Collaborative Instruction

Course

Collaboration & School-Wide Initiatives [6:42]

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About

When a librarian takes a proactive approach to new school-wide initiatives, the librarian is seen as a possible agent of change and has the possibility of impacting the entire school.

Transcript

A librarian should speak with the principal about any new school wide initiatives that will be coming into effect during the next school year.

Most staff members see change or new initiatives as something to be dreaded. However when a librarian is proactive in approaching the principal regarding new initiatives, the librarian is seen as a possible agent of change because the librarian is embracing the new initiative instead of shying away from it.

The librarian, embracing a new initiative, has the possibility of impacting the entire school. Also, the librarian can be seen as a source of comfort to the staff because the librarian can support the staff with resources, modeled lessons, or staff development to prepare the staff for the new initiative.

If there's any mention of a possible new initiative coming to the school system, the librarian should read the relevant research to become as fully informed as possible about the new initiative.

What else can the librarian do? Ordering curriculum materials to support the new initiative is perhaps the easiest and quickest way a librarian could support the teaching staff in the face of a new initiative. But it is not the only way. Go a step further, read those materials and then share with the staff what materials have been ordered and why they have been ordered.

Meet with the principle to discuss the imminent changes. Offer to go to a training regarding the new initiative on your own time. Then follow up with an offer to provide staff development. Instantly the librarian becomes the expert in this new initiative, the person whom everyone can count on for support as this initiative becomes a part of the school culture and the principle sees the librarian as a leader among the staff.

Being seen as a leader on a new school wide initiative by the administrator often reinforces their reasoning as to why they are supporting the librarian in the efforts of a collaborative and flexible library.

Offer to plan with teachers regarding this new initiative. Model lessons, coach staff, or co-teach with teachers who are seeming nervous about the new initiative. Even if they do not take you up on this offer, they will see the librarian as someone who wants to stand in the trenches supporting them.

The following are three initiatives that our school embarked upon and how we handle them using library collaboration.

The social thinking curriculum is a way to embed the thought that others have positive and negative thoughts regarding how we behave in society. Children do not naturally realize that others are thinking about them nor do they realize that there are expected and unexpected ways of dealing with situations without someone providing explicit teaching on this.

Recently our school adopted this curriculum. We started using it in one class and then rolled it out to a grade level. And now the plan is to use it across the grade levels so that all students have familiarity with the same language regarding behaviors.

This social thinking approach seemed so logical to me that I immediately started asking questions and ordering materials. Once the materials came in, I read the materials and went to one of our teachers for help in determining how this curriculum could be embedded into the library classroom.

She helped me create several lesson plans. All of a sudden it seemed to me that many books were just popping into my mind that could be used in this new approach, thinking about behavior.

We created a committee and started fleshing out simple lesson plans related to these books that were popping into my mind so that there would be a database that every teacher would have access to that address the multiple objectives in social thinking. From there we created a Summer Teachers as Readers Club regarding the curriculum materials with plans for a staff development workshop.

The Lucy Calkins Units of Study is our language arts framework for grades three through five. This curriculum seemed very overwhelming to our staff because everything about it was new to them. The framework includes student self-selection of reading text, individual conferencing, strategy groups and mini lessons. The reading specialist and I spend an entire nine weeks working with the teachers from grades three through five.

We modeled every piece of this new language arts framework. Then our time was spent coaching the staff through each piece and gradually releasing control over to the teachers. By the second nine weeks there were only a few of the teachers who needed us to support them with the new framework.

Throughout the remainder of the year we touched base with each teacher to determine how each was doing and what we could do to support that individual teacher.

Interactive read-alouds was something that I initially introduced to the staff of grades three through five at the end of the first year of using the Lucy Calkins Units of Study because they had mentioned that some specific objectives were missing in the units of study framework.

I modeled it for each grade level teacher. Once, to show them how easy it would be to select text for specified teaching points, identified either through the individual conferencing or through strategy groups. The reading specialists and I provided staff development on interactive read-alouds for grades two through five.

We modeled step by step how to plan and implement this type of read-aloud. The staff was provided with a variety of materials that could be used with very little preparation work necessary.

We informed them that the librarian would be a resource for helping them to find text for any specific objectives that they might have.

In the first months of school, our principle has all teachers create a SMART goal for the year. My SMART goal was to coach teachers through using interactive read-alouds so that they could become independent in using this technique. My goal was for each teacher to use interactive read-alouds at least once per nine weeks in the collaborative setting.

We exceeded that goal by having almost every grade level, two through five, using interactive read-alouds in various ways once per month in the collaborative library setting. Each classroom also used interactive read-alouds at least four times per nine weeks outside of the collaborative library teaching times.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Annotated Biblography.

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