

# Chapter 4

## Partnering With School Librarians to Distribute, Expand, and Evolve the Process of Instructional Design

Wendy Stephens  
Jacksonville State University, USA

### ABSTRACT

*For classroom teachers engaged in curricular design, incorporating the school librarian in collaborative planning can distribute the instructional burden and ensure that students cultivate information literacy skills in the context where those strategies are most meaningful. A body of research literature supports the relationship between the involvement of the school librarian in cross-curricular instructional planning and delivery and improved student learning. This discussion of teacher-librarian collaborative instructional design explores the nature and varieties of collaborative partnerships, identifies barriers to shared curricular planning, and foregrounds the importance of school culture and administrative support in establishing working relationships. Many of the best-known research models are presented, along with commonalities and differences in those approaches, to present potential processes for mapping content curriculum to support information literacy skills.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-8208-7.ch004

## **INTRODUCTION**

Too often, the important process of instructional design proves an independent, even solitary experience for preservice and beginning teachers. Planning an entire instructional arc – from activation of prior knowledge to assessing student learning outcomes – can be a lonely and onerous burden. But instructional specialists can help any teacher in designing meaningful integration of emerging technology, incorporating inquiry activities, supporting project-based learning, or reinforcing research skills.

For those teachers working in buildings fortunate enough to have school librarians and other instructional specialists in technology and reading, there are ample opportunities for distributing the strategic planning and delivery of instruction among professional colleagues. Today's school librarians welcome opportunities to partner with teachers in all content areas and across grade levels. Embedding librarians as part of instructional planning, be it within larger cross-curricular teams or through a paired team-teaching approach, allows for combining student learning outcomes and infusing appropriate extensions and modifications to ensure all students encounter a range of accessible resources to master content area standards. While librarians are often asked to identify print and multimedia to vary instructional delivery and connect with a range of student learning modalities, it is the deeper collaboration through the ongoing process of instructional design and valuation that allows librarians to ensure that they appropriately impart and effectively reinforce specific information literacy skills at different developmental levels. Additionally, as school-based experts in the retrieval and use of information, school librarians can provide assistance for everything from resource-specific instruction in search strategies and evaluating nuanced types of information sources to hands-on assistance in summative scoring integration of citation and bibliographies. Distributing the grading of in-text citations, bibliographies, and the integration of a range of information sources, in particular, allows school librarians important and timely access to the evidence of student learning to inform the library's instructional program.

This chapter will begin with an overview of the historical background of library instruction in school settings, demonstrating that explicitly teaching students how to find information sources and to use them with appropriate intellectual integrity is always most effective at the point of need. Optimal teacher-librarian collaboration is predicated on the evidence that supporting content area research tasks in the classroom – what is sometimes a “just-in-time” model instead of teaching “just-in-case” skills in isolation – gives tangible meaning to research skills and increases transferability of those once internalized to different settings and subjects.

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