The Effect of Professional Development on Teachers’ Perceptions of the Role of School Librarians: An Action Research Study

Jennifer C. Mandrell

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THE EFFECT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving husband, Lee, who has been an amazing support to me throughout this entire process, my parents who have always encouraged me to better myself, and finally, our children, Hannah, Caroline, and Robert, who I hope will someday understand what I have been doing for the last three years because I did this to make their lives better.
ABSTRACT

The role of the school librarian has greatly evolved from its origination as a person who solely checks out books or reads to students. School librarians are a vital part of schools and, when utilized appropriately, can be an integral part of the learning process with students. When collaboration occurs regularly, collaborative relationships between school librarians and teachers have been found to improve students’ academic performance. This paper describes a proposed action research study, which stems from the lack of a collaborative relationship between the school librarian and teachers at a middle school in South Carolina. The study focuses on teachers’ perceptions of the role of the school librarian and the way in which those perceptions affect the teachers’ likelihood to work collaboratively with the school librarian. Utilizing an action research methodology, I designed a questionnaire to determine the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the role of the school librarian and collaboration. A questionnaire was administered before and after two professional development sessions to instruct the teachers on ways in which the school librarian can work collaboratively with the teachers in order to improve student academic performance. Details for data collection and analysis are provided, as well as an action plan delineating the ways in which the results will be utilized to establish an effective school library collaborative at Bloomington Middle School (pseudonym).
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

School librarians are taught to collaborate with teachers as a means of creating learning environments that effectively teach information literacy skills to students. It is not easy to explain collaboration between teachers and librarians as one particular action. According to Webb and Doll (1999), depending on the situation, it can take on various forms and should happen willingly between two or more educators, with the result being authentic learning experiences. Varying levels of collaboration can take place between teachers and school librarians. On the low end of the spectrum, a teacher may request that a librarian gather books and create a list of websites for student research, while on the high end, the teacher and the librarian would develop the research lesson together and would work as instructional partners (Rawson, 2014). In a study conducted by Montiel-Overall (2009), it was found, “Every effort should be made to shift from traditional practices between teachers and librarians to high-end collaboration which incorporates joint planning, teaching, and evaluation of students” (p. 189). According to Dando, Folk and Levitov (2017), the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) established an initiative with the central message being, “School Librarians Transform Learning” which focused on the importance of school librarians being seen as agents of change along with having the ability to transform the manner in which teachers teach and students learn in today’s classroom.
While it is important to develop and maintain collaborative relationships between the teachers and librarians, it is even more important that the principal of the school realize the importance behind collaboration and therefore set an expectation for teachers and librarians to work together. Principals should establish protocol that includes school librarians in grade level and/or departmental planning meetings. Creating a situation that places teachers and the librarian together can work toward the establishment of collaborative relationships that may eventually occur independently outside of the required meetings. According to Farmer (2007), “The chief catalyst for collaboration at the site level is the principal, who serves as the vision-maker and curriculum facilitator” (p. 56). Russell (2002) discovered teachers will be more receptive to being approached by the librarian if know the principal expects them to collaborate with the librarian. It is important that principals communicate with teachers and ensure the teachers understand the purpose of the library. Through stating expectations regarding school library use, principals can set the tone for teachers and help establish a relationship between the staff and librarian. As found in a recent study by Gavigan and Lance (2016), students were more likely to perform at the highest performance levels on standardized ELA tests in South Carolina when librarians spent at least 50% of their time instructing students. Through collaborative relationships established between librarians and teachers, more learning can occur through a variety of means as opposed to one sole method of delivery. According to the American Association of School Librarians’ (1998), “Effective collaboration with teachers helps to create a vibrant and engaged community of learners, strengthens the whole school program as well as the library media program, and develops support for the school library media program throughout the whole school” (p. 51).
Building a relationship with the teachers at my school in which they learn to trust me and view me as a collaborative partner is something that I need to develop in order to become a more vital part of their curriculum and planning. Collaborative partnerships between teachers and school librarians can take place in various ways, such as brainstorming ideas for lesson planning, accessing appropriate resources for students and teachers, and co-teaching. According to *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (1998), “Effective collaboration with teachers helps to create a vibrant and engaged community of learners, strengthens the whole school program as well as the library media program, and develops support for the school library media program throughout the whole school” (American Association of School Librarians, p. 51). While I feel that I am a well-respected member of the staff at my school, and I have made multiple offers of ways in which collaboration could take place, I will have to continue to demonstrate the importance of collaboration. Schultz-Jones and Ledbetter (2009), stated that “maintaining a credible presence as a valuable partner in the school learning environment would depend on continually demonstrating reliability and developing shared expectations of the role the school librarian could play at the various collaboration levels” (p. 37). I want to be more than just someone who checks out books to students and in order to maintain my role as an educator, I will have to prove myself and advocate for myself to get teachers to allow me into their classrooms.

According to Gavigan and Lance (2016), “Generally, where librarians spent 20 or more hours per week teaching, all students were more likely to have exemplary results on PASS ELA standards and less likely not to meet those standards” (para. 7). Schools are constantly working to improve their standardized test scores and one possible way is
available to them as a free resource through collaborative teaching between the teachers and librarian. Ballard (2015), stated “Action research raised the profile of school librarians as teachers and leaders who could influence our fellow educators and create demand for our programs” (p. 48). Gordon (2006) found action research to be especially helpful in the field of school librarianship because of the knowledge possessed by librarians in regards to access to research and the process of research itself. School librarians have access to both the students and staff at the school and are therefore more privy to issues affecting the school as a whole.

**Problem of Practice**

The identified Problem of Practice (PoP) for the present action research study involved the development and implementation of a school library collaborative. I worked with teachers at Bloomington Middle School (BMS) (pseudonym) to develop the school library. Currently, collaborative relationships do not exist at this school beyond the teachers requesting the librarian to pull books or create website links for research assignments. This is my eleventh year as the school librarian at BMS and while I have always desired to maintain my role as an educator, I have found myself having to do this independently and without connection to the classroom curriculum. Teachers at BMS have stated a lack of time as a reason to not plan lessons with me. They viewed working with an additional person as taking longer than working independently. I have always been supported by my principal however, in the last eleven years, BMS has had four head principals (one moved to the high school, one was removed, one moved to a district office position) with four years being the longest any were head principal. The current principal at BMS supports me philosophically and is very open to teachers trying various
ways to increase student learning. Class sizes at BMS have increased each year due to growth in the housing market surrounding the school. Working collaboratively with me would decrease the student to teacher ratio and allow students more interaction with teachers.

Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2014), reinforce this PoP through their discussion of collaboration and the importance of its existence among educators. Working collaboratively can alleviate much of the work placed upon one teacher working independently. Additionally, it allows for the sharing of knowledge and ideas, which ultimately leads to better instruction and in turn better the education of students.

**Collaborative relationships**

Ken Haycock (2007) developed a list of 20 factors that contributed to successful collaboration between librarians and teachers in his study of collaboration and the critical success factors for student learning. The 20 identified factors were broken down into six areas, which include “factors related to the environment, to membership characteristics, to process and structure, to communication, to purpose, and to resources” (p. 25). This study provided a unique way to examine collaboration, how it can be effective, and possible benefits incurred from its use. Haycock (2007) put a lot of credence into the level in which the principal gets involved with collaboration and expectations of teachers and librarians working together. Teachers look to their principals for guidance, leadership, and expectations and without the encouragement or expectation of collaboration between librarians and teachers, it is less likely to happen. While the literature placed a large focus on principals in the development and nurturing of collaborative relationships, librarians did not receive a free pass in regards to
responsibility. Librarians cannot sit back and wait for teachers to approach them, but instead, need to be proactive and self-promoting. Haycock (2007) found that when teachers and librarians collaborate, it “not only has a positive effect on student achievement, but also leads to growth of relationships, growth of the environment, and growth of persons, all conducive to improved experiences for all members of the school community” (p. 32).

Educational leadership theorist, Linda Lambert (2002), supports shared leadership as an effective means of instructional leadership in schools. She does not view the principal as being the only individual in a school who can lead others and does not believe singular leadership is effective. Lambert views teachers and other staff members, such as librarians should be utilized as educational resources for each other and feels, “Being responsible for the learning of colleagues is at the center of the definition of leadership” (2002, p. 38).

**Spectrum of collaboration**

Montiel-Overall is an associate professor at the School of Information at the University of Arizona, whose research focuses on teacher and librarian collaboration among other areas. In her study of teacher and librarian collaboration, Montiel-Overall (2008) conducted observations and semi-structured interviews of teachers and librarians. In her observations, she examined methods utilized by teachers and librarians who collaborated frequently, as well as the methods they used in successful collaboration. Just as in the Haycock study, Montiel-Overall’s found that having a school culture in which collaboration between teachers and librarians was encouraged and/or expected definitely led to more successful and meaningful learning outcomes for students. High-
level collaboration was described as having three parts: coordination, cooperation, and integration. When all three parts worked effectively, students were instructed with depth and breadth that might not have been there through one teacher’s independent instruction (Lambert, 2002). Additionally, Montiel-Overall found high-level collaboration schools handled situations, possibly inhibitive to collaboration, proactively because collaboration with the librarian was considered extremely important (2008).

Another study by Montiel-Overall (2009) focused on teachers’ perceptions of teacher and librarian collaboration. Collaboration is not just one specific thing because there are varying levels of ways in which teachers and librarians can work together. Montiel-Overall’s study indicated four facets of collaboration, from lowest to highest, which included, coordination, cooperation, integrated instruction, and integrated curriculum. The questionnaire tool created in this study can help “teachers and librarians recognize the range of teacher and librarian collaborative activities and focus their efforts toward collaborative practices that are most likely to improve teaching and learning” (2009, p. 189). Teachers at my school request materials from me in both print and electronic formats, but do not go further to involve me in their lessons. Often, their requests come after planning their lessons or projects and my acquiring resources are the final step in the process. While there is some level of low-end collaboration at my school such as pulling materials or creating web resources, it is important to make efforts to move toward high-end collaboration in order to best serve the students and improve academic achievement. Involving me in the planning process for lessons and projects would allow me to incorporate information literacy into student learning and create more opportunities for learning through resources of which teachers are not aware.
Collaboration and student achievement

Students exposed to effective teacher-librarian collaborative relationships have been shown to perform better on assessments. A study conducted by McNee and Radmer (2017) reported larger gains on average between pre- and post-test assessments when the school librarian and teacher co-taught lessons. Teachers in the study stated that while working collaboratively with the librarian, their quality of lessons was strengthened, and benefits included, “access to resources, expertise, and connections to the broader school community” (p. 7). Montiel-Overall’s (2005) paper on the theory of collaboration promoted collaboration between teachers and librarians in order for it to become more than just a passing educational trend. Montiel-Overall focused on the importance of improving student academic achievement through effective collaboration between teachers and librarians. She suggested that collaboration could lead to “students’ greater understanding of material from being exposed to diverse opinions and distinct teaching and communication styles” or even “gain from integration of information that mutually reinforces learning and brings about a greater understanding of content and information literacy” (para. 42).

The research question for the present Action research study focused on the development of school-library collaborative relationships and the teachers’ perceptions of this initiative. Once a positive reputation is established regarding the librarian’s ability to teach collaboratively with a small group of teachers, Cooper and Bray (2011) suggest then moving on to other teachers. Having worked at BMS four years as a math teacher and 10 years as the school librarian, I have developed positive relationships with a core group of teachers who have worked there for approximately the same amount of time.
Approaching teachers with whom I have established relationships would increase the likelihood of them agreeing to collaborate with me.

For the past several years, BMS has had a high teacher turnover rate, which has created a difficult situation in establishing relationships with teachers. This, in addition to a lack of teachers willing to work collaboratively with me, it is a good idea to focus my attention on the teachers who are not likely to leave BMS and have asked me to pull books or create web resources. Once collaborative relationships involving co-teaching are established, these teachers can encourage others to do the same. Positive collaborative experiences should be shared through grade-level, department, or leadership meetings rather than getting by on reputation alone. Cooper and Bray (2011) pointed out that “the library media specialist must not be complacent, satisfied with having found one or two willing collaborators,” but “every effort must be made to build similar relationships across the school faculty and administrative staff” (pp. 49-50).

**Role of principal in collaboration**

Gaining the support of my principal in regards to creating a collaborative with the teachers at my school is very important. According to Hartzell (2002), many principals view librarians as support staff to the teachers instead of being educators in their own right. “This perception often makes it difficult for others, both inside and outside education, to see the depth, breadth, and importance of what media specialists contribute, or should be contributing, to schools and schooling (p. 95). Education programs do not tend to promote the role of school librarians, which leaves the educating up to the librarian her/himself. The most effective suggested means of changing the perceptions of principals are self-promotion and demonstration of abilities as educators. As stated by
Hartzell, “The only way to change principal perceptions is to assault them directly, repeatedly, and from a multiplicity of directions” (p. 106).

**Study Rationale**

Collaboration among teachers and school librarians is a vital part of the educational process because when teachers and librarians work collaboratively students benefit academically through learning to think critically. Collaboration involving teachers sharing ideas and areas of expertise to create meaningful and thought provoking lessons and activities will lead to critical thinking on the part of the students (Montiel-Overall, 2005). Critical thinking is a necessary skill in the 21st century and is an expectation of employers of future graduates who want employees able to problem solve on the job. According to Donham (1999):

> When teachers and library media specialists work together to identify what students need to know about accessing, evaluating, interpreting, and applying information; when they plan how and where these skills will be taught and how they relate to content area learning; when they co-teach so students learn the skills at a time when they need them; and when they assess the students’ process as they work with information as well as the end product, they have truly collaborated. (p. 21)

This study is necessary because there are currently no collaborative relationships in place at BMS despite my efforts to create them. It is important to develop collaborative relationships between the teachers and myself to provide students and teachers opportunities to incorporate information literacy into lessons and activities. Becoming information literate will better prepare students for high school and the real
world following graduation. As found by Kaplan (2010), school library programs with established collaborative relationships between teachers and school librarians had better student achievement on state mandated tests. Multiple studies referred to as the “Lance studies” reviewed the data multiple states and “the relationship between the school library media program and student achievement could not be explained by other school or community differences” (p. 56). It is vital that students know how to locate information, analyze its reliability and credibility, and know how to use the information to create a product. Through developing better professional relationships with teachers at my school, it will ultimately improve student scholastic achievement through improvement of my professional practice as a school librarian.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this action research study is to develop school-library collaborative relationships at BMS. I will draw on my work in my Masters’ degree involving the development of collaborative working relationships between librarians and teachers through a face-to-face professional development (PD) method of delivery. Face-to-face PD was chosen as the delivery method for this study due to the employment of all participants at BMS with me. While some believe participants prefer online PD, no differences have been shown between the amount learned in face-to-face PD compared to online PD (Russell, Carey, Kleiman, & Venable, 2009). The secondary purpose of the study is to collect data from teacher-participants regarding their curricular needs and the ways in which the librarian-researcher can meet those needs in order to improve student scholastic achievement. The tertiary purpose is to develop an Action Plan for continuous school improvement and development of the school-library collaborative.


Research Question

RQ1: How will participating in professional development on the benefits of teacher/librarian collaboration affect teachers’ perceptions of the role of school-librarians and increase collaborative relationships?

Action Research Methodology

Action research, as defined by Mertler (2014), is “any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators, counselors, or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or environment” (p. 4). To make improvements that will affect the quality of education being provided to students at BMS, this research was conducted to provide me with the opportunity to evaluate my school library program regarding collaboration. Action research applies to this research project because I implemented 2 PD sessions to improve the teachers’ perceptions of the role of the school librarian as part of the collaborative between the teachers and myself. Stark (2014), defined action research as “an instrument of change to bring about transformation in people’s lives wrought by the people themselves” (p. 88). Combined, Mertler and Stark’s definitions accurately describe action research and its purpose.

According to Mc Millan and Wergin (2010), the purpose of traditional research is to make educational improvements, which are applicable to generalized settings. Traditional researchers, more disconnected from participants in their studies, are able to generalize their research findings, unlike action research. Action research is more localized and produces results that are more specific and applicable to an individual teacher, classroom, or school (Mertler, 2014). Traditional educational research does not provide a custom fit to individual schools, classrooms or students, as action research
do. Classical theorist John Dewey (1938) stated, “There is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education” (p. 20). Conducted in educational settings, such as classrooms or libraries, action research is intimate in nature because it focuses on the needs of the individuals in the studies. Dewey viewed education as a means of social progress and intellectual freedom, which would lead to both individual and societal progress. An important component of action research involves analyzing study results to create an action plan to implement necessary changes and to plan for future research. Action research connects to Dewey in this regard as well because “Dewey saw reflection as a process of actively making sense of one’s experience, and this sense-making as enabling people to plan for future action, or, in Dewey’s terms, to ‘form a purpose’” (Stark, 2014).

Conclusion

Chapter 1 of this Dissertation in Practice (DP) introduced the reader to the identified Problem of Practice (PoP), research question, purpose statement, and action research design for this action research study which will focus on teachers’ perceptions of the role of the school librarian and the way in which those perceptions affect the teachers’ likelihood to work collaboratively with the school librarian. A review of the related literature will be included in Chapter 2. The following chapter, Chapter Three, will detail the methodology used to collect, analyze, reflect, and report data findings from this action research study.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

When people think about school librarians and what they do, what likely comes to mind is checking out materials to patrons. Traditionally seen as the keepers of the books, librarians’ responsibilities now take on much more than managing a collection of reading materials. Accredited library and information science programs expect school librarians be knowledgeable on a variety of subject areas including information literacy. Teaching information literacy collaboratively between teachers and librarians is more effective and efficient in comparison to isolated lessons taught in the library. School librarians have been involved with collaboration for quite some time because they “have long understood the importance of collaborating with the different members of the learning community” (American Association of School Librarians, 1998, p. 50). Classroom teachers were not trained to collaborate with other teachers, let alone, librarians. Due to the disconnect that exists between teachers and librarians, it is important to instruct teachers on the value of developing collaborative relationships with their school librarians.

The following literature review provides the theoretical and historical context of school librarianship and the importance of classroom teachers understanding the value of working collaboratively with their school librarians. It discusses the related research on the role of school librarians, the importance of collaborative relationships between classroom teachers and school librarians, and the perceptions of classroom teachers regarding the role of school librarians.
In the creation of this literature review, I utilized a variety of sources that will be helpful in my action research study. Reviewing studies that involve collaboration between teachers and school librarians allowed me to see common trends that I might expect to see in my own study. I was able to glean knowledge about collaboration, information literacy and inquiry-based learning through reading articles about trends in librarianship, which was useful in the creation of PD sessions for my action research study.

**Historical Context**

**History of Libraries in Public Schools**

Prior to the 19th century, libraries were not seen as places of learning and it was not until states began to financially support libraries in public schools during the latter half of the 19th century that plans were made to include libraries in public schools. Teachers did not utilize libraries in the same way they might today because during that time, students memorized facts and the library was seen as unnecessary for anything other than reading. (Wallace & Husid, 2012). Organizations such as the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) eventually promoted the use of libraries in the 20th century as a location of instructional materials for students and teachers (Wallace & Husid, 2012). According to Wallace and Husid, “School librarians taught location of materials as "library orientation" and use of materials as "library skills," although the 1960's standards delineated school librarians' roles as parallel to classroom teachers” (para. 3). In the 1980s and 1990s, the AASL encouraged teachers to take their students to the library in order for them to receive instruction from the librarian, which was the beginning of information literacy. The goal
of information literacy was to teach students to understand when they needed information along with where and how to locate it (Wallace & Husid, 2012). As stated by Wallace and Husid, students needed to learn information literacy skills in context so it would be relatable to real life or else they would forget it as soon as they no longer needed it.

Technology made its way into school libraries in the form of audio-visual equipment in the early 1960s and continued from there to include personal computers and the Internet in the mid-20th century (Wine, 2016). Today’s school libraries may have technology devices such as tablets, laptops, desktop computers, projection boards, and more. Some school districts are one-to-one with technology, which means that every student has some type of electronic device for home and school use. If the school’s instructional technology specialist (ITS) does not manage the one-to-one devices, the responsibility may fall on the librarian to distribute, collect, trouble shoot, and repair devices.

In addition to technological devices, technology is now present in school libraries through electronic databases, such as Digital Information for South Carolina Users (SC Discus) which is a free resource to residents of South Carolina. Electronic databases, such as SC Discus, have replaced print format reference materials once utilized heavily prior to Internet and digital resources. The increase in digital resources has not diminished the librarians’ role in teaching students how to locate, analyze, and interpret information.
Educational Learning Theories and Information Sciences

Constructivism and learner centered ideology.

Constructivist learning follows the idea that learning takes place through experience, which must come first. According to Jones, Flohr, and Martin (2015), “Inquiry when thoughtfully conducted— not the teacher driven ‘locate information—cut and clip—report’ model of library projects so often evident—is an activity that leads to significant student involvement, conceptual understanding, and action” (p. 115).

Through collaboration with school librarians, teachers could receive help in moving away from traditional research projects and assignments to more meaningful learning experiences. Learner-centered educators view constructivism as an underlying part of the learner-centered ideology. According to Schiro (2013), “People construct and reconstruct meaning by transforming both the new meanings they are acquiring and their preexisting cognitive structures—by transforming both their new understanding of their world and themselves” (p. 118). Under the learner-centered ideology, educators believe that it is important to both monitor growth in students’ learning, and allow students to participate in activities that will allow them to create their own meaning (Henson, 2003; Schiro, 2013). Through actively participating in inquiry-based learning through the instruction of information literacy taught by librarians, students are able to make meaning. Information literacy teaches students to be independent thinkers capable of discerning good information from bad. Students are not generally able to make meaning based on previous knowledge when taught information through lecture-based instruction. Inquiry-based learning allows students the opportunity to relate information, “to other phases of the learner’s experience and capable of being related to and incorporated into
the learner’s meaning structure”, which will allow meaningful learning to occur (Schiro, 2013, p. 181).

There is a definite connection between teaching information literacy and the learner-centered ideology. According to Bond (2016), “Preparing students for independent, self-directed learning is a goal shared by information literacy instruction” (p. 8). Through working collaboratively with the school librarian, teachers can incorporate research into the lesson, as well as including “active learning techniques,” which together lead to students becoming more information literate” (Bond, 2016, p. 8).

Montiel-Overall (2005) stated, “A social constructivist view of education envisions collaboration as a new way of learning for students, and a new way of planning and teaching for SLMSs and teachers” (para. 6). Collaboration is based on the idea that while working together, teachers and librarians can help students construct meaning from their learning experiences. According to Montiel-Overall, “This view corresponds to a holistic social constructivist worldview in which relationship is the unit of analysis and environment is taken into account” (2005, para. 6).

Proponents of the learner-centered school have often referred to it as the ideal school. The learner-centered ideology puts children first and values them as a part of society, and describes them as “individuals full of self-generated curiosity about their world, impulses to be active participants and communicators in their world, and active makers of meaning (and knowledge) as a result of their interest in and interactions with their world” (Schiro, 2013, p. 106). Students must be able to discern between credible and non-credible sources to make sense of the world and events occurring in it. Many students have mobile devices with access to a wealth of information, whether it be true or
untrue. While seeking out information for school or personal use, students need to be aware of the best places to search for information and how to determine whether information is reliable and credible.

Learner-centered schools do not teach skills independently and out of context, and believe in the interdisciplinary teaching of skills. In contrast to traditional schools, learner centered schools incorporate all subjects into learning activities on an as needed basis. “The job of the teacher and the curriculum is to create engaging learning experiences that naturally integrate the content of the different academic disciplines in holistic ways that do not atomize and partition knowledge” (Schiro, 2013, p. 113). Integrated schools do not focus on the separation of activities into structured, fixed times of learning, and therefore allow for crossover between subject areas where they are deemed appropriate by students. Teaching library skills out of context is not the best use of a librarian’s resources and can be a waste of students’ time. Incorporating information literacy lessons into the curriculum will enable students to make more meaning from the lessons, which allows for longer retention. Learner-centered schools demonstrate their focus on the needs of the learner through worrying more about what students need rather than what they are told.

One disposition of learner-centered theory required learning be experiential. It is the job of the educator to provide the environment for the learners and the job of the learners to gain knowledge though experiencing the environment. Teachers must be knowledgeable, observant, and enthusiastic about their students and learning in order for educators to provide learners with appropriate learning environments (Henson, 2003; Schiro, 2013). Working collaboratively with the school librarian, teachers can develop
the appropriate environment for students to experience learning in a context that is appropriate to what the students are learning.

While it is hoped that students will come away from school with similar knowledge bases, it is not possible for all students to learn exactly the same thing due to being unique individuals and experiencing things in their own way. An important part of the learner-centered ideology is that it focuses on educating children through experience and not just through the information provided directly from the teacher (Henson, 2003; Schiro, 2013). Co-teaching with the school librarian to incorporate information literacy skills into research activities allows students the opportunity to experience skills in a situation that has context and meaning which will lead to understanding and long-term recall.

21st Century skills.

The 21st century brought about many technological advancements and with those come the need for students to understand how to use them. Students need not only know the core subjects, but they also need to be able to work with others, think critically, and solve problems. It is important that students understand that learning can take place outside of the traditional classroom. Technological changes in learning platforms such as digital classrooms and use of online textbooks has affected learning. Digital classrooms allow students to share work, collaborate with classmates, complete assignments and assessments, and communicate with teachers. To assist with students who might not be quite ready to make the jump to the digital side of learning, Librarians should be considered an instructional partner with classroom teachers through collaboration because they are knowledgeable in the area of information literacy (Witte,

In 2007, the AASL presented The Standards for the 21st Century Learner as a means of “fostering high expectations for today’s learners through skills, dispositions, responsibilities, and self-assessment strategies” (Jones, Flohr, & Martin, 2015, p. 122).

According to Witte et al. (2014/2015), the role of the school librarian in 21st century learning:

- is to aid teachers on augmenting classroom resources for engaging in “community-driven, interdisciplinary” learning through communication and collaboration. If teachers are not trained to incorporate librarians into their strategies, the classrooms will not be as effective spaces as they could be in preparing students for the skills outlined by the Framework for 21st century skills. (p. 211)

The 21st century requires the need for students to gain technological skills and new ways of learning in order to be prepared for the world beyond school that is ever changing. While some may believe that libraries will become obsolete due to the adoption of so much technology, it is actually quite the opposite. The role of libraries in the 21st century is to provide students and teachers with the necessary tools and skills to access all of the information available regardless of the format in which it presents itself (Kuhlthau, 2010). Teachers and librarians must work together to keep up with the skills students need for the 21st century. Kuhlthau (2010) believes, “School librarians are primary agents in schools for 21st century learners. School libraries are dynamic learning centers in information age schools” (p. 1). Librarians must keep up with educational technologies to assist students on classwork or research because they are not always kept
in the know about assignments given to students. One cannot be afraid to learn new things or try new technologies when working in a school library because you have to be prepared for anything that walks through the door.

Inquiry is another vital part of the 21st century and schools today. Through inquiry, students can learn the skills needed to keep up with the continuous changes in technology. While information technology is a vital part of library instruction, it must evolve to include inquiry, as well (Kuhlthau, 2010). Over the last thirty years, “School librarianship has evolved from emphasis on library skills to information skills in the 1980s, to information literacy in the 1990s, to inquiry as a way of learning in the first decade of the 21st century” (Kuhlthau, 2010, p. 3). While teachers may feel that they do not have time to conduct inquiry-based lessons, they must realize that through working collaboratively with librarians, they will be able to create more engaging lessons that will challenge students to think more critically which will lead to lifelong learning (Kuhlthau, 2010). School librarians have the opportunity to promote their practice through 21st century skills because these skills are not new to them. According to Smith (2008), “Having these skills identified on a national and state level gives a new platform for building and supporting that work” (p. 29)

In support of 21st century skills, The South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA) Superintendent’s Roundtable, South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, and the South Carolina State Board of Education adopted Transform SC’s Profile of the South Carolina Graduate (PSCG) on February 11, 2015. The purpose of the PSCG was to establish common goals for students in South Carolina schools to prepare them for life beyond high school, whether it be a college or career path
One of the three goals focused on world class skills, including critical thinking and problem solving, communication, information, media, and technology, as well as knowing how to learn. Today’s school librarians are prepared to work with students and teachers to produce students who will model the PSCG in preparation for the real world.

**Progressivism, Dewey, and libraries.**

John Dewey had an effect on school libraries during the 20th century by pushing for changes in the way libraries were viewed with the “concept that a child’s growth and development should supersede subject matter as a school’s central focus” (Wallace & Husid, 2012, para. 4). Dewey promoted his belief that learning should be student-centered through involving them in their education, rather than being vessels filled with knowledge by their teachers.

Wallace and Husid (2012) believed that working collaboratively follows the principles of Dewey and provides students with a learning environment that best suits their needs, unlike the current trend of teaching students to perform on high-stakes testing (2012). According to Dewey (1897), education must consider both the psychological and sociological sides of children, with the psychological being the foundation. “Without insight into the psychological structure and activities of the individual, the educative process will, therefore, be haphazard and arbitrary” (Dewey, 1897, p. 33).

It is important to consider the strengths and weaknesses of children in order to meet their educational needs, but the social side of children and their interaction with others is also important. Dewey felt that school should be a realistic experience for children and students should see value in what they do at school (Dewey, 1897).
Additionally, he believed school should be an extension of what was students learned in the home to allow them to see a connection between the two. Dewey stated that school is necessary because “It is the business of the school to deepen and extend his sense of the values bound up in his home life” (1897, p. 35). Unfortunately, many students today must solely rely on the school to teach values not taught in the home. Schools are supposed to be an extension of the home, however teachers must often fight against what has or has not been taught at home. Dewey believed:

The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences. (1897, p. 36)

Collaboration follows along with the progressive philosophy of Dewey because it focuses on the learning of the student. The role of the librarian in teaching information literacy also has roots in progressivism because helping students become information literate allows them discover with guidance and not influence.

**Library Power.**

In 1988, Library Power, “a $40 million national school improvement initiative funded by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund,” was established (American Association of School Librarians, 1998, p. 137). Library Power’s purpose was to provide assistance to elementary and middle school libraries that were in need of revitalization. According to the AASL, “Library Power is the largest non-governmental school library media investment since the 1962 Knapp School Libraries Project and is bigger in terms of
dollars and numbers of students than many other current school reform efforts” (1998, pp. 137-138).

Library Power was developed around six goals:

- Create a national vision and new expectations for public elementary and middle school library programs and encourage new and innovative uses of the library’s physical and human resources
- Create model library programs that are an integral part of the educational process
- Strengthen and create awareness for the role of the library media specialist as a teacher and information specialist who collaborates with teachers and students
- Encourage collaboration among teachers, administrators and library media specialists that results in significant improvement in the teaching and learning process
- Demonstrate the significant contributions that school library media programs can make to school reform and restructuring efforts
- Encourage the creation of partnerships among leaders in school districts, public libraries, community agencies, business communities, academic institutions and parent groups to improve and support library programs.


Through Library Power, schools without previously established collaborative relationships between librarians and teachers were able to collaborate. Webb and Doll (1999) found that teachers who were already collaborating with their school librarians
were doing so even more after Library Power. According to the AASL (1998) “More than 90% of library media specialists, teachers, and principals believe that the practice of collaboration between library media specialists and teachers both will and should continue.” (p. 140). This was quite an accomplishment for the schools involved due to having no prior collaborative experience.

Library Power, established with collaboration in mind, contributed to the establishment of collaborative relationships between teachers and school librarians, which positively affected teaching and learning in the Library Power Schools. Librarians typically taught library skills in isolation, which was ineffective in long-term retention of skills. Through Library Power, teachers and librarians learned the importance of teaching library skills simultaneously with the curriculum, which lead to application of skills in meaningful educational activities as opposed to being taught in isolation (Webb & Doll, 1999). In addition to the changes that occurred within the classrooms, “Some principals have recognized the effectiveness of collaborative teaching and have honed their own ability to lead through facilitation rather than authority” (American Association of School Librarians, 1998, p. 141).

Library Power also promoted the use of PD in the education of teachers, administrators, and school librarians. In order for change to occur in the Library Power schools, it was imperative that professional learning opportunities be provided to all involved. Library Power schools discovered that PD was a key component in creating educational change (American Association of School Librarians, 1998).
Transforming Information Science in Schools

Librarians’ Role in Public Schools

In 1919, Martha Wilson wrote:

Too much cannot be said about the personality of the school librarian. Her work is of a cooperative nature that requires constant use of all her powers for social adjustment. She needs to understand people and to inspire their confidence in her activities. This is best accomplished by someone possessing steady nerves, an alert mind, a sympathetic and understanding nature, and who is orderly and readily adaptable. In a word, she should be an individual whom both the faculty and the students can respect and admire, a dominant, but not a domineering personality. (Currin, 1939, p. 23)

With the view of librarians early in the twentieth century being that of someone who collaborates, it is difficult to understand where things went wrong in regard to why they are no longer seen as collaborative partners in learning. During the 1970s, the profile of the prim and proper librarian diminished and the collaborative role of the librarian became more prevalent (Purcell, 2010).

Lupton (2016) confirmed, “The role of the teacher-librarian has expanded from the traditional role of resourcing the curriculum, promotion of reading and development of information literacy” (p. 57). Sadly, studies have found that there is not one clearly defined role of the school librarian agreed upon by teachers, librarians, and administrators (O'Neal, 2004). A quote by William Osler provided a look into the view of the librarian from the early twentieth century, which demonstrated that even long ago librarians were viewed as people who did more than just read books:
The librarian of today, and it will be true still more of the librarians of tomorrow, are not fiery dragons interposed between the people and the books. They are useful public servants, who manage libraries in the interest of the public . . . Many still think that a great reader, or a writer of books, will make an excellent librarian. This is pure fallacy. (Eckstrand, 2009, p. 5)

Confusion about what librarians do exacerbates the situation of teachers not knowing they can go to the school library for more than just reading material.

Librarians tend to suffer from occupational invisibility, which occurs for several reasons. Librarians tend to be isolated in their libraries. If teachers do not have a reason to go to the library, they might not see the librarian on a regular basis, leaving them to form their own opinions of what librarians do on a daily basis. How can teachers be expected to know what librarians do if they do not see librarians actively working with students or teachers, teaching lessons, or conducting research?

In preservice undergraduate education programs, many teachers are not receiving instruction to work collaboratively with school librarians, while preservice librarian programs are instructing librarians to work with teachers. If education and library science programs worked together on making the connection between the two professions, the struggle to get the two groups together collaboratively would not be nearly as difficult as it is today. The stereotypical manner in which the media portrays librarians can cause librarians to be invisible in the eyes of administrators and teachers and does not help the situation (Oberg, 2006). School librarians of the past helped students and teachers locate reading and research materials in what were typically quiet locations. Today’s school librarians run libraries in which students not only find books,
but are encouraged to be social, interact with displays, conduct research using electronic
databases.

Librarians, today, are in a much different world than a century ago due to
continuous changes in technology, changes in the behavior of students in learning, and research, which now utilizes more electronic sources than print materials. It is extremely important that librarians remain current with societal and technological changes and remain creative in their attempts to work collaboratively with teachers (Pradhan, 2016).

Most students complete their work electronically, with students searching for information in electronic databases, as well as creating documents or presentations utilizing computer programs. To better assist students, school librarians must be knowledgeable of computer programs, electronic databases, and other Internet resources.

Information Literacy

Information literacy, as defined by the AASL (1998), is “the ability to find and use information (p. 1). It is the responsibility of school librarians to teach students and teachers to be information literate. Members of the learning community can benefit from being information literate because it promotes lifelong learning (American Association of School Librarians, 1998). Students have access to a vast amount of information when conducting research. Being information literate allows students to be able to locate, analyze, and create their own information (Wheeler & McKinney, 2015).

According to O’Connell (2002), information literacy involves students being able to create their own learning rather than relying on teachers or librarians to impart that knowledge on them. “Meaningful learning occurs when learners actively interpret their experience using internal, cognitive operations. And because students learn from
thinking about what they are doing, the teacher’s role becomes that of stimulating and supporting activities that engage learners in thinking” (O’Connell, 2002, p. 22).

Information literacy skills of school librarians are under-utilized due to teachers not working collaboratively with them. In a world where technology is constantly changing, it is imperative that students be information literate to be prepared for the world beyond the classroom.

In order for students to wade their way through the variety of information available to them, they must be able to determine the difference between useful information and inaccurate and unusable information (Klomsri & Tedre, 2016). Although teachers may be knowledgeable on their particular subject areas, they are not always aware of electronic resources available to their students. Most often, students will utilize Google to conduct educational research and accept the first information they encounter rather than using online databases, vetted for information reliability and accuracy. When technologically uninformed teachers assign research to students without including the librarian, it leaves the students to flounder about on the information highway and in general, they take the path of least resistance, which can often be an unreliable or inaccurate source. Studies have shown that even at the collegiate level, when teachers and librarians do not communicate, the students felt unprepared (Klomsri & Tedre, 2016). Making contact with librarians prior to assigning research projects can ensure the required materials are readily available for students and enable the librarians to assist students efficiently and effectively by knowing the assignment in advance.

Technology is present in the lives of students today and very often, teachers make the assumption that because students use cell phones and play games on computers they
know how to use a computer without assistance (Lowe, 2001). According to Lowe (2001), disintermediation is “the idea that as technology becomes more advanced, users will no longer require assistance to use it” (p. 32). To prepare students for technological advances, which will continue in the future, it is, therefore, the responsibility of school librarians to advocate for students and demand the teaching of information literacy skills (Lowe, 2001). School librarians will contribute to creating students ready for the technological world beyond the classroom through the education of teachers about the importance of information literacy and demonstrating how students can become information literate.

Collaboration

Collaboration, as defined by Montiel-Overall (2005) is:

The process of shared creation: two or more individuals with complementary skills interacting to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have come to on their own. Collaboration creates a shared meaning about a process, a product, or an event. (para. 3)

Librarians have been interested in being involved in curriculum since the early 1950s (Russell S., 2002). While collaboration has been an important part of school librarianship for quite some time as librarians become more involved with curriculum, it is even more vital that librarians be able work with teachers to incorporate information literacy into learning (American Association of School Librarians, 1998). True collaboration takes place when teachers and school librarians provide students with the best possible learning environment by working together to plan lessons, create goals, and share each other’s expertise. Working collaboratively, students are able to experience
something that neither teacher nor librarian could have created on their own (Montiel-Overall, 2005).

Team-teaching, a pedagogical approach, connects to collaborative relationships between teachers and school librarians. Pedagogically, in a team-teaching situation, all involved teachers are considered equals in regards to planning and instructing lessons or activities. Overn (2014) discovered information literacy skills were better understood when integrated into the classroom rather than being taught in isolation by the librarian. Working collaboratively as team-teachers allows librarians to establish their role as educators as well as information retrievers. The role of school librarian has evolved into that of a blending of teacher and librarian in which students are in a position to learn from the librarian even if he/she is not physically in the room. This occurs when the school librarian works with teachers to create and implement lessons that utilize information literacy. Through collaboration, teachers can provide students with learning opportunities that are unique to collaborative relationships (Kimmel, 2012b). Kimmel found that while teachers felt the resources pulled by the librarian were valuable, they also wanted the librarian involved in the teaching of the lesson because of the experience and knowledge he/she brought to the table (2012b). Overn also believes, “The different backgrounds and perspectives held by librarians and teachers could be of real value to the collaboration and, by extension, to students” (2014, p. 49).

Collaborative efforts on the part of the school librarian are often thwarted by the lack of teacher training programs educating preservice teachers on the value of working collaboratively with their school librarian (Small, 2005). Due to teachers often being
ignorant of the collaborative role of school librarians, the responsibility of educating teachers falls on the librarian him/herself.

As stated by Schroeder and Fisher (2015), the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction recognized the problem of teachers not utilizing the valuable resources provided by school librarians and through a workshop at the Wisconsin School Library Summit, created summer learning opportunities for teachers that would promote the role of the school librarian. To promote advocacy of school librarians to school administrators, summer workshops educated teachers on the evolution of the role of school librarians, and the value of collaboration for student learning (Schroeder & Fisher, 2015). Prior to attending summer workshops, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their perceptions of the school library program. Upon completion of the workshop, participants once again completed the questionnaire. When the questionnaire results were compared, a better understanding of the role of school librarians and the role they could play in the education of students was evident (Schroeder & Fisher, 2015).

Educating teachers and administrators on the importance of collaboration, along with the promotion of school library programs is vital to the improvement of student learning. According to Schroeder and Fisher, “Librarians support the development of skills in creativity and innovation, allowing learning to be personalized for individual students, encourage a hunger for learning, and take learning outside the world of the classroom” (2015, p. 41).

An important part of developing collaborative relationships is the development of trust between the teacher and school librarian. Prior to any collaborative work, both need
to understand that their contributions are equally important and not mutually exclusive (Muronaga & Harada, 1999). Collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians can take place in several ways and can begin with the librarian gathering print and/or electronic resources for student research and move on to the librarian conducting lessons to connect to curriculum learned in the classroom. More advanced methods of collaboration involve teachers and librarians co-planning lessons and even co-teaching if all parties are comfortable doing so. As stated by Muronaga and Harada (1999):

In an effective partnership, teacher-librarian and classroom teacher share a crucial underlying assumption that curriculum building is holistic and dynamic. This requires a dramatic shift from envisioning curriculum planning as a linear process with fixed learning goals and implementation strategies to viewing curriculum building as a more fluid process of adjustments and modifications based on a continuing assessment of student performance and needs. (para. 9)

Once collaboration has taken place with a few teachers in a school, it can encourage others to participate in collaborative relationships with their school librarian. It might take the promotion of positive collaborative experiences to spark the interest of other teachers. Developing a shared vision between the teacher and librarian is critical to the success of collaborative relationships. Collaborative partners are encouraged to talk and get to know one another and discuss plans prior to the creation of an activity. When teachers and librarians both feel that their opinions and knowledge are valued, this is truly when collaboration can occur through a shared vision of student learning and success (Brown, 2004). As stated by Haycock (2007), “Collaboration is not easy. But
collaboration is the single professional behavior of teacher-librarians that most affects student achievement” (p. 32).

**Preservice teacher education on collaboration.**

Studies have found that while librarians are being taught to work collaboratively with teachers, preservice teachers are not being educated on the importance of working collaboratively with librarians in their undergraduate programs (Small, 2002). According to Small, “Collaboration cannot be fully realized without creating a collaborative culture in which all partners see the importance and understand the benefits of collaboration to themselves, each other and their students” (2002, p. 10).

It has been suggested to librarians that they become involved in the education of preservice teachers by speaking to local colleges and universities about meeting with preservice teachers as part of their undergraduate program. Additionally, colleges and university library and information science programs need to develop relationships with undergraduate teaching programs to bridge the gap that continues to exist (Kovalik, Jensen, Schloman, and Tipton, 2010; Small, 2002). To stop the problem of teachers being unaware of what librarians can do for them, changes must be made while both teachers and librarians are in preservice education programs. After receiving a grant, Chesky and Meyer (2004) used their funding for outreach to preservice teachers to establish the importance of collaborative relationships between teachers and librarians for increasing student academic achievement. Chesky and Meyer felt “by reaching teachers who are still developing their personal teaching style, the SLMS has a unique opportunity to discuss, demonstrate, and encourage collaborative teaching” (2004, p. 21).
According to Church (2006), “The researchers found that preservice teachers look to teacher-librarians more for information access and delivery than they do for teaching and learning” (p. 20). Once teachers get comfortable in their practice, it can be very difficult to change their attitudes. Administrative demands can make teachers feel pressured to keep to themselves in order to accomplish everything with which they have been tasked. Teachers might say that they do not have time to incorporate the librarian into their curriculum, however, it is just the opposite because working with the librarian can actually make their teaching more effective and efficient (Church, 2006). Utilizing the librarian, who is skilled in information literacy, would be a great use of collaboration.

Administrators’ role in collaboration.

Administrators play a major role in the establishment of collaborative relationships between teachers and school librarians (Brown, 2004, Lupton, 2016). According to Lupton (2016), research on principals’ perceptions of school librarians suggested they “valued collection development, library management, reference services and promotion of reading. Teaching (i.e. the instructional role of the school librarian) was not valued in either study” (p. 50).

While other studies discovered that principals did view librarians as first being teachers and then librarians, the teaching focus was on lessons conducted by the librarian in the library with no involvement with the teachers (Lupton, 2016). It has been found that principals can be the determining factor in whether or not teachers successfully develop collaborative relationships (Lupton, 2016). To be able to advocate for librarians, principals must be educated on the responsibilities of school librarians.
According to O’Neal (2004), there is not one agreed upon view of the role of school librarians, demonstrating the need for school librarians to be more proactive in advocating for themselves and their role in schools. Librarians need to provide staff development and instructional planning to their teachers and administrators on information literacy skills and the importance of their involvement in instruction. In addition to providing staff development to teachers and administrators, it is imperative that school librarians communicate regularly with their administrators. Extending invitations to the administrative team to observe library lessons, activities, and programs, would allow opportunities for observations of what school librarians are capable of doing. Additionally, scheduling meetings, sending emails, and sharing library reports that promote the importance of the school librarian and his/her library program are ways of getting administrators to better understand the role of the school librarian (Shannon, 2012). Shannon (2012) found that:

Administrators are critical to the success of school library programs. Therefore, it is important to develop ways to inform and educate them about (1) the potential positive impact of school library programs on student achievement, (2) the role of the school librarian in support of teaching and learning, and (3) what they can do to support school library programs and school librarians in their schools and districts. (p. 21)

Advocating for oneself is important as a school librarian, and beginning with the principal is an excellent starting point to get everyone to support efforts to improve the school library program.
Effect of collaboration on student learning.

Schools with high academic student performance in comparison to schools with low academic student performance are more likely to have school librarians who are included in collaborative relationships (Haycock, 2007; Kaplan, 2010; Lance, 2001; O'Neal, 2004). Haycock (2007) stated:

Collaboration between teacher and teacher-librarian not only has a positive effect on student achievement, but also leads to growth of relationships, growth of the environment, and growth of persons, all conducive to improved experiences for all members of the school community. (p. 32)

Keith Curry Lance conducted several studies to determine the impact of school library programs on the academic performance of students. Through his utilization of student test scores, Lance determined that successful school libraries do in fact have a positive effect on performance of students (Small & Snyder, 2010, p. 62). After analyzing the results of three separate studies conducted in Alaska, Colorado, and Pennsylvania, Lance (2001) noticed several trends in schools involved in the studies. All schools in the studies employed a credentialed school library media specialist supported by teachers and administrators, capable of educating teachers and students on the importance of information literacy, and able to attend individual and group meetings to plan collaboratively.

Kaplan (2010) researched school library impact studies and the positive correlation between schools with “effective school library media programs and student achievement (p. 56).
Collaboration in Action.

Collaborative relationships do not occur overnight and like any relationships, they must be developed and nurtured. There is not a finish line or ending when it comes to collaborative relationships, but rather these relationships must adjust and evolve to meet the needs of both teachers and students. According to Muronaga and Harada (1999), teachers and school librarians who effectively work together must view “curriculum building as a more fluid process of adjustments and modifications based on a continuing assessment of student performance and needs” rather than just a process of fixed goals. (para. 9). Members of collaborative relationship teams must be willing to debrief about successes and failures and be able to monitor and adjust.

Schomberg (2003) had worked collaboratively with teachers at her school, but not in the true sense of collaborative instruction. After deciding to move beyond what they had been doing, they decided to “collaboratively plan, deliver and assess instructional units that focused on not only content and product, but more specifically on the importance of the research process as well as the formal assessment of that process” (p. 8). Working together, the research process was modeled for students at the time they needed it, rather than teaching it out of context as a stand-alone lesson. Collaborative instruction also provided opportunities to integrate information literacy skills directly into the content curriculum (Schomberg, 2003). Muronaga and Harada found that meeting with grade level or subject area teams, made it easier to, “weave content area concepts and information literacy skills into integrated learning experiences for students” (1999, para. 15). Any time information literacy can be incorporated into existing curriculum, the
more meaningful the learning will be because students will be able to apply it to something that means something to them.

Due to teacher attrition, it is important for members to have a strong commitment to the collaborative teaching team in order to prevent dissolution of collaboration. After loss of staff members, it is vital that newly hired teachers be brought into the team and trained regarding the importance of the previously developed team. Eventually, all members of the collaborative team will see, “refinement of their own professional skills, increased collegial exchange of ideas and strategies, and ultimately, improved and cohesive learning experiences for their students” (Muronaga & Harada, 1999, para. 25). In schools with high attrition rates, this may be more difficult, however, developing a core of teachers dedicated to collaborative relationships will help deal with losses of teachers.

Kimmel (2012a) stated, “Some research exists about individual planning done in isolation, but little is known about teachers’ planning with other professionals (p. 1). According to Oberg (2009), before changes can be made to a school, it is important to understand the preexisting culture of the school. “The integrated school library program is a bundle of innovations and the school library professional is likely to be working with a number of teachers who vary in their knowledge of and experience with the different aspects of the program (pp. 14-15). In order to be successful, teachers will need to be educated on working collaboratively rather than in isolation, which is where PD comes into play.
**Librarians as Educational Leaders**

Librarians take on the role of educational leaders as teachers of all students and teachers, and must be aware of multiple grade level and subject area curricula. In schools with large student enrollment and staff numbers, the librarian must know all staff members in order to serve their needs. Sharing educational resources with teachers and staff allows librarians to be seen as leaders. According to Haycock (2007), “The role of the principal is enhanced by the visionary leadership of the teacher-librarian. In addition to energy, personal stamina, and enthusiasm, the teacher-librarian exhibits initiative, confidence, communication skills, and leadership qualities, together with a willingness to take risks” (p. 32). Librarians are often seen as leaders in their schools by their principals even if in an informal role (Lupton, 2016). According to Purcell (2010), through their role as school leaders, school librarians should be active participants in “the daily functioning of the school, plus creation and implementation of the curriculum in addition to leading the library media program activities” (p. 31). If librarians desire to be viewed as leaders in their schools, they need to be prepared for that role. Library and information science programs should be instructing preservice students on how to achieve leadership prior to entering the library (Moreillon, 2013). According to Moreillon (2013), “If instructional partnerships provide a pathway to leadership, then developing this role during candidates' preservice education is a key responsibility of educators of school librarians” (p. 64).

Through their study of school library program effectiveness on student achievement on standardized tests, Gavigan and Lance (2016) found “one of the key findings from the survey results, test scores, and success stories is that the majority of
school administrators value library policies and practices, as well as the leadership roles that school librarians play in their schools” (para.18). Librarians need to take ahold of their role as leaders within their schools and utilize that role to create collaborative relationships.

Teaching other teachers can be a difficult and awkward situation for school librarians, but it is necessary if a collaborative relationship is to be developed. Dotson and Clark (2015) note:

This circumstance enables the visionary librarian to be a guiding force within the school. The shift seen in education over the past two decades, with new and expanded access to technology and other digital resources, has presented challenges to the traditional classroom teacher. (p. 10)

Providing PD to the teachers allows the librarian to share information literacy skills, assist with the newly acquired challenges, and move beyond the library.

**Inquiry-based learning and librarians.**

Inquiry-based learning is based on the idea that students are able to create meaningful learning when they discover information for themselves (Buchanan, Harlan, Bruce, & Edwards, 2016). Librarians have been involved with inquiry-based learning for quite some time; however, their work has been completed in isolation within their libraries. According to Callison (2015), "The progression to student-centered, inquiry-based learning through school library programs was clearly underway more than forty years ago" (p. 3). Librarians that have already established collaborative relationships with teacher colleagues have a strong foundation for the implementation of inquiry-based learning. Inquiry-based learning is not something that librarians can implement on their
own, but rather they can be the guide to teachers in a cooperative effort to instruct children on the methods of inquiry-based learning (Levitov, 2016).

At the same time that there was a movement toward students being active participants in their own learning, there was a movement toward the role of school librarians to be involved in the instruction of inquiry-based learning through working collaboratively with teachers (Callison, 2014). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was established on December 10, 2015, by President Obama. According to Levitov:

ESSA is considered a major victory for school libraries because by including language specifically mentioning school libraries and school librarians, the law recognizes that school library programs and the instructional role of the school librarian are essential and integral components of a student's education, and as such, eligible for federal education dollars. (2016, para. 14)

While inquiry has long been a part of the history of school librarians, there is a long way to go before teachers and students will completely understand it. Changes to the educational culture must take place before inquiry can become an established part of our educational system. “School librarians can champion the move toward the realization of inquiry while capitalizing on the strong historical anchor of their professional literature, standards, and resources” (Levitov, 2016, para. 15).

Conclusion

This literature review provided a context in which collaboration between classroom teacher and school librarians is important to the education of children in the effort to prepare them for real world life experiences beyond the classroom. The changing role of the librarian in the 21st century was explained and it was demonstrated
that collaboration has a positive effect on student academic performance. This current action research study will be worthwhile in determining the ways in which a school library collaborative can be developed.

**Keyword/Glossary**

**Action research** – “Any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators, counselors, or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or environment for the purpose of gathering information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how their students learn” (Mertler, 2014, p. 305).

**Collaboration** – “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals … the relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards” (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001, p. 26).

**Disintermediation** – “The idea that as technology becomes more advanced, users will no longer require assistance to use it” (Lowe, 2001, p. 32).

**Information literacy** – “The ability to find and use information” (American Association of School Librarians, 1998, p. 1)

**Shared vision** – “A common purpose that also included shared resources and responsibilities” (Brown, 2004, para. 22).
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will provide a detailed explanation of a study conducted using an action research methodology. According to Mertler (2014), action research is “the process of systematically collecting information followed by active reflection—all with the anticipation of improving the teaching process” (p. 13). Action research is an effective way for classroom teachers to improve upon their practice and help their students make improvements, as well. This study sought to determine if collaborative relationships could be developed between the school librarian and teachers at Bloomington Middle School (BMS) (pseudonym) based on changes in teachers’ perceptions of the role of school librarian. This action research study seeks to determine the effect of professional development (PD) on teachers’ willingness to work collaboratively with me in my role as school librarian. The research question that guided the action research study is: How will participating in professional development on the benefits of teacher/librarian collaboration affect teachers’ perceptions of the role of school-librarians and increase collaborative relationships?

In order to make improvements in my professional practice, it was important for me to determine the perceptions teachers at my school had in regard to my role as school librarian. Upon completion of the research, an action plan was created to make changes to the school library program at BMS. The action plan will be used to develop a
collaborative program between the school librarian and teachers, with the ultimate goal being an increase in students’ academic performance

**Role of the Researcher**

Unlike in traditional research, educators play a major role in the action research process as active participants (Mertler, 2014). According to Maksimovic (2012), “The essential characteristic of action research is that it aims at solving specific problems practitioners encounter in their daily practice, which means improving educational practice” (p. 54).

As the librarian at BMS, I was an active participant in this practical action research study. I created and instructed the PD sessions on the ways in which school librarians can be utilized to assist and work collaboratively with teachers. The primary focus of the PD sessions was developing collaborative relationships with the teachers at BMS in order to improve upon my professional practice as school librarian.

**Action Research Validity**

Action research is not generalizable in comparison to traditional research methods, however, according to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), “Action research is appropriate for educators because the purpose is to help identify a problem in a classroom or school and find solutions to the problem” (p. 596). When teachers conduct action research to solve problems within their classrooms, their findings will benefit both their students and themselves, which is an advantage over trying to replicate a large-scale study, which may or may not have involved participants with similar demographics. Another benefit of action research is flexibility because it can be conducted by individuals or groups of school professionals in any school setting to determine a solution to virtually any problem (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The flexibility of action research allows
any educator to conduct research in the comfort of their own classroom with their own students as subjects. Enabling educators to grow professionally is a second advantage of action research. According to Fraenkel et al., in addition to action research helping educators “improve their skills, they can also improve their ability to read, interpret, and critique more formal research when appropriate” (p. 596). Through learning more about formal research and analyzing data, educators can improve upon their practice as classroom teachers. A third advantage of action research is the ability of educators to determine a problem in their own teaching practice and therefore have a vested interest in both the research process and the implementation of changes based on the findings of the action research (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Having autonomy over how research is conducted along with the ability to implement necessary changes quickly for improvement can be an impetus for teachers to conduct research. A fourth advantage of action research is control over the creation of a research question, the development of ways in which to attempt solving a problem, evaluation of the results and professional sharing of findings with others. This process can enable educators to try new things and break out of often long-established routines with the result being professional growth and possible more engaged learners (Fraenkel et al., 2012). A final advantage of action research is the ability for a group of educators to work collaboratively in the research process, which can lead to the growth of professional community within a school. Fraenkel et al. (2012) found that working as a team,“can help reduce the feeling of isolation that many teachers, counselors, and administrators experience as they go about their daily tasks within the school (p. 596). Action research by one teacher is great, but
action research involving multiple teachers can affect more students and create more change for the better.

**Research Context**

Hoosier County School District (HCSD) is one of two districts in a county made up of rural, urban, and suburban settings and has an enrollment of approximately 26,000 students. HCSD is made up of fifteen elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 3 high schools, one alternative program (grades 6-12), and one adult/community education program (pre-kindergarten – adult). Forty-four percent of district students receive free or reduced lunch. The HCSD is one of the fastest growing school districts in the state of South Carolina (SC) and is the largest employer in Hoosier County (Dorchester School District Two Fact Sheet, n.d.). The total per pupil expenditure in HCSD for the 2017-2018 school year was $10,321.00, which was lower than the state average per pupil expenditure of $13,214.00. Only three school districts in SC received less funding per pupil than HCSD (South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, 2018).

Each elementary and middle school in HCSD has one school librarian and a library assistant and each high school has two school librarians with no library assistants. While there is a district level representative for the school librarians, they do not have any experience or education in library and information science. One elementary, one middle, and one high school librarian serve as lead school librarians for their respective levels and act as liaisons between the librarians and the district level. I am the middle-level school librarian for HCSD.

I am currently the school librarian at BMS, and have served in this position for ten years, with an additional eight years as a BMS math teacher. My relationship with the
staff is a friendly one and I am well liked by students and staff. Beginning last year, my principal asked me to join the leadership team that meets weekly to discuss school issues. Administration welcomes my input and I feel comfortable approaching any member of the administrative staff. I have served as the lead middle-level librarian in HCSD for the past four years to present day, and therefore viewed as a leader in my school district.

BMS is one of six middle schools in HCSD, located in the Lowcountry region of South Carolina. The current school population for the 2018-2019 school year is 1,323 students with a demographic breakdown of 62.4% white, 20.8% black, 7.6% Hispanic, 0.68% American Indian, 0.83% Asian, 7.7% two or more races, and 0% Native Hawaiian. Located in the rural section of Hoosier County (pseudonym), the current percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch is 44.6% (PowerSchool, 2018). According to the 2017 State Report Card for BMS, 49.1% of students are in poverty based on their status in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), foster child or homeless (South Carolina Department of Education, 2017a). In comparison, the elementary school on the same campus has 42.2% of students in poverty (South Carolina Department of Education, 2017b).

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) (2018a) reported less than half of students in each grade level (6, 7, and 8) scored Meets Expectations or Exceeds Expectations on the 2018 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) Test Scores for English Language Arts (ELA). The percentages of students scoring Does Not Meet Expectations for sixth grade was 18.8%, seventh grade was 23.1%, and eighth grade was 18.8%, leaving a little more than a third of each grade level
scoring *Approaches Expectations*. The SCDE (2018b) reported the 2018 South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) Test Scores for Social Studies as follows: 25.3% *Not Met*, 30.4 *Met*, and 44.3 *Exemplary*. Science SCPASS scores for sixth grade were 30% *Does Not Meet Expectations*, 25.2% *Approaches Expectations*, 22.4% *Meets Expectations*, and 22.4% *Exceeds Expectations*. Eighth graders’ scores on Science SCPASS were as follows: 17.3% *Does Not Meet Expectations*, 25.5 *Approaches Expectations*, 30.5% *Meets Expectations*, and 26.7% *Exceeds Expectations*. Students scoring in the *Does Not Meet Expectations*/ *Not Met* range and the *Approaches Expectations* range are in need of academic assistance. BMS administrators are always seeking ways in which they can move students from one scoring range to another to improve student performance on state mandated testing.

The 14 participants of this action research study were selected from the 71 certified teachers at BMS. The teachers at BMS have experience levels ranging from first-year teachers to thirty-five years of experience. In addition to regular education classes, BMS offers gifted and talented, special education, and related arts courses. The school library, located at the front of the school, operates on a flexible schedule, which allows me autonomy in scheduling classes and activities with the exception of state-mandated testing, district level meetings and computer-based district level testing (benchmarks, Reading and Math Inventories, etc.) which occasionally take priority over library activities. The library is located adjacent to the front office and courtyard of the school, which allows it to be used as a thoroughfare for teachers and students and creates a social atmosphere. Thirty-four desktop computers are arranged in a lab setting on one
side of the library, while tables and chairs arranged near the projection board create a classroom setting where I instruct lessons with students.

**Data Collection Plan**

This research study consisted of a quantitative design. Data collection included an electronic questionnaire consisting of closed-response questions, most of which utilized a Likert-type scale. The post-questionnaire consisted of the same closed-response questions with the addition of three open-response questions (see Appendix D), which were analyzed for themes. Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun (2012) stated an advantage of closed-response questions is that, “because all subjects respond to the same options, standardized data are provided” (p. 399). The questionnaire was used to determine the perceptions of participants regarding my role as the school librarian to develop collaborative relationships at BMS. Google Forms was used to create the questionnaire, which was emailed to the 14 participants. Electronic questionnaires are inexpensive to use, convenient for the respondent, and assist the researcher with automated data entry (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

HCSD and the principal of BMS granted me permission to conduct this research study. Prior to the pre-test questionnaire, potential subjects were provided with both a paper (delivered to potential subjects’ school mailboxes) and electronic copy (sent to the potential subjects’ school email addresses) of an *Invitation to Participate Letter* (see Appendix A). To minimize risks of coercion or undue influence, participants received invitations to participate without me present.

The questionnaire was completed by participants prior to, and after attending two PD sessions, which took place over a period of two weeks during spring semester 2018.
Participants were instructed to complete the electronic questionnaire in a preferable location of their choice and by a given deadline.

In the development of questions, it is important to remember that questionnaires be created with careful consideration to the design and ways in which the questions are worded. When writing questions, it was important I considered both what I was trying to discover about the participants and the way in which they might interpret the questions. It was vitally important that both the participants and I interpret the questions in the same way (McLafferty, 2016). According to McLafferty (2016), “Questions should be clear and easy to understand for survey respondents, avoid ‘leading questions’ and they should provide useful, consistent information for research purposes” (p. 131). To do, this, I kept statements as simple as possible and used a similar format for each question to keep them consistent. South Carolina’s ADEPT Performance Standards for Library Media Specialists were used as a guide for statements about my roles and responsibilities (South Carolina Department of Education, 2003).

A questionnaire was administered to fourteen willing participants regarding their perception of the role of school librarians. Surveys provide researchers with a variety of information in a short amount of time and Likert scales allow for better understanding of the strength of the participant responses (Mertler, 2014). The questionnaire results were used to determine where, on the spectrum, the participants’ view of my role as the school librarian in regards to collaborative relationships lie. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants attended two PD sessions (see Table 3.1) on the role of the school librarian instructed by me. The first PD session focused on librarianship: Becoming a school librarian, expectations/tasks of school librarians, and misconceptions
about today’s school librarians. I began the first session with *School Libraries Matter: The Changing Role of the School Librarian*, video created by Capstone Publishers (Sweeney-Samuelson, 2014). The 4:42 minute in length video, highlighted the role of the school librarian and the positive impact school librarians can have on schools. A PowerPoint presentation was used to guide the session’s discussions on educational requirements of becoming a school librarian, job expectations and responsibilities, and misconceptions about what school librarians actual do on a daily basis. The last 10 minutes of the session was dedicated to questions and discussions based on the presented material. The second PD session focused on collaboration and information literacy: Definition of collaboration, benefits of collaboration, co-teaching with the school librarian, and information literacy. The lesson began with *Highly Effective School Librarians Create Collaborative Culture*, a 2:14 minute in length video demonstrating what collaboration between a teacher and school librarian might look like (“Highly Effective,” 2011). A PowerPoint presentation was used to guide the session’s discussions on the benefits of collaboration, co-teaching with the school librarian and the impact collaboration can have on student learning and academic achievement. Also discussed, was the definition of information literacy, and how information literacy can be incorporated into the curriculum instead of teaching it in isolation. The last 10 minutes of the session was dedicated to questions and discussions based on the presented material.

After PD, the participants completed an electronic questionnaire identical to the one completed at the beginning of the study. Once again, participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire in a location of their choice. Upon the participants’ completion of pre-test questionnaires, responses were analyzed by calculating the
percentages of each response, which were compared to post-test responses to determine the percent change.

The questionnaire contained three demographic questions based on each participant’s total years of teaching experience, total years employed at BMS, and total years employed in HCSD. The demographic questions were included to enable comparisons between the answers of teachers based on their experience levels.

Following the demographic questions were five Likert-type scale questions based on each participant’s past actions regarding work with the school librarian at BMS. The Likert-type scale for these five questions had the following options: Always, Sometimes, and Never. Rating scales are appropriate when a participant’s “response indicates the strength of that response” and are an effective way to measure attitudes and perceptions of participants (Mertler, 2014, p. 140). These questions allowed me to gauge changes in the participants’ perceptions upon completion of the PD sessions. In the post-test questionnaire, questions were asked in such a way to determine whether participants would work with me in the future.

The third part of the questionnaire contained sixteen Likert-type scale questions, which focused on my role as school librarian at BMS. These questions collected data on the perceptions of participants regarding what I do or am capable of doing as part of my job and had the following options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, and Don’t Know. The post-test questionnaire questions were identical to the pre-test questions to enable me to identify changes in the perceptions of the participants.

The final section of the questionnaire contained a checklist of twelve options regarding my role as school librarian at BMS. Participants were able to select as many
options as desired. The post-test questionnaire contained the same checklist to determine if the PD sessions affected the perceptions of the participants in addition to three open-response questions, which were analyzed for themes.

**Professional Development**

Two PD sessions were held in the morning prior to the start of the school day. One make-up session had to be held for both the first and second PD sessions due to four participants being absent. The PD sessions focused on educational requirements to become a school librarian, tasks of the school librarian, collaboration, co-teaching, technology, and information literacy. All participants completed a pre- and post-questionnaire. Ten out of the 14 participants responded to three open-ended questions that were part of the post-questionnaire.

**Ethical Considerations**

When the action research plan was developed, it was important to take into consideration ethical guidelines regarding the participant involvement and the collection and reporting of data from the research study. My responsibility was to design an action research study that would treat both my colleagues and their data with respect. According to Mertler (2014), “An action researcher’s ability to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants and their data is a vitally important component of the action research process and of any action research project” (p. 151).

Because this action research study did not involve students or their data, parental permission was not required. An *Invitation to Participate Letter* (see Appendix A) contained a full description of the study including what was required of the participants. All participants signed a *Hoosier County School District Consent Form* (see Appendix
B). Additionally, the informed consent form indicated participation in the study was voluntary and could be terminated without penalty, if deemed necessary by participants. Participants were also guaranteed their confidentiality and assured of anonymity throughout both the duration of the study and its completion (Mertler, 2014).

In order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants, their names did not appear connected with any collected data. It was my responsibility to create a method of coding the participants to ensure their responses would remain anonymous. The data in this study was confidential. In order to protect the identity of the participants, a unique study ID number was assigned to each participant, which was linked to their name. The document linking the participant names to the study ID numbers was kept in a locked file cabinet.

**Data Analysis Plan**

After the completion of the initial questionnaire, I analyzed the quantitative results using descriptive statistics. Mertler (2014), defined descriptive statistics as, “simple mathematical procedures that serve to simplify, summarize, and organize relatively large amounts of numerical data” (p. 169). Descriptive statistics include measures of central tendency, such as mean, median, and mode, measures of dispersion, such as range or standard deviation, and measures of relationship, such as correlation coefficients. According to, Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), “The major advantage of descriptive statistics is that they permit researchers to describe the information contained in many, many scores with just a few indices, such as the mean and median” (p. 187). Measures of central tendency were used to analyze the data and the mean was calculated to determine the percent change from pre- to post-questionnaire data.
I documented personal thoughts and reflections after each of the PD sessions, including needs generated by the participants as part of the PD sessions. I focused on comments and questions from the study participants after the first PD session in order to adapt or adjust any of the content for the second PD session. I reflected on the results of the study to determine what could be done differently the next time in order to improve upon the results received and also determined how the results could be used to increase collaboration with teachers at the school.

**Conclusion**

This action research study sought to determine if providing PD to teachers on the topic of utilizing school librarians as collaborators would affect their perceptions of the role of school librarian. This chapter provided research context and validation for the use of action research. Additionally, it addressed the methods for data collection and analysis that were utilized in this action research study. Chapter 4 of this DP includes the findings, discoveries, reflections, and analyses for the identified PoP.

Table 3.1

*Professional Development Session Overview*

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<td>o Becoming a school librarian</td>
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<td>• Discussion/Questions</td>
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<td><strong>Session 2</strong></td>
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<td>• Video: <em>Highly Effective School Librarians Create Collaborative Culture</em></td>
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<td>▪ Co-teaching with the school librarian</td>
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<td>Impact of collaboration on student learning</td>
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<td>Information Literacy</td>
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<td>Discussion/Questions</td>
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CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS & INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to present the findings of the data collection and analysis regarding the following research question proposed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation:

How will participating in professional development on the benefits of teacher/librarian collaboration affect teachers’ perceptions of the role of school-librarians and increase collaborative relationships?

Problem of Practice

The identified Problem of Practice (PoP) for the present action research study involved the development and implementation of school library collaborative relationships. I identified the lack of school library collaborative relationships at Bloomington Middle School (BMS) (Pseudonym) as a way to develop the school library media center.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this action research study was to develop school-library collaborative relationships at BMS. I drew on my work in my Masters’ degree involving the development of collaborative working relationships between librarians and teachers through professional development (PD). The secondary purpose was to collect data from participants regarding their curricular needs and the ways in which the librarian-researcher can meet their curricular development needs in order to improve student
scholastic achievement. The tertiary purpose was to develop an Action Plan for continuous school improvement and development of school-library collaborative relationships.

This research study consisted of a quantitative research design. Data collection included an electronic questionnaire consisting of 36 closed-response questions and the addition of three open-response questions (see Appendix D) on the post-questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to determine the participants’ perceptions of my role as the school librarian.

**Study Design**

This research study employed a quantitative research design. The purpose of this descriptive design study was to describe and interpret the effect of PD on teachers’ perceptions of my role as the school librarian at (BMS). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data collected from electronic questionnaires completed by participants. The study also employed qualitative methods and thematic analysis to develop a deeper understanding of middle school teachers’ perceptions toward the role of the librarian-researcher as the school librarian. Three open-ended questions were included on the post-questionnaire, and were analyzed to locate themes.

**Participants**

The participant group included two white males and 12 white females with average years of experience for the group being 14.6 years, with the least amount being three and greatest being 35 years. The average time employed at BMS for the study participants was 6.4 years. This is my 11th year as the school librarian at BMS. All core subjects were represented with one math, three social studies, one science, five English
language arts, and one special education (ID Mild self-contained). Twenty-nine percent of the group were in their first five years of teaching and 36% had 22 or more years of experience. Out of 71 teachers, only 14 participated in the study, which accounted for 19.7% of the teaching population at BMS. Prior to my research project, another staff member and doctoral student, conducted an action research study, which included 15 staff members of the teaching staff. While the length of my research study had a smaller time requirement, the closeness of the two research studies could have negatively affected the amount of teachers willing to participate. The time of year in which my research study was conducted may also have had an effect on the amount of participants due to May being a busy month in schools with the conclusion of state mandated testing and the end of the school year activities.

**Procedures**

I attended grade level meetings to introduce my research study, which allowed me to see the majority of the teachers on staff. The research study and its requirements were explained. Participants would need to complete a 36-question pre-questionnaire (see Appendix C) that would take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, followed by attendance at two hour-long PD sessions. The PD sessions were each planned for one hour prior to the start of school, which was a preferable time for all participants. All 71 teachers were given an *Invitation to Participate Letter* (see Appendix A) and a school district research consent form (see Appendix B) with a deadline to return to me. Pre-and post-questionnaire instruments were emailed to the 14 willing participants. All participants completed the pre-questionnaire instrument prior to the first PD session. After the second and final PD session, the post-questionnaire instrument was emailed to
participants. I contacted four participants who had not yet completed the post-questionnaire to ensure completion by all participants.

A random number generator was used to create a unique six-digit number for each participant to use as their identifier in the study to keep the questionnaire responses confidential. The identifier was emailed with the pre-and post-questionnaire instruments with instructions to provide the identifier when requested on the pre- and post-questionnaire. The Institutional Review Board, school district research review board, and the school principal granted permission to conduct the pre- and post-questionnaires.

**Findings of the Study**

The primary data collection instrument was the *Role of the School Librarian Questionnaire* (see Appendix C) created by the librarian-researcher, administered both before and after the PD sessions. The questionnaire consisted of three demographic questions, 22 multiple-choice questions, and 12 checklist items. The questionnaire contained three sections: (1) teacher utilization of the school librarian, (2) teacher knowledge of the role of the school librarian, (3) descriptions of the teacher librarian. Following the conclusion of the second PD session, three open-ended questions were included in the post-questionnaire: *What was the most interesting/surprising thing you learned from the professional development sessions?, What is/was your main reason for not working collaboratively with the school librarian?, and What, if any, additional comments or suggestions for the school librarian regarding my role here at BMS?*

Ten of the 14 participants answered the open-ended questions. The responses were coded for thematic analysis and the following themes emerged: co-teaching.
collaboration, technology, use of library services, knowledge of librarian, time, and librarian outreach.

**Interpretation of the Study**

**Collaboration.**

Teachers’ knowledge of the school librarian’s role-plays an important part in determining the likelihood of forming collaborative relationships (Russell S., 2002). Five questions on the pre- and post-questionnaire asked the participants about their past behaviors in regards to utilizing the school librarian and their use of the school librarian in the future. The lowest level of collaboration would be the pulling of print resources for student use. According to Table 4.1, the most popular use of the school librarian was in the pulling of print resources for student use, with 64.3% having done so prior to the PD. The post-questionnaire revealed 100% of participants will plan to do so in the future. Librarians are known for their access to reading and research materials, so it is not surprising that more than half of the participants had already requested this be done. Based on the 100% response for planning to request print resources in the future, the participants who had never done so might not have been aware of the option.

In its most basic form, collaboration involves classroom teachers requesting print and electronic sources for student use. Consulting or working with the school librarian to develop classroom lessons or activities would be considered a middle-level collaboration, while co-teaching would be considered high-level collaboration. While 100% of the participants agreed with the statement, “The librarian collaborates with teachers” on the pre-questionnaire (see Table 4.2), only 57.1% have actually worked collaboratively with the school librarian (see Table 4.1). Interestingly, during the PD sessions, five
participants commented that they assumed the school librarian was either already working with other teachers or was too busy to take on additional work.

The atmosphere of the school library can have an effect on the likelihood of teachers requesting the assistance of the school librarian. Table 4.2 indicated 100% of respondents agreed with the statement, *The librarian creates and maintains, in the school library media center, a teaching and learning environment that is inviting, safe, flexible, and conducive to student learning.* It is not likely that the school library atmosphere is the reason for teachers not working collaboratively with the school librarian at BMS.

A flexible schedule for the school library is important because it allows for students and teachers to utilize the library resources in addition to classes coming to the library to check out books. On the pre-questionnaire, 100% of the participants responded agree or strongly agree to the statement, *The librarian arranges for flexible scheduling of the school library media center to provide student accessibility to staff and resources at point of need* (see Table 4.2). While all participants agreed to the previous statement, only 42.9% of them had previously asked the librarian to instruct student lessons on information literacy skills, such as credible websites, Internet safety, searching databases, etc. (see Table 4.1). Reasons mentioned for not having previously asked the librarian to instruct student lessons on information literacy skills were the teacher not wanting to lose time in class and not knowing it was an option to request lessons from the librarian. One social studies teacher did not realize subject areas other than English language arts were allowed to request lessons.

The lowest use of the librarian on the pre-questionnaire was asking the librarian to create internet resources for student research with only 21.4% having done so in the past
and 100% planning to do so in the future. Existence of a prior collaborative relationship with the school librarian included 57.1% of participants, 42.9% asked the school librarian to teach lessons to their students, and 35.7% had co-taught with the school librarian. The results of these questions indicated that teachers were more likely to talk with the school librarian about lessons and activities as opposed to actually having the school librarian co-teach with the teacher. Less than half had even requested the school librarian teach their classes independently even though 85.7 described the librarian as a teacher (see Table 4.3).

**Co-teaching.**

With growing class sizes, co-teaching is excellent method of reducing the teacher-student ratio, yet the school librarian has rarely been asked to co-teach with classroom teachers (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001). The qualitative data on the post-questionnaire indicated 60% of the respondents were unaware of the opportunities for co-teaching with the school librarian. According to Ms. Green (pseudonym), “I was so shocked that our librarian is willing to co-teach lessons with me! I’m so excited to utilize her expertise on finding and evaluating creditable sources!” While some were unaware of the opportunity, others were surprised so few were taking advantage of the opportunity. Ms. Blue (pseudonym) stated, “I was surprised to learn that more teachers didn't utilize the school librarian as a resource. She has always been so helpful to me that I just assumed everyone utilized her help.”

**Librarian outreach.**

The final theme that emerged from the qualitative data was the need for more outreach on the part of the school librarian to promote her abilities. Seventy percent of
the respondents mentioned wishing they had known about the various ways in which the school librarian’s knowledge and expertise could have been utilized beyond pulling books and locating websites for students. According to Ms. Yellow, “I think you need to advertise your role(s), abilities and access to everyone. Come to one of the first grade level and department meetings to discuss with everyone we’ve discussed plus the use of DISCUS”. If teachers are not instructed to utilize the school librarian collaboratively in their undergraduate education degree programs, they are more likely to view the librarian role as the traditional “keeper of the books” as might have been their experience as students themselves. Teachers are very focused and driven to teach their required curriculum and may view time outside of the classroom as taking away from their instruction. Some teachers may just not have considered the school librarian as a viable teaching partner. While 100% of respondents agreed with the comment, The librarian encourages recreational reading on the pre-questionnaire, only 64.3% agreed with the statement, The librarian is a teacher. According to Mr. Red (pseudonym), “I was not aware of the amount of responsibility they have and the true depth of their job. Without them, schools would not be able to exist.”

Through the PD sessions, participants were able to learn more about the librarian preparation program involving a master’s degree program and internship. Beyond not knowing the requirements to become a school librarian, there were several other tasks of the school librarian less than 65% of the participants knew. Only half of the participants answered agree or strongly agree to the statement, The librarian prepares, justifies, and administers the library media program budget to support specific programs goals. Only 57.1% were aware the librarian reads professional publications to stay current on the
profession, 64.3% knew the librarian cooperates and networks with other libraries, librarians, and agencies to provide access to resources outside the school and evaluates print and digital resources using evaluation and selection tools (see Table 4.2). Knowing the capabilities of the school librarian can have an effect on teachers’ decisions to work collaboratively.

**Technology.**

In the 21st century, teaching information literacy to students is part of the school librarian job. Being information literate is vital to the success of students in the real world. When searching the Internet for information, whether it be school-related or not, students need to be able to discern between credible and non-credible sources of information. With the introduction of the instructional technology specialist (ITS) to BMS, however, the school librarian was no longer the go-to person for technology-related educational issues. In fact, only 28.6% of respondents viewed the school librarian as a technology expert (see Table 4.6). The thematic analysis of the qualitative data, revealed technology as a theme. Participants were very interested in the use of technology for research and classroom activities, most especially with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) project-based learning (PBL). Ms. Blue mentioned, “The collaboration, awareness of training and sites to research are going to make such a difference in the lives of student products and the implementation of assignments by teachers”. Discovering the school librarian’s ability to provide instructional resources, as well as instruct students in the use of technology and information literacy for school assignments/projects and the location of reading material will increase the likelihood of teachers working collaboratively with the school librarian.
Digital Information for South Carolina Users.

A secondary theme of technology that developed was Digital Information for South Carolina Users (SC Discus). As defined by the South Carolina State Library (2018), “Discus is a collection of subscription databases with an array of resources ranging from books and magazines to maps and videos” (para. 2). Qualitative data found respondents mentioned SC Discus when asked about the most interesting/surprising thing they learned in the PD sessions. According to Ms. Purple (pseudonym), “The most interesting thing learned was Discus is a free resource available for all research and introduction to books”.

Teaching students how to evaluate credible sources for research is an important life skill, especially with the large amount of fake news being present on the internet and television. Utilizing online databases through SC Discus is an efficient method for student research because it helps eliminate unreliable sources and provides students with a wealth of credible and reliable sources of information instead of only searching the Internet.

Time.

The qualitative post-questionnaire data indicated 70% of the post-questionnaire respondents mentioned time as being a constraint to their past interest in collaborating with the school librarian. Responses mentioned the need for additional time to collaborate as opposed to planning lessons individually, when in actuality, a second person involved in the planning process could actually alleviate some of the work. Teachers at BMS spend much of their planning periods in meetings such as team planning, subject area, grade level, 504, IEP, or parent conferences. Little time during
the school day is available for additional planning, leaving before and after school as available options. Ms. Blue felt, “With all of the meetings and planning requirements, I just felt meeting with another person would just add to my already long list of things to do. I never considered you could be a help instead of a hindrance.”

Additionally, the 70% also felt as if the school librarian was already too busy working with other teachers and students and would not have enough time to incorporate additional teachers into the library schedule. This perception came from teachers viewing the library as a busy place because I have always been able to accommodate any teacher who requested services from me. As stated by Ms. Lavender (pseudonym), “I would love to have worked with you, but you always seem so busy in the library that I assumed you already had too much on your plate.” Statements such as this one demonstrate the misconception of today’s school libraries as being quiet places.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this research project was to assess teachers’ perceptions of the role of the school librarian to create awareness of the many ways collaborative relationships can exist. Based on both the quantitative and qualitative data questionnaire results, the PD sessions did change the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of the school librarian and increased the likelihood of future collaborative relationships between the teachers and me. Ironically, part of the reason participants were less likely to work with the school librarian was because they felt the school librarian was too busy or was already working with other teachers. The following chapter presents an action plan to implement the necessary changes required to improve collaborative relationships between the teachers and the school librarian.
Table 4.1
*BMS Teachers Responding Sometimes or Always on Pre- and Post-Questionnaires*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Sometimes/Always</td>
<td>% Sometimes/Always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHER UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIAN</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have asked the librarian to pull books for student research.</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>55.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have asked the librarian to create internet resources for student research.</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>367.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have asked the librarian to collaborate with me in the development of lessons or activities.</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have asked the librarian to co-teach with me in the development of lessons or activities.</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>160.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have asked the librarian to instruct student lessons on information literacy skills, such as credible websites, Internet safety, searching databases, etc.</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>133.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Post-questionnaire questions were worded, “In the future, I will ask…”.

Table 4.2
*BMS Teachers Responding Agree or Strongly Agree on Pre- and Post-Questionnaires*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Agree/Str. Agree</td>
<td>% Agree/Str. Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KNOWLEDGE OF ROLE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian is a teacher</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>55.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian encourages the use of technology by teachers and students.</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>367.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian is a visible leader in the school.</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian encourages recreational reading.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian collaborates with teachers</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian evaluates print and digital resources using evaluation and selection tools.</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>55.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian communicates with stakeholders the library mission and how the program aligns with the school’s mission and goals.</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian prepares, justifies, and administers the library media program budget to support specific programs goals.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The librarian establishes processes and procedures for selection, acquisition, circulation, resource sharing, etc., that assure appropriate resources are available when needed. 85.7 100 16.69

The librarian arranges for flexible scheduling of the school library media center to provide student accessibility to staff and resources at point of need. 100 100 0.00

The librarian creates and maintains, in the school library media center, a teaching and learning environment that is inviting, safe, flexible, and conducive to student learning. 100 100 0.00

The librarian cooperates and networks with other libraries, librarians, and agencies to provide access to resources outside the school. 64.3 100 55.52

The librarian understands copyright, fair use, and licensing of intellectual property, and assists users with their understanding and observance of the same. 100 100 0.00

The librarian reads professional publications to stay current on the profession. 57.1 100 75.13

The librarian participates in professional growth opportunities by attending training, conferences, and webinars. 78.6 100 27.23

The librarian articulates the role and relationship of the library program’s impact on student growth and achievement. 78.6 100 27.23

Table 4.3
*BMS Teachers’ Description of School Librarian on Pre- and Post-Questionnaires*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIAN</th>
<th>Pre-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivator</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborator</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Support Provider</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Resources Manager</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Processor/Book Repairer</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>9.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Expert</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>174.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service Provider</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>399.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>402.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Teacher</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Designer</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>166.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TE</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO</td>
<td>Librarian Outreach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TI</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to summarize the action research study and the findings from the data collection, analysis, and reflection. Chapter 5 begins with an overview of the action research question and purpose of the study, followed by a summary of the study findings, implications of the findings, and future research. This chapter concludes with an Action Plan to improve collaborative relationships between the school librarian and classroom teachers.

Research Question

The implications and conclusions presented in this chapter were used to address the following research question:

How will participating in professional development on the benefits of teacher/librarian collaboration affect teachers’ perceptions of the role of school-librarians and increase collaborative relationships?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to develop school-library collaborative relationships at Bloomington Middle School (BMS). I drew on my work in my Masters’ degree involving the development of collaborative working relationships between librarians and teachers through professional development (PD). The secondary purpose was to collect data from participants regarding their curricular needs and the ways in which I could meet their curricular development needs in order to improve
student scholastic achievement. The tertiary purpose was to develop an Action Plan for continuous school improvement and development of school-library collaborative relationships.

This research study consisted of a quantitative research design. Data collection included an electronic questionnaire consisting of closed-response questions, most of which utilized a Likert-type scale with the addition of open-response questions on the post-questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to determine the perceptions of participants of my role as the school librarian.

Overview/Summary of the Study

This research study was conducted in May of 2018 at a middle school located in the Lowcountry region of South Carolina. Fourteen teachers, representing all core subjects and special education, participated in the study, which included two PD sessions, each one hour in length. This research study attempted to determine if the use of PD on the role school librarians play in the school setting would change the perceptions teachers have of the school librarian in my position at the school in order to create more collaborative relationships with the ultimate goal being an increase in student academic achievement.

Two PD sessions were held in the morning prior to the start of the school day. One make-up session was held for both the first and second PD sessions due to four participants being absent. The PD sessions focused on educational requirements to become a school librarian, tasks of the school librarian, collaboration, co-teaching, technology, and information literacy. All participants completed a pre- and post-
questionnaire. Ten out of the 14 participants responded to three open-ended questions that were part of the post-questionnaire.

**Implications**

The main goal of this research study was to determine if providing teachers with PD on the role of the school librarian would increase the likelihood of teachers working collaboratively with the school librarian. In order for teachers to want to work collaboratively with the school librarian, they must first know it is possible to do so. The results of this research study confirmed that teachers were more likely to develop collaborative relationships with the school librarian if they were aware of the opportunity as was provided to them through the PD sessions.

Teachers at (BMS) had the opportunity to contact me, in person, before school, during planning periods, after school, or via e-mail at any time of day. The school library served as a thoroughfare for many teachers throughout the day, which also provided opportunities for brief discussions. I had a good working relationship with the majority of the teachers, which lent to a greater chance for collaboration. According to Copeland and Jacobs (2017), collaboration is more likely to occur when trust exists between the individuals collaborating and can have a, “positive impact on students, ourselves as teachers, and other teachers and specialists in the building (p. 25).

The findings of this study demonstrated teachers at BMS have the desire to work collaboratively with the school librarian despite a lack of collaboration in the past. All of the teachers in the study agreed or strongly agreed that in the future, they will work collaboratively with the school librarian to develop and/or co-teach lessons. Additionally, the study found that teachers at BMS were not completely aware of the
collaborative opportunities available to them through the school librarian or believed the school librarian to be too busy to incorporate any additional teachers into the library schedule.

**Collaboration**

The purpose of this action research study was to change the perceptions of classroom teachers to encourage them to develop collaborative relationships with the school librarian. From informal discussions during the PD, and quantitative data on the post-questionnaire, the results of the study indicated the PD sessions did positively influence the teachers’ desire to work collaboratively with the school librarian in the future.

Collaboration can take on several different forms, such as teachers and school librarian working together to develop a unit of study, to a librarian teaching a class on a topic to supplement activities in the classroom, to co-teaching with the classroom teacher. Once collaborative relationships have formed, and trust built between the involved parties, it will become easier to collaborate each time it occurs. I will need to promote successful collaborative relationships to the school staff in order to draw more people into utilizing the strengths of the school librarian.

**Librarian Outreach**

One of the major themes from the qualitative data was the need to for the school librarian to make school staff aware of the ability and desire to work collaboratively with teachers for the benefit of the students’ academic success. Lack of librarian outreach falls on the shoulders of the school librarian. After analyzing the qualitative data, it became clear that the teachers were interested, but just were unaware of their options.
The librarian-researcher’s graduate program for librarianship indicated that teachers were being instructed to work with the school librarian, so it was somewhat expected that teachers would come to me. Attempts were made to promote the school library program, but the most that ever came from it was creating research documents consisting of websites students could utilize for research. When collaborative relationships failed to develop, complacency set in and the librarian-researcher focused on reading promotions and working with the students who came independently to the school library to complete research.

It is the plan of the library-researcher to utilize the Action Research Plan (see Table 5.2) to improve librarian outreach to the classroom teachers.

**Technology**

This study found that teachers were unaware of the school librarian’s knowledge of technology with only 21.6% viewing the school librarian as a technology expert; 42.9% had asked the librarian to instruct student lessons on information literacy skills, such as credible websites, Internet safety, searching databases, etc. Aside from parents, students spend the majority of their school day with their teachers. While many teachers are competent in their use of technology, information literacy may not be included in that knowledge. Information literacy is the ability to know where and how to search for information, how to analyze the information, and then be able to use the information. According to McKeever, Bates, and Reilly (2017), “Promoting and developing these skills is essential in modern knowledge-based societies. With so much information available at our fingertips through smartphones, tablets and laptops, students need to have
the skills to enable them to access, use, understand and share this information” (pp. 51-52).

After learning about information literacy in the PD, 100% of the teachers responded that in the future, they would ask the school librarian to instruct their students in the area of information literacy. Educating the teaching staff on the importance of information literacy and how to incorporate it into the curriculum will be my responsibility. As referred to in the action plan, I will meet with content area teachers during content planning meetings. Teachers will be more likely to collaborate with me once they see that students are better equipped to conduct research utilizing information literacy skills.

**Time**

Qualitative data indicated time as being an obstacle to working collaboratively with the school librarian. Comments were made about not having enough time to finish normal teaching requirements, let alone meeting with someone else. Teachers at BMS are required to meet as teams and content on a weekly basis and grade level on a bi-monthly basis. Much of the remainder of their time is devoted to Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 meetings, or general parent conferences. During lunch periods, teachers must monitor the students and many choose to eat their lunch during planning periods/meetings, taking up even more of their free time. After discussion during the PD, I was able to explain how sharing the work between two people would actually create more time for the classroom teacher.

Another way time was viewed as an obstacle to working collaboratively with me involved a misperception on the part of some of the teachers. Several participants were
quite surprised I did not work collaboratively with more people because they assumed I was always busy with other teachers beside themselves.

The action research plan for this study will focus on better communication between the teachers and myself to make better use of everyone’s time regarding planning lessons and activities for student learning.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study could be repeated in the fall semester of the 2018-2019 school year after conducting PD with the content area teachers. Actual data could be collected on the amount of times the school librarian worked collaboratively with teachers.

Longitudinal data could be collected on the fourteen participants and their level of collaboration after the PD to determine if the PD actually did increase the amount of collaborative relationships.

As lack of collaboration was a problem across other school district middle schools, repeating this study on a larger scale by including teachers from all middle schools district wide would allow for a larger participant group.

Action Plan

The Action Plan for this research study will continue to build and improve collaborative relationships between teachers and school librarian at BMS. This Action Plan will be implemented throughout the 2018-2019 school year with plans to continue promotion of the school library in perpetuity. It will be important to conduct PD with new hires on an annual basis to keep momentum going with collaborative relationships at BMS.
Limitations

While every core subject area was represented in the study, it does not guarantee that all teachers will have the desire to work collaboratively with the school librarian. Twenty percent of the teaching staff participated in the research study. One has to consider the personalities of the study participants who were willing to come to work early in the morning to participate in the study and consider them possibly more open to trying something new. Teachers who consider themselves my friend might have been more likely to participate than those teachers who I did not know as well. Another doctoral student conducted a research study earlier in the semester, which may have led to individuals not choosing to participate in two research studies scheduled so close to one another.

The time of year in which the study was conducted was another limitation. The research study occurred during the last few weeks of May 2018, leaving no real opportunities for collaborative opportunities. Additionally, the end of the school year is a busy time of year for teachers, which may have affected the amount of participants.

Finally, action research is not generalizable, which was also a limitation of this study because other school librarians cannot apply it to their school situation (Mertler, 2014).

Conclusion

The data collected from this research study supports the need for PD on the part of the school librarian to educate teachers on the various methods in which the school librarian’s skills and knowledge can be utilized for the betterment of student learning. Teachers left the PD sessions excited about what they learned and demonstrated their
interest in their responses on the post-questionnaire. The researcher will need to continually promote the school library program until collaborative relationships become second nature for all stakeholders. When students and teachers become adjusted to working with the school librarian, the disconnect existing between what classroom teachers and school librarians do will essentially disappear.

Table 5.1
Professional Development Session Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Becoming a school librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expectations/tasks of school librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Misconceptions about today’s school librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Benefits of collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Co-teaching with the school librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information Literacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2
Action Research Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Actions</th>
<th>Person(s) responsible</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend grade-level meetings for introductions and brief presentation on role of school librarian and collaboration.</td>
<td>School librarian and teachers</td>
<td>Once, during first two weeks of school year</td>
<td>2018-2019 School year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend content planning meetings to establish needs for upcoming units of study and student projects.</td>
<td>School librarian and teachers</td>
<td>Bi-Monthly</td>
<td>2018-2019 School year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend STEM committee meetings to work collaboratively on quarterly grade-level STEM Project-Based Learning</td>
<td>School librarian and STEM committee members</td>
<td>Monthly, or as needed</td>
<td>2018-2019 School year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish school library newsletter highlighting collaborative relationships with classroom teachers.</td>
<td>School librarian</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>2018-2019 School year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct professional development on school-based staff development day.</td>
<td>School librarian</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>2018-2019 School year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>Frequency/Duration</td>
<td>Timeframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer professional development sessions on topics such as SC Discus, credible research sources, co-teaching with the school librarian</td>
<td>School librarian</td>
<td>Monthly, or as requested by teachers</td>
<td>2018-2019 School year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host new hire school library orientation prior to first day of school for students.</td>
<td>School librarian and new hires</td>
<td>Once at beginning of school year (during teacher work days prior to start of school)</td>
<td>2019-2020 School year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration Open Office Hours (one hour before and after school)</td>
<td>School librarian</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>2018-2019 School year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


South Carolina Department of Education. (2003). *ADEPT Performance Standards Library Media Specialists*. Retrieved from South Carolina Department of
Education: https://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/file/programs-services/50/documents/LibraryMediaSpecialistStandards.pdf


http://www.health.herts.ac.uk/immunology/Web%20programme%20-%20Researchhealthprofessionals/why_are_literature_reviews_impor.htm


APPENDIX A

Invitation to Participate Letter

Unique Study ID: ________

Dear Colleague,

My name is Jennifer Mandrell. I am a doctoral candidate in the Education Department at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Curriculum and Instruction and, as a teacher at DuBose Middle School, I would like to invite you to participate.

In an effort to develop collaborative relationships between teachers and the school librarian, I am studying the effect of professional development on teachers’ perceptions of the role of school librarians. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a pre- and post-test survey about the role of the school librarian. In particular, you will be asked questions about what you feel your school librarian knows or does at your school. The link to the electronic survey will be emailed to you by January 10, 2017. If you choose to participate, please complete the survey by January 17, 2017. Upon completion of the survey, all participants will be asked to attend two professional development sessions (held from 3:10 p.m. - 3:40 p.m.) conducted by me, regarding the role of the school librarian.

Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at the University of South Carolina. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed. While this study will take place at DuBose Middle School, Dorchester District Two Schools is neither conducting nor sponsoring this research study.

Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also quit being in the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. If you begin the study and later decide to withdraw, there will not be any negative consequences.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 843-509-1833 or jemandrell@dorchester2.k12.sc.us or my faculty advisor, Dr. Richard Lussier, 803-381-4951 or rrlussie@mailbox.sc.edu, if you have study related questions or problems. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may
contact the Office of Research Compliance at the University of South Carolina at 803-777-7095.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please complete the attached *Dorchester School District Two Consent Form* and return to me by January 10, 2018. Please complete the electronic pre-test survey when it is sent to your school email address on January 10, 2018. A unique study ID is printed at the top of this paper. Please insert that unique study ID into the electronic survey when requested. I will need you to complete the pre-test survey by January 17, 2018. I will contact you, via email, regarding the dates of the two professional development sessions, both of which you will need to attend. Upon completion of the sessions, I will, once, again, send you an email with a link to the post-test survey.

With kind regards,

Jennifer C. Mandrell
1500 Mandarin Court
Summerville, SC 29483
843-509-1833
jemandrell@dorchester2.k12.sc
APPENDIX B

Dorchester School District Two Consent Form

Dorchester School District Two
Consent Form

Research Consent Form: To be completed by non-student participant or student participant 18 years and above.

Project Name ________________________________

Sponsoring Organization(s) University of South Carolina

Principal Researcher Jennifer C. Mandell Telephone 843-592-1833

Project Location DaBose Middle School, 1005 DaBose School Road, Summerville, SC 29483

Participant’s Name ________________________________

Home Address ________________________________ Telephone ________________________________

Student’s School ________________________________ Grade ________ Age ________

Participants Right and Assurances

I have received a copy of the approved Dorchester School District Two Research application form for the aforementioned research project. Having thoroughly read the application I am familiar with the purpose, methods, scope and intent of the research project.

__ I am willing to participate in this research project.

__ I am not willing to participate in this research project.

If I am willing for my child to participate in this research, I understand that during the course of this project, my responses will be kept strictly confidential and that none of the data released in this study will identify me by name or any other identifiable data, descriptions or characterizations. Furthermore, I understand that I may discontinue my participation in this project at any time or refuse to respond to any questions I choose not to answer. I am a voluntary participant and have no liability or responsibility for the implementation, methodology, claims, substance or outcomes resulting from this research project. I am also aware that my decision not to participate will not result in any adverse consequences or disparate treatment due to that decision. I fully understand that this research is being conducted for constructive educational purposes and that I voluntarily participate in this project.

Participant’s Signature ________________________________ Date______________________________

Quality • Tradition • Vision
Role of the School Librarian Pre- and Post-test Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this research study. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can.

Please enter the Unique Study ID, as was provided to you on the Invitation to Participate letter you received.

Unique Study ID: Click here to enter text.

Demographics:
How many years have you been teaching? Click here to enter text.
How many years have you taught at DuBose Middle School? Click here to enter text.
How many years have you been employed by Dorchester School District Two? Click here to enter text.

Using the following scale, please answer the following questions from your work experience at DMS: (1) Never, (2) Sometimes, (3) Always

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have asked the librarian to pull books for student research.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have asked the librarian to create Internet resources for student research.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have asked the librarian to collaborate with me in the development of lessons or activities. & 1 & 2 & 3  

I have asked the librarian to co-teach with me in the development of lessons or activities. & 1 & 2 & 3  

I have asked the librarian to instruct student lessons on information literacy skills, such as credible websites, Internet safety, searching databases, etc. & 1 & 2 & 3  

Using the following scale, please answer the following questions about the DMS Librarian:  
(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Agree, (4) Strongly Agree, (5) Don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree 1</th>
<th>Disagree 2</th>
<th>Agree 3</th>
<th>Strongly Agree 4</th>
<th>Don’t know 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The librarian is a teacher.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian encourages the use of technology by teachers and students.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian is a visible leader in the school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian encourages recreational reading.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian collaborates with teachers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian evaluates print and digital resources using evaluation criteria and selection tools.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian communicates with stakeholders the library mission and how the program aligns with the school’s mission and goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian prepares, justifies, and administers the library media program budget to support specific program goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian establishes processes and procedures for selection, acquisition, circulation, resource sharing, etc., that assure appropriate resources are available when needed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian arranges for flexible scheduling of the school library media center to provide student accessibility to staff and resources at point of need.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian creates and maintains, in the school library media center, a teaching and learning environment that is inviting, safe, flexible, and</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian cooperates and networks with other libraries, librarians, and agencies to provide access to resources outside the school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The librarian understands copyright, fair use, and licensing of intellectual property, and assists users with their understanding and observance of the same.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My librarian reads professional publications to stay current on the profession.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My librarian participates in professional growth opportunities by attending training, conferences, and webinars.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My librarian articulates the role and relationship of the library program’s impact on student growth and achievement.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Select all of the following that describe the role of the librarian at your school:

☐ Reading Motivator
☐ Teacher
☐ Collaborator
☐ Instructional Support Provider
☐ Administrator
☐ Instructional Resources Manager
☐ Book Processor/Repairer
☐ Tech Expert
☐ In-service Provider
☐ Clerk
☐ Co-teacher
☐ Curriculum Designer

Thank you for completing this survey!
APPENDIX D

Role of the School Librarian Post-Questionnaire Open Response Questions

1. What was the most interesting/surprising thing you learned from the professional development sessions?

2. What is/was your main reason for not working collaboratively with the school librarian?

3. What, if any, additional comments or suggestions do you have for the school librarian regarding her role here at BMS?