Issue #2, December 2012

Policy into Practice

How Can Teachers and Librarians Partner to Support the Third Grade Guarantee?

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Common Core . . . new state content standards . . . Third Grade Reading Guarantee—the pressures keep growing. Classroom teachers as well as reading teachers and other specialists can use all the support possible. Media specialists in school libraries and children's librarians in public libraries can be valuable support for stressed, struggling colleagues. Both school media specialists and public youth librarians are professionals that have been educated in teaching methods, reading strategies, children's literature, technology, and child development. They are eager and able to partner with classroom teachers to provide a number of services and resources that can make a difference in their teaching lives—and in the achievement of the students. Both school libraries and public youth libraries provide similar types of services, through two different venues. Both types of libraries provide educational classes in reading and inquiry, literature and reading promotion, and technology support.

Policy into Practice is a series of briefs created to support the efforts of districts to achieve the Ohio Third Grade Reading Guarantee. Each brief will focus on a question about literacy teaching and learning and provide a response to the question, implications for teaching, questions for further discussion, and suggested readings. *Policy into Practice* briefs are intended to support conversations among educators leading to quality instruction and increasing literacy achievement.

Educational classes in reading and inquiry

Media specialists can truly be partner teachers. When time is provided to coplan and to coteach and coassess students, teaching reading and language arts standards can be strengthened. From teaching literature and informational text standards to guiding students through inquiry and writing standards, media specialists have been educated to know how to pace teaching and learning so skills can be mastered. This can be done whole class, small group, or one-on-one. Media specialists are particularly astute at working with small reading groups, both remedial and enrichment.

Public youth librarians provide enrichment story times—including bilingual programming—which focus particularly on the needs and skills of the emergent reader. During these sessions, the librarians use great literature to deliver instruction to the child. At the same time, they are also supporting the parents: Modeling reading strategies and providing examples of the power of books help show parents how to continue to help their preschoolers. In addition, homework help centers are staffed by well-trained professionals that can support children in all areas of the curriculum, including reading and language arts and inquiry.

Literature and reading promotion

Media specialists and children's librarians are lovers of, and experts in, children's literature. Media specialists are ready to recommend titles to teachers and students alike that connect with both interests and standards. Pulling collections is a welcome daily service the specialists and librarians provide, and special reading-related events are anticipated yearly. These include literacy nights, family book clubs, author visits, book fairs, book giveaways, battle of the books, and more, all of which are part of the literary-rich landscape of media centers.

Public youth librarians also provide services that support and enrich classroom libraries. These include pulling collections, providing educator and corporate cards, offering book clubs, and organizing author visits. Libraries are the greatest havens of high-quality literature, both literary and informational—and it's all free!

Technology support

The explosion in technology and our increased dependence on it, coupled with the changing ways that students learn, affect all educational areas, including reading and language arts. Both media centers and public libraries serve as centers of technology and provide numerous educational opportunities for users to become familiar with and take advantage of the new technology. As examples:

- Both types of libraries provide the use of hardware and software free, helping to close the digital divide.
- Both types of libraries offer e-books—an increasingly popular format that requires some of the same reading skills as print books, and some different.
- Media specialists and public youth librarians are ready and able to assist in using web 2.0 tools and tablets and apps. Web 2.0 tools are becoming more and more necessary in communication. And tablets and apps are becoming an increasingly ubiquitous tool in teaching reading as well as other content and in learning to read.

Conclusion

In these times of increasing academic pressures, including the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, teachers can use all the assistance that other professionals can offer. Partnering with local library experts, including both media specialists and public youth librarians, can make real contributions to the reading and language arts lessons teachers design.

Questions for further discussion

1. How could you collaborate with your media specialist to coteach the new Common Core reading and language arts standards?
2. What programs do your local public librarians offer that you could take advantage of to strengthen your current reading practices?
3. What features of e-books would motivate your reluctant readers?

Suggested readings

Grimes, Sharon. (2006). *Reading is our business: How libraries can foster reading comprehension*. Chicago: ALA Editions.

Moreillon, Judi. (2007). *Collaborative strategies for teaching reading comprehension: Maximizing your impact*. Chicago: ALA Editions.

Moreillon, Judi. (2013). *Coteaching reading comprehension strategies in elementary school libraries: Maximizing your impact*. Chicago: ALA Editions.

School library programs improve student learning series of brochures from the American Association of School Librarians.

Stoltz, Dorothy, Czarnecki, Elaine M., & Wilson, Connie. (2012). *Every child ready for school: Helping adults inspire young children to read*. Chicago: ALA Editions.