
Practices and Barriers of Inter-Professional Collaboration with Teacher-Librarians and Teachers: A Content Analysis

Paulette Stewart, & Mark-Jeffery O'niel Deans

University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica

Thematic content analysis was used to identify the practices, and barriers of inter-professional collaboration among teacher-librarians and classroom teachers. Twelve structured research were identified and information regarding the themes was extracted verbatim. The data collected on practices were analysed to see how they correlated with to Loertscher and Koechlin's (2016) conceptual framework for collaboration and co-teaching among teacher-librarians and classroom teachers. The barriers were examined and analyzed to gain an understanding of suitable recommendations to alleviate same. It was discovered that the involvement of school administration in the collaborative process; the presence of curriculum integration; and the provision of a common space for teaching were important practices for successful inter-professional collaboration. On the other hand, the lack of understanding of the role of both professionals and the workload of teachers were identified as some of the barriers. It was recommended that these can be alleviated if each professional spends time to know about each other's job description and learn how to integrate the library seamlessly into the curriculum so that the workload of the teacher is not increased.

Introduction

Inter-professional collaboration is seen as a best practice approach to integrate the school library into the schools' curriculum. As pedagogical practices emerge to meet the needs of the dynamic society, information professionals have recognized that teacher-librarian and teacher collaboration is a key component of the teaching-learning process and a critical tool in the advancement of student learning (Merga, 2019). Inter-professional collaboration allows educators to use their specialized knowledge and unique skills together for the benefit of students. To this extent, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) has supported the collaborative efforts and opportunities of teacher-librarian collaboration and has seen it as a framework for enhancing learning (Schultz-Jones & Oberg, 2015). Students are not the only beneficiaries of inter-professional collaboration as the teacher and the teacher-librarian are likely to experience improved collegiality and personal relationship. Baharuddin, Saad & Hasnol (2014) verified that this type of collaboration "can redound in increased satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment, an exciting sense of synergy stemming from combining and building on creative ideas, and a commitment and a desire to improve as professionals" (p. 33). Additionally, the process could create opportunities to learn from each other and ultimately this can improve their pedagogical practices.

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Significance of the Study

With the global emphasis on inter-professional collaboration, in this study, the researchers aimed to identify the practices and barriers of the collaboration between teacher-librarians and classroom teachers. This study is significant because teacher-librarian and teacher collaboration offers important potential for contributing to these professionals' pedagogical skills and correlates with the improvement in students' academic performance (Lance, Rodney, & Hamilton-Pennell, 2002). Therefore, deviation from this framework in Figure 1 should be noted and recommendations made to help these professionals adopt this or similar approach to inter-professional collaboration in the library and information environment.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used to explain the concept of teacher-librarian and classroom teacher collaboration is Loertscher and Koechlin's (2016) conceptual framework for collaboration and co-teaching. This framework, shown in Figure 1, depicts the individual strength that both professionals bring into operation in the teaching and learning process as well as the activities and process both are engaged in during collaboration.

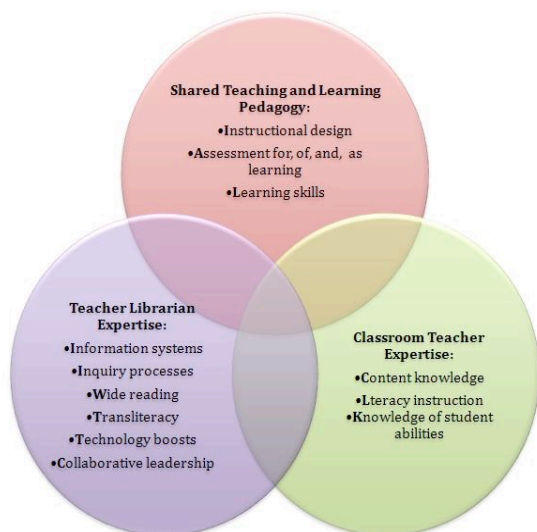


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for collaboration and co-teaching (Loertscher & Koechlin, 2016)
[note: figure text appears exactly as in original]

As the figure illustrates, the Teacher Librarian Expertise circle includes the strengths of the teacher-librarian including technological skills and leadership in the collaborative process. The Classroom Teacher Expertise circle includes teachers are knowledge of the students, pedagogical skills, and content area knowledge. The Shared Teaching and Learning Pedagogy circle shows that both teachers and teacher-librarians are responsible for designing and evaluating learning.

Research Questions

We will use Loertscher & Koechlin's (2016) framework to investigate three research questions:

1. What are the practices involved in inter-professional collaboration?

2. What are the barriers to inter-professional collaboration between teachers and teacher-librarian?
3. How are the practices discovered aligned with Loertscher and Koechlin's conceptual framework for teacher-librarians and teacher collaboration?

Literature Review

The literature review is composed of the thematically-analyzed the research papers and is organized by the topics of the research questions.

The Practices of Teacher-Librarian and Teacher Collaboration

National school policy on inter-professional collaboration. Eri (2018) indicated that collaboration between the teacher-librarians and teacher partnership can extend beyond partnerships at the institutional level between schools and library administrators, to a national policy level through legal acts and strategic policy documents. Eri's (2018) view is that a national school policy on inter-professional collaboration will provide an infrastructure to facilitate this large-scale initiative, and ensure that all educational stakeholders understand that this is a requirement for the pedagogical benefits for teachers, and academic success for students. Eri (2016) recommended that, "teacher and librarian partnership in literacy education needs to be a national strategy represented in educational policy documents, budgets and legal acts" (p.76).

Administrator involvement. Haycock (2007) examined teacher-librarian and classroom teacher collaboration from a broader theoretical and research perspective over a 20-year period. Haycock (2007) discovered that the principal is a key player in supporting collaboration and that, with the involvement of the principal, librarians and teachers more frequently communicated, and the library programme was integral to collaborating teaching. When the school principal expected team planning between teachers and the teacher-librarian, whether as grade-level groups or subject-area groups, team planning occurred more than when the principal did not expect such collaboration. Craig's (2013) research also demonstrated that the principal is empowered with administrative responsibility to lead and direct an integrated approach to curriculum administration and teacher-librarian collaboration

Montiel-Overall's (2008) qualitative research explored the mechanisms that enabled collaboration between teachers and librarians. Findings from this research suggested that one of the most important factors is administrative involvement. Montiel-Overall (2005) stated that when the administrator is involved, the teacher-librarian and the class teacher truly collaborate.

Joint lesson planning. Haycock (2007) reported that school climate and time for planning were two important factors for joint planning, along with professional knowledge about the curriculum, library resources, instructional design, and delivery. Principal support was vital. Crary (2019) investigated teachers' perceptions of their own openness to change and about collaboration between a school librarian and a teacher in the context of information literacy instruction. The findings regarding joint lesson planning revealed that teachers believed they should initiate the planning, instead of the teacher-librarians, and that teacher-librarians should collaborate with teachers to evaluate students' lessons integrating information literacy. This type of collaboration improved curriculum integration.

Craig (2013) emphasized that teachers and librarian should think and plan together to produce lessons that will effectively combine their specialized knowledge and improve students'

academic performance. This report also emphasized that establishing meeting times before each new school year started and scheduling department or grade meetings into the librarian's timetable were critical to ensuring that the library was integrated in the library into the school curriculum.

Curriculum integration. Eri's (2018) study used Montiel-Overall's (2008) Four Facets Model, which includes coordination, cooperation, integrated instruction and integrated curriculum. This model addressed practice of the teacher-librarian and the teacher working to arrange schedules, manage time and avoid overlap. The model includes the division of responsibilities in jointly planned, implemented, and evaluated integrated lessons. Findings from Lo and Chiu (2015) revealed that "in addition to being a specialist in information literacy teaching, school librarians also play a key role in collaborating in instructional design, which includes linking curriculum, learning process, skills and resources" (p.10).

Dubazana and Karlsson (2006) conducted mixed methods research on the integration of the school library into the curriculum. The research participants were the principal, deputy principal, heads of departments, teachers and students. The findings showed that the strategies devised to integrate the school library into the school curriculum included timetabling of classes for students to visit the library to do their projects. The advantage was that students were exposed to books and other library materials, as well as library skills, to retrieve the required materials which the teachers described as just-in-case, and not just-in-time, and not linked to the classroom curriculum. The teachers and the teacher-librarians commented that the projects given to students were not linked to the curriculum and there was little or no planning together before, during or after the project. The students' interactions with the teacher-librarians were limited to inquiring about the resources available on a certain topic; guiding students to relevant resources; issuing required resources for research; and monitoring students' behaviour in the library

Similarly, Dubazana (2007) found that the school library as an integral part of the curriculum and indicated that the integration of the school library into the curriculum was limited. Teachers gave projects to learners that required them to use various information resources, provided time for learners to conduct research in the school library, and taught learners how to use information effectively. Dubazana (2007) also discovered that to strengthen the integration of the library into the curriculum, some teachers assigned grades to students for using the library. The teacher-librarians who promoted the use of the library through book reviews read by students and Read-a-Thon celebrations were more successful. Another practice that of timetabling school library periods to encourage learners to use the school library. These activities made the library a common learning space for all students.

The findings also indicated that integrated instruction, easily facilitated through an integrated curriculum, was important to the collaborative process. Eri (2018) suggested that to improve students' learning in all areas of the curriculum, consideration must be given to Montiel-Overall's continuum of collaborative practices between teachers and librarians. Eri (2018) asserted that "at the left lower end, we find coordinating activities such as managing time and avoiding overlap. At the right higher end, we find jointly planned and implemented lessons with integrated library curriculum" (p. 15).

Schools' culture of collaboration. School culture refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and rules that shape and influence every aspect of school function (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). Craig 2013 used a social constructivist approach to identify the leadership attributes that librarians need to create a culture of collaboration in their school community and found that "in addition to trusting, respectful relationship builders, librarians must be seen as

enthusiastic, highly involved leaders in the community who have a deep understanding of the needs of those they serve" (p. 29). Again, Montiel-Overall (2008) also indicated that when collaboration depends on the school's culture, including an environment conducive to sharing ideas and fostering the relationship needed for collaboration. Of importance to this culture was the positive attributes of collaborators, as well as their willingness to change if needed (flexibility) and communication, which builds trust. Without this culture for collaboration, barriers can emerge that will prevent any form of collaboration.

Communication skills. Craig (2013) confirmed that the practice of good communication skills is necessary to foster good interpersonal and professional relationship between the teachers and the librarians. These skills were crucial as they encompassed openness, mutual respect, flexibility, understanding of both teacher and librarian, and certain boundaries respected for a successful collaboration. The practice was for librarians to work as mediators to negotiate conflict and that they had responsibility to ensure that all partnerships were based on equality, respect and trust, suggesting that the librarian was looked upon to successfully manage the communication to bring about a friendly and collegial atmosphere. Other important soft skills that were mentioned include "the librarian's welcoming attitude, for example, being "willing to help" "cooperative" or even proactive by "reaching out...to offer suggestions" (Craig, 2013, p. 336) enhanced collaboration—the librarian ought to be one who puts people first and be friendly and collegial. In all of the research reports evaluated for this study, there was consensus that the librarian should take the lead role in setting the example for the good communication in collaborative relationships.

Barriers to Teacher Librarian and Classroom Teacher Collaboration

Lack of understanding the role of the librarian. Farmer (2007), Mackey and Jacobson (2005), as well as Kovalik, Jensen, Schloman & Tipton (2011), mentioned that perhaps the biggest barrier to the collaboration is that the classroom teacher views information literacy teaching as the sole responsibility of the librarian. These researchers expressed that institutional culture explained this kind of thinking. Hai-Hon Chen (2014) constructed a Collaboration Scale used to collect data from 59 teacher-librarians, 76 teachers and 2 principals from 60 primary and secondary schools. The scale consisted of 22 items, which covered three factors. These factors were integrated instruction, teacher-librarian and library as resource, and traditional role of teacher-librarian. The teacher-librarians' role was mainly seen as providing teachers with resources and that there was still a lack of high-level collaboration between teacher and librarian for integrated instruction; any lack in understanding the role of both professionals in the collaborative process could lead to resistance and resentment.

Eri (2018) emphasized that teachers' negative perception of collaborating with librarians was the main barrier for developing teacher-librarian partnership. It was evident from the findings of Eri (2018) that many teachers deemed the teacher-librarian as being unqualified for the planning and learning activities. Teachers reported teacher-librarians had difficulties articulating how the library contributed to student learning. Additionally, Eri (2018) found that teachers and administrators did not fully comprehend the role of the librarians, and this contributed to miscommunication between teachers and librarians. Teacher-librarians were not seen as playing any major pedagogical role, but were seen as serving as "gate keepers to the collection of resources" (Eri, 2018, p. 12-13). Loertscher and Koechlin's (2016) conceptual framework for collaboration and co-teaching, seen in Figure 1, depicts a teaching learning pedagogy that eliminates this perception. The framework shows that the teacher-librarian is a multifaceted expert with skill sets that compliments those of the classroom

teacher. Furthermore, the framework indicates that it is the teacher-librarian that assumes a collaborative leadership role in this mutually beneficial relationship.

Teacher workload. Merga (2019) reported that collaboration with secondary school teachers could pose a barrier because of heavy teacher workloads prevented the kind of relationships necessary for collaboration. In support of Merga's (2019) experience, Lo and Chiu's (2015) findings revealed that if practicing school librarians also had heavy classroom teaching loads, the librarians tended to feel distracted and unable to focus their efforts in the core library duties, quality library services, and the associated information literacy skills instruction. However, Lo and Chiu (2015) also reported that "an appropriate small amount of classroom teaching would enable the school librarians to better understand the students' learning needs as well as the new changes in the curricula" (p. 9).

McKeever, Bates, and Reilly (2017) discovered that teachers' lack of time emerged as one of the barriers to collaboration as the teachers and librarians study participants indicated a lack of time to focus on information literacy skills. One librarian saw the collaboration as adding to the workload of the teachers; McKeever, Bates, and Reilly (2017) confirmed that this finding is in keeping with existing research by Williams & Wavell (2006); Probert (2009), and Korobili, et. al, (2011). McKeever, (2012) reported that teachers sensed that they lacked the time to provide any information literacy instruction and were constrained by timetables and heavy subject content. Craig's (2013) discovered that many teachers felt that school administration was supportive of collaborative efforts between them and librarians. However, teachers felt overloaded and considered workload to be a main barrier to collaboration.

Lack of collaborative culture in schools. Findings from Willis, Bland, Hughes, and Burns (2013) expressed that the culture of collaboration within some schools was minimal as librarians found it difficult to convince teachers and administrators of the relevance of the librarian and the library in the teaching learning process. This led to librarians first collaborating with students, and not with teachers. The authors further stated that although teacher-librarians were recognized for their library management and leadership skills, they were not seen as an integral component of the wider school leadership or management team. Thus, "while the school leaders appreciated the new library as an improved asset, the new school libraries were rarely recognized for the potential to inspire whole school innovations in pedagogy" (p.6). Ideally, Craig (2013) described the absence of collaboration within schools as a traditional isolationist method of delivering education. This was highlighted, as having minimal effect on influencing any substantial change in schools.

Methodology

Research Design

The researchers used thematic analysis to closely examine studies conducted on teacher-librarian and classroom teacher collaboration in primary and secondary schools to collect data on two themes: 1) practices of teacher-librarian and classroom teacher collaboration; and 2) barriers to teacher-librarian and classroom teacher collaboration. "Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that can be widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions. It is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set" (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017, p.2). The theme of practices of teacher-librarian and teacher is reflected in Figure 1, and depicts collaborative activities that happen between the teacher-librarian

and the teacher and the strength that each partner brings to the collaborative process. Figure 1, however, does not reflect the barriers which were discussed as outliers.

To establish trustworthiness of the data collected, the researchers used some of the criteria for thematic research, as indicated by Nowell, et al. (2017). To achieve dependability, the researchers made certain that the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented. To attain this, the researchers created an audit trail by producing a table with the research papers consulted along with a very brief overview of the findings as they related to the themes. Table 1 represents a version of that audit trail, summarizing the themes and associated citations.

Table 1. Paper audit trail table

Teacher-Librarian and Teacher Collaboration Practices (Key Reference)	Barriers to Teacher-Librarian and Classroom Teacher Collaboration (Key Reference)
<i>National school policy on inter-professional collaboration.</i> Eri (2018)	<i>Lack of understanding of the role of the librarian.</i> Eri (2018); Hai-Hon Chen (2014)
<i>Administrators' involvement.</i> Craig (2013); Haycock, (2007) Montiel-Overall (2008)	<i>Teachers' workload.</i> Craig's (2013), Lo and Chiu (2015), Merga (2019); Willis, Bland, Hughes, and Burns (2013).
<i>Communication skills.</i> Craig (2013); Loertscher and Koechlin (2016)	
<i>Joint lesson planning.</i> Crary (2019); Haycock (2007)	
<i>Curriculum integration.</i> Dubazana (2007); Eri (2018), Lo and Chiu (2015); Montiel-Overall (2008)	
<i>Schools supporting a culture of collaboration.</i> Craig (2013); Farmer, (2007); Kovalik, Jensen, Schloman, and Tipton (2011); Mackey & Jacobson (2005); Montiel-Overall (2008)	

Another table was also created with the raw data which included sentences from the research that were related to the theme. These were used for cross referencing. To meet the transferability criteria, the description of the findings was clearly delineated to provide readers with evidence that these findings could be applicable to other research. In analyzing the data, the researchers ensured confirmability by clearly interpreting the findings derived from the data as well as using the data to demonstrate how the conclusions and interpretations have been arrived at. Finally, to increase the credibility, the completed research paper along with the research paper used and the raw data were submitted to two researchers for peer debriefing.

The term "inter-professional partnership" was used for the phrase teacher librarian and classroom collaboration. The researchers wanted to find out from a set of research the findings on the themes and to get an understanding of the barriers to inter-professional collaboration. The analysis of the findings is guided by the research questions and the Loertscher and Koechlin (2016) conceptual framework is used in the discussion of the findings.

Sample

Purposive sampling was used to select research conducted on teacher-librarians and classroom teachers. Overall, 17 general research papers on collaboration among academic staff and librarians were reviewed. Of the 17, 12 structured research papers were analyzed because these were the only papers that reflected the specified themes and were conducted in primary or secondary schools. Five papers were rejected based because they did not meet the set criteria of being in schools.

Limitation

The researchers were limited by the papers they had available to them; additional papers on teacher/teacher-librarian collaboration may exist.

Findings

Practices in Teacher-Librarian and Classroom Teacher Collaboration

National school policy on inter-professional collaboration. Eri (2018) was the only research of the twelve consulted that mentioned the inclusion of a policy document regarding inter-professional collaboration in schools. The school administrators who were responsible for the implementation of policies in the schools were seen as the individuals who should provide a suitable environment for collaboration because their administrative position allows them to initiate school-wide decisions with the agreement of teachers

Administrators' involvement. The research conducted by Craig (2013) and Montiel-Overall's (2008), as well as Haycock (2007), indicated that school administrators have a major role in the collaborative process. These authors explained that administrators are needed to invest in this philosophy and to help create a collaborative learning community that would support the best pedagogy. It was concluded that the practice of principals' direct involvement in the collaborative process, produced success when funds were provided, and time given for collaborative lesson planning. In addition, success was gained when the school administrator encouraged professional development that was geared towards the integration of information literacy at all grade levels. Administrators were required to create a supportive atmosphere and practical opportunities for cooperation among librarians, classroom teachers and information technologists. Craig (2013) confirmed that school administrators were also seen as facilitators of collaboration and that they must support and promote collaboration and pointed out that an important practice for teacher and librarian collaboration is the involvement of a supportive principal or curriculum coordinator who envisions a school with an integrated curriculum.

Joint lesson planning. Haycock (2007), Crary (2019) and Craig's (2013), discovered the importance of joint lesson planning in teacher librarian and classroom teacher collaboration while Craig's (2013) findings further show that planning together and division of responsibility are two major factors that make collaboration successful. (Montiel-Overall 2008) findings indicated that during the joint collaborative process, it is important that the challenges hindering collaboration be addressed by the administration of the school so that the teacher-librarian can be rightfully acknowledged as a legitimate part of the instructional team.

Curriculum integration. Eri (2018), Montiel-Overall (2008) and Dubazana (2007) purported the notion that an integrated curriculum, whilst establishing principles of coordination and cooperation will ultimately promote and encourage joint effort in instructional planning from both teacher and librarian. It should be noted however, that Dubazana (2007) research findings on the "integration of the school library into the curriculum" is not a true reflection of collaboration. The findings suggests that there was an absence of actual meetings by the librarian and classroom teachers and the responses from the reflect that 15% seldom visit the library, 25% sometimes visit the library and 60% often visit the library. Instead, students were sent to the library to carry out their projects with the

assistance of the librarian and teachers provide time for learners to conduct research in the school library. In addition, students were given marks for using the resources of the library.

Schools supporting a culture of collaboration. Both Montiel-Overall (2008) and Craig (2013) research on teacher-librarian and classroom teacher collaboration give credence to the importance of the school fostering a culture conducive to collaboration. Craig (2013) highlighted that “as an informal leader and mediator, the librarian’s role is to implement their Servant-Leadership qualities to educate their peers on the benefits of collaboration as well as to ensure that all voices are heard in a safe and inclusive environment” (p.41). Additionally, Montiel-Overall addressed the fact that creating a sense of family among the staff is healthy and differences in approaches in catering for students are respected (2008).

Communication skills. Craig (2013) confirmed that the practice of good communication skills was necessary to foster good interpersonal and professional relationships between teachers and librarians. He suggested that this action is essential because it allowed teachers to constantly re-evaluate and adapt their teaching practices to reach higher levels of student achievement. Craig however stressed the role of the librarian as literacy experts in the school community and provides a summary of the attributes of a skilled communicator and gives examples of how a librarian can put them into practice. He affirmed that collaborative communication should see the librarian being receptive, responsive, warm, inviting, conversationalist, attentive listener, self-reflective, knowledgeable of curriculum and needs of the community.

Barriers to Teacher-Librarian and Classroom Teacher Collaboration

Lack of understanding of the role of the librarian. Both Hai-Hon Chen (2014) and Eri (2018) research highlighted the lack of understanding of the role of the librarians. The findings from Hai-Hon Chen (2014) study indicated that the teacher-librarians’ role was mainly seen as providing teachers with resources, whilst Eri (2018) emphasized that teachers’ perception of collaborating with librarians is the main barrier for developing teacher- librarian partnership.

Teacher workload. Merga (2019) Lo and Chiu (2015), as well as Craig’s (2013), research emphasized that many teachers felt that school administration was supportive of the collaborative efforts. However, the findings of the study also indicate that they felt overloaded and this they considered to be a major barrier to collaboration.

Lack of collaborative culture in schools. Findings from the Willis, Bland, Hughes and Burns (2013) research highlighted the lack of collaborative culture that exists in schools. The academic culture is integral to the pedagogic pursuits of the school and must therefore be created and sustained as one that embraces fruitful collaborative endeavors.

Discussion

The researchers sought to answer: What are the practices involved in inter-professional collaboration? What are the barriers to inter-professional collaboration between teachers and teacher-librarian? and How are the practices discovered aligned with Loertscher and Koechlin’s conceptual framework for teacher-librarians and teacher collaboration?

The themes deriving from the 12 research papers were: practices involved in inter-professional collaboration; national school policy on inter-professional collaboration,

administrator's involvement, joint lesson planning, curriculum integration, schools supporting a culture of integration and communication skills. As it relates to the barriers of inter-professional collaboration between teachers and teacher-librarian, the following themes were discussed: lack of understanding of the role of the librarian, teacher workload and lack of collaborative culture in schools. The ensuing discussion in this area will surround these themes and will seek to answer how the practices are discovered aligned with Loertscher and Koechlin's conceptual framework for teacher librarians and teacher collaboration.

National School Policy on Inter-professional collaboration

Although only one study focused on having a policy at the national level; it can be argued that this is a strategically sound approach, since national policies are usually governed by legal implications and can be governed by "rewards and sanctions for compliance with externally imposed performance standards" (Spillane & Kenney, 2012, p.541). In addition, those who carry out the activities are accountable for what they do and therefore this important activity of teacher-librarian and classroom teacher collaboration can be guaranteed to take place within a school setting if this becomes a part of the ministries of education school policy. The schools' administrators are therefore seen as key enablers to the collaborative process (Craig, 2013). The conceptual framework would set the foundation in the schools for the implementation of the national policy to ensure that the right conditions are within the workplace that will result in having a successful collaborative model within the schools. Such conditions would include strategies that govern shared teaching and learning pedagogy and the collaborative expertise between the teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher.

Administrator's Involvement

Loertscher and Koechlin (2016) addressed that for successful co-teaching to take place in the learning environment, administrators should assist with the professional development needs of teacher-librarians who desire to embrace this challenging role. Consequently, the researchers believe that because the views held by both professionals can sometimes act as barriers to the collaborative process, the creation of an enabling environment by school administrators, alongside joint curriculum planning and open channels of communication between teachers and librarians, is vital. The researchers support the notion that teacher-librarians need to sensitize school administrators about the concept of inter-professional collaboration, since they might not be aware of the fact that this can exist among librarians, classroom teachers and information technologists. The training that teacher-librarians receive would give them the insight on how this collaboration can be carried out seamlessly among these three professionals.

Joint Lesson Planning

As proposed by Loertscher and Koechlin (2016) if joint planning of lessons is carried out between teacher and librarian, they would help to promote the inter-related framework proposed in that the strengths of both professionals would be realized. The researchers also agree that this is true as constant planning together can improve the communication skills of both partners. The researchers believe that the practice of the involvement of school administrators is an important enhancer to the collaborative process.

Curriculum Integration

Loertscher and Koechlin's conceptual framework for teacher-librarians and teacher collaboration depicts the interrelated relationship that exists between the teacher-librarians and classroom teacher and brings out the desired expert input of the teacher-librarian. It is this expertise that is needed along with the classroom teacher's skills in content knowledge, literacy instruction and a knowledge of student abilities that is crucial to coordinated instructional planning between teacher and librarian. Based on the findings of the research, it can be said that the practices involved in inter-professional collaboration are critical to the pedagogical practices of both professionals. The professionals can then join forces to effectively implement the school's curriculum. Within the realm of inter-professional collaboration, the roles of librarians and teachers transcend cultural norms and create an environment that is conducive to inter-curricular sharing between these professionals. At the same time any curriculum that seeks to foster a true representation of the necessary skills and attitude of an information literate student, must have embedded throughout, components of lessons that are planned, executed and evaluated with the teacher-librarian's expert input. Additionally, Lo and Chiu (2015) suggested a linking of curriculum, learning process, skills and resources. This shared learning pedagogy is demonstrated in the conceptual framework as instructional design and assessment for and of students. Both instructional design and assessment of and for students are collaboratively derived from the skill sets of both the teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher.

Schools Supporting a Culture of Integration

Of all the practices involved in inter-professional collaboration highlighted by the researchers, a support for a culture of collaboration in schools is strongly highlighted by the conceptual framework. This culture is manifested through the integration of the strengths in skills and knowledge of both the teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher. Additionally, in practices such as curriculum integration, joint lesson planning and communication skills recognized as part of the shared learning pedagogy of both teacher-librarians and classroom teachers. The conceptual framework makes no mention of the school culture; however, as outlined by Craig (2013) and Montiel-Overall (2008), a collaborative culture can only be fostered through mutual, respectful, trusting relationship and the flexibility and willingness afforded by each partner in the collaborative process.

Communication Skills

The researchers believe that the various practices of inter-professional collaboration that were identified between teachers and teacher-librarians were heavily dependent on effective communication for successful collaboration. The conceptual framework in a subtle way depicts and communicate between the teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher in the shared pedagogy section. This is important in order to facilitate a shared teaching learning pedagogy. In order for this process of communication to be effective, the research content reviewed indicated that attention must be given to mutual levels of respect and trust at all levels of the collaborative process. This is important as both professionals have to share the same space whether in the classroom or in the library. In some instances, many professionals may not be aware of a collaborative model that includes a joint and shared teaching learning pedagogy which brings together instructional design through collaborative planning and follow up through assessment for and of students. The researchers believe that one way in which this can be realized is for the library curriculum to be developed to reflect the content of the general school's curriculum, so that the librarian can teach the information literacy skills that non-library subjects require. For example, the teacher is teaching a lesson on "receive and dissemination of information", the librarian at the same point in time that

this lesson is being taught in the classes, can collaborate with the classroom teacher and give instruction on “detecting misinformation” as a media literacy lesson. This will not need any additional teaching time on the part of these professionals and must take into consideration. Particularly, instructional design and assessment for and of students was observed as part of the teaching learning pedagogy of the Loertscher and Koechlin’s (2016) conceptual framework, illustrates the dynamic partnership of a teacher-librarian and a classroom teacher. This partnership requires from both teacher-librarian and classroom teacher a level of communication skill that would foster mutual respect for each other and cultivate an environment that will enhance the students’ experience.

Barriers to Teacher-Librarian and Classroom Teacher Collaboration

The framework featured in Figure 1 does not directly identify the barriers to teacher-librarian and classroom teacher collaboration, and this is a critical flaw in the model. The research findings suggested that the barriers to inter-professional collaboration are the same variables as the practices that surround two main themes: namely, teachers’ perception of collaboration with librarians and time constraint. It was evident from the findings that if teachers, as primary stakeholders of the collaborative process, do not embrace librarians as equal partners, then successful collaboration will not be achieved.

Lack of understanding of the role of the librarian. The lack of understanding of the role of the librarian is a deterrent capable of great effects on all areas of the collaborative process. The conceptual framework identifies collaborative leadership as part of a successful model and bears heavily on the role of the teacher-librarian in this process. The researchers agree that among the most impeding barriers to teachers’ and teacher-librarians’ collaboration are those associated with the teacher’s perception of librarians. Teachers oftentimes seem to feel they are the best source of information for their subject area and cannot envision how the skills of the librarian can improve their instruction.

Teacher workload. Of all the barriers to the practice of collaboration, the researchers believe that time constraint is the most subtle, yet practicable controlled barrier. Both professionals must have the inclination to be flexible in the sharing of their time. This mindset will form the foundation for the implementation of the collaborative process. The process must first take into account that both educators should be given adequate time from an administrative level, to cohesively plan lessons that are well structured and suited for instructional delivery. It is then incumbent on the teacher and teacher-librarian to set reasonable time frames in which equal and mutual planning can be done. Finally, time must be factored in for review and discussion on best practices and possible adjustment for the way forward. The researchers would like to point out that if the curriculum in schools is developed using an integrated approach, these professionals would not need to spend so much time at the planning stage.

Lack of collaborative culture in schools. It is with this in mind that the researchers believe that lack of collaborative culture in schools is a deterrent to the successful implementation of any true collaborative initiative. Furthermore, as the main gatekeepers of the school administration, the principal must initiate the workplace conditions that will facilitate the shared dynamic partnership as indicated in the conceptual framework; thus, nurturing the collaborative process. If this is not done, the difficulty of propelling collaboration will be heightened.

Conclusion

The findings implied that apart from the principal, the teacher-librarian was perceived as the key person in initiating the collaborative process, although librarians are not seen as an equal partner in the educational process, they are nevertheless looked upon as having the leadership skills and attributes needed for successful inter-professional collaboration. This is confirmed in the conceptual framework as collaborative leadership is seen as a key skill set of the teacher-librarian. True collaboration cannot be achieved nor maintained in schools, except where equal appreciation is given to both the teacher's and librarian's innovative pedagogical roles as manager of learning spaces and facilitator of knowledge. The Loertscher and Koechlin (2016) conceptual framework includes elements that are necessary for successful collaboration; however, some elements are not reflected in the framework; but which is crucial for high level of implementation. These include the development of a national school policy on inter-professional collaboration and the involvement of administrators in the collaborative process. However, all areas of the conceptual framework indicate that there must be equity among teacher-librarians and classroom teachers based on their respective roles, responsibilities and skills, as seen in Figure 1. This collaboration is intertwined in a shared teaching learning pedagogy and shows that for successful interdisciplinary collaboration to happen, all stakeholders have a major role to play. Furthermore, all stakeholders have a major role to play if the collaboration is to be sustained.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following are recommended:

- Ministries of education should consider including inter-professional collaboration as a part of the education policy.
- All library curriculum should be integrated with the schools' curriculum to make it easier for collaboration to happen.
- School administrators should place priority on flexible scheduling and fixed scheduling to ensure that collaboration can take place at the point of need and throughout the school term; and that all students would be exposed to information literacy lessons
- Administrators should receive professional development training on the pedagogical role of the teacher-librarian as an educator. The training should include respect, support, and trust for each other.

Further Research

The change of the teachers' perception of teacher-librarians because of inter-professional collaboration should be explored, as teachers' perception of the role of teacher-librarians' in the teaching learning process may impose challenges to collaborative work in the school environment.

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Author Notes

Paulette Stewart is the Head of the Department of Library and Information Studies at The University of the West Indies, Mona. She was the IASL Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean from 2013 to 2019 and the President of the Library and Information Association of Jamaica in 2010.

Mark-Jeffery Deans is the librarian and an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Library and Information Studies, at the University of the West Indies, Mona. He is a member of the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) and the current President of the Library and Information Association of Jamaica (LIAJA).