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Mod 7 Paper – Instructional Program

According to the AASL, the school library media specialist should model, foster and promote collaboration within the learning community as well as teach multiple literacies and information problem solving skills (AASL, pg. 19). Similarly, my mentor, Ms. Del Valle, works under and is a staunch believer in flexible scheduling. Ms. Del Valle believes in order to most efficiently and effectively achieve a collaborative learning environment and instill dispositions of life long learning, flexible scheduling is a must. She maintains that with flexible scheduling teachers who that want to make use of the LMC resources will sign up. Since teachers are required to be in the library with their class, they are participants in the learning process and are willing collaborators with flexible scheduling. Fixed scheduling is seen as a stop and drop by many educators because it is a teacher's prep period. With flexible scheduling, teachers utilize the time to help further classroom learning and projects. Thus, collaboration occurs much more frequently. In addition, teachers begin to internalize information problem solving models and methods after seeing it modeled and applied during lessons by the librarian and that instruction carries over into the classroom across other content areas.

While some may feel flexible scheduling limits others' use of the library, Ms. Del Valle has an open door policy. While conducting classes, during lunch, prep, and before and after school, Ms. Del Valle allows students to come in and use the computers, resources and check out books. Ms. Del Valle is a very experienced and dedicated librarian who gives 125% to

her school. She serves on various committees such as the Literacy Committee, AIS Team, Inquiry Team Meeting Pupil Personnel Committee, Consultation Committee, Library committee and organizes and runs the book fair. Usually, Ms. Del Valle does not have the prep time aligned to attend grade level meetings. She is given a prep and an additional period each day to use for record keeping, book upkeep and collection weeding. Further, Ms. Del Valle is a big believer in collaborative planning with the classroom teachers and has developed her school library media program around that philosophy. She centers her lessons around the class curriculum and projects that are occurring. Weekly, she meets with teachers to re-teach and reinforce or enrich classroom activities. She mainly instructs in the lessons and the teachers guide or assist. In order to prepare lessons for her classes, Ms. Del Valle collaborates with the classroom teachers to find out what they are working on and need help with. She can then refer to the continuum, developed by NYC School Library Services under the direction and leadership of Barbara Stripling, to assist in planning her lessons since it has standards, skills, benchmarks and documents that are helpful for collaborative grade level planning.

Incidentally, *The Power Tools Recharged* book is a school librarian's bible. When I inquired if Ms. Del Valle wanted to see or use the form for soliciting feedback from teachers to improve instruction, collaboration and projects, she said she has and uses the book already. Woolls suggests maintaining a professional textbook reference collection to make available to the staff and assist in collaboration (Woolls, pg 88). This can also be utilized down the line for curriculum mapping and planning. In addition, Pennsylvania Guidelines states that professional resources for educators should include but not be limited to videos, digital resources, electronic databases, journals, periodicals, etc (PA, pg. 33). Ms. Del Valle occasionally provides PD on curriculum mapping, Common Core Standards and information problem solving. This

component is highly suggested since a school library media specialist is a leader (PA, pg. 10). Further, Ms. Del Valle utilizes every opportunity to attend local library professional development. She incorporates the Stripling Information Problem Solving Model into her lessons, but does not believe in teaching it in isolation. She feels learning must have continuity and once students see the relevance of what they are learning connected throughout their curriculum and education, it is more meaningful, relevant and powerful.

In *Designing a Flexible Schedule for an Elementary School Library Media Center*, Carol Fox maintains that a flexible schedule should be designed to fit the needs of the school and staff constantly when the need should arise. She recommends various half hour blocks under specific categories like book check out time, information literacy skill development, story and read aloud time, and special activities. Also, time is allotted for library maintenance, record keeping and planning. Ms. Del Valle's LMC is not as organized or structured as that; however, I feel it would stand to benefit if she was. She calls and schedules teachers according to grade slot availability. I believe specific periods like the above categories help to plan more effectively, meet the needs of the classes and help teachers prioritize what skills they want their students to learn.

While author and media director, Doug Johnson, argues that fixed schedules secure librarians' jobs since prep teachers are always needed, I disagree with his arguments (Johnson, pg 39) . Instructing in a quality manner secures jobs and since flexible scheduling fosters collaboration, instruction is more thorough and of a higher caliber. Ms. Del Valle has an excellent relationship with her teachers and principal. Working hand in hand with the staff as allowed the school to flourish and that speaks for itself. Johnson mistakenly believes flexible scheduling is about school library media specialists teaching whenever they want. Flexible

scheduling is about being flexible to the needs of the learning community. Just as all learners do not learn the same and educators must be adaptable in their instruction to challenge students and help them grow, flexible scheduling is about being versatile to a whole school's needs. Further, real collaboration occurs when educators share ideas, thoughts and planning (Fox, pg. 2). Under flexible scheduling, planning and collaboration occur very frequently.

Works Cited

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