ASSIGNMENT 3

Evaluation Plan to Improve Your Reference Services

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Introduction

The reference collection in the school library learning commons is often seen as a learning "hub" to which students and staff look for answers to their questions. Our school district has been working to transition our 'school libraries' into 'school library learning commons', partly by implementing new digital reference tools and new learning resources. According to the *Leading Learning* document (Canadian Library Association, 2014), a transitioned school library learning commons provides information through quality reference sources and guides the use of this information.

 Part 1: Analysis of the Current Reference Collection

The reference section of the David Oppenheimer Library Learning Commons is not a section that is well used. There is a minimal section of physical reference materials, and all are outdated. The reference print materials are located on accessible shelves on the side wall of the SLLC, but are not currently a point of interest for students. I evaluated the SLLC's reference services using the CLA's *Achieving Information Literacy* (Asselin, 2003*)* and I determined that based on the physical collection's currency, intellectual accessibility, and maintenance, the physical reference resource collection fits into the **below standard** category.

Resource	Below Standard	Acceptable	Exemplary
Currency	Copyright dates within the last 10 years: less than 50% of the collection	Copyright dates within the last 10 years: 50 - 70% of the collection	Copyright dates within the last 10 years: 80% or more of the collection
Intellectual Accessibility	Materials provide limited support for students cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills	Material available to students is within the range of their cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills, and reflects student interests and the cultural interests valued by the children's families.	The wide range of material available to students is within the range of their cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills, and reflects student interest and the cultural background of the student population
Collection Maintenance	Significant number of resources are worn, damaged, missing components or need of repair	Most materials are complete and in good repair. Some items are missing components	Materials are complete and in good repair

(Asselin, 2003, p. 32-33)

Due to the high cost of printed reference materials and a drop in the library budget, the previous and current Teacher-Librarians (TL) have placed more of a focus on improving the digital reference section using the <u>district's digital subscriptions</u>.

The school has access to a number of online databases, including World Book Online, EBSCO, KnowBC, and National Geographic Kids. Working with the "Electronic & Digital Resources" section of *Achieving Information Literacy* (Asselin, 2003, p. 30), I determined that our SLLC was at the **acceptable level**; however, many of the digital resources are not utilized well enough in a K-6 elementary school.

Part 2: Rationale for Change

With the inclusion of a more inquiry-based curriculum and the need to use the technology and multi-modal learning tools, it is important that the SLLC provide useful resources for students to research. Our digital reference section is comprised of the available district digital subscription, but nothing is really done with them beyond making them visible on the school/SLLC homepage. When students need to research, they tend to look online (websites) rather than consult the physical and digital reference resources.

Upon surveying the teachers at the school, I found that most teachers implement some form of information literacy skills in their teaching program. However, the lessons were disconnected from the SLLC and inconsistent. Our school currently lacks a consistent and common information literacy curriculum, therefore preventing students from learning how to best conduct research. Teachers also reported that when they assigned students to do research, the teachers would sign out non-fiction books from the SLLC and the public library, or simply direct students to certain websites to explore their topic.

Based on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), it seems that many teachers are also concerned about the level of information literacy skills that students currently possess. According to the CABM, the majority of teachers fit in the *Informational* and *Consequence* stages of concern. Under the "Levels of Use", most of the teachers fit in the *Refinement*, *Integration*, and *Renewal* stages. This shows that teachers are willing to collaborate in order to improve students' information literacy skills, but may need guidance and support in doing so.

With the available digital databases, students could be taught critical literacy, information, and research skills while in the library which they can take with them into the classroom for further inquiry-based learning. Classroom teachers can collaborate with the TL to introduce the necessary skills and then practice them throughout the school year. With these new reference services, the library program could expand to a more layered approach, leading to more meaningful collaboration time, as well as more opportunities for inquiry-based learning.

Part 3: Step-by-Step Plan

I used the steps outlined in the Leading Learning Document, specifically in the appendix titled "Planning and Leading Transition to a School Library Learning Commons" (CLA, p. 33). Although this guide is geared towards transitioning a library into a SLLC, I have adapted each step to have more of a focus on references resources and services.

1. **Consult**: Transitions - *What changes do we want to make?*

- TL will consult with teachers, support staff, and administration to develop a Leadership Team to represent the learning needs of the school community
- Review existing resources and services to chart current practices on "growth continuum"
- Conduct survey for entire school community (staff, students, administration, families)
- Develop a vision for the reference collection and services
- My vision: increased use of digital references resources, and acquisition of more current, relevant, and intellectually accessible physical reference resources, increased information literacy skills among students
- Determine cost of acquiring new materials

2. **Plan**: Timelines - *What are the expected start and finish times?*

- May 2022 to June 2022
    - Develop leadership team, develop a vision and plan
    - Develop and present scope and sequence to teachers, support staff, and administrion.
    - Meet in grade level groups for feedback and suggested changes.
- September 2022:
    - Present revised scope and sequence to staff.
- October 2022 to December 2023:
    - Implement strategies and actions (see "Implement" section below)
- January 2023 to June 2023:

- o Continue collaboration

  - o Continue supporting teachers in teaching information literacy skills and using the digital resources

- June 2023 and beyond:

  - o Continue providing professional development opportunities around information literacy

  - o Continue to adapt the scope and sequence to meet needs of school community

  - o Continue promoting physical and digital reference collection

3. **Implement**: Strategies and Actions - *How will we achieve transitions?*

- Collaborate with teachers to co-plan and co-teach information literacy lessons.

- Plan and lead professional development sessions for staff, with specific focus on information literacy skills.

- Support teachers in using reference resources withing their curricular units.

- Weed physical collection.

- Present budget request to administration and school budget committee for acquisition of new physical resources.

4. **Monitor**: Roles - *Who is responsible for what?*

- TL is responsible for developing scop and sequence, and supporting teachers in implementing it into their teaching program.

- Teachers are responsible for being open to trying out the lessons and skills offered by TL.

- TL is responsible for evaluating success of transition and adapting the plan to meet the needs of the school community.

5. **Evaluate**: Indicators of Success - *How will we know the transition is complete? How will we know it is working?*

- TL will survey teachers for feedback on their comfort level with the transition.

- Follow up with feedback by revising the action plan and strategies. TL will also meet with student, teachers, support staff, and administration to review success and possible gaps of the transition.

- Measure how often the digital databases are being used in research projects, and the awareness of information literacy skills among staff and students.

- Increased collaboration time between teachers and TL.

Conclusion

Any major transition in the school system (or in society) takes time. There may be some colleagues who are resistant to the change or slower in accepting the change, but it is important to remember that it will ultimately improve student achievement. By focusing on the goals of 1) increased use of digital references resources, 2) acquisition of more current, relevant, and intellectually accessible physical reference resources, and 3) increased information literacy skills among students, the SLLC will provide a better educational experience for students in the community. As Riedling (2013) reiterates in the text, it is important o keep in mind the following considerations when making this transition: knowing about the school and school community's needs, continuous collaboration and feedback, and keeping a record of questions and research requests (p. 26).

References:

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