Shared Vision:
A Key to Successful Collaboration?

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A three-phase Australian study designed to help students learn to avoid plagiarism gave rise to some interesting and potentially useful findings about collaboration between teachers and teacher librarians. Although the original research purpose was not to investigate collaboration, the existence of strong collaborations determined the success of the entire project. The data collected through observation and focus group interviews were analysed to reveal what could be understood about these collaborations, and these findings are presented within the context of categories of necessary prerequisites for successful collaborations that emerge from the literature on collaboration. The research suggests that the likelihood of success with collaborations may be deeply influenced by the participants' level of shared concern for the topic under consideration

Introduction

The topic of instructional collaborations between teachers and teacher librarians has been explored extensively in the literature over a long period. There have been many anecdotal accounts of collaborations, particularly focused on units integrating information literacy and curriculum content (see, e.g., Mills, 2001; Ramsey, de Palma & Holman; 2004), as well as an extensive literature encouraging teacher librarians to engage in classroom collaborations (Todd, 2008). There has also been analysis of elements that contribute to success--or lack thereof--in collaborations, some of them research-based (e.g., Montiel-Overall, 2008).

Despite such a wealth of discussion in the literature, Todd found that levels of instructional collaborations of any kind in major curriculum areas were low (Todd, 2008), a result confirmed by others in the literature (e.g., Lindsay, 2005). Todd also found that incidents of truly integrated collaborations, "where the teacher and the school librarian jointly set goals, design learning experiences, teach and evaluate a comprehensive unit of study" (p. 20), were particularly low.

This article focuses on highly successful collaborations between teachers and teacher librarians in four Australian high schools (students aged from 12-18). These collaborations were truly integrated, all focused on developing strategies to avoid plagiarism and then trialing the strategies with students through a unit of work. While the subject content was largely generated and taught by the teachers and the information literacy component was taught mostly by the teacher librarians, considerable collaborative planning and joint teaching took place, drawing on the expertise of each partner. Evaluation was undertaken by the teaching teams and by the independent researchers.

The examples presented in the article are not the outcomes of cultures or environments marked by strong principal support, previously noted for fostering collaborations between teachers and teacher librarians, although there was some history of collaboration between teachers and teacher librarians in all of the four schools involved. These kinds of collaborative cultures are understandably seen as ideal in the literature (e.g., Haycock, 2007; Monteil-Overall, 2008; Oberg, 1995). Nevertheless, a whole-school approach to collaborations for information literacy and avoidance of plagiarism was the outcome in two schools. Teacher librarians in all schools have extended, or are planning to extend, their units to involve other teachers and classes.

The catalyst for collaboration in each of the four schools was a shared goal and vision focused on helping students to avoid plagiarism through improved information literacy. Added to this was a team of researchers interested in this subject and an organization that perceived the value of the project sufficiently to provide substantial funding. Although the collaborations were not the principal focus of the study, named *The Smart Information Use* project, its success can largely be attributed to the fact that there were collaborations involved. Indeed, without collaboration, the project would not even have been possible since every step required contributions from, and negotiations among, both teacher and teacher librarian partners.

The original aims of the study were all concerned with helping students to avoid plagiarism. Retrospectively, a research question, which this article sets out to answer, was developed and explored: What elements of collaboration between teachers and teacher librarians, identified in the literature, contributed to the positive outcomes of a project focused on assisting students to avoid plagiarism?

Literature Review

Two recent articles were central for the researchers in considering the elements that contribute to successful collaborations between teachers and teacher librarians in schools. The first is by Haycock (2007) who has contributed to the literature on this topic for over two decades. Haycock discussed what he called the "critical success factors" related to collaboration and

student learning. These are clustered into groups based on the work of Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey (2001, as cited in Haycock, 2007). The second article is by Montiel-Overall (2008) who undertook research in three schools--primary, elementary and middle--including three teacher librarians and fifteen teachers with some involvement from the three principals. She clustered her results into five overarching themes. She pointed out that, while her research was undertaken independently, the six factors identified by Mattessich and Monsey (1992, as cited in Montiel-Overall, 2008) are remarkably similar to her five overarching themes.

Both Montiel-Overall (2008) and Haycock (2007) linked collaboration between classroom teachers and teacher librarians with improvements in student learning or achievement. Haycock (2007) mentioned "measures of achievement" (p. 25) that indicated this, and Montiel-Overall (2008, Section 2, para. 1) referred to considerable anecdotal evidence of improvements in student learning through collaborations.

Definition of Collaboration

Collaboration is a trusting, working relationship between two or more equal participants involved in *shared thinking, shared planning* and *shared creation of integrated instruction.* Through a shared vision and shared objectives, student learning opportunities are created that integrate subject content and information literacy by co-planning, co-implementing, and co-evaluating students' progress throughout the instructional process in order to improve student learning in all areas of the curriculum. (Montiel-Overall, 2005, Section A, para. 9)

The project at the centre of this article involved collaborations containing all of the elements encompassed in this definition. While the project did not aspire to include "all areas of the curriculum" initially, one of the recommendations of the researchers, and indeed an aspiration of all the teacher librarians involved, was that the whole of the curriculum would eventually be involved in all the schools as Monteil-Overall suggested above (although only with regard to plagiarism). The concept of shared creation, or what Gibson-Langford (2008, p. 31) called "co-creation," was important to most of the collaborations in the study, as were shared vision and shared objectives.

These elements in the definition are mostly included in Montiel-Overall's (2008) overarching themes and in Haycock's (2007) clusters. These elements will now be discussed, using the headings of the former and drawing on additional literature for the elements central to this article. These same themes have been used to structure the findings about collaboration that were revealed in the *Smart Information Use* project.

School Culture

According to Montiel-Overall, school culture refers to the "environment within a school where certain practices are encouraged or discouraged" (2008, p. 150). An encouraging environment, which she says is a prerequisite for collaboration, promotes sharing, trust, and positive inter-personal relations and provides support for collaboration. The role of the school principal in creating this environment is considered "the key to collaboration in school settings" (p. 150).

Other writers who have discussed issues of school culture, including principal support, include Hay and Henri (1995), Lindsay(2005), Oberg (1995; 1999), and Small (2001).

Attributes of Collaborators

For Montiel-Overall's study participants, this theme was a prerequisite because successful collaboration depends on collaborators "possessing certain attributes or characteristics" (p. 151). The emphasis in the literature tends to be on the attributes of teacher librarians, including leadership and expert knowledge, also discussed by Hay and Henri (1995). Haycock saw the need for teacher librarians "to act as change agents, innovators, opinion leaders and monitors" (Haycock, 1995, cited by Haycock, 2007, p. 32). Yet Gibson-Langford (2008), whose research focused on a teachers' learning community, mooted that teachers also want their knowledge valued in a collaborative relationship. Branch (2005) also made the point "that teachers must see that they [themselves] have valuable skills and knowledge to contribute and to be seen as equal partners" (p. 32). Other attributes of collaborators include flexibility and the ability to compromise as well as personal relationships built on trust, respect and a willingness to listen and share (Haycock, 2007; Monteil-Overall, 2008). There is wide agreement in the literature about these characteristics which are also important for the theme "communication" discussed below. Gibson-Langford (2008) spoke of trust but also of empathy which in her study "was acknowledged as the single most effective attribute in developing denser social interactions." The latter she saw as "the key to sharing knowledge and creating new knowledge" (p. 35). Todd (2008) also found that personal characteristics and good team dynamics were amongst the most common reasons for successful collaboration, with the latter being particularly emphasized as leading to a "shared vision," discussed below.

Communication

Montiel-Overall (2008) and Haycock (2007) found communication to be a requisite theme for collaboration. Open and frequent communication on a personal and professional level was seen to require trusting relationships, as discussed above. Since lack of time is often cited as a problem for collaboration (Todd, 2008) and good communication is time consuming, it is very important that teachers and teacher librarians have the personal characteristics for building trusting relationships and that they are prepared to devote the time to communicating effectively. Haycock mentioned more informal personal relationships and communication as an implication here. Interestingly, Gibson-Langford (2008) found that the teachers in her study strongly preferred informal structures and social processes, seen as enhancing communication.

Management

For this theme, Montiel-Overall (2008) emphasized the scheduling for collaborative planning, the role of the principal, and having clear goals and objectives. Haycock (2007) noted that collaborative partners need to share goals and vision, as well a stake in process and outcome. There also needs to be the development of clear roles and an appropriate pace of development. Both Monteil-Overall and Haycock saw flexibility and adaptability as important.. Although not discussed specifically within the management theme, the co-planning, co-implementing and co-evaluating stages of the collaboration, which are part of Montiel-Overall's (2005) definition, can

also be included here. Some of the management factors that Haycock (2007) also included were sufficient funds, staff, materials and time.

Motivation
While Montiel-Overall primarily examined prerequisites and requisites for success, her "motivation to collaborate" theme appears to have emerged from her participants' recent experiences of collaboration. (The teachers in her study were chosen because they were currently collaborating with the teacher librarians who had agreed to participate in the study.) Montiel-Overall found that participants "were motivated by the personal and professional development they experienced" (p. 152). Motivation also came from observing the positive effects of the collaboration on their students' learning, also mentioned by Branch (2005) and by Gibson-Langford (2007) who spoke of "the power of collaboration as a force for generative and creative learning" (p. 24). Participants in Montiel-Overall's project considered that the collaborative lessons were more interesting than those they produced alone and that the students benefited from having two teachers. Among the strengths of teaching together identified by Todd (2008) were many pedagogical benefits that included the combination of two areas of expertise as well as deeper interaction with students and an ability to give them more individualized attention.

Research Method and Context
The philosophical underpinnings for the project emerged from the interpretivist tradition of research, with the study design being based on the constructivist paradigm. This fits well with the constructivist philosophical approach to learning, espoused for some time by leading educators (e.g., Bruner, 1973; Dewey, 1944; Jonassen, 1999) who posit that constructivist principles (i.e., that learners are active constructors of knowledge) should underpin teaching and learning. In research, constructivists emphasise natural settings and seek to gain deep understanding of the meanings of the actors involved in the social phenomenon under study (Glesne, 1999; Williamson, 2002).

This constructivist approach was appropriate for a project where the researchers were interested in understanding the viewpoints, or meanings, of a range of different students and staff. It was also the approach that was used by Montiel-Overall (2008) for her study focused on collaboration of teachers and teacher librarians. Montiel-Overall proposed that, when individuals negotiate meaning through social relationships, opportunities for creative thinking and innovation arise. During collection and analysis of research data, it is not uncommon for unexpected insights, not directly connected to the focus of the project, to emerge. In this case, collaboration was not central to our investigation, although success of the project depended on it, of which we became increasingly aware as project proceeded.

As mentioned above, the two-year *Smart Information Use* project focused on the issue of how to assist students to avoid plagiarism. It involved a cross-section of four Australian high schools (students aged 12-18): a country coeducational government school; a girls' Catholic school; and two other non-government, independent (private) schools--one for boys only, the other co-educational. The project had three phases: (1) an exploration of information use by

students, linking good practice to the avoidance of plagiarism, reported in Williamson, McGregor, Archibald and Sullivan (2007); (2) a collaboration between teacher librarians and selected classroom teachers in the four schools to develop and trial strategies designed to teach students how to avoid plagiarism, reported in Williamson, McGregor and Archibald (2009; 2010); and (3) the development of an electronic resources kit.

The findings of the present article are drawn from the second phase of the study. The research design for Phase 2 of the study included: (1) action research, used by teachers and teacher librarians in developing, testing and evaluating the strategies and models to assist students to avoid plagiarism, and (2) evaluation by the researchers to gauge the extent to which the new teaching strategies or models influenced students' understandings and avoidance of plagiarism.

As indicated above, in Phase 2 of the project, teacher librarians and selected classroom teachers in the four schools worked collaboratively to develop and trial strategies designed to teach students how to avoid plagiarism. In all the schools, the strategies were implemented in conjunction with assignments that students were undertaking as part of their regular curriculum. After teachers and teacher librarians had completed their trials of the strategies, the research team undertook their evaluations to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies and their impact in assisting students to avoid plagiarism. All teachers and teacher librarians involved in the project were interviewed. As well, a total of nine focus groups of 8 to 12 students each were conducted. The following table (Table 1) provides an overview of the year level/s, subject/s, topic/s, and number of students involved in Phase 2 of the project.

Table 1
Sample Description

School	Year levels	No. of focus groups	Subject	Topic
No. 1	Years 7 (aged about 13); Year 9 (aged about 15)	2 (1 for each year level)	English	Year 7 English: Response to text - Novel – *Parvan*; Year 9 English: Response to text- Film – *Bend it like Beckham*
No. 2	Year 7 (aged about 13)	2 (2 iterations of the project were evaluated at this school)	Humanities: History Inquiry Project	The causes of the break-up of the Roman Empire
No. 3	Years 8, 9, 10, and 11 (aged about 14, 15, 16, 17 respectively)	4	(1) Year 8 Science (2) Year 9 History (3) Year 10 Design Technology (4): Year 11 English	(1) Water Conservation (2) Gallipoli – how accurate a portrayal is the film? (3) Product Design (4) War Poetry
No. 4	Year 7 (aged about 13)	3	History	Famous person

The analysis of data initially involved the identification of the themes focused on the original research questions. The data within each theme were then rigorously analysed for categories and key quotes. The quotations, included in the findings sections of the present article, are mostly from the analysis of the interviews with teachers and teacher librarians which was undertaken after the completion of the original analysis. This later analysis was guided by the retrospective research question about collaboration, included above, and the use of the Montiel-Overall (2008) framework to interrogate the data. Additional quotations come from the final reports of the project, written by each school for inclusion in the final report for the funding body.

Findings

The findings are presented under Montiel-Overall's themes, partly because this structure logically clusters the elements or factors for successful collaboration. Another reason for presenting them in this structure is that it will become clear, at least to some extent, which of the prerequisites and requisites for successful collaboration were present before the project took place and which fell into place as the project developed.

School Culture

Montiel-Overall (2008) regarded the existence of a culture of collaboration within a school as a virtual pre-requisite for collaboration. In this project, there had been piecemeal collaborative

efforts between teachers and teacher librarians previously in all of the schools, and none of the environments was neutral or non-supportive. Nevertheless, sustained and consistent support for collaboration did not exist.

The catalyst for the collaborations was the issue of plagiarism, considered a problem in all of the schools by teachers and teacher librarians alike. The problem, particularly at university level, is now widely discussed particularly in the media, and high school teachers have become aware of the need to assist their students to understand and avoid plagiarism from the early years of their secondary education. As Todd (1998) indicated, there is a keen awareness of the extent to which the electronic environment is now playing a part in the problem of plagiarism.

The university team was therefore able to engage teacher librarians from four different schools in the idea of being involved in the project. These teacher librarians, in turn, were able to persuade their principals that their schools should take part (and contribute some funding), and a sufficient number of teachers were willing to take part in order to make the project workable in their schools. Thus there was a shared vision within each of the schools, although undoubtedly it was the teacher librarians who were the driving force and who enthusiastically led their teams' involvement in the project. As one teacher librarian commented:

> *Our agenda was we had to teach how to avoid plagiarism whereas in the past … we very much fitted in with what the teacher's agenda was and what the teacher wanted to achieve by having us in the class. And you see, it's very different because we asked the teachers to be part of the project, they didn't ask us to be part of what they were doing in their class. So everything was different.*

While collaborations based on teacher librarian initiatives are not necessarily well received, teachers in these schools were willing to collaborate with teacher librarians on the latter's initiative because they could see the value of it for their students. It was also because of the perceived importance of the issue (plagiarism) that the project received continuous support from senior management in all the schools. As a result, the necessary collaborations were also strongly supported, thus incidentally providing an element considered crucial in the literature. For example, there were four team meetings held during the course of the project, hosted by each of the schools (one of them twice). Two meetings involved all the teachers and teacher librarians taking part in the project and the research team, and each meeting required a considerable amount of time.

Multiple members of the teaching staff from all but the smallest school attended the 'full team' meetings. Such strong attendance at these meetings was no mean feat and demonstrated considerable commitment to overcoming time and distance. Three of the schools, whilst in the same state, were geographically widespread from each other. The fourth school was in another state altogether, in a large rural town. This was costly for the schools (although the ARC grant paid for the interstate travel) and could not have taken place without time release for teachers and the provision of substitute teachers for their classes. At one of the meetings, the principal hosted a lunch for the team, welcomed all the participants, and commended the project as being a vitally important initiative.

Attributes of Collaborators

As noted earlier in the literature review, there is widespread agreement (e.g., Haycock, 2007; Montiel-Overall, 2008; Todd, 2008) that personal characteristics of participants are important in whether or not a collaborative effort is successful. Such attributes as trust, empathy, respect, flexibility and willingness to listen and share were obvious in most of the teams in each school.

Although information on the nature of the collaborating relationship was not sought by overt enquiry, participants, when asked if they shared a focus with their collaborators during the interviews, commented about the confidence they felt in their interactions and the mutual benefit and pleasure of working together. One teacher librarian described her teaching partner as "a joy to work with because she's interested in both [the process side of designing the assignment as well as the content side]." Another, in a different school, commented on how some teachers come with ideas about what "they've done every year for the last five years"; however, she described her partner in these terms: "He's a young teacher; he's very open-minded." A teacher in one of the schools was equally positive: "I really enjoyed it … we worked really well as a team." Another teacher remarked, "I like working with teacher librarians."

Most of the teachers displayed the attributes required for successful collaboration. There was one exception in one school but the communications and other problems resulting from this were insufficient to blight the level of overall trust and co-operation exhibited in the project. Teachers also made significant contributions beyond the teaching teams. Two teachers from different schools made presentations about the outcomes of the project from a teacher perspective at the final, day-long team meeting and one of these teachers wrote a joint conference paper about teaching pedagogy for the prevention of plagiarism with two of the teacher librarians at her school. All of the teachers who attended the full-team meetings contributed ideas to the discussion.

Nevertheless, the close involvement of the academic research team in all schools provided many opportunities to observe that it was the teacher librarians who supplied strong leadership in all cases and they were the main links between the research team members, the teachers and the principals. In this way, they displayed the kinds of qualities that the literature (e.g., Hay & Henri, 1995; Haycock, 2007) has exhorted them to portray. For example, teacher librarians from two different schools were very much focused on building alliances in their schools. One, a stalwart lone librarian in her school, commented: "It has to come from me, I think, but it's really good if you have your head teachers on board … I think you have to get in and work with the faculties and get them on board, and it really does need to be a whole school approach."

Communication

As noted in the literature review, requisites for successful collaborations include trusting relationships and a preparedness on the part of participants to devote the time to create open and frequent communication. Haycock (2007) and Gibson-Langford (2008) also highlighted the importance of informal social processes for facilitating effective communication. In three of the schools, the teacher librarians initially worked very closely with only one or two teachers

although, in one of these schools, two more teachers became involved in a subsequent iteration at the same year level. In all cases, good communication was apparent amongst the teams.

In the fourth school, collaborations occurred in four different year levels and provided an interesting opportunity to observe the ways in which varying levels of communication affected the quality of collaboration. When there were limitations of time, some teachers did not go out of their way to make opportunities to communicate and this had a detrimental effect on the collaboration. One collaborative partnership worked particularly well in the school, partly because the teacher and teacher librarian team took advantage of a timetable arrangement that allowed the teacher to stay on for a chat at the end of the lesson. This type of informal discussion enabled the fostering of their personal relationship. The teacher librarian recounted how: "At the end of every lesson, instead of him rushing off to the next class, he would stay behind … and we would talk about how we were going, and we would make adjustments. … I can't tell you the value in having that time." The teacher's view of this was: "We had time … we were able to meet and talk and make sure that we had common goals and we knew where we were going at the end of each lesson."

Conversely, this teacher librarian experienced the opposite effect where the opportunity for communication was disrupted by less favorable timetabling. In another case again, the scheduling of the collaboration collided with the requirement of the teacher to be absent on a school camp. Here communication was seriously hampered because, as the teacher librarian commented, "if the teacher isn't in there with you and they don't know what you're doing … it ended up being all over the place."

Management

Research indicates that a shared focus, purpose or vision is a key facilitating element of successful collaborations (e.g., Haycock, 2007; Montiel-Overall, 2008), what Todd calls "mutuality of intent" (2008, p. 26). As mentioned above, teacher librarians, teachers and principals were united by their shared vision of assisting students to avoid plagiarism. As one teacher commented, "you'd be surprised at the level of ignorance about plagiarism; that's why I thought it [the project] was very good." The problem of plagiarism was thus a powerful focusing issue, formalized through the shared goals of the ARC project. When participants were asked if they felt they had shared the same focus, all were enthusiastic in agreeing that this was the case, typified by one teacher's remark: "Oh definitely, I'd agree with that, most wholeheartedly." Teacher librarians, particularly, were aware of how closely avoidance of plagiarism was linked to information literacy.

Although the teaching collaborations had a strongly shared focus, it was also important that the members shared a stake in the processes and outcomes through the development of clear roles and an appropriate pace of development (Haycock, 2007). In the study, both teacher librarians and teachers felt that they contributed their areas of expertise in the development of the new curriculum materials, expressed by one teacher as the opportunity to "feed off each other, which meant you were using your professionalism." The aim from the outset was for

teacher librarians and teachers to collaborate on a unit of work that was already scheduled in the curriculum in terms of subject content, but to reconsider the design of the assignment and the associated teaching so as to incorporate the implementation of strategies to avoid plagiarism. Despite there being some sense of the classic dichotomy of teacher librarians being essentially focused on process and teachers on subject content, the general perception was that these areas of expertise were complementary. One teacher librarian felt that though they were "coming from a different place in some respects," nevertheless "that's a pretty natural thing because that's our area of expertise."

Even when some discrepancy of focus might have occurred within the mechanics of teaching in the actual classroom, the teams were able to resolve the problems successfully. One teacher, for instance, felt "a bit stressed" about whether the students would finish tasks within the allotted time frame, as opposed to the teacher librarians' reluctance to force the pace of the students' research, believing that students needed more time to absorb and synthesize information. These tensions were resolved with the realization by the teacher librarians that somebody was needed "to manage the time and manage the whole task, and the teacher's obviously the person who takes that role." Typically teachers and teacher librarians worked in the classroom in tandem, sometimes alternating in roles, such as in instructional delivery, and sometimes overlapping, such as in providing supportive individual interactions with students. One teacher commented: "it was team teaching at its best."

Apart from co-planning and co-teaching, both teachers and teacher librarians took part in some reflection and evaluation of the teaching and learning. A reflection/evaluation phase plays a part in action research. In two of the schools, units of work were taught three times, in each case evaluated by students, teachers and teacher librarians, followed by changes to teaching approaches. This was apart from the evaluation undertaken by the researchers. Teacher librarians also contributed to the assessment of students' assignments, with their evaluations of students' note-taking skills contributing to reports to parents in one case.

Motivation

In this theme, Montiel-Overall (2008) included motivation that resulted from participants' perceptions of professional development occurring through the collaboration, as well as the positive effects on their students. Others (e.g., Branch, 2005; Gibson-Langford, 2007) have noted that teachers are very encouraged when they see benefits of collaboration for their students. In each school in the project, an almost palpable sense of excitement was conveyed about the benefits of working together. Teacher librarians and teachers combined their areas of expertise to design and deliver units of work that resulted in the production of new curriculum materials and methods. In describing her interactions with a teacher during this process, one teacher librarian said: "We just bounced ideas off each other."

Many participants felt revitalized by the collaboration process, with one teacher commenting: "It's been very energising, strangely, like, a lot of energy has gone into it, but a lot of energy has come back at the same time, and I've found that very rewarding as well." The participants also valued the evaluation and reflection that occurred throughout the teaching. One teacher librarian described how, as well as focusing on the students' learning, the

collaborating team members were also, "reflecting on our own practices, so we were learners too." She continued, saying, "working together is profound. … We know that teachers [teaching] in isolation doesn't tend to improve practice; teachers working together improves practice enormously." Such morale-boosting outcomes almost certainly will contribute significantly to the motivation for future collaboration and may influence other people who observed these effects to become participants in collaboration when the opportunity arises.

The benefits for the students of having two teachers, as Montiel-Overall (2008) found, was a source of satisfaction and motivation to participants. One teacher commented: "Having the librarians that could spend time with each of the groups and go around and talk with them and engage, to me that was so valuable … It was fantastic for me, and I think the kids really got a lot out of that." In another school, a teacher recognized how much more students were learning through the collaboration than would have been the case if she had been teaching on her own: "It's so fantastic because kids actually learn … how to avoid it [plagiarism]. I would have just imagined that I would have just told them not to do it, said what it is, and then hoped they wouldn't do it."

Students also benefited from team teaching in their classroom in helping them deepen their levels of both information literacy and subject content. For example, one teacher librarian talked about the focus of her team on exploring the question of: "How do we build enquiry and how do we create space for synthesis?" The team in this school spoke of their delight in observing students making connections and generating meaning. One of the teacher librarians declared, "we succeeded in making metacognition happen, and we weren't expecting it--we were just hoping for the best--and it blew me away!" Thus the benefits for all participants emerged strongly, although there is only anecdotal support for the notion that student achievement was improved through the project.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that a shared vision and goal underpinned the successful collaborations that occurred. Once these were strongly espoused, other elements, such as good communication, followed suit. The frameworks offered by Montiel-Overall (2008) and Haycock (2007) proved useful for this article and, together with much other writing in the literature, provide a rich understanding of the elements contributing to successful collaboration. Nevertheless, the project indicated that emphasis on achieving the prerequisites and requisites included in those frameworks may make the process of collaboration more complex than is necessary if there is an issue that unites a range of staff in a school. In some situations, the necessary requisites for successful collaborations may well follow suit as they did in this project. Not all issues and topics will necessarily lend themselves to collaboration, and this should be considered when choosing whether to collaborate, or not. Collaboration may not always be the most effective approach but, in the case of this project, the success was deeply influenced by the level of shared concern for the issue of plagiarism.

The successful collaborations that occurred in the study, together with the quality of the work undertaken, have resulted in some outcomes that were not entirely expected at the beginning of the project. In her final report for the project, the teacher librarian in one school

wrote that she had "presented the research findings to the school executive, specifically focusing on the need for school-wide policy and the need to continue to build on what had been achieved at the Year 7 level by enabling follow up in later years." A teacher librarian at a different school wrote in her final report that "as a result of the project, the school now has a plagiarism policy and there is a language to deal with it. The teacher librarians are now seen as an important cog in the wheel, rather than being on the periphery" and they have "gained a lot of confidence as a result of their participation in the [research] project." Other school-wide units focused on information literacy, collaboratively taught, are also being developed in this school as a result of the project.

Thus the study appears to suggest that actually demonstrating successful collaborations between teachers and teacher librarians in schools, where there is a shared vision and goal, may be a catalyst for extending the concept of collaboration across the curriculum in a school without all the prerequisites and requisites for successful collaboration being in place to begin with. Todd (2008) also found that "the major overall influence on further collaboration was the success of the first one and particularly the improved relation and appreciation of the partners' skills and contributions" (p. 25).

The achievements in this study were, to a large extent, the result of the inspiration and drive of the teacher librarians involved. It was they who gained the critical endorsement of the principals, as well as of other key personnel such as subject coordinators and heads of departments, as well as of their teacher-collaborators. In this sense, they can be considered as agents contributing to a change in the culture of their schools and can be considered as role models for others.

Nevertheless, the conclusion from the research is that the likelihood of success with collaborations may be deeply, perhaps mostly, influenced by the participants' level of shared concern for the topic under consideration. Given this finding, we suggest that further study of the nature and operation of collaboration is required, especially in relation to the literature-identified characteristics of successful collaborations and collaborators, as used as the framework of this article.

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