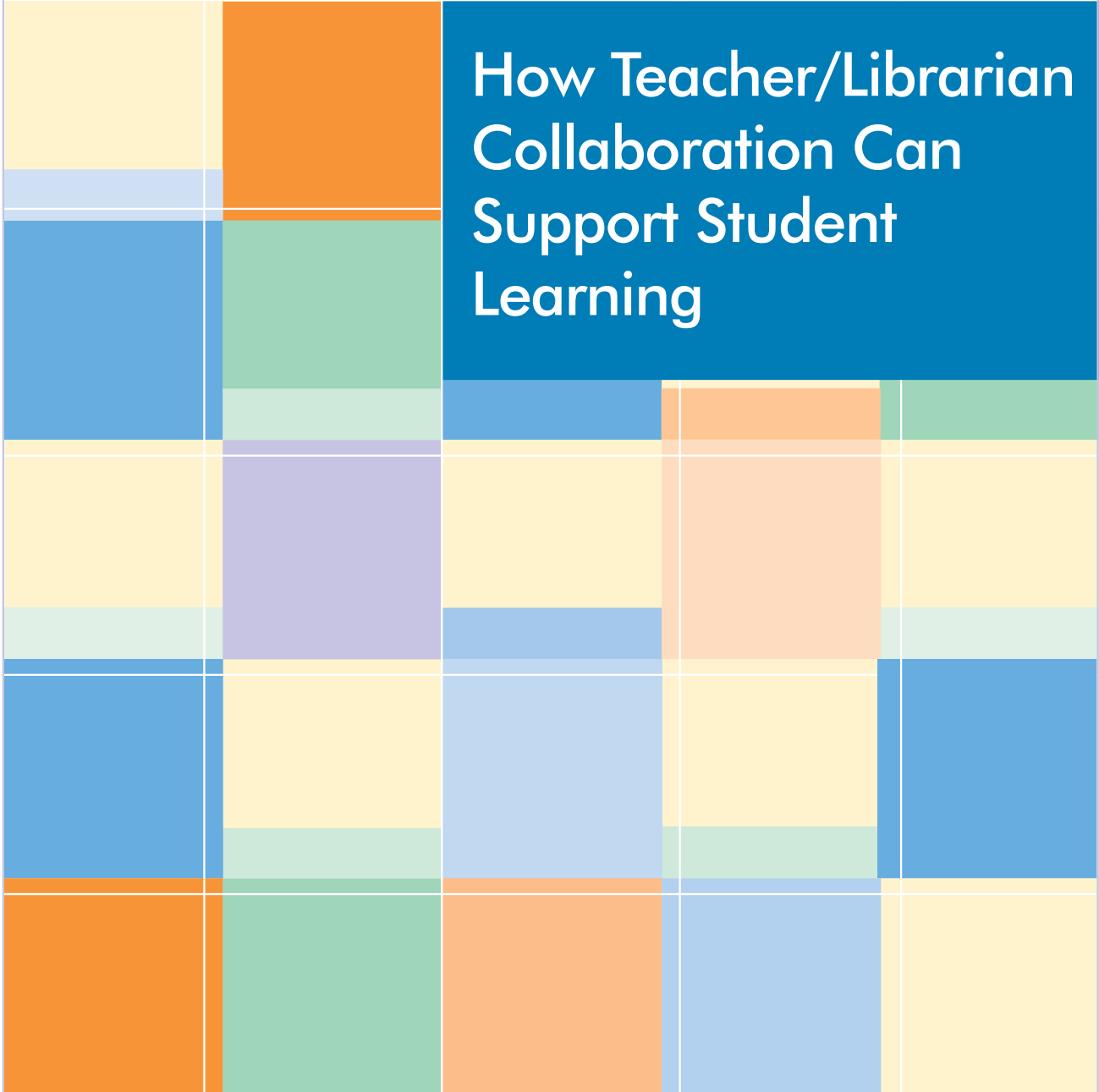


ERS FOCUS ON

*Research-based practices for
the classroom teacher*

How Teacher/Librarian Collaboration Can Support Student Learning





E D U C A T I O N A L R E S E A R C H
S E R V I C E

Table of Contents

Today’s Library Media Specialist	1
Support of the School’s Instructional Program	2
Promoting Reading for Pleasure	2
Information Literacy	2
Some Barriers to Effective School Use of the Media Specialist.....	4
Collaboration	4
Elements that Support Collaboration	5
Planning Collaborative Projects	7
In Summary	8
In Practice	11
Books in Brief.....	12
Web Resources	15
Related ERS Resources	17

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Focus On:

How Teacher/Librarian Collaboration Can Support Student Learning

Today's media centers have changed dramatically from the school libraries of 20, or even 10, years ago. While traditional materials such as reference, fiction, and nonfiction books are still readily available, students now have access to additional resources such as online databases, educational software, and, of course, the Internet. The challenge for teachers is finding effective ways to use these to support instruction and student learning. An additional challenge is ensuring that students have the research and information-literacy skills needed to sift through the ever-increasing number of online materials.

While addressing these challenges might seem to be the "right thing to do," it is also important to think about them in the context of a teacher's typical day. The focus, and rightly so, is on ensuring all students meet content standards. Where, then, in a teacher's time-pressed day, can student library work and instruction on information literacy fit?

Happily, the school library's most important resource—the media center specialist—can help address both of these challenges and the goal of high student learning. Research has shown a link between teacher-librarian collaboration and higher student achievement. For instance, Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Pennell (2005) found a positive correlation between more collaborative library staffs and higher ACT scores. According to their research, when the library staff spends more time identifying materials for teachers, planning with teachers, motivating students to read, co-teaching, serving on school committees, and meeting with librarians from other schools or districts, "ACT scores increase an average of three to four percent over the scores for schools with less collaborative library staff" (8).

This *Focus On* will discuss the role of librarians—media center specialists—working in today's schools.

"When a teacher is willing to move a learning experience from the classroom to the library media center, good things happen: There are now two teachers instead of one, an information-rich and technology rich environment is available, and each learner can expect twice as much professional support"
(Champlin and Loertscher 2003, 67).

In addition, it will talk about the ways teachers and librarians can collaborate to ensure the school library is an effective resource for students and for the school's instructional program.

Today's Library Media Specialist

It is not just the school library that has changed since many of us were in elementary or high school. The role, responsibilities, and training of librarians have changed as well. While they are still responsible for administration of the library program—ordering books, setting up procedures for book check out, etc.—they are now expected to be more proactive in terms of their instructional role. One aspect of this is direct support of a school's instructional goals and objectives. In addition, they provide instruction for students in the areas of research and information literacy skills. And in many schools, they are viewed as one of its technology "experts."