Preface

The rise of digital learning and constant proliferation of Web 2.0 technologies have spurred changes in the field of school librarianship. Over the last decade, the role of school librarians has significantly shifted from “keepers of the books” to instructional leaders within the school community. The ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians (2010) reflect this shift by promoting the librarian as a teacher, instructional partner, and leader within the school community and beyond. Once designated storytellers and information resource providers, today’s school librarians are considered experts in information literacy and curriculum alignment, essentially becoming co-teachers (Bishop & Larimer, 1999).

Even so, establishing instructional partnerships with classroom teachers is challenging due to many constraints, including lack of personnel, budgetary shortages, and time. As evidenced by the field of research and conference foci over the past decade, technology integration specialists, administrators, and library professionals continue to struggle with the concept and implementation of collaboration. Despite the plethora of robust collaborative digital tools, many educators continue to fall back on the comfort of face-to-face interactions. In light of cuts in school library positions, the formation of collaborative relationships with administrators, classroom teachers, and other education professionals is more important than ever (Lamb & Johnson, 2008). These relationships have the potential to affect positively the learning environment while equally acknowledging both teacher and school librarian contributions to student learning (Muronago & Harada, 1999; Naslund & Giustini, 2008).

The relationships created and nourished between school librarians and teachers have long been considered crucial to students’ understanding of the research process (Kuhlthau, 1995), teachers’ development of quality curricula (Manzo, 2000), and students’ academic achievement (Didier, 1984; Gaver, 1963). In order to be successful, these relationships should be based on trust and respect, resulting in achieving the mutual and ultimate goal of student learning. There are many benefits to these relationships including but not limited to the following:

- Meaningful integration of technology into curriculum (Doiron & Davies, 1998).
- Decrease in student-teacher ratio (Doiron & Davies, 1998).
- Information literacy (AASL, 2007).
- Inquiry learning.
- Personal and aesthetic growth.
- Respect for viewpoints of others.
- Ethical and legal guidelines for information gathering.
Creativity, innovation.
Critical thinking, problem solving.
Communication, collaboration.
Life, career skills.
Technological literacy.

While collaborative structures have been well documented since the 1980s, the push for student development of 21st century skills highlights these relationships once more. This book explores current collaborative relationships between school librarians and classroom teachers, offering research-supported best practices by providing examples that illuminate and reflect on the quality relationships that exist. It is built upon the theoretical concepts of case-based learning, knowledge repositories, collaborative coaching, professional learning communities, teacher mentors, and situated cognition.

This book strives to add to the work begun by the American Librarian Association’s “Empowering Learners” by guiding teachers and school librarians through the process of beginning, nurturing, and maintaining collaborative instructional partnerships using new and emerging digital technologies. It can be used as a practical guide for professional development, joint lesson planning, and the development of online collaborative units. The target audience includes P-12 school librarians, teachers, professional development specialists, and administrators, as well as teacher educators, school librarian educators, other education professionals and researchers.

The book is split into three sections, the first of which includes research studies, the second of which includes case studies and models, and the third of which highlights voices from the field. In Chapter One, “From Collaboration to Transformation: Practitioner Research for School Librarians and Classroom Teachers,” Jen Scott Curwood explicates the core features of practitioner research and discusses findings from a three-year study of digital literacy conducted by a high school librarian and an English teacher. In Chapter Two, “School Librarian and Teacher Candidate Collaboration,” Barbara Ray and Connie Cassity share their research and findings based on the development of an assignment that encouraged graduate-level school library candidates to collaborate with undergraduate teacher candidates in the initial steps of creating original WebQuests.

The third chapter, “Collaboration is the Answer: What’s the Question? Using a Framework of Guided Questions to Inform Collaborative Partnerships,” by Angel Kymes and Alicia Gillean, describes models of collaboration, presents technological resources and avenues through which collaborative interactions can occur, and organizes the establishment of procedures and steps around a set of question phrases and ideas. In Chapter Four, “Teaching Multiple Literacies through Collaboration,” Judith Stanton uses a social constructivist platform to explore teachers’ and teacher librarians’ abilities to teach 21st century skills needed to prepare students for future employment. In “Voices at the Table: Collaboration and Intertextuality,” Chapter Five, Sue C. Kimmel shares findings from a year-long study of a school librarian collaboration with a team of second grade teachers. The study results demonstrate the value of reading aloud in building background knowledge and vocabulary, modeling how to read aloud, understanding curriculum, creating common texts, and reading for enjoyment.

In “School Librarians as Significant Other: Using Online Professional Learning Communities for the Development of Pre-Service Teachers,” Chapter Six, Lara Luetkehans and Rebecca Hunt explore three strands of research: professional learning communities, the significant others in the development of pre-service teachers, and teacher-school librarian collaboration in developing a strategy for using Online Professional Learning Communities (OPLC) as a means for fostering career-long, mutually beneficial
collaborations among teachers and school librarians. In Chapter Seven, “Preparing Stakeholders for the School Librarian’s Instructional Partnership Role: Whose Responsibility Is It?,” author Judi Moreillon develops an in-depth literature review of the research-based evidence for the value of successful instructional partnerships and the barriers that have been identified in enacting them.

In Chapter Eight, titled “Special Collaboration: Establishing Successful Partnerships between School Librarians and Special Educators,” Stephanie Jones, Kathi Vanderbilt, and Kelly Bramblett provide a foundation for the development of collaborative relationships between school librarians and special educators by examining the commonalities between the roles and responsibilities of the school librarian and the special educator, through explaining the terminology and legalities associated with special needs students, and by providing strategies, tips, and techniques for effective instructional design that results in standards-based, collaborative lessons that utilize the most current instructional tools and resources that motivate student learning.

Wrapping up the research-focused part of the book is Chapter Nine, “School Librarians and Music Educators: Unique Interdisciplinary Partnerships,” by Lucy Santos Green and Brad Green, who discuss research on interdisciplinary partnerships between fine-arts educators and school librarians while identifying the strengths each of these professionals offer from their respective disciplines.

The second section of the book concentrates on presenting field-based case studies and models. The section begins with Michelle Kowalsky in Chapter Ten, where she writes about “Collaborative Learning Design in Librarian and Teacher Partnerships.” Kowalsky uses this chapter to evaluate types of lesson designs that lend themselves most easily to teacher-librarian collaborative partnerships, and review partner and student activities that reflect on design elements of both delivery and internalization of concepts and skills by students. Rhonda Huisman, in Chapter Eleven, “‘Need to Know’: Partnerships in Project-Based Learning,” outlines, defines, and illustrates examples of project-based learning and focuses on how school librarians can offer support to teachers as well as create and lead project-based learning programs. Joan Lange in Chapter Twelve, “Building Literacy through Media-Rich Projects: Slow Down, Look, and Connect,” describes a case study of a librarian and high school English teacher who collaborated on Shakespeare projects to improve students’ critical reading of sonnets and soliloquies.

Chapter Thirteen, “Simplifying and Expanding Collaboration through Collaborative Websites: Using Technology Wisely,” follows. In this chapter, authors Eileen Schroeder, Anne Zarinnia, Jason Glampe, Vickie Horman, Jodie Sanken, and Michael Slowinski discuss the use of LibGuides as a framework and tool for encouraging collaboration between teachers and school librarians and for involving students in the creation of knowledge through collaboration and communication with others. Chapter Fourteen, which is authored by Brenda Boyer and Alison Kocis-Westgate, describes a team-based collaborative process, the team protocols put into place, commitments, and instructional design tools, along with implications for ongoing improvement.

The last of the three book sections, “School Library Voices,” starts off with Chapter Fifteen, “Administration: Making a Connection with the Library’s Strongest Advocate,” by Rebecca Kelly. This chapter explores the crucial need for the library to be the central hub of the building by developing and nurturing long-term collaborative relationships with school administration. Susan Kowalski, the author of Chapter Sixteen, “Increased Engagement: Exponential Impact on School Library,” discusses the need for school librarians to provide users with the opportunities to lead, create, facilitate, and participate by way of collaborating with leadership in transforming the library program to ensure high levels of student engagement in conjunction with the library. In Chapter Seventeen, “Invaluable Collaboration,” Lisa Turner presents content-focused collaborations that answer the question many school librarians
have asked: “How do you get teachers to collaborate with you?” In Chapter Eighteen, “Interview with a Librarian: The Collaborative Process as a Journey Rather than a Destination,” Susan Grigsby concentrates on making connections between multiple subject areas, taking a cross-curricular approach to school librarian and teacher collaboration. The final chapter, Chapter Nineteen, “Collaboration + Integration = A Library Program Greater than the Sum of Its Parts,” by award winning school librarian Michelle Maniaci portrays collaboration as one of several important components of a small elementary school library program in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. Highlights of the AASL-recognized program include flexible scheduling, targeted curriculum, standards and assessment, and stakeholder support. We hope that each of these studies, models, and voices aids in the development and nurturing of essential collaboration between school librarians and teachers.

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