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Room to Read: Tracking the Evolution of a New Secondary School Library

by

Marjorie Cummings Goodin

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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of

University of California, Berkeley

Dissertation committee:

Professor P. David Pearson, Chair  
Professor and Dean Judith Warren Little  
Professor Nancy Van House

Fall 2011

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Marjorie Cummings Goodin

## Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Berkeley

Professor P. David Pearson, Chair

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the evolution of a new school library, one that was a site for learning and practicing literacy in collaborative ways. By tracking the construction of school library resources and programs at a secondary school where no library existed, I was able to explore the processes and elements of library formation as it impacts the literacy environment. My hunch was that by improving the available resources in a *distributed library*, the opportunities for access and choice, and by developing the *library dispositions* of the students there might be observable changes in students' reading attitudes, engagement and achievement at the school. These library dispositions include developing habits of mind and attitudes that guide student thinking and intellectual behaviors, and that may be measured through actions taken to access library resources and to read independently.

In this study I viewed the school library project as an intervention—one that sought to develop a culture of reading and information use with adolescents—by attending to access, choice, motivation and engagement in reading, and by collaborating with amenable content area teachers on instructional supports. My initial research concerns included how library dispositions are taken up in a school, or not, as a distributed library was developed on site; what barriers and benefits of building library resources and instructional connections to students and content area curricula might be evident; and how increased access to resources might impact the attitudes about reading and reading achievement of a focal group of students. The design research approach allows an examination of the impact of the library as intervention (the product) as it is engineered and adapted with input from the school community (the process).

This dissertation argues that the school library exists in an academic Third Space animated by constant tensions: in the ideological space between traditional in-school instructional goals and out-of-school learning priorities, in the curricular space between explicit curricular requirements and independent learning desires, and in the physical space between facility competitions for access to group learning space versus individual learning space.

I dedicate this work to my mother and father,  
*Marjorie Jensen Cummings and Benton Pierce Cummings,*  
generous teachers who would have approved of the effort.

And to others who believe in the power of reading, literature and libraries:

Why are we reading, if not in hope of beauty laid bare, life heightened and its deepest  
mystery probed?

Annie Dillard

Everything is held together with stories. That is all that is holding us together, stories and  
compassion.

Barry Lopez

The library is an arena of possibility, opening both a window into the soul and a door  
onto the world.

Rita Dove

I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings  
of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our  
libraries.

Carl Sagan

More than a building that houses books and data, the library represents a window to a  
larger world, the place where we've always come to discover big ideas and profound  
concepts that help move the American story forward and the human story forward...  
That's what libraries are about. At the moment we persuade a child, any child, to cross  
that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the  
better. It's an enormous force for good.

Barack Obama

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

- Mrs. Goodin: Did you notice any changes resulting from the new literacy programs at the school, including the writing center and the library?
- Ms. Stuart: There's definitely kids carrying around a lot more books, which is nice. And it sounds like such a simplistic measure of it, but I don't think it is. Because before I just never saw kids carrying around books, *ever*, and so to see, you know, even our lowest kids carrying around *Harry Potter* which to be honest is probably outside of their grasp. But for them to pick it up and to carry it around and, like, have this pride in carrying around a book—and you know, there's room in the backpack, but you don't notice the book in the backpack. You know—that's, I think, been the biggest difference—that because of the library, kids have books and kids are reading and kids are learning how to find books that they're interested in. So they're not just reading *Harry Potter* and they're not just reading *Twilight*; they're starting to branch out and read other things. Math is most important to me but most of them are not going to be mathematicians. At the end of the day, I want them to experience the passion of learning (Interview, September 28, 2010).

### Study Overview

There is a broadly expressed common concern for students' reading proficiency in K-12 schools and it comes from teachers and researchers alike. Teachers, like Ms. Stuart quoted above, recognize the importance of reading in students' lives. Knowing that the difficulty of underachievement in reading impacts many students' performance in school and prospects for college and career, teachers and researchers strive to discover the best ways to 'hook kids on books'. At the secondary level, it becomes imperative to engage students in a broad range of texts with diverse perspectives to prepare them for lifelong reading. I wondered if part of the solution to reducing secondary reading achievement gaps is living quietly, in plain sight, in the often unrealized resources of a school library and school librarian,<sup>1</sup> both existing in a familiar instructional site where multiple literacy practices are accommodated with diverse multimodal materials every day (Goodin, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> School Librarians have been called Library Media Specialists, Library Media Teachers, and now in many places, Teacher-Librarians. For simplicity's sake I will use the term Librarian.

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the evolution of a new school library, one that was a site for learning and practicing literacy in collaborative ways. By tracking the development of school library resources and programs at a secondary school where no library existed, I was able to explore the processes and elements of library formation as it impacts the literacy environment. My hunch was that by improving the available resources, the opportunities for access and choice, and by developing the *library dispositions* of the students (see American Library Association, 2009) there might be observable changes in students' reading attitudes, engagement and achievement at the school. These library dispositions include developing habits of mind and attitudes that guide student thinking and intellectual behaviors, and that may be measured through actions taken to access library resources and to read independently.

I knew from the outset that this library would have to be unique because of the physical constraints imposed by the space available—or more accurately NOT available—at the school: The selected research site had no functioning central school library and could not accommodate a traditional core library collection and facility for lack of room, but I worked to build a distributed library and library dispositions by developing better classroom libraries, by constructing a small, focused central collection, and by reaching out to public library services. The facility building components were accompanied by collaborative outreach to the teachers, students, and to a lesser degree, the whole school community. These efforts comprised a *distributed library*. Designing and observing the development of a distributed library—a set of resources, opportunities and activities distributed throughout the school—presented a unique opportunity to gauge the impact on the school's literacy environment.

In this study I viewed the school library project as an intervention—one that sought to develop a culture of reading and information use with adolescents—by attending to access, choice, motivation and engagement in reading, and by collaborating with amenable content area teachers on instructional supports. With ongoing education research confirming both a continuing achievement gap between students from different backgrounds (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009) and the reading comprehension struggles of many adolescents (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006), it seemed important to explore the potential of all resources for improving reading achievement. Research in reading comprehension instruction and independent reading programs, as well as engagement and motivation research, have pointed the way to effective instruction in literacy—in part, by providing more positive and interesting reading experiences. In related literacy research, New Literacy Studies (Gee, 2000; Heath, 1983, Scribner & Cole, 1981) have revealed that multiliteracies (i.e., a variety of literate practices with a broad range of texts used in diverse cultural settings) are practiced productively by students outside of the school context. These multiliteracy practices might include writing song lyrics or rap, creating and reading graphic novels or zines, and chatting with friends online. Some researchers suggest that traditional pedagogy should take into account these authentic out-of-school multiliteracies and where possible, infuse them in the curriculum to reinvigorate classroom literacy practices and improve student achievement (Mahiri, 2004; Hull & Schultz, 2001; The New London Group, 1996). It seemed to me that taken together, findings from these research areas indicate that a school library program

encompasses exactly the combination of resources and pedagogy to help address the adolescent reading gap.

There are several reasons to believe that building a school library could serve as a literacy intervention. First, reading comprehension models and school library effectiveness studies document a strong connection between high volumes of reading and improved reading achievement. A combination of reading models informs the hypothesis of increasing students' reading achievement through library instruction. Kintsch's (1998) theory of reading assumed an engaged reader, one for whom a good match has been made between reader and text—and to that end a librarian can work to discover the interests of students and connect students with texts that meet students' literacy preferences. Attending to students' motivations complies with what Guthrie & Wigfield's model of reading engagement suggested and their assertion that reading is a motivated act (2000). Further, by supporting students' desires for interesting texts to read for independent reading, a positive spiral of improving reading achievement in a Matthew effect of reading (Stanovich, 1986) is envisioned. Access to texts is an important factor for reading development and is typically limited in impoverished communities with limited libraries and degraded print environments (Neuman & Celano, 2001; Smith, Constantino, & Krashen, 1997). A rich school library program addresses the issues of access to texts, reader-text matching and reading volume.

Second, there is reason to expect positive effects from a library program in schools, even a very small library such as the one proposed (Allington, 2001; Cullinan, 2004; Gambrell, 1996). A strong correlation between excellent school library programs and school achievement, particularly to reading achievement, goes back decades (Cullinan, 2004; Lonsdale, 2003). More current research (Achterman, 2008; Baughman, 2000; Lance, Welborn, & Hamilton-Pennell, 1993; Smith, 2001) has been conducted in 20 states of the U.S., 2 countries and 1 Canadian province, and all study findings point to a robust connection between strong library programs (including resources and personnel) and reading performance on standardized tests. Based on these results and others showing the power of independent reading, both in school and out-of-school (Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1988; Taylor, Frye & Maruyama, 1990) this project worked to provide students with interesting texts for engaging students in independent reading on a daily basis. Overall, this study positioned the development of a school library as an intervention on behalf of literacy growth in the secondary school.

Third, instruction accommodating adolescent literacy practices supports the infusion of a broad range of texts and literacy practices into adolescent schooling. In a broader view of literacy practices and community discourses, traditional literacy is no longer understood as adequate to the needs of millennials (Gee, 2004). Researchers advocate the need for pedagogy providing for multiple literacy practices in multiple modalities, based on the concept of *design* (The New London Group [NLG], 1996). The creative production inherent in new technologies calls for socially constructed project-based work and the development of student portfolios including diverse skills and experiences (Gee, 2004; NLG, 1996). My hope was engage students in reading and inquiry by providing a diverse and interesting body of materials in the library, thereby improving literacy skills with a wide range of literate activities.

Further, I also hoped to engage the staff in collaborative instructional practices in pursuit of integrated curriculum experiences that used library resources. The basis for engaging students and staff in collaborative teaching and learning is a growing recognition of the social nature of learning. Taken up by school librarians, there is a new library concept emerging in the school library field, one that is based on collaborative work between educators (Kearney, 2000; Loerstcher, 1988; Monteil-Overall, 2005; Small, 1998) and participatory engagement by students (Asselin & Doiron, 2008). Manifested in the library facility as a *learning commons* (Bennett, 2003; Roberts, 2007), it takes into account the resources and discourses that students bring to learning tasks (Alvermann, 2002; Kapitzke, 2003). The new library space, a learning commons, accommodates students' navigation between in-school content area requirements and out-of-school literacy practices and discourses (Gee, 1991). Although it was not possible at this school site to develop a fully realized learning commons facility due to space and scheduling restrictions, I adhered to the founding principles of one.

The learning commons idea is both a concept of learning community and a spatial real-world place for interactive learning—a center for knowledge construction where students, faculty and librarians can work together on joint projects. The library is configured to accommodate not only its traditional resources, but is equipped with technology and workspaces for collaborative projects drawing on a wide array of research materials available in the library. In the case of this study, those interactive learning spaces existed on a small scale across several rooms and program facets. It's important to note that the school library, as learning commons, continues the traditional functions of collecting, organizing, disseminating and storing information, so the challenge in facility design is to provide for the variety of active learning functions. This new library concept, the learning commons, is a more collaborative, interactive, participatory (and noisy) form of library where social knowledge construction is encouraged.

To summarize, this design research project was the study of a small secondary public charter school as it built a distributed library. My initial research concerns included how library dispositions are taken up in a school, or not, as a distributed library was developed on site; what barriers and benefits of building library resources and instructional connections to students and content area curricula might be evident; and how increased access to resources might impact the attitudes about reading and reading achievement of a focal group of students. The design research approach allows an examination of the impact of the library as intervention (the product) as it is engineered and adapted with input from the school community (the process).

### **Developing a Conceptual Framework**

The story of this design research project starts with an idea—the idea of *third space*—that I encountered in graduate school study. Third space is a construct that is descriptive of accommodation and potential change between entities, for instance, between languages, literary traditions, cultural traditions, or sets of beliefs. On the surface, third space appears to be an inherently simple construct explaining an area of creative contestation between dualities, but I saw it as a tool for surfacing tensions in the school library that I had observed over many years serving as a teacher and school

librarian. I began to see the school library as a third space for both individual learning and collaborative instructional practices, providing a site for teaching and learning whose constraints and affordances served some traditional and some non-traditional educational purposes.

In the field of education several researchers have utilized the construct of third space as a metaphor for explaining positive and hopeful possibilities in instructional reform. Various used to describe a hybrid space of interplay between different knowledge sources and diverse scripts, or between different language practices and literacy modes (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Turner, 1997; Moje et al., 2004); third space has been useful in imagining a site for change. It may also be used to describe the terrain between differing, sometimes competing, content area activity systems in the school, for instance, between English and science department goals. In content area matters, third space is used as a metaphor to spatialize, or define the ideological boundaries, (Leander & Sheehy, 2004) of how teachers navigate joint work with each other and students. Introducing the notion of third space into an analysis of how school libraries function provides a theoretical umbrella for the multiple activities and dimensions of a school library—including its physical entity, pedagogical constructs and ideological foundation.

The new library concept of a learning commons described earlier is one that is becoming, physically and ideologically, a third space (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Turner, 1997; Leander & Sheehy, 2004) for literacy practices in the school landscape (Goodin, 2007)—a third space for students navigating between in-school content area requirements and out-of-school literacy practices and discourses (Gee, 1991). Spatializing the collaborative work in the library also helps us to account for the different materiality of the library—the sheer diversity and wealth of tools available for shared use by two different spheres of instructional activity. As Leander & Sheehy explained, the geographical, material nature of our cultural spaces *matter* and must be included in analyzing the social construction of place:

In sum, literacy spaces have been produced as metaphors without material substance. Our metaphorical spatial lexis matters, and tracing how it matters inevitably leads us to “matter” in the world, to the material stuff of our homes, lives and cityscapes, which absorbs us and which we continually interpret through the word (Leander & Sheehy, 2004, p. 3).

I argue that this spatial perspective supports the relevance of the mass of materials, the tools and texts, present in the school library activity system as potentially transformative for students. The idea of third space also alerts us to the need to place the tensions between activity systems, to recognize the penetration and crossing of boundaries between the activity systems of the school library and other content area classrooms during collaboration (Engeström, 1998). Accommodating teachers’ different agendas, in content areas and in the library, requires flexibility in goal development and was an essential component of this project and of design research (Brown, 1992). Third space as a perspective on teacher and librarian collaboration helps to explain the way in which the differences and similarities of the school library and classroom instructional spaces might be theorized. With this study I hope to contribute to a fuller understanding

of the nature and constraints of teacher collaboration with a more complete picture arising out of a description of collaboration in a situated practice—with characterizations of successes and impediments explored as the new library service was adapted to the site.

In short, this dissertation argues that the school library exists in an academic third space animated by constant tensions: between traditional in-school instructional goals and out-of-school learning priorities, between explicit curricular requirements and independent learning desires, and between facility competitions for access to group versus individual learning spaces.

### **Research Questions**

A broad range of questions about student literacy development and the literacy environment at the school attach to the evolution of a library. Some of those consistent with a design research approach involve not just the measurable features of literacy engagements at the school, but also the elements observed that contribute to successes of the program, or act as obstacles to its development (Reinking & Bradley, 2008). In formative and design research, the design of the intervention is intertwined with theory of the phenomenon being studied, and it includes the researcher as an active participant in the research (Kelly, 2003; Reinking & Bradley, 2008). In this way, design-based research acts as an important link between theory and practical application in the learning environment, testing theoretical perspectives on the ground (Schoenfeld, 1999; The Design-Based Collective, 2003). Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer & Schauble (2003) described the dual-purposed nature of design research as, "... pragmatic as well as theoretical in orientation in that the study of function—both of the design and of the resulting ecology of learning—is at the heart of the methodology" (p. 9). In order to link theory and practice on the ground with the intent of uncovering the factors and impacts of the library as intervention, I posed the following pairs of questions, each pair prefaced by a purpose setting statement:

1. To determine the broad impact of inclusion of library services on the school community: How are library dispositions taken up in a school, or not, as a distributed library is developed on site? Does increased access to resources impact students' attitudes about reading and independent reading behaviors?
2. To gauge impact on content area teaching with inclusion of library services and resources: Will teachers at the site use the new resources for curriculum purposes and will students access resources for school projects? What characterizes collaborative implementation of the program at this site?
3. To define the factors that are essential to the success or failure of the library evolution in this particular environment: What are the evident elements for success and obstacles to building a library resource and program? What design modifications occur as the project evolves and adapts to the needs of the site?

### **Possible Significance**

Conducting a study of the evolution of one small library using a sociocultural lens on reading development may contribute to the knowledge base connecting the two fields

of school librarianship and reading research. The intersection of interests between the fields is easily discovered in the literatures on reading comprehension, collaboration and motivation research connected to reading proficiency, though a bridge between fields is difficult to build and hard to traverse. Given the common interests in reading development evident if one reads literature in the fields of literacy and librarianship, a study such as this one—connecting research areas—opens new avenues for pedagogical change. Even though this study involves just one researcher and is limited to one school site, it has the potential to open the communication between fields on behalf of improving instruction for adolescent learners.

### **Overview of Chapters**

The remaining segment of this chapter describes the first phase of negotiation for library building, before actual building began. In Chapter Two I include a literature review of topics that intersect in the school library: Reading Comprehension and Student Achievement, Collaboration in Teaching and Librarianship, and Sociocultural Perspectives on Literacy and Libraries. Chapter Three describes my methodological approach covering my methods, researcher role and data analysis. Chapters Four, Five and Six present data from the study in roughly chronological order, but there is overlap in the chapters due to overarching thematic threads. While the first data chapter describes the physical emergence of the library and collection, noting student usage patterns, the next two chapters report findings in regard to collaborative program integration of library service and the underlying beliefs about libraries that were expressed. Thus, in Chapter Four I introduce the development of physical access to the library resources and consider the observed differences in student reading dispositions. Chapter Five reports on the nature of distributed library efforts and the outcomes of collaborative work. Continuing the presentation of data, Chapter Six describes student and staff beliefs in regard to reading proficiency, library efficacy and literacy instruction. Finally, Chapter Seven synthesizes analysis of the data, reviews the findings in relation to the original research questions and returns to the perspective of the third space conceptual framework.

### **Library Desire and Design (Phase 1)**

I first became acquainted with Southside Secondary School (SSS) when I began a reading intervention evaluation study in the 2006-2007 school year through the auspices of Western University. Western University has a loose affiliation with the school offering pedagogical advice, grant-proposal writing support and research assistance. Part of the affiliation between Western University and SSS included my involvement on the evaluation study. It was in that year of conducting research at the school that the thought of building a school library at Southside Secondary School arose in my mind when students and staff spoke of the school's need for a library. During the period that I conducted research on the reading intervention I surveyed 24 students in grades 6 through 8, interviewed 22 of the 24 students surveyed, and interviewed six staff members. I also did formal observations in the humanities and reading intervention classrooms over the course of a spring semester. I noted that one school aide, a fan of children's literature, augmented the collection of books supplied in the reading intervention program by assembling a small collection of donated and garage-sale books—a welcome, but limited

selection of older titles. One finding of the evaluation study was that a majority of the staff, five out of six adults interviewed, requested more books (or library service) to give students access to differentiated materials. The students interviewed echoed this request for more books, especially for more “good books” that appealed to their contemporary interests (Goodin, 2009). The clear plea for more and better books became the impetus to both construct and study the building of a small secondary school library at SSS.

I continued study as a graduate student of Western University after the evaluation study concluded, and I continued making informal evaluations at SSS, consulted on a grant proposal to support curriculum goals, and began the process of planning and developing a small core library collection for the humanities, in hopes of building a library program *and* a subject for my dissertation study. The ‘accidental library’—one emerging from the happenstance of my research presence and my subsequent work at the school—became the subject for my dissertation study.

The first turning point for development of a school library came in September of 2008, when the school received a curriculum grant to provide print resources supporting writing project work in the content areas. Staff made the decision to support the building of a small library facility to house the new curriculum materials. Over the course of several months we negotiated the space for a small collection (*Figure 1*), created a design to scale for the space allocated, developed bids for the requisite equipment and books, and established the necessary vendor accounts. By the late spring of 2009, the new library became a visible presence in the all-purpose room at SSS, generating interest in staff and students. A small school library began to evolve, as did the idea of a library program.

In short, the impetus for building one small secondary school library ‘from scratch’ began with an idea for conceptualizing the place of a school library within a school’s culture, was reinforced by a clearly expressed desire for library resources in one school community and expanded to become the topic of my dissertation study.



*Figure 1:* The all-purpose room at Southside Secondary School in 2008-2009. One corner of the all-purpose room would become the first site for the school library.

## Chapter Two

### A Review of Intersecting Literatures

In my years of teaching and librarianship one simple question repeatedly incited my curiosity. The question, posed by many students over many years was: Can you help me find a good book? There is much implied in this simple question—a motivation to read, a desire for interesting texts and the need to make a match between reader and text. At the heart of making a match is the presumption of comprehension. Whether the books are for recreational reading, research, or school or work requirements, students want books they can understand; they want books that are *good for them*, implying that they meet a host of criteria around reading ability, interest, text readability and purposes for reading. It seemed to me that in order to satisfy this seemingly simple request from students we, as educators, needed to possess fundamental knowledge about reading comprehension theories; how else could we match the willing reader and a potential text? Tracking possible answers to that simple question led me to a career as a school librarian, to return to graduate school to study reading comprehension instruction, and then to pursue the research that has guided this dissertation. In my effort to chronicle the evolution of a school library in Southside Secondary School, I realized that there was a related question that was equally important; I needed to understand how a school library is, or ought to be, situated in the learning community of a school. While the conventional wisdom within the school library field is that the library is the ‘hub of learning’ or at the ‘heart of a curriculum’, it is not clear what that means for the school or the individual student. How exactly is a school library situated in the learning environment of the school and the reading lives of students?—that is what I wanted to know.

Delving into these seemingly straightforward questions required me to conduct a very broad survey of several lines of literacy research that, while they seldom appear in a single study, share a common thread in that they intersect in the school library; they situate the work there within the teaching and learning ecology of the school community. In this chapter I review three salient bodies of work in the reading and literacy education fields in order to understand the tensions between the core curriculum and the pedagogy of school librarianship: models of reading and comprehension, research on collaborative practice, and sociocultural perspectives on literacy. First, I examine selected reading comprehension models, touching on the issues of print volume and access to print, as well as their connection to independent reading and school library effectiveness research. Each has a bearing on the functioning and efficacy of a school library program; each belongs in the conversation about school librarianship. Next, I review collaboration in teaching and librarianship, noting the way in which library history has impacted collaborative expectations between teachers and librarians. Last, I review the sociocultural perspectives on literacy and learning that influence how literacy is taught in contemporary classrooms and libraries. These three literatures, taken together, provide a scholarly basis for the work undertaken for this study.

## **Part I. Reading Comprehension and Student Achievement**

### **Reviewing Models of Reading Comprehension**

Research on reading processes and reading achievement has been enriched over the past decades by contributors from many different disciplines (Pearson & Stephens, 1993); psychologists, linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, educators, historians, and cognitive scientists have all added perspectives advancing our understanding of the complex task of reading and the ecology of environments supporting the task. More recent work on the cognitive consequences of print exposure and on reading comprehension strategy instruction has informed the field about both reading process and achievement. A separate, but I argue, intersecting research strand from school library programs complements this body of cognitive research by examining the library-related factors influencing student reading achievement. My goal was to show how school library program research and strands of reading research could converge to contribute to a growing body of evidence about what works in developing reading competence in our school population.

#### **A Historical Perspective on Reading Comprehension Processes**

Before looking to individual reading models that may impact the pedagogy of librarians and teachers, it may be helpful to provide an overview of the topic of reading comprehension processes. Hamm & Pearson (2005) provided a conceptual history of comprehension models, a review that describes the ‘top-down’ versus ‘bottom-up’ issue of theoretical models of reading in the research literature since the 1970s. ‘Bottom-up’ models of reading focus on word processing activities tied to word recognition skills, while ‘top-down’ models describe the reading process in a larger sociocultural frame. Neither view omits the importance of comprehension as the goal for reading, but they do differ in their emphasis on the origin of comprehension—in word processes enacted in-the-head versus meaning-making based in out-of-the-head community contexts.

According to Hamm & Pearson (2005), the early traditional focus on text and language processing (word-level processes) shifted in the cognitive revolution of the 1970s to a psychological, not only a biological, idea of mind. This shift turned research attention to work on knowledge representations and processes in the brain and produced the new cognitive models in the 1970s and 1980s. One model of reading comprehension was founded on a theory of memory called schema theory (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). It suggested that comprehension relies on an individual’s memory of past experiences and world knowledge organized into related chunks of information (schema) that serve the reader approaching a text. For Anderson, the interaction of a reader’s prior knowledge is instrumental in his ability to make meaning from text, “The meanings of words cannot be “added up” to give the meaning of the whole. The click of comprehension occurs only when the reader evolves a schema that explains the whole message” (1984, p. 247).

Meanwhile in other arenas, Vygotsky (1978) a Soviet learning theorist, and Bakhtin (1981) a Russian literary theorist, were making important contributions to understanding the ways in which children learn and people draw on world knowledge, but with a decidedly more social and cultural turn than was common in schema theory. Vygotsky theorized that children learn first in social, interactive contexts—using speech and other

tools to develop new cognitive behaviors. In community with others first, children learn through language, then internalize spoken language and knowledge as they become metacognitive problem-solvers. Bakhtin's theory of intertextuality provides a social and historical concept of texts lying beneath a reader's experience of reading. He proposed that readers construct layers of meaning during the process of reading in an ongoing inner dialogue between many texts, the multiply-voiced echo of all texts and utterances, within a social context. Together their work foreshadowed an evolving sociocultural view of comprehension as researchers from many disciplines entered the literacy and reading research field.

Beginning in the late 1980s, sociocultural models of comprehension conveyed a social construct of reading and knowledge acquisition, taking a 'social turn' toward understanding reading as a social process engaged in by a community of learners with a community of texts, not as a purely individual endeavor (Smagorinsky, 2001). Research on ways of practicing literacy left the schoolhouse and took in reading and writing activities in a diverse range of literate behaviors outside of academics (Heath, 1983; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 1984; Street, 2001). Just as literacy theory expanded to accommodate a broader spectrum of literate practices, the school library and librarianship expanded to include more of those practices—moving beyond a librarianship centered on the maintenance of collections toward social, collaborative practices (Kearney, 2000; Lester & Latrobe, 1998).

Most recently, technological advances have allowed researchers to 'look' inside the brain, revealing activity in differentiated areas of the brain during reading that may eventually help to diagnose specific reading disabilities; at the very least, they will complicate current theories of reading comprehension. For the purposes of this study, I examine a sampling of reading process and comprehension models that are particularly salient to librarians and teachers teaching together in the school library.

### **A Purposive Sampling of Theoretical Reading Models**

**The model of Construction-Integration.** Kintsch's working model of reading comprehension used the structure of language as the architecture for a cognitive theory of both reading process and memory processes (Kintsch, 1998; Kintsch & Kintsch, 2005; Kintsch & Rawson, 2005). That is, both word processing and semantic functions, and memory activation functions are expressed as language-based. Kintsch theorized the reading process in terms of language: The reader is engaged in dynamic interaction between two knowledge sources, the text as a source of knowledge and the reader's brain as a source of knowledge stored in memory. The reader derives information from both sources in an on-going construction-integration where the 'situation' described by the text is interpreted by the reader and, if successful, leads to new knowledge. Learning, however, occurs in very idiosyncratic ways depending on the particular text, the individual reader's knowledge base and the specific purpose for the reading endeavor. Kintsch acknowledged that successful comprehension depends on a willing reader, a reasonably coherent text and a match between the two—and that in less successful efforts misinformation can be learned. In one clear implication for instruction, Kintsch hypothesized a "zone of learnability" where a student's decoding skills and knowledge base can best meet the demands of a challenging text if it is neither too easy nor too hard

(1998, p. 323). As a librarian, I found this work to validate the importance of matching students with appropriately challenging (not too easy/not too hard) texts.

**A Transactional Zone model.** Kintsch's model, while detailed in its treatment of the text and reader interaction, did not attend closely to the social and cultural contexts of reading: Smagorinsky's cultural model of reading comprehension (Smagorinsky, 2001) provides us with that aspect. In his theory of meaning making, the reader is in constant interaction with the text, in a *transactional zone*, that in turn is operating within the wide landscape of culture. In the Smagorinsky model, no reader is ever alone in confronting a text, but always accompanied by a history of other texts and other readers' experiences with texts. It is in this social, interactive, dynamic space that a reader reads and generates a new text, shaped by a community of texts and a community of readers. By including outside-the-head factors, he emphasizes the importance of social and cultural factors on cognitive processes and the reader's production of meaning. Smagorinsky's model invokes the social environment of literacy, a perspective, I argue, that is central to a school library's cultural position within a reading community (2001, p.134).

**A model mapping the mechanism for cognitive change.** Stanovich's model (1986) theorizes the early divergence in reading activity between active, successful readers and unsuccessful readers; and is central to librarians concern for encouraging reading. Stanovich's (1986) work on the "Matthew Effects in Reading," formulates a hypothesis for the impact of extensive reading on reading growth and competence, arguing that a positive upward spiral is set into motion by reading practice, leading to self-efficacy in reading-to-learn. He stated that in the crucial reciprocity between vocabulary development, comprehension, and reading volume "The critical mediating variable that turns this relationship into a strong bootstrapping mechanism that causes major individual differences in the development of reading skill is the volume of reading experience (Fielding, Wilson & Anderson, 1986; Nagy et al., 1985)" (1986, p. 380). In his hypothesis, successfully 'breaking the code' leads to reading experiences that, in turn feed motivation to read more. Increasing practice leads to automaticity in word recognition, an increase in vocabulary and background knowledge, and results in successful comprehension experiences. The subsequent fluency and engagement in reading continues in an upward trajectory to build vocabulary, general knowledge and a sense of self-efficacy in reading. Stanovich's hypothesis also accounts for a negative feedback loop for students who don't break the code early. In this case, the young reader may struggle with slow, frustrating decoding resulting in a smaller reading volume and less motivation to continue to read. This negative feedback loop discourages struggling readers, resulting in a lower ability to read-to-learn and lower self esteem.

While the Kintsch (1998) and Smagorinsky (2001) models assumed a reader's willingness to engage with text, Stanovich (1986) clearly demonstrated the consequences of an unwilling, unmotivated young reader. And though the Stanovich model focused on achievement differentials for young students, the RAND study (2002) advocated following best practices while more research is gathered, especially about older readers. The RAND authors did *not* assume a compliant reader and did assume that comprehension can 'go wrong' and result in incomplete comprehension for some readers, just as Kintsch noted the possibility that students could acquire misconceptions through reading. Where problems in comprehension occur with challenging text, the motivation

of the reader is crucial to effortful, strategic problem solving to reach understanding. I argue that the key role of teachers and librarians in promoting interesting texts for students is tightly connected to developing their desire to read.

**An engagement model of reading.** One model that supports the significance of motivation in reading is the Engagement Model of Reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). In this model, student motivation is the organizing concept for developing reading programs that ensure active, engaged reading. Guthrie & Wigfield defined motivation as one piece in a complex of behaviors they broadly termed as engagement. They portrayed engaged readers as “decision makers” who are on-task, intrinsically motivated, knowledgeable, strategic and self-confident (2000, p. 403). Guthrie & Wigfield recognized that reading in school often occurs in socially constructed activities and stated:

Although the cognitive and social dimensions of engaged reading are distinguishable from the motivational dimension, engagement cannot occur without all three. We therefore propose that engaged readers in the classroom or elsewhere coordinate their strategies and knowledge (cognition) within a community of literacy (social) in order to fulfill their personal goals, desires, and intentions (motivation) (2000, p. 404).

They argued further that motivation is significant as part of the equation for academic success: Engaged readers improve competence, read more, and consequently develop the self-improvement cycle described in the Matthew Effect (Stanovich, 1986). Guthrie & Wigfield asserted, “motivation mediates this Matthew Effect. That is, increasing competence is motivating, and increasing motivation leads to more reading... Motivation is the link between frequent reading and reading achievement. This link sustains the upward (and downward) spiral of achievement.” (2000, p. 405). Having thus accorded motivation a crucial role in reading success and its resultant academic achievement; they reasoned that instructional processes must be consciously constructed to support and promote self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation in concert with cognitive and social processes in the classroom. There is a role for the library and librarian to play within the complexity of factors bearing on motivation in an engagement model of reading as they support motivation to read by connecting students to interesting texts.

**The Four Resources Model of reading.** Luke and Freebody (1999) developed a model of reading that establishes four broad reading competencies to be used by the reader as resources when encountering text. It is important to note that it is not a model of hierarchical competencies, but a family of practices available from the earliest stages of reading development. The four practices are described as: code-breaking, meaning-making, practical text-using, and text-evaluating.

The repertoire of practices envisioned by the Four Resources Model importantly included critical literacy in reading instruction. If, as many literacy theorists contend, reading is a social and cultural practice (Gee, 1991; 2000; 2004; Heath, 1983; Scribner & Cole, 1981; The New London Group, 1996) then the issue of power must be included in reading models. What texts ‘count’ in school cultures, whose voices are heard or not heard in those texts, and what uses are acceptable for texts are some of the issues to be considered in a critical literacy stance. This has great relevance for the school librarian

working to provide a diverse selection of materials for the school community that support deep interrogation of the social implications of texts. As they stated:

Literacy education is not about skill development, not about deep competence. It is about the institutional shaping of social practices and cultural resources, about inducting successive generations into particular cultural, normative ways of handling texts, and about access to technologies and artifacts (e.g., writing, the Internet) and to the social institutions where these tools and artifacts are used (e.g., workplaces, civic institutions) (Luke & Freebody, 1999, unpaginated).

By their definition, reading is a social practice anchored in ideological contexts and subject to idiosyncratic interpretations by participants. Their model attempts to chart a repertoire of practices in any classroom (or library), not as a testable commodity, but as a moral and political response to the characteristics of the existing linguistic and cultural practices of a local community.

**Summary and implications of reading models.** In a network of interrelated concepts, each of the five reading models discussed implicates the school library program. Overall, they suggest the importance of a reader's prior knowledge, developed in part by reading, and the crucial impact of matching texts to a student's interests and competence level. Kintsch (1998) and Smagorinsky (2001) highlight the dynamic process of meaning-making connected to existing knowledge and specific contexts. Specifically, Kintsch mentioned the role of librarians and teachers in making a match between student and text in order for students to work in the optimal "zone of learnability" (1998, p. 323). The importance of Stanovich's (1986) theoretical model is that it mapped the divergence in reading skill resulting from early differences compounded by differential practice. At the heart of the difference in early reading ability is reading practice—an issue that implicates librarians' and teachers' instructional efforts throughout the grades to support independent reading volume, thus promoting increased achievement. Guthrie & Wigfield's (2000) Engagement Model of Reading implicates instructional practices not only for teachers, but also for the teachers in the library—school librarians. Both Guthrie & Wigfield (2000) and Stanovich (1986) suggest the importance of motivation in reading instruction—an important objective in school librarianship. Finally, in their Four Resources Model, Luke & Freebody (1999) argue for the concept that schools should turn literacy back on power for critique. They question what counts as literacy and what counts as literate text in practices existing in schools. The implication for teachers and librarians is to foster critical thinking that addresses the power structure represented in the curricula. Likewise, as providers of texts and information, librarians are tightly connected to the content areas of the core curriculum and engaged as partners in understanding the social significance of text selections.

### **Issues of Print Exposure, Print Volume and Access**

Stanovich's (1986) Matthew Effects of reading theory placed print exposure, or print experience, at the heart of a successful upward spiral of reading achievement. Considerable research since that theoretical model was introduced has served to validate

the concept of some cognitive consequences of print exposure. Two studies by Stanovich & West (1989) and Cunningham & Stanovich (1990) introduced new quick probe measures for print exposure to discern whether or not relative amount of print exposure could predict variance in word recognition skill through orthographic processes. Their analyses determined in both research cases that, for the different age groups studied, print exposure accounted for a significant variance in word recognition.

A third study tracking the impact of print exposure on vocabulary, spelling and general knowledge in children (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991) expanded the potential effects of print exposure in ways hypothesized earlier by Stanovich (1986). In this attempt to sort out the cognitive consequences of print exposure for the individual student; fourth, fifth and sixth grade children were the subjects in a study correlating academic indicators and a reading exposure survey. The findings indicated that print exposure predicts performance in vocabulary, spelling, verbal fluency and general knowledge, even after phonological and general ability measures had been factored out.

Though the results of this work were correlational, the converging evidence is powerful and was extended by research predicting content knowledge acquisition (Stanovich & Cunningham, 1993) and reading growth (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992). The 1993 study results showed that the measures of an individual's experience with print were more powerful predictors of later content knowledge and vocabulary knowledge than general intelligence measures. It is important to note that the overall results held true even for individuals who had high print exposure, but low comprehension scores, that is, reading more over time served even the lower scoring students by building prior knowledge bases. The Cipielewski & Stanovich (1992) longitudinal study questioned whether relative measures of print exposure could predict reading growth in elementary school students. Using existing standardized reading test results, as well as print exposure measures administered to a group of 98 fourth- and fifth-graders, they found that both measures of print exposure accounted for a significant variance (of up to 11%) on fifth-grade standardized reading comprehension test scores. These results could not be attributed to decoding skill, but reliably linked to print exposure, prompting the conclusion that "Print exposure appears to be both a consequence of developed reading ability and a contributor to further growth in that ability" (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992, p. 85). Overall these studies can be seen to validate the reciprocal causation construct of the Matthew Effects of reading (the more you read, the better you get; the better you are, the more you read...).

Print exposure research findings complemented other findings revealed earlier by Anderson, Wilson & Fielding (1988) in a study examining the effect of out-of-school reading volume on the standardized measures of school reading. Though the methodology for gauging print exposure was different, requiring self-reported diary entries for reading and other activities out of school, the results of this study confirmed that reading growth between second and fifth-grade was predicted by the amount of out-of-school reading, especially book reading. Before all other school and out-of-school factors were considered, 14.4% of the variance in fifth-grade reading comprehension was attributable to book reading. After all other school and out-of-school factors were considered, it still claimed 6.6% of the unique variance in reading comprehension at fifth-grade. This result accrued even though the mean amount of book reading reported was

only 10.1 minutes a day. It is interesting to note three points related to the reading volume issue that this study by Anderson et al. uncovered, namely that: differences in the amount of out-of-school reading reported by children ranged from .2 to 90.7 minutes a day, teachers efforts made a significant difference in the amount of reading students did out-of-school (with class averages ranging from 4.1 to 16.5 minutes per day), and reading comprehension ability rose steeply with only 10 minutes of book reading a day (Anderson et al., 1988, pp. 296-297).

These findings linking print volume to achievement were confirmed by Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama 's (1990) study of fifth and sixth graders and in Cullinan's (2004) review of research on the effects of independent reading on school achievement. Cullinan found that studies confirmed that the amount of free, voluntary reading has a consistent positive impact on school achievement measured by assessments of vocabulary, reading comprehension, verbal fluency and general information. Nagy and Anderson (1984) helped to explicate the mechanism for growth in their work on establishing the size and development of academic vocabulary. They proposed that "direct instruction could not cover more than a small fraction of the words that a student will actually encounter in school reading" (Nagy and Anderson, 1984, p. 32) and identified volume of language experience as the fundamental catalyst for vocabulary growth. It is fair to conclude that converging evidence indicates that print exposure accounts for significant differences in reading achievement and a set of cognitive abilities related to school achievement.

I argue that one cannot acknowledge the implications of differential practice in reading on achievement outcomes, without recognizing the import for pedagogy. Some researchers have indicated the importance of extensive reading as part of a balanced program of reading instruction, for example, Pressley stated "the more a reader reads and improves fluency, the more comprehension should improve by increasing the cognitive capacity available for comprehension" (2000, p. 553). Duke & Pearson argued for providing a great deal of time spent reading in order to apply skills and strategies (2002, p. 207) and Pearson & Goodin (2010) decried the lack of evidentiary clarity of the National Reading Panel leading to its conclusion that it could not validate the efficacy of school-based independent reading in developing fluency.

### **Access to Print**

An underlying problem connected to the findings of print exposure studies lies with assumptions about print access in our communities. As several studies have reported (McQuillan, 1998; Neuman, 1999; Neuman & Celano, 2001; Smith, Constantino, & Krashen, 1997) there is unequal access to print of all kinds apparent in our communities and school libraries. If children do not have reliable and proximate access to reading materials, then exposure-to-print effects will reflect that lack in lower achievement. Given that there also appear to be wide differences in the independent reading habits of students, lack of physical access will influence and compound the lack of practice. But access is not just physical, proximate access—intellectual access in school libraries is also provided with library program factors such as book promotion, book display, collaborative activities with instructional partners, and broad genre acquisition. These are all functions of the credentialed school librarian, supported by other library staff in a high-functioning school library. The access issue is expressed in absolute numbers in

collections as well; California school libraries provide an example of the variation seen in the pupil-to-book ratio—in California the ratio is 1:17.9; nationally the ratio is 1:26 (California Department of Education, 2005). For California schools especially, the statistics mean that when schools initiate practices to increase reading volume and reading achievement, staff must make a special effort to obtain a large number of appropriate texts to support independent reading.

### **Achievement Studies Related to School Libraries**

Research on the effect of school libraries on student achievement has a long history with at least seventy-five studies in the past half century (Lance, 2002b), but in this review I will privilege the research accumulating since 1990. The more recent studies (20 states in the United States have been assessed) based their analysis on a fundamentally different concept of school libraries as a result of the conceptual framework defined by *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (American Association of School Librarians, 1998). In this document the foundational elements of library purpose—information, education and recreation—are affirmed, but the facets of the library program and the librarian’s instructional roles have taken precedence over the concept of resource collection in defining the library’s power. Sophisticated technology has also created a distribution of information in (and from) the library that has altered the instructional expectations and roles of the librarian.

### **School Librarians’ Changing Roles**

The roles of the librarian as described by *Information Power* include that of teacher, instructional partner, information specialist and program administrator. As a teacher, the librarian works one-on-one with students or class groups to access, evaluate and synthesize information. As an instructional partner the focus is on collaborating with staff in the school to develop instruction and resources for the benefit of the entire school community. The librarian’s ability as an information specialist relies on expertise in evaluating and acquiring a range of information resources in all formats, and developing programs and instruction to promote its use. Finally, the day-to-day operation of the library facility—from budgets, to schedules, to program activities and policies of use are jointly determined in the school community with the leadership of the school librarian.

The expanded roles of the modern school librarian require more time and expertise and advance the concept of librarianship from one based on collection to one based on instruction in the evaluation and use of information (Lance, 2002b, Lonsdale, 2003). But it is this expanded set of roles and new conceptual framework for school libraries that allows current researchers to design analyses to tease apart aspects of the school library and librarianship that most impact student learning. And while older library studies showed connections between library service and achievement, it is the more refined statistical analysis in research initiated by Keith Curry Lance in Colorado that started the current cascade of state studies. In the initial Colorado study by Lance in 1993 and a collection of studies since then, the statistical data included information on a collection of variables connected to *program development* (such as per-student ratios of library staff hours, print volumes and other materials, library expenditures, visits to the

library), *collaboration with teachers* (measured in hours of lesson design, professional development, instruction in information literacy and leadership capacity in the school community) and *technology leadership* (measured in computer-pupil ratios, networking capacities and remote access). These research factors were correlated with standardized test results and controlled for a variety of school and community differences including: the characteristics of teachers (education, experience, compensation), teacher-pupil ratio and per pupil expenditures, and community factors such as poverty levels, minority demographics and adult educational attainment (Lance, 2002c). The findings of the Lance group and other researchers working in different states found that schools with higher-level operating school libraries have achievement test scores that are 10% to 18% higher than schools with poorer library programs. After all socio-economic differences are controlled, school libraries still account for up to eight percent of the variation in standardized test scores (Lance, Rodney, & Hamilton-Pennell, 2000; Lance, 2004a).

### **A Sampling of School Library Effectiveness Studies**

In the studies conducted by Lance and his group in six states (Alaska, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Oregon, Iowa and New Mexico), the collection of data was similar, but the grade levels assessed were different. The critical finding for all schools—elementary, middle and high schools—was the distinct, positive difference made on student achievement between professionally credentialed librarians and all other staffing solutions. Although the variation between states is notable, the commonality of increased student achievement was clear, even after 50 to 60 percent of the test score variation is accounted for by socio-economic factors (SES). It is important to note that the single biggest factor in the test score variation *after SES* is the activity of a credentialed librarian and that even in the best of school circumstances related in the staffing data, most schools were understaffed in terms of recommended librarian-student ratios. Similar findings have been replicated in other states by other researchers, noted below.

**Massachusetts study.** Baughman (2000) conducted a survey with concerns similar to the Lance group surveys, mailing 1,818 questionnaires to elementary, middle/junior and high schools. In the 519 replies from 289 elementary, 89 middle/junior and 108 high schools, Baughman found a clear positive relationship between school library services and achievement on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). In percentage differences on the MCAS, 7.3% at the elementary level, 4.5% at the middle/junior high level and 1.5% at the high school level were connected to various factors of library service, after factoring out social and economic factors. Summarizing the findings (Baughman, 2000) found that higher per pupil book counts and more open hours correlated with higher average MCAS scores as did a higher level of professional staffing. As Baughman (2000) noted, levels of access hours, print experience and library service may have a powerful cumulative impact on a student's achievement over the course of a school career—an effect hypothesized in the Matthew effect (Stanovich, 1986).

**Texas study.** Smith (2001) surveyed a random sample of 600 Texas school libraries and correlated the survey findings with state data on school characteristics, community economic data and student performance on the reading section of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The intent of the study was to assess

characteristics of school libraries, relate the findings to reading achievement on TAAS and highlight best practices in high performing schools. The study found that at all school levels, students performed better in schools with librarians than in schools without librarians:

Over 10 percent more students in schools *with* librarians than in school *without* librarians met minimum TAAS expectations in reading. On average, 89.3 percent of students in schools with librarians compared with 78.4 percent in school without librarians met minimum TAAS expectations in reading (Smith, 2001, p. 1).

Smith confirmed what had been found in other studies, that SES accounted for a large part of the TAAS variation: 26 percent at elementary level, 44 percent at middle/junior high and 55 percent at high school. But library program variables accounted for a significant portion of the variation, explaining four percent of the TAAS variance at elementary and middle/junior high school and 8.2 percent at high school. While the specific library factors accounting for the variation were somewhat different at each schooling level, Smith provided an additional comparison between the 25 highest performing schools and the 25 lowest performing school in order to identify the key influencing factors. She found substantial differences between the groups in “library staffing levels, collection size, cooperative activities with teachers, library technology and school technology” (Smith, 2001, p. 2).

**California study.** Achterman (2008) conducted a statistical analysis of 5,690 (out of 8,215) comprehensive California schools at the elementary, middle and high school levels, relating library program features to California Standards Test (CST) results at the fourth, eighth and eleventh grades. His findings conformed to the other studies mentioned: There were great discrepancies between school staffing levels, the correlation between total staffing levels and student achievement was more robust with increased staffing, and generally, the humanities CST scores were significantly correlated to library program services. The robustness of the school library impact on achievement was increasingly strong as all school and community factors were controlled—reaching up to 21% higher at the high school level.

**Other school library studies.** Studies with similar methodology and similar findings have been conducted in Michigan (2003), Minnesota (2003), Missouri (2003), North Carolina (2003), and Ohio (2004). The conclusion, that the mounting evidence converging on the reliable and significant impact of school libraries on student achievement, requires some qualification. Given that professional library staffing level was among the most significant variables accounting for achievement differences in most states at most levels, it is important to note that the professional staffing level was far from ideal in almost every instance. Recommendations from the California School Library Association reflect a national consensus that a team consisting of a librarian and a technician /clerk serve school libraries at increasing levels of service, depending on the school size and level K-12 (Abilock, 2004), but this is far from the reality. An important consequence of low staffing levels noted by Smith (2001) is that where staffing is inadequate, librarians spend the greatest portion of their time on lower level basic services, instead of collaborative instructional practices. This may mean that the results of

the studies, though significant, are skewed against the true academic impact due to unfavorable staffing-pupil ratios. Against the backdrop of the changing role of librarians—from a keeper-of-the-books-model to a true instructional partner and leader model, expectations about the power of the school library to increase achievement demand continuing investigation.

### **The Intersection Between Reading Research and School Librarianship**

It is fair to say that there is an extensive connection between what we know about the reading process, the requirements of reading practice for student achievement and school librarianship. It is clear that access to print is not equitable and that it is essential to ensure adequate reading progress, yet adequate access may also require the services of a librarian to provide intellectual access for students. Books are a necessary, but not sufficient asset in school library effectiveness studies, where achievement is correlated with staffing and other program features of the school library.

## **Part II. Collaboration in Teaching and Librarianship**

### **Braided Histories: School and Public Libraries**

**The moral values phase.** The history of the United States library movement as it unfolded in the nineteenth century reveals the source of tension between public and school library cultures. It illuminates on-going concerns about book selection meant to ‘expose patrons to good literature’ that were integral to early library history. In *Apostles of Culture*, Garrison (1979) records the history of the public library movement from 1876-1920 to examine its patrician origins and seemingly contradictory evolution as a site for urban reform. The deeper story includes discussions about the multiple social forces at work in founding libraries, the social control inherent in large social institutions, and the tensions, including the counterpoint between the “genteel ethic,” and the contribution made by the public library to be a freer intellectual environment than available in the public school (Garrison, 1979, p. xiii). Often the public library mission was couched in religious terms; for example, envisioning the public librarian as a literary pastor who “must be able to become familiar with his flock...to select their reading, and gradually to elevate their taste” (Garrison, 1979, p. 37).

An imposition of cultural values can be seen in the long-lasting struggle for definition over what constitutes *quality* literature, and is ongoing today in school library selection processes, especially as manifested in different measures of acceptability seen in censorship squabbles. With a decidedly paternalistic air, early public librarians, and subsequently school librarians, meant to improve people’s education through the selection and promotion of highly moral texts. In what became known as the ‘fiction problem,’ library users, first women and then children, chose fiction of another sort altogether: adventure, romance, mystery and counter-culture stories. The popularity of light fiction and escapist literature was a controversial problem dealt with repeatedly in library literature and in American Library Association conferences during the decades between the 1870s and 1900 (Hildenbrand, 2000). The issue of moral rectitude at the heart of book selection in the early days of the public library established the issue in

conflicts over selection in public and school libraries ever since (English, 2005; Garrison, 1979).

**The urban reform phase.** The idea that light fiction was inappropriate fare was also manifested in teachers' resistance to allowing public library texts in the schools (Garrison, 1979). Public library service to schools before 1953 was largely accomplished with bookmobiles, loans from public libraries and informal classroom libraries (Michie & Holton, 2005). Early resistance by schools to library service was slowly undermined by persistent crusades on the part of public librarians, but it wasn't until the 1890s that they made headway in cooperative endeavors with teachers in regard to supplementary reading for students.

In the progressive era from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until WWI, librarians engaged in a new enthusiasm for social reform manifested in library social centers, library extension work and a new focus on children in libraries. The first children's room in a public library was established in 1890 in Massachusetts, before that children under twelve years of age were routinely excluded from the public library. Soon children's service was enlarged into separate rooms with special functions involving storytelling and book clubs meant to engage wayward youth. The growth was fast-paced: "In 1913 the ALA estimated that children's books comprised about one-fifth of the nation's library collections and about one-third of the total circulation" (Garrison, 1979, p. 210).

Librarians continued to exercise selection control over the reading materials of children beyond the time that they had given up on limiting the reading choices of adults. Initially librarians resisted providing popular texts for children, but gradually, librarians stocked light fiction and noting that the urchins "had better be reading these than doing nothing downtown," they had by 1915 embraced the more entertaining texts as part of the collections (Garrison, 1979, p. 213). The concern for good literature lingered on, as seen in the reading research summaries and commentaries of W. S. Gray (Gray, 1931; Gray, 1944). In his annual research digests one finds a "Deep regret was expressed by the investigators that instruction was not inculcating a love for better types of literature" (Gray, 1931, p. 603) and the notion that reading is "a series of experiences which help the child in his living," necessary to "elevating reading interests and tastes" (Gray, 1944, p. 497-509). The concerns over quality of texts may continue today with approved texts and canonical instruction held in opposition to freely selected reading and free reader response—and this divergence may often be found between teachers' classroom reading goals and independent reading goals of the school librarian.

In the early 1900s there were relatively few elementary school libraries and at the same time the role of school librarian was slowly being professionalized. By 1945 only 18% of schools nationally reported having a school library, but the rise of separate libraries in schools gained momentum with Federal funding through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Since then, funding for school libraries at both state and federal levels has been highly variable, constraining the steady development of resources at the school level (Michie & Holton, 2005).

In summary, the history of public and school libraries is intertwined, sometimes moving forward with similar goals, at other times in conflict over authority and selection of texts for students, but always in an interactive dialogue with one another. By understanding library history we can see the school library as distinct from the

public library with the school library serving the curriculum of the school at the same time that it is charged with the broader objectives of lifelong learning. The pedagogy of school librarianship has evolved on a parallel course with instruction generally, but is influenced by its joined history with public libraries, fraught with tension over text selection and appropriate levels of independent learning.

## **Interwoven Pedagogies: A Look at Collaboration Research**

### **Collaboration in the Work of Education**

Collaboration is increasingly valued in education (DiPardo, 1999; Fullan, 1993; Lieberman & Miller, 1999) and the barriers to and complexity of its practice are well documented (Lortie, 1975). Lortie's careful description laid out some of the causes for a historic avoidance of work in collaborative community: They included protection of individual psychic rewards of the classroom, isolation organizationally pronounced in time and space, and resource constraints. Little (1990) confirmed and amended his findings with her own, cautioning that teachers' vulnerabilities based in the uncertainties of classroom work being revealed can lead to the "persistence of privacy," both operating as forces working against collaborative work.

The move toward collaboration and professional community as a source for growth in teacher efficacy and student achievement, and away from the isolated individual teacher, is predicated on the willingness of teachers to accept the "new social realities of teaching" (Lieberman & Miller, 1999, p. 24). These new realities include a transition in teaching from individualism to professional community, from technical work to inquiry into practice, and from classroom-centered work to whole-world concerns. Yet at the same time that this new focus on the collective in teaching is emerging, the definitions of what constitutes collaboration and community remain unclear. As DiPardo noted, the two words often become entangled "Collaboration and community: two buzzwords traveling as a pair, talk about the former inevitably turning to the latter." (1999, p. 154). In an attempt to limit the discussion, I will focus on collaboration, and will exclude as much as possible, the more expansive research on the concepts of learning community and collegiality from this review.

DiPardo introduced the metaphor of a flowing stream to the conversation about collaboration, helpfully suggesting that the manifestation of collaborative practice might be "shape-shifting and diverse, varied in terms of depth, width, speed, clarity, purity, and direction" (1999, p.156). This context-dependent vision, one that accounts for public interests, oppositional currents, multiple influences and ultimately, human effort, allows us to consider collaboration as a multidimensional and situated practice operating in multiple spheres of activity. This is particularly apt for the collaborative work engaged in between teachers and librarians.

Two more specific definitions of collaboration guide analysis of the work observed in the school library. The strong form of collaboration, 'joint work', as proposed by Little (1990), is the accomplishment of complex work not possible to do individually and is typified by "encounters among teachers that rest on shared responsibility for the work of teaching (interdependence), collective conceptions of autonomy, support for teachers' initiative and leadership with respect to professional

practice, and group affiliations grounded in professional work” (1990, p. 519). This definition squares with DiPardo’s metaphor in that it takes into account situational variations and organizational constructs, including the management of tasks and time in teaching practices.

Another definition emerging from the field of librarianship defined collaboration as a process in which two or more individuals work together to integrate information in order to enhance student learning. As Monteil-Overall (2005) claimed:

Collaboration is a trusting, working relationship between two or more equal participants involved in shared thinking, shared planning, and shared creation of integrated instruction. Through a shared vision and shared objectives, student learning opportunities are created that integrate subject content and information literacy by co-planning, co-implementing, and co-evaluating students’ progress throughout the instructional process in order to improve student learning in all areas of the curriculum (2005, n. p.).

### **Collaboration: An Evolving Description of School Library Practice**

School libraries have evolved from being focused on print collections with limited service by librarians to being centers of multimedia resources with school librarianship embracing curricular partnership and instructional design (Kearney, 2000; Lester & Latrobe, 1998). One of the salient concepts of new librarianship is the idea that by collaborating, librarians “establish links not only between the library media program and individual teachers but among the teachers themselves, the library media specialist encourages a culture of collaboration throughout the school (AASL, 1998, p. 51).

The work of defining the nature of collaboration was refined in the literature on school library service beginning with Loertscher’s (1988) taxonomies for resource-based instruction. These chart increasing levels of collaborative participation in curriculum planning and implementation of lessons between teacher and librarian, but unlike other teacher-based definitions of collaboration, they are firmly rooted in resource use (1988, pp. 10 and 23). The collective team envisioned subsequently (Loertscher & Woolls, 1997), included Library Media Teachers, ESL teachers and other specialists, teachers, parents and community members. This model defines broad interaction between the activity systems represented by classroom and library curriculum and lends specificity to the school librarian’s instructional partnership role. Ongoing research examines the ways of accomplishing the new collaborative role by addressing it from the angles of progressive development over time, teachers’ cognitive styles, modes of planning, and enabling and inhibiting factors of collaborative work with teachers (Giorgis & Peterson, 1996; Monteil-Overall, 2005; Small, 1998; 2005).

Monteil-Overall (2005) catalogs the attributes of collaboration in a developmental, progressive way. Her work describes a range of practices leading to full collaboration in four models progressing from coordination, to cooperation, to integrated instruction, to integrated curriculum. She names numerous attributes including collegiality, respect, and trust that are needed for collaboration to be effective. One of the required attributes of successful collaborative practice resides in the construction of a school environment that accommodates a willingness to take risks in curriculum

partnerships (Giorgis, & Peterson, 1996). The need to tread in the risky waters of collaboration may explain, in part, the rarity of true collaborative practice as described by the researchers above. Another explanation can be described in the differences between the instructional missions and practices of the classroom and the school library as described by Cultural Historical Activity Theory.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of cognitive development established the idea of cognition and learning as inherently interactive and collaborative. With the work of others in the field, a sense of a system of activity and the cultural-historical development of humans emerged, but it was Engeström (1987) who gave substantial shape to the idea of community as mediator with his famous triangle of activity. In Engeström's elaborated triangle the elements of an activity system can be imagined in many settings, from classrooms to the school library where in each, the desired outcome, learning, is conceived of as expanding beyond the individual but with different rules and expectations. The system of activity in each type of learning situation, or classroom environment, includes a multiplicity of tools and people acting in community—in collaborative fashion. But there are differences between classroom contexts for learning and the school library. For instance, the accepted rules of student behavior in the classroom may vary from expectations in the library where students are encouraged to move about in order to browse and do research. Rules and norms for conversation levels and goals of activity also vary as students research topics and texts of personal interest without concern for graded results. Sometimes the learning goals of the teacher and librarian are different, complicating collaboration.

### **Advances in Collaborative Practice: Barriers and Factors for Success**

Arriving at working definitions of collaboration, as difficult as it may be, is not as difficult as nurturing the capacity for its practice and overcoming the barriers to its success on the ground. Literatures in the fields of teaching and librarianship abound with descriptions of the substantial inhibiting factors to successful implementation of collaborative engagement between teachers at the same time that they identify factors for success (Kearney, 2000; Peterson, 1999; Walster, 1998). Overall, these factors are related to the maintenance of separate activity systems in the school with the territory between, the possible third space, seen as risky and resisted terrain inadequately utilized by educators (Huberman, 1993; Kearney, 2000; Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1999; Walster, 1998).

One factor determining the likelihood of collaboration is that the changing, expanding role of the school librarian has not been embraced fully either inside or outside of the library profession (Small, 2005). Collaborative work in the library is resisted based on the prevailing stereotype of librarian-as-clerk and teachers' adherence to classroom boundaries, and acceptance is likely to grow slowly, moving from cooperation to coordination to full collaboration (Kearney, 2000; Peterson, 1999). Walster commented that the shift toward collaborative practice in the school library program is instantiated as a technological innovation; and as such the "social technology" of collaboration is more influential than other technologies (1998, p. 249). Like many technologies, collaboration as a technology is perceived as both helpful and constraining; as an innovation it calls on new capacities in the individual, in both teachers and school librarians, to engage in

shared curriculum creation in a new activity practices. The complexity of the change process in regard to instructional partnership for the purpose of improved student achievement also includes issues of time, autonomy, organizational influence, and shared beliefs about learning.

First, the concern over time in connection to collaborative practice is a constant refrain in the literatures of teaching and librarianship: time spent in collaboration is reported as a loss to time spent in doing the work of the individual classroom, or as a loss if unique lessons prepared by one teacher become shared lessons (Huberman, 1993; Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975); time spent collaborating is seen as a loss if the partners in collaboration don't believe that worthwhile knowledge is produced (Small, 2005); and impatience develops if the time needed to develop a working, collaborative relationship is seen as prohibitive (Monteil-Overall, 2005; Peterson, 1999).

Second, the notion of teaching autonomy looms large in the literature on teaching practice in both library and classroom; collaborative engagement is seen as a threat to individual control and independent creativity in classroom instruction (Huberman, 1993; Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1999). The historical independence of classroom teachers, operating independently in separate classrooms underlies the resistance to collaborative practice as Little pointed out:

Schoolteaching has endured largely as an assemblage of entrepreneurial individuals whose autonomy is grounded in norms of privacy and noninterference and is sustained by the very organization of teaching work. Teachers are now being pressed, invited, and cajoled into ventures in "collaboration," but the organization of their daily work often gives them scant reason for doing so (Little, 1990, p. 530).

A third issue constraining shared work across disciplinary boundaries concerns the tightly bounded department or grade-level structures that can make it difficult for librarians, operating as a department of one (especially in California), to participate as full partners with teachers where those structures are compelling in the teachers' day. When the force of schedules and curriculum materials dictated by the larger school structure works against collaboration, it is rarely practiced (Wolcott, 1994). And when administrative forces initiate collaborative interactions, for example in peer coaching, a "contrived collegiality" can be instituted that results not in a departure from isolation and autonomy on behalf of professional growth, but in a "pseudocommunity" that narrows teacher empowerment and authentic professional development (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990). Institutional constraints and the lack of administrative recognition for the value of protecting school meeting time for the topic of collaboration also act as barriers.

Finally, in regard to teachers' shared beliefs about learning Kuhlthau (1993) noted the newly evolved librarians' understanding of pedagogy: "Undergirding the process approach to information skills is a constructivist rather than a transmission view of learning," (1993, n.p.) one that actively involves students in learning through the use of a variety of resources, providing equitable opportunities to learn. Throughout the recent history of developing librarianship and teaching practice is the echo of evolving constructivist theory about learning, and a concern for equity—if teachers and librarians

share these core beliefs about learning, it supports their efforts to work jointly (AASL, 1998; DiPardo, 1999; Huberman, 1993; Kulthau, 1993; Little, 1993, 2002; Loertscher & Woolls, 1997; Lortie, 1975; Monteil-Overall, 2005; Wolcott, 1994).

### **Intersecting Research from Braided Histories and Collaboration**

In conclusion, the literatures on collaboration in teaching and librarianship share some common trajectories and concerns, but there are two significant differences. Because of organizational structures in schooling, teachers may be in community by virtue of their numbers, but school librarians are often departments of one. Second, in school librarianship, collaboration is a core feature of the instructional mission, in teaching it is often considered a voluntary activity. This brings into full relief the drive to individualism and autonomy that is so historically entrenched in our schools, each classroom operating as a separate activity system, but does not cohere to what we currently know and believe about how people learn collectively from cultural-historical activity theory. The necessity of joint work for optimal student learning needs specific signposts to guide continuing work in a shared space—this is true in classroom teaching and library work as well, as it emerges from a keeper-of-the-books mentality to the new model of instructional partner.

## **Part III. Sociocultural Perspectives on Literacy and Libraries**

### **New Literacies Emerging in Library Pedagogy and Design**

In a broader view of literacy practices and community discourses, traditional literacy is no longer understood as adequate to the needs of millennials (Gee, 2004). Researchers advocate the need for pedagogy providing for multiple literacy practices in multiple modalities, based on the concept of *design*. The creative production inherent in new technologies calls for socially constructed and project-based work, often including the development of student portfolios showcasing diverse skills and experiences (Gee, 2004; The New London Group [NLG], 1996). The notion of new literacies has also been taken up in the library field, first in the academic libraries by those who recognize the collaborative, interactive, multimodal nature of learning as it is enacted by all participants, both as both learners and teachers. Kapitzke (2001) argues as a result of these new concepts, that a new pedagogical stance is needed in libraries, one emphasizing interpersonal learning, and that a critically acute librarianship, insistently inclusive rather than exclusive and canonical, must be instituted Kapitzke (2003). She asserts that connections, not collections, must become the emphasis in the new library and can only be accomplished through collaborative effort. The notion that social interaction is essential to library program design and to motivate learning, especially for adolescents, positions librarians to develop a new brand of library functionality. Librarians alone cannot make this paradigm shift—it must be a joint work between teachers, librarians, students and the school community.

Asselin & Doiron (2008) are among those who envisioned the implications of new literacies for the traditional school library to accommodate new structures of learning and new ways of constructing knowledge. The authors propose a transformative

pedagogy for school libraries with emphasis on accommodating new learners interdisciplinary, non-authoritarian, multimodal approaches to producing new knowledge. They argue that traditional methods of schooling are discontinuous with students' lives out of school, leading to disengagement. The new learners they described are interactive participants, early to adopt new technologies, who create their own personal landscapes online through multimodal, multitasking means. Learning in the school library is challenged by these new learners and new literacies requiring a transformative pedagogy enacted in a new learning space, one that is inquiry-based, collaborative and connected to the school community. Asselin & Doiron argue, "This moves us from a notion of covering the curriculum to the challenges of developing a transformative approach where students uncover the curriculum" (2008, n.p.). In this scenario, the foundations of knowledge would be 'discovered' in a loosely structured investigative approach, subject to guidelines, but open to individual creativity requiring a new concept for library facilities, called the *learning commons*.

The learning commons idea is both a concept of learning community and a spatial real-world place for interactive learning (Roberts, 2007). Taken up by academic libraries, the idea is to create a center for knowledge construction where students, faculty and librarians can work together on joint projects. The library becomes configured to accommodate not only its traditional resources, but is equipped with technology and workspaces for collaborative projects drawing on the whole wide array of research materials readily available in the library. As Bennett (2003) noted in his review of library design projects, the traditional library described a place for knowledge seeking, while the new library describes an environment for knowledge construction. The shift has followed the evolving understanding of learning as a social, collaborative enterprise and has emerged as the technology revolution, especially the accessibility of the Internet, has enabled students' capacity for socially produced knowledge. This new library space, a Learning Commons, is based on social exchange as central to learning, and is now being designed into many new academic libraries (Bennett, 2003). As theorized, the spatial design should not reinforce the authority of the library staff, but rather it should reflect its purpose as a collaborative student space. Currently, some school libraries are folding these understandings into new interactive programs and physical designs in hopes of motivating more student use and collaborative projects with teachers.

### **Motivation and Adolescent Literacy in the School Library**

Motivation theories, both general theories of motivation (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990; Hidi, & Harackiewicz, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and those dedicated to literacy (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), provide a framework for understanding adolescent literacy practices. The complex web of relationships between sources of motivation and adolescent choices in literacy behaviors inside and outside of school have been elaborated in current theories by more fluid notions of what drives motivation (Hidi, & Harackiewicz, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

**Motivation: conceptual perspectives.**

Ryan & Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) offers a model delineating the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as they exist on a continuum of autonomy, impacting an individual's engagement. In SDT, the more autonomous a motivated act becomes, the more it represents intrinsic motivation and delivers personal satisfaction by virtue of the individual's choice-making. This suggests that a sense of autonomy might play an important role in adolescent motivation to engage in literacy practices. Likewise, Hidi & Harackiewicz (2000) agree that intrinsic motivation is driven by an individual's interests, but they argue against polarizing extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on a linear continuum. They suggest instead that motivation is a fluid construct with intertwinings between facets of extrinsic objectives and situational interests prompted by specific contexts, and intrinsic individual interests. In their construct, extrinsic motivations and goals may be integrated into the individual, and over time, may develop into intrinsic motivation for a task. So while both theories would agree that intrinsic motivation is driven by personal interest and satisfaction, Hidi & Harackiewicz (2000) counter with the idea that extrinsic motivation manifested in situational triggers (perhaps in a school assignment) may usefully prompt sustained interest, and ultimately may be experienced as intrinsic motivation for a learning goal. This more fluid concept of motivation relates to questions uncovering adolescents' preferences and goals for literacy practices both inside and outside of school. It is especially meaningful for instructional programs in the school library where students are encouraged to make personal choices for texts and topics that interest them.

Motivation and engagement received more attention in the reading research field in the 1990s, when reading began to be seen as an intentional act, one involving both cognitive and affective domains (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Guthrie & Wigfield (1999) recognized reading as constructing meaning in a motivated act, one that correlates intentional behavior with text comprehension. What has evolved theoretically is an understanding that a dichotomous framework holding intrinsic motivation in contrast to extrinsic motivation lacks the nuance and fluidity needed to analyze students' literacy preferences and practices inside and outside of school. Founded on the belief that reading is a motivated act, these theories cumulatively focus attention on the relationship between multiple sources of motivation and adolescent engagement in a complex of reading practices and associated preferences in multiple environments (Csikszentmihályi, 1990b; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; and Ryan & Deci, 2000).

**Motivation: enlarging empirical perspectives in education.** Motivation has been studied conceptually as a factor in reading engagement and more generally as a developmental issue in schooling. Seminal studies have shown that academic motivation decreases over years of schooling as adolescents face more impersonal school settings, more competition and less opportunity for decision-making (Eccles et al., 1993; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). The ideas that student interests and preferences matter to achievement (Guthrie et al., 1997; Guthrie, et al., 2007) and that allowing student choice also matters to achievement (Cordova & Lepper, 1996; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004) provide reasons for including the issue of student motivation in reading programs.

Research on motivation established that it is a critical factor in promoting independent reading. Guthrie & Wigfield (2000) assert that reading instruction must

extend past traditional relationships with text, beyond comprehensive reading strategy instruction, to embrace motivational practices as part of pedagogy. Their recommendations coincide with the model of engagement presented and lead to considering the implementation of independent reading programs in the instructional day. In related research, Guthrie & Davis (2003) found that many struggling readers in middle school are disengaged from reading. They claim that disincentives for reading in middle school include fragmented and decontextualized reading instruction, stultifying textbooks, a competitive, rather than collaborative work ethos, depersonalized assignments, diminished agency and limited support from teachers with a much larger student cohort than elementary school. To provide support for engaged reading in the face of all of those barriers, they suggest that middle school teachers use several classroom practices to increase motivation; including allowing students choice in selecting reading materials (Guthrie & Davis, 2003).

One of the crucial contrasts between much in-school learning and many out-of-school learning situations is the student's ability to make choices and pursue individual interests. Though Schugurensky (2000) defines informal learning as self-directed, incidental, or socialized, depending on the levels of intention and self-awareness of the learner, and all three occur outside the school's regular curricula. He does note, however, that informal learning *can* take place inside educational institutions, but that sometimes, independent learning goes against the "intended goals of the curriculum" (Schugurensky, (2000, p. 2). The school library is situated to provide for both types of learning, curricula-based and independent. Furthermore, it would seem that the library is well-situated to accommodate learning that develops knowledge as a useful tool, one of particular interest to the learner in a specific time and within a specific school culture. Given access and time, students in the library can pursue knowledge, acting on individual interests and supported by social interactions, that build their understanding of the world (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). The conflict arising between established goals in the curriculum and other ways of informal learning is both visited and resolved in productive library activity.

## Chapter Summary

My goal in this dissertation is to come to a better understanding of the place of the school library in the learning environment and culture of a secondary school. Using the three lenses of research literatures in reading, collaboration and new literacies, I examine the role it plays in one small educational community.

Returning to the question referred to at the start of the chapter, Can you help me find a good book?, we can now see how reading models speak to the librarian's and teacher's concern with answering it. The reading models we have reviewed indicate how much success in reading comprehension relies on making a good match between the willing reader and the potential text. If there is a good match between the competencies of the reader and the demands of the text, comprehension is enabled. The factors of domain knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, print experience, interests, motivation and critical purposes for reading—all play a part in supporting reading achievement.

Beginning with Kintsch's cognitive model, moving to Smagorinsky's socio-cultural model, to Stanovich's concept of developmental divergence based on print volume, to Guthrie & Wigfield's engagement model and Luke & Freebody's Four Resources model, we can see a connection to an expanding social notion of literacy practices. Each model advanced the understanding of the complexity inherent in the act of reading and making meaning within a community of readers. And while these two-dimensional models of reading may appear to be like 'pinning the butterfly,' deprived of the sense of life and activity inherent in social interaction, each model attempted to represent some of the dynamism of text engagement and its precursor, motivation, within a particular situation.

The librarian and teacher collaborating in the school library then, are on solid theoretical ground in working to activate prior knowledge, to build vocabulary and general knowledge, to promote wide reading and to use interactive learning strategies so students cooperatively build knowledge. In the following chapters we will use these principles to examine the responses of the stakeholders at Southside Secondary School as a library evolved at the site.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### Methodological Approach

Once I had decided to begin construction of a small library at Southside Secondary School (SSS) and I presented a proposal to study the library's evolution as a dissertation project, the question arose as to what methodological approach to take. My dissertation committee recognized that the effort had all the markings of a design research effort and encouraged me to pursue that methodology. As a result, this study was conducted as a design experiment (see Reinking & Bradley, 2008) with formal data collection extending over the course of one year. But, as discussed at the outset, the full extent of my connection to the school involves relationships that extend over four years in this study and in an earlier study. The research focus was to describe the evolution of one small secondary public school library in the Bay Area and its impact on the school site—looking at how the students and staff respond to a library. I have chosen the design research framework and, within it employ a range of qualitative and ethnographic methods (see Bogdan & Biklen, 2003); it is a theory-driven study in a situated learning environment—that is, the approach is based on practical application. The intent is to create an important link between theory and practical application as the project evolved over time (Design-Based Collective, 2003; Shavelson, Phillips, & Feuer, 2003). Since design research is meant to be an adaptive, pragmatic and authentic application of research goals modified as needed to accomplish pedagogical goals within the ecological demands of a site (Brown, 1992; Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer & Schauble, 2003), it is well suited to the complexities found on the ground in school-based research. In this case, at Southside Secondary School, the subject was the multiple interactions of staff, students and spatial elements while building a library program.

Design studies are distinguished by studying the “evolution of learning” of a community in the context of the “crucible of practice” (Shavelson et al., 2003, p. 25) accomplished in a collegial, co-constructionist frame. The difficulty lies in disentangling the factors present to create a valid narrative and to accurately portray a teaching experiment against theory and hypothesis. I anticipated factors in this study that included student interests, staff instructional goals, administrative schedules and limited space as well as other interacting variables in developing a library program where none existed. One cannot anticipate every variable, but as Schoenfeld (1999) reminded us, building something is one of the best ways to see how something works: “Sometimes the only way you can understand complexity is to study complex things” (p.12). I reasoned that by actually studying the complexity itself, as much as the outcomes of intervention, some new understanding about school libraries might be gained. Words that characterize design studies: *iterative, process focused, interventionist, collaborative, multileveled, utility oriented, and theory driven* (Shavelson et al., 2003, p.26) can also be seen as describing good, responsive teaching. It seems, therefore, that engaging in research that focuses on the iterative nature of instruction, the sort that develops in a complex interaction between school elements, is precisely what building a school library entails, and was what I expected to encounter at this site.

In short, education research (and my project) is well served by an ecological stance in the research design, one that draws on the human capacity for dealing with networks of influences simultaneously (Cobb et al., 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The complexity of factors is not a liability, but an advantage in understanding the possible mechanisms of change. This study of a school library as intervention is not accidental ethnography, but deliberate, opportunistic, recursive qualitative work that leads to information more broadly useful in the engineering of practical applications for school improvement.

### **Earlier Study and Researcher Engagement**

I conducted an evaluation study of a reading intervention program at the school site in 2007-2008 that is used for background and some comparison data in the current study. During that period I surveyed 24 students in grades 6 through 8, interviewed 22 of the 24 students surveyed, interviewed six staff members, and observed in the humanities and reading intervention classrooms over the course of the spring semester. The survey and interview protocols from that study were modified for use here and the participants were contacted again, whenever possible, for inclusion in this study. The reading intervention program evaluated included a limited number of titles (40) to provide independent reading material across the three grade levels. One school aide, an avid fan of children's literature, assembled a small collection of donated and garage-sale books—a welcome, but inadequate hodge-podge of titles to augment the limited selection of available titles. A majority of the staff, five out of six interviewed in the earlier study, called for more books or library service giving access to differentiated materials as well as more “good books” that appealed to contemporary interests. This recognition, echoed by the students interviewed, became the impetus to both build and study the building of a school library.

After the evaluation study concluded, I continued to be engaged as a graduate student of Western University, making informal evaluations at the school, working on a grant to support curriculum goals, and beginning the process of planning and developing a small core library collection for the humanities, in hopes of building a library program and a subject for my dissertation study. I think it is important to note that the site has had considerable turnover during its five years of operation, both in students and in staff, as is the case in many school settings. In this study I compare individual data on some occasions where that is possible; in other cases, the data comparisons are summaries of responses from similar, but not identical groups of staff and students. While this may not be optimal, it is the reality of multiyear engagements with unpredictable population turnovers in an urban school.

### **Data Collection for the Library as Intervention: A Distributed Library**

In this study I viewed the school library project as an intervention—one that seeks to develop a culture of reading and information use with adolescents—by attending to access, choice, motivation and engagement in reading, and by collaborating with amenable content area teachers on instructional supports. The proposal initially called for constructing library use at three levels in the school landscape: near-ground, middle-ground and far-ground, but was reliant on the collaborative engagement of teachers and

students. Building and studying a three-tier library program is the first focus of my study and is what I refer to as a *distributed library*.

In the near-ground, I envisioned expanding classroom libraries, valued for the advantages of proximity and easy access to a small collection and easy connections to a smaller circle of readers. I planned to help the school support a robust independent reading program by working with the teachers to construct vibrant classroom libraries, with program guidelines focusing on the issue of matching texts to student interests in order to improve engagement and motivation in reading. This element of the plan was jettisoned when the English Department eliminated most free voluntary reading time and reported that maintaining a classroom library was just too onerous. Teachers asked me to collect most of the books from the classroom libraries, so that part of the project was discontinued, though I did visit the classrooms to booktalk titles available in the core library collection in order to support independent reading.

In the middle-ground I proposed to build, maintain and grow a central library collection, providing a larger set of resources that were both on-site and curriculum-connected. A school library and librarian may provide opportunities for collaborative, resource-based instruction by engaging in the development of reading and curriculum-based writing tailored to the site's needs for resources. My plan of engagement included other facets of library support: building prior knowledge for core novel reading, collaborating on literature circles, book clubs, and research projects, and working with small groups of students in library aide programs. Together with willing teachers, I meant to develop students' ability to access, evaluate and use informational resources with mini-lessons in Information Literacy embedded in project work. The school site's willingness (or reluctance) to take up projects designed to build students' library skills and reading inclinations were a second major focus of the study. I suggest that these active elements of library use constitute what can be called *library dispositions* that may be important signals of literacy growth worthy of attention.

In the far-ground I proposed to connect students to libraries in the broader community—public and Internet—by providing instruction to build the skills and habits of mind necessary to use those broader resources. In the year prior to this study, two humanities teachers and I took fieldtrips to the local public library with four classes of the two younger grade levels for an orientation and to obtain library cards. In 2009-2010, we presented information on the local public library and reviewed library card access procedures, as well as made applications available to the classes at the two older grade levels.

**Building the library.** While most research-based interventions in schools may be more limited in their physical construction, this study required an extensive connection to the school in monetary and material means. I was involved in obtaining all the ingredients for a small school library including: grants for library funding, donations of books and volunteer librarian consulting time, design of the library space, account relationships with major vendors for library books, supplies, furnishings and software, orders and account tracking for the procurement of all items, and labor involved in moving books, shelving cases and furnishings. The work was accomplished in phases as funding was secured; the physical construction played out over a two-year period in several major phases:

- Phase 1: designing a library and negotiating for space, first grant
- Phase 2: housing a library—first shelving (five units) and book orders, and library computer station with automation software, book circulation begins
- Phase 3: creating a library place—second round of shelving (seven units) and book orders, move library to all-purpose room stage, addition of two wireless laptops and printer, second and third grants
- Phase 4: expanding the collection, third round of shelving (five units), fourth grant
- Phase 5: expanding the library collection and library space into annex, fourth round of shelving (four units).

### **Researcher Role**

The iterative nature of design research means doing the next logical thing as the intervention is socially constructed within a community of learners—the teachers, students and researcher included (Brown, 1992). Given that formative and design research is recursive, collaborative and adaptive as enactment on the site dictates changes and redesign to accommodate the situation (Reinking & Bradley, 2008; Shavelson et al., 2003; The Design-Based Collective, 2003), I was a participant observer in the most active sense (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Kelly, 2003). Using the engineering metaphor (Brown, 1992; Cobb et al., 2003; Reinking & Bradley, 2008) of design research, my role was to continually appraise the intervention and rework the design as it progressed, at the same time that I was the consulting teacher-librarian, the acting librarian for the school.

Given the very involved nature of my research relationship to the library design project, and my long experience as a teacher and teacher-librarian, I have valued the importance of triangulating many data sources to strive for as much objectivity as possible. And in keeping with Peshkin's argument that researchers must actively seek out their subjective inclinations throughout the course of data collection and analysis (1988), I have tried to unearth my biases. In his words, subjectivity is a broad concept, "It is an amalgam of persuasions that stem from the circumstances of one's class, statuses, and values interacting with the particulars of one's object of investigation" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). I have strived to illuminate my particular subjectivities throughout the research process. These subjectivities include my perspectives as a middle-class white woman, as a long time educator and librarian, and as a strong proponent of independent reading that attends to students' interests and motivations to read. I have sought to include the ways in which my prior convictions and experiences might be reflected in the affective responses I recorded in my fieldnotes and memos. In other words, I have worked to make my findings reflect the whole of my self brought to this research situation.

Some of the issues I considered related to my past experiences, some to the situation of this study. To start, I worried about my ethnicity in light of the school population of almost 100% minority students: Would the students accept me as an older white woman, especially in moments of Reader's Advisory as I sought to understand and provide for their preferences for independent reading? It is also true that my 30-plus years of experience as a teacher and librarian had led me to believe in the power of interest and in choice-making for improved student reading engagement and achievement. Stepping

back from these biases (research-based though they may be) required self-reflection. It also required the effort to reveal data from many sources in order to test my perspectives from multiple angles and other voices. The research effort was further complicated by the very engaged nature of my participant observation status as one of the staff without really being one of the staff; that is, I worked at the school, but was not an employee of the school. This led to discrepancies in information when I could not be included in the staff email network, or was not regularly included in conversations about curriculum. I countered this by collecting data from a wide range of sources (including collecting assignments from the study hall floor). The data collection plan in Table 1 provides an overview of the multiple data sources used over the course of the study to develop the findings found in later chapters.

Table 1

*Overview of Research Data Collection at Southside Secondary School*

Aspect	Data type	Data collection record
<i>Distributed library:</i> Facility and program development	Observations of library activity and public records, notices and reports	Observation fieldnote and verbal exchanges with staff, students and parents
	Photographs of library facility development	Dated photo files
	Destiny acquisition records	Publicly documents
<i>Library dispositions:</i> Information Literacy practices and beliefs	Staff audiotaped interviews	Content matrix with selected transcription
Impact of access to library resources on collaborative teaching practices	Informal staff interviews	Fieldnotes on collaborative exchanges
	Observation of changes in content lesson design	Student projects, esp. 8 <sup>th</sup> grade exhibition work
Students' interest and motivation to read independently	Student reading survey, attention to access issues, student questionnaire	Tally of survey results on Likert items and short response questions
Focal students' interest and motivation to read independently	Survey and follow-up reflective individual audiotaped interview	Tally of survey results on Likert items & short response questions Audiotapes—content matrix with selected transcription
Library impact on students' engagement in independent reading	Written observations, teacher responses and student comments and interactions, circulation records, classroom booktalking records	Fieldnotes of student and teacher interactions <i>Destiny</i> circulation records Notes of classroom mini-lessons on library usage

*Note:* *Destiny* is the name of the Follett Library automation software utilized in the study.

## Methods

### Site and Participant Description

**Site selection.** Selection of the secondary public school site (SSS) was purposive (Polkinghorne, 2005): It was chosen because I was involved in two earlier projects there (a reading intervention evaluation and an analysis of reading motivation derived from a segment of data in the original reading evaluation study). I had also started the process of building basic library resources in the year prior to the study, both in classrooms and in a very small central collection. The purposive selection of this site without an existing school library program represented an unusual opportunity to study the evolution of a library at a school as one was constructed (Shavelson et al., 2003). Given that the school was entering its fifth year of operation, it provided a lens on the creation of library curriculum and culture in a start-up school. In this project there was a perfect storm of inadequacy that presented an opportunity for study; there was no library facility, no library staff, and no library instructional program, but there was an emerging readiness to take small interdisciplinary steps towards developing resources and programs on behalf of students' learning. Since randomized studies are often unfeasible in schools, even less so when considering library effects (how do you withhold a school library?), the evolution of a school library program over time presented a unique situation for research.

**The school site.** Southside Secondary School opened in the fall of 2005 with a cohort of 90 middle school students. By the 2008-09 school year the school had moved to a new school site and had grown to 198 students (School Accountability Report Card, California Dept. of Education). Student Enrollment was reported then at 57% African American, 40% Hispanic or Latino with the rest in small subgroup categories. At that point there were nine teachers at the school and the principal was the third in the school's history. Also in that year the school received recognition for its academic growth with a California Title 1 Academic Achievement Award for student progress on proficiency in standardized testing goals. The school district (a public charter district) reported a total of 30 schools, eight of which had libraries with some staffing, including three credentialed librarians, myself included. Southside Secondary School was also loosely affiliated with Western University, a research institution.

In the 2009-2010 school year as the library program was built, the school's population ranged between 190 and 200 students in grades 8 -11 comprised at the start of the school year of 61% African American, 29% Latino, 4% Asian, and 1% Caucasian. In the spring of 2010, California standardized STAR testing data recorded that 52% were eligible for Free/Reduced lunch status, and 28 students were English Learners, or Reclassified Fluent-English Proficient, while six were identified as Students with Disabilities. Twelve full and part-time teachers, four administrative staff members, and one college counselor were on site as well as numerous adult volunteers

**Staff participants.** Eighteen teachers and administrative staff were recruited for participation in the study and in one formal, audio-taped interview. Only one of the six staff members observed and interviewed in the original 2007-2008 study remained at the site. Of those 18 staff members offered consent forms for participation, 12 returned signed consents, 3 offered verbal consent, but did not return signed forms and thus did

not participate in the interview, and 3 left the school before follow-up requests could be made.

Both the teaching and administrative staff had a mix of experienced and inexperienced members. The eight teachers interviewed on the teaching staff had an average of four years of full-time teaching experience, ranging from one to eight years. Two teachers were *Teach For America* teachers; altogether four were first-year or second-year teachers. Ms. Tallub and Mr. Rogers, the English teachers, had seven and eight years of teaching experience, respectively. The third English teacher, Mrs. Scott, was a first-year teacher as was Mrs. Kilpatrick, the Resource Specialist. A history teacher, Mr. Wright, and the Student Services Coordinator, Ms. Zita, were experienced humanites teachers with 16 years of experience between them. Principal Rider had many years of teaching experience at the fourth through eighth grade level, as well as three years of administrative practice. A Campus Supervisor, Mrs. Redstone, had worked in the education field as a parent volunteer, an administrative office assistant, and at SSS in her current role as student supervisor.

**Student participants.** The focal group of students selected were the same group first studied in the reading intervention evaluation study in 2007-2008. Given attrition, 13 of the original 24 informants remained at the school in grades 8 through 11, and 9 of them consented to participate in the current study. Obtaining written consent for interested students was hard; it seemed difficult for the teenagers to remember to return signed consent forms even though we strategized ideas together, such as phoning or texting themselves a reminder message. Some wrote urgent reminders on the backs of their hands. In the end, too much pressure to return the forms seemed inadvisable and after eight weeks of effort to recruit, the study went forward with nine students to be surveyed in a written questionnaire with a follow-up audio-taped individual interview. As Polkinghorne noted, “The unit of analysis in qualitative research is experience, not individuals or groups” (2005, p.139) and in this case, the number of individuals was only one part of the study’s recorded experience. The research focus was on the overall environmental response to the building of a library, so the addition of 85 other students answering a similar, but anonymous questionnaire lent triangulation data and depth. I decided to be satisfied with the recruitment numbers as representative for analysis.

### **Study Protocol Design and Administration**

**Reading survey and questionnaire design.** I created a Reading Survey protocol for students in the evaluation study referencing other student reading surveys in the literature (Atwell, 1987; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Pilgreen, 2000). The Reading Survey used in the current study modified six questions from that earlier 2007-2008 protocol, but remained largely the same in order to obtain some comparative data for the remaining focal students in the 2009-2010 study. The anonymous Student Reading Questionnaire was a modified version of the Reading Survey, designed to be administered to groups of students on the school site during the spring semester of 2009-2010 by English Language Arts teachers. I thought that a widely disseminated questionnaire offered an efficiency of interrogation that might also serve as a valuable triangulation to the focal students’ responses and my own observations.

**Administration of the student protocols.** In the spring of 2010, I administered the eighteen-question Reading Survey to nine focal students individually in the unoccupied library, followed immediately by a 20 to 30 minute audio-taped interview probing generally for more extensive responses and explanations about their written survey answers. The interviews all occurred in the library due to a lack of any other available private space on the site. I adopted the interview stance suggested by Spradley (1979): each student will be viewed as a respected “informant” for not only perspectives on classroom instructional practices, but their self-reported reading behaviors and reading preferences, both inside and outside of school. The questions in the Reading Survey cast a very wide net into the reading lives of these students, including library activities. After the written survey was completed I followed up with open-ended interview probes to add depth to the information available about libraries, reading, schools, and general literacy practices.

English teachers administered the anonymous twenty-question Student Reading Questionnaire to 85 available students, 49 females and 36 males. Of these, 30 were in grade eight, 20 were in grade nine, 18 were in grade ten and 17 were in grade eleven. A majority of the questions were identical to the written survey given to focal students (all protocols are attached as appendices). The written survey and questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes for students to complete and most were accomplished at the end of the school semester. I waited until the end of the school year to distribute the survey and questionnaire in order to give students a longer time period to experience the new library program and therefore to produce information-rich data. The selection of students responding anonymously to the Student Reading Questionnaire depended entirely on the teacher’s choice of timing to administer the protocol—the students who were in the classroom at the time chosen took the survey. The resulting data served as a kind of informal check on observations, focal student data and the perceptions of teachers gleaned from staff interviews.

**Staff participation.** The audio-taped interviews of 12 consenting staff were conducted individually in the unoccupied library and lasted 20 to 30 minutes. The interviews of consenting teachers and administrators focused on their experiences with school libraries in their personal histories and their responses to library resource growth at the school, particularly as it may have influenced instruction and student responses to reading instruction. The questions probed teachers’ experiences with school libraries during teacher preparation classes as well as their beliefs and practices with reading instruction in the content areas. Frequent informal interviews with adult consenting staff were a regular part of the ongoing participant observation structure of the study. For example, I would offer a curriculum resource, saying “Can I walk down the hall with you?” Since the staff had no lunchroom or common workspace, informational moments like these added to the information gathered in meetings we arranged.

### **Other Data Collection**

Some publicly accessible data were collected at the site as the library facility was in the process of early construction during the 2008-09 school year. These data include Department of Education reports, school district information, photos of the facility development, regular school notices, meeting agendas and a prior grant application.

**Observations.** As a participant observer (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994), I found it difficult to schedule observational visits to the content area classrooms because of my commitment to be present in the library for the students and staff. Hence these observations were irregular and very brief. Though I had meant to conduct regular formal observations in classroom settings to record literacy activities and practices (especially small group literacy work, whole class group work and independent reading), these observations were replaced with occasional short visits and mini-lessons, as well as broader, ecological observations of the school community at work. The location of all our book and computer resources in a completely open, and hence vulnerable, space, also “tied” me to the library. Computers and shelving cabinets had to be locked down whenever I left that space. The amount of time needed to open and close the library every day precluded my doing it multiple times during the day. I learned to lock the computers and dart to do brief errands within the school. These are the realities of work as an active participant observer in public schools; the researcher is called upon to be flexible.

**Ecological observation.** Formative and design experiments strive to discover consistent themes and practices. They are guided by pragmatism and authentic application of research accomplished within the ecology of a site (Brown, 1992; Szwed, 2001); this is research “in the crucible of practice” (Shavelson et al., 2003, p. 25) that accounts for and includes a complexity of variables (The Design-Based Collective, 2003), and the notion of a “community of practice”. Because an ecological perspective is important for valuing the complexity of variables of practice as a beneficial whole, rather than as a problem of confounding multiple factors (Brown, 1992; Shavelson et al., 2003), I made careful observation fieldnotes on a daily basis with weekly transcription, and I collected district and site-level documents. These included the collection of some teacher instructional plans and schedules, school schedules and public announcements, and other documents pertaining to the evolution of library service, including observations of the SSS school culture as the library evolved.

**Quantitative data.** In addition to the qualitative data noted above, I used readily available school-wide test scores from the California Standards Test (CST) in English Language Arts (ELA), and data from School Accountability Report Cards for overview purposes. Some valuable quantitative data came from the library automation software, called *Destiny*, purchased to catalog and circulate resources. Though I had a steep learning curve to understand its functionality, I was able to capture valuable information about collection growth and grade level circulations over time, as well as data about the top patrons and favored titles in the collection. This data gathering did not happen without error; I discovered too late to recover it that I had forgotten to obtain one statistic on collection size in the month of October 2009.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was ongoing and recursive over the entire course of the study, according to the principles of design research using ethnographic tools (Denzin, & Lincoln, 1994; LeCompte & Goetz, 1981) and constant comparative analysis (Glaser, & Strauss, 1967). Assessing the impact of the library intervention was reliant on the combination of long-term observation at the site and triangulation of all data sources (LeCompte & Goetz, 1981; Mathieson, 1988) including data from focal student surveys

and follow-up interviews, as well as interviews with content area teachers. Given the importance of describing the obstacles, successes and modifications as they unfolded, I also wrote frequent memos to myself as insights emerged. Later, I created data displays to search for patterns in the accumulating data sets (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The crush of data was a near catastrophe, but for this recursive analytic process.

**Analysis of fieldnotes.** My data analysis started with simple open coding of the written fieldnotes; I repeatedly read the year-long observations with my research questions in mind in order to name (count to one) items that might sort into categories of understanding (Becker, 1998). By categorizing the gist of comments and notes recorded in broad terms, such as transparency, infrastructure, time constraints, teacher reluctance or collaboration, student interest and resource development, I was able to relate my fieldnotes to topics of interest in the original research design. As is common in this sort of inquiry, unexpected patterns emerged, such as the relevance of sound and silence patterns in the school all-purpose room and possibilities for privacy in the basic functioning of the small library as it evolved. The effort to discover broad structural patterns (MacQueen, McLellan & Milstein, 1998) went hand-in-hand with listing the common terms to begin the development of a set of codes available for analyzing the other data collected. What I found was that my initial coding led to a further organization of codes into constraints and affordances: in the physical space of the facility, in the curricular space of the school program, and in the ideological space of the school community's beliefs about teaching and learning.

Using constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) throughout the process of data collection and on increasingly complex levels of coding as I worked on data analysis led me to organize the basic structure of categories into subcategories that included strongly connected observations about issues of access, time and resources. Cross referencing the emerging codes "in a continuous dialogue with empirical data" (Becker, 1998, p. 109), helped me to see the ways in which the data related to my original theoretical umbrella of Third Space in the school library. I worried initially that I might not be adhering to Becker's (1998) advice to use the data to define the concept, not the other way around, but sorting the data into large functional sets led naturally to dissecting Third Space into three major elements. Over time each of the spatial concerns, for physical, curricular and ideological space, became important touchstones in analysis. I found that it was also important to be alert for the surprises and outliers that can disappear in categorization and subcategorization (Bowker & Star, 1999). For instance, it was late in my data collection process that my hunch about the difficulties of visibility and privacy encountered by moving the new library onto the stage in the all-purpose room was validated during interviews. Relating that finding back to observation notes made much earlier in the research process exemplify the recursive nature of the work.

**Analysis of student and staff interviews.** During the interviews of staff and students I took notes at the same time that we recorded our conversations on audio-tape. The first stage of analysis for all interviews was to create matrices, such as those recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) that included all the research questions and all 21 interview participants, separated into student or staff files. Next, I transcribed my notes about subjects' responses to the questions into the basic matrices, noting the issues

that were emphasized and the personal interpretations revealed in answers. Then I listened to the interviews again, correcting my notes where necessary and transcribing commentary where needed to develop evidence for the participant's expressed concerns. As the interview transcription proceeded, I discovered just how "real" the notion of constant comparative analysis was; often, for example, the analysis of interview data led me back to the fieldnotes in an iterative analysis process that revealed commonalities between interviewees and my observations. One example is the concern by a majority of respondents for access to "interesting books" for the students; though the definition of "good books" varied, there was a broad consensus for providing a diverse literature for young adults.

**Analysis of reading surveys and questionnaires.** Some identical questions on the focal student Reading Survey and the Student Reading Questionnaire provided opportunities for descriptive statistics in regard to book ownership, reading frequency and habits, library usage preferences, and self-identified reading proficiency. The first task in analysis was to tally responses for all the questions, noting the consistency or inconsistency of responses across grade levels, and calculating simple averages related to my research questions on student library dispositions and the value of a distributed library concept. These figures, in turn, became comparative data points for my observations and the comments of interviewees by virtue of their relationship to my identified codes of access, time, resources and spatial categories.

### **A Note on Qualitative Coding and Analysis**

In design experiments, analysis of the intervention as it evolves becomes an outcome to be studied, shaped by the context of the implementation site and the specific 'artifacts' used. So in this research approach, both materials and social interactions gain importance. Analysis is emergent and recursive, and like the design itself, requires attention to activity structures, scaffolds, curricula and the whole institution as part of the intervention context to be studied. These structures are seen as important features of complexity that influence outcomes (Cobb et al., 2003; Reinking & Bradley, 2008; The Design-Based Collective, 2003). By addressing what is happening on the ground, my study embraces mixed methods and allows for the inclusion of some data on individuals as part of the "human science" that provides for claim-making (Shavelson et al., 2003). The problem of making "faithful and accurate rendition of the participant's lifeways" is the crux (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 54). To that end, I found it necessary—and useful—to blend a broad array of analytic tools and data sources.

This study positions the research in the realm of process theory, as opposed to variance theory, and deals with events and factors that influence one another in a tangle of interrelated factors (Denzin & Lincoln, 1993; Maxwell, 2004). I include contextual information as fundamental to potential causal explanation (while maintaining anonymity for participants in the study) and make the effort through analysis to understand this particular school library situation in its complexity. Maxwell (2004) refuted the black box notion of regularity in observable events as the only way to see causation, by observing variance, and called on researchers to value process theory to deal with events and factors that influence one another. This is the ecological view that raises context as important in description and findings, one increasingly practiced in qualitative research design, and

observed in this study. My hope is that by studying the development of a school library at a site where there had been none, I might add to the theory-in-practice about libraries.

## Chapter Four

### A Turning Point—Cornering the Library (Phase 2)

“We should . . . turn a classroom into a bigger library.” Comment from an eighth grade boy returning *The Last Olympian* (Fieldnotes, April 28, 2010).

Above all, school libraries have a mission to provide access. While the significance of access to resources hinges on success in connecting resources to students and staff, the initial drive must be to provide physical access. In this chapter I report on the nature of access issues connected to the emerging Southside Secondary School (SSS) library as reflected in the physical growth of the facility, in students’ library usage, and in student and staff responses to the library throughout the course of its growth. The excitement of having physical access to an ever-growing collection of texts hand-picked for this school site was evident in some students’ early comments ranging from “That’s a nice little library!” from a group of eighth grade boys exploring the book cases to a classroom chorus of “Yes!” in an English class when Principal Rider announced the opening of the library.

In addition, I attend to student access for early student users, noting the barriers and improvisations needed to establish the library, as well as some helpful surprises discovered as library use developed. The on-the-ground realities of actual library usage—who uses it, under what circumstances and with what regularity—are tightly connected to both physical and intellectual access to a collection and a place. The goal of promoting student access often required improvisation at this site given the limitations in student access times and physical space for the library. For example, in order to provide visual displays of books to engage readers at SSS without the library display counter space that one might normally find in a traditional school library, I repurposed the two library book carts to become circulation and display vehicles (*Figure 2*). I found that decisions such as this were an ongoing necessity at a school site without the usual physical library facility. In fact, the many accommodations in facility design and usage plans represent part of the engineering nature of design research at this school as I found myself repeatedly problem-solving around space and scheduling constraints.

#### Physical Access: Building a School Library

I started the library-building process with the notion of ‘build it and they will come’. I had realized that the school community wanted a library from evidence collected in the earlier reading evaluation study and from encouragements by Principal Rider, but found that that expressed desire was complicated and sometimes compromised by the plethora of programs housed at a school with too little physical space to accommodate them all. Just as the boy quoted above opined, space constraints were a frustration to me while building the library and to the many students who were impatient for access to more texts in a larger facility.



*Figure 2: Improvised Book Cart Display*

A flat-topped library book cart was used for a circulation station and book display.

In this first phase, as we moved from planning to building a physical facility and collection, the tensions between competing programs and interests emerged. Starting in the spring of 2009 through the fall of 2010, the all-purpose room housed the library, but that room was also used for a host of activities and events such as the following:

- school-wide gatherings for morning announcements
- last period student body award assemblies
- breakfast and lunch for the student body every day
- after school practice space for the Cheer Team and Girls' Basketball Team
- yoga class elective period
- small group academic excellence reward parties
- afterschool Drumming Class
- Advisory Class for 2 advisory groups twice a week
- last period school-wide Study Hall 3 times a week
- testing make-up sessions for students absent during standardized testing
- disciplinary Detention Hall space for some periods
- testing of students' hearing
- school-wide photography for ID cards
- lunch-time cultural events, such as African-American Heritage Lunch
- university sponsored events or meetings

The sheer number of valued purposes in the all-purpose room left little space for the small library and introduced a tension in the 'where and when' realities of teaching priorities at the school. Focusing on providing physical and intellectual access for student learning, administrators juggled facility and staff competition for large group spaces versus individual learning spaces. On repeated occasions during the study, the library

could not operate during its limited, regular scheduled hours because library time was “trumped” by events such as reward ceremonies, cultural assemblies, or other scheduled gatherings in the all-purpose room.

So amid multiple competing programs and activities in the aptly named all-purpose room, the SSS library facility was founded in early April of 2009. After many weeks of negotiations with administrators to choose a suitable space, it was allocated a corner in the multi-use hall. The initial facility (*Figure 3*) consisted of five steel shelving cabinets and a computer with library automation software housed in an office ‘cupboard.’ By collecting, cataloging and processing donated and used books, as well as by purchasing new titles from a school library distributor, the collection grew in a few months to 598 books by September 2009. Establishing a place to house the initial small book collection was just the beginning of an effort to build a program of collaborative library service with substantial materials to serve both students and staff.



*Figure 3:* Southside Secondary School Library - Spring and Fall 2009 - Phase 2. The first 5 shelving cabinets were located in the corner of the all-purpose room.

### **Access to Resources: Developing the Collection**

Developing the collection required the concomitant development of several administrative procedures: library collection and selection policies for the school, budgets and vendor accounts, cataloging and processing protocols, and usage schedules to ensure the system could become institutionalized. While only the principal was closely involved with this part of the development, the staff had been solicited informally for suggestions about the collection and library functioning in a much earlier December 2008 staff meeting. At that time, a few teachers made specific suggestions about titles they would

like (e.g., *The Cartoon Guide to Statistics*), topics to be served (e.g., biomes), or genres to acquire (e.g., history atlases). In this beginning phase the library also needed technological support from the school district for loading the automation software on the library computer and integrating it into the intranet at the school. This support was very slow in coming then and throughout the whole building process. For example, I purchased a secondary hard-drive to back-up the library server databases and installed it myself in the spring of 2009 when technical assistance was not forthcoming from the school district.

In the spring and fall of 2009, even before book circulation and the formal study began, I contacted the teachers to start to develop a collaborative relationship, seeking the ways in which the evolving library might serve them and their students. I met with the humanities teachers about their library-based needs, including classroom libraries, and made outreach to the science and math teachers about their materials needs. The wide array of diverse activities I found myself engaged in is aptly captured in this memo from September 2009:

Met with Mr. Rogers and Ms. Zita 9/16/09 about collaboration and schedule, and gave them a 'tour' of the library. Continued work on batches of used books from bookstores, ordered American Library Association materials on heritage months, etc., worked on finalizing second book order, set up office, developed inventory of book group titles with reading levels, put together whiteboard, put up Latino Heritage Month display in hall, Banned Book and Bay Area Public Library (BAPL) display on whiteboard. Got bids on return carts and new Tennsco metal cabinets from [library supply company]. ... Sent parent notification letter home with parent newsletter today—this letter introduced the library to parents and described purpose of providing a wide range of subjects. Gave humanities teachers library schedule today (no response on days). Gave Mrs. Kilpatrick the box of paperback group novels to review for use. Made Mr. Wright's contact re: BAPL library card pitch.

These activities reflect the multiple, regular facets of school librarianship recognized by credentialed school librarians who wear the hats of instructional partner, collection acquisition manager, facility supervisor and technology supporter. Each function contributes to the capacity of the library to serve both individual and programmatic needs. The range of activities comprising school librarianship are all meant to serve what school librarians call resource-based instruction; a pedagogy of information use known in the field as information literacy. The resources of a given collection are a necessary but insufficient condition for successful collaborative practices in school librarianship.

The decisions about collection development included students as well as staff. Staff was consulted informally on a regular basis after meeting in late 2008 and notified when desired texts arrived. The students were consulted during circulation moments about book preferences (for example, I would ask them: Was it good? Did you like it? What would you like to read next?), thus, the collection grew steadily in response to students' expressed interests. I also made an inventory of the standards-based curriculum followed at the school and drew on my knowledge of secondary school library collection

development gathered over 18 years of library experience in order to choose titles. When I remarked to Principal Rider that our collection was still very, very small, she said, “These are more books than these kids have ever seen here” (Fieldnotes, December 2009). While it is true that the initial collection was large in the context of this school’s specific history of book access, it is also true that the potential for successful student engagement in wide reading requires a broad selection of diverse literature to satisfy a broad range of interests and preferences (Allington, 2001; Brozo, 2002; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Guthrie & Greaney, 1991; Krashen, 2004; Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, & Morris, 2008; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999). I knew from this research and my own experience as a librarian that in order to provide increasing student access to diverse literature the library needed to continue to grow, so I made plans to obtain more funding through grants and to negotiate for more space.

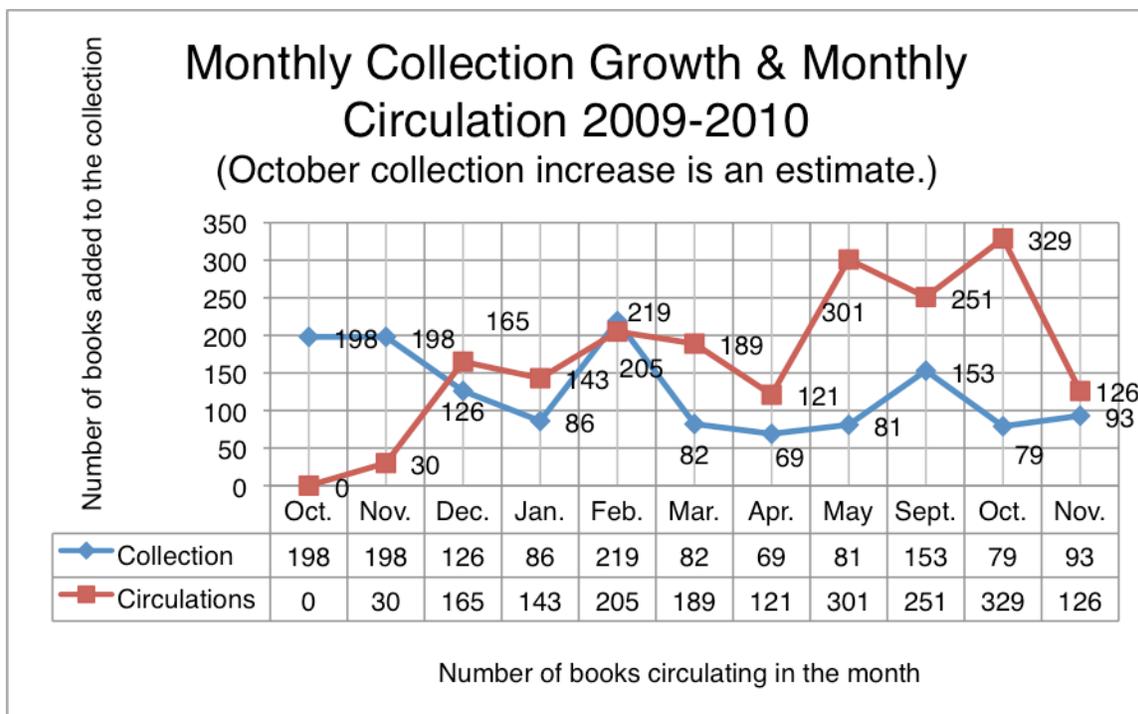
### **Student Access: Circulation of the Collection**

The school community had witnessed the slow but steady growth of a small library, built over a period of months from contributions of books, money and retired librarians’ consulting time. As I worked in plain view of everyone in the all-purpose room during the spring and fall of 2009—cataloging, stamping, and taping, in short, doing the clerical minutiae of a library technician, the library collection grew visibly, week by week. This growth elicited many questions about the library from students and staff as they passed by at lunch, study hall, or after school. And some said encouraging things like, “That’s tight!” “Cool!” and “Can I help?” Students were ready to borrow books in the early fall of 2009, asking regularly for a library opening date. Unfortunately, there were two remaining barriers to circulation, importing the patron database into the library computer and distributing student photo ID cards. Though students received the school ID cards in the third week of October, we could not circulate books because the patron database had not been installed on the library computer. Exasperated by the lack of district tech support, I had to privately hire a tech-savvy school librarian to finish the set-up job of importing the student database in order to be able to circulate books. Finally, on November 10, 2009 the systems were ready for circulation to begin and students began to borrow books.

Given my part-time status at the school, there were effectively two and a half days a week when I was available to circulate books, but the actual time to circulate was limited to short lunch periods three days a week and study hall periods two days a week. Visitors to the school joked that the study hall resembled Hogwarts of *Harry Potter* fame, with the same strictly enforced quiet and motionless attendance that in this situation constrained visitation and conversation about requested and suggested titles in the library. I struggled with the difficulty of having conversations with students about books, at the same time complying with the rule for silence during study hall periods. I began to negotiate with staff for regular small group student visitation times during humanities classes. Since the initial book collection was very small, whole-class visitations were unworkable; 30 student bodies simply would not fit into the allotted corner space with five cabinets. Nonetheless, while we explored various scheduling options, the first eager students browsed the collection cabinets with permission during study hall—very

quietly—and began to circulate books. By the end of November after only 3.5 days of limited access at lunch, study hall and afterschool, 11.8% of the student body, or 23 students, had checked out 30 books. I became aware during these first days of circulation that if the library was going to impact the school, it would have to provide more and better access to the new materials; to accomplish this goal the library would have to expand both its collection and its space allocation from a single corner of the all-purpose room.

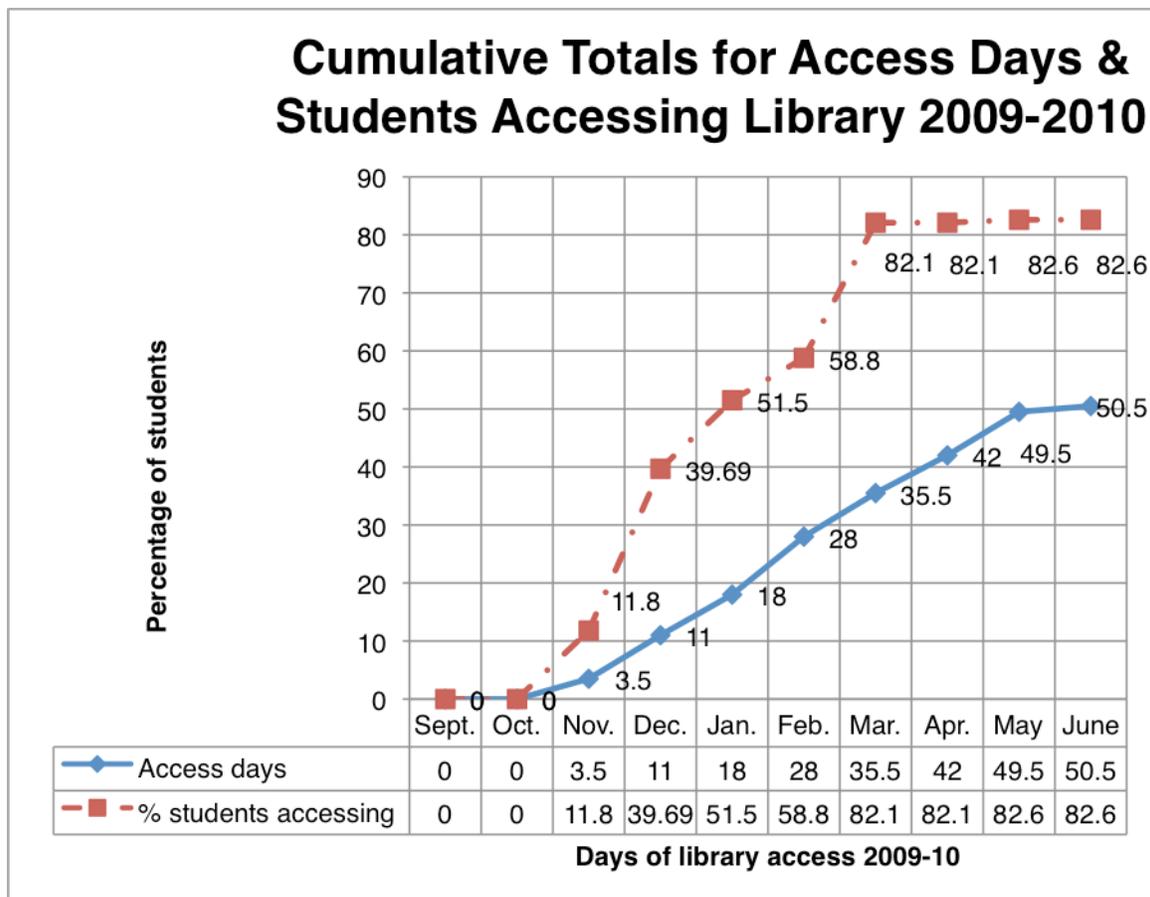
In response to early interest expressed in student circulations, both the collection and circulation of books continued to grow over time (*Figure 4*), with noticeable circulation increases during the times when English teachers scheduled students to rotate into the library and when the history teacher’s year-end research project called on the library’s resources. The growing collection accommodated a wider set of student interests and curriculum topics, as is reflected in increasing circulations. Students demonstrated their positive reactions to improved access with expressions of interest along with increased usage. One girl related the advantage of the library’s proximity for easy access, “I’m so glad we have a library here because I don’t have time to walk down the street to the library” (Fieldnotes, March 23, 2010). Comments like this supported the idea that easy physical access to interesting texts matters in usage patterns.



*Figure 4:* Cumulative Collection and Circulation Data. This graph shows the simultaneous increase in book acquisition and book circulation numbers.

The number of days that students had access to using the library made a difference in circulation, too. Over the duration of this study, the cumulative number of days students had access to the library and the number of students making initial contact

with the library continued to grow and were apparently related. As *Figure 5* displays, the more days and times that access to the library was possible, the more students made initial contact and used the facility to borrow books. The only decreases in circulation coincided with extended school vacations or schedule changes that precluded student visits. The end-of-the-year spike in May was due to demands made by an extensive American civil rights research project required of all eighth graders. It is clear that student use of the library materials increased over time both with the size of the collection and with increased days of service providing regular access to students and staff. Over the course of the school year starting with the library opening on November 10, 2009, 82.6% of the student body visited at least once and all but 13 students checked out a book of interest on their first visit. During the spring a ceiling of 82.6% of students making initial contact was reached as the number of students willing to use the library peaked and leveled out. While some students had become regular users of the library, others had not made any contact.



*Figure 5:* Cumulative Access Days and Circulation Data Sept. 2009 - June, 2010. This graph shows cumulative student library participation as access days accumulated.

## Student Access Realities: Early Adopters and Late Entries

In addition to tracking the growth in collection and circulation overall, I was able to chart specific characteristics of usage with the student Library Use Agreement that called for the date, student's name and grade (this was the happy result of a requirement that Principal Rider had suggested for each student's initiation to library use at the school). By recording the student's grade, gender and first book selection (if a book was chosen) on all students' initial visit, I was able to track both the rising library use by grade and gender, and to capture specific titles of interest. During the early period of circulation in the fall of 2009, some staff reported to me that students were proudly "flashing their book covers in the halls" and quizzing one another about their book choices. Mrs. Wing noted that after the library was operational she considered the biggest consequences to be excitement and access, noting that she "sees kids with library books and excited to read; it was a big change from before the library" (Interview, June 9, 2010). Another teacher, Mr. Rogers, remarked in the year-end interview, "One, I've never seen more reading being done than this year with the access to Ms. Goodin. "Can I run up to Ms. Goodin? Can I return my book? Can I grab a book? Truly"" (Interview, June 10, 2010). There were many examples of teachers remarking on the positive benefits of students having library access, but not all staff members were equally supportive. While many staff members celebrated increasing library use by students, others commented negatively on student excitement over the new resources, remarking that students were reading library books surreptitiously under their desks during class, requiring the teachers to remove the books. And while some staff members applauded book availability in the new library and visited to preview titles, others were noticeably less engaged in the development of the small facility. It appeared that the evolving library program was accepted, but not universally celebrated by staff. The challenge presented by this variation in attitude will be emerge as a major theme a later chapter.

Initial uptake of the library was not universal for students either. Beginning use of the library was spread unevenly in the population of eighth through eleventh graders. In the early weeks, the younger students, eighth and ninth graders, expressed excitement, especially the eighth grade girls. Frequently, one or more would sidle up to me asking for a specific book, for example, "You have *Twilight!* Will you get *Breaking Dawn?*" (Fieldnotes, December 2009). From November 10 through December 17, after a total of 11 days of access, 77 out of 194 students had checked out one or more books. This represented 39.69% of student body that borrowed a total of 110 books over the course of the first four and a half weeks. In that period of five weeks the number of students accessing the library by grade level varied substantially, revealing higher usage by the eighth and ninth graders (Table 2).

Table 2

*Number of Students Accessing the Library, Grades 8-11, Nov. 10 to Dec.17, 2009.*

Grade level	Number of students	Number of students accessing the library	Percentage accessing
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	56	35	62.5
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	60	32	53.3
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	56	5	14.2
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	20	4	20.0

*Note:* The 11<sup>th</sup> grade class consisted of only 1 section with 20 students, reduced to 19 students early in the school year.

As I collected data about beginning library usage among the students, a pattern emerged indicating that the younger girls were the early adopters, those first to visit the library to circulate books. It was notable that only girls accessed the library in the first week with only four boys visiting the second week. By the end of this early period until December 17<sup>th</sup>, only 27 of the 77, or 35% of the students using the library were boys (see Table 3). It appears that the early adopters were the younger students, and girls utilized the library initially more than boys. During the first five weeks of circulation, the tenth and eleventh graders were infrequent patrons (Table 3).

Table 3

*Comparison of Students Accessing the Library by Grade and Gender Nov. 10 - Dec. 17, 2009.*

Grade	Number of girls	Percent access	Number of boys	Percent access
8 <sup>th</sup>	25	88.0	21	61.9
9 <sup>th</sup>	29	68.9	31	38.7
10 <sup>th</sup>	31	12.9	25	4.0
11 <sup>th</sup>	8	37.5	12	8.3

*Note:* Grade composition and total number of students fluctuated over the course of the school year; these numbers are from the November 12, 2009 class rosters.

Some students demonstrated their positive reactions to improved access to books with expressions of interest along with increased usage. For instance, Principal Rider reported to me that shortly after circulation had begun, she encountered a group of ninth-grade girls descending the stairwell after checking out books, excitedly planning to start their own book club “just like our mothers” (Fieldnotes, December, 2009). This enthusiasm for library access was also reflected in a comment I overheard in the library

made between eighth-grade girls, “We should have a contest to see what grade checks out the most books, our grade would win” (Fieldnotes, January 14, 2010). While I did hear enthusiasm from individual boys in regard to the new library, the data showed a skew towards the girls’ usage. The numbers tell the story of boys’ early diffidence in accessing the library. My hunch was that it resulted partly from the complete lack of privacy associated with having the library situated in such a publicly visible setting, as I will explore in a later chapter.

The apparent gender bias skewed towards girls’ reading enthusiasm and against boys’ independent reading at the secondary level in these early library use data is consistent with findings from Smith & Wilhelm (2002). They found that boys want to read in high school, but they don’t necessarily want to read what is available there. Smith and Wilhelm reported that boys preferred reading appropriately challenging materials that allowed them to pursue authentic out-of-school interests connected to their life experiences. In related work, Moje, et al. (2008) found that students have rich literate experiences out of school, reading for reasons that increase social capital (Moje et al., 2008, p. 138) and that help them to define their emerging identities. Seeing the data about boys so clearly represented in this current study provided me with renewed impetus to find titles for the collection that would appeal to all students at the school, no matter the gender or age. On an ongoing basis then, my selection priorities for the collection included a special effort to find ‘boy books’ (and books that might win over any disaffected staff).

Consistent with earlier studies (Cullinan, 2004; Guthrie & Greaney, 1991) age also has an impact on how much independent reading students do, especially of books. In both of these reviews of independent reading research, the time-spent reading independently was reduced as students move up through the grades. Cullinan (2004) reported on NAEP findings indicating that both television watching and spare-time reading decreased as adolescents develop. Increased interest in periodicals and non-fiction topics increase (Guthrie & Greaney, 1991) as students’ age. A more recent report from the Kaiser Foundation on student use of media interfaces during students’ spare time indicate that children aged 8 to 18 spent an average of over seven hours a day in total media use in 2009 (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). While this total did include print media, at 38 minutes per day it was outpaced by the total of 7 hours and 38 minutes. Thus, the findings of decreasing reading time for teenagers found in my data conformed to other reports.

### **Access Barriers, Serendipities and Improvisations**

Countering the barriers to student library use in the all-purpose room given the competition for physical space was accomplished in part by developing students’ enthusiasm for reading by providing books of interest. Two of the ways I was able to establish students’ preferences for titles that generated interest were accidents of the location and limitations in the library space. The first, I’ll call the Red Cart Benefit. The red, steel book carts I purchased for hauling books were the only surfaces available for processing and preparing books for inclusion in the collection when the students were using all of the tables for lunch or study. When I noticed that many students were

intrigued, and drawn to comment on the books I was processing so visibly on the carts, I developed the habit of positioning myself and the carts in the most advantageous position for students to observe new titles being added to the library. Their comments helped me to refine the selection of titles to add to the collection. This simple transparency in library collection development led to a second serendipity I'll call the Blue Notebook Effect.

Early in the development of the library I began to make note of all the book requests and recommendations made by students as we had book conversations. Using a small blue notebook, I recorded the title and author (if the student remembered them) of desired books while engaged in book discussions. Students noticed this practice and it seemed to encourage them to be vocal about books they wanted in the collection. Students began to ask me to use the little notebook to record their requests. The effectiveness of this strategy hinged on two features: giving them the authority to voice their preferences and following up quickly to “deliver” the goods—i.e., getting the books in and on the shelves. This turned out to be a simple but powerful way to customize selection for this particular site, and more importantly, to engage students in the process of library building. While this was not a procedure that I had planned to use, and it would never have occurred to me to do it in a regular library space in precisely this way, it was effective. This valuable strategy emerged in part due to the limitations of locating the library in the all-purpose room. It appears that students' positive response in using the library so quickly in the early days when the selection was very small, as captured in Figure XX, may demonstrate the power of these two simple procedures, both born of necessity and chance lighted by insight.

But space and location did not always prove serendipitous. One barrier connected to the location of the library continued to be unresolved throughout the project and was a direct consequence of the spatial and scheduling limitations at SSS. In the two daily times that students had open access to the library, lunch and study hall, sound—noise or its absence really—interfered with library use. During lunch the high-ceilinged room, missing its soundproofing tiles, echoed the voices of 200 teenagers in an unpleasant, deafening roar—to the point that limited library conversation. In contrast, during study hall the requirement for silence meant that book conversations were conducted in uncomfortable, and often inaudible, whispers. About the only situation in which one could expect the ‘productive’ noise of small group conversations was during the periods in which English teachers scheduled classes or small group visitations. The irony is that in traditional libraries of earlier times in this country, librarians' control exerted for silent, decorous behavior has given way to modern library norms that include conversations in the service of learning, yet at this site neither scenario worked. The silence of the study hall and the cacophony of the lunchtime both discouraged book talks and research requests, revealing an important on-the-ground variable that I had not considered in the design research plan.

## Chapter Summary

Building a library program at a school that had had no library resources—no space, no staff, and no books—brought access issues into full relief. First, I found that providing a physical space for the library was crucial for housing a critical mass of texts

that could encourage independent selection of books. The importance of access is evident in student comments such as the personal note I received from a female student in the early days of building the collection:

Dear Mrs Goodin, thank you for coming to our school and bring [sic] along a great library [sic] with any interesting books. I hope that you enjoy being our librarian and stay for a long time and stay being so nice. Thank you (Personal communication, January 2010).

I noticed that providing a space that allowed for easy student access at the same time it allowed for student interaction was a crucial factor in functionality. When competition among activities in the all-purpose room created noise levels or demands for silence that were incompatible with library discourse, student access to the library collection and program was constrained.

Second, while the location of the library in the all-purpose room constrained its size and use according to the daily schedule, it offered serendipitous affordances in transparency and visibility. When students could clearly see the work of library collection development as I worked on the Red Cart in the middle of the lunch line, they participated by making comments such as “You have *Rocket Boys!*?!” and by making book recommendations to me on a regular basis. I had not anticipated that response from students in the planning phase. When I added their recommendations to my Blue Notebook while they watched, my respectful regard for their preferences was transparent. I believe that both of these serendipitous processes led to engagement by the student body as the library was constructed. In my fieldnotes I recorded my reaction at the time:

One thing that’s clear is that the transparency of this library building makes it different: students have watched me stamp, cover, tape and work at the computer and I think it makes them feel closer to it as a part of their school. This is usually the invisible library for all but a few student aides (Fieldnotes, December 2009).

Third, the realities of student circulation data confirmed what has been reported elsewhere about student interests and usage patterns; girls choose to read independently more from resources found at school and older students read independently less from traditional print materials as they move through high school. While I do not delve into the social reasons connected to these findings, I do report on student reading preferences and interests in a later chapter. Over time boys made it clear to me that many of them like books with information, as one described that “tell him about stuff” (Fieldnotes, December 2009).

In sum, reviewing the historical progression of building a library at SSS and analyzing the data on student access to the early collection, it appears that having ready access to a collection of diverse, interesting texts matters in the reading lives of adolescents, as does the spatial location of the library. A collection of texts, proximity to available texts and location of the library within the school does make a difference for students. It is fair to conclude that students’ dispositions to use a library and read for pleasure are positively impacted by easy availability of texts, even when constrained by

physical facility limitations. As one teacher explained during her interview, when a library is available, especially when guidance in text selection is provided, both moderately engaged and prolific readers became even more so:

Ms. Tallub: In terms of the library I would say that the biggest difference that I noticed was that our prolific readers—I could see them more prolific. I've seen more of a variety of books in their hands. And I've seen them cycle through them very quickly and they're speeding up and they're, they're rapacious, and they're able to be as rapacious as they like because they can get as many books as they like—now they have this access in school.

Mrs. Goodin: Yeah, proximity does make a difference for most kids because they have to be driven or they have to get another ticket to get some place. That makes it tougher. That brings up a follow-up question...thinking about this rapaciousness; is there a way to support that for kids who are not what you would say are rapacious readers?

Ms. Tallub: I think some of it is already happening. And I think it's finding an *in* with kids, right, it's asking them what was the last book that you read that you really, really liked and having a resource like you who's ready now that you've heard that book and you've got a number of books at hand to suggest to them. I think that that's part of it. My own personal experience says to me that especially with young men, it's about having a really good variety of interesting nonfiction books about subjects they like. And I think that's a challenge for a school library because we're great at getting in the books for research projects that they might need to learn. But how often do we get books about how to redo your car or etc., etc? And I think there is a gender difference often time between the type of reading that girls like to do and that boys like to do and I think that nonfiction is a part of getting some of those more hesitant boys interested in reading (Interview, June 17, 2010).

## Chapter Five

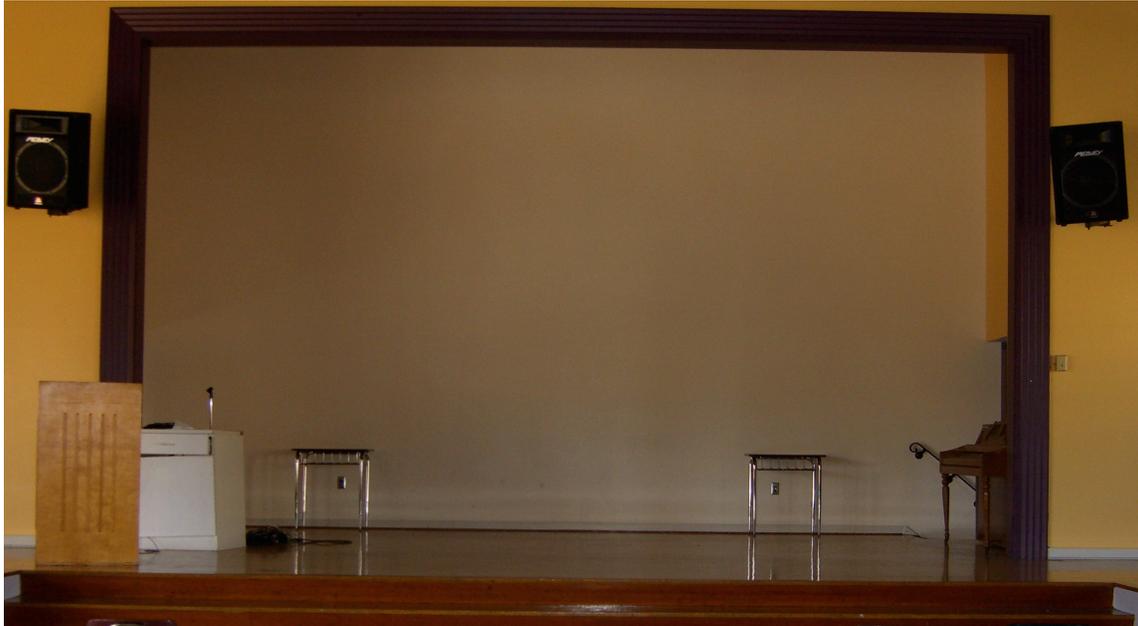
### A Turning Point—The Library on Stage (Phase 3)

If a school library's first mission is to provide equitable access to information resources, its second, equally important mission, is to *connect* students and teachers to those resources. Certainly Southside Secondary School recognized the need for both curriculum resources and the associated professional skills needed to use them, as was evident in a 2008-2009 grant received to improve student writing. When the school received the grant for improving writing-across-the-curriculum, the proposal included funding to develop resources for student research and teacher joint preparation time, thereby providing opportunities in collaborative, resource-based instruction. The focus of that first grant for resources was twofold, to build classroom resources with interesting books and research materials, and to provide a school-wide collection of readily available reference materials. The staff involved, including Principal Rider and a team from Western University, hoped that new resources in a small library and ongoing in-service work would help develop literacy skills, especially curriculum-based writing, but would also serve reading comprehension growth. With the early success in students' interest in the library to make a case for more funding and more space, I decided to write a new grant proposal to provide even more library resources. By December 2009, I had written and the school had received a second grant for expanding the school library established in the all-purpose room.

While the desire to expand was a natural outcome of early enthusiasm on the part of many students and staff members, the school had no obvious or comfortable place to locate a larger library. The small collection needed a home other than the corner of the all-purpose room where there was no feasible way to grow. The only viable option for expansion was to move the library to the empty stage in the all-purpose room (*Figure 6*) and that move required considerable negotiation between Principal Rider and the school facility administrator. Early in the 2009 fall semester, permission was granted to make the move, fortuitously financed by the second grant enabling the purchase of more shelving and more books.

My expectation, based on the first few months of library operation in the corner of the all-purpose room, was that increasing access to a larger collection would probably lead to more student usage. As documented in Chapter Four, the more the collection grew and the more days that students had access to it, the more students made initial contact to use the library. So once we received permission to move onto the stage, I sketched a drawing to scale and worked with the custodian to put the furnishings, books and other resources I obtained in place (*Figure 7*). I was concerned at the time that the school's stage might not be a good site for a library: Was it so public, so 'exposed' that students would be embarrassed to use it? (Fieldnotes, January, 12, 2010). But I also considered the possibility that housing the library in a room-like space, such as the stage offered, might help to define it as a real place, a valued destination. As a possible negative feature, I also wondered whether there might be some resentment that the library would limit the use of the stage as a stage. In fact, a few people in the school community did express some reservations—as one person said “You can't put the library on the stage.”

(Administrative Official from Western University, Personal Communication, November 2009). Out of necessity, we did embrace the stage as an untraditional setting for a library.



*Figure 6:* Stage in the Southside Secondary School All-purpose Room, December 2009. The stage was mostly empty in mid-December 2009 before the library was moved onto it.



*Figure 7:* The Southside Secondary School Library on Stage, January 2010. A stage in the all-purpose room housed the newly moved library facility in mid-January.

Concurrent with building the central library collection and facility, I was working with teachers and administrators to create a larger set of library resources in the school, what I had proposed as a *distributed library*—one that included facets beyond the central collection. The effort to broaden the scope of literacy resources and to work with staff to integrate them into the curriculum represents the collaborative heart of librarianship. My original intent was to help teachers develop classroom libraries and pedagogy for a silent reading program, to include information literacy instruction in research projects, to encourage public library membership, and to create a library website with online resources for the school. In this chapter I report on outcomes from the effort to distribute library services in several arenas in the school, to satisfy students' expressed preferences for books, and to collaborate with teachers on curriculum projects.

## **Distributed Library Stories**

### **Classroom Libraries: Changing Dynamics**

One of the initial goals of this entire effort was to build or improve classroom 'satellite' collections of books in the English classrooms for use in independent reading programs. At Southside Secondary School (SSS) the principal and English teachers were well versed in the benefits of silent reading practice and were receptive to classroom libraries. In the spring of 2009 before my library dissertation project had begun, I worked with an English teacher who was amenable to help, organizing her classroom corner of books for sustained silent reading. Unfortunately, the room was used after school for a number of programs and the books were quickly disorganized (and sometimes lost) in lightly supervised times, so it was very difficult to maintain the collection in good working order. This description of little used and somewhat abused classroom libraries had been the norm I observed in the years observing the humanities classrooms at SSS, though I had also observed one English teacher in the 2008-2009 school year who managed to maintain a productive classroom library.

By the fall of 2009, the English staff was composed of three teachers new to the school; two were interested in promoting silent independent reading times during class and maintaining classroom collections. I met with Ms. Tallub and Mrs. Scott on two occasions to discuss both their classroom libraries and ways of managing a sustained silent reading program. I made recommendations based on personal experience and the work of Atwell (1987) and Pilgreen (2000), proponents for allowing students self-selection of texts for independent reading. Both English teachers were very positive about the importance of independent reading, trying to provide time in class on a regular basis during the week. Ms. Tallub reported that during her double-period classes she gave students ten minutes to read a self-selected item, including magazines, but Mrs. Scott struggled to fit a silent reading time into her schedule. During an extended conversation on the subject in December, Mrs. Scott said that she had initiated but given up a Sustained Silent Reading program of 15 minutes a day, at least temporarily. She also acknowledged that she was not familiar with Young Adult (YA) literature, had a negative view of graphic fiction genres, and had removed most of the classroom library surviving from the prior year, with advice from her district literacy coach. When she also said, "I'm a first-year teacher and have no money to buy books", I assured her that we could find

good books to stock in her room as well as attractive display items (Fieldnotes, December 2009). We agreed that I would visit her class to introduce interesting titles by booktalking available books in her room and in the new library. We did manage in the next two weeks to create a more inviting small library in her room (again in a corner) and I visited her class to booktalk, but the course of classroom library development quickly took a different turn as another idea surfaced for giving students access to the newly developing school library.

In January 2010, once the school library had moved to the stage, I re-introduced a weekly schedule suggesting periods that students from the humanities classes might be sent to the library on a hall pass to access books (Table 4). Ms. Tallub immediately scheduled a rotation list for students in her eighth and ninth grade classes that allowed groups of five or six students to visit the library once every six weeks. It worked especially well on the days that double-period English blocks provided a silent reading time segment. Mrs. Scott agreed that her ninth and tenth grade classes would do the same. This schedule worked well for Ms. Tallub, whose students became regular patrons then and during the last period study hall, but it never caught hold in Mrs. Scott's schedule.

Table 4

*Weekly Student Library Access Schedule for Humanities Classes, v.4.*

Periods	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
2° 9:00-9:40	X	(Tallub 8a)	X
3° 9:45-10:35	(Scott 10a) or 9 <sup>th</sup> graders / AVID	(Rogers 11 <sup>th</sup> ) or 9 <sup>th</sup> graders /AVID	X
4° 10:40-11:25	(Wright 8 <sup>th</sup> history)	(Rogers 9b)	X
5° 11:30-12:20	(Wright 8 <sup>th</sup> history)	(Scott 10b)	X
LUNCH	Individual access—for up to 10 students at a time (with occasional Literary Lunch Treats)		
6° 1:00-1:45	(11 <sup>th</sup> flextime access by hall pass)	(Scott 9a)	(11 <sup>th</sup> flextime access by hall pass)
7° 1:50-2:35	Materials cataloging, processing, displays & library maintenance	(Tallub 8b)	Materials cataloging, processing, displays & library maintenance
STUDENT SUPPORT 2:45-3:45	Individual access from Advisory Classes	Individual student access from study hall	CREW—student library advisory club
AFTER SCHOOL 3:45-5:00	Independent student access Procurement, cataloging, processing, displays & library maintenance	(Sports teams use of Commons)	Independent student access Procurement, cataloging, processing, displays & library maintenance

*Note:* This Feb. 1, 2010 version of the schedule was adjusted over the course of the spring. X represents the periods that the library was closed.

At the same time that the new library access schedule was being negotiated in early February I met with the Humanities Team, three English teachers and the history teacher, and discovered that they did not want to continue to develop classroom libraries in the English classrooms. It became clear that the English teachers did not want to maintain the current classroom libraries as the main source of independent reading materials. Ms. Tallub declared it “unsustainable” while Mrs. Scott said she was too “overwhelmed” to make it work (Meeting, February 1, 2010). None of the English teachers thought the selection of books available from prior classroom libraries were suitable for many of their students. They believed that they were books for younger students—and many of them *were* books purchased earlier for the middle school grades. We agreed that I would cull most of the books, leaving just a few in each of the three English classrooms, that some culled materials might become book circle books, and that some might be suitable titles for the Resource teacher to use with struggling readers.

There was a general agreement at the school that independent reading is a valuable activity, but considerable difficulty in implementing a school program for it. Though all of the English teachers acknowledged that independent reading is important for students’ literacy development and each was striving to provide for it in their programs with varied success, it was difficult for them to add the organizational chore of tending a classroom library to their workload. Principal Rider also repeatedly expressed the value of classroom libraries and of Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) as well as the hope that in the following school year, SSR would be practiced school-wide (Meeting, February 25, 2010). But by mid-March as I collected all but the last few classroom library books from Mr. Rogers room, he remarked that “in truth, they have too much homework anyway” to be reading independently (Fieldnotes, March 10, 2010).

As the second semester unfolded, it was also apparent from our conversations and their rotation schedules that Ms. Tallub and Mrs. Scott preferred to send students to the library where I could introduce them to titles of interest during booktalking sessions and reader’s advisory moments. Ms. Tallub was able to send her students much more regularly than the other humanities teachers, but by the end of the year roughly one third of the scheduled class times for student library rotations were all that were utilized. On one occasion after her students missed most scheduled periods, Mrs. Scott brought whole class groups of tenth graders to the all-purpose room where I was able to give them an orientation to the new resources. While these whole class sessions were welcome visits, they allowed far too little time for me to match students to appropriate books; I simply could not booktalk and do individual readers advisory for 30-plus students in 40 minutes. Some students left the library without books. It raised the issue again of how important it is to have regular access times for students to browse and consult comfortably in order to successfully access the library collection. Listening to the teachers’ struggle to give students access to independent reading that could improve their reading achievement as predicted by research (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990) and theory (Stanovich, 1986) and their own best judgment, led to questioning the source of difficulty.

## Tensions Over Student Curricular Time

Providing regular access to school library resources, even when classroom resources were scarce for differentiated independent reading, was still a struggle for teachers who valued it. There was a constant tension between their expressed understanding of the importance of developing an independent reading program and the tension to accomplish other content goals. As the Resource teacher, Mrs. Kilpatrick said about using the new book resources in the school library, “there’s not a lot of room, or a lot of teachers don’t feel there’s room, to do other activities that actually would be supporting the standards, but in not so direct a way” (Interview, June 10, 2010). Another expression of the English teachers’ ‘curriculum bind’ came from Mr. Rogers during an interview late in the spring. As the year progressed he was able to afford the least time to student library visits, yet as he expressed himself at the end of the year, he was aware that offering some engaging book options to students could provoke wider reading. Asked about what goals should be addressed in the school’s literacy instruction, he reminded me of a success with one of his reluctant readers, and advocated for the value of library resources and student choice.

Mr. Rogers: I’ll tell you, the image is John. It’s putting a book in John’s hands. It’s probably the first book he ever read. So I think that was in your analogy —

Mrs. Goodin: —He came here, right? Are you talking about the book that he came up here to find?

Mr. Rogers: — and we put a few options, I think.

Mrs. Goodin: Exactly, options.

Mr. Rogers: Yes. I would say a few options. That’s always going to be better. Otherwise when he had independent reading assignments, he was just content with - That is so foreign to me. I used to, you know - I’m going to go to the bookstore, or I’m going to go to a library. He’s probably never been to both. [Speaking then as if he was the student John] I don’t have books I can pull off the shelf in English in my home, so this is something I’m not going to do. But if you bring me up, show me a couple of interesting, engaging, relevant-to-me topics; I’ll pick it up. And if I feel confident to follow the content, I’m going to take it to the end (Interview, June 10, 2010).

In short, it appeared that the English teachers as a group valued the opportunities for students to choose independent reading texts from the school library, were not able to maintain robust classroom libraries, and over the course of the year, relied more heavily on the evolving school library to provide both texts and a librarian’s expertise in young

adult literature to match students to titles of interest. The pressure of teaching to the broad range of English content standards took precedence over the particular standards for independent reading, even though it was valued. In spite of the content crunch, when collaborative scheduling worked to provide students access to the library in small groups or as individuals, students were generally receptive and successful in finding interesting books. Students' receptiveness to the library resources was represented in the findings revealed earlier that 82.6% of students accessed the library at least once in the school year and most found books of interest. Given the limited access time, many students still used the school library regularly for independent reading selections; the top 50 student patrons recorded between 6 and 29 book circulations in the course of the first school year starting from the library opening on November 10, 2009 until June 1, 2010. While the circulation figures do not necessarily represent the number of books read by individuals (some transactions represented book renewals), it does represent a substantial amount of reading. This conclusion is strengthened by reports from teachers that they were seeing much more independent reading than they had seen previously at the school.

### **Attending to Student Preferences and Reading Habits**

As I developed the school library collection, I endeavored to be responsive to student preferences in books, recording requested titles and obtaining them as quickly as possible to sustain students' interests in reading. I also gathered class assignments so I could order texts on topics addressed in curriculum standards and project work, ensuring access to a range of print materials in the content areas. The goal was to gradually engineer the collection to meet both the academic and independent reading needs of the school community. But these two goals—curricular relevance and personal relevance—were qualitatively different, and sometimes oppositional, efforts. The assigned English texts provide one example.

#### **Assigned English Reading**

English teachers taught core novels and other literary texts to all the English sections. The texts compiled from the school's English syllabi from two school years, spring and fall 2010 (Table 5) are recognizable as literature taught regularly in secondary English programs; for the most part they are titles found in high school English programs for the past several decades (Wolk, 2010). These traditional titles, however, are not representative of students' independent reading choices made from the school library. When allowed free choice for independent reading the students chose books whose protagonists were people their own age dealing with teenage, rather than adult issues and circumstances. The specific choices made by students (Table 6) are discussed later in the section on Student Reading Preferences.

The English teachers recognized that the assigned core English texts were only one set of texts necessary for students' growth in literacy. As described in the syllabus for all English classes, English as a comprehensive course in the English language arts includes the study of genres, writing conventions, vocabulary and independent reading—all with the goal of developing communication skills for college and beyond.

Table 5

*A Sampling of Core English Texts Used at Southside Secondary School.*

<p>Ninth grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>The Bean Trees</i> by Barbara Kingsolver</li><li>• <i>Bless Me Ultima</i> by Rudolfo Anaya</li><li>• <i>The Odyssey</i> by Homer</li><li>• <i>To Kill A Mockingbird</i> by Harper Lee</li><li>• <i>Of Mice and Men</i> by John Steinbeck</li><li>• <i>Annie John</i> by Jamaica Kincaid</li></ul> <p>Tenth grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>The Bluest Eye</i> by Toni Morrison</li><li>• <i>Catcher in the Rye</i> by J. D. Salinger</li><li>• <i>Linden Hills</i> by Gloria Naylor</li><li>• <i>Night</i> by Eli Wiesel</li><li>• <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare</li></ul> <p>Eleventh grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>The Crucible</i> by Arthur Miller</li><li>• <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> by Lorraine Hansberry</li><li>• <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald</li><li>• <i>Huckleberry Finn</i> by Mark Twain</li><li>• <i>Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare</li></ul> <p>Twelfth grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by Tennessee Williams</li><li>• <i>Beloved</i> by Toni Morrison</li><li>• <i>Frankenstein</i> by Mary Shelley</li><li>• <i>Othello</i> by William Shakespeare</li><li>• A selection of modern and traditional poetry</li></ul>
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Demonstrating the importance of voluntary reading, Mr. Rogers and Mrs. Scott also included specific statements about the value of independent reading:

It is important that you read independently in order to become a better reader. You must always be reading a text based on your choosing that will be used for Independent Reading (outside of class) and Sustained Silent Reading (in class) (English Syllabus, included for grades 9, 10 and 11).

Ms. Tallub's syllabus did not include a descriptive segment on independent reading, but both years I observed versions of an independent reading program in her classes. The difficulty in consistently promoting independent reading as a valued activity lay in providing time for students to access the library and in granting time in the classroom for sustained silent reading (SSR). English teachers verbally expressed commitment to independent reading and to the importance of providing student choice-making for texts to read independently, and they provided time for it in their curriculum plans. But they were constrained by schedules and standards-based curriculum pacing that privileged cognitive activities and products over the standards for independent reading. During the spring semester especially, teachers and administrators expressed the sense of being

dominated by standardized testing concerns. On three occasions from mid-April to early May when staff cancelled library visitations, both teachers and administrators referred to “test craziness” as the reason for eliminating library program plans (Fieldnotes, April 13-15 and May 4-6, 2010). Ironically, the one occasion when 10<sup>th</sup> grade classes were scheduled to visit as whole class groups to select books for independent reading, the teacher acknowledged that the goal was to make sure every student had a book in hand to read after taking the high school exit exam and benchmark tests. The books were a means to an end—a quiet exam room. Caught in the tension between their own stated curriculum goals supporting SSR and the frenzy of preparing students for standardized testing, they opted for the more immediate and pressing goal of test performance. In the meantime, many students did find independent reading books of interest in the school library, in fleeting and irregular visits to the stage.

### **Students’ Reading Preferences**

Many students, especially the younger students at SSS, embraced the opportunity to choose books from the new school library. For the year starting at the library opening on November 10, 2009 until November 30, 2010, student book circulations, or transactions, totaled 1939. This included regular checkouts and in-library use calculated by scanning books that were utilized in the library during research project work<sup>2</sup>. Both project work and class rotation schedules impacted the circulation, but successful navigation of the library collection depended upon student motivation as well. One notable example of this element can be found in Jared’s story, a ninth grader in the fall of 2009, a student who I had known from previous work at the school as a struggling reader who was also a member of the library club (CREW). When the library opened on the stage in January 2010, he visited on several occasions seeking a book for pleasure reading (Fieldnotes, December 2009), but it was late-January 2010 before we found a book he wanted to read (*Lord Loss* by Shan). Once he finished the book he told me “I finally got into a book; it’s an accomplishment for me!” (Fieldnotes, February 16-18, 2010). Two weeks later John asked again how many of Shan’s *Demonata* series were in the library, saying, “They’re really good”. By the week of March 11, 2010 he bounded up onto the stage to say, “Where’s #3, I need #3! I can’t believe I found a book I like!” (Fieldnotes, March 8-12, 2010). And by mid-March John took the next two volumes of the *Demonata* series for spring break reading. On May 6, I chatted with Jared, who had finished the ninth book of the *Demonata* series and was desperate for the final book. I ordered it for him and he expressed great satisfaction in completing the series of ten books. By reading 13 books inside of six months, Jared was a success story by virtue of his motivation to read a self-selected text, but he was by no means the only success story of students engaged in reading.

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<sup>2</sup> In-library book use was undercounted since taking the time to scan books while many students used them in the course of a research period was not feasible. My solution was to scan them for a count once a day, twice if several groups came two periods in a row, but even that did not account for multiple users in a single research period, so the total circulation figure is a rough under-approximation.

Many teachers commented on the number of books they noticed in students' hands and the amount of reading they observed in the school. During her interview the science teacher, Mrs. Brown, best described one of the perceived benefits to students of access to a school library:

I can think of specific kids, I mean if I had to put them in a group, I would say a lot of the eighth graders in particular, I think have benefitted a great deal. I think in general the younger kids, eighth graders *and* ninth graders, and especially the kids who are not often considered super academic. Umm, because I think some of the kids who maybe were already really academic kind of had enough additional resources or whatever to find some things on their own. But I think having- for some of the kids it's been really good to have things *here*. It's been a lot easier for them to get really into reading and writing and typing things and stuff like that. So yeah, I think some of our typically-I don't want to say-not particular in the kind of- not the Far Below Basic, but I'd say the Below Basic and barely Proficient that-I mean, I hate to use those types of obnoxious [labels], but you know what I mean, like that kind of group of kids. Umm, I think they benefitted a great deal (Interview, Mrs. Brown, June, 15, 2010).

Mrs. Brown's observations were borne out in the end-of-year Top Patron Statistics from the *Destiny* circulation software; of the top 32 student patrons (those registering 10 or more circulations) only about half were 'top students' and all were eighth graders and ninth graders except for one tenth grade girl.

So, what books did students choose to read (Table 6) once they were given completely free choice? By the fall of 2010 after a year of building the collection, there were over 2000 books, populated with 52% fiction and 36% nonfiction (reference, professional and biography made up the remainder). Students primarily chose fiction from the school library for independent reading, but used nonfiction in research projects, especially history and social science titles. Fiction represented the largest share of circulation at 57.8% while the lowest rate of circulation was in professional resources (0.95%) and reference (3.6%) books. Seven of the top 25 titles were series books—or the current craze in YA publishing, the first books of trilogies and quartets. Science fiction, especially dystopian fiction, such as *The Hunger Games* and *Uglies*, were very popular with over 20 circulations each. Almost without exception, the most-circulated nonfiction books were those used for research. One of the exceptions was *The Rose That Grew from Concrete*, a book of poetry by Tupac Shakur that 'went viral' with some boys for a couple of months. Overall, as suggested by Worthy (1996) and Worthy, Moorman & Turner (1999), when students had choice, opportunity and access to interesting books in school, they were more likely to read and to improve their disposition to reading.

In reflecting on the pattern of usage during the first school year of library operation, I found that the text types valued by the students for independent reading contrasted with the titles selected by teachers for English curriculum use. English classroom texts were part of a typical high school canon (Table 5), useful in teaching literary concepts and preparing students for standardized tests and college performance. The texts that counted for students, expressed by their choices, were culturally driven and

socially relevant, as suggested by Wade & Moje (2000) and Moje et al. (2008). Overall, the most popular independent reading titles were from YA literature—those books particularly attuned to teenage students’ interests in relationships, possible futures, identity issues and to their personal, immediate concerns, such as gang membership and urban life.

Like Ivey & Broaddus, I was “struck by the range of books students said they liked and reported reading out of school” (2001, p. 368). When students made requests for books to include in the school library, the topics ranged from books about religion, the Cold War, Greek myths, and astronomy to the genre of poetry, sports stories, romances and everything in between. And when library titles went ‘viral,’ as they did on many occasions, students were “flashing books in the hall” and telling one another about books they enjoyed, demonstrating the social aspects of reading just as Guthrie & Wigfield (2000) and Moje et al (2008) have described. It was apparent from what students reported to me about their book desires, that even though our literature conversations were constrained many times in the library setting, students were finding times to have discourse with other students about the books they enjoyed. It is fair to conclude, or at least speculate, that part of the reason for the robust social engagement around library books at the school was related to the types of texts made available to the students and to the efforts to connect students to those texts through booktalking and regular book display activity.

Table 6

*The Top 25 Circulated Books at SSS from Nov.10, 2009 through Nov. 9, 2010.*

	Book title and author	Call number	Number of circulations
1.	The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins	Fic Col	27
2.	Wake by Lisa McMann	Fic McM	23
3.	Uglies by Scott Westerfeld	Fic Wes	21
4.	Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card	Fic Car	18
5.	The African-American Century: How Black Americans Have Shaped Our Country by Henry Louis Gates	920 Gat	15
6.	The Book Thief by Markus Zusak	Fic Zus	15
7.	Failure Is Impossible!: The History of American Women's Rights by Martha E. Kendall	305.42 Ken	14
8.	Biographical Dictionary of Hispanic Americans by Nicholas E. Meyer	Ref 920 Mey	13
9.	Catching Fire by Suzanne Collins	Fic Col	13
10.	César Chavez: A Voice for Farmworkers by Bárbara Cruz	B Chavez	13
11.	Extraordinary African-Americans by Susan Altman	Ref 920 Alt	13
12.	The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold	Fic Seb	13
13.	Who Am I Without Him?: Short Stories About Girls and the Boys in Their Lives by Sharon Flake	SC Fla	13
14.	With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote by Ann Bausum	324.6 Bau	13
15.	The Women's Movement by Virginia Schomp	305.42 Sch	13
16.	Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A. by Luis Rodriguez	B Rodriguez	12
17.	Gay America: Struggle for Equality by Linas Alsenas	306.76 Als	12
18.	Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago by LeAlan Jones	306 Jon	12
19.	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules by Jeff Kinney	Fic Kin	11
20.	Eyewitness: A Living Documentary of the African-American Contribution to American History by William Loren Katz	973.04 Kat	11
21.	Freedom's Daughters: the Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830-1970 by Lynne Olson	323 Ols	11
22.	Homeboyz by Alan Lawrence Sitomer	Fic Sit	11
23.	Jellicoe Road by Melina Marchetta	Fic Mar	11
24.	Pretties by Scott Westerfeld	Fic Wes	11
25.	The Rose That Grew From Concrete by Tupac Shakur	811 Sha	11

## Students' Reading Habits

Given the limited time available at SSS for student library visitation and for SSR in English classes reported earlier, I wanted to know more about students' reading habits. I wondered how often they read independently and where they obtained books besides the school library. I asked a series of questions on these matters in the end-of-year Reading Survey and Reading Questionnaire, drilling down for specifics about students reading patterns, book ownership and library habits (Table 7). The two most surprising findings were that 8.2% of the students surveyed owned *no* books of their own and 17.6% had read *no* books for pleasure in the preceding twelve months. I found this surprising given the presumed academic goals of students enrolled in a college preparatory charter school. The lack of student-owned books helped to explain the enthusiastic response to the library collection from many students, and magnified the importance of giving students access (Eccles et al., 1993; McQuillan, 1998; Neuman, 1999; Neuman & Celano, 2001). The fact that so many students reported that they had not read a book for pleasure in the prior year highlighted the need to assist students in finding books of interest, 'making the match' understood to be important by Kintsch (2000) and Biancarosa & Snow (2006).

The public library was the favorite library site for the greatest segment of students with the school library holding a solid second place; the classroom library garnered only 1% of student responses as a favorite. This is understandable since the classroom libraries in the English classrooms had been denuded of most books. For the large group of students (34.5%) who almost never read when they are away from school, the effort to entice them to read engaging texts would seem to be a highly desirable goal at a school striving to build a college-going culture. Exploring the possible barriers to student engagement with books in the evolving library was an issue at the forefront of my mind.

Table 7

*Selected Responses from the Student Reading Questionnaire 2010.*

Questions to Students (n=85)	Student Responses		
How many books do you own yourself?	8.2% of the students owned 0 books personally.		
Circle the type of library you like to use the most. <sup>1</sup>	Public library 43.9%	School library 30.7%	None 23%
How often do you read when you're away from school?	Almost never 34.5%	Some/many/most days 53.6%	Every day 11.9%
How many books have you read for fun in the last twelve months?	0 books 17.6%	1-3 books 30.5%	> 6 books 34%

*Note: 85 students in 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade answered the questionnaire.*

<sup>1</sup> *1% of students chose the classroom library as their library of choice.*

## On 'Stage Fright'

I had had a hunch that moving the library to the stage in the all-purpose room might be a problem given its visibility (considering teenage self-consciousness) during

lunch and study hall. The Phase 2 instantiation of the library had also been in the all-purpose room, but it was situated in the corner, almost *in* the lunch line, allowing it to hide in plain sight. I worried that many teens might be embarrassed, or at least hesitant, to play the role of “enthusiastic reader” on the stage in clear view of their peers; the fact that they had to publicly climb the stairs in front of the student body to access the newly situated library made it all the more difficult. In fact, I did notice that very few students accessed the library at lunch when the whole student body was present; some students waited, almost stealthily, until lunch was over and then darted to the stage to renew or check out a book before the next period bell rang. I speculated that they did not want to be seen by the whole student body making a library transaction. So when I interviewed staff and students, I began to add a new question to the set of questions in the original protocol. I explained to students what my worry was about the library visibility on the stage and asked them if it was a real concern. My hunch was correct, at least from the perspective of the small group of focal students I consulted. Even though most focal students did not acknowledge it as a problem for *themselves*, they said that ‘the other kids might not want to do it’ [go up on the stage to get a book].

Mrs. Goodin: You know, one of the things I noticed is that when we moved up here on the stage (I don’t have any numbers to show this), but it seems like fewer kids come up during lunch. Occasionally they do... And I wondered, do you think it feels uncomfortable for people to come up on the stage? Or is it the same as being in the corner over there? I can’t figure it out. I worried that some students might not want to use it. Do you think I was right to worry?

Donald (10<sup>th</sup> grader): I think it *might* be more uncomfortable because people, most people, care about what other people think and all. Umm, yeah, like cause if all your friends are there and you’re like hanging out with everyone, and like, you’re just not gonna tell them, oh, I’ll be right back I’m gonna go return this book, or I’m gonna go get this book, like, people, like, probably won’t say that most of the time and stuff. Like I...just because they care that people think like that, too much.

Mrs. Goodin: So is it— it’s like geeky...to come to the library? So people wouldn’t, you know—

Donald: —You can say... you can say that’s how people think, but *I* wouldn’t care, like I’d come up here during lunch and like I’d look for books and all that. I don’t care what people think, but like most people *do* care what people think and all that and like having it up here like during lunch like, *I* think it’s fine but most people however, like,

‘Oh I don’t want like most of my friends to think anything of me or I don’t want to come up here at lunch because I’m, like, hanging out with my friends and all that’...(Interview, May 25, 2010).

Most of the focal students made comments similar to Donald’s; they saw the library on stage as somewhat intimidating during the most public access times, lunch and study hall, but were willing to entertain its use overall. In fact, all were very positive about the library’s existence, even if they were not all frequent users. Given the richness of their responses, I decided at the end of my set of staff interviews to ask the campus supervisor the same question. She was uniquely qualified to answer the question because she regularly saw students in many school settings throughout the day, heard their conversations on campus, and she was also present for study hall. When questioned generally about any community barrier to library use at SSS, she pointed to the issue of visibility on the stage as a deterrent for students.

Mrs. Goodin: So do you see any community barrier to library use here, anything in the environment, you know, in the way the school day is scheduled, anything that you can think of, anything you’ve *heard* that makes it seem that there’s any sort of a barrier to library use?

Mrs. Redstone:  
(Campus  
Supervisor) Umm, you know, Mrs. Goodin, I think that you are *extremely* inviting to the library, umm, I think our kids are well aware that they have access to the library and that they have access to a resource of a person who’s really knowledgeable about books and kinda what they can utilize. There isn’t so much of a barrier in that manner, but kids are kids, and I think *socially* there might be a barrier because I sometimes think because the library is located up a stage and it’s set up on a pedestal—that it gives the kids kinda this feeling of being on, on, on, on, on- I don’t know-you know?

Mrs. Goodin: I know exactly what you mean it was my *biggest* fear about moving up there—

Mrs. Redstone: —*Really!*

Mrs. Goodin: —but there was *nowhere* else to go.

Mrs. Redstone: Yeah, so, like, I think that’s —

Mrs. Goodin: — I’m trying to put up these screens that provide a little privacy somehow, but during lunch kids

don't *dare* to come up there, it seems to me.

Mrs. Redstone: *Exactly.*

Mrs. Goodin: So, I don't know, I'm thinking about pulling that bulletin board across, just as a routine, having it- I hate sort of cutting it off, but on the other hand, I might try it. I might try it, to see if —

Mrs. Redstone: —You're right because if you see the same kids in classes and when their classes come up they're really interested and they're like, 'Oh, I didn't even know these books were here, and I didn't know you even had a book like this, and I'm gonna to check this out.' Those same kids would, or *maybe* would've come during lunch. But I do, I think they feel they're put on [display] and the other kids can see they're nerdy or bookwormish, you know what I mean, and that's more of a barrier, because I think once they get in there, then you're so inviting and knowledgeable about things and they can say, 'Hey, I want a book on Tupac' and you actually know who he is, you know what I mean. Or 'I want a book on hip-hop' and you're like, well I *have* this, and I *might* be able to get this and they're like, 'Oh.' So I think it's really inviting once they get up there (Interview, September 15, 2010).

It was a problem for many students to use the library in plain sight during the social laboratory that is a high school lunch period, but it was a different story during study hall. During that tightly restricted time, a library pass became, at least for some students, a reprieve, a 'get-out-of-study-hall' free pass, for those who dared. I became aware of some students, who either already had a book or did not seem committed to finding a book, using the pass to avoid homework or to be involved in conversation with me or the other students working in the library. I would always welcome them unless or until they were disruptive of the reader's advisory and homework activities being pursued. So in the same way that noise, or the prohibition of it, was a constraint to library activity during lunch and study hall, visual access to students using the library was either a badge of nerdiness (during lunch) or a symbol of resistance (during study hall) for particular students.

To summarize, giving students access to a library facility is not transparently simple; it offered both constraints and affordances. It involves attending to social interactions deeply embedded in the local school community's expectations, influenced by individual personal needs and community literacy practices (Gee, 1991; Gee, 2000). Interview exchanges and other conversations with students and staff provided not only information about what texts to acquire, but revealed some of the social complexities of

library usage for these teenagers. Feedback from the interviews, observations and informal conversations helped me see the next steps in designing the library facility to minimize social barriers to its use. For one thing, I decided in the future to use the rolling whiteboard to screen library activity during whole school use of the all-purpose room so that once students were on the stage, their activity was partially screened from public view.

### **A Distributed Library: Collaborative Efforts**

A school library garners much of its value to a school when classroom teachers and a teacher-librarian collaborate to make connections between library resources and curriculum. That collaboration, in turn, relies upon development of open interactions between the librarian and both staff and students. Building trust and a sense of joint goals and being seen as part of the learning landscape of a school; these are crucial to library efficacy (Loertscher, 1988; Monteil-Overall, 2005; Small, 2005). In order to build a productive relationship with the school staff, I learned about their programs and offered assistance. As the library evolved, I focused first on making small professional gifts to teachers: curriculum-based information from the local public library, websites of interest to specific assignments, pre-made student hall passes, curriculum lessons for new book projects, books of interest from my personal collection, cyber-savvy materials, posters for classroom display, et cetera. I also offered to visit classrooms to promote public library membership. Staff was uniform in their gracious acceptance of my offerings, but real application of those outreach efforts was more rare. For example, though Principal Rider and some humanities teachers had expressed interest in developing a webpage for the school with the vehicle of a library homepage, I observed it to be little noted and very underused once posted online. Given that the posting happened at the end of the year and was in support of the student Exhibition research and CREW program, I had expected a more positive response, but uptake may have been limited due to the school's focus on state standardized testing in the same time frame.

### **The Library CREW**

Collaborative work in a school library also includes working jointly with students, not only in collection development as we have seen, but in program development as well. So in the fall of 2009 I advertised the beginning of a student library advisory club, the CREW. I had observed how eager many students were to be involved in the development of a book culture at the school during the bookfair hosted in the spring of 2009 and in book conversations throughout the project. The library CREW, a library advisory club open by school rules only to honor roll students, began in November 2009 and continued throughout the 2009-2010 school year. After the first quarter grades were released, honor roll students were allowed to choose from a menu of extracurricular activities and five students chose CREW. One of the attractions to the CREW was the understanding that we would run a spring bookfair as I had done the previous spring. The volunteer student group, all ninth graders, was also interested in helping to create bulletin boards highlighting various cultural heritages over the months. Together we designed displays for the central stairwell that featured Hispanic Heritage, Native-American and African-American Heritage, as well as other cultural and historical themes. The bulletin board

displays were accompanied by thematic book displays in the library and complemented heritage luncheons organized by the Dean of Students.

The CREW also participated in an advisory capacity, developing student use guidelines for the library and reviewing new titles (some of these reviews ultimately went on the library webpage). It was difficult to orchestrate these CREW activities because the schedule provided only 50 minutes to meet, divide responsibilities and complete our objectives. We were scheduled to meet once a week during study hall, but were hard-pressed to hold to our schedule due to frequent program changes in the all-purpose room. Of the 27 weeks we were scheduled to have CREW meetings, 9 of them were cancelled for other events. This speaks to the difficulty of the particular environment of the SSS library; the all-purpose room was an important site for many school activities. It is also true that the sound limitations of study hall routines interfered with booktalks and book club activities that we pursued in the spring after five more students joined CREW. Trying to have discourse with ten students about books and our other projects on the stage during study hall proved daunting.

As the spring unfolded the most popular activity for the CREW was the organization and management of the school bookfair. While it did not generate much in the way of book sales, there was a lot of excited browsing of books by the student body. And I observed considerable pride in the CREW members' as they learned to manage bookfair sales and the cash register. CREW students were conscientious in showing up for their scheduled work times, wearing the identifying tee shirts and name badges for the bookfair. Further, they expressed pleasure at being able to choose benefit books for the school library. My report to the school newsletter on March 22, 2010 (below), indicated some details of the event.

The Bookfair, while selling only a modest number of books, earned \$435 Scholastic dollars that have already translated to 27 new books for the library, with \$102 to be spent in the future. In addition, the 10 Library CREW members had the experience of managing the Bookfair and received a gift book of their choice. Thanks to all for your support of this opportunity.

It was clear to me after running bookfairs for two consecutive years, in which there was substantial student interest in the books offered but very limited sales, that acquiring interesting books in the school library was important to providing equitable access to print resources.

### **Eighth Grade Exhibitions**

In May of 2010, after the school had finish its test prep regimen and all students had taken the California Standardized Tests, curricular focus shifted to students' final Exhibitions. The eighth grade Exhibition project was designed to give students the opportunity to work in depth on one topic and to present before a panel of community members. As described in the eighth grade assignment, *American Civil Rights Activism*, students were assigned to work with a small group researching a decade between 1900 and 2000:

Students will conduct research on a specific movement in American civil rights activism during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They will study and describe its most important events and influential members, analyze its key issues, and evaluate its notable successes. . . . Each group member will be responsible for a particular group of Americans: African Americans, Latinos, or Women. . . . Exhibition will be the oral presentation of the student's research, analysis, and timeline to a panel of judges made up of teachers, students, and community members. Students will be judged on the quality and professionalism of their timeline, the content of their presentation, and their presentation skills.

The two-week timeline for this project, scheduled for part of each day—4 hours a day for 9 days—was particularly ambitious for eighth graders who had never attempted an extensive research project before. Work on the project became an important collaborative moment for the history teacher, the eighth grade English teacher, the art teacher, the resource teacher and me. While we had very limited time to work together and had not designed the assignment as a team, we were able to use email and short meetings to develop a plan for using our joint resources to help almost all the students complete the project successfully. Reviewing the email traffic from the time revealed our orchestration of library and personal text resources, website guidelines, citation formats and a detailed schedule for small group access to the library texts held on reserve. An elaborate schedule was designed to ensure that all the student project teams had regular access to the library resources and to librarian research instruction.

One clear impact of Exhibition work was on the circulation of texts in the library (*Figure 8*) as the two eighth grade classes rotated into the school library. The peak monthly circulations of 301 and 329 occurred during research projects: in May for the eighth grade Exhibition and in October for the ninth grade Human Rights Research Project. A new English teacher initiated a human rights research project in the fall of 2010, having developed it in a prior teaching position. Perhaps it was the success of the spring project that encouraged the department to take it on; in one early fall meeting Ms. Tallub recognized my work and contribution to the Exhibition project, saying that when they had students who were totally lost, they sent them to the library for “Susie Surgery” because the teachers had noticed that when students returned to class after a library visit, they were on track and making forward progress on research (Meeting, August 26, 2010). This is one example of trust-building, a potential benefit in any collaboration, that can lead to more effective use of the school library and librarian. Absent joint project work in the full spectrum of assignment planning, implementation and evaluation, the Exhibition research project work cannot be described as a high-end collaboration (Loertscher, 1988, Monteil-Overall, 2005) but it was a first, important move in that direction.

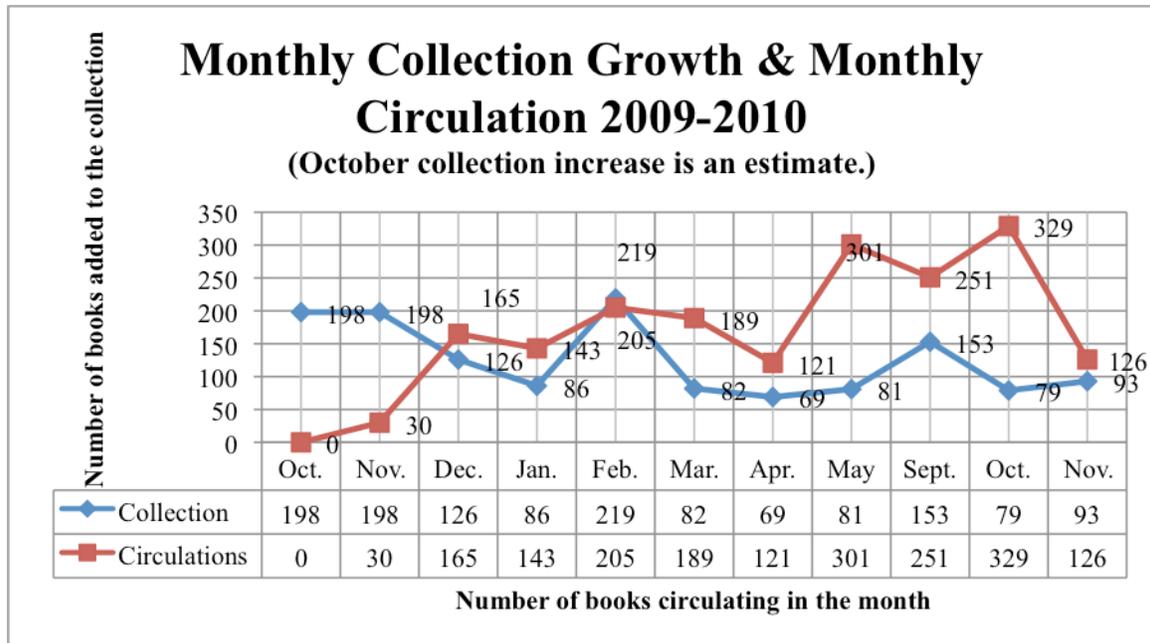


Figure 8: Monthly Circulation and Collection Statistics for Nov. 2009 - Nov. 2010. This chart displays circulation variation over one year of library operation and acquisition.

### Testing Mandates — One Constant Saboteur

Taking stock of the collaborative effort to provide students with interesting texts for their self-selection in several settings and across the school schedule leads to evaluating the successes and obstacles. Classroom libraries appeared to demand more time that teachers were able to commit to their maintenance and the website may have fallen victim to its unfortunate timing at the end of the school-year. A circulation decline in the main library during April and November (Figure 8) can be accounted for by school vacation breaks, but what can be said of the other limitations to student access? My observation was that SSS was constantly striving on behalf of its students, constantly changing schedules and programs and adding activities in a Herculean effort to provide the programs and activities of “a real high school” despite its small size and overworked staff. When I asked about the frequent schedule changes and their relationship to school goals in developing a literacy program, Ms. Zita commented, “We’re a school that does things right now” (Interview, June 16, 2010). Her response reflected the urgency to serve students that I observed generally over the course of the year. The dedication of the staff was unquestionable, but the lack of continuity made true collaboration much more difficult and less likely to lead to deepening curriculum connections in an integrated school library program. In fact, by the fall of 2010, the CREW library advisory group had been ‘scheduled out,’ the eighth grade Exhibition project was eliminated as eighth graders advanced, and the study hall access time had been revised to include fewer students—thus fewer students had access during that minimal time period. But more than anything else, the intense drive to perform on the spring CSTs seemed to be the source of tension in affording time for a school library program. The tension that teachers felt when

confronted with the choice between delivering tightly-paced, standards-based instruction and providing time to visit the library for independent reading choices created a curriculum bind that teachers acknowledged in interviews and was also revealed in the school calendar.

The school calendar for SSS in the 2009-2010 school year scheduled pre-CST preparation beginning in February, especially on Fridays, from February 26<sup>th</sup> through May 7<sup>th</sup>. Figure It Out Fridays (FIOF) involved giving practice test questions to students, requiring them to write descriptive annotations of their problem-solving efforts on the test papers. One school newsletter excerpt from Principal Rider dated March 22, 2010 provides a flavor of the required practice:

- Our first FIOF went off well! Thank you for making assessments and using compies [sic] of the rubric to assess if students were able to master the annotations.
- Students were using annotations! 95% of students that I saw had annotations on questions and passage or showed work.
- I saw proctors walking around classrooms, checking work and reminding students to annotate!
- I saw 100% of students on task and quietly focused on the test.
- For this coming week, please put a post –it on the door of your room if you need someone to be picked up to go the bathroom – this is one of the procedures that we did not start today. [The Dean] and I will be around to collect students to bring them to the bathroom.
- What do you think went best during your FIOF?
- What did you do best off of the “proctoring” list I sent out?
- What will you improve for next time?

Standards reviews began in earnest throughout the entire week in all subject areas on April 12<sup>th</sup> after spring break and continued for four weeks until testing week started on May 12<sup>th</sup>. The impact on the library program was substantial; students’ small group visits from the English classes all but disappeared. As I observed in fieldnotes: Test prep and FIOF have taken over the attention of the school. Though a few students came on passes or at the end of the day, Ms. Tallub’s groups didn’t come at all on either week (Fieldnotes, April 20 - 29, 2010).

When I inquired about the regimen of test preparation and the instruction of new academic content during this time frame, Ms. Zita, the academic supervisor, explained that teachers had finished teaching all of the required content standards before spring break. Further, she noted that in the time between spring break and testing, teachers were reviewing standards and applying them in ways that students might see them on the CST tests because “they look different there” (Fieldnotes, April 20 - 29, 2010). In one early indication of the extent of standards review, I happened upon a print job in process on the copier and discovered that Mr. Rogers was producing a 66 page packet of CST- released practice questions to do in mini-lessons—to do and redo with his 11<sup>th</sup> graders in preparation for the standardized tests in mid-May (Fieldnotes, March 8 -12, 2010). Clearly the pressure for students to perform well on the tests was a very high priority.

Teachers acknowledged the impact of standardized testing on curriculum plans during end-of-the-year interviews, repeatedly referring to the pressure to prepare students for the CSTs. Noting that teaching to prepare for college reading and writing was very different from preparing students to take the CSTs and the high school exit exam, Mrs. Scott said, “We’re compromised to do it right because of test prep” (Interview, June 17, 2010). Her sensibility was echoed by all of the humanities teachers. As Mr. Rogers explained, literacy work at the school was driven by accountability; teachers prioritized for goals and standards that are tested: “It has to be mentioned in the conversation that we are an organization beholden to, less so as we get more successful, but that—those CSTs. So a math or a science teacher, their bread is buttered by that—those scores.” (Interview, June 10, 2010).

What teachers aspired to achieve in their classrooms in literacy development was broader in scope than the testing mandates prescribed, but their aspirations seemed to be sabotaged by constant pressure to prepare for standardized tests.

Mrs. Goodin: If you were able to change pretty much anything you wanted about the literacy program at this school, what would you do?

Ms. Tallub: I would reduce the emphasis on CSTs, most specially for the higher grades because I think there’s a danger with standards in that they are what you need to graduate high school. And that can become constraining when what they really need to be prepared for is college, if that makes sense. And so, with my junior class that I’m looking to teach next year I’m going to have to do some careful balancing between the things I want them to get for college and the things I need them to be able to do well for the CST. Sometimes those things crossover, but not always perfectly. Like it takes some work to get those two different goals to sit together comfortably. And while I completely support our CST focus because it’s what allows us to exist; it’s what gives us all sorts of extra money, grants and attention and help. And so I’m very practical; I know we need that, but I think there comes a point where it becomes problematic (Interview, June 17, 2010).

### **Chapter Summary**

The development of a small school library program at Southside Secondary School was interrelated with a host of factors: the size of the collection, the available times for student access, student reading preferences, and the extent to which teachers were willing and able to integrate the library program with their own curriculum. Overall, I found that as the central collection and number of access days increased, so did

circulation of materials and the number of students accessing the library, even though the conditions for access were not ideal—either library access was too public on stage for some students during lunch, or was compromised for other students by the requirements for silent study behavior during study hall. The effort to build and maintain classroom libraries in the English classrooms was not successful due to the time pressure on teachers for other curriculum priorities. When teachers planned research projects into their lesson schedules, such as the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 9<sup>th</sup> grade and 11<sup>th</sup> grade research assignments, the library was used more extensively. And when independent reading times and requirements were emphasized in English classes, the collection was utilized more actively.

I also found that younger students were more likely than the older students to patronize the library collection. Students indicated their willingness to read books of personal interest and usually their choices were quite different from the typical high school canon. Many students chose series books, young adult fiction and books with topics closely attuned to their own teenage concerns related to identity construction. I also discovered that students' identity as a reader was on display for the student body when going on stage to check out a book and that that exposure was a named deterrent for students.

The collaborative effort with teachers to schedule library use was often undermined by other priorities at the school, especially by the drive to prepare for standardized testing in the spring semester, but the English teachers were especially aware of the conflict in their instructional goals. They continued to strive for ways to meet the dueling objectives of standards coverage and more long-term learning represented by independent reading and inquiry. Nevertheless, the 'curriculum bind' that impacted teachers' latitude in scheduling for library use and independent reading was an ongoing tension in the development of a library program at the school.

At the end of the school year, knowing that teachers were struggling to balance multiple competing demands for instructional time and that there was a broad understanding in the staff in regard to the benefit of a school library, I decided to apply for another grant to continue to build the library to its fullest possible extent. The fact that the school's curriculum was relentlessly standards-based, without much attention to the information literacy standards found throughout the California content standards, was one decisive reason to continue to build the library (in hopes of providing for the information literacy standards). The other even more compelling reason was the growing cadre of students who visited the library eager to converse about books they enjoyed or hoped to read. Phase 3 of the library facility construction (*Figure 9*) included more shelving, more books, new technology improvements with two laptops, a wireless printer and a large presentation screen, but the most encouraging enhancement was the first step toward collaborative engagement with the humanities teachers. The year ended with plans for more collaborative research projects in the fall and hopes for a robust independent reading program in the school.



*Figure 9: The School Library at the End of the Spring Semester, May 2010. Additional shelving, books and technology were added to the library during Phase 3.*

## Chapter Six

### A Turning Point—The Library Performs on Stage (Phase 4)

- Mrs. Goodin: So if people see you picking out a book—what do they think, what does it mean?...What does it feel like for the kid who's checking out a book?
- Marcus: I guess like they're just, like, kinda shy. They don't want people to be like, oh, he's getting a book, oh. You know, they just don't like the attention you get for just being a student getting a book. I mean, *I* don't care about getting a book...That's just the way people are at this school, you know. I think in most high schools that's how it is (Interview, June 6, 2010).

School libraries function effectively, or not, based on library users' current experiences and importantly, on their prior experiences as well. The resultant beliefs developed about library use, literacy practices and curriculum relevance drive both students' and teachers' inclinations to patronize the school library. Just as Marcus revealed above, student beliefs about social expectations connected to library use *do* impact students' willingness to use the school library. Individual student's beliefs about reading competence, the desirability of reading as an activity, and the willingness to be perceived as a reader inform students' library usage. In short, the development of a 'book culture' and library use at the school relies on factors arising out of experiences from the past and social expectations understood in the present setting. At Southside Secondary School I observed that dispositions to use the resources of a school library are founded in a set of experiences and expectations, a network of beliefs, connected to the sociocultural context of the participants (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

Teachers and administrators also have varied expectations and beliefs about school libraries, derived from personal experience during schooling, pre-service and in-service education and from different content area instructional norms. The teachers at Southside Secondary School (SSS) revealed many of these expectations and beliefs during our interview sessions prior to the beginning of the 2010-2011 school-year. Their beliefs in the value of the school library fueled my hopes for a more robust research agenda in the humanities classes. In addition, at the end of the 2009-2010 school-year Principal Rider and the English teachers had expressed a desire to have students do more research projects in order to meet research and writing standards for standardized tests and to prepare for college-level work. I also hoped for a rejuvenation of the independent reading program in the English classes. More independent reading and more research projects required more texts, so I began the fall expansion with more shelving and more books.

Given the students' positive reception to the beginning library in the 2009-2010 school-year, I began the 2010-2011 school-year with more grant funding to expand the library in Phase 4 building, anticipating many students' willingness to have library

experiences. But since interview findings had revealed a need for privacy in accessing the library, I adjusted the ‘look’ of the space, hoping to offer a little shelter from public scrutiny once students were on the stage (*Figure 10*). By pulling the large whiteboard across the front of the stage, the library seemed to feel more room-like, as one student remarked; it was cozy. My thought was that the whiteboard screen might make library visitation feel a little less exposed for many students. It was clear from comments like the one from Marcus above, that finding a way to allow students to visit the library *and* comply with teenage social imperatives would be part of the challenge for the school-year.



*Figure 10: Rolling Whiteboard Used as a Screen at the Front of the Southside Secondary School Library, 2010-2011.*  
A whiteboard was used to limit visual access to the stage from the all-purpose room.

This chapter explores student and staff beliefs about literacy development and its connection to the school library expressed in several ways: as students’ reader identity and reading volume, as teachers’ memories of youthful school library experiences and teacher training recollections, and as the tension between beliefs about basic literacy instruction and content literacy curricular demands.

### **Attending to Students’ Literacy Beliefs**

#### **Reader Identity: Students’ Beliefs About Their Reading Competence**

Marcus’ comment above and other students’ reflections about library use made me vitally aware of the social issues connected to book reading and library use in the high school scene, especially at SSS where library use was often in public view in the all-

purpose room. The sense that students were “enacting identity” (Moje et al., 2008) in a particular setting and that “each act of literacy is embedded in a network of social relations” (Moje, 1996, p.175) led me to attend to students’ assessment of library use and their individual identity constructs as readers. My interest was not just in the usage patterns of the school library, but also in the ways in which students perceived school library patronage to relate to their identity as a reader and a student: Was library use a sign of ‘nerdiness’, or not?

Mrs. Goodin: I was worried when we moved from the tiny little library we had there in the corner up to the stage that it would be *harder* for some kids to actually come to the library because...everybody sees you come to the library... maybe that would seem uncomfortable....Do you think kids feel that way?

Brenda: I think they do. Uhh, just sometimes, like people just judge you, like if you’re going to the library makes you a nerd which isn’t necessarily true because you can still get failing grades and read books (Interview, May 27, 2010).

Brenda’s comment is interesting for the distinction it draws between library use and being a good student, or a ‘nerd.’ Unlike Marcus, who stated that in high school borrowing a book warrants unwelcome attention—“I think in most high schools that’s how it is”—Brenda also suggested that reading books is not necessarily a sign of academic achievement. Her more nuanced view allowed for readers, library users, who are not good students, while also acknowledging the social risk inherent in being seen as a library patron. Hoping to shed more light on the issue of reader identity at this school, I turned to results from the Reading Questionnaire. The anonymous Student Reading Questionnaire administered by English teachers posed Question #19, a question relating to students’ self-perception of reading competence (Table 8).

Table 8

*Students’ Self-selected Reading Competence Identity: Reading Questionnaire, 2010*

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Question: In general, how do you feel about your reading?

Responses: I am...a very good reader, a good reader, an OK reader, or a poor reader.

Grade	Very good	Good	OK	Poor	DNA
8 <sup>th</sup> (n=20)	50%	28%	17%	5%	2 students
9 <sup>th</sup> (n=30)	38%	38%	24%	0%	1 student
10 <sup>th</sup> (n=18)	47%	20%	33%	0%	3 students
11 <sup>th</sup> (n=17)	6%	69%	25%	0%	1 student

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*Note: DNA is the number of students who did not answer the question and were excluded from the calculations.*

Roughly two-thirds to three quarters of the students at each grade level rated themselves as very good or good readers. Overall, their self-rankings as readers conformed quite consistently to the recorded grade level performances on the 2010 English Language Arts segment of the California Standardized Tests for SSS (data found online at the California Department of Education). For instance, where 78% of eighth graders considered themselves to be very good or good readers on the Questionnaire, the eighth grade group recorded scores of 68% as Advanced or Proficient on the English Language Arts (ELA) segment of the CSTs. 76% of the ninth graders self-reported as very good or good readers on the Questionnaire and 74% of them performed as Advanced or Proficient on the English Language Arts segment of the CSTs, a tighter correspondence than the eighth grade results. Tenth and eleventh grade comparisons were similar to the ninth graders, but there was a larger disparity between the eighth graders' estimation of themselves as poor readers and their CST ELA scores. While 5% of eighth graders ranked themselves as poor readers on the Questionnaire, 13% of the eighth graders scored at Below Basic or Far Below Basic on the English Language Arts portion of the CSTs. The difference between eighth grade students' estimation of their literacy performance and their performance on standardized testing seemed curious. I turned to the short responses made by eighth graders (n=20) on the Reading Questionnaire, attempting to uncover the disparity. Question #20 on the Questionnaire read: If I could change one thing about my school reading, I would...

Sixteen students wrote the short answers displayed below:

- want more series!
- change
- nuthin [sic]
- nothing its good!
- start reading more!
- read more
- chose better books
- nothing
- nothing
- it should be more fluent
- nothing
- have more black books
- keep the same...maybe
- not change anything.
- ask for a bigger library
- to be more open about books

Of the 16 respondents, 7 indicated that they thought no changes were necessary, but roughly half of the group responding suggested either that more reading or more (and better) books were what they wanted to change. It appears that almost half of the responding eighth graders believed that their school reading was satisfactory. These responses were similar to the set of responses made by the whole group of eighth through eleventh graders (n=63) for question #20: half of the students responded that no change was needed in their reading, or that they didn't know of a change that was needed. The



The desire to read more interesting books was a common sentiment I found in the interviews, questionnaires and conversations held with students throughout the year of the study. Students repeatedly stated their desires to read books of interest to them across a broad range of subjects. Marcus expressed his desire to read books on more topics that teach “new categories of knowledge, like I want to read about a life of a cook or engineer—things I haven’t read before.” (Interview, Marcus, June 1, 2010). The library intervention at SSS sought to provide both physical and intellectual access to a diverse range of texts in hopes of satisfying students desire to read more, and more interesting books in order to increase the volume of reading by all students, a goal shared by many students.

### Students’ Reading Volume

Reading volume is another measure of the way in which students engage as readers, a way that students mentioned regularly in interviews and questionnaire responses. When commenting on what makes a good reader and what changes they might make in school reading, many students referred to the amount of reading, or reading volume as a sign of a good reader. Earlier (see chapter four) I reported on the increases in book circulations during the course of the study, by gender and by grade. In Table 9 I notice the amount of independent pleasure reading in the prior 12 months as declared by students on the Reading Questionnaire. While these are self-reported numbers of books read, the pattern of more reading being accomplished by the younger students correlates to the circulation differences seen earlier. Eighth and ninth graders claimed to have read six or more books in the previous year—at approximately ten times the rate of their older school colleagues in the tenth and eleventh grades. The younger students were also the more consistent library patrons.

Table 9

*Student Reading Volume by Grade Level, Reading Questionnaire 2010.*

Reading Volume - school year 2009-10 (85 students completed the questionnaire.)	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11
Students who read 1-3 books for pleasure in the last 12 months (self-reported).	6.6%	35%	50%	42.1%
Students who read 6 or more books for pleasure in the last 12 months (self-reported).	46.6%	65%	5.5%	5.3%

*Note:* Percentages reflecting students reading of 4 or 5 books in the last 12 months are not listed.

I tabulated the average circulations by grade level using the *Destiny* circulation records in order to create a snapshot of the differences between the four classes of students (Table 10). What I found confirmed both of the other measures of reading volume discussed earlier: the two younger grades were more active readers than the older two grades by a large margin. In both school years of the study I queried for averages in the first seven months of circulation, finding that eighth and ninth graders ‘out-circulated’ the tenth and eleventh graders by multiples of three and four or more. I can speculate on

some of the reasons for the difference: older students have a greater homework burden, and they are more likely to devote time to jobs, social activities, and preparations for college (i.e., testing and applications). These figures on circulation by grades were also impacted by access differentials as students gained access to the library within their class schedules, or not. Teachers rarely scheduled times in the library for the two upper grades. But some regular patrons, avid readers, found times to visit briefly during the school week to find the books they wanted, even when the school schedule made that difficult. In the second school-year of the study, the twelfth grade class had several periods to meet in the all-purpose room as well as a literature seminar that afforded more library visitation opportunities with the resultant increase in average circulation from 0.4 in 2009-2010 to 4.1 in 2010-2011.

Table 10

*Student Reading Volume by Average Grade-level Circulations from Destiny Records*

<b>Reading Volume - School Year 2009-10</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>
Average circulations of school library books recorded in Destiny records for the first 7 operating months (Nov. 2009 - June 2010)	6.9	6.6	1.5	0.4
<b>Reading Volume - School Year 2010-11 (Students advanced one grade.)</b>	<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>
Average circulations of school library books recorded in Destiny records for the first 7 months (Sept. 2010 - March 2011)	9.1	4.1	1.0	4.1

Students' short answers about the new library taken from the Reading Questionnaire shed some light on the reason that many students responded to the library. I expected from students' comments over time that the collection of books would be revealed as a prime motivator for library use and, in fact, that proved to be true. Out of the 56 short answer responses made to the question "If you used the SSS library this year, what was the best thing about it for you?" (Appendix 1: Reading Questionnaire, Question #11, 2010), 49 students mentioned books as the best thing about the library. So although there were some magazines and two laptops, however tightly constrained their use; it was the book collection that most appealed to the students across the grade levels. It is fair to conclude that by providing interesting book choices to students, the library was able to promote successful experiences with independent reading, that in turn, were at least partially responsible for increased reading volume (Csikszentmihály, 1990b; Guthrie & Greaney, 1991; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

To summarize, most students maintained a positive reader identity as good or very good readers, but were restrained in their expression of that identity when it meant exposing their reading interests publicly in the library on stage. Though standardized test scores in English Language Arts indicated that there might be room for improvement in



repurposed shelving carts. I reached out again to the English teachers, offering to collaborate on choosing and obtaining Young Adult titles for literature circles, small literacy class core novels, and coordinating library purchases for seminar readings and independent reading assignments.

Mr. Rogers and Mrs. Scott stated in interviews that teachers might benefit from training in some library fundamentals and from familiarization with current children's literature titles, causing me to focus on providing tidbits of training wherever possible. I worked to find moments to have small conversations about these topics during brief moments of collaboration about texts and research projects. I recognized, as the science teacher Ms. Mone pointed out, that what physical libraries have to offer is personal contact with a librarian (Interview, June 9, 2010) and I strived to provide that contact during the limited times I had access to students and teachers.



Figure 11: Example of a Topic-based Reading List. This bulletin board was on display in the Southside Secondary School Library with a list of books made into movies.



Figure 12: Thematic Display of Archival Photos and Books. This is a Japanese Internment book display in the Southside Secondary School library, 2010.

### Pre-service and In-service Library Experiences

Interviews with the SSS staff revealed the extent to which training about school libraries was absent in their pre-service and in-service experiences. 10 of the 12 adult staff members who I interviewed were credentialed teachers. Of those teachers, two acknowledged *never* having had any formal training in the use of libraries. I was somewhat surprised to discover that only three had had cursory mention of the value and use of libraries in pre-service education programs. Mrs. Kilpatrick, the Resource teacher, remembered that classroom libraries were recommended in Teach for America training, but the use of a school library was never addressed. Mrs. Brown, a science teacher, remembered some mention of the benefits of using online databases during teacher preparation classes. And Ms. Tallub reported that attention to libraries was not an explicit part of her teacher preparation, but she recollected that one master teacher in her program had pointed her to libraries in support of independent reading. It became clear that the SSS staff had very limited teacher preparation for using a school library in instructional practices.

In-service experiences with school libraries were also quite varied—two teachers reported wanting to use the secondary school library more often than was possible because the large high schools where they had worked previously were overbooked with classes in the school library. And in spite of minimal training in library use, several teachers expressed rich histories of collaboration. Ms. Zita relayed a series of joint efforts with librarians to do student research projects, to build personal book acquisition for students and to initiate a public library card campaign with English Language Learner

students. In spite of having almost no availability to school libraries in his teaching career, Mr. Rogers regularly took fieldtrips to the local public library for research projects, working with the public librarian to help students learn to access online databases. Ms. Tallub noted that one school librarian had “roped her in” to collaborative practice by engaging in conversations that incorporated the library into projects that had started out as required computer lab assignments (Interview, June 17, 2010). The commonality in these teachers’ reports of some successful use of school (and public) libraries seemed to be the personal connection made between the teacher and the school librarian in pursuit of complementary curriculum goals. As Mrs. Scott described her initial in-service experiences, the relationship between the teacher and librarian might create a successful bridge to student library use:

Mrs. Scott:                      What I found there [at her student teaching postings] is that often students don’t have relationships with the librarian, and, but if you build a relationship with the students which I’m good at doing and then you have that—the teacher has a relationship with the librarian—you can bridge that and they start to go to the librarian themselves ...because librarians there, and certainly you, are much more knowledgeable—I mean I have some knowledge—but you can guide them in making choices that are good for them. But they have to get comfortable and build that relationship and the way they do that is by seeing the teacher and the librarian interact, and also I would make the introduction for kids...because I think it’s hard for a librarian to do that all by him or herself (Interview, June 17, 2010).

Mrs. Scott’s descriptions of her in-service experiences with school librarians raised an important point about successful school library programs recognized in school library literature. The relationships formed between teachers and school librarians in collaborative practice represents an important “social technology” (Walster, 1998), one that can lead to productive joint work for the benefit of students. A collaborative pedagogical stance, such as described by Mrs. Scott, one that is focused on “connections, not collections” (Kapitzke, 2003), has value both in research efforts and independent reading practices, as we saw in school library effectiveness studies, leading to increased student achievement (Achterman, 2008; Baughman, 2000; Lance et al., 2000; Smith, 2001).

### **The Principal’s Part**

A principal’s experiences and beliefs about the curricular value of a school library and the contribution of school librarianship are crucially important to the success of a school library program. Church (2010), Hartzell (2002) Oberg, Hay, & Henri (2000) all recognized the part played by the principal in embracing school libraries. Where administrators understand the instructional role of the school library program, expect a

librarian to collaborate with teachers and have successful experiences with the school librarian, school libraries thrive (Church, 2010; Oberg, Hay, & Henri, 2000). In contrast, the school librarian's contribution as a teacher to successful instruction is often invisible in what Hartzell called "the absorbability of library media work" (2002, p. 96). If the collaborative work in the library and students' learning is sidelined as merely an expendable support service, it can lead to devaluation of the library program. This can be exaggerated further by the professional isolation of librarians operating as departments of one in most schools, isolated a second time by schedules that often keep the librarian in the library during potentially collaborative moments in the lunchroom and hallway, for instance.

At Southside Secondary School, Principal Rider had repeatedly expressed a strong conviction that a school library was an essential part of 'a real high school.' She hoped to see the school adopt a robust independent reading program, imagined expanding literacy in the content areas, wanted to institute an orientation to library for all classes in the 2010-2011 school year and anticipated the expansion of the school library on the stage (Meeting, June 22, 2010). So in spite of having limited in-service experiences with school libraries—noting, "I've never been in a school with a library, oh, except for Pine Middle School"—Principal Rider believed that libraries belonged in a school program (Fieldnotes, January 14, 2010). Throughout the year as we struggled to find times for students to access the library she engaged in planning how to "regularize library work" during AVID in the following year (Meeting, April 20, 2010). All of these instances demonstrated a belief in the value of a school library, but establishing a library program in a such a small school encountered multiple obstacles: in the schedule, in the budget, in spatial constraints, and as we saw earlier, in the race to perform on standardized tests. The school district had delivered scant support for the library project, providing one computer and three sessions of tech support. It seemed clear to me that without policy direction and support from the school district, this principal was hampered in her aspirations to build a school library and a library curriculum. One of the most experienced teachers also recognized the difficulties of developing a school library without a supportive policy from the district level, exploring other options in his interview:

Mr. Rogers: Mountain School District may need to have in the back of its mind mandating something like that and maybe even requiring training for the teachers to go to libraries, partnering with public libraries and having that structured at the District level or the principal level (Interview, June 10, 2010).

It had not occurred to me in designing the research project that so many of the teachers and staff members would have had such limited knowledge of and experiences with school libraries. In retrospect, planning even more outreach at the initial phases of the study may have been beneficial because understanding derives from experiences, and limited experience in this case had a direct impact on the library budget, educational goals, administrative expectations and school schedules.

## Content Literacy Tensions

While library program growth was hampered by the inadequacy of the school facility, by a tightly-bounded schedule, and by large startup expenditures of money and time, another constraining factor was found in competing literacy goals and standards. All the content areas, including the library, had a distinct set of subject matter goals related to literacy, but they were often hard to integrate. During staff interviews the differing sensibilities about literacy work in the various subject disciplines and the tensions that that caused in the staff came into view.

### **English Teachers and Literacy Instruction: It all falls on us.**

The question of where responsibility lies for literacy instruction at the school was answered uniformly by staff members—it belongs to the English department with perhaps some attention from the history teacher. Though literacy instruction includes attention to both reading and writing, when considering reading instruction I found that the staff believed that the English teachers were the primary providers. Certainly from my vantage point that was true; I observed that the only teachers who scheduled student visits to the library in the 2009-2010 school-year were English teachers, with the exception of the history teacher during May 2010 Exhibition research. When asked during interviews, “How are teaching responsibilities shared for literacy work in this school?”, the English teachers agreed that they shouldered the task of literacy education. Mrs. Scott exclaimed that the responsibility for literacy instruction is “absolutely not shared, it all falls on English, not even history” (Interview, June 17, 2010). Ms. Tallub echoed that sentiment, offering the explanation that unfortunately content literacy is not introduced as an enrichment to the subject areas, but rather is seen as an extra responsibility, a burden. Mr. Rogers agreed with both of them and offered his perspective as to the reason why literacy instruction seemed confined to the English department.

Mr. Rogers:                    There is a resistance and you touched on it—the 70 hours a week standpoint. You’re going to prioritize based on where you’re accountable, and you’re accountable for grading papers and submitting lesson plans, so if you’re a science or a math teacher, really focusing on literacy is not going to be a priority....And you know Mountain School District attracts an ambitious, competitive type of person that even if they frown upon standardized tests, they’re not going to be left out—in terms of being celebrated. So with that being the focus, it allows you to say, well, ‘I can’t get to writing and literacy, that’s my English counterpart; they’re not doing math’ (Interview, June 10, 2010).

From the humanities teachers’ outlook, literacy instruction across the curriculum was a desirable goal, but did not represent the reality at the school, at least for reading instruction. One of the reasons explaining the difficulty of cross-curricular responsibility

for literacy instruction that I heard consistently was the issue of time needed to prepare lessons including a literacy element. The history teacher, Mr. Wright, suggested that the staff was working on developing an understanding of content literacy instruction, but that years of teaching experience played a part in developing literacy goals within the content areas. As he explained, the effort could seem overwhelming for newer teachers “who are trying to get their own content under control...I don’t think they have a lot of mental space to consider literacy in terms of when they’re teaching their lessons, planning their lessons, but certainly a lot of the older teachers work it in pretty conscientiously” (Interview, June 9, 2010). Clearly the consensus from humanities teachers was that other content area teachers were not including fundamental literacy instruction in their classes.

### **Content Area Teachers and Literacy Instruction: Does numeracy count?**

The six content area teachers outside of the humanities that I interviewed: two science teachers, two math teachers, the Spanish teacher and the Resource teacher, agreed on the desirability of content literacy instruction, but with some qualifications. Mrs. Brown, a science teacher, noted that the English department was better prepared to teach literacy because they had more tools and better assessments for reading instruction (Interview, June 15, 2010), while Mr. Printz, the Spanish teacher, indicated that he had never heard clear goals communicated on content literacy instruction (Interview, June 8, 2010). Ms. Stuart, a math teacher, noted her ambivalence about the content area divisions and risky aspect of teaching across subject boundaries:

But I don’t expect, you know, and I would never receive support from an English teacher teaching basic math skills and I’m also not equipped to teach basic English skills. I don’t know if I want the English teachers teaching basic math skills. And while I don’t think they should all be so compartmentalized and separate, like done separately, I think that unless you have the training to do it, like on some level, I’m afraid you’d do more damage than anything (Interview, September 28, 2010).

The Resource teacher, Mrs. Kilpatrick, was a good source of observations on the matter of literacy instruction since she regularly observed in all content classes and worked with students on class assignments. In terms of reading instruction, she confirmed that it mainly happened in English classes, but also she observed that some literacy instruction occurred in the history classes. The history classes addressed textbook reading and answering text questions, but as she explained, “not on *how* to do that, it’s an assumed skill, not guided reading or strategies...but there is somewhat [literacy strategy instruction] in English classes, but we can improve in science and math literacy inclusion” (Interview, June 10, 2010).

Overall, staff expressed consensus on the need for more training on content literacy instruction, missing from pre-service and in-service education, but had concerns about how a literacy focus might impact the available time to teach content standards. They also expressed in interviews that the English department and Principal Rider were very helpful in relaying some useful strategies across subject lines, but that they needed professional development more directly related to specific disciplines. As Ms. Stuart

lamented, literacy strategies in math were geared towards the elementary level and she had “never seen anyone come up with something [literacy instruction] for algebra 2 that directly related to algebra 2” (Interview, September 28, 2010). Regardless of the lack of directed math strategies for literacy, Ms. Stuart practiced literacy work in her classroom by reading aloud books such as *The Book Thief* to her younger students, and short math stories and current events articles connected to math to her older students.

In spite of the tensions that these teachers recognized in the content literacy arena, I also found a dedicated appreciation of writing-across-the curriculum at Southside Secondary School. As they recounted some successes in literacy instruction in their subject areas, the history teacher, the English teachers, the math teacher and the science teachers all spoke of the importance of writing with the use of evidence to support claims in essays, problem-solving notes, or lab reports. Mrs. Scott called the process of integrating evidence in student essay writing as making “quotation sandwiches” (Interview, June 17, 2010) while the science teachers integrated writing and critical thinking by stressing the development of clarity of argument in lab reports. Both science teachers thought that having the new school library was a good thing for literacy development at the school, but they saw it as more of a general resource for students, not for teachers of science. Mrs. Mone acknowledged that she had never opened a science textbook, even throughout college, and that that lack of reading had hampered her writing ability. What emerged from reviewing the interviews from the teaching staff was a complex, nuanced picture of literacy instruction at the school—each teacher relying on a combination of past experiences, scant training and current priorities to forge their literacy instruction practices.

In summary, there was a general understanding supporting literacy development and content literacy instruction, but it was not without reservation. In reflecting on the reasons for the complexity of teachers’ responses in regard to content literacy instruction, I turned to the follow-up probes I made during staff interviews. All but one of the twelve staff members interviewed pointed to the time constraints deriving from focused attention on content standards (and test preparation) in pursuit of better test scores as a major constraint on content literacy instruction. Ms. Tallub spoke about the barriers to literacy instruction that she perceived in the drive to cover content standards, saying “I think the fact that we are so standards-driven could kind of, maybe, be an issue for other subjects (Interview, June 17, 2010). The math teacher, Ms. Stuart, described the curriculum bind between content standards coverage and literacy instruction even more poignantly when she explained that:

A lot of it is the pressure to get through so much content over the course of a year that, you know, I feel like I *have* to focus on that and not on going to the library and reading, especially now they’re talking doing value-added and having our jobs tied to the test scores. I mean, I don’t know what they think is going to happen, but I think in general, everybody’s going to focus more on testing instead of on critical thinking (Interview, September 28, 2010).

It appeared that conflicts in curricular focus arose more out of broader institutional constraints for positive test results than out of teachers’ instructional beliefs.

Certainly the oft-cited conflicts between progressive instructional methods and the complex historical traditions of individual disciplines in secondary schooling were present as teachers expressed the pressure they felt to deliver content (O'Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995), but the group as a whole believed literacy instruction to be important and this included their general support of library activities as literacy instruction. The teaching staff was not interested in the “every teacher a teacher of reading” directive (Fisher & Ivey, 2005), but did indicate a willingness to undertake professional development to improve literacy instruction in their field if it was focused and additive, rather than an instructional burden, as Shanahan & Shanahan (2008) have suggested. This curriculum bind has persisted for many decades with subject area traditions serving as engines of control and boundary setting between fields (O'Brien et al., 1995). The teachers at Southside Secondary School were caught in the bind of heeding two masters—the tyranny of tests and their own best instincts for broad literacy instruction.

### **Literacy in the Library—An Unknown Curriculum**

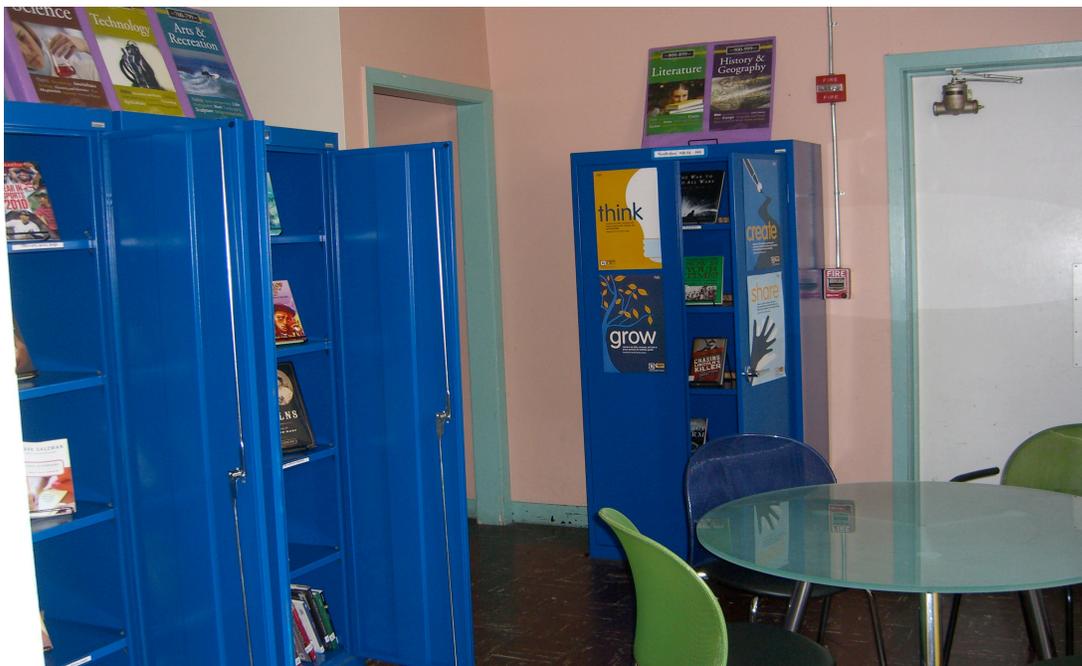
In the course of this study, I found that my reference to literacy instruction meant different things to different teachers; some interpreted it as a reference to reading strategy instruction, others interpreted it as writing in the curriculum, and none of them included a clear perspective on the literacy instruction standards in the library called information literacy. These information literacy standards address research skill development, independent reading growth, and socially responsible information use, and are present throughout the content standards for California schools. But information literacy standards were not fully understood by all the teachers at SSS due to lack of training, as Mr. Rogers claimed—“the teachers need library skills themselves to use the library” (Interview, June 10, 2010). It was apparent to me that the lack of training in the use of a school library—both before and during teaching experiences and absent regular connections with school librarians—that SSS teachers had not had the opportunity to consider how a school library might be integrated into their programs. It seemed, for science and math teachers especially, that there was a need to learn how to incorporate library standards widely in the school program. Given the lack of school library instructional experience in the staff, I experienced my own curriculum bind, finding the evolving library program seemingly at odds with the school goals and schedule. As I encouraged students to pursue personal reading and research interests, and continued to promote conversations about independent reading books, even during tightly controlled study times in the all-purpose room, I developed the sense that I might be considered a saboteur to the institution’s pursuit of testing goals. Finding the place to stand as a school librarian and a researcher was often uncomfortable as I found myself sometimes in a precarious middle ground trying to balance conflicting purposes. As I wrote in my fieldnotes:

There have been many moments when my position at SSS has felt like that of a saboteur in the eyes of the teachers, providing material for ‘clandestine’ reading outside of the controlled curriculum. . . . SSS expectations of students are high, but narrow by being focused on achieving the standards for the test; they leave little

latitude for true creative activity and very little choice connected to students' interests (Fieldnotes, April 20-28, 2010).

I had resolved as the first school-year of the study came to a close to reach out again to the teachers in order to provide materials and teaching resources more directly aimed at their class curriculum. At the start of the second school year, I conferred with English teachers on the needs for small group sets of literature for literature circles, literature class seminars, and required independent reading lists as well as resources for a new human rights research project. The benefit was apparent as I spent more time collaborating with the English teachers and was then able to collect data from ninth grade students on their literature circle experience (provided by the English teacher). In the small set of evaluative questions answered by 43 ninth graders, the great majority of students (76% to 88% of respondents) found the literature circle program to be interesting, enjoyable and productive to comprehension. The successful experience of developing literature circles in two English classes led to the creation of literature circles in the Spanish classes during second semester as the news spread in the staff. It seemed to me that the slow emergence of a school library program relies on just such moments of small success, especially with a staff that had not previously had the advantage of experiencing a school library program.

By mid-year I had proceeded with one more facility expansion, adding four more shelving cases. Having received permission to build into an auxiliary space connected to the stage, I moved some book shelving and a table and chairs into what became known as the library annex (*Figures 13 and 14*). In order to continue to develop a program to meet the evolving needs of the school, the library grew once more in Phase 5.



*Figure 13:* The Southside Secondary School Library, Phase 5 Expansion. The SSS school library annex added a table and nonfiction book shelving case



*Figure 14:* The Southside Secondary School Library on Stage, Winter 2010-2011. The SSS school library acquired more shelving and resources in Phase 5.

## Chapter Summary

To summarize, as the library program gained traction in the school community during the second school-year, the importance of beliefs connected to school library use emerged more clearly. Students' concepts of themselves as competent readers and library patrons were expressed as reader identity that aligned with reading volume and explained hesitancy on the part of some students to use the library. Staff expressed ambivalence in their beliefs about literacy instructional practices within and across the disciplines—and conformed tightly to traditional practices in the content areas. The English department was the primary segment of the faculty that took advantage of the new library resources, even if inconsistently. Further, staff's limited training and experience with collaborative practices in the school library revealed a need to develop understanding about information literacy as the content of library pedagogy. Overall, the tightly paced curriculum in the SSS program and crowded schedule of classes put teachers in a curriculum bind that favored content area objectives over any other goals, impacting school library use. Competing program aspirations influenced the higher valuation of the visible goals, manifested as test scores, versus the invisible objectives, expressed as goals for lifelong learning and the development of habits of mind. What the emerging web of beliefs required of the library, and myself as researcher, was constant improvisation to adjust for teaching priorities, time concerns and belief systems of both staff and students.

## Chapter Seven

### Disquiet in the Library

When I started this dissertation study to build a school library at a small secondary school where there was none, intending to track its growth and usage, my goal was to observe it as an intervention on behalf of literacy development. The relevance of the school library in literacy development is supported by many sources. Numerous recent reports featured the idea that reading comprehension for adolescent learners was an important area of concern nationally, and in many quarters the notion of providing for independent reading was touted as one factor in improving reading proficiency. Influential reading researchers called for extensive, independent reading of a diverse range of texts, supporting sufficient practice in reading to build vocabulary knowledge and comprehension (Allington, 2001; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2000). National reports (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002) called for reading programs that included broad reading by adolescents. Other researchers recommended encouraging reading choices that respect adolescents' interests in order to engage them in regular independent reading (Brozo, 2002; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Moje et al., 2008; Moore et al., 1999).

At the same time that there is a consensus for the cognitive benefits of wide reading of diverse texts, there has been controversy about how to provide for students' independent reading, especially as to whether or not to support sustained silent reading during the school day (Krashen, 2004; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), 2000; Pearson & Goodin, 2010). While many in the education field do promote providing independent reading time in school (Allington, 2001; Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Atwell, 1987; Ivey & Broaddus, 2001), the issue of providing *access* to diverse texts is rarely pursued in concert with the call to encourage wide reading. Very little attention has been paid to the practical issues of how teachers and schools can provide the requisite texts for extensive independent reading. As International Reading Association President Edwards wrote recently, the issue of equitable access to books makes a difference to students' development in reading, but the access issue "gets lost in the attempt to find the best practices or the most evidence-based approaches" to teach (2011, p.16). In fact, while school library research has focused on the impact of resource provision, very few education researchers have recognized the growing body of research from the library field documenting the relationship between effective school library programs and reading achievement gains measured in standardized test scores (Krashen, 2004; Lance, 2002a, 2002b).

One can test the claim that school library programs are disassociated from literacy literature by perusing a wide range of professional studies and pedagogical practice books on reading development as I have done over the course of 40 years of reading articles and chapters on reading development—the words school library and librarian are mostly missing. To complicate matters further, school librarianship is not a settled field; with the emergence of new technologies and rapidly changing literacy tools and diverse formats there is an unsettled nature to library pedagogy. As librarians struggle to find a new balance point for expanding library programs in a variety of formats and for new mission

descriptions to develop service, a future of bifurcated facilities is emerging—one digital, one analog (Helgren, 2011; Kenney, 2011; Shaw, 2010). Uneasiness in service priorities extends to the design of library spaces as well, as technology features and collaborative learning processes are expressed spatially in the Learning Commons concepts of new libraries (Bennett, 2003; Boyce, 2006; Roberts, 2007). Overall, a productive disquiet pervades the school library, though a dedication to meeting students needs for interesting texts prevails.

Given the changes in the library field and the urgency to discover means of improving adolescent literacy performance, it seemed to me that the two areas of research, on reading development and school library efficacy, might be joined in a research project to build a school library. My design research approach required that the library intervention be negotiated over time as the school community, including students, staff and teachers, responded to the library and thereby influenced its evolution. This ethnographic study to observe one small school's effort to construct and respond to a library—to engage its ability to integrate resources into the curriculum and schedule—tracks the evolution of a secondary school library program over the course of almost three school years.

The research site, Southside Secondary School (SSS), is a young public charter school, only five years old, and by most measures, it is a success. It has increased its standardized test scores every year, garnered a Title One Achievement Award for its test score improvements and boasts a waiting list for entering students. When I first visited the school in the winter of the 2006-2007 school year, it was to evaluate a reading intervention program that was being implemented for underachieving readers. The school was striving on many fronts to provide resources and programs for its disadvantaged minority students. These efforts included the provision of the commercial reading intervention program as well as an initial effort to provide access to books in small paperback classroom libraries and an early central collection of donated and yard-sale books, many of them ragged and out-of-date. During interviews with staff and students made for the reading intervention evaluation study, I discovered a common thread of interest in building a school library. That and my own specific interest in school libraries, by virtue of being a school librarian, compelled me to propose a study focused on developing a school library. The research questions I had in mind included probing the nature of the students' response to increased access to library resources, gauging the impact of library services on the collaborative engagement of content area teachers, and defining the essential elements contributing to success or failure of the library evolution in this particular school environment.

### **A School Library Situates in Third Space(s)**

This dissertation emerged from my need to understand how a school library is situated in the learning community. I sought to uncover the location of the library as it developed in the school and found that it evolved in three dimensions—physical space, curricular space and ideological space. An overview here of the concerns of each spatial element foreshadows the discussion sections on each that follow. In each of these school dimensions, the library occupies a territory that has an essential in-between-ness about

it—it occupies a third space between traditional school literacy practices and the authentic literacy practices of students out of school. Noticing the spatial description of literacy practices, how they are situated at a school site and in the literate life of a learning community, reveals what Leander & Sheehy claimed: “in literacy matters we are inevitably led to material substances” (2004, p. 3). Spatial metaphors used in literacy experiences, such as boundaries, borders, margins, centers and peripheries, are a visual means to address physical experiences and dynamic effects in social life and these relational processes were evident as the library established its place in the school.

The requirements and complexities of building the physical facility emerged first as the effort to provide library resources competed with other compelling needs for facility space at the school. Carving out a corner in the all-purpose room to circulate a small collection of books related to my first research questions about access reported in Chapter Four. I sought to discover the broad impact of inclusion of library services on the school community by asking:

- How are library dispositions taken up in a school, or not, as a distributed library is developed on site?
- Does increased access to resources impact students’ attitudes about reading and independent reading behaviors?

The issue of curricular space for a library program intersected with the mission and goals of the school as a whole as teachers struggled to integrate the possibility of library service in an already crowded curriculum and schedule. As the physical instantiation of library service expanded, the challenge for the faculty and the librarian to collaborate reflected the tension of divergent goals in curricular engagement, considered in Chapter Five. My initial questions to gauge impact on content area teaching with inclusion of library services and resources were:

- Will teachers at the site use the new resources for curriculum purposes and will students access resources for school projects?
- What characterizes collaborative implementation of the program at this school site?

Descriptions of ideological space, a space that encompassed the deep beliefs and understandings held by students and staff about school library functioning, emerged both in interviews and in statements expressed as the learning community accessed library resources over the course of the study. As described in Chapter Six, I expected that beliefs about the value of a library resources and a library program would drive the evolution of program and resources. I questioned how sociocultural perspectives on literacy and learning might influence the way that literacy is taught in this school’s setting. In order to define the factors that are essential to the success or failure of the library evolution in this particular environment I wondered:

- What are the elements for success and obstacles to building a library resource and program?

- What design modifications occur as the project adapts to the users' library needs?

As I explored the successes and failures related to establishing student access to library resources, to collaborating with the school staff, and to understanding beliefs about literacy at SSS, I became aware of the complex of relationships involved in supporting literacy in a school library. Dressman (1997) argued that school libraries historically occupied a geopolitical space outside of the norms of regular school practice, hosting a contrarian effort to satisfy student desires for popular literature outside the canon. Boyce argued that school library design must transform along with technological capacities and the expectations for social communication:

In the past, the material status of the school library signified a singular cultural representation of text, literacy, knowledge, and information within the school. Now, within a new set of communications conditions, major shifts in perceptions of literacy and spatiality give rise to reconceptualizing both the place and spaces of the school library (2006, p. 33).

To take a divergent theoretical path, this dissertation argues that the school library exists in an academic third space animated by constant tensions: between facility competitions for group access versus individual learning spaces, between explicit curricular requirements and independent learning desires, and between beliefs about traditional in-school instructional goals and out-of-school learning priorities. All the while seeking equilibrium between sometimes opposing goals, the school library juggles the diverse goals of schooling and out-of-school priorities by maintaining a stance in the middle, serving both.

### **Physical Space and Access: Matter Matters**

Building a library program where none previously existed first entailed developing the physical space for library service including essential elements—the collection, the furniture, the technology. In order to determine the broad impact of inclusion of library services on the school community, there must be something of a physical entity as well as resources existing in analog and digital forms. The allocation of physical space for a school library, whether or not it is central and where it is bounded, reveal curricular priorities and facility limitations connected to literacy goals. The entity of the library concretizes the relationship between literacy goals and active pedagogy, reveals a school's commitment to literacy, and leads to questions of both power dynamics and impact on learning (Soja, 2004). I hoped to discover how library dispositions are taken up in a school, or not, as a distributed library is developed on site. I also sought to answer whether or not increased access to resources impacts students' attitudes about reading and independent reading behaviors.

What I found first at SSS was an ongoing tension between curricular and extracurricular demands for limited space, as reported in Chapter Four. Given that the school's leased facility was designed for an elementary school, the high school—with its larger students, expanded class offerings and need for multiple extracurricular

activities—was overcrowded and overscheduled. There was no library space, so the library settled first in the corner of the all-purpose room, moving to the stage after two semesters. The collection grew from a start-up of 598 books to nearly 3000 books by the end of two and a half years of development and as it expanded, so too did the students' circulation of books. When I started the library-building process, it was with the notion of 'build it and they will come'. Because I knew, from my earlier research at the school and from encouragements by Principal Rider, that the school community wanted a library, I assumed that the library would be a welcomed addition. Even so I found that the desire for a library was complicated and sometimes compromised by other priorities for spatial use. For instance, the limited times for library use at the end of the day in eighth period were frequently 'trumped' by assemblies, academic rewards and award parties, and school spirit events. In spite of these conflicts, the principal, staff and students expressed genuinely receptivity to the concept of a school library.

### **Student Access to Texts: "Can I have another one just like it?"**

The key factors I found connected to increasing student library use were the following: the number of diverse texts available, the number of days the library was accessible, and the gender and age of the students. Another factor, the collaborative engagement of the teachers, is addressed in the section on curricular space. This section on student access consolidates the data recording the growth of the physical library highlighted earlier. Over the course of the 2009-2010 school year, every expansion in library service was matched by an increase in student use; for instance, after only 11 days of access, 77 out of 194 students had checked out one or more books. This represented 40% of the student body that borrowed a total of 110 books over the course of the first four and a half weeks. As the collection expanded to nearly 2000 books at the end of the first school year (2009-2010), 82.6% of the student body visited at least once and all but 13 students checked out a book of interest on their first visit. Given my survey findings that 8.2% of the students surveyed at SSS owned *no* books of their own and 17.6% had read *no* books for pleasure in the preceding twelve months, expanding access to interesting books was a factor in increased circulation. Once students understood that books that they *wanted* to read were available, they returned requesting similar titles, becoming more open to readers advisory with a librarian.

**Access and equity.** The issue of access to library resources includes both physical and intellectual access (Allington, 2001; Atwell, 1987). On repeated occasions during the study, the library could not operate during its limited, regular scheduled hours because library time was superseded by other scheduled gatherings in the all-purpose room, rendering physical access impossible. Beyond providing physical access to a wide range of texts for student use, those wishing to promote library use must also introduce students to diverse reading options as a way of making the library resources familiar and approachable. In this library, I used revolving displays organized by genre and topic as well as booktalking in the library and in classrooms to connect students to books of interest. Together these efforts can offset the lack of equity in access that is well-documented for disadvantaged learners (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Neuman, 1999; Neuman & Celano, 2001). Circulation figures at the end of the first seven months of

limited operation—1154 books circulated for approximately 190 students—demonstrated that students responded to increased access, though not uniformly by grade or gender.

Another issue tightly connected to both physical and intellectual access was sound. During the two regularly scheduled times that the students could visit the library, lunchtime and study hall, the experience of sound was diametrically opposed. At lunchtime the large hall, stripped of its soundproofing tiles, echoed the boisterous voices of 200 students, and the sheer din made one-on-one book conversations with students almost impossible. During study hall in the same space, the requirement for absolute silence meant that book conversations between student and librarian (readers advisory) had to be conducted in uncomfortable whispers. Both situations discouraged discourse about books and proved to be an ongoing barrier to access throughout the course of the study, relieved only by small group visits from the English classrooms when more normal productive conversation was possible.

**Early adopters and late entries.** There were gender and age differences in students' response to the addition of school library services that I measured by access rates. Consistent with earlier research findings that younger students spend more time reading independently (Cullinan, 2004; Guthrie & Greaney, 1991) the younger eighth and ninth grader students were early adopters of the library, visiting to check out books. Within the first five weeks, 58% of the two younger grades had visited the library, while only 12% of the tenth and eleventh graders had done so. Gender also made a difference in library usage at this site; in the first five weeks of operation, girls at all grade levels accessed the library to a much greater degree. For example, 88% of eighth grade girls versus 62% of eighth grade boys and 38% of eleventh grade girls versus 8% of eleventh grade boys (in other words, 1 out of 12) visited the library to find books for independent reading. It appeared to me that it was harder to attract boys to the growing collection, in part because the books that might appeal to their need to define and pursue emerging identities (Moje, et al., 2008; Smith & Wilhelm, 2002) were in short supply. This shortage is consistent with my 20 years of experience in librarianship, which suggests that non-fiction titles that are both appropriately challenging and relevant to many boys' out-of-school interests are simply harder to find for a collection. Just as one boy remarked that he wanted books that "tell him about stuff", I found that many male students responded positively as I built the collection of biography and other non-fiction materials. Ms. Tallub, the experienced eighth grade English teacher offered the same reflection about specific genres appealing to boys when she commented:

And I think there is a gender difference often time between the type of reading that girls like to do and that boys like to do and I think that nonfiction is a part of getting some of those more hesitant boys interested in reading (Interview, June 17, 2010).

In short, as the library collection grew and was increasingly informed by students' requests and responses to the available selection, so did the circulation of books, especially at the eighth and ninth grades.

### **Design Research Serendipities: The Red Cart Benefit and the Blue Notebook Effect**

The early limits in physical space and the ongoing scheduling obstacles to student access had some benefits. I discovered that by working on collection development right in the midst of students during lunchtime, the evolving library (i.e., the library more as a process than a place) was both visible and transparent. The growth of the library was visible as students saw the number of books in the collection grow day by day as I processed them for library circulation with labels, stamps and barcodes. I used a red library cart as a workstation and found that many students were interested in the process and asked questions as they waited in the lunch line nearby. The Red Cart Benefit was the unplanned promotion of the library and particular book titles in a thoroughly authentic manner. Another serendipitous outcome of the crowded corner start-up library was the Blue Notebook Effect. As students noticed my work on books, they also commented on them and the books they would like to see acquired for the library. Soon I was writing their suggestions and their names in a small blue notebook in order to satisfy their expressed preferences. This procedure introduced an element of transparency to the construction of the library as students soon came to realize that I was buying and stocking the books they wanted. It became clear from students' eagerness to make recommendations about books they liked and those they hoped to read that the highly visible and transparent nature of my initial efforts had the unanticipated consequence of drawing students into the process.

An important part of the value of making connections to students' interests in developing the library collection was the overt respect it displayed for adolescent literacy practices. By attending to student interest, teachers and librarians validate students' ability to make meaningful choices about the texts they read voluntarily, nourishing the motivation to read in the process (Gibson, 2010; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Worthy, 1996). Further, allowing students some power in selecting texts, especially in choosing a broader range of texts (Alvermann & Rush, 2004) than the typical library fare—by providing student-suggested graphic novel titles, for example—allows students to participate in the literate culture of the school, to “write themselves into the world” of literacy engagement (Wade & Moje, 2000, p. 622).

### **Students' Reading Habits: “Choose better books.”**

Over the course of this study, students actively reported to me their preferences in books: during informal conversations, during readers' advisory moments, and in formal surveys and interviews. Individual enthusiasm for particular titles were commonplace as students requested and recognized book titles—“You have *Rocket Boys*?!” While I raise the issue of specific titles of interest later, what is important to note here is that providing students' preferred books was reflected in their motivation to patronize the library. When a book was a good match for a student, by topic and reading level, that student's positive reaction to reading was evident in their motivation to check out the book, to find more titles by the same author, and even to submit their names to waiting lists for very popular books.

**An issue of motivation.** While motivation to read independently is a complex matter, this study confirmed some claims by other researchers. First, if we want students to *want* to read, we have to show them it's worth it, by modeling and revealing our own

enthusiasm, by finding ways to attract attention to reading as a satisfying experience, and by consulting with students about what they want to read and learn (Csikszentmihályi, 1990b, p.134-136). The most compelling evidence of this claim was the regular discourse students managed to have with me about books they loved, even when those conversations were very circumscribed by limited access times in the school schedule. Student responses to my sessions of booktalking was another regularly observed effect on students' motivation to read—after every booktalk session, which provided me the opportunity to introduce titles of interest, students were eager to check out the titles. The positive responses of many of the SSS students confirmed that teenage students do respond to adult modeling and enthusiasm for reading.

A second related claim confirmed in this study is that engagement is closely aligned with motivation to read, as Brozo, Shiel, & Topping, (2007) and Guthrie & Wigfield, (2000) argued. If we define engagement as simply the amount of time that students are actually reading and measure it with evidence from circulation records and observed attention to books at the school site, then engagement with books was evident at the school. Increasing circulation figures, my observations of students reading, teachers' observations of students "flashing their book covers in the hallways" support the conclusion that access to the school library improved reading engagement for many students. Another sign of the impact of engagement and its effect on motivation to read was demonstrated in the phenomenon of books 'gone viral' in the student population. I observed that as specific titles gained popularity—for instance, a book of Tupac's poetry or the *Wake* series—and produced a demand for those books, many students were motivated to request the same titles for independent reading. Some books became 'contagious'.

**Stage fright.** The highly visible nature of the library on stage was not conducive to increased library use for all students. I discovered through observation and interview data that there was a social consequence to moving the library onto the stage in the all-purpose room where it was in plain (and elevated!) sight of the student body during lunch and study hall. It appeared that most students did not want to perform as library users when the whole school could observe them, although there were differences observed in the free access of lunchtime and the library pass system utilized during study hall in the same room. What I found and had confirmed by interview data with students and staff was that during lunchtime a library visit became a badge of 'nerdiness', but during study hall it served as a badge of resistance; some students used the library pass as a 'get-out-of-study hall' pass. I found that most students' use of the library was strongly influenced by peer relationships in the social laboratory that is high school. The power of social interactions connected to library use were deeply embedded in the local school community's expectations, influenced by individual personal needs and community literacy practices (Gee, 1991; Gee, 2000). For a great many students that meant that they needed a protective layer of privacy in regard to library engagement. I found that it helped to partially screen the stage with a whiteboard and to organize scheduled visits by small groups of students during regular class periods in order to offset the 'nerdiness' factor of independent library use.

### **Summary: Access and the Physical Dimension**

It was clear from student response to access of an increasing collection in the evolving library that both social and physical factors had a strong influence on use. By the end of the 2009-2010 school-year, a ceiling of 82.6% of students making initial contact was reached, and the number of students willing to use the library plateaued. While some students had become regular users of the library, others had not made any contact and some of the difference was related to students' age and gender. In the early weeks, the younger students, eighth and ninth graders, expressed excitement— especially the eighth grade girls. Slowly the group of students patronizing the library expanded. But by the end of the year there were many in the older classes who had never visited the library. The resistance to library use was both social and physical; for some students the very visible position of the library on the stage was a deterrent as they avoided being seen by peers using the library. Other students, however, demonstrated a disposition to choose and read self-selected texts, especially those who had engaged in the process of selecting books for the library as they made acquisition recommendations. This engagement was also an effect of the physical placement of the library in the all-purpose room; as students had a close-in view of library construction, they participated through comments and suggestions. School expectations for sound levels also played a role in library usage when either too much noise or demands for silence impacted library discourse. From my vantage point, complex tensions in the space committed to the library were tightly bound to social expectations of students, to physical space limitations and serendipities, and to school curricular priorities for space allocation. As library usage increased and the school community recognized its value to literacy development, the library moved from a space on the periphery in the all-purpose room to the stage, a more central place in the school, signaling a change in status.

### **Curricular Space: A Library Program's Uncertain Welcome**

Building students' individual dispositions to use the school library represented just the first layer of library construction; the second level included making connections with the teachers' curricular goals. The nature of school librarianship encompasses curriculum support along with support for independent learning and at SSS the former was slow to be established. Collaborative efforts between teachers require time, of which these teachers had little; conversant objectives, which we were exploring; and trust, that also takes time and experience to develop (Loertscher, 1988; Monteil-Overall, 2005; Small, 2005). I hoped to record the trajectory of resource use for curriculum projects and to uncover the characteristics of joint work between teachers and librarian at the site. The first two concrete efforts to collaborate with teachers came at opposite ends of the 2009-2010 school-year: Collaboration on classroom libraries for independent reading emerged at the start of the school-year and joint work on the culminating research project for eighth graders developed at the end of the year. Both were cautious initial efforts to collaborate, but neither was thoroughly successful.

### **Independent Reading Program: “There’s not a lot of room.”**

When the school-year began, two of the three English teachers, all of whom were new to the school, expressed interest in enhancing their small classroom libraries in support of an independent reading program. By the second semester, however, all three English teachers requested that I remove most of the books from their classrooms, saying that the time required to manage even a small library was overwhelming. The obstacle they reported was a lack of time—time to provide books, time to allow students to read, and time to teach the standards necessary to prepare students for standardized tests in the spring. All the demands on their teaching time competed for their attention and caused one of them to eliminate independent reading from the classroom program even though she recognized its importance. We continued to work together as I scheduled booktalks and students rotated in small groups into the library for 15 minute visits to select books. The difficulty in finding room for reading—just plain reading—while recommended by researchers (Allington, 2001; Underwood & Pearson, 2004) and desired by students (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Pitcher, et al., 2007; Worthy, 1996) revealed an ongoing tension in priorities for developing literacy. Although both English Language Arts standards and school library standards call for support of independent reading and inquiry, library standards played second fiddle to the urgency of covering other content standards, even though reading a broad range of diverse texts can indirectly enhance content learning (Devoogd, 2009; Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

So why is independent reading time in school so underutilized by teachers? Certainly one reason is the primacy of testing in the current culture of school accountability; any practice that cannot demonstrate measurable gains on standardized tests is not likely to be valued even when, as is the case for independent reading, common sense suggests that it ought to matter. The valuing of test scores and grades on assigned texts introduces a tension with students’ preferences for self-selected books. As a result, teachers preferred that students use available time to read the core assigned text rather than student-selected choices. Another reason for the lack of independent reading programs that I uncovered at this site pertains to the lack of teacher knowledge about contemporary YA literature. Lacking a familiarity with popular teenage literature interferes with teachers’ ability to promote accessible and interesting free-reading selections. As a consequence, it hinders the smooth operation of an independent reading program and tests teachers’ patience when attempting to match students with appropriately challenging books. In one example of the persistence needed in matching students to books of interest, I spent four readers advisory sessions reviewing books with Jared, a ninth grader, before we found a book he wanted to read. His enthusiasm upon reading the book—“I finally got into a book; it’s an accomplishment for me!”—validated the time spent in selection, but may not be time available to most teachers.

Perhaps more important, the contestation of *which* texts are worthy influences many teachers’ attitudes about independent reading. As Mrs. Scott reported, she didn’t approve of graphic novels and did not consider it to be a literary genre. The restrictive attitude in regard to ‘acceptable texts’ is common (Gibson, 2010; Jago, 2004; Samuels, 1983), but is counterproductive when encouraging adolescents to develop individual book preferences and literacy abilities. The multiliteracies of today’s adolescents includes a wide range of texts and formats, and the students at SSS repeatedly revealed in their

actions, in survey responses, and in interviews that making their own reading choices was important to them. When we speak of students' multiple literacies, we may mean several things: we may mean the use of texts other than the usual privileged texts of school (Alvermann, 2002; Wade & Moje, 2000), we may mean the complementary or contrasting literacy practices used out of school by our diverse students (Greenleaf et al., 2001; Hull & Schultz, 2001), or we may mean the ability of contemporary students to access and compose information in multiple formats and across many disciplinary areas (Alvermann, 2002; Gee, 2004). What these definitions hold in common is the importance of enfranchising students to engage in individual authentic literacy practices with a wide variety of textual resources in pursuit of the anticipated outcome of higher motivation for sustained work (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Pearson, 2007; Wade & Moje, 2000). At Southside Secondary School the tension teachers struggled with between assigned and independent work was evident in the lack of strong support for the independent reading program as a lynchpin in the school's literacy curriculum.

### **Small Collaborative Moments: Piecemeal Patterns**

At the heart of school library effectiveness studies is the issue of collaboration between librarians and teachers (Loertscher, 1988; Monteil-Overall, 2005; Small, 2005). Where school library professionals work together with teachers in planning and implementing research projects and programs such as independent reading, student achievement levels increase (Achterman, 2008; Baughman, 2000; Lance, 2002a; Smith, 2001). At SSS an initial focus on building the collection evolved into a focus on integrating resources and schedules to maximize student access and information literacy instruction. At the end of the first school year and the beginning of the second school year of operation, this collaborative initiative manifested in several research projects with eighth, ninth and eleventh graders. Through a combination of class visits and small group research visits, students were given a taste of research strategies and bibliographic instruction, but it was evident from their response that far more research experience would be beneficial. For instance, students had very limited understanding of how to search a subscription database or a library catalog, and most did not know how to locate materials in the library once a title record was produced in search results. Since collaborative efforts take time as does the development of trust between collaborating partners (Kearney, 2000; Monteil-Overall, 2005; Small, 2005), I expect that the program at SSS will grow over the years as the library is understood to be beneficial to the content areas.

In piecemeal fashion, I was also able to engage English teachers and the Spanish teachers in collaborative partnerships for literature circle work, book club initiatives and independent reading assignments for out-of-school completion. For the most part, the nature of the collaboration had to do with obtaining resources, but consultation on the appropriate titles to obtain and on the location of instructional materials was also a part of the process. For example, the new ninth grade teacher and I identified a dozen titles, including YA literature, to be used in her classes' literature circles, as well as core novel titles to use with her remedial reading class. I also produced a host of instructional resources to support her core novel work. These were initial, if somewhat limited, moves in the direction of an integrated library program.

In short, a partnership between the librarian and content area teachers is a social interaction that takes time, trust and program integration to be productive. As Walster noted, collaboration is a “social technology” (1998, p. 249), one that draws school librarians out of potentially isolating modes of instruction. Mrs. Scott, one of the English teachers, referred specifically to the social connections inherent in successful library interactions, suggesting that if a teacher has a relationship with the librarian that that can serve as a link for students to use the library with less reservation—“you can bridge that and they start to go to the librarian themselves” (Interview, June 17, 2010). Given that the curricular standards for content areas and librarianship are distinct, but overlapping in some particulars (e.g., independent reading and research), and that activity systems are likely to be different (e.g., rules about movement, conversation, choice-making), the school library operates in a specific curricular space. At SSS I found an emerging willingness to bridge the differences in content areas by working to develop joint programs.

### **Ideological Space: Unearthing Student and Staff Beliefs**

Beliefs about the value of a school library program underlie both the willingness to engage in physical construction of library as a place and the development of curriculum integration with the library. At the foundation of a library’s efficacy is the history of school library use held in the memories, experiences and expectations of school community members reported in Chapter Six. Reflecting the history of library users, school libraries are subject to an “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) as teachers, administrators and students relate their own personal regard for libraries to their particular past experiences. A set of beliefs about libraries—what I call the ideological space—was manifested at SSS over time through conversations, decisions, and challenges that accompanied the construction of the school library. Balancing competing epistemologies on the ground was a constant issue as the SSS school community struggled to ‘fit’ the library into its physical and curricular space. The design modifications that were made as the project evolved and adapted to the school community’s needs reflected deep beliefs about the value of independent learning, collaboration and the nature of content literacy instruction. For example, while staff indicated strong belief in the value of independent reading and inquiry, as discussed earlier, their ability to provide opportunities for those activities was compromised by the “dual fixation” of tightly controlled instructional standards and heightened attention to standardized testing (Pearson, 2007). Every teacher interviewed referred to the constrictions of standards and standardized testing when describing the limitations they experienced in teaching *past the test*. As Ms. Tallub imagined a different educational scenario she said:

I would reduce the emphasis on CSTs, most specially for the higher grades because I think there’s a danger with standards in that they are what you need to graduate high school. And that can become constraining when what they really need to be prepared for is college, if that makes sense (Interview, June 17, 2010).

As I uncovered elements for successful library operation and met obstacles to building a library resource and program at this site, I became increasingly aware of how underlying epistemological beliefs about how people learn are imbricated within a school's culture (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). An intricate web of overlapping beliefs and expectations influenced the way that literacy was taught in this school's setting and the ways in which the library was utilized, or not.

### **Believing in the Power of Libraries, Or Not**

There were three main categories of beliefs that had a strong impact on the integration of a school library at Southside Secondary School: a set of beliefs held by teachers about the value of libraries in curriculum areas, an institutional regard for school libraries, and students' beliefs about reading competence and library use.

In the case of the teachers and staff, youthful experiences with libraries were more commonly positive than experiences using school libraries in pre-service or in-service education. All of the 12 staff members interviewed had positive experiences with libraries before training or becoming teachers, while only 3 of the 10 credentialed teachers had any brushes with library pedagogical connections before teaching. As a result, SSS teachers believed generally that school libraries might have a beneficial influence on learning, but they had somewhat limited understandings of the pedagogy of librarians or of the possibilities for collaborative partnerships in their curricular area. Their beliefs formed as younger students were largely unpracticed once they became teachers, partly because they had little training to guide them and partly because library programs were scarce in their job postings. The upshot was that while teachers supported the concept of a school library program, they had little experience or curricular room to accommodate one. I recognized that a lack of training, a sense of intimidation about the library (reported by three staff members), and explicit mention of the benefit of personal attention from a librarian to make the connection to bibliographic instruction described staff needs. I therefore redoubled my efforts to make collaborative connections. There is a body of school library effectiveness research to support such an effort on behalf of increasing student achievement (Achterman, 2008; Baughman, 2000; Lance et al., 2000; Smith, 2001). The fact that the school library effectiveness research is extremely underrepresented in education research literature also contributes to a library-knowledge gap for teachers. As a content area of its own, library pedagogy is not known, impacting beliefs and leading to narrow understandings about supporting school libraries as part of developing college-going cultures in our most disadvantaged student populations.

Second, in an age of accountability where tangible, high-stakes test scores take strong precedence over the largely invisible impact of independent or informal learning (Gallagher, 2011; Pearson, 2007), a school library's mission to promote independent learning plays second fiddle to test preparation when space planning and curricular scheduling are considered. Few attend to the importance of incidental learning though we know that independent reading is the greatest source of increased vocabulary and general knowledge—for example, one student reported to me that he learned the history of the Library of Congress from a novel he read. Even Principal Rider, who increasingly demonstrated appreciation for library resources as the library grew, said that she would like to “regularize library work”, but was hard-pressed to help her staff include information

literacy in the curriculum. It is documented that where administrators understand the instructional role of the school library program, expect a librarian to collaborate with teachers, and have successful experiences with the school librarian themselves, school libraries thrive (Church, 2010; Oberg, Hay, & Henri, 2000). In an era when the value of independent and informal learning (Schugurensky, 2000) is undervalued; school library programs are challenged to be seen as essential to the curriculum (Santos, 2011).

Student beliefs about the value of library use and their individual reader identity—beliefs about personal competence in reading (Hall, 2007; Hall 2010)—comprise the last major category in a web of beliefs I discovered at the site. A majority of the students at SSS believed themselves to be good or very good readers, regardless of the actual amount of time they spent reading or the regularity of their library use, but for some struggling readers, this confidence about reading was ‘doubly fraught’. I learned from student and staff interviews that performing as library users on the stage was socially risky for many students. Further, underperforming readers had two barriers to overcome when approaching the library to obtain independent reading materials: first, they had to risk the badge of ‘nerdiness’ on occasion by using the library in full public view, and then they had to risk the label of ‘struggling reader’ during attempts to find appropriately challenging books. Nevertheless, many students who did value reading found ways to circulate books of interest, selecting from a wide range of titles that they were free to choose from, allowing them to successfully differentiate according to interest and need (Benson, 2010; Gibson, 2010; Siah & Kwok, 2010; Worthy, 1996).

### **A Content Literacy Conundrum**

One ongoing conundrum in the literacy field involves the incorporation of literacy instruction within the content areas. Just as O’Brien et al. (1995) described, content area teachers at SSS recognized a discrepancy in the sense of responsibility for secondary student literacy instruction between content areas. When faced with the question—Whose job is literacy instruction?—they reluctantly admitted that it falls on the English teachers. The Catch 22 of content literacy instruction illuminated by O’Brien et al. (1995) found that content area teachers rejected research-based strategies for content literacy either because the strategies did not accommodate the norms and constructs of the subject disciplines, or because after adapting the strategies to the subject area, they became (paradoxically) uninteresting. In addition, at SSS the infusion of independent reading texts as part of an expanded literacy curriculum occasionally generated a negative response as math and science teachers found students doing ‘clandestine reading’ during class and removed the offending texts. While students certainly should not disrupt class with unassigned activity, the lack of responsiveness on some teachers’ part to students’ reading engagement highlighted the tension between general literacy instruction and content area curriculum expectations (O’Brien et al., 1995; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

At the base of the conflict between content area differences is the issue of control over texts—which texts count as literate and valuable? The regularities of secondary education include teachers’ control over students’ time, activity and text selection (Alvermann & Moore, 1991; Pitcher et al., 2007). However, students uniformly revealed a desire to read books that they found more interesting than assigned texts, as expressed in interviews, questionnaires and conversations throughout the study. Students repeatedly

stated their desires to read books of interest to them across a broad range of subjects, but teachers, driven by the urgency of standards instruction, were required to largely confine the choice of texts to the core curriculum. This is not to say that teachers were uniformly opposed to the library, or students' self-selection of books—the reverse was apparent. As one math teacher, Ms. Stuart explained in regard to her support of independent reading, “Math is most important to me, but most of them are not going to be mathematicians. At the end of the day, I want them to experience the passion of learning” (Interview, September 28, 2010). But given the curriculum bind of standards and testing in connection with independent learning, teachers often opted out of allowing students to make choices that advanced general literacy proficiency over content area knowledge.

To summarize, I argue that school librarianship sits in the middle of the content literacy conundrum by virtue of the school library's mission to serve students' independent learning, a content pedagogy of its own (information literacy) *and* the goal of supporting literacy development in all the content areas. In so doing, the school library locates at the center of the school's curriculum by situating in an ideological third space, a space of tension between epistemologies about how people learn. Whether based on time constraints, a focus on testing objectives, a focus on teaching autonomy, or a tightly constricted schedule, teachers were caught between the need to be relentlessly standards-based and an unswerving dedication to student growth. Belief systems, fundamental to theoretical underpinnings of teaching and learning, impacted the ways in which students, teachers and staff responded to the evolution of a school library program at this site.

## Conclusion

This design study using ethnographic tools has sought to situate one new school library within the learning community of a small secondary school in hopes of understanding the ways in which it might contribute to the learning environment and reading lives of its students. By using the lens of education literature in reading comprehension and collaboration in combination with the literature from the field of school librarianship, I examined the evolution of one small library from a sociocultural perspective.

The story I found reveals the extent to which tensions between a school library's mission and other school objectives may drive a library's efficacy and acceptance. This dissertation argues that the school library exists in an academic third space defined by constant tensions in three categories: first, in an *ideological space* balanced between in-school and out-of-school learning priorities, next in a *curricular space* caught between curriculum requirements and individual learning desires and third, in a *physical space* competing for accessible learning spaces. The ideological space confronts differences in beliefs about how and why teaching and learning are productive. In the curricular space, a learning community struggles to balance the content of teaching and learning, while contestation over physical space reflects the where/when realities of teaching and learning. All three categories of space exist in an environment dedicated to knowledge construction; each represents part of the complexity of a school community's learning ecology. In this case, it occurs to me that the new concept of the learning commons, a place of knowledge construction rather than knowledge seeking or collection, was nicely

paralleled on the ground as the construction of the library became an exercise in knowledge construction, too—as students and staff observed and participated in collection building and library program development.

When summing up the findings in this case, the good news is that the school library continues to serve students in some historical and traditional ways. Access to library resources at school, both print and nonprint, *does matter*. At Southside Secondary School, the school community responded to the construction of a library in primarily positive ways: increasing patronage and circulation, expanding collaborative partnerships between disciplines, and exploring avenues for physical expansion. I saw, as Robertson did, a “cascade of changes” (2003, p. 196) that went from changing the facility, to changing attitudes, to changing practices, to changing use policies, to potentially changing student achievement. Although my findings do not speak directly to student reading achievement measured in standardized test scores, the logic of the Matthew effect of reading (Stanovich, 1986) encourages one to assume some positive consequences from the increased volume of reading seen at the site. Other studies note the validity of an assumption of increased reading proficiency arising from increased reading volume: NAEP survey findings reflecting higher scores for those students reading at least 11 pages a day (as cited in Underwood & Pearson, 2004) and a finding that a mere 10 minutes a day of independent reading improves students’ standardized reading achievement in Anderson et al., 1988. Over time, library dispositions were impacted positively, manifested by increased library usage by both students and staff.

The powerful impact of time pressures and curricular control exerted on teachers in the age of accountability define a second realization arising out of this study. The fundamental issue of control over student access to a library complicates library program development. At SSS the majority of teachers reported the sense of being in a curriculum bind, a tug-of-war between the requirements of core curriculum standards and their prerogative to pursue other educational objectives with their students. One prime example was the difficulty over establishing and maintaining classroom libraries and an independent reading program at the school. Even though ensuring equity of access to books and the opportunity for dedicated time to read, developing and supporting student motivation to read, and standardizing implementation criteria for school-wide sustained silent reading initiatives *were* valued concerns, independent reading programs did not thrive in the English department. Dedication to the standardized curriculum in pursuit of higher test scores made independent reading a lower priority. Unfortunately, one consequence of privileging one source of knowledge construction over another, through consistent disregard for use of some kinds of texts, is the disenfranchisement of some students for whom self-selected texts in multiple formats is crucial to engagement in reading. A school library can offset such disengagement with the provision of texts that students *want* to read, as evidenced at SSS, by embracing students’ multiliteracies in opposition to textual control.

Last, my conclusions in regard to the success of a distributed library at the site—in classrooms, online and in the community—reflect the complexity of student and staff beliefs about the value of a school library and independent reading. These beliefs, in turn, were related to personal histories of library training and experiences that influenced whether or not the library was utilized. Students’ sense of identity as readers was

connected to their willingness to perform as readers and library users on the stage. Teachers in the content areas differed in their use of the library resources depending on whether or not they believed that library use in support of curriculum goals jived with their experience and content area training. I found that staff beliefs and past experiences in libraries are further influenced by the invisible nature of school librarianship; often the collaborative contributions of a librarian during project work goes unrecognized and is further exaggerated by the professional isolation of librarians operating as departments of one. Taking a sociocultural perspective on the school library, attending to the multiple ways in which a library offers resources, leads to a broader conception of information provision at a school. The transfer of knowledge and construction of information in all its forms—from literacy proficiency to cultural knowledge and historical data, from literary arts to social networking norms—have a place in contemporary school library program design. Seeing the school library as a third space offers a multifaceted concept on the ground, utilizing the logic of three dimensions of ideology, time and space to explain the ecological complexity of library interactions. At last, we can understand the school library as a site for students to express individual agency through choice of texts and literacy practices, as a “space for elaborating strategies of selfhood...that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1-2).

### **Significance for Educational Policy**

My hope is that by describing the elements of school library functioning in relation to literacy development, clarity of purpose might be achieved for both libraries and literacy curriculum. In this era of rapid change in technology and increasing digital access to information there are elevated doubts about the efficacy of school libraries. If the value of the school library is invisible, it can be dismissed as a peripheral rather than central component of a learning environment—initiating a cycle of misunderstanding, underuse, undervaluation and subsequent underfunding. Yet, creating balanced literacy programs, valuing the power of differentiated literacy practices, and honoring the diverse learning interests of students are all explicit priorities of school librarianship. This study hopes to alert policy makers to missed educational opportunities if school libraries practices are not topics of pre-service and in-service education. If teachers and administrators become familiar with standards for literacy in the library, become aware of the breadth of young people’s literature and their combined potential for literacy growth, one can imagine a renewed drive for equitable funding of school libraries to provide equitable access to all students. In a time of accelerating technical change, school libraries may be the ‘slow food of education,’ but this study hoped to expose their significance as potential rich sites of lifelong learning by accommodating student agency in learning.

### **Limitations of Study**

This study spanning three years of involvement is limited by virtue of being about one small school and including only one researcher. Though I identified as a participant observer in the most active sense, by building program, teaching and observing; it is true that I started with a clear bias as a teacher-librarian. In addition, the nature of being a

researcher positions one on the periphery of an institution—attempting to maintain a semi-objective distance—rather than at the center of the learning community being studied. At this site, my part-time, volunteer status as consulting school librarian and researcher complicated teachers’ potential responses to collaborative overtures. Further, I acknowledge that early in the project my hunch about third space theory being applicable to the operation of a school library expanded into more refined categories, providing an intellectual framework for understanding the data findings. I relied on Heath & Street (2008) to confirm how the use of ethnographic tools can lead to building theory that uncovers belief structures underlying observed behaviors. They suggested that “Ethnography... is a theory-building enterprise constructed through systematic observing, recording, and analyzing of human behavior in specifiable spaces and interactions” (Heath & Street , 2008, p. 29).

### **Future Research**

Qualitative research, its 10 year flirtation with serving as the dominant paradigm of literacy research from the mid 1990s to the mid 2000s, has once again taken a backseat to quantitative work on literacy in recent years, at least in terms of the regard accorded it by major funding and policy-making institutions. It certainly is true that the messy navigation of complex systems, such as those operating in education settings, offers little in the way of simple solutions. On the other hand, it may be that naming the messiness of ecological systems is exactly the research that needs to be done. It is only by taking on the complexity of educational sites rich with possibility from cross-currents of dictate and desire that research can illuminate “emergent systems” (Brooks, 2011, p. 108). In the case of school libraries, the non-linear approach to a complex of factors taken as a whole rather than through its discrete components can rejuvenate our understanding of their value. The mode of studying multiple elements interacting in a developing pattern runs counter to the prevailing quantitative and linear research paradigm in vogue today in education. The difficulty, of course, is that in human interactions, the component parts of a school or culture, do not sort regularly into disaggregated factors, but evolve organically in dynamic complexity (Fullan, 2002). And the resultant change cannot be attributed to one specific variable, but in the end, must be grappled with as the consequence of an ecosystem deprived of simple reductionist forces. School libraries must be researched in this fashion to uncover the true worth of their contribution to literacy in context.

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## Appendix 1

### Adult Interview Protocol—Library and Literacy Intervention

Thanks for spending the time with me today answering questions about your work. I hope that our conversation may help to illuminate the nature of the library intervention and its impact on this school. I'm particularly interested in learning what literacy instructional practices you employ, what your opinion is of specific literacy instructional elements in this school program, and what your thoughts are about reading instruction generally. I hope to hear your observations of programs this year.

My questions are meant to be neutral and non-judgmental, so I hope you will take them in that spirit. As you know, your responses are entirely confidential and you can decline to answer any question if you choose. I'll tape record our session and take notes to ensure the accuracy of our conversation. Do you have any questions?

Let's begin the interview.

1. Please tell me a little about your experience in education—subject areas, grade levels, years taught and background with literacy instruction, especially in reading in your field.
2. Please describe your experiences with using school libraries, both as a student and as a teacher.
3. What resources or supports are available at this school to learn about literacy instruction?
4. How are teaching responsibilities shared for literacy work in this school?
5. Describe the major goals for the school's reading instruction from your perspective.
6. Is there any school community barrier to the implementation of reading instruction?
7. In your opinion, what main factors contribute to children struggling with reading, or reading below grade level? Which of these factors do you feel are in your control as a classroom teacher?
8. Does any group, or subset of students you observe seem to benefit more, or less, from the new literacy instruction programs—including the Library and Writing Center?

9. What challenges do you face in teaching literacy in your subject area?
10. What have been some successes for you working with literacy instruction in your subject area?
11. If you were to change anything to improve the literacy program in the school, what would you change?
12. Last open-ended comment: Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the literacy program and its implementation in this school setting?

Thanks for sharing this time with me. I appreciate your thoughtful answers and I hope the exercise was useful for you, too.

## Appendix 2

The follow-up interview to the Reading Survey is meant to give students a chance to explain and expand on their answers, and to clear up any confusion surrounding responses. The follow-up probes will include: Why did you choose that answer? Are there any more kinds of materials you like to read? Would you like to read more each day? Why or why not? Is it hard to find books you like to read? Have you enjoyed using libraries in the past? Why or why not?

*Interviewer: Today I'd like to ask you about your responses on the Reading Survey. We'll look at your answers together and you will have an opportunity to explain more about your answers in regard to your reading preferences and practices. I'm interested in knowing what you'd like to add to your survey responses that would explain why you like what you like in reading. We can skip any question you'd rather not address.*

### Reading Survey—Interview Protocol

print name \_\_\_\_\_ grade \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

1. I am in      • grade 8      • grade 9      • grade 10      • grade 11

2. I am      • female      • male

3. If you had to guess...

How many books would you say you own *yourself*? \_\_\_\_\_

How many books would you say you have read *for fun* in the last twelve months? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What materials *other than novels* do you like to read? Circle as many yes/no as apply.

newspapers      • yes    • no      poems & song lyrics      • yes    • no

magazines      • yes    • no      biographies      • yes    • no

comics/graphic books • yes    • no      non-fiction (science, history) • yes    • no

websites      • yes    • no      sports books      • yes    • no

email      • yes    • no      manuals, how-to books      • yes    • no

blogs      • yes    • no      joke books, humor      • yes    • no

5. How often do you read when you're *away from school*?

• almost never      • some days      • many days      • most days      • every day

6. If you read when *out of school*, about how much time do you read per day?

• 1-10 minutes      • 11-20 minutes      • 21-30 minutes      • more than 30 minutes

7. Can you name a favorite book and/or your favorite author? Name them below.
8. Have you ever reread a book? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please list below any of the titles you remember.
9. How do you decide what you choose to read?
10. Why do people read? List what you think are the two most important reasons.
11. I go to the library to find what I want to read.  
 • almost never    • sometimes    • many times    • most times    • almost always
12. Circle the type (or types) of library you most like to use.  
 • public library    • school library    • classroom library • none
13. Tell what you like about your favorite library.
14. Do you enjoy the following *in-school* reading activities?
- |                       |               |                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| teacher reading aloud | • yes    • no | student reading aloud | • yes    • no |
| independent reading   | • yes    • no | class novel reading   | • yes    • no |
| book reading groups   | • yes    • no | reading plays/poetry  | • yes    • no |
15. Do you ever have discussions about what you read, either in school or out of school?
- never    • rarely    • sometimes    • often    • always
16. Do you like to have your teacher read aloud to you? Circle the response that fits you.  
 • never    • rarely    • sometimes    • often    • always
17. In general, how do you feel about your reading? I am...  
 • a very good reader    • a good reader    • an OK reader    • a poor reader
18. If I could change one thing about my school reading, I would...

### Appendix 3

#### Reading Survey

Print name \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

1. 1. I am in      • grade 8      • grade 9      • grade 10      • grade 11

2. 2. I am      • female      • male

3. If you had to guess...

How many books would you say you own *yourself*? \_\_\_\_\_

How many books would you say you have read *for fun* in the last twelve months? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What materials *other than novels* do you like to read? Circle as many yes/no as apply.

newspapers      • yes      • no

magazines      • yes      • no

comics/graphic books • yes • no

websites      • yes      • no

email      • yes      • no

blogs      • yes      • no

poems & song lyrics      • yes      • no

biographies      • yes      • no

non-fiction (science, history) • yes      • no

sports books      • yes      • no

manuals, how-to books      • yes      • no

joke books, humor      • yes      • no

5. How often do you read when you're *away from school*?

• almost never      • some days      • many days      • most days • every day

6. If you read when *out of school*, about how much time do you read per day?

• 1-10 minutes      • 11-20 minutes      • 21-30 minutes      • more than 30 minutes

7. Can you name a favorite book and/or your favorite author? Name them below.

8. Have you ever reread a book? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please list below any of the titles you remember.

9. How do you decide what you choose to read?

10. Why do people read? List what you think are the two most important reasons.

11. I go to the library to find what I want to read.

• almost never      • sometimes      • many times      • most times      • almost always

12. Circle the type (or types) of library you most like to use.

• public library      • school library      • classroom library • none

13. Tell what you like about your favorite library.

14. Do you enjoy the following *in-school* reading activities?

- a. teacher reading aloud      • yes   • no
- b. student reading aloud      • yes   • no
- c. independent reading      • yes   • no
- d. class novel reading      • yes   • no
- e. book reading groups      • yes   • no
- f. reading plays/poetry      • yes   • no

15. Do you ever have discussions about what you read, either in school or out of school?

• never      • rarely      • sometimes      • often      • always

16. Do you like to have your teacher read aloud to you? Circle the response that fits you.

• never      • rarely      • sometimes      • often      • always

17. In general, how do you feel about your reading? I am...

• a very good reader   • a good reader   • an OK reader   • a poor reader

18. If I could change one thing about my school reading, I would...

## Appendix 4

### Student Reading Questionnaire

date \_\_\_\_\_

*Please circle your answer or fill in the blanks as accurately as you can.*

1. I am in      • grade 8      • grade 9      • grade 10      • grade 11
2. I am      • female      • male
3. If you had to guess...  
How many books would you say you own *yourself*? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many books would you say you have read *for fun* in the last twelve months? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How often do you read when you're away from school?  
• almost never      • some days      • many days      • most days      • every day
5. If you read when *out of school*, about how much time do you read per day?  
• 1-10 minutes      • 11-20 minutes      • 21-30 minutes      • more than 30 minutes
6. I go to the library to find what I want to read.  
• almost never      • sometimes      • many times      • most times      • almost always
7. Circle the type of library you like to use the most.  
• public library      • school library      • classroom library      • none
8. Circle what you like best about your favorite library.  
• books      • magazines      • CDs or DVDs      • email access      • Internet research
9. Did you use the new SSS Library this year?      • yes      • no
10. If you used the SSS Library, how often did you use it?  
• almost never      • some days      • many days      • most days      • every day
11. If you used the SSS Library, what was the best thing about it for you?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_

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12. Did you use the new SSS Writing Center and/or work with Writing Center tutors this year?  
• yes      • no

13. If you used the SSS Writing Center and/or Writing Center tutors, how often did you use it?

- almost never
- some days
- many days
- most days
- every day

14. If you used the SSS Writing Center and/or Writing Center tutors, what was the best thing about it?

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15. Did you use the new SSSS Learning Center this year? • yes • no

16. If you used the SSS Learning Center, how often did you use it?

- almost never
- some days
- many days
- most days
- every day

17. If you used the SSS Learning Center, what was the best thing about it for you?

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18. Do you like to have your teacher read aloud to you? Circle the response that fits you.

- never
- rarely
- sometimes
- often
- always

19. In general, how do you feel about your reading? I am...

- a very good reader
- a good reader
- an OK reader
- a poor reader

20. If I could change one thing about my school reading, I would...

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