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# A Library Power Case Study of Lakeside Elementary School, Chattanooga, Tennessee

Dianne Ober

*Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, Canada*

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*The implementation of the Library Power initiative at Lakeside Elementary School, Chattanooga, Tennessee was examined through a case study. The Library Power program was found to have had a positive impact on teaching and learning in the school. The program provided an opportunity to improve the library collection and to develop a process approach to library research. The development of student-centered, resource-based approaches to teaching and learning contributed to improvements in student achievement in measurable ways. The changes in teachers' instructional strategies and in their beliefs about teaching and learning hold promise for continued improvements in student learning. The development of Library Power in Lakeside School was facilitated by strong leadership from the principal and librarian. Library Power built on previous reform efforts that had developed the faculty's capacity for change and growth.*

## *Introduction to Lakeside School*

As a case study researcher for the Library Power National Evaluation Program, I visited Lakeside School in November 1996 and April 1997. The school, a one-story brick building located in a suburb of Chattanooga, Tennessee, had a well-kept, homey atmosphere and provided an inviting environment for students, parents, faculty, and visitors. At the time of the case study, Lakeside School had about 530 students. About 95% were African-American and about 60% received free or reduced-price meals. The students came primarily from working-class families who lived in the area around the school. The school faculty included the principal and assistant principal, 22 regular classroom teachers, three special education classroom teachers, a full-time librarian, and several part-time itinerant teachers for speech, music, and guidance. In addition to the regular classroom programs, Lakeside School had some special programs: one class for Severely Emotional Disturbed students, two for Special Education students, and one for preschool children with developmental delays. Teacher planning and preparation time was provided primarily through the music and science programs.

On the first morning of my visit, the principal was there to greet me at the front desk of the school office. A few minutes later, the principal began the morning announcements over the intercom. She welcomed the students and announced birthdays. She gave the word for the month, *Kind*, and asked the students to repeat the November school creed with her: "It is cool to be kind.

Kindness is goodness. Kindness is gentleness. Kindness is consideration. I am Lakeside cool." Then two students gave the Thought for the Day and helped lead in the singing of "America the Beautiful." That Monday, the principal also reminded the teachers and students of the visitor in the school and asked them to welcome me. Throughout that week and throughout the second site visit as well, I did feel welcomed into the life of the school.

### *Case Study Methodology*

The data from which this case study report has been developed were collected through observations, through interviews and conversations, and through review of documents created by and about the school. During the first site visit, meetings with the principal and the librarian helped me to identify teachers and students who had been particularly involved in Library Power-related activities. I talked with students about their library-based projects, observed teachers and students at work in the library and classrooms, and observed faculty planning and decision-making. The second visit to the school came just after the students had completed the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) tests. During this visit, I focused on the perceptions of the principal, librarian, and teachers about Library Power and on evidence of student learning that might be attributable to Library Power.

### *Library Power's Development in the School*

Lakeside School had gone through some quite substantial changes before Library Power began in the school. What was the school like before the changes began? According to the principal, at the end of the 1980s, the school had been "dead last" in the rankings of the city schools on the TCAP tests, the teachers were frustrated and demoralized, and there seemed to be "nothing to lose." At that time, the teachers at Lakeside School were delivering a traditional program, "covering the curriculum" and following the textbook page-by-page. The state curriculum guides were not being used. Many teachers were not teaching any science at all. They were working so hard on the 3 Rs that they did not think they had time for science. According to the principal, the ethos of the school was "the more worksheets and workbooks, the better." The librarian provided a structured program of weekly sessions that consisted of reading stories to the students and teaching library skills in isolation from the classroom curriculum. Although teachers had been trying harder, test scores had been going down.

In the next few years, however, the situation began to improve at Lakeside School. The faculty used "curriculum mapping," outlining the grade levels where various curriculum content and skills were taught, in order to identify gaps and overlaps in the program and to develop a school-wide curriculum plan. The librarian had begun to rethink the library program, based on *Information Power* (American Association of School Librarians & Association for Educational Communications and Technology

[AASL & AECT], 1988), the national school library guidelines developed by the American Association of School Librarians, and on trends toward literature-based and integrated curriculum programs. The principal mandated teacher inservice on these ideas as a regular part of faculty meetings. For some teachers, the ideas “fell on deaf ears” but slowly, as the principal and librarian suggested, “Let’s try this ...” the ideas began to be implemented. By Year 1 of Library Power (1994-1995), Lakeside School had made many changes that were consistent with the changes that would be required for participation in the Library Power project.

### *Vision and Goals*

The goal of the Library Power initiative was to enhance student learning by improving school library programs. Improvements in student learning were to be supported through improvements to library collections and facilities, through the development of collaborative planning by the librarian and teachers, and through the provision of flexible scheduling<sup>1</sup> and of a full-time librarian. Lakeside School’s Library Power proposal presented a vision of the library as “the most vital part of the teaching and learning process ... a focal point in holistic teaching and in bridging all aspects of art, science, mathematics, language arts and technology into the curriculum.”

### *Library Power Key Players*

The Library Power proposal was developed by the school’s Library Power Committee, composed of the principal, the librarian, a classroom teacher, and a parent. The purpose of the Library Power Committee, according to the teacher member, was “not so much to lead as to share information, to get the idea and then to get started in educating our people.”

The principal had been an educator for over 30 years, as a middle school teacher, a supervisor of instruction, an assistant principal, and a principal. In her supervisor role, she had worked with fourth- and fifth-grade teachers in curriculum and staff development. She was appointed principal of Lakeside School in September 1991. Something of the principal’s leadership approach can be discerned from her response to discovering that no science was being taught in the school. She asked the teachers, “Have you ever thought about changing your teaching styles to meet the children’s learning styles? Have you ever thought about teaching reading using your science textbooks?” The principal provided professional development activities for the teachers, and she moved resource dollars into math manipulatives and calculators, into kits and trade books, and into science equipment.

The librarian had been at Lakeside School for 17 years. Previous to that, she had been a middle school home economics teacher and a high school librarian. She had a K-12 endorsement in school library media services and an MS in Guidance and Counseling. In her early years at Lakeside School, she had developed a scheduled program in library skills and literature appreciation. When the district supervisor began to encourage the integration

of library skills instruction consistent with the AASL and AECT (1988) *Information Power* guidelines, the librarian was resistant. She said she could not see how she could work with 22 teachers, and she had “thrown *Information Power* across the room, ... saying, ‘Never in my lifetime!’” In time, however, reading about the whole language approach brought her to a personal watershed. She reread *Information Power*, shared it with her new principal and, with the principal’s support, went to the faculty with changes in the nature of the library program.

The third member of the Library Power Committee was a parent, active in the Parent Teacher Association and a regular volunteer in the school. This mother was an out-of-boundary parent, who chose to drive her child to Lakeside School because she valued the kind of learning environment provided there. She had experience with other school systems, having lived in three different states. In her view, the value of Library Power was in the opportunities for children to do research, individually and in small groups, with a librarian who had the time to work with them.

The final key player was the teacher selected for the Library Power Committee. She had been teaching at Lakeside School as a first-grade teacher for many years, and she was about five years from retirement when the school decided to pursue the opportunity to participate in Library Power. She was selected by the principal for the Library Power Committee because “she was someone who was beginning to branch out from the textbook.” She was a thoughtful and innovative teacher. For example, in June of the first year of Library Power, she went to a presentation by the Library Power Director on organizing instruction around essential questions. This struck a strong chord with her. Over the remainder of the summer, based on that insight into curriculum development, she totally redeveloped her classroom curriculum around the concept of Interdependence. The nature of her curriculum work is explored further below (Scenario 1).

Once the Library Power proposal was approved, the Curriculum Committee of the school picked up the role of the Library Power Committee. The nine-member Curriculum Committee was composed of the principal, the librarian, and a representative from each of the grade levels K-6. Although this meant that there was no longer a parent involved in Library Power planning, it also meant that Library Power concerns quickly became a regular part of the curriculum planning processes of the whole school. In most matters related to Library Power, the principal and librarian worked as a team, consulting with the assistant principal, taking major issues to the Curriculum Committee, and putting together ad hoc working groups for specific tasks such as writing grant applications.

### *Budget and Financing*

In 1996-1997, the school had available for the purchase of library materials approximately \$10,000 (\$19 per student). This included the district allotment

for library materials plus the Library Power funds and district matching funds. Two years prior to Library Power, the funding for library materials was only \$5.20 per student. The Public Education Foundation (PEF) made some of the Library Power funding available to schools through a competitive application system of mini-grants for project materials, curriculum development, and professional development. Between 1994 and 1997, Lakeside School was successful in 11 of its 13 mini-grant applications and was thus able to obtain an additional \$15,250 from the PEF for Library Power activities.

Involvement in Library Power was used by the school to leverage other grants, from the Parent-Teacher Association, the Lyndhurst Foundation, and the National Science Foundation, and to buttress requests for district support for the establishment of a science lab. Library Power was a catalyst; the school was able to ask, "Will you help us where Library Power will not?" In this way, the school obtained TV/video players for 17 classrooms, the hardware and software needed for library automation, a fully furnished and equipped science lab, and a laserdisk system for the library.

### *Library Media Center Facilities*

The library was located near the main office of the school. Figure 1, although not drawn to scale, gives the floor plan and general layout of the library. Plants, small figurines, and stuffed animals added to its comfortable, home-like atmosphere. The furniture in the library was used to divide the room into functional areas. There was an instructional area with oak tables and seating for 32 students. A large cloth sculpture Mother Goose flew over this area. At the information desk, right by the entrance, there was a children's red wagon that was used for book returns. The other half of the library's main room consisted of a story reading area with a large comfortable couch and armchair, and a row of computer stations separating it from the reference area. There was a computer and laserdisk unit next to the circulation desk for teacher and student use. There were computer work stations for an automated and networked library. With the help of Library Power, facilities, funding, traffic patterns, and general aesthetics were improved, and a much-needed materials storage room was created.

### *Library Collection*

Through Library Power, the school developed a relevant collection of approximately 6,000 print and nonprint items. New materials had been selected using the data from curriculum mapping, from the Library Power collection mapping<sup>2</sup> exercise, and from library-based instructional units. As a result, the librarian stated, "The bulk of inquiry can now be supported from our collection."

At the time of the school's Library Power proposal, the library's book collection numbered 6,464 (about 12 books per student), and it was an out-dated collection. To prepare for collection mapping, the librarian and two

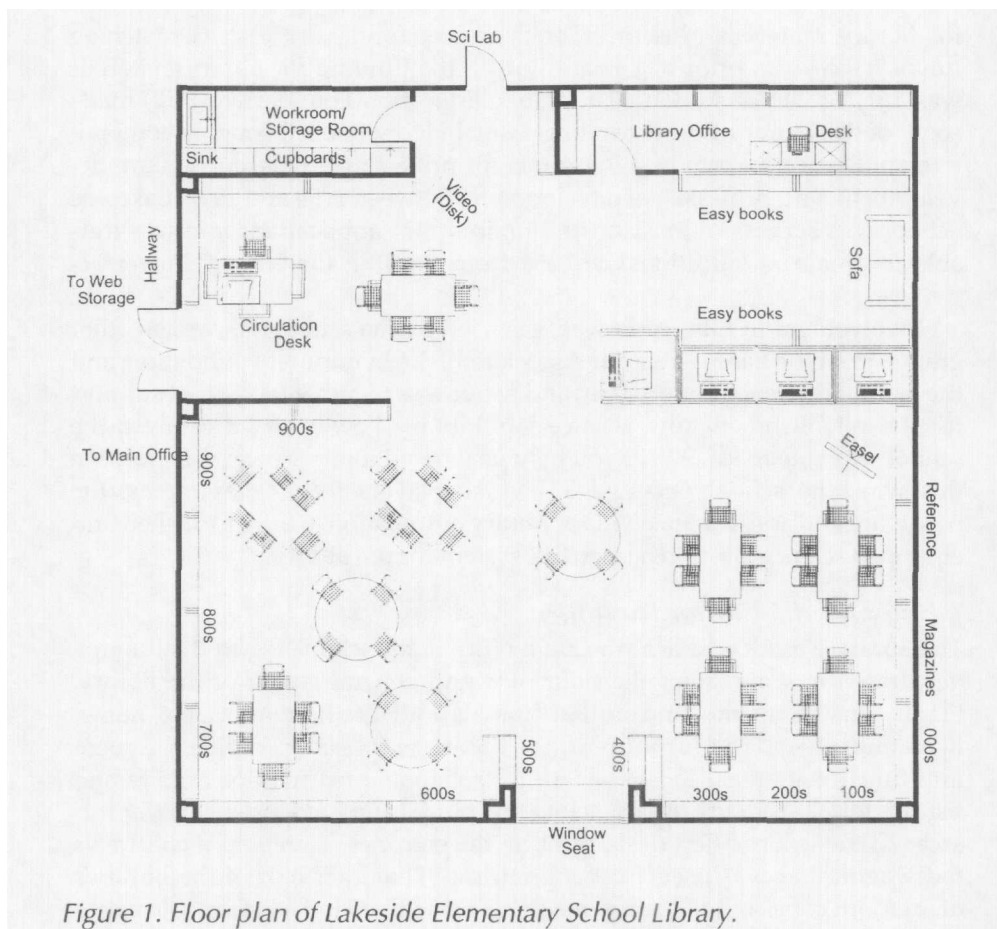


Figure 1. Floor plan of Lakeside Elementary School Library.

teachers weeded over 60% of the collection. One measure of collection currency is the percentage of items having copyright dates falling within the previous five years. Of the 3,000 items available after weeding, 2.7% fell in the five-year copyright range. In June 1995, 10% were in that range; in April 1997, 17% were in that range. The status of those areas of the collection where currency is particularly critical was much improved: by 1997, 29% of the science materials in the 500 Dewey category and 26% of the geography, biography, and history materials in the 900 Dewey category were within the five-year copyright range.

### *Flexible Scheduling*

Before Library Power, Lakeside School had begun to experiment with a form of flexible scheduling for the library, and the librarian had begun to insist that information skills be taught only in the context of cooperatively planned units. Mornings were used for scheduled library classes, and afternoons

were reserved for class use on an as-needed basis. "It didn't work," reported the librarian, "because no one knew what to do with the flexibly scheduled time." With the commitment to Library Power, the school moved to fully flexible scheduling. Teachers arranged instructional activities with the librarian. Generally, students came in small groups to work with the librarian on specific topics that grew out of classroom activities. Occasionally, a student would arrive from a classroom with a specific question to be investigated, but planned activities were more the pattern.

### *Collaboration Between Teachers and Librarian*

The librarian participated in grade-level meetings and also planned with individual teachers. Because no planning time was built into the school's schedule, most of the unit planning occurred during the summer break. Two days of planning time were provided for each grade level. The principal required that the teachers at each grade level plan at least three units in collaboration with the librarian, but some grade levels actually developed more than three units per year. The teachers were paid a small stipend from Library Power funds for this planning time with the librarian. As the year progressed, the teachers and librarian met more informally before and after school and at lunch time to review the unit plans they had developed in the summer and to do the more detailed instructional planning.

The mini-grant program established by the PEF required collaboration, and this encouraged collaborative planning of library-based activities at grade levels where this kind of planning had rarely been done. Teachers at the first-, second-, and third-grade levels were mostly working in full partnership with the librarian. There was little or no interaction with the librarian outside of grade-level planning by the two fourth-grade teachers and by one of the fifth-grade teachers. The other two fifth-grade teachers were beginning to look for the librarian's involvement in some aspects of their library-based work, particularly the provision of resources and assistance in instruction.

Library Power supported the curriculum alignment work that was being done in the school. Teachers were exploring interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum. For example, the second-grade library-based unit on Animals of Asia combined social studies content about continents with science content about animal habitats.

Library Power funding (and other funding made possible by leveraging Library Power funding) provided a richer base of library resources for the science program. This facilitated the development of a strong science program. Students from grades 2-5 had two 45-minute periods in the science lab with a science specialist every week, and kindergarten and first-grade students were often invited into the lab to explore activities that older students were carrying out. The hands-on approach in science created a lot of interest in science, and students were pursuing those interests through personal

reading. The circulation of science and nature library books was high in the school.

Library Power supported the move to a more student-centered approach to instruction. Generally, teachers in Lakeside School were trying to move away from textbooks and basal readers. There was an emphasis on children's questions, particularly at the primary level. The Triple R strategy—Research, Report, Review—was proving to be a powerful means to involve students in inquiry and to build students' confidence in themselves as learners (see Scenario 2). The fourth- and fifth-grade teachers appeared to rely more heavily on textbooks, and they were less successful in creating meaningful inquiry-centered assignments.

### *Institutionalization of the Library Power Changes*

The principal of Lakeside School was a winner of the 1996 American Association of School Librarians Distinguished Administrator Award because of her support of the library program in Lakeside School, and she was frequently asked by district supervisors to act as a mentor to other principals because of her successes in improving student learning. She had a clear view of her role as instructional leader in the school, as the following quote suggests.

Teachers need to know what is expected to be taught at their grade. We need to educate them, especially new teachers, to help them understand why curriculum alignment is so important. Then we have to hold their feet to the fire.

The principal "held their feet to the fire" in many ways. She reviewed teachers' year plans and required lesson plans to be handed in to her every other week. She checked that displays of student work were instruction-oriented. She reviewed the minutes from each of the grade-level planning meetings. She provided performance data to teachers for their classes, and she expected teachers to adapt their teaching on the basis of that information. The principal incorporated support for Library Power activities into her instructional leadership role in the same way. From the beginning, she made it clear to her staff that participation in the Library Power initiatives was mandatory. For example, each teacher was required to document and present evidence on an annual basis of having planned with the librarian three times a year. Teachers who failed to do so received reminder letters reiterating expectations for collaborative planning with the librarian. The principal provided the same kind of attention to the library program as she did to classroom programs. She visited the library, discussed the librarian's plans, and reviewed data on library use and circulation of materials.

### *Professional Development*

Professional development facilitated the institutionalization of the Library Power changes. At the beginning of the school's involvement with Library Power, the librarian and one other teacher went to a one-day collection mapping workshop and a week-long workshop on collaborative planning.



The librarian and various members of the faculty participated in the workshop sessions provided by the PEF Library Power Director on topics such as essential questions, collaboration, and leadership. The librarian visited another Library Power school in Overland Park, Kansas; this helped her understand the ideas behind Library Power in a new way.

A number of faculty mentioned that the process of writing the PEF mini-grants was an important professional development activity. The mini-grant system adopted by the PEF also provided incentives for teachers to work with the librarian; classroom materials and supplies could be obtained through the mini-grants as well as library materials. The principal identified teacher recognition, in addition to the incentives of planning time and funds for materials, as an incentive for involvement in initiatives such as Library Power. She commented, "Success is contagious. The school has a reputation for being a 'workhouse' school, and the faculty are proud of that. Teachers have enjoyed the 'notoriety' so much that they would miss that!" Several faculty also mentioned Lakeside's "workhouse" reputation with considerable pride and amusement.

Lakeside School provided professional development for other educators as well as for its own faculty. In summer 1996, the principal, the librarian, and a teacher, along with a librarian from another Library Power school, presented a three-day workshop for Chattanooga principals, teachers, and librarians. They also provided workshops for Nashville and Chattanooga principals and librarians on three occasions. A real high point for them was their participation in a session at the American Association of School Librarians conference in spring 1997. On more than 12 occasions, Lakeside School hosted teams of visitors from other schools. Teaching others through these activities enhanced the professional growth of these leaders from Lakeside School.

### *Financing*

Lakeside School was creative and resourceful in providing the funds needed to support the library program. Outside funds were obtained by using Library Power funds to leverage support from foundations, from the school's Parent Teacher Association, and from the school district. The school used \$7,000, awarded through the State of Tennessee's "pay for performance" incentive program for exceeding national averages on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program tests, to hire a part-time library clerk in order to free the librarian for more work with teachers and students. The school also made use of the Tennessee Career Ladder Teachers program to extend the library hours while providing tutorial assistance to students. The school's application to the national funding program, the Title I School Improvement Plan,<sup>3</sup> included access to the school library as a resource for reading improvement. This plan brought an additional \$167,000 into the school to provide one-on-one assistance to students struggling in basic lan-

guage and mathematical skills. This freed other resources to support the library program.

### *Improved Student Learning*

Dramatic improvements in student learning, attributable at least in part to the Library Power initiative, can be seen from several sources of evidence. One critical source of evidence for improved student learning was the school's achievement record on the TCAP (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program) tests. For two years in a row, the school was the only school in the city of Chattanooga to score above the national average (expressed as 100) in mathematics (112.8), reading (112.7), language (116.7), social studies (123.6), and science (105.6). According to the report in the local newspaper,

The school worked to meet state goals and objectives by dividing them into four nine-week segments "to be sure we're focused and that we're getting these things taught. We're trying to target areas that the child must master to go on to the next grade. It's not guesswork," said [the principal], adding that teachers analyze where the students are academically and write an improvement plan for each class. (Spear, 1996)

The librarian and principal also used library data in conjunction with the TCAP test results to provide evidence to teachers that library use was related to student learning. Library use was measured by the number of times children used the library for curriculum work, the number of items the teacher checked out, and the number of items the children checked out. The librarian compiled library use statistics for each classroom and compared these data with the average TCAP scores for each classroom. She found that reading and reference scores began to climb as library use increased. For example, the children of one third-grade teacher who had the most collaboration with the librarian and the highest student circulation reached 95% mastery on the reference portion of the TCAP test and 81% mastery on the comprehension portion. The children of a third-grade teacher who had not collaborated with the librarian scored only 19% mastery on the reference portion and 52% mastery on the comprehension portion. The principal included information about this "dramatic carryover" from library use to student achievement in inservices and performance evaluation meetings with teachers in Lakeside School.

All students benefited from Library Power by the open access to the library for individual borrowing and by a more open attitude to the library as a place for many kinds of learning. Student use of the collection, both for voluntary free reading and for curriculum-based activities, increased over the three years of Library Power. The monthly circulation of library materials for 530 students averaged between 2,000 and 3,000 items. There was also a shift in the nature of the items selected for personal reading from easy and fiction items to nonfiction. Particular favorites were nature books, drawing

books, and sports books. The primary children, whose teachers were more likely to use resource-based learning approaches and the Triple R approach to library-based inquiry, benefited to a greater degree from cooperatively planned units. These students were more likely to have written short reports in their own words, guided through the process of locating information and writing sentences to answer questions in small groups by the librarian, and then sharing what they had learned with their classmates under the direction of the teacher (see, e.g., Scenario 2). The fourth- and fifth-grade students benefited to a lesser degree because their teachers were less likely to plan with the librarian and the students were expected to do more work independently. For them, research work, whether library-based or using the resources of the classroom, often became a reproduction of information rather than a construction of knowledge.

### *Positive Benefits for Faculty*

Teachers reported that they enjoyed collaborating with the librarian and that collaboration enhanced the quality of the instructional program. The partnership between teachers and librarian was evident in the collaborative planning sessions and in the comments made by teachers about the process. A third-grade teacher explained how she and the other third-grade teachers worked with the librarian, in these words:

The library and the librarian have become part of the classroom, part of what I do. The librarian is a partner with me and I feel the students gain from that. The small groups work beautifully. It takes longer but we can work more in-depth with the children. When we wrote the units for the mini-grants, we began with brainstorming to get everyone's ideas. The librarian and I put the ideas together on paper and gave them to the group for revision.

All classroom teachers engaged in some level of planning with the librarian by virtue of the schoolwide expectation for grade-level planning, but some teachers met the requirement for collaboration with the librarian only minimally. The practice of the majority of teachers reflected to some degree a resource-based approach, but the level of sophistication of teachers' use of those strategies varied considerably. There was evidence of changes in teachers' practice and belief (see, e.g., Scenario 1). The commitment to the changes brought by involvement in Library Power was reflected in a statement made by at least four different faculty members: "The kids won't let us go back!" Two other faculty members explained the changes in these words:

Library Power has had a real impact on children's learning. It has shown students what they can do. They are not so quick to say, "I don't know." They are willing to find the answer. They take more pride in their learning when they have some input into their own learning. (assistant principal)

The Library Power changes are deeper than the things, the materials, although they were certainly a boost, an encouragement and the changes could not be im-

## Scenario 1: Teacher Learning

### *Reconceptualizing Teaching and Learning*

The first-grade teacher developed and named the Triple R (Research, Report, Review) strategy, which has been emulated by other primary grade teachers in the school. She believes that children need to develop the idea of research early in their school life and that children need to understand that they learn from and can teach others. Before Library Power, she had begun to use a literature-based approach, but she had not used a thematic approach to organize her teaching because she couldn't see how organizing one's curriculum around a topic such as "bears," for example, could be done in a meaningful way.

Three years ago, at the beginning of Library Power, a question from the Library Power Director at a district level inservice session started her thinking about the first-grade curriculum in a new way. The question was, "Have you ever thought of organizing your curriculum by concepts?" The Director had used the example of the concept of "Change" to organize a unit of study. Looking back on this, she reflected, "I want to leave some influence on my children that will go with them for life, and I had always stressed the idea of responsibility, that they depend on others and that others depend on them." From there, she came to the major theme of Interdependence. That summer, she rewrote her classroom program, incorporating its major topics into the concept of "Interdependence"—

I depend on others and others depend on me. (Social Studies/School Rules)

People in the community depend on each other. (Social Studies/Community Helpers)

Things in nature depend on each other. (Science/Environment)

Countries depend on each other. (Social Studies/Economics)

We depend on the past. (Social Studies/History)

The future depends on us. (Science/Ecology)

The Triple R is just one of many instructional strategies that this teacher uses, but it is one of several that she uses that could not be implemented without a well-stocked library and a librarian devoted to collaborative planning. The teacher noted that pre-Library Power, "You could go to the library and you MIGHT find what you needed, but with teacher involvement in the selection of library materials, you can go to the library and KNOW you can find what you need."

## Scenario 2: Student Learning

### *The First-Grade Bird Study—Research, Report, Review*

Four first-grade researchers arrived in the library with their clipboard and their questions, ready to learn about feathers. With the guidance of the librarian and using library books and pictures preselected by the librarian, they located and talked about feather facts—the different types of feathers and how the feathers help the birds. The librarian had a selection of feathers, which they examined and talked about, noting the different textures of the feathers, the little hooks holding the feathers together, and the hollow quills of the large feathers. They used droppers of water to test the water resistance of the different kinds of feathers. Then the students were asked to tell the most important information they had found, and the librarian recorded the facts on a small whiteboard mounted on an easel next to their table. The facts were then put in order by the group, and they copied the facts in order onto their clipboards. The Research phase of the process had been completed.

Taking their clipboards and the feathers and droppers back to the classroom, the students were then prepared to Report. The students who had been working with their teacher using a Big Book about birds were divided into four “student” groups, and the four researchers as “teachers” began to report what they had learned about feathers to their group. This was the Report phase of the process.

The teacher then called the class together in a large group with the “teachers,” the “authorities on feathers,” seated at the front of the group. She began, “Tell me one thing that you learned about feathers today.” One boy volunteered, “Fly—feathers let birds fly.” The teacher nodded, and asked, “Who taught you that, Josh?” Josh replied, “Courtney taught me that.” The teacher continued with this pattern around the group, until all the “students” had spoken. Then the “teachers” were invited to report on anything that had been missed in the discussion, and they also performed the water resistance demonstration for the class. Next, the group that had been working with a Big Book about birds while the researchers had been in the library shared what they had learned. Then the whole class read the Big Book in unison. The Review phase of the process had been completed.

The students are engaged in learning through the Triple R (Research, Report, Review) strategy almost every week of their first-grade year. The Triple R strategy places the children in the center of the learning process and respects their individual voices. There were no cookie-cutter products in this classroom. For example, after reading Pat Hutchins’ book, *My Best Friend*, each of the children wrote sentences about a friend of their own age and then about the principal, their “grownup friend.” The edited pieces, carefully recopied for the hallway display, clearly showed the unique ideas and language of each child.

plemented without the materials. Library Power supported a change in the philosophy of teaching. It brought a totally different view of the library, and it caused teaching here to open up. It feels like you came from “seeing darkly” to a space full of light. We won’t lose that. (first-grade teacher)

### *Reasons for the Library Power Successes*

“Library Power was a godsend; it was the push that we needed,” the principal of Lakeside School commented in reference to the role of Library Power in the school. This seemed to be true. Library Power was a catalyst and a support for a number of initiatives that had been started earlier. These reform efforts, beginning several years before the school became a Library Power site, had developed the faculty’s capacity for change and growth. Library Power provided an opportunity to refine library use, to improve the library collection, and to develop a more thoughtful and consistent process approach to library research. Library Power represented an ameliorative change for Lakeside School, not a radical one. The reasons for the successes of Lakeside School in implementing Library Power include the leadership roles played by the principal, the librarian, and the teachers; the school’s recent history with change; the school’s culture; and the coherence of Library Power with other reform initiatives.

The teamwork of the principal and librarian enabled the Library Power program to be implemented in a powerful way. Before Library Power, the librarian had gone through a transformation in her beliefs about best practice in the school library program and was beginning to implement some of her beliefs and understandings. The dynamic and forceful principal was focused on student learning and curriculum change, and her knowledge of the school district and community provided a strong base for using Library Power and other leveraged resources to bring about improvements in student learning. She used her routine administrative structures to emphasize teachers’ use of the library and to reinforce student-centered teacher practice.

The support of classroom teachers—as well as that of the principal and the librarian—was important in implementing the kinds of changes advocated through Library Power. The first-grade teacher who had served on the Library Power Committee explained the growth of teacher leadership in this way:

The previous principal had been leading us toward a literature-based integrated curriculum. This started the ball rolling. The librarian was pushing us in this direction too. When Library Power came, we were ready for it. We have had strong academic leadership from two principals and from the librarian who was motivated and strong-willed. One-by-one, teachers began to like the changes. Initially the faculty were directed, but they became participants. When you plan your own curriculum, it’s going to go better. This is a hardworking faculty. We get along well, sharing and cooperating. Here we all just push it down each other’s throats!”

The faculty of Lakeside School had a positive, confident approach to their teaching and a belief that they could achieve success through hard work. They spoke about the school as a place where people shared their ideas and had positive and friendly working relationships. The positive relationships were evident among the faculty and with the support staff and itinerant teachers as well.

Other innovations undertaken successfully, such as curriculum alignment, whole language, and hands-on science, were consistent with Library Power in terms of their view of the relationship between teacher and learner and of the nature of learning. There was a core of teachers who had personally transformed their practice in ways consistent with Library Power. The faculty's confidence in making changes in the school program had grown out of a history of successful collaboration and curriculum innovation.

### *Future Library Power Initiatives*

The principal, the librarian, and several faculty members stated that the school had not met the technology goals that they had set for themselves as part of the Library Power initiative. They had been able to automate the library and to provide a range of software for the library and computers that were used by students at every grade level. However, there was no school-wide plan for integrating technology into instruction, through the library or the classrooms. Student use of technology tended to be low in interactivity, and no keyboarding skills or searching strategies (beyond the most basic) were being taught.

There was also work to be done in increasing collaborative work at the fourth- and fifth-grade levels. One potential for collaborative work that could benefit fourth- and fifth-grade students would be the partnership of the librarian and science teacher, particularly in relation to science fair projects. The students appeared to be working on their own, locating and using information for their projects without the assistance of the librarian. This unrealized potential was particularly regrettable given the strong emphasis on science at Lakeside school and the exciting learning opportunities being provided through the science program.

The teaching of the research process was an area of concern identified by the librarian, the principal, and some of the faculty. The need to build prior knowledge, to create interest in the topic, and to help children develop their own questions was reflected in the practice of many teachers in the lower grades, but was still largely unrecognized by the teachers in the upper grades. In the upper grades as well, both the note-taking process and the organization of the information recorded in the notes were unguided. This often resulted in products that were really just reproductions of other people's words and ideas (a process made even easier by the availability of electronic reference sources in the fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms). Rec-

ognition of this problem, however, represented a significant step toward improving practice and an opportunity for teacher learning.

### *Library Power's Contribution in Lakeside School*

The development of Library Power in the school was facilitated by strong leadership from the principal and librarian, who were able to use Library Power initiative to build on and extend other reform efforts that had begun several years before the school became a Library Power site.

Library Power enabled Lakeside School to move further and faster than it could have on its own in improving opportunities for student learning. Commitment to Library Power involved the school in implementing a package of innovations that were mutually reinforcing. Flexible scheduling provided the opportunity for teachers to use the library in a more integrated way. Professional development in the area of collaborative planning helped the librarian and the teachers to plan the integrated use of the library. Collection development ensured that the materials necessary for curriculum-based library use were available. Facility refurbishment helped to create more functional working spaces in the library and, along with flexible scheduling and an enhanced collection, made the library a more inviting learning environment.

Library Power facilitated the development of student-centered, resource-based approaches to teaching and learning in Lakeside School. This contributed to improvements in student achievement in measurable ways. The changes in teachers' instructional strategies and in their beliefs about teaching and learning hold promise for continued improvements in student learning at Lakeside School.

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### *Notes*

<sup>1</sup>Flexible scheduling, in contrast to fixed scheduling, allows access to the library media center for individuals, small groups, and classes so that students and teachers may use the resources and services of the library media center at the time of need or interest. Flexible scheduling enhances opportunities for cooperative planning for the use of library materials and facilities in instruction by teachers and librarians, as well as for the teaching of information skills relevant to the classroom program at the time of need or interest.

<sup>2</sup>Collection mapping is a technique developed by David Loertscher, library educator, for assessing adequacy of library collections. The quantity and quality of items in the collection available to support general inquiries (a base collection), to support the study of subject areas



taught in the school (general emphasis areas), and to enable resource-based learning activities on topics in the subject areas (specific emphasis areas) are identified and represented visually. This representation reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the collection and thereby assists in the planning of collection development activities.

<sup>3</sup>Title I Improvement Plan is a federally funded program of financial support to schools that serve an economically disadvantaged student population. The measure of eligibility for application for Title I funding is the proportion of students qualifying for free or reduced-price school lunches.

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## Author Note

Dianne Oberg is an associate professor at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. Her research work focuses on teachers' use of libraries and on the implementation and evaluation of school library programs. She has been involved in assessing school library programs at the school and district level since 1987. Dr. Oberg has had many years of experience as a classroom teacher and as a teacher-librarian in elementary and secondary schools and has been actively involved in school library association work from the local to the international level.