Role of the Library Media Specialist as a collaborator in the Instructional Process
"Student Achievement is the Bottom Line[1]"

Hypothesis:

        People outside the library world frequently don't understand the role the Library Media Specialist can play as an educator. Consequently, our value in the educational process is undervalued and diminished unless we take a proactive position to define and sell our program. For example, how many lay people have responded, when told you are a librarian, by saying, "Oh, how nice to have all that time to read in the quiet of a library." One of our most important jobs is to market the LMC and our very proactive role as a collaborative teacher in the educational process.

Brainstorm

1.   What is the "educational process?" How do schools structure the process of learning?
   a.   **Setting goals -** what do we think children need?
      1)   based on an assessment of needs
      2)   desirable standards
   b.   **Structuring curriculum -** to provide classes/programs to meet goals
      1)   scope & sequence of what to include to reach goals
      2)   specific lesson plans for how to implement scope & sequence
   c.   **Providing staff, setting and materials -** to provide access to information to support instruction and learning.

2.   Where do School Library Media Specialists fit into this process?
   a.   What is the mission of the School Library Media Center[2]?
      1) mission (See Overhead (OH) #1: "The Vision: Mission and Goals of the School Library Media Program," Information Power, p. 6.)
      2) goals (See OH #2: "Goals of the School Library Media Program," IP, p. 6.)
      3) IP logo (See OH #3: "Information Power Logo," IP, p. 48.)

   a.   What is the role of LMS in implementing goals to meet the mission? (See OH #4: "The Roles of a Media Specialist."[3])
      1)   teacher
      2)   instructional partner
      3)   information specialist
      4)   program administrator

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[1] McClintock, Mary. "Implementation of Information Power." Knowledge Quest, Journal of the American Association of School Librarians. Vol. 27, issue 3:11-12.

[2] American Association of School Librarians. Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning. Chicago: American Library Association, 1998.

[3] LaHam, Joanne Pryor, et. al. "An Overview of Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning," Knowledge Quest, Journal of the American Association of School Librarians. Vol. 27, issue 3: 16.

3.   How do we demonstrate the role of the SLMC/ library media specialist in the educational process? - The Primary goal of a school is learning. The shift from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning has created a school media program that is more important than ever. (LaHam, p. 15.) Think about the impact research-based projects or "project learning" have had on our role in the educational process, particularly in the last 5 - 7 years.

Library Media Specialists - Planning, strategies, activities:

a.   Power/dependency mapping - who are the people you depend on for support? The principal, teachers, staff, tech support…(See OH #5 & #6: "Bureaucratic Dependency Map" and "Power/ Dependency Mapping."[4])

b.   Influence potential of the job (See OH #7: "The Influence Potential of the Job," Hartzell.)

c.   IP themes - collaboration, leadership, and technology (LaHam.)

d.   Teachers, administrators, and community members - w/ teachers and community partners to plan, conduct, and evaluate learning activities that develop information literacy -

1)   some practical approaches to collaboration, leadership, and technology (See OH #8: "Some practical approaches." LaHam, p. 15.)

2)   strategies and tactics for building influence w/ the

(a)   Principal (See OH #9: Hartzell, p. 2.) -

- get early and continuing clarification of what the principal expects of you and from you;

- take the initiative;

- do your homework before going to see the principal; try to deliver possible solutions when you deliver problems

- be your own publicist and promoter, but be subtle rather than strident

- get out and talk to people before you talk to the principal

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[4] Hartzell, Gary. "Building Influence for School Library Media Specialists." AASL Supervisors' Program, AASL at ALA Annual Conference. Washington, D.C., June 28, 1998.

- don't get caught up in jargon or titles
- build a strong relationship with the principal's secretary
- learn the preferred chain of command
- ask for assignment to accreditation teams
- volunteer for committees
- offer to write a column in the school's newsletter to parents
- get on the new student orientation program and the program for the parents of new students
- develop an orientation program for student teachers and new hires
- write grant proposals and seek other methods of securing outside funding and donations for the school
- volunteer to be a speaker for local civic organizations
- develop a "brag" sheet/book/Web page for the principal and/or counselors to have in their office to show parents
- attend school board meetings as warranted

(b) Teachers - (*Target*: to have teachers not only defend your program when you are not around, but to have them actively lobby for its enhancement with decisionmakers at all levels. *Tactic*: convince teachers that they need you.) (See OH #10: Hartzell.)

- master the technology
- get on every curriculum committee you can (for formal curriculum involvement) and be involved in every curriculum discussion you can (for informal curriculum involvement)
- become the research source for new ideas
- seek out teachers to join you in funding proposals to internal and external sources

- involve teachers in library operations: new, continuing, and retired
- keep contacts with alumni
- make the library and yourself into real teaching resources: professional library, idea bank, computers, make-ups, team teaching
- make time for flexible scheduling of the library to include time for student research
- take/make time to recognize and socialize

4. Conclusion - Planning your tactics - Brainstorm what will work for you (See OH # 11: "Planning Strategy: Matching Goals, Targets, Resources, and Approaches," Hartzell.)

a. who is your target (See chart below: "Goal: Building support for the SLMC and Specialist.")

b. define the purpose

c. describe the activity

d. identify the resources needed to implement

e. access the attractiveness for the "target"

f. anticipate target reactions

g. plan and execute activity
- when to begin
- advance work needed?
- Contact: formal or informal; written or oral?
- How to maintain contact?

h. plan to evaluate
- How will you know/measure if you are succeeding?
- What other opportunities grow out of this activity?

Goal: Building Support for the School Library Media Center and Specialist				
Purpose	Activities /Strategies	Resources Needed	Planning/ Timeline	Evaluation

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