**Beverly Edwards, SLM509**

**Collaborative Lesson Observation #1**

*Description of School:* An independent, nonsectarian preparatory school for boys from grades K-12 with an enrollment of approximately 600 students. The school “welcomes young men from diverse backgrounds and educates them in a supportive student-centered environment.” The Lower School Librarian works with grades K-5. She occasionally has some help from an assistant in the Upper School Library, but she basically handles the tasks in the library herself. She chooses not to use parent volunteers.

Date: September 15, 2011

Lesson Topic: Identification of Keywords in Research Questions

Grade Level: 5th

Length of Time of Observation: 45 minutes

**Library Context**

* **Fixed**
* Flexible
* Combination
* Individualized Instruction
* Stand-alone Lesson
* **Lesson in Unit**
* Multiple Lessons in Unit

**Engagement of Learners**

* None
* Limited
* **Moderate**
* Intensive

**Level of Collaboration**

* None
* Limited
* **Moderate**
* Intensive

**Interactions**

* Student/Teacher: Teacher was not present.
* Teacher/School Librarian: N/A
* School Librarian/Student: Librarian clearly had a well-established positive relationship with the boys. She led the lesson, gave instructions, asked questions, and milled about as students worked in pairs, lending assistance when needed and encouraging students to delve a little deeper when appropriate.
* Student/Student: Students started off working in groups but then moved to pairs when they worked with the content questions. They worked cooperatively (with an occasional bit of adolescent boy silliness that needed to be addressed) and when it came time for browsing for books, they were excited to use a social network tool in Destiny Quest which allowed them to send and receive book recommendations from each other. It was clear that they liked talking about books together.

**Observation**

Learning Environment: This was a most amazing facility—an entire beautifully-designed building devoted solely to the Lower School Library for grades K-5! (It was donated by a family in honor of a grandmother who had a great passion for reading and learning.) The over 13,000 books were located on shelves that were arranged in sort of a circular fashion around the perimeter of the space, leaving an open area in the center of the floor. There was a learning area with tables and chairs and a Smartboard, another area with 16 computers arranged on a long table, a room enclosed by glass for quiet time or meetings to take place, a read-aloud area near the picture books, loads of storage, cozy reading areas for students, a large checkout desk, a spacious office for the librarian and more. Besides books, students could check out magazines, books on CD and Playaways with headphones included. It was just gorgeous—very conducive to reading and learning.

Other Notes: This librarian has a fixed schedule but has one whole course for 4th graders called Science/Research class in which she works collaboratively with the science teacher on information skills and the research process. She is delighted to have this time to focus on research and connect it to science.

**Connection to Articles**

*“What Does It Really Look Like When Students Are Learning in the Library Media Center?” (Zmuda)*

Active Efforts to Construct Knowledge

* Pursue Inquires- Yes, but these were teacher-given inquiries.
* Locate and Evaluate Evidence- Yes
* Make Connections- Yes
* Analyze Patterns
* Reconcile Apparent Discrepancies
* Deliberate about Language – Yes—analyzing questions to identify and determine keywords
* Communicate Thinking – Yes. Students were asked to explain their thought processes for organizing themselves into groups and how they came up with the keywords they selected for the questions given to them.
* Revise Work

Learners are…

* Passive Processor
  + Direct answers to complex questions - somewhat
  + Linear process without reflection
  + Copy what they find
  + Complete task as quickly as possible-Yes
  + Confuse quantity with quality
  + View all published sources as valid
  + Focus on “bells and whistles”
  + Overly narrow or broad inquiry
  + Collect details without thinking about connections
  + Assume once they have found the “answer” from one source they are “finished”- Somewhat--when they were coming up with keywords, they wanted to write a few and be done with it. They tended to avoid thinking in depth if they could get away with it.
* Active Searcher
  + Move around, search for answers - Yes
  + Ask meaningful questions to teacher/librarian - Yes
  + On-topic conversation with peers-Yes, for the most part
  + Find research interesting and engaging-Somewhat
  + Completion of task does not mean finding an “answer” from one source
  + Somewhat frustrated during steps of research - Yes
  + Overcome obstacles-Yes
  + Collaborate with others - Yes
  + Organize and develop ideas and information-Somewhat

*“Reframing the Media Specialist as a Learning Specialist.” (Harada and Zmuda)*

Questions for the School Librarian

* Do you serve on county or district level curriculum committees? She serves on a curriculum committee that meets regularly throughout the school year. This summer, all departments developed a new scope and sequence, and she spearheaded this effort for her department
* What leadership opportunities are you involved in at your school? Head of the Library Department
* Do you assist in developing assessment instruments for co-taught lessons? Yes—in 4th grade Science/Research class
* What kind of assessments? Informal.
* Do you assist in interpretation of test results? Look at scores informally and notice trends.
* How do you use these results when collaborating with a colleague? N/A
* How do you use these as part of your library program? Data helps determine small group instruction.
* Do you discuss and share ideas with teachers about help for struggling students and/or ideas that enhance performance? Yes—in grade level team meetings
* Do you model instructional strategies for teachers? No.
* Do you offer profession development in your school? Yes. The library and computer departments recently hosted a professional development day in which sessions were offered on Web 2.0 tools, among other things. The librarian wants to conduct a PD session on copyright because she feels all teachers need to be made current of your safety and personal property.
* What professional development opportunities do you provide to staff at your school that serve as a catalyst for collaboration? N/A

**Reflection**

Did the level of collaboration impact student learning? How?

Although the lesson was taken from ***Destination Collaboration***, the librarian was not collaborating with any teacher yet. She said she is setting the foundation for research work that the students will be doing during the course of the school year. The lesson clearly lends itself to collaboration, however, and the librarian could easily weave the skills addressed here into research projects and assignments in all of the grade levels in her school. The fifth grade teacher did not stay to work with the class; if she had, she might have gotten excited and highly motivated to put the skills the students gained to work in lessons and projects of her own.

*Created by Lindsey Weaver Fall 2010 and adapted by Kay Craig and Ann Duncan Summer, 2011.*

**Beverly Edwards, SLM509**

**Observation #1 - Description and Reflection of Lesson**

**Description of Lesson:**

I scheduled a visit to observe three classes with this librarian—one 5th grade class, one 2nd grade class and one 1st grade class. Unfortunately, I was only able to arrive from my own school when the 5th grade lesson was underway, and then I watched the full lessons for the other two grades. The 5th grade lesson was definitely the most substantial of the three, so I chose to write about it here, even though I did not see all of it, so the details about the first part of the lesson are a bit sketchy.

The AASL Standards addressed were Standard 1 – Inquire, think critically and gain knowledge and Standard 2 – Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations and create new knowledge. The essential question the librarian used for this lesson was “How does the identification of keywords in a research question assist in locating information?” The desired understandings included how to identify keywords and how to make inferences about topics in order to identify keywords. From the lesson plan she gave me, I gleaned that as the students entered the classroom area, the librarian distributed a “key” to each of them. The cardboard cut-out keys were made from a template in the “Unlocking Keywords” section of the book ***Destination Collaboration*** by Danielle N. DuPuis and (our very own) Lori M. Carter. The teacher asked the students to group themselves in a way that would make sense to them, according to what was written on the keys. When all of them were gathered into groups, she asked them to select a spokesperson from their group to explain why they thought they belonged together. She then placed lock questions on the board, read the questions aloud and had the students match their key groups with the appropriate lock questions. From there, she explained that the locks represented questions that learners might have and the keys represented keywords that can be used in the OPAC to find the answer. She had them elicit the definition of “keyword” and explained that a keyword is not an answer to a question but a word that helps ***guide*** someone to an answer.

***This is where I came in:*** The librarian explained to students that when they are gathering information from a variety of sources for various projects and assignments they will create during the school year, they will actually become consumers of information. She asked them if they had ever heard of the word “consumer” before and what it might mean. One student suggested that a consumer is someone who “buys stuff.” The teacher went on to explain that consumers acquire goods and services for their direct use. She introduced and showed the students a QuickTime movie entitled “Information Consumer.” She asked them what Ned’s “information need” was and had the students explain how he solved his problems.

The librarian then wrote the following question on the board: “How is climate change affecting our environment?” She asked the students come up with keywords they might use to locate answers to the question. The students had a little trouble here, but the librarian patiently explained why certain keywords would not work (like “change”) and why others were better (“global warming,” “climate” and “environment”).

At this point, she asked students to pair themselves up, and she distributed content questions on strips of paper to each pair, asking them to identify keywords to correspond with their questions. When they thought they had enough words, she told them to swap their question with a neighboring pair and add any additional keywords that might have been missed. She then directed the pairs to the OPAC on the computers and told them to complete a keyword search. When the students felt satisfied with the results, she told them to write down a title, author and call number for a book that met the requirement of the question. She had them discuss choices, asking them what changes they would make if they were to do something like this again.

**Reflection**

Well, one would think that I HAVE to say this was a great lesson since it came from a book that my instructor wrote, but I can honestly report that the lesson was a worthwhile exercise for these boys. (Also, I did not know that the lesson had come from Lori’s book until after it was over, when the librarian told me she had gotten the idea from “a great book I just bought called ***Destination Collaboration***.”) When I entered the class, the librarian had them explain to me what had taken place before I arrived, and they were able to fully articulate that they had been learning what keywords were and how keywords could help them when they wanted to get information on the OPAC. They explained the whole process of the locks and keys, and one student made sure to point out to me that the keyword was not the answer to a question but a guide to getting to the answer. When I observed them working in pairs, the boys were fully engaged and cooperated in coming up with appropriate keywords for their questions. They did have a little trouble with this—their tendency was to grab any word in the question without thinking through whether it would work well in a search—and the librarian had to get them to stop and think why certain words were too broad or would lead them in the wrong direction. The students had to “dig deeply” to come up with keywords that weren’t written right in the question. The boys were eager to complete the task quickly so that they could jump right to the computers, so having the pairs swap with neighbors to elicit more appropriate keywords was a good way to slow them down and get them to examine a little further.

This lesson was clearly intended to be a building block for leading students into inquiry-based projects they will encounter in their subject disciplines, and the librarian will be able to coordinate with classroom teachers in helping students come up with their own keywords for questions they have written themselves. The students should be more invested in the process when that happens.

As Judi Moreillon mentions in her article “Show Them What We Do: Strategies for Collaborative Teaching” (Fontichiaro, p. 218), classroom teachers benefit when they actually see what happens when the LMS works with students rather than just read or hear about it. This is a perfect example of a lesson that a classroom teacher could benefit from if she were to stay in the library instead of running off to plan on her own. Moreillon says that it is “during the implementation stage that library media specialists/teacher-librarians have golden opportunities to SHOW students, classroom teacher colleagues and administrators exactly what we do.” In that regard, it would have been nice to have the fifth grade teacher stay for this lesson.

I only had the chance to quickly glance at the ***Destination Collaboration*** books (this librarian had both volumes), but I am sure there are extension lesson ideas and other lessons that dovetail nicely with this one. I cannot wait to get hold of a book that actually gives concrete lesson ideas to librarians who need ideas for teaching information literacy.

**Beverly Edwards, SLM509**

**Collaborative Lesson Observation #2**

*Description of School:* K-12 private school with religious affiliation. I observed Lower School Librarian, who has 2 assistants and several parent volunteers. On staff, there is also a Lower School Technology and Library Educator and a Lower School Technology Educator. The Lower School has approximately 450 students. Librarian is on fixed schedule, but technology teachers are on flexible schedule. Lower School Librarian sees all students in grades K-5 in classes once a week, and he also has visits from toddlers in the preschool and babies in the daycare center.

Date: 9/21/11

Lesson Topic: Pirates

Grade Level: First Grade

Length of Time of Observation: 40 minutes

**Library Context**

* **Fixed**
* Flexible
* **Combination**
* Individualized Instruction
* **Stand-alone Lesson**
* Lesson in Unit
* Multiple Lessons in Unit

**Engagement of Learners**

* None
* Limited
* **Moderate**
* Intensive

**Level of Collaboration**

* **None**
* Limited
* Moderate
* Intensive

**Interaction:**

* Student/Teacher: N/A
* Teacher/School Librarian: N/A
* School Librarian/Student: School librarian read to students, asked and answered questions, engaged with students as they searched for books, and walked around and helped students as needed.
* Student/Student: Students talked about books, read together, and helped those around them to find books.

**Observation**

Learning Environment: The library was spacious, yet cozy at the same time. There were 18,000 books spread out on many, many shelves, and students had easy access to them. Teaching/reading area was equipped with colorful, comfortable floor seats (with backing) gathered around a projection screen. Shelves were prominently labeled with genres and nonfiction topics of interest. There were lots of stools around for students to reach books, as well as tables and reading areas. There were four computers available for students to search on the library catalog. Unfortunately, the library is located in an area that is also used as a hallway, so teachers enter back and forth during classes.

Other Notes:

**Connection to Articles**

*“What Does It Really Look Like When Students Are Learning in the Library Media Center?” (Zmuda)*

Active Efforts to Construct Knowledge

* Pursue Inquires – There were questions from the students during the read-aloud time and also when they searched for materials in the library.
* Locate and Evaluate Evidence
* Make Connections – there were students who wanted to learn more about pirates
* Reconcile Apparent Discrepancies
* Deliberate about Language
* Communicate Thinking
* Revise Work

Learners are…

* Passive Processor
  + Direct answers to complex questions
  + Linear process without reflection
  + Copy what they find
  + Complete task as quickly as possible
  + Confuse quantity with quality
  + View all published sources as valid
  + Focus on “bells and whistles” – Yes. There was a great deal of excitement and interest from students about librarian dressed as and speaking like a pirate.
  + Overly narrow or broad inquiry - Yes
  + Collect details without thinking about connections
  + Assume once they have found the “answer” from one source they are “finished”
* Active Searcher
  + Move around, search for answers – did some of this while browsing in library
  + Ask meaningful questions to teacher/librarian – to some degree
  + On-topic conversation with peers
  + Find research interesting and engaging – not research, but library time was definitely so
  + Completion of task does not mean finding an “answer” from one source
  + Somewhat frustrated during steps of research
  + Overcome obstacles
  + Collaborate with others
  + Organize and develop ideas and information

*“Reframing the Media Specialist as a Learning Specialist.” (Harada and Zmuda)*

Questions for the School Librarian

* Do you serve on county or district level curriculum committees? Rotates with other librarians in department on curriculum committee. Participates in curriculum work over the summer with summer grants.
* What leadership opportunities are you involved in at your school? N/A
* Do you assist in developing assessment instruments for co-taught lessons? Yes—involved with the assessment of 5th grade inventors project
* What kind of assessments? Contributes to grading of student research projects
* Do you assist in interpretation of test results? No
* How do you use these results when collaborating with a colleague? N/A
* How do you use these as part of your library program? N/A
* Do you discuss and share ideas with teachers about help for struggling students and/or ideas that enhance performance? Yes, we discuss these things in grade level team meetings.
* Do you model instructional strategies for teachers? No.
* Do you offer profession development in your school? Yes.
* What professional development opportunities do you provide to staff at your school that serve as a catalyst for collaboration? Helps plan and conduct workshops on “Tech Days” specifically set aside for teachers to learn about new technology. Instructs teachers on how to use equipment in the media center.

**Reflection**

Did the level of collaboration impact student learning? How?

This lesson did not show collaboration, but the librarian collaborates with teachers on all grade levels with different units, and he gave me specific examples of these. It is obvious that there was no research or meaningful student inquiry in this lesson, but there were a lot of positive things going on, which I discuss in my write-up and reflection of the lesson below. It also must be noted that there is a whole technology department in the school, and two full time technology teachers are assigned to the Lower School alone, one of whose title is “Lower School Technology and Library Educator.” These teachers have a flexible schedule and collaborate extensively with the classroom teachers. I had the opportunity to talk with one of them, and she explained how the flexible scheduling works in the school, as well as the benefits and the challenges involved. The tech teachers run the computer lab and, in conjunction with the librarian and the classroom teacher conduct meaningful lessons and research projects related to the curriculum. This leaves the librarian more time and freedom to focus upon and engage in the first common belief of the Standards for the 21st Century Learner: Reading is a window to the world, which states, “Reading is a foundational skill for learning, personal growth and enjoyment.” If I had known that there was a person specifically designed to combine library and technology skills, I would have observed her for the purpose of this class and this assignment, and I hope to do that at some point in the near future. In the meantime, I feel that I learned some wonderful things from this very creative, dedicated and talented librarian, even if though I did not get to see him engage in collaborative work.

*Created by Lindsey Weaver Fall 2010 and adapted by Kay Craig and Ann Duncan Summer, 2011.*

**Beverly Edwards, SLM509**

**Observation #2 - Description and Reflection of Lesson**

**Description of Lesson**

I visited the library on “National Talk-Like-a Pirate Day.” Prior to the students’ arrival for class, the librarian had designed and made a pirate costume for himself, which included a cardboard hat, a purple beard of yarn (which went along with a character in one of the books he read) and a raven on this shoulder. As the first graders entered the library, he spoke to them like a pirate (called them “mateys” and introduced himself by saying, “I be Captain Purple Beard”), and they were curious and obviously delighted about this. He introduced the theme for the day as students proceeded to their seats. The librarian asked the students what they knew about pirates and they engaged in a brief discussion about the characteristics of pirates. He introduced the first book, ***Everything I Know about Pirates*** by Tom Lichtenfeld. He had taken the time to scan this and the other two books so that students had a clear and enlarged image of the pictures and text on the overhead screen as he read. There was one section of the book with a list of names that one could combine to make a good pirate name, and he had students volunteer to name themselves from the list. He proceeded to read two other picture books: ***Pirate Girl*** by Cornelia Funke and ***The Pirate Cruncher*** by Jonny Duddle, and there were some questions and answers exchanged during this time as well. Afterwards, students were given time to browse and check out books in the library. Several asked for more books about pirates. These first graders of approximately age 6 navigated the library with ease, found many books themselves and felt comfortable asking for help as they searched. I saw students helping each other and looking at books together. They were allowed to check out five books, and most of them left with that many.

**Reflection**

In all fairness, this librarian contacted me a few days before my scheduled observation to let me know that he had decided to celebrate “National Talk-Like-a Pirate Day” with the first graders and that I would not be seeing any sort of lesson of substance. It was too late to schedule another time, so I decided to go. I had given him the collaboration questions ahead of time and asked him if we could take time to discuss them, and he was more than amenable. In our discussion, it was very clear that a lot of thoughtful and worthwhile collaboration is going on in the school, some of which he is involved in and some he is not. As I mentioned earlier there are two technology teachers who assume a lot of the instruction in information literacy, and those teachers have flexible scheduling. The librarian works in conjunction with these teachers on lessons and projects that involve inquiry and research. Second graders spend 3 ½ months on an animal research project that involves the teachers in just about every discipline, the 3rd graders work on a colonial crafts project in conjunction with a social studies unit, the 4th graders do research on Egypt and Greece, and the 5th graders do a six-week inventors project. All of the projects involve a written component that involves the language arts teacher. The librarian is involved in the planning and execution of the lessons involved in these projects, and he takes part in assessment in some of the cases. For instance, he reads and comments upon the rough drafts and final copies of the writing for the 5th grade inventors project. The technology teachers handle the Web 2.0 tools aspects; I am not sure exactly sure how and to what extent they do this. Since our meeting time between classes was limited, we did not have time to get into the details of these projects, but I plan to talk with him further about them, and he is going to send me some of his materials for review. (When I was speaking with my school’s first grade teachers at a meeting about a collaborative research project of our own, one of them said her mom had been a substitute at this school and that the 2nd grade research project was “phenomenal.” I look forward to finding out more about it.)

It is obvious that there was no real “learning” or collaborating happening in this particular class, and I think there are plenty of things the librarian could have done to add substance to it. Instead of diving right into the reading about pirates, he could have developed some sort of guided inquiry, allowing the students to come up with their own questions about the subject. One big problem here is that some of the students might not even be interested in the topic of pirates in the first place. He could broaden the inquiry to involve other legendary character types in adventure stories, or he could have students focus on an aspect of pirating that interests them, such as buried treasure. There is, however, the potential for what Zmuda refers to as “a research task where little learning is likely to result.” Students would be operating with “an overly narrow or broad inquiry that they are unable to refine.” (p. 61) There were no essential questions or desired understandings developed ahead of time here. I think the librarian’s goal was just to have a “fun” day with several read-aloud stories and a chance for students to browse in the library. It seems that one of the roles of the librarian in this school is to serve as a storyteller, and there is certainly some value in that, but there exits the potential for much more collaboration on his part. I don’t want to underestimate the value of the collaboration he has already been doing with different grade levels, but it would be nice for him to reach out for more.