as well get a diploma, all the more to get me that elusive job that I was so desperate to have. Somewhere along the way, and I can't name one course or project that inspired me, it became more than "just getting by." While I had been encouraged by friends and family to enter the Master of Education program, the reasons were not things that inspired me to make that commitment: more money, ability to be an administrator; bigger pension. It was not until I developed a passion to create an effective library program, that I knew I could complete the degree.

Due to lay-offs I have had to continue to apply and move to a new school every year. While these experiences are frustrating, I continue to accept that these moves are a part of my journey. The transient nature of my experiences thus far has allowed me to work in large variety of school communities. Each community offers me different

challenges that add to my confidence in the ability to develop a quality library program and the determination to implement such a program for as long as I am there.

Due to the constant movement of teacher-librarians and the continuous cutbacks in our district, many people are reluctant to open their minds or classroom doors to the possibility of collaboration or, in some cases, even a weekly book exchange. In most of the situations that I have experienced it takes close to a year of hard work to develop the trust that is needed to begin any type of collaborative relationship. As Oberg (1999) states, the types of changes that I attempt to make will affect the whole culture of the school, which is not something to be taken lightly.

My ultimate goal is to introduce a collaborative, inquiry-based library program into a school and expand it over time. With yearly lay-offs this has, so far, remained a dream but it has provided me with many opportunities that have benefited my personal and professional growth. These challenges have created a focus for my capping paper that is relevant to my current experience and also to new teacher-librarians entering the field. I have had the opportunity to work in a variety of school settings and to develop library programs when faced with varying levels of acceptance. Most personally and professionally rewarding, has been to experience a change in attitude over time by reluctant staff members to embrace what I, as a teacher-librarian, bring to a school environment.

Muronaga and Harada (1999) indicate that developing the relationships necessary for collaboration is a “complex and evolving process” that takes time to develop. Eisenberg and Miller (2002) maintain that five years are needed to develop an optimal library program. My capping paper will examine the development and

implementation of an effective library program given a one-year time frame. Will it be perfect? No. But in the world of libraries, I don't believe that perfect is what I want. Perfect implies completion. Libraries and teacher-librarians need to grow and change, otherwise they are no longer effective. Have I given up on the dream of remaining in one school for a number of years? Absolutely not, but in the meantime, I'm creating my own dream. I am using the components of effective library programs and exploring the role of teacher-librarian as a change agent to make a difference right now.

These roles and components will be the focus of a literature review in the second section of this paper. The paper will continue with a reflective examination of my personal experiences in light of the research. Finally, I will create a program plan to aid me as I continue my work in my newest library and, with the very real threat of school closure, prepare to move again in a year or two.

Literature Review

Researchers emphasize that building relationships and quality school library programs is a complex, evolving, creative process (Kuhlthau, 1993; Muronaga & Harada, 1999). Oberg (1999) identifies the importance of addressing school goals when creating a framework for a program while Eisenberg and Miller (2002) and Muronaga and Harada remind us that the process is non-linear, requiring flexibility, assessment, and revision. While a timeline of a year may not seem like enough time to create, implement, assess, and adjust, teacher-librarians are responsible for creating a program that is “sustainable, relevant to users, and useful” (“10 rules for new librarians,” 2006, p.63).

As part of the process, teacher-librarians must make themselves aware of curriculum at all levels (Jinkins, 2001). At the school level, teacher-librarians can encourage staff to

provide long-range plans (Jinkins, 2001; Montiel-Overall, 2005) which will aide in providing lessons that are relevant and contextual (Kuhlthau, 1993).

To build or maintain an effective program there must be willing partners (Muronaga & Harada, 1999). One way to find willing partners is to approach teachers and offer to implement collaboration, which may begin with the teacher-librarian informally linking lessons to classroom curriculum (Muronaga & Harada). Over time, if applicable, this could be expanded to a more integrated model of collaboration (Montiel-Overall, 2005). This part of the process, evolving from simple to complex partnerships, requires collegiality, respect, and trust (Montiel-Overall).

Relationships require work whether they are new or long term. Building relationships with colleagues requires no less effort. In order to build trust, essential for effective collaboration, teacher-librarians must be approachable (Muronaga & Harada, 1999) and reliable (“10 rules for new librarians,” 2006). Montiel-Overall (2005) identifies attributes of positive collaboration: friendliness, congeniality, collegiality, reciprocity, respect, propensity to share, trust, and flexibility. Muronaga and Harada remind teacher-librarians to acknowledge teachers for their support and involvement in the library program. Muronaga and Harada assure that this will create an appreciation for the program and a willingness to participate.

Eisenberg and Miller (2002) believe that a positive attitude “is everything”. They maintain that positive thinking equals positive results. Haycock (2003) identifies a successful teacher-librarian as one who is enterprising, has a positive attitude, has vision and adds that they must also be risk-takers who are committed to student learning and collaboration. Attributes of positive thinking are: passion, enthusiasm, energy, and

optimism (Eisenberg & Miller). Kuhlthau (1993) mirrors this belief by stating that excitement and enthusiasm are found in successful programs. McCracken (2003) identifies key factors that make a difference in role development. They are: having input and a willingness to try new things; continued personal education initiatives; creativity; determination; desire; having a clear plan; and, a true enjoyment for the job. Vansickle (2000) adds that having a warm, caring demeanour improves the success of a library program.

Gallagher-Hayashi (2001) states that teacher-librarians work hard but not smart because they isolate themselves and are, generally, not visible. Muronaga and Harada (1999) suggest that teacher-librarians participate in activities other than those directly related to the library to create a visible profile. Jinkins (2001) suggests observations; classroom visits; and walks in the halls; which will help them to get to know staff and students while making their presence known.

Muronaga and Harada (1999) identify the heart of collaboration as “developing a climate of trust and mutual respect” (p. 9). Respect all participants for their strengths, expertise, skills, knowledge, abilities, and comfort levels (Muronaga & Harada). Simply put, an effective program requires a team effort (Kuhlthau, 1993; McCarthy, 1997; and Muronaga & Harada).

Muronaga and Harada (1999) state that to obtain a collaborative culture a teacher-librarian must be willing to be a leader or to be an active team member. Gallagher-Hayashi (2001) states that teacher-librarians must be proactive and develop a leadership voice to address library concerns. Oberg (1999) emphasizes that the teacher-librarian, in partnership with the principal, must play a strong leadership role in program

implementation. Vansickle (2000) states that the leadership role must be emphasized in the training received by teacher-librarians.

Montiel-Overall (2005) describes collaborative teams as those who “recognize each other’s unique expertise, maintain a certain independence, jointly agree upon common goals, and implement them through mutual support, build trust leading to open and honest dialogue, recognize conflict is normal, and jointly participate in decision” (¶ 12). This is not a relationship that can be developed overnight. Muronaga and Harada (1999) remind us that we need to be realistic, patient, and nurturing.

A successful program has a library committee to participate in decision-making, goal and policy development, evaluation, and promotion (Eisenberg & Miller, 2002; Gallagher-Hayashi, 2001; Jinkins, 2001; Oberg, 1999). The committee should include the teacher-librarian, the principal, and classroom teachers and may also include students, parents, district administrators, community members, and the public librarian (Eisenberg & Miller; Gallagher-Hayashi; Jinkins; Oberg).

Also of key importance are regularly scheduled meetings (Oberg, 1999). These meetings are interactive and may include whole staffs, grade level teachers, or individual teachers and should include the teacher-librarian (Muronaga & Harada 1999; Oberg), technology teacher (Muronaga & Harada), and principal (Eisenberg & Miller, 2002; Gallagher-Hayashi, 2001). Also important is the need for the team to set goals for the program, which must reflect the community as a whole (Gallagher-Hayashi).

A flexible schedule is a fundamental component of collaborative library programs (Jinkins, 2001; Kuhlthau, 1993; McCarthy, 1997; Muronaga & Harada, 1999; Oberg, 1999). Teachers book time for classes, small group, or individual activities (Oberg).

Students may also come to the library to answer questions on their own (Oberg). Flexible scheduling allows for additional planning time between teachers and the teacher-librarian (McCarthy). Many researchers support the use of a flexible schedule that will allow the teacher-librarian to implement roles that they may not be able to accommodate in a fixed schedule, such as collaborative partner, teacher, or leader; implement the standards in to the curriculum; create a strong position; provide more time for collaboration and student help; as well as provide more time for committee work (McCracken, 2001; Henri, Hay, & Oberg, 2002; and van Deusen, 1996).

Regular communication indicating collection additions, program activities, and anecdotal circulation records are critical to the support of the library (Eisenberg & Miller, 2002; Montiel-Overall, 2005). This communication may be presentations at meetings, website updates, or memos (Eisenberg & Miller). Recipients of these may be principals, staff, parents, students, district administration, and other community members (Eisenberg & Miller). Teacher-librarians must create an action plan that includes assessment and long-range goals. Teacher-librarians should also document and communicate on a regular basis with all members of the education community: teachers, students, principals, parents, and district administration. This documentation must include information about the library program, achievements, and the impact on student achievement.

One of the most critical factors in the success of a school library program is the support of the school principal (Eisenberg & Miller, 2002; Gallagher-Hayashi, 2001; Kuhlthau, 1993; McCarthy, 1997; Montiel-Overall, 2005; Muronaga & Harada, 1999; Oberg, 1999). Gallagher-Hayashi and Montiel-Overall agree that without administrative

leadership there is no chance for a successful program. Oberg adds to this by stating that for institutionalization to occur the principal must state clear expectations for collaborative partnerships. In order to expand the teacher-librarian's role the support of the principal is vital (McCracken, 2001). Henri et al. (2002) agree and believe that a principal with a positive attitude and knowledge about library programs can show support when it comes to budgets, scheduling, influence with staff, and staff development opportunities. To gain and maintain the support of the principal a teacher-librarian should be encouraged to provide monthly reports highlighting library activities, successes, and problems that need to be addressed.

Gallagher-Hayashi (2001) insists that teacher-librarians must be strong advocates for library programs in order to activate, encourage, and maintain programming. Herrin, Pointon, and Russell (1986) identify several other personality attributes possessed by successful teacher-librarians. The most successful teacher-librarians have a positive self-image and self-concept. Teacher-librarians are strong communicators. They are expressive and are quick to solve problems when necessary. They use a wide array of attention giving behaviours such as smiling, using names, and making eye contact. Herrin et al. discovered that successful teacher-librarians enjoy their jobs because of the challenges and the people with whom they work. They are willing to take the initiative and accept, and work with, change. Another factor that was found to be important was a sense of humour (Herrin et al.). Haycock (2003) also emphasized the need to create a warm, inviting environment.

McCracken (2001) states that many members of the school community including teachers, principals and teacher-librarians themselves misunderstand the role of the

teacher-librarian. van Deusen (1996) points out that to many the prime role of the teacher-librarian is to manage the circulation of materials. The role of the teacher-librarian is constantly changing. Vansickle (2000) acknowledges this change by emphasizing the fact that teacher-librarians are no longer considered to be primarily providers of knowledge but are now actively involved in facilitating learning. Clearly, for all members of the education community, a more complete definition of the teacher-librarian's role is needed. According to Asselin, Branch, and Oberg (2003) the role of the teacher-librarian is to provide information literacy expertise; up-to-date curriculum information and professional development; and to work with teachers and other team members collaboratively to implement effective programming into the classroom.

Lance, Hamilton-Pennell, & Rodney (2000) identify six roles that constitute the position of a teacher-librarian. They are: teacher, information specialist, administrator, instructional consultant, policy maker, and partner. Haycock (2003) identifies the roles of teacher, information specialist, and administrator as the key roles that empower teachers and students which results in higher test scores. Vansickle (2000) further expands on this role definition by including leadership in this list of responsibilities that a teacher-librarian has in their day-to-day experience.

Asselin et al. (2003) remind us that teacher-librarians are qualified, experienced teachers with specialist training in teacher-librarianship. Other members of the education community may overlook this. Haycock (2003) identifies the teacher-librarian's teacher role as that of a guide. Teaching students to use, access, apply, and evaluate material from a variety of sources is a large part of this role (Haycock; McCracken, 2001; van Deusen, 1996; Vansickle 2000). Another part of the teaching role for teacher-librarians

is planning and creating learning experiences with classroom teachers (van Deusen; Vansickle). van Deusen and Vansickle remind us that teacher-librarians also must continue to promote a love of books and provide incentive for reading both for informational and recreational purposes.

McCracken (2001) identifies the information specialist role as the most important role and, therefore, the one that is practiced the most. As information specialists, teacher-librarians are responsible for collection development. Haycock (2003) emphasizes that for Canadian teacher-librarians finding and selecting Canadian books and materials is of utmost importance. This expertise in selecting these resources will offer Canadian students insight into their own culture. Haycock also mentions the need for teacher-librarians to select materials that will support enrichment opportunities for students.

McCracken (2001) found that teacher-librarians identified administration as their second most important role while van Deusen (1996) identified it as one of the top three roles performed by teacher-librarians. The administrative role is what would be described as the stereotypical librarian's activities: circulation activities, shelving materials, and locating and gathering materials for teachers. van Deusen emphasizes that these are duties that should be performed by clerical staff. The American Library Association [ALA] and the Association for Educational Communication and Technology (1988, 1998) [AECT] define this role as direct services and access for library users as well as management of the library program itself. Haycock (2003) includes managing technology in this area.

As an instructional leader, teacher-librarians must work as consultant and partner to teachers (McCracken, 2001; van Deusen, 1996). Their planning, material, content, and

instruction must support the learning goals of the school, the standards, as well as the curriculum. McCracken expresses the need for teacher-librarians to offer guidance regarding technology as well. This role is becoming increasingly important in today's schools.

The teacher-librarian is responsible for creating, initiating, evaluating, and changing policies that meet the needs of the school and its community members. The ALA and AECT (1988, 1998) emphasize the need for policies regarding training and advocacy for teacher-librarians and other members of the learning community.

Haycock (2003) and Tallman and Tastad (1998) describe the partnership aspect of the teacher-librarian's role as essential. Teacher-librarians, in partnership with classroom teachers, would teach and evaluate units and lessons. van Deusen (1996) emphasizes the need for teacher-librarians to offer professional development to the whole school community.

McCracken (2001) and Vansickle (2000) identify leadership as the most important role in a teacher-librarian's position. This role ensures the viability of the program. Vansickle and Haycock (2003) recognize that teacher-librarians are responsible for initiating collaboration. Haycock emphasizes that being able to lead students and teachers in accessing and using information specific to the curriculum defines the leadership role of the teacher-librarian. In this role, teacher-librarians also work as advocates for youth (Vansickle). Vansickle tells us that, as leaders, teacher-librarians have vision that they can identify, initiate, and execute. They provide leadership for information literacy, integrated, collaborative programming, and, often, in technology through meetings, in-servicing, professional development, and committee work (Asselin

et al. 2003). Teacher-librarians work with the whole school community and maintain a high profile for themselves and the library program (Vansickle).

This literature review examines the role of the teacher-librarian as well as the process and essential qualities of an effective school library program. There are no guaranteed recipes to follow but there are several indicators of successful programs and their teacher-librarian leaders. The teacher-librarian must have a positive attitude; be prepared to deal with the multi-faceted aspects of their role on a daily basis; be an active leader in their school community; and be open and willing to acknowledge the contributions of all team members. The program must be based on curriculum and connected to classroom learning; be done in partnership with willing community members, especially the administrator; and optimally, be provided through a flexible schedule. While there are many optimal qualities of successful library experiences, they may not always be readily available or understood by all concerned with the library program. There may be roadblocks that need some adjusting or removing, such as a one-year timeline. Remember that developing your “perfect” program is a process. The following section of the paper will examine ways to overcome, or at least shift, some of the obstacles.

Personal Reflections, Experiences, and Struggles

How can an effective library program be implemented on a yearly timeline? The first step would be to develop a personal philosophy that encompasses the professional components of an effective program as well as the attributes of a successful teacher-librarian, as outlined in the literature review. The key is not to get mired down in the frustrations of the transient experience but to relish it as a learning experience and move

forward with a positive attitude. While this may not be easy, it is essential to enter each new experience with an open mind and a willing attitude. Researchers have indicated that this positive approach is a key element of successful library programs (Eisenberg & Miller, 2002; Haycock, 2003). There are many challenges faced by TL's including, but not limited to, program cuts and lack of funding. My transient experiences are just one more thing to advocate against in my daily duties.

My personal philosophy begins with the belief that others, including the principal, staff, parents, and students as well as upper management, must have something to believe in if they are going to work with me to protect and develop a viable library program. It begins with me but does not end with me. It is imperative to do everything in your power to develop a program that other members of the education community will fight for, if needed. Some environments are definitely easier: if a previous TL already had a viable program and similar ethic, the transition is easier; others are less smooth. Either circumstance requires a commitment to developing respectful relationships. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that the process of developing collaborative relationships is one that will require patience. A staff member may take close to a year to even be willing to work together at the simplest level of collaboration. All steps must be respected and celebrated, even if they are at a snail's pace. These baby steps, for some, may make your colleagues feel very vulnerable. It is up to the TL to prove that their trust is warranted.

One of the greatest pleasures of my job is being able to explore my creative side. What was once an unknown entity, I now consider a foundation of my career. The creativity that I am most excited about is having the ability to capture the interests of

students in the area of research. When faced with a fixed schedule where collaboration and inquiry are still a dream, how do you teach information skills in an interesting, relevant way? Find something that excites yourself and your students and have fun with it. Students will be learning essential library skills by exploring different types of resources; evaluating the usefulness of these resources; understanding how to use these materials; and gathering and sharing information. The best part is that many students do not even know that they are learning. One of my favourite “units” is on dragons, which I begin in mid-September. We start with a discussion and poll on whether dragons are real or not. Students, and many times parents and colleagues, enjoy listening to dragon stories and poems and then we slowly move towards the exploration of non-fiction materials on real dragons: Komodos. Students learn to examine a variety of resources and collate that knowledge into collective learning about Komodo dragons. This year, by chance, I called in a teacher-on-call who had actually been to Komodo Island and was able to share his experiences, photos, and knowledge with the students. When I returned the students passed more information to me. This “unit” is fun and interesting but also a powerful learning tool. Students still talk to me about the dragons, real and not real, and I frequently have students bringing me dragon material to share. They also carry this excitement and need for more dragon knowledge back into the classroom and home. This brings teachers and parents into the library and leads to conversations about what students are learning in class and how I might tie these learnings into the library program through a class or individual research project. This is simple collaboration but some teachers, when approached directly regarding collaboration, may be reluctant. This

method allows them to see success in library skills and to link classroom learning without having to commit to full collaboration.

I feel some success if I am able to make this classroom connection early in the school year. While this unit is a personal favourite, I do like to explore new subject areas as well. While I usually begin with dragons, I always seek teacher and student input for subsequent explorations. This allows students to direct their own learning while I can work as a guide to finding and evaluating resources. No school or student is ever the same so I am constantly learning and adjusting as I go along.

Another key element to be addressed is the need for creating a visible profile. Gallagher-Hayashi (2001) reminds us that we must not isolate ourselves in the library. Instead we must be visible members of the whole learning community. It is important to be seen throughout the school in different capacities: walking the halls; greeting students as they enter the school at the start of the day; attending sporting events as a coach, spectator, or participant. This visible element puts the TL on the radar for school members. We are not shut into our library but are, instead, important members of the school community. I have also discovered that I can learn so much more by stepping outside of the library doors. I can find out about student's interests that I can use to set up relevant displays and choose new resources. I can learn about special events which allows me to provide resources that are relative to staff and students interests. As the information specialist at the school I am responsible for collection development. I take into account student interests when choosing resources, curriculum initiatives, current collections and staff desires. Providing quality materials that are relevant helps build the trust of staff and students. Classroom teachers will see that you understand their needs and are

knowledgeable regarding the curriculum; students will trust that you are someone that they can come to when looking for resources whether for research, assignments, or pleasure reading; the principal will learn that you are an information expert that they can trust. As a prep release teacher, I do not work with all students in the school. By being a visual in the school community, students and their parents recognize me and by getting to see students outside of the library, I get to know them better as well. It is especially important to make connections with those who might not make an appearance in the library on their own time.

A library committee should be established in order to develop and promote the library program. It should include a variety of school community members. As the TL, establishing this committee would, logically, fall on my shoulders. The challenge is the reluctance of community members to join another committee. Thankfully, in my current teaching role, I am also the Lead Literacy teacher and a Literacy committee has already been established. Bringing library issues into this environment was an easy transition. In other schools, this has not always been available. While trying to establish a library committee, I have discovered that people are quite eager and willing to pass library-related decisions directly onto the TL. This is completely understandable, as we all know the number of commitments we as educators make on a daily basis before, during and after school hours. Tied to this work is establishing regular meetings with all staff members to plan and set goals. Again, I am fortunate to be able to tie the library position in with the lead literacy position as well as have regular input at staff meetings. While Oberg (1999) emphasizes the importance of library planning meetings, and from a library

standpoint it would be ideal to have separate meetings, I am cognizant of the fact that teachers are reluctant to commit extra time to more meetings.

One of the most beneficial, and realistic, meetings is the unplanned one. How to plan for unplanned meetings? Make yourself available. Go to the staffroom on a regular basis; show up in the office or the photocopy room. These are the places where teachers are talking about what is going on in their classrooms. Here is where you can make yourself invaluable. Are your intermediate teachers starting on a research project? Offer to teach note-taking and bibliographies. Is one of your primary teachers starting a unit on penguins? Now is the perfect time to provide her with that URL for the Webcast from the Aquarium that you discovered. These unplanned moments open more doors, in my experience, than the most clearly written goals ever could.

Regularly notifying community members about what is going on the library through newsletters, reports, website additions, notes, and displays is essential to the library program. It keeps that visual profile alive and provides another reminder of what you are doing and a glimpse of what you are capable of achieving. Admittedly, I have not developed an action plan or set of long-range goals. Not for a lack of belief in their importance but, instead, have concentrated all my efforts on the here and now. Long-term planning seems illogical when short-term experience is so prevalent. Instead, I have focused my energy on introducing a program with the hopes of adding to it as the year progresses. While this may seem short-sighted and negligent it is, instead, a survival tactic. I cannot make long-term plans when, in all likelihood, it will be somebody else in that position in the following school year.

Researchers identify a supportive principal as the most integral component of a successful library program (Eisenberg & Miller, 2002; Gallagher-Hayashi, 2001; Montiel-Overall, 2005). The principal must believe strongly in the library program and what it has to offer students and the entire school learning community. A school administrator who understands and supports the library program has a strong influence over the budget, schedule, and attitudes of staff members as well. Researchers have proven that a flexible schedule is fundamental to a successful library program (Jinkins, 2001; Kuhlthau, 1993; McCarthy, 1997). The principal, in partnership with the teacher-librarian, is in a position that could explore and promote this type of schedule. Currently and historically in my practice, I use my administration and personal prep time to provide flexible opportunities for my colleagues. Others may argue, and indeed they have, that I am shooting myself in the foot by providing these services on my own time. This could be true, but how else am I to show what a library and teacher-librarian can offer if I do not let people experience it first hand? When do I make up this administrative time or prep time? I make it up after school, like every other classroom teacher who does not have enough time in their daily schedule to get everything done.

Clearly it is necessary to define my role and make it clear to others. I am not the stereotypical librarian: shelving and circulating books, and reading stories to children. Although I do these things, these are not the most important parts of my job. Lack of funding in libraries goes beyond not having money for resources or having little TL time designated to a school, it also involves a lack of clerical support. Adequate clerical support would enable the TL to be free to work directly with students and staff, using his or her literacy and technology expertise to guide library users. Volunteers, when they are

available, and the TL are often doing clerical jobs. That being said, there are benefits to the clerical side of a TL's duties: it allows the TL to obtain first hand knowledge of what is circulating and, when new to a library, it allows the TL to view the collection.

Additionally, signing out books for students allows me to learn their names more quickly. As the role continues to develop and change we are responsible for building collaborative relationships with our teaching colleagues and for developing inquiry-based experiences for our students. This role expansion is a positive move in establishing TL's as essential to learning in the 21st century but this does mean that some traditional TL roles are no longer a major part of the job. As a young child I remember enjoying story time at the library. While it is true that anyone can read a story, I still feel a sense of loss that this element of the TL's position is being minimized. As the on-site expert regarding resources, I am still the one that students, teachers, and parents come to for reading advice, whether for research or pleasure reading reasons. We need to continue to provide this information while being careful to focus our energies on the essential role of developing independent learners.

The seven role components as identified by Lance et al. (2000) and Vansickle (2000) make the definition easier and provide TL's with clear guidelines for the professional expectations. The role of leader is, perhaps, the most challenging of roles for me personally. I have never defined myself as a leader. Avoidance of public speaking is always high on my list of priorities but as a TL I find myself outside of my comfort zone on more and more occasions. As an advocate for library programs, I am on the front line. I am responsible for sharing the role and value of the library program. If not the TL then who else would take on this responsibility? This goes beyond sharing at the school level.

As an active advocate, I must take this responsibility to the district level as well, working with and encouraging other TL's to share ideas and information between colleagues as well as presenting information to senior district management and local trustees. As the resources expert on site, staff members frequently bring me lists of resources that they require and, as a leader, they expect, as do I, that I will do what is my power to get these things into their hands. As I started on the road of teacher-librarianship I was unaware of how much this role-played in my job as a TL. I cannot hide behind my stacks of books. I must step out and bring people through the doors.

As a teacher I have worked in all areas of the elementary program: classroom teacher; P.E. specialist; Student Support teacher; French itinerant, and band. As a teacher-librarian, I must incorporate all of these experiences as well as my specialist training as a TL into my practice. The most challenging aspect of the TL role is convincing others, including staff, parents, and students, that I am a teacher. I am teaching information literacy skills so that students may understand how to use and present information in an independent way. While van Deusen (1996) and Vansickle (2000) acknowledge that TL's are responsible for planning and developing collaborative experiences with their other teaching colleagues we, as practicing TL's, know that getting others on board is not always as easy as it sounds. Creating a culture of collaboration is something we must work towards. This requires a shift in pedagogical thinking. No longer can teachers close their doors and teach in isolation. We no longer exist in isolation and our students understand that we are locally and globally connected.

We must work within our schools to highlight the needs of the 21st century learner. We can help classroom teachers learn to collaborate with a TL and also model

collaboration for our students. This could be offered as a professional development opportunity for staff, perhaps in lieu of a staff meeting or during planning meetings. Schools in our district have professional development days at a school level. Oftentimes, these school-based Pro-D events are tied to school goals so the TL should be prepared to make this connection at the workshop. If entering a school as a new staff member, the TL must not presume that collaboration is already a school goal or that staff are aware that this type of partnership can be a part of the teacher-librarian's role. This would be an opportune time to offer a workshop on teacher/teacher-librarian collaboration. This would also be a time to highlight what we know about the 21st century learner and how they learn and what their futures might look like. The TL can expand the focus beyond the doors of the school, using the school goals and curriculum as the building blocks for developing students as global thinkers through inquiry-based learning. Our goal is create lifelong learners who are capable of solving problems or answering questions on their own, whether for personal, local, global, or social implications. Presenting a collaborative workshop early in the school year may establish your role as a leader and will also allow staff members to gain an awareness of this possibility. Another possibility is presenting a similar workshop later in the school year. TL's will have spent the earlier part of the year gaining principal support; developing their program; and establishing their profile in the school community. Perhaps they have already done some collaborative work with willing staff members. This alternative Pro-D opportunity will allow you to share your successes in a positive, functional way.

The most important thing to remember when establishing a library program, whether your experience is transient in nature or not, is that it is a process. There are no

hard and fast rules. It takes time and commitment. While you can use the indicators of successful programs as a guide, you, as the teacher-librarian, will have to find your own way to make your program successful. If you are on a one-year timeline you must remind yourself that you cannot do it all. An optimal program can take years to develop. Key elements, in my personal experience, are: a positive and willing attitude; energy and creativity; being prepared to step out of your comfort zone; acknowledge and support all collaborative initiatives; make connections to curriculum and classroom learning; and be persistent in your endeavours. Don't give up on collaboration even if you feel you aren't getting anywhere. The process may seem impossible at times but you can make a difference and people will come around. I know that it has worked for me.

Conclusion

This paper set out to present a positive response to a challenging situation. While changing schools every year may not be what I had hoped for when I began my teaching career, I accept this as part of my journey. It provided the opportunity to learn from a variety of experiences; make some great friends; and develop a program that I am proud of and can continue to develop. The one-year timeline definitely has its limitations but it has also allowed me to experience successes.

The literature review outlined some key things to consider when introducing or developing a library program including, but not limited to, a collaborative, inquiry-base environment that will enable students to become independent, lifelong learners; a flexible schedule that allows all users to access the school library when it is appropriate for their own learning; a supportive principal that is knowledgeable regarding TL's expertise in collaboration and inquiry who also sets the expectation for these fundamental program

values; and that the process for developing a viable library program takes, time, patience, and perseverance.

Teacher-Librarians have personal and professional attributes that they must develop or nurture that will assist them in creating a successful library program. They must be friendly; active throughout the school community; create a visual presence; and communicate to all community members, in a variety of ways, on a regular basis. TL's must also be aware of curriculum; be knowledgeable regarding current resources; be willing and able to lead on the topics of collaboration and inquiry-based learning; and they must be willing to act as leaders in their school environment. Some of these attributes may come naturally to the TL; others may not. Each TL must be willing to step out of their comfort zone, if necessary, in order to act in a way that creates the most successful program that they are able to present.

21st century learners must be able to: find information from a variety of formats; analyze this information for its usefulness in solving their problem or question, its currency, and its accuracy; organize and understand their information; and demonstrate and communicate this knowledge. This is what an information literate person can do (Asselin et al., 2003). TL's, in partnership with classroom teachers, provide the opportunity, the means, and the expertise to make information literacy a possibility.

As a TL I must continue to advocate for library programs at a school, district, and provincial level. By creating an active library program I have provided a glimpse of what we are capable of providing for our staff and students. Imagine what could be done with additional time, funding, and continuity on a staff. We all face challenges on a daily basis. My transient experience is frustrating but I have never been one to back down

from a challenge. It must be my stubborn side. Instead it just encourages me to be creative. How can I continue to advocate for lifelong learning in a positive way? How can I influence others to open their school library doors and move into the 21st century? What can be done to convince upper management, trustees, school boards, and ministry officials that school libraries with qualified Teacher-Librarians make information literacy an obtainable goal? There are no right or wrong answers for any of these questions. We each have to find our own way to advocate for library programs. Take a walk on the wild side and see what your TL can do for you!

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Appendix

Checklist/timeline for one-year library program implementation

Pre-school year activities:

(To be done, if possible, before the school year begins at your new school.)

- ❑ Curriculum awareness at each grade level
- ❑ Awareness of school goals to be tied in to library planning
- ❑ Examine information regarding predecessor's program. Consider which to amalgamate, discard, or adjust to meet your goals.
- ❑ Introduce yourself to all staff.
- ❑ Present goals and request for active support regarding collaboration and flexible schedule to principal.
- ❑
- ❑

Early September

- ❑ Establish library committee either as an independent committee or tied to an already-established committee
- ❑ Join committees/activities that are non-library related
- ❑ Outline of role definition and how it applies to classroom programs to be provided to staff members
- ❑ Define collaboration and inquiry-based learning for all staff
- ❑ Speak at staff meetings to introduce yourself and your hopes for the library program

- ❑ Approach teachers to initiate collaborative relationships. Some may be familiar and willing to begin on this right away as part of their regular program.
- ❑ Have library skills plan in place if collaboration is not already in place at the school level
- ❑ Have plan in place for school goals in the library program
- ❑ Request long and short range plans from classroom teachers
- ❑ Be visible around the school from day one
- ❑ Establish your presence with staff by regularly showing up in the halls, staffroom, office, classrooms, and copy room in anticipation of unplanned meetings
- ❑
- ❑

Ongoing and monthly

- ❑ Celebrate and acknowledge all collaboration, at any level
- ❑ Continue to approach staff regarding collaboration. Encourage and celebrate even the simplest level
- ❑ With staff who have started on the road to collaboration, encourage a move to a higher level of collaboration
- ❑ Be visible at school events
- ❑ Initiate “unplanned” meetings
- ❑ Submit library news to newsletters: PAC, school, classroom, and others

- ❑ Write a library newsletter sharing collaboration, news, collection news, and offering your assistance and input for classroom initiatives for staff
- ❑ Speak at the staff meeting
- ❑ Create displays to celebrate library initiatives, collaboration, and curriculum connections
- ❑ Plan and attend monthly committee meetings to examine goals, assess, and revise
- ❑
- ❑

Mid- September-Early November

- ❑ Begin your fun library skills unit (i.e. Dragons) if not using collaboration or skills-based program
- ❑ Continue ongoing/monthly activities
- ❑
- ❑

Mid-November

- ❑ Finish and share fun unit. Approach staff members regarding next unit and how it may be tied into the class program or plan a student-generated unit
- ❑ Assess and revise program
- ❑ Provide report for principal regarding program initiatives, successes, and plans for the coming months
- ❑ Continue ongoing/monthly activities
- ❑

January-February

- ❑ Small group or partner research project. Implement an inquiry model
- ❑ To be done in consultation with the classroom teacher collaboratively, if possible
- ❑ Continue ongoing/monthly activities
- ❑
- ❑

March

- ❑ Assess and revise program
- ❑ Plan for final term of school
- ❑ Provide report for principal regarding program initiatives, successes, and plans for the coming months
- ❑ Continue ongoing/monthly activities
- ❑
- ❑

April- June

- ❑ Individual or small group projects using collaboration at some level
- ❑ Continue ongoing/monthly activities
- ❑
- ❑

Year End

- ❑ Yearly report to principal outlining library program, activities, events, collaboration, curriculum connections and acknowledging their support

- ❑ Yearly report to PAC highlighting library program and initiatives
- ❑ Acknowledgements and celebration with all staff, regardless of their participation level
- ❑ Develop plan for the following school year. If remaining at current school, celebrate and then plan using this year's successes and struggles as a springboard for next year. If moving on to a new school, use this outline and add your own points to make it your own
- ❑
- ❑