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# Library Power: A Potent Agent for Change in Media Programs

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*The National Library Power Program funded by the DeWitt-Wallace Reader's Digest Foundation has contributed over \$40 million for the improvement of library information and reading resources in selected school districts across the United States of America. Not since the Knapp School Libraries Project in the 1960s has a project of such potential impact on school library media programs taken place. This article reports on the changes made as a result of the Library Power initiative in two schools in a large urban district. Attitudes of school staff changed positively toward expanding the role and leadership of the library media specialist in planning collaboratively curriculum units with appropriate resources, information literacy skills, and effective student learning activities. Planning teams were able to create much richer, in-depth multiple-content units using a broader range of resources for resource-based learning and teaching.*

## Introduction

In the fall of 1994, we were invited by the district media coordinator and the local director of the Library Power program in a large urban school district to observe and document their Library Power grant's effect on participating schools. The district had been awarded a \$1.2 million grant by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation as part of the National Library Power Program (American Library Association and American Association of School Librarians, 1996), first conceived by DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation as a way of increasing library resources for New York City students. Under an administrative partnership with the American Association of School Librarians, the program expanded into an agency for integrating the school library resources into the curriculum as well as increasing those resources for participating schools and districts.

Using a qualitative methodological approach, we agreed to act as participant observers for three years at two elementary schools involved in the grant. The purpose of this article is to relate our findings and observations about the effect of Library Power on the two schools.

### *Vision of the Library Media Specialist Role*

School library media specialists [LMS] concurrently fill the roles of information specialists, instructional partners, program administrators, and teachers (American Library Association [ALA], 1997). The instructional partner and teaching roles are the primary ones receiving attention in this study. The new *External draft: AASL/AECT National Guidelines* (1997) that in final form will replace *Information Power* (ALA/Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1988) defines an instructional partner as the LMS who "joins with teachers and others to identify links across student information needs, curricular content, learning outcomes, and a wide variety of print, nonprint, and electronic information resources." The LMS takes a leadership role in guiding students toward information and communication literacy. Through collaborative planning activities, the LMS partners with teachers to design authentic learning tasks and assessments that integrate information and communication literacy skills within units (ALA, 1997).

Correspondingly, the Draft defines the teacher role of the library media specialist as follows:

As teacher, the library media specialist works with students and other members of the learning community to analyze learning and information needs, to locate and use resources that will meet those needs, and to understand and communicate the information the resources provide. As a practitioner of good teaching skills, the LMS knows the current research on teaching and learning and is skilled in guiding students' use of "information from multiple sources in order to learn, to think, and to create and to apply new knowledge." (ALA, 1997)

Unfortunately, the instructional partnership and teaching roles for the LMS are often low-priority roles (Van Deusen & Tallman, 1994; Tallman & Van Deusen, 1994a, 1994b). In fact, in many schools, the LMS remains isolated from the teachers and the curriculum except for finding resources. Lack of experience with collaborative partnerships that include the LMS, lack of vision by staff and students, lack of support by the administration for the collaborative role, and lack of time and energy for the changes necessary contribute to the entrenchment of the LMS in this position. Without collaborative planning between the LMS and teaching staff from the inception of a curriculum unit, LMSs find it much more difficult to support the integration of information literacy skills into units.

### *The National Library Power Program*

The National Library Power Program encourages school reform through changes in the school library media program. According to Edmonds (1979), if a school is to change its practices, it first must have the will to do so. That is what the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Foundation hoped to increase through its financial support and through the technical assistance offered by AASL.

With the vision and help of the AASL support staff, the National Library Power Program evolved into a funding program that aimed to provide the means for school districts to "create public elementary and middle school library programs that improve the quality of educational services for children" (ALA, 1996). Started in 1988 in New York City, the Library Power initiative spread to 19 sites around the country, investing more than \$40 million in school media centers. For the first time since the Knapp School Libraries Project of the 1960s, the K-12 education community benefited from an opportunity to change their school media programs by upgrading resources, facilities, and the professional development of LMSs, teachers, and administrators, while promoting involvement of the community.

In order to qualify for the program, in addition to submitting a proposal, each school district was required to have: (a) a full-time, certified LMS for each media program; (b) flexible scheduling that allowed students to go to the library individually, in small groups, and with their classes throughout the day; (c) provision for staff to attend Library Power professional development activities; and (d) a readiness to pay for labor costs for remodeling or renovating school media center facilities.

AASL oversaw the program by giving technical assistance and program guidance to sites. At each Library Power site, AASL staff worked with the local funding distribution agency and school administrative personnel to create opportunities for LMSs, teachers, and administrators to learn new strategies, techniques, and teamwork skills. Collaborative planning of curriculum units, information literacy skills taught within the units, and development of the media collection were among the main emphasis areas for staff development.

### The Library Power Program in One Urban School District

We conducted our study in a district that specifically designed a set of experiences to give school personnel new skills and strategies for incorporating changes in the place of the library media center in the school and the role of the LMS in designing curriculum. Educators have recognized the potential of school media programs as one of the most dynamic elements in school reform (Barron & Bergen, 1992). Thus we set out to observe, interview, and work with the personnel of two elementary schools through the first two and a half years of their Library Power grant in order to understand any changes apparently taking place because of Library Power.

The two schools in our study had different environments, principal administrative styles, and LMSs. Each school had an international student body and averaged around 500 students. School #1 had expanded into a new wing, which included a new media center facility, at the start of the first year of the grant. This LMS was still unpacking the resources and organizing the collection. School #2 was in a temporary facility, an old high school building, during the first two years of the grant while their school was being

remodeled. The LMS had somehow to find room to make all the resources accessible and create as warm and inviting an environment as possible. Her media center was in a makeshift double classroom with an adjoining classroom for storage.

### *Research Questions*

As a result of the Library Power grant's emphasis in these areas, we investigated:

1. whether schools could make systemic changes in the way curriculum planning took place in the school, particularly in reference to the role of the LMS and library resources; and
2. how long it would take to institutionalize these changes (if any) in the school.

As subthemes of the first research question, we wondered (a) if there would be a noticeable change in the way curriculum units were planned and taught; (b) if there would be a noticeable change in how the staff viewed the LMS as a planning and teaching partner; and (c) if there would be a noticeable change in the kinds of activities designed for student learning.

### *Methodology*

We decided to use several types of qualitative methodology to approach this research. Both of us have had years of experience as LMSs and now teach in professional preparation programs for LMSs. We had been through many of the experiences we were to observe happening to our participants and could personally relate to the politics and school culture surrounding the library media programs. Our backgrounds acted both as a positive force and a limitation to our ability to observe events objectively. We were also realistic in knowing that we would need to be aware of our belief systems during our observations (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

We used heuristic methodology to attempt an understanding of the participants in our two schools through individual interviews with LMSs and principals and through focus interviews with teachers. We made observations and notations with each visit to the schools. These visits came during February through to the first part of June of year 1, September through to November of year 2, and November and December of year 3. During the visits in year 1, we provided assistance in the library media centers as clerical help, storytellers, and reader's advisors for students. As participants in the daily routine of the library media centers, we could observe as unobtrusively as possible and interview the LMSs informally in a relaxed setting. We were also able to gather a good perspective on the routine functioning of the library media centers in the life of the school.

In a comparison that could be applied to our study, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) contrasted heuristic inquiry with phenomenological research in ways that could relate to what we were doing: (a) we had a connectedness

and relationship to our study instead of a detachment; (b) we were after essential meanings and personal significance of the experience with Library Power; (c) all our research participants were central to our examination of the data and continued to be portrayed as whole persons. The essence of the people involved is what made the difference in the two schools.

Some parts of the definition of phenomenology methodology also applied. We were trying to understand the phenomenon of Library Power and how it affected its participant schools. In addition to the interviews, we used our observations and fieldnotes to probe for findings. Because we were looking at only two schools, we could not generalize what was happening. Yet, with the two very different schools, we could tell a story that educators in other schools might find relevant to their own situation. According to Moustakas (1994),

the aim is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions general or universal meanings are derived, in other words the essences or structures of the experience. (p. 13)

### Findings and Discussion

This article relates the story of how Library Power changed the environment surrounding the library media program in two of the district's schools. It reports some of the successes, the meaningful experiences, and the frustrations as observed by us as participant observers, and as told to us by the participants through individual and focus interviews. We also gathered information from casual talk while we were working in the schools and from documentation submitted to the local Library Power office.

#### *End of Year One*

At the end of the first year, the two school LMSs and their principals reported varying reactions to Library Power. The LMSs in both schools and one of the principals talked about the overwhelming number of meetings, the staff development process, the cohort meetings, and frustrations about program requirements. The discomfort affected everyone from grant director, district media coordinator, to individual building personnel. There were long delays in having the new resources delivered to the library media sites because of required procedures at school district level, and this was frustrating to the participants, even though they knew why holdups were taking place. Teachers and LMSs expressed some shock during the first year of the grant when they realized that Library Power was not just funding for more resources, but also for staff development with its attendant expectations. Although the grant administrator had explained the other obligations in detail, few participants seemed to understand what the reforms would truly mean to them in their roles as LMSs.

*School #1 Library Media Specialist*

At school #1, the LMS seemed to have a managerial perception of her role and responsibilities. At the beginning of Library Power, she did not appear to emphasize her teaching role, stating that the school district had requested no more library skills taught in isolation from curriculum units. Unfortunately, she reported, her teachers did not seek her out much for use of resources or library skills. Having just moved into a new media center addition to the building, she was also too overwhelmed with organizational responsibilities to concentrate on these problems and seemed to avoid them. We observed her as being extremely stressed by the reports and projects required by the Library Power administration, as well as by the meetings.

By the end of the first year, she had not substantially changed her role in the planning of curriculum activities. She saw herself almost exclusively as provider of resources and willing to give skills instruction to small groups when they signed up for the library. Her safe routine centered on ushering students in and out for book circulation, with some resource location for a few of the teaching staff. Computer technologies stymied her to the point that she ignored them as information resources unless someone else could help the students.

However, this LMS was trying hard to understand and add new processes taught through Library Power staff development, such as collection mapping, to her routine for collection and facilities development. This strategy of collection mapping was new to her, and she felt uncomfortable about it until she decided she could compare it to the way she had thought about the collection during her budget preparation. It appeared to us that little in her background as a LMS lent itself to understanding the LMS's role in collaborative planning as a partner in planning and teaching of curriculum units. After 30 years, she had formed a definition of her role in planning curriculum units with teachers as strictly that of provider of resources. If teachers told her what they wanted, she tried to help them find it.

Our role as participant observers during the first year of the grant was to help her in the library media center in any way she wished. We helped her to prepare her reports and the collection map for Library Power meetings. We also prepared new materials for shelving and told stories during story time for the students. This gave us a chance to become familiar with her setting, meet staff and the principal, watch quietly all the activities of an average day, and talk to her when she had a lull.

*School #1 Principal*

Her principal was eager to see changes but could not articulate fully what she herself expected. She was a principal who stated that all change should come from and through her. Consequently, her vision for the LMS centered on incorporating the new resources into the circulating collection and making contact with the teaching faculty about the new resources. She

would speak to the staff about using the media center resources and including the LMS in their planning. In our interview with her at the end of the first year of the grant (June 9, 1995), she commented:

Well, I'll just say that I think I am the catalyst for everything that happens in this school. I think I set the tone with the staff by laying out a set of expectations at the beginning of the year, during the year, and then following through in terms of monitoring whether those expectations are taking place. I have really tried to work with my library media specialist to enhance her abilities to really get outside the media center and more actively involved in working with staff. It has worked very well with some persons. Some persons still have a very limited view of the media center, so it's a continuing process and it's one that I know is going to take us a while to really get in place, but I have tried to structure some times so that the grade levels can meet with the library media specialist at certain times.

### *School #2 Library Media Specialist*

The LMS, already respected by her colleagues for her skills and knowledge of the art of persuasion, gained greater respect as a skilled planning facilitator. She demonstrated her expertise by ensuring that each teacher had a say in the planning and voiced ideas of what was wanted and needed in the unit, thus sharing power and ownership equally among all the staff. At the end of the monthly planning meetings, the LMS brought the teachers back to task through good closure skills of revisiting their objectives, what they had accomplished during the meeting, and what each was to do before the next meeting, the date of which she set with their agreement.

### *School #2 Principal*

The principal of School #2 reported creating a new vision for collaborative planning during the first year and for establishing the LMS as facilitator of monthly grade-level curriculum planning meetings with teachers and a parent representative (June 6, 1995). In prior years, led by the LMS, the teaching staff had been coming to planning sessions with all ideas in place, the unit sketched out, and only needing help with resources. During the initial Library Power Year, the principal started to attend planning sessions regularly, bringing her support and suggestions to the sessions. To encourage collaboration, she asked teachers to initiate unit planning during the meetings.

For grade-level teams who had worked together for a long time, this new planning routine caused difficulties. Previously, they could anticipate what each other wanted and thought. Outsider participation also changed the familiar pattern of interaction. Although they respected the LMS, they were not familiar with including anyone else in their planning. The politics of expertise were at work in this situation. They had the expertise for teaching the curriculum and did not expect that anyone else could make a viable contribution.

Their principal realized they would be naturally frustrated by this new planning format, and she encouraged and supported them through their transition. She gave them freedom to experiment with the new communication flow and made allowance for planning that did not result in good curriculum units. By providing planning time for teachers during the day in addition to after school, she visibly indicated her support for change.

The LMS and principal both reported considerable benefits from the modified collaborative planning meetings. The school staff designed a curriculum map that indicated what overlapping content area teaching was occurring in different grade levels. They also devised more accurate sequencing for information literacy skills in context with curriculum needs. During our interviews with her, the principal indicated that this model greatly enhanced the staff's ability to ensure students more opportunities for successful learning experiences in the curriculum.

As a result of the new planning agenda, both principal and LMS reported seeing a change in assignments given students, including more choice of projects and a wider variety of outcomes. Units took on an interdisciplinary context with multiple content areas covered, including art and music, where appropriate. Each unit's richness and depth grew, with all the planning participants contributing more ideas for the unit as well as outcome objectives. The parent representative on the planning team acted as a conduit of curriculum information to the community, which created a feeling of greater parent involvement in their children's education and excitement about what they were accomplishing. The sense of something really good permeated the environment; students were more actively involved with their learning.

Our role as participant observers with school #2 during the first year of the grant consisted of helping the LMS with her clerical needs. Thus we were able to watch her during a collaborative planning session with a grade-level team and could observe the dynamics of the interactions. We also had a chance to talk with a parent participant on one of the grade-level teams and sensed the enthusiasm with which the parent was reacting.

### *Fall of the Second Year*

#### *School #1*

Interviews with participants during the fall of the second year indicated to us that a change had taken place for the first school. The LMS from school #1, who appeared to be technophobic but at the same time excited about the benefits of technology, had come back to school in September with renewed energy and a new level of ambition for improving the media program under the guidance of Library Power. Her principal had given her some part-time clerical assistance for the media center, an action that, more than any other, indicated to her that the principal had heard her plea for help and respected it. Her refreshed attitude made the environment much more dynamic. No longer did we hear about the possibility of her retirement or the heavy work



load as a reaction to the stress. Instead, we heard about her proactive plans for the future of the library media program and an increasing vision for what she wished to happen in her program.

### *School #2*

For school #2, already involved in active collaborative planning, further changes over the summer were not quite so evident. Staff progress in collaborative planning that included the LMS continued in an effective, positive way. During the second year, teachers expanded their planning across grade levels, one of the accomplishments of which the principal was most proud.

### *Winter of the Third Year*

#### *School #1 Library Media Specialist*

By the late fall of the third year, the LMS in school #1 had extended her vision of collaborative planning and her responsibilities to the point where they had a positive impact on the role of the media center as a partner in the curriculum. The new resources were important to her and her teachers, as they reported in their focus interviews on November 12 and 13, 1996. They could now find materials in their own school that had previously been available to them only after trips to the public libraries. In an interview on December 2, 1996, this LMS reported that,

I work closer with a lot of the teachers now because of the collaborative planning. Where before I would talk to them about it and about things that we had.... They were just afraid to come in. Now, they seem to feel more comfortable in coming to me, asking me for things. If we don't have it here, I try to get it from the professional library or from some of my other co-workers. So I think the relationship has improved some.... They are beginning to feel more relaxed as far as asking me when we're planning to do certain themes. I had a planning session with the first grade [team] and it was real good. They found out all of the things they didn't know. And that's one thing about this collaborative planning. I can tell them things that are here that they really don't realize we have.

This LMS noted that working with a group of LMSs during the Library Power grant had helped her grow with ideas, as had visiting other media centers in the surrounding school districts to gather ideas. In the beginning, this LMS had commented strongly that the stress caused by the work expectations of Library Power came in part from all the meetings where attendance was mandatory, but the same meetings had helped her bond with other LMSs. She reported, "It was new to everyone. So we went through all of these changes, complaining and agreeing on certain things and certain parts of it. It was a great experience ... because that expanded the horizon."

After the program was officially over, this LMS expected to plan collaboratively with her teachers more than before:

Although I did it before but it was on a smaller scale and because if a teacher did not want to do anything in the media center, I would say I'm here if you need

me. But now I will go to them and tell them what's here, what's new, what's old, what we can do together to make the lesson easier for the student to be able to learn better.

She was more assertive in her work with teachers and happy about the changes. Her place in the school had become stronger and more valued because the teaching staff and the principal had given her new status. As a consequence, she exhibited excitement and enjoyment of her job and responsibilities that the researchers did not observe two years before.

### *School #1 Principal*

On November 13, 1996, in an interview with this LMS's principal, we asked if Library Power had had an impact on the school. She replied emphatically, "It has helped the teachers to understand that the media center is not something separate and apart from what goes on in the instructional program. In other words, it is an integral part of instruction, rather than just a place to go and check out books." She has seen more enthusiasm in teachers for the use of media center resources in their units and more long-range assignments requiring research instead of constant overnight textbook-oriented homework. One of the most important facets has been the growth of the school's information resources in the media center as a result of funds from Library Power. The principal reported that,

Our books were so old and outdated.... When you have more recent information, it becomes more relevant.... It generates so much more interest, and I definitely think that collection development is the most important thing, the largest benefit from this program. Because, you see, when the library media specialist had to do her mapping of needs, then [the teachers] could really look at what the instructional program was about and then try to strengthen those areas where we were weak. I think that helps everybody.

As a summary of the program, the principal thought that,

We have grown tremendously as a result of our participation in Library Power, from our collection development to just our attitude and our really being able to work together more to broaden the type of instruction that we are providing to our children.

Prior to Library Power, this principal's vision of team planning was having one teacher at the grade level plan science units, another the social studies units, another math, and so on. Then they would get together and share the units. As a result of the Library Power principal development meetings and the changes she observed in her school, she resolved to sustain this growth through time allotted during the school day for monthly collaborative planning meetings at each grade level. She had changed her perspective for team planning to include everyone at a grade level participating in all planning for that grade's units, including the LMS. In this school,

too, they worked on units with a cross-content emphasis and a much richer depth than that contained in former units.

### *School #1 Teachers*

During the researcher-led focus interviews with the teachers at this school on November 12 and 13, 1996, some of the same issues appeared as had been discussed by the principal in her interview. Before the Library Power program brought new resources, many teachers bypassed the media center in favor of trips to the local branch of the public library to get additional materials for their units. They did not even approach their school media center, knowing full well that resources were old, unattractive, and frequently containing misinformation. Although by the third year the teaching staff still viewed the LMS as an information specialist whose main function was to help them find appropriate resources, all the teaching staff had come around to thinking about the school media center as the first place to go to gather good unit resources.

Teachers were sending more students for small-group and individual research projects, encouraging students to use the computer information resources as well as the print resources. The improved resources meant that they could help their students gain independence with information research. They lauded Library Power as one of the initiatives connected with bringing information technology literacy to their students. Collaborative planning enhanced their ability to be informed about the new resources they might want to use. Their excitement extended to the vision of seeing their students develop a love of reading with the help of the beautiful new books and enthusiasm for seeking information through technology with the new computers bought with a corresponding initiative to Library Power. This was new to them at this school and it was powerfully important.

### *School #2 Library Media Specialist*

During an interview on December 2, 1996, this LMS reported that she had begun to initiate discussion with teachers before each planning period to start them thinking about units they wished to plan. This eliminated time spent during planning discussing what units to plan and what needs were there. She felt one of her big accomplishments at this point was having each participating teacher take notes using a planning sheet during the planning session so that they would better absorb what was happening during the planning and understand their corresponding role. Her objective during the third year was diplomatically to get the teachers to move toward recognizing the need for and establishing unit evaluations. Before the third year with Library Power, most units did not include an evaluation section where teachers discussed the success of the unit and how they wished to improve it for better delivery and increased student learning growth. She aimed for teachers to take and spread the ownership around for each new team-planning interdisciplinary unit.

When asked if she had seen an increase in student learning growth, this LMS reported,

I have. Because I'm seeing now that students are trying to work on their strategies. Teachers are trying to do strategies. When we did our information literacy skills [continuum] last year, that was the one thing I was trying to get them to see, their students need to have some strategy. They need to have a variety of ways to do things.... We're trying to get [teachers] to see that the assignments shouldn't just be answer some questions on a sheet of paper. We're trying to get to an end product.... Not only getting to that end product but also doing a presentation of end products.

When asked what might happen at her school when Library Power officially was over as a program initiative, the LMS commented,

I know I would not go back because I am not going back ten years. Instead I've moved forward.... It's a good thing that Library Power said that it's a process to make things happen for kids. Not to buy materials for kids but figure out a way to use these materials, to make all these exciting things happen.

Her vision for her program reflected the kinds of experiences she had had with Library Power:

Students taking more responsibility for their own learning, incorporating more technology and coming up with rich and wonderful ways of presenting and analyzing and problem solving questions from the classroom. And some kind of way for encouraging students to demand a little more from us teachers.

### *School #2 Principal*

During an interview, also on December 2, 1996, her principal praised this LMS for the changes made in the program. She reported that at the beginning of the Library Power Program, "we were probably using the media center and the library media specialist not as a partner in the planning process, not as the master facilitator and the center of the resources, but definitely as an add on." She continued to note that,

We were given a real boost all along just because of [our library media specialist's] vision and what she had moved that media center to accomplish before Library Power. But it's really because of a lot of that vision, too, that she's been able to help move it so forward in the last three years. I don't feel like we're anywhere close to where we were then. We moved a long way in terms of what collaboration means.

The new emphasis on collaborative planning allowed the principal to encourage the staff to create rubrics that would entertain all the optional standards of performance, letting students know what excellence meant and giving them a choice of performance:

This year we went the extra, additional step to say, "Okay, we've developed these alternative assessments of what children do in this unit. They need to have

a say in how this unit seemed to them." So we have built in student evaluations which is much better than waiting till the end of the year to say to a student, "What do you remember most about the year." ... But actually to get some feedback immediately from the unit from the student who can say, "Here's what I wish my teacher had done more of or I was really interested in this little angle and I never had a chance to explore it." I mean some things that inform the teachers as they retool the unit for use at a later time.

This principal described her own leadership in facilitating an environment for rich collaboration:

We had a couple of conversations in staff meetings about what collaboration was. We revisited the *Kaleidoscope* video (AASL, 1993) tape a couple of times. [Our library media specialist] just has this way, too, in working with grade levels of letting them know that fine line between or that idea of preparedness for a collaborative planning session, which was not to have your minds made up about the way this unit is going to look but to have some pretty clear ideas about objectives. But I think one of the mistakes we made, or some grade levels were making, is that some of our grade levels were so used to having done their homework before they would come to her. That it was like too much already had been thought through.

The principal noted that the LMS used Library Power as a vehicle for helping her assert herself as a respected facilitator for and full partner in the planning meetings. She commented that the whole definition of collaborative planning at the school changed with the inception of Library Power and its staff development workshops. In hindsight, this principal thought that the most critically important part of Library Power, in addition to making the media center an extension of the classroom through collection development, was changing the way people viewed planning and their own roles as teachers and professional colleagues in the planning process. She felt that the school could not have validated the planning process and strengthened the relationship between the media program and the teaching program nearly as well without Library Power's staff development. She viewed the LMS's role as pivotal in terms of providing innovative leadership for the instructional program.

### *School #2 Teachers*

Library Power had been the catalyst for helping the teaching staff at this school to generate units that fitted within the context of their constructivist philosophy, for assuring that resources were incorporated into the units taught, and a collection developed that matched curriculum needs. Although their vision was not as clear and strong as the principal's, each focus interview with teacher groups at this school triangulated with the principal's and the LMS's comments. These teachers leaned heavily on the LMS to guide and facilitate their collaborative planning as well as to steer them toward excellent resources for the units they were developing. She was seen as the expert.

These teachers described problems instituting a smooth system for providing them daytime planning meetings, but tempered this with murmurs of understanding about the problems it caused for everyone involved. They spoke of open support provided by the principal and of the special feelings and respect they had for her and their LMS. They also were proud of the interdisciplinary units they had developed since the inception of Library Power. To these teachers, the interdisciplinary nature of the new units meant that their students were receiving more opportunities for realistic problem-solving and experiences and were able to make choices about the types of products they wished to develop, leading to a transference of skills from one context to another.

### Conclusion

The story of Library Power in this district is the story of how a new style of collaborative planning came about with the changes in the belief systems that accompanied it and how the teamwork philosophy surrounding planning created a framework for much wider school reform. Our observation of two of the schools indicated that the principals, faculty, and LMSs all strengthened their definitions of collaborative planning, of interdisciplinary units, and of the role of each participant in the process. These people had believed at the start of the program that they already knew about and fully participated in collaborative planning. Once in the program, however, they rapidly reevaluated their concept of collaborative planning and deepened their understanding of the power and depth of a unit when the process is truly employed. During our participation, we observed that the staff of these schools learned how to create units that offered students more active learning and development opportunities for their personal research processes.

The district as a whole can be proud of its collaborative planning activities and particularly satisfied with the growth of interdisciplinary units at Library Power schools. This program brought changes in the environment by strengthening the place of the media center in student learning as well as strengthening the role of the LMS as a partner in curriculum design and teacher of integrated information literacy skills. Yes, there were frustrations, stress, and anxiety at the finish of the first year of the program. But by the third year, the participants at the two schools we observed were full of compliments about the changes that had taken place in their schools. The teaching staffs were much more involved with the media centers as an extension of their classrooms. The LMSs took deep interest in their colleagues' needs, using strategies learned through Library Power workshops to tailor the collection to the curriculum. They had learned how to help teachers with their planning.

At both schools, the role of the LMS deepened into a truer partnership with classroom teachers in each school. One of the LMSs became the central facilitator and leader of interdisciplinary planning sessions for all grade-level

sessions held by her faculty. The other LMS progressed from the role of isolated resource provider and from a peripheral place on the faculty to fuller participation in curriculum planning sessions and to a respected provider of resources. Both LMSs indicated a much higher use of the resources in the media center and community as a direct result of their participation in collaboratively planned units. Both LMSs indicated more opportunities to include information literacy skills at the point of need for their students. Both LMSs felt a closer connection with their faculties and students and more satisfaction and involvement with their jobs. Finally, the staff and principals related more satisfaction with the resources and services given by the media program. In school #1, the teachers and the principal had new perceptions and attitudes about the role and responsibilities of the LMS. They accepted her more as a part of the curriculum planning teams and a teaching partner. In school #2, teachers and principal praised the LMS for her role as facilitator of the curriculum planning meetings and her ability to help them create new ideas for teaching their units. They saw her as a key figure in the school, providing strong leadership in a number of areas. The principal respected the LMS's vision for the library media program and supported her efforts on the planning teams, giving the LMS much credit for the success the school had had.

We believe these schools changed their teaching and learning environments through the Library Power initiative to include the LMS as a central partner in collaborative planning initiatives and to move to a full team environment. We think the changes were successful because of the extensive staff development programs on team building and collaborative planning. Teams of teachers, LMSs, and principals were required to attend the workshops on these topics and to work as teams on the assignments. Eventually, individuals from each school started thinking as a team and planning as a team.

School #1 had a group of individual teachers separated philosophically from each other and the LMS. Teachers planned and taught as individuals in a closed classroom environment or planned a subject area unit and then shared it with colleagues. The LMS was essentially left out because of poor resources in the media center and a definition of her role as outside the teaching-learning environment. That changed over the three years with the scores of meetings and staff development workshops so that the LMS now became a key part of the planning team. Because of these team experiences, the school began to create a professional, collegial environment based on teamwork. It now had the preliminary teamwork philosophy in place for any new schoolwide initiative.

School #2 already had a preliminary concept of teamwork and a collegial environment, but not a full appreciation of how the library media program and LMS could partner with the classroom staff. It used Library Power to create an outstanding teaching-learning environment from a good base. At

the end of the three years, the school had a solid foundation of teamwork philosophy that could be used for making any new initiative such as site-based management a successful venture.

### Implications

This urban school district's Library Power program brought the media program into a truer partnership with teaching and learning in its schools. The LMSs, teachers, and principals involved broadened their vision of the roles and responsibilities of the LMS in providing rich learning experiences for students. Under development and accessible in draft form online via the Internet through the AASL's Web page, the new national school library media guidelines focus on the student as learner (ALA, 1997). Library Power focuses on the LMSs and the media program as a guide for the student as learner through emphasis on collaborative planning and the collection's connection to the curriculum. Library Power helped LMSs bridge the gap from LMS as resource provider to LMS as information specialist, instructional partner, and teacher. Given time to mature and institutionalize, the concepts learned through the auspices of the Library Power Program will strengthen curriculum opportunities for this urban district's students.

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