WORKING TOGETHER:
A NARRATIVE INQUIRY STUDY EXPLORING ONGOING COLLABORATIONS
BETWEEN COLLEGE LIBRARIANS AND FACULTY PAIRS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand how collaborations are developed and maintained between college librarian and faculty pairs. This study focused on the collaborations between five college librarian and faculty pairs who had worked together within 2 years prior to the study, in 2 community colleges, a 4-year state university, a 4-year STEM institution, and a private research university in the central New York region. The study explored the participants’ collaborations on various activities including teaching information literacy classes and planning and managing events for the campus community. The main purpose of this study was to examine the specific elements that contributed to developing ongoing cross-departmental collaborations through narrative stories shared by the participants as they recounted meaningful collaborations with their collaborative partners. The study revealed the factors that influence ongoing collaborations between librarians and faculty include: (a) the culture of higher education, (b) perceptions of librarians and faculty, (c) learning by sharing knowledge and expertise, (d) perceived success.

*Keywords*: librarians, faculty, collaborations, culture, learning, perceptions, narrative inquiry, cross-departmental
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to understand how collaborations are developed and maintained between college librarian and faculty pairs. Specifically, college librarians and faculty who have worked together on a collaboration within the past 2 years served as participants in this study. For the purpose of this study, the collaborations were not limited to library instruction and information literacy. Knowledge generated was expected to inform practices contributing to the development of collaborations between college librarians and faculty members as well as other interdisciplinary collaborations in schools, colleges, and universities.

Statement of the Problem

College librarians and faculty bring a wealth of knowledge to an institution, and the evolution of teaching, learning, and scholarship in higher education creates opportunities for both groups to collaborate. Although collaborations between librarians and faculty have traditionally focused on information literacy instruction, additional areas of collaborative opportunities also include, but are not limited to: collection development, the creation of subject or resource guides, embedded librarianship in academic programs, and the development of online academic profiles (Ali & Richardson, 2018; Reynolds, Smith, & D’Silva, 2013; Wu, Betts, Jacob, Nollan, & Norris, 2013). The literature has established that librarian–faculty collaboration is important and worthwhile; however, librarians find that building and maintaining the relationship remains a challenge (Douglas & Rabinowitz, 2016; Meulemans & Carr, 2012; Phelps & Campbell, 2011).

Librarians have realized that “we cannot order collaboration” because “this is not a dictatorship” (Gunawardena, Weber, & Agosto, 2010, p. 210) and higher education has been moving away from silos and towards a culture that encourages collaboration (Doskatsch, 2003).
Despite the transition to interdisciplinary collaboration, librarians have still struggled to develop and sustain collaborations with faculty (Doskatsch, 2003). Issues during collaborations have arisen, such as faculty members’ lack of respect for the roles of librarians and librarians’ view of faculty as ignorant to the function of the library (Badke, 2005). Faculty members also noted in the literature that it is difficult to find opportunities to integrate library resources and instruction into their courses, that librarians lack knowledge of their specific discipline, at the availability of library instruction in their classes has not always been made clear to them (Manuel, Beck, & Molloy, 2005).

Differences between the cultures of librarians and faculty have also been identified as barriers to collaborations (Badke, 2005). The work of some faculty focuses on teaching and research activities, and the work of librarians focuses on providing support and services. This structural divide creates an “unequal power relationship” between the two groups (Pham & Tanner, 2014, p. 16). Stereotypes and traditional perceptions of librarians also remain barriers to collaborations between librarians and faculty (Pham & Tanner, 2014). Additional factors which influence the quality and frequency of librarian–faculty collaborations vary, similar to the factors which affect any relationship between humans (Douglas & Rabinowitz, 2016).

The attitudes and perceptions of faculty are important to librarians, who continue to investigate the factors which increase the likelihood of successful collaborations with faculty. Understanding the preconceptions and perceptions of relationships fosters successful librarian–faculty collaborations (Doskatsch, 2003). Conducting a narrative inquiry can help librarians understand how the experiences of librarians and faculty pairs have changed over time, and Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory has been utilized as the theoretical framework to guide researchers’ interpretations as the complex nature of mentoring was explored (Arshavskaya,
For this research project, four sets of preservice teacher pairs participated in mentoring sessions which focused on activities such as planning, teaching, and reflecting as pairs to determine the levels of the teachers’ interactions with and perceptions of the mentoring experience (Arshavskaya, 2016). Sociocultural theory has also been applied to teachers’ professional development because educators can gain new knowledge through collaboration with peers or by conducting research (Shabani, 2016).

Researchers conducted an ethnographic study of the attitudes which influence librarian–faculty collaboration in library instruction, and they examined why some faculty collaborate with librarians and heavily utilize library instruction in their classes (Manuel et al., 2005). The study revealed that 18 of the 21 faculty participants collaborated with a librarian and participated in library instruction because they viewed the librarian as the expert. When asked why the faculty members began the library instruction collaboration, more than half indicated the work with the librarian was developed by a previous faculty member. The authors posited that librarians would be well served to conduct similar research to discover faculty attitudes in their own institutions (Manuel et al., 2005).

Researchers at the University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal, utilized the Librarian–Library/Faculty Relationship Model to conduct a case study to evaluate the variables that contribute to faculty members’ willingness to collaborate with librarians (Amante, Extremeño, & da Costa, 2012). The study was conducted due to the changes in European and higher education and because of the researchers’ experiences with faculty and the negative effects of infrequent interactions between librarians and faculty. The researchers obtained qualitative data through a focus group and quantitative data from a survey then utilized the Librarian–Library/Faculty Relationship Model to: identify and understand faculty needs, determine the satisfaction of
faculty needs, evaluate communication, examine trust based on long-term relationships, and determine commitment of faculty to librarians and libraries. The researchers found that the identification and understanding of faculty members’ needs was the determining variable in their willingness to collaborate with librarians. The results indicated that commitment and needs satisfaction are also variables which influence faculty members’ willingness to collaborate.

Examples of successful and unsuccessful librarian–faculty collaborations were prevalent in the literature; however, more research is necessary regarding specific elements that contribute to the development of successful collaborative relationships (Phelps & Campbell, 2011). The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to examine how collaborations between librarians and faculty are developed and maintained, and to help librarians, faculty, administrators, and other stakeholders understand the impact of librarian–faculty collaboration.

**Significance of the Research Question**

In response to the burgeoning changes in politics, technology, and the economy, educators across the globe have felt the pressure to transform their methods of teaching and learning (Doskatsch, 2003). Librarians have found this to be a promising opportunity to help enhance their institutions’ learning environments; however, many still wonder how faculty describe the collaborative relationship with librarians (Douglas & Rabinowitz, 2016). The rationale for this study was the researcher’s interest in expanding knowledge on how ongoing librarian–faculty relationships were developed in order to address the continued barriers librarians face when attempting to cultivate impactful collaborations with faculty.

Research has shown successful collaborations between librarians and faculty are evident in colleges and universities that maintain ongoing collaborations between the two groups. Several librarian–faculty collaborations have been developed in the field of health sciences, as
nursing and physical therapy programs have developed workshops and embedded librarians into their curricula (Brooks & Bigelow, 2015; Friberg & Lyckhage, 2013; Miller, Jones, Graves, & Sievert, 2010; Wu et al., 2013). Researchers evaluated the embedded librarian pilot project at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, wherein the nursing faculty proposed embedding a librarian into a 7-week, accelerated, online course. The faculty member requested the librarian’s help to improve students’ research and information literacy skills. The evaluation conducted with the students at the end of the pilot program indicated the embedded librarian service was successful, and the researchers posited “the library’s value and relevance to the campus was strengthened and made more visible via the faculty–librarian collaboration” (Wu et al., 2013, p. 326).

Many librarian–faculty relationships center on instruction and teaching, while additional projects include collection development, grant writing, and presenting; however, room for growth is present in collaborative research, as it can be beneficial to faculty writing goals and university initiatives (Reynolds et al., 2013). Librarians and faculty have brought their discipline-specific knowledge and tools to accomplish effective projects; however, the problem remains, “and vast literature confirms it, effective collaboration simply is not the norm” (Badke, 2005, p. 68). Therefore, understanding how librarians and faculty perceive their individual contributions to projects can create opportunities for collaboration on a variety of activities, such as collaborative research (Reynolds, et al., 2013).

Through the utilization of Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural framework, activities which problem solve or accomplish a common goal can be socially constructed at the group or organizational level (Boreham & Morgan, 2004). Knowledge generated from the sociocultural perspective can serve as a collective resource, through interactions between people (Boreham &
Morgan, 2004). The knowledge and skills that librarians and faculty bring from their respective disciplines can be evaluated using this framework, as well as the contributions both groups make during the collaboration to achieve the desired outcome.

Librarianship is a multifaceted field, and its resources and services apply to numerous academic departments on campuses. As colleges and universities respond to digital and global changes, libraries have reconsidered and expanded the services they provide (Díaz & Mandernach, 2017). To meet the needs that new technology brings, librarians have led initiatives such as the acquisition and storage of open education resources, the development of faculty online academic profiles, and the creation of institutional repositories (Ali & Richardson, 2018; Givens, Macklin, & Mangiafico, 2017; Goodsett, Loomis, & Miles, 2016). Projects such as advising faculty authors with copyright or licensing issues during publication can benefit the life cycle of scholarly communication and increase the impact of research (Ali & Richardson, 2018). The development of faculty profile systems can help scholars from across the globe find one another, work together, share research, and form collaborations that “lead to real-world benefits” (Givens, et al., 2017, p. 253).

The shift in the relationships among researchers and traditional library and university services and methods of support has led to more proactive initiatives designed to address the new challenges (Richardson, Nolan-Brown, Loria, & Bradbury, 2012). Librarians in Queensland University in Australia conducted a study to evaluate levels of support for researchers and the research agenda in their institutions and determined that while the libraries offer a high level of research support, areas of growth included e-research and research data management support (Richardson et al., 2012). Librarian contributions to faculty research affects scholarly communication on a global scale. As colleges and universities become more international and
interdisciplinary, data housed in faculty profile systems that are interspersed into the scholarship are useful to individual faculty members and can support broader goals and collaborations (Givens et al., 2017). Although the literature demonstrated some partnerships occur between librarians and faculty, the specific elements that contribute to impactful collaborations were unclear (Phelps & Campbell, 2011).

**Research Problem and Research Questions**

The frequency and impact of collaborations between librarians and faculty vary, and current studies have indicated a lack of collaboration between the two groups (Amante et al., 2012; Doskatsch, 2003; Manuel et al., 2005). The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study with college librarian–faculty pairs, was to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence ongoing collaborations between the two groups. Specifically, this study looked at the culture and knowledge the groups brought from their respective disciplines and evaluated their perceptions of the impact of the collaboration. The following research question guided this study:

How are collaborations developed and maintained between college librarians and faculty pairs?

Subquestions used in this study included:

1. How do librarians perceive the impact of their collaborations with faculty?
2. How do faculty perceive the impact of their collaborations with librarians?
3. How do librarians and faculty learn from each other during collaborations?

**Definition of Key Terminology**

The following terms and definitions were used during the course of this study:
• Central State Community College. Pseudonym given for the statewide community college system, including numerous sites throughout the state.

• Collaboration. Working together towards a common goal, or more specifically, “human behavior that makes a substantial contribution toward the advancement of a research project . . . with respect to a mutually shared superordinate research goal” (Gunawardena et al., 2010, p. 213)

• Discipline. “Commitments to a theory system, profession” as well as “a particular branch of learning or body of knowledge whose defining elements—i.e., phenomena, assumptions, epistemology, concepts, and methods—distinguish it from other knowledge formations” (Gunawardena et al., 2010, p. 214)

• Embedded librarian. Librarians involved in the college or department at a macro level, in the course at micro levels, and who go out where their services are needed to be integrated into the user group (Wu et al., 2013)

• Faculty. College and university “faculty as opposed to librarians” although some “librarians have faculty status and many also teach” (Díaz & Mandernach, 2017, p. 274)

• Librarian. College or university professionals who hold a master’s degree in library science. Some “librarians have faculty status and may also teach” (Díaz & Mandernach, 2017, p. 274)

• Library instruction class. One-shot, generic, subject-specific sessions wherein faculty bring their students to the library to learn about its resources and databases (Badke, 2005)

Theoretical Framework
Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory served as the theoretical lens for this study.

Vygotsky utilized his experience as a teacher and psychologist to study children’s development of speech, knowledge, and skills, in the context of working with adults, teachers, and other peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Marx’s theory of society influenced Vygotsky’s thinking, as Marx suggested that historical changes in society and life, changes human consciousness and behavior (Vygotsky, 1978). The vital role of social interactions in the cultural context were revealed through Vygotsky’s studies, as he posited that knowledge is constructed from the social environment (Ryder & Yamagata-Lynch, 2013). Sociocultural theorists examine human intelligence through social or cultural settings, as an individual obtains knowledge through interactions with their social environments (Bratitsis & Demetriadis, 2013). The sociocultural perspective suggests that human cognition is developed through engagement and interactions in social activities (Wang, Bruce, & Hughes, 2011).

Valsiner (1987) described Vygotsky’s “genetic law of development” as learning that occurs through a range of joint activities; then strategies and knowledge of the world and culture are acquired through the product of learning together (Palinscar, 1998). Sociocultural theory is typically demonstrated by examining individuals with disparate levels of knowledge, such as children and their caregiver or novices and experts (Palinscar, 1998). The relationship between students and teachers has also been examined using sociocultural theory, as students can solve problems with their peers or the teacher that they might not have been able to do on their own (Eun, 2010). Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development addresses collaborations between peers. Vygotsky (1978) stated “it is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration
with more capable peers” (p. 86). During collaborations, the zone of proximal development allows individuals the opportunity to contribute and learn from each other, as the less knowledgeable individual learns from the individual with more knowledge and vice versa (Shabani, 2016). Librarians and faculty each bring their own knowledge base to collaborations, both serving as the expert or the novice while learning from each other.

**Critics of the Theory**

Vygotsky’s (1978) ideas regarding human learning and development differed from those of his peers because, during the 1920s, human psychology was studied through stimulus and response experiments (Ryder & Yamagata-Lynch, 2013). Vygotsky’s (1978) concepts of experimentation differed from those in American psychology because he viewed the object of experimentation as the means to make processes visible “that are ordinarily hidden beneath the surface of habitual behavior,” and he believed a proper experiment could create processes that “telescope the actual course of development of a given function” (p. 12). Vygotsky (1978) shared the Gestalt psychologists’ dissatisfaction with the state of psychological analysis; however, he determined the Gestalt psychologists failed to move beyond the description to explanation of higher psychological processes.

Vygotsky was dissatisfied with Piaget’s, Thorndike’s, and Koffka’s perspectives on formal instruction and development. Piaget suggested that children can only benefit from teaching and learning processes after the maturing of certain psychological functions; Thorndike posited that cognitive development is the shadow of teaching, and Koffka maintained that school instruction and biological maturational processes are the two types of development (Eun, 2010). In contrast, Vygotsky (1978) argued cognitive development does not precede formal teaching and learning processes (Eun, 2010). Vygotsky’s death at an early age prohibited the
development of many of his ideas (Palinscar, 1998). John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) suggested caution when utilizing a complex theory as there is a tendency to utilize only parts rather than the whole, resulting in distorted application and understanding of the theory (Palinscar, 1998).

**Rationale for Using This Theory**

In this study, Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory was used to inform how librarians and faculty collaborate and learn with each other in the context of higher education. Gaining an understanding of each participants’ knowledge and culture used during day-to-day activities developed a clearer picture of the history and culture each group contributes to collaborative projects. The data generated from the study and the subsequent analysis helped the researcher understand how collaborations occurred and were maintained between the participants (Lupu, 2011).

Practices and procedures are oftentimes passed down from professor to professor in academia, as indicated in a study by Manuel et al. (2005) where faculty members followed in the example of their predecessors and visited the library with their students and collaborated with librarians. In the classroom, the collaborative culture consisted of common learning goals that were shared by students (Eun, 2010). For the purpose of this study, the common goals between librarians and faculty consisted of the completion of a project or ongoing classroom collaboration.

Researchers have indicated the lack of collaborative support structures provided to individuals in institutions where departmental silos create barriers to collaboration (Kezar, 2005). The use of Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory helped to “describe human cognition as developed through engagement in social activities, as an individual interacts with other people, objects, and
events” (Wang et al., 2011). This study addressed the impact of the participants’ work with each other as well as their perceptions of the impact of the collaboration on the organization.

**Application of Theory**

Sociocultural theory applied to this study because it allowed the researcher to examine the perceptions of the librarians and faculty and the environment in which the study was situated. When considering how librarians and faculty learn and develop from collaborations, the researcher distinguished between the actual and potential levels of development of the research participants (Wang et al., 2011). The researcher examined how the participants’ social interactions influenced their individual learning processes.

Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory was applied to a study focused on information literacy research and curricular design (Wang et al., 2011). Twenty-two academic staff and professional librarians were interviewed from three Australian universities, and data from the interviews determined that the key characteristics of information literacy curricular integration were: collaboration and negotiation, contextualization, and ongoing interaction with information. Through the utilization of sociocultural theories, the researchers determined that a collaborative community of information literacy can be formed (Wang et al., 2011).

Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural perspective was utilized as a theoretical lens through which to see the developmental trajectories of four mentor–preservice teacher pairs who participated in mentoring relationships at a large northeastern university in the United States (Arshavskaya, 2016). The study revealed the varied nature of mentoring when the mentor in one pair acted more as an expert while interactions in another pair were more reciprocal. Two of the four pairs experienced contradictions they were not able to resolve, illustrating the complexities
which can occur when two individuals interact and collaborate with one another (Arshavskaya, 2016).

Collaborations are inherently difficult, with over 50% ending in failure, and within higher education, the challenges are prevalent throughout siloed departmental structures and numerous subsystems and subcultures (Klein, 2017). This framework provided an opportunity for the researcher to examine whether the participants viewed the departmental or organizational structure as a facilitator or hindrance to their collaborations. Gaining an understanding of the cultures of the two groups provided the researcher insight into the participants’ motivation to create new opportunities for collaboration or maintain the status quo.

Conclusion

Creating an environment to develop and maintain impactful collaborations takes work. Librarians have utilized various methods to interject themselves into the structure of their organizations for years. Many librarians have achieved brief collaborations with faculty members by providing information literacy instruction to their students in the library or in the classroom; however, the changing landscape of higher education is requiring more meaningful collaborations. Librarians can play a vital role in the technological changes that are occurring in higher education, as proven by their creation of institutional repositories that house not only open access resources, but also faculty professional profiles and scholarship.

Conducting a study on the development of maintained collaborations between librarians and faculty has provided insight and tools that librarians, faculty, and administrators can benefit from and implement in their institutions. This study determined how participants perceived institutional structures as a hinderance or benefit to collaborating with professionals in other disciplines. Through the utilization of Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, collaborations and
shared knowledge between librarians and faculty were explored. The next chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature, focusing on librarian culture, faculty culture, and institutional structures.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Opportunities for collaboration can be plentiful in colleges; therefore, understanding how and why collaborations between employees are developed and sustained is vital to the success of institutions of higher education (Eddy, 2010). However, despite the expressed desire for increased collaborative work in higher education, building new connections and collaborations are difficult to implement (McMahon & Bhamra, 2017). This literature review includes three strands of literature and provides background to the research study. The first section reviews the collaborative experiences of organizations, faculty, and librarians. The second section reviews how culture is perceived within organizations, and among faculty and librarians. Lastly, the third section of this review addresses how learning occurs among organizations, faculty, and librarians. Examining how each group individually perceived their experiences, cultures, and learning methods provided a greater understanding of how they interacted when working together during collaborations.

Collaborative Experiences

The whole is greater than its individual parts; therefore, collaborations and group work lead to more informed decisions and fresher perspectives on topics (Chase, Ross, & Robbie, 2017; Coleman & Bandyopadhyay, 2011). Collaborative teams include individuals who are working together towards a common goal (McMahon & Bhamra, 2017). Individuals and organizations are encouraged to participate in institutional collaborations in order to develop partnerships, reconsider preconceived ideas regarding the roles and resources that individuals contribute to the projects, and determine the connections that participants contribute to the group (Eddy, 2010). Cross-institutional collaborations create opportunities to build bridges and networks for the co-construction of knowledge and collaborative learning (Nerantzi, 2012).
Organizational Collaborations

Collaborations are complex, and during the collaborative process, participants struggle with factors such as working with a diverse group of individuals with their own voices, overcoming language barriers, and developing outcomes that reflect the desire of the various disciplines (McMahon & Bhamra, 2017; Pham & Tanner, 2014). Administrators and policy makers can facilitate collaborations in their organizations more effectively when they understand the factors which best support the development and ongoing maintenance of collaborations (Eddy, 2010). Motivating factors for partnerships within and among multiple organizations include:

- educational reform addressed through P-16 initiatives;
- economic development achieved through joint ventures;
- dual enrollment or student transfer between K–12, community colleges, and 4-year universities;
- student learning and increased student success;
- resource savings due to the decline in funding;
- shared goals and visions to achieve specific outcomes; and
- international joint ventures to establish partnerships across the globe (Eddy, 2010).

Educators continue to investigate methods to facilitate collaborations among institutions. Researchers provided stakeholders the opportunity to discuss global engagement during a cross-institutional and interdisciplinary professional development forum among three universities in Australia (Patel, Li, & Piscioneri, 2014). The researchers noted the discussions became tense due to the variety of voices; however, the participants determined the forum created an open space for discourse on global engagement (Patel et al., 2014).
In the United Kingdom, a small scale, online study was conducted to examine the potential creation of networked learning environments and problem-based learning using open access technologies (Nerantzi, 2012). Eight new academics and two academic developers participating in the phenomenographic study were split into two multidisciplinary, multi-institutional groups, and asked to complete a problem-based learning task for 5 weeks (Nerantzi, 2012). The study determined the participants and facilitators found working with others from various institutions beneficial, as they valued the opportunity to work and learn with colleagues from different disciplines and organizations (Nerantzi, 2012).

In the United States, institutions of higher education within the same region have also explored methods to foster collaborative engagement, and researchers conducted a study to increase faculty skills and knowledge in community-based teaching (Lake et al., 2017). The research process included surveys, interviews, observations, open dialogues, and observations. The researchers identified several barriers to intra- and interinstitutional collaborations such as individual autonomy of the various academic departments, differences in the scope and mission of the participating institutions, and physical distance between the departments and institutions (Lake et al., 2017). The researchers determined efforts were hindered by cultural and structural differences between the participating institutions and identified disciplinary siloes as additional barriers to effective collaboration (Lake et al., 2017).

Although cross-disciplinary collaborations can be challenging to facilitate, working with colleagues in or out of the same organization allows for the opportunity to bring staff together and bridge organizations and implement good practices (Chase et al., 2017; Coleman & Bandyopadhyay, 2011). Researchers conducted a cross-institutional case study to explore digital assessment practices between employees from two institutions of higher education and
determined when individuals with different areas of expertise work together towards a common goal, the collaboration was successful and feedback from the participants was perceived as positive (Chase et al., 2017). Cross-disciplinary collaborations can also have a positive impact when participants engage in activities with interdisciplinary teaching, as researchers conducted a study to determine the willingness of faculty to collaborate with others from various academic departments (Coleman & Bandyopadhyay, 2011). The researchers concluded that faculty members’ willingness to collaborate with individuals from various disciplines was increasing, and faculty considered their collaborative efforts as beneficial and an opportunity to share information and generate knowledge (Coleman & Bandyopadhyay, 2011).

**Faculty Collaborations**

Collaborations between faculty occur among various disciplines within institutions, as well as between multiple colleges and universities across the globe (Barczyk, Davis, & Zimmerman, 2012; Cooper & Mitsunaga, 2010; Hoover & Lyon, 2011; Walsh, Lewis, & Rakestraw, 2013). Disciplines in the sciences have seen a decrease in silos and an increase in cross-disciplinary teams (Luke et al., 2015). Researchers have also documented a rise in interdepartmental collaborations among faculty within the health professions; however, literature regarding collaborative efforts is limited (Tivener & Gloe, 2015).

Researchers determined athletic training and nursing faculty who participated in an interprofessional collaborative project developed a mutual respect and new perspective for their collaborative partners’ disciplines (Tivener & Gloe, 2015). While creating simulation labs together for students, the athletic training and nursing faculty determined that collaborative teaching was a positive experience that enhanced clinical understanding and student learning (Tivener & Gloe, 2015). Research has also shown that collaborations with colleagues in various
disciplines leads to research opportunities and increased joint grant submissions (Luke et al., 2015; Tivener & Gloe, 2015).

Health care systems utilize a team-based collaborative approach when caring for patients, and faculty who teach in the health sciences are charged with preparing students to enter a collaborative work environment (Casa-Levine, 2017). A study was conducted to assess the attitudes of dental hygiene administrators and faculty members regarding the value of interprofessional education, which is intended to encourage teamwork and effective communication, improve health outcomes, and increase students’ understanding and appreciation of various health care professions within dental hygiene curricula (Casa-Levine, 2017). The researcher determined most of the participants realized the value of utilizing interprofessional education to effectively prepare students to enter a collaborative workforce, as administrators and faculty perspectives indicated an interest in adopting more interdisciplinary teaching methods into program curricula (Casa-Levine, 2017).

Programs such as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) have been developed to explore how institutions encourage faculty development and collaborative scholarship (Barczyk et al., 2012). Faculty have come together to collaborate on curriculum and course design as well as on student mentorships (Hoover & Lyon, 2011; Routhieaux, 2015; Walsh et al., 2013). Researchers examined the benefits of faculty mentorship collaborations during a critical thinking and writing project with dental students at the University of the Pacific and determined the expertise of the diverse faculty participants enhanced and supported student learning (Hoover & Lyon, 2011).

In addition to programs such as SoTL, institutions are encouraging new faculty in cohorts such as Georgetown’s Doyle Faculty Fellows program to participate in interdisciplinary faculty
collaborations (Walsh et al., 2013). The fellows participate in workshops, group summer
consultations, and monthly cohort meetups during the academic year to learn about and discuss
best practices in diversity-focused pedagogy and course development. The fellows have
commented the greatest benefit to participating in the program was being a member of the cohort
community and working with others from various disciplines (Walsh et al., 2013).

Faculty collaborations result in both successes and challenges as depicted in a case study
documenting the design and implementation of a new master of business administration program
at a comprehensive university in the midwestern United States (Routhieaux, 2015). The program
designers sought to implement innovative curricula which integrated content from various
content areas, allowing for the integration of broader learning experiences while moving away
from traditional silo formats. Although the program designers faced challenges such as finding
time to meet and plan and the presence of imbalanced teaching loads, the benefits to the
innovative curricula approach included the opportunities it afforded faculty, staff, and
administration to collaborate and the foundation it provided for ongoing faculty professional
development and learning (Routhieaux, 2015).

Additional opportunities for faculty to participate in professional development stem from
working with K–12 teachers in their community. Researchers presented the higher education
faculty–teacher collaboration that was part of the Rhode Island Technology Enhanced Science 5-
year project which included most of the school districts in the state (Knowlton, Fogleman,
Reichsman, & de Oliveira, 2015). Faculty and teacher participants worked together to develop
technology and science-based activities for middle- and high-school students and collaborated
using methods such as face-to-face meetings, emailing, and occasional phone calls. The
participants indicated that working together was beneficial as they valued each other’s expertise
and suggested that such scientist–teacher partnerships can “serve as an essential bridge for supporting STEM students and as a foundation for sustained K–12/ higher education collaboration” (Knowlton et al., 2015).

**Librarian Collaborations**

Libraries are unique as they are perceived as an interdisciplinary space, providing the setting and expertise to encourage knowledge sharing among faculty (Wishkoski, Lundstrom, & Davis, 2018). Although libraries are considered an open space for everyone on campus to use, librarians continue to struggle with establishing themselves as academic peers with faculty (Andrews, 2012). To address this barrier, librarians continue to explore how to build trust and develop collaborations with faculty (Wishkoski et al., 2018). One method librarians have used to establish themselves as experts in their field is to offer information literacy instruction classes to faculty and students (Bezet, 2013; Cohen, 2016; Kelly, Williams, Matthies, & Orris, 2011; Torres, 2018).

Librarians who work closely with specific academic departments, schools, or colleges in their institutions have been labeled as liaisons or embedded librarians and usually hold a degree or formal training that relates to the departments where they serve as a liaison (Bezet, 2013;). Librarian liaisons can participate in classroom activities by serving as a co-instructor in a course, participating in discussion board conversations with students, and by creating and grading assignments (Bezet, 2013). While describing the benefits of librarians serving as liaisons embedded in online courses, Dewey (2004) who stated, “the integration of scholarly resources and librarian expertise into the online classroom leverages the university’s support for the library itself and, furthermore, improves the overall teaching and research mission of the institution” (Bezet, 2013, p. 184). Librarian and faculty collaborations have also proven effective in various
disciplines including music, chemistry, and first-year seminars (Junisbai, Lowe, & Tagge, 2016; Stone & Sternfeld, 2014; Tucci, 2011). Librarians have also contributed to faculty scholarship by developing institutional repositories which manage institutions’ faculty scholarship and electronic resources, including databases, e-books, e-journals, and open educational resources (Goodsett et al., 2016).

Although many librarians recognize working directly with faculty as liaisons for specific disciplines is important, there are numerous barriers to establishing the collaborations (Cohen, 2016). In order to address barriers such as ineffective one-shot library instruction sessions, librarians introduced the flipped classroom design as a tool to create more meaningful experiences with business students in the classroom (Cohen, 2016). As a result of utilizing the flipped classroom model, which better utilized face-to-face time with students and provided active learning and critical thinking activities, librarians and faculty experienced a successful collaboration and extended the integration of information literacy into additional business courses (Cohen, 2016).

The Association of College and Research Libraries has developed Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, which provide a framework for assessing students’ information literacy proficiencies (Kelly et al., 2011). Librarians utilized this framework to investigate whether students who received information literacy instruction in an introductory business course performed significantly higher than students who did not receive similar library instruction (Kelly et al., 2011). During the study, students were exposed to information literacy instruction provided by the library over the course of three sections, with sessions and training exercises created in collaboration with the librarian and course professor. After reviewing the student participants’ pretest and posttest questionnaires, the librarians determined students who
received library instruction in earlier business courses performed better than those who did not receive the training. The students who did not receive the training also acknowledged the importance of in-class collaborations between librarians and faculty (Kelly et al., 2011).

Librarians conducted a study utilizing the research skills development framework as a model to develop first-year biology students’ research skills (Torres, 2018). The researchers applied Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivist epistemology as data was collected through observations of eight students in a laboratory lab setting. The researchers determined the research skills development framework was effective in helping librarians and faculty work together to develop students’ research skills and referenced librarians’ knowledge and expertise as contributing factors to instilling research-related skills into biology units and additional disciplines across colleges and universities (Torres, 2018).

Coteaching is an additional method that librarians have utilized to address the barriers they face when collaborating with faculty (Medaille & Shannon, 2012). Librarians have discovered that coteaching is an effective method they can utilize to foster teaching relationships with other information professionals and encourage shared learning (Medaille & Shannon, 2012). Researchers determined collaborations between librarians and faculty are most successful when both parties participate in joint planning and teaching in the classroom, particularly when the collaboration was part of the faculty member’s normal work routine and not an additional responsibility (Pham & Tanner, 2014). Collaborations have become more common in complex environments; however, social structures create barriers to individuals putting forth the effort to work together (Pham & Tanner, 2014). Effective collaborations between librarians and academics necessitate a number of various factors such as: time allotted to develop trust and mutual understanding; reflection of each other’s knowledge, skills, and expertise;
complementary personalities and interpersonal skills; consistent communication; recognition of roles and culture; and an joint exploration of how the collaboration will add value to the education or research experience (Pham & Tanner, 2014).

**Conclusion**

Collaborations occur in learning environments when a diverse group comes together towards a common project or solution and when each member of the group contributes to one another’s learning (Hoover & Lyon, 2011). Researchers have determined interdisciplinary collaborations can break down silos and create more opportunities for individuals from various departments and disciplines to work together (Lake et al., 2017; Luke et al., 2015). Campus administrators and policy makers can contribute to the formation of partnerships by supporting joint ventures between employees and encouraging collaborative pairs to achieve their shared goals (Casa-Levine, 2017; Eddy, 2010).

As faculty have found themselves working more consistently with others outside of their discipline or department, they have also prepared students for the increasingly collaborative workforce (Casa-Levine, 2017; Hoover & Lyon, 2011). Faculty collaborations have also occurred outside of the home institution with K–12 elementary teachers and other potential colleagues across the globe (Barczyk et al., 2012; Knowlton et al., 2015). Librarians add value to teaching and learning in their institutions through information literacy instruction (Andrews, 2012). Collaborations between librarians and faculty in the classroom have been shown to improve student success and increase information literacy skills (Bezet, 2013; Kelly et al., 2011; Pham & Tanner, 2014).
The Impact of Culture on Collaborations

The concept of culture is “ubiquitous” as it is present in “all areas of group life” and directly influences how individuals learn how to respond to events that occur in their environments (Schein, 1990, p. 112). An organization’s culture stems from its leadership and is demonstrated through the combined learning experiences and behaviors of its members (Zhu, 2015). Developments in learning and teaching require a change in the culture of institutions of higher education (Claxton, 2007). Consultations and collaborations between faculty and librarians have affected the culture of libraries through heightened engagement in the learning and teaching processes (Donham & Green, 2004).

The Influence of Organizational Culture

Institutions of higher education have increasingly emphasized the impact of culture on knowledge sharing and collaboration; however, organizational culture can encourage innovation or create barriers for effective change (Santosh & Panda, 2016; Zhu, 2015). Klein and Falk-Krzesinski (2017) showed silos and opposing departmental subcultures cause barriers to collaborations and disrupt the development of common goals in organizations. In addition to departmental silos, hierarchical and bureaucratic structures within an institution’s administration can stem back hundreds of years, causing employees to become rooted in structures and cultures from years long gone (Kezar, 2005).

Culture is learned; therefore, the assumptions, beliefs, and experiences of an organization’s leader play a major role in an employee’s understanding of “how things should be” (Schein, 1990, p. 115). College leaders have been charged with creating a positive culture of collaboration in their organizations, and although some collaborations have been successful, many have faced various issues and failed (Lee, 2004). Kezar (2005) conducted a study to
determine how institutions of higher education can move away from bureaucratic structures and siloed academic departments towards organizational cultures that support collaborations. The study resulted in the following eight factors that are essential to creating a collaborative work environment:

- having an organizational mission statement that encourages collaboration,
- developing networks to encourage relationship building,
- integrating structures to facilitate collaborations and implement cross-institutional work,
- implementing reward and incentive systems,
- prioritization of collaborations from senior administrators,
- overcoming pressures imposed by external groups,
- generating a common set of student-centered values, and
- creating centers for teaching and learning (Kezar, 2005).

Zhu (2015) argued that learning and innovation are crucial to the evolution of organizations, and organizational culture directly influences success or hinders the adoption of innovation. Researchers explored the impact of organizational culture on teacher’s perceptions of technology-enhanced innovation in Chinese universities. The study’s questionnaire feedback revealed employees perceived the need for innovation; therefore, the organizational culture should support employee collaborations (Zhu, 2015).

Community colleges have been studied to determine how employees perceive the role of campus culture on individual and institutional effectiveness (Lee, 2004; Smart & Hamm, 1993). The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems developed the Institutional Performance Survey as a tool to measure the organizational cultures of colleges and universities.
The tool was utilized in a study to determine the differences in the effectiveness of 2-year colleges based on their dominant culture type (Smart & Hamm, 1993). The four dominant organizational culture types explored in the study included: clan cultures that encourage high morale and joint decision-making processes, adhocracy cultures that utilize innovative strategies, hierarchy cultures that maintain mechanistic structures, and market cultures that are proactive and implement robust market initiatives (Smart & Hamm, 1993). Faculty and administrators from 30 institutions participated in the study, and the researchers determined that community colleges with dominant adhocracy cultures are perceived to be most effective, and hierarchies were found to be the least effective culture type (Smart & Hamm, 1993).

A small team of faculty, staff, and students at the River Parishes Community College worked together to create the Education for Success through Partnership Rallies on Instruction and Teaching (ESPRIT) program to create an open and collaborative teaching and learning culture (Lee, 2004). The ESPRIT program contributed to the culture of collaboration at River Parishes Community College and created a space for students, faculty, and staff to communicate and work together. Employees perceive increased institutional effectiveness through the implementation of the ESPRIT program and strengthened collegiality due to the enhancement of the institution’s collaborative culture (Lee, 2004).

The Role of Faculty Culture

In academia there is an increasing emphasis on team and interdisciplinary collaborative research, and experts consider interdisciplinary research as a method to gather essential expertise to address major issues in society and to advance discovery (Burroughs, 2017). However, cultural differences within academic departments, disciplines, and institutions directly affect faculty culture and the willingness of faculty to learn and collaborate with others (Cox,
Faculty perceptions and attitudes towards learning and sharing knowledge with others also affected their willingness to work with others (Kim & Ju, 2008). Faculty culture upholds a “professional autonomy whose corollary is academic freedom” and emphasizes “research, content, and specialization” (Badke, 2005). Researchers have found that in faculty culture, teaching and individual scholarly achievement are prioritized over a shared vision of organizational goals and faculty tend to present independent, autonomous, and individualistic qualities with competing loyalties to their scholarly disciplines, academic departments, and institutions (Cox, et al., 2011; Kim & Ju, 2008). The faculty community maintains its own distinctive culture; therefore, faculty members’ perceptions and attitudes towards knowledge sharing and collaborations vary between organizations (Kim & Ju, 2008).

Research has shown that reforming faculty culture requires effort from an institution’s administration to create new values, expectations, and norms for faculty to shadow because employees follow the beliefs, values, and assumptions of their organization’s culture (Cox, et al., 2011). Faculty members’ backgrounds (e.g., where they received their education, the location and type of institution where they are employed) have been shown to directly affect their culture on faculty work (Eddy & Hart, 2012; Kempner, 1990). Researchers conducted a study to explore how 20 faculty members working in small, geographically remote institutions of higher education perceived their work lives when considering their cultural expectations of faculty work and determined culture plays a primary role in faculty members’ decisions to stay or leave their institution (Eddy & Hart, 2012). The study also revealed some faculty sought to work in environments with cultures vastly different than the institutions where they received their education, but a number of faculty expressed dissatisfaction with the difference in culture.
between the small institutions where they were employed and the larger institutions where they received their degrees (Eddy & Hart, 2012). Despite feeling isolated by living in a smaller community, some faculty participants acknowledged the benefits of cross-departmental collaborations that became available to them when their access to colleagues in other departments was more convenient due to the small size of the campus community (Eddy & Hart, 2012).

Within the disciplinary cultures of the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, there was a lack of knowledge regarding how faculty engaged in collaborations (Burroughs, 2017; Lewis et al., 2012). To address this issue, researchers conducted studies to examine how and why faculty in different disciplinary areas collaborated (Lewis et al., 2012). The research revealed that it is easier for faculty to work or write alone, and the culture of their discipline values single author work; however some participants who were interested in collaborating were unable to find collaborative partners or found the differences among cultures created barriers to working together (Lewis et al., 2012). The researchers determined collaboration needs greater recognition by policy makers, as policy and funding should encourage collaborative work across disciplines.

Knowledge sharing and interactions among faculty members were key components of how an organization’s culture developed (Tan, 2016). Cultural activities among faculty members included:

“Soliciting feedback, asking questions, providing instructions or advice on what needs to be done, asking others for help, request for teamwork (in terms of collaborations), asking for advice, giving advice on what needs to be done and most importantly why it needs to
be done, enquiring on whether members would do differently and also sharing the know-how and know-why information” (Tan, 2016, p. 529).

Faculty members’ willingness to share knowledge and work together was influenced by their organization’s culture, therefore, researchers have determined that institutions of higher education should work towards enabling its employees to share new ideas and knowledge to encourage a positive culture of social interactions (Tan, 2016).

The Culture of Librarianship

The master’s degree in library and information sciences admits professionals into the library culture, which consists of “a set of beliefs that support quality service, intellectual freedom, curiosity and an overarching desire to make library use as easy, friendly and satisfying as possible” (Holley, 2016, p. 207). The concept of culture was incorporated throughout the curriculum; therefore, the core values of librarianship has been imparted to students as they receive their master’s degrees (Holley, 2016). The public has remained unclear of the role of the librarian and associates the field of librarianship with the physical library instead of the librarian (Seminelli, 2016). The stereotype of an older woman wearing glasses and trying to quiet library patrons has continued to negatively affect the image of librarians and undervalues the importance and impact of their work (Seminelli, 2016).

It was recommended that librarians address this negative stereotype by participating in partnerships and collaborations with other libraries (Sarjeant-Jenkins & Walker, 2014). Researchers conducted a qualitative study to determine the value and challenges of developing and sustaining cross-library partnerships and explored the cultural traits of the partnering organizations. The participants commented they believed value was added to their organizations when partnering with other libraries, in addition to the financial benefits of sharing limited
resources across organizations. The researchers also determined that partnerships helped raise awareness for library programs and services and increased library use (Sarjeant-Jenkins & Walker, 2014).

Kaatrakoski and Lahikainen (2016) asserted that the librarian of today is a provider of service and a learning practitioner who works to serve customers; however, as library work evolves, librarians must become more visible and active in learning and research. In addition to working with administrators and faculty, researchers suggested librarians can partner with student organizations to build a participatory culture wherein student groups are engaged in library instruction centered collaborative activities (Johnson, Clapp, Ewing, & Buhler, 2011). Researcher’s posited:

The librarian’s role in the twenty-first century landscape should not end with teaching information literacy skills. As instructors, librarians should be aware of the broad range of new literacies that will prepare learners to succeed in an increasingly interdisciplinary, international, and collaborative world. (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 5)

Fox, Carpenter, and Doshi (2011) pointed out that implementing innovative collaborative activities can help refresh the library’s image and influence the perceptions of the roles of librarians and librarians on campus. Librarians at Georgia Institute of Technology developed and maintained traditional types of collaborative partnerships with faculty and other groups on campus such as the writing center; however, they recently made efforts to develop more nontraditional types of collaborations, such as a virtual aquarium project to make aquarium and additional museum experiences more available for the visually impaired (Fox et al., 2011).

The Georgia Tech library has also hosted virtual poster sessions of undergraduate research wherein students’ presentations are displayed on LCD monitors (Fox et al., 2011). The
library also partnered with various departments on campus such as the Counseling and Campus Recreation Centers to host a “StressBuzzters” event wherein students were encouraged to relax and were offered tips on stress management shortly before the fall final exams. Librarians credited the library’s culture of innovation and willingness to take risk as the reason for their collaborative success and determined that developing collaborations increased the library’s usage and visibility by establishing the library’s role within the institution (Fox et al., 2011).

**Conclusion**

Culture is learned, developed, and reproduced as new members observe the beliefs, assumptions, and values of their organizational leaders (Schein, 1990). Organizations have moved away from silos to more collaborative structures and cultures (Kezar, 2005; Klein & Falk-Krzesinski, 2017). Faculty have engaged in more collaboration within their departments and outside of their disciplines; however, cross discipline collaborations are difficult to develop and sustain (Burroughs, 2017; Eddy & Hart, 2012; Lewis et al., 2012). Efforts to shed the negative stereotype of their profession have led librarians towards reinventing their image and demonstrating their culture of service and innovation on a larger scale within and outside of their institutions (Fox et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2011; Kaatrakoski & Lahikainen, 2016).

**Learning and Knowledge Sharing**

Researchers have argued that higher education institutions are being asked to do more with less and must contend with rapid changes to their environments and increased competition (Holyoke, Sturko, Wood, & Wu, 2012). Dailey and Hauschild-Mork (2017) asserted that “The synergy created by collaboration can facilitate stronger works by calling upon the unique skills and knowledge of all involved” (p. 64). The overpowering subcultures of higher education institutions have directly affected the ability of employees to learn together (Holyoke et al.,
The learning processes of organizations, librarians, and faculty differ, so all three groups have had to contend with the changing times to ensure longevity and student success (Schrader, Shiri, & Williamson, 2012; Seyednazari, Avarsin, & Atalou, 2018; Sternberg, 2015).

**Learning in Higher Education Institutions**

Universities and colleges are managed like businesses and require the ability to adapt during rapidly changing times; therefore, researchers have argued that utilizing the concept of learning organizations will help increase their competitiveness and survival (Balay, 2012; Bowen & Schofield, 2013; Holyoke et al., 2012; Sternberg, 2015). Buckley (2012) said “A learning organization encourages its staff to learn by giving them the mechanisms to share experience and best practice, and to improve their skills and capabilities” (p. 336). Other research has shown that higher education institutions must implement creative and innovative reformations in their structures with new administrative practices to become learning organizations (Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016; Sternberg, 2015).

Traits of higher education institutions such as “high formality, little flexibility, hermetic style of management, strong resistance to changes, little or no money for experiments in implementing new management methods, techniques and tools – do not support application of the learning organization concept” (Kuzmicz, 2015, p. 90). Hierarchies and traditions among management, staff, and students have created barriers to working and learning together (Kuzmicz, 2015). Curado’s (2006) study was utilized to identify basic activities that constitute learning organizations which included:

- systematic problem solving which establishes a culture of problem solving and an acknowledged learning philosophy within the institution,
experimentation using opportunities available to organizations rather than trying to solve unnecessary problems,

- learning from previous experiences by analyzing successes and failures,
- learning from other individuals through collaborative learning, and
- transferring knowledge amongst individuals in the organization (Lawler & Sillitoe, 2013).

In today’s higher education institutions, knowledge has been contained in departmental silos causing barriers to organizational learning (Khalil & Shea, 2012). Holyoke et al. (2021) argued many staff, faculty, and administrators were “often isolated and view themselves more as independent contributors rather than an integral part of a large organization” (p. 437). Researchers conducted a study to determine how faculty share research related knowledge with their departmental colleagues, and found participants recognized barriers such as lack time and effort necessary to share knowledge (Khalil & Shea, 2012). The participants noted additional barriers included the lack of incentive and support from the organization to share knowledge and collaborate and a lack of trust due to an organizational culture that failed to value sharing knowledge among its faculty (Khalil & Shea, 2012).

Individuals within a learning organization determined methods to promote learning in their institution by challenging patterns of assumptions and behavior and finding new ways of conducting business (Holyoke et al., 2012). The escalating impact of new instructional technologies may also have changed how educators teach and learn in higher education (Dziuban, Moskal, Parker, Campbell, Howlin, & Johnson, 2018). Researchers conducted a study to examine the collaborative efforts of two universities that implemented adaptive learning environments to increase student learning and found universities can utilize adaptive learning to
create more effective teaching and learning experiences with their students (Dziuban et al., 2018).

Learning Among Faculty

In colleges and universities, faculty have frequently been hired based on their areas of research expertise; however, it has been difficult to facilitate a culture of teaching and learning across an organization (Drew & Klopper, 2014). In order to address the disconnect and lack of collaborative learning, educators have implemented initiatives such as the community engagement professional model, professional learning communities (PLCs), and the SoTL (Barczyk et al., 2012; Gale, Dolson, & Howard, 2019; King, Logan, & Lohan, 2019; Terry, Zafonte, & Elliott, 2018). When engaging in SoTLs, instructors have been required to “critically reflect on aspects of their practice, examine their beliefs about teaching, consider their sense of self in relation to their practice, and even question and challenge institutional and social norms related to teaching” (Miller-Young, Yeo, Manarin, 2018, p. 1). Researchers conducted a study to determine if utilizing the SoTL among participants in the Faculty Research Abroad program resulted in the formation of partnerships and connections (Barczyk et al., 2012). The participants responded to a questionnaire which included closed, open-ended, and narrative questions, and most of the participants indicated the program fostered cooperation and increased their value of collaborating with other academics (Barczyk et al., 2012).

More recently, researchers explored how self-study affects educators’ understanding of the SoTL as it was applied to the context of teaching and evaluated the participants’ collaborative interactions through blog posts, recording from meetings, emails, focus group interviews, and Twitter (King et al., 2019). The researchers determined the educators’ collaborations affected learning as they modeled collaborative practices through learning and
teaching together (King et al., 2019). The practice of self-study also provided the participants
the opportunity to reflect on the effects of collaboration on instructional knowledge as they
focused on “how things are to be taught” and worked to “interrogate our own instructional and
pedagogical knowledge (King et al., 2019, p. 131).

In addition to the SoTL, the community engagement professional competency model has
been used to develop collaborative community engagement among educators in higher education
institutions (Gale et al., 2019). Researchers implemented a data lab as a method to make
meaning of data in a collaborative setting as “data labs build a collaborative culture of inquiry
through an inclusive, invitational, and cocreative approach” (Gale et al., 2019, p. 228). Through
the utilization of the community engagement professional program, initiatives that were
previously completed in isolation may have occurred more broadly across the organization, as
researchers indicated the community engagement professional model’s and data labs were
effective tools to “open up a space of shared inquiry, to engage participants across differences,
and to stimulate ongoing change-oriented dialogue” (Gale et al., 2019, p. 244).

Researchers have also found communities of practice serve an additional method for
developing and sharing knowledge between staff members in medical universities (Seyednazari,
Avarsin, & Atalou, 2018). A descriptive-survey research study was conducted with 245 faculty
members at Tabriz University of Medical Sciences and identified six components of
communities of practice which included: participatory leadership, formal structure, interactions
with other members of the communities, aims and goals, informal structures, and boundary and
size of the communities (Seyednazari et al., 2018). The findings of the study indicated the
participation of communities of practice enabled the development and sharing of more
experiences and knowledge among the participating members (Seyednazari et al., 2018).
As efforts to improve student learning outcomes have shifted towards more innovative approaches, educators have developed blended learning techniques as alternate teaching tools (Terry et al., 2018). Interdisciplinary faculty members at Grand Canyon University implemented PLC’s as a professional development practice to support blended learning and teaching (Terry et al., 2018). PLC’s provided the faculty members the opportunity to feel part of a community and increased new collaborations and learning experiences (Terry et al., 2018).

Factors such as trust, self-efficacy, and reciprocity (i.e., the degree to which a faculty member believed they could enhance their relationships with others) contributed to knowledge sharing within research universities (Tan, 2016). Researchers conducted a study with a variety of academic professionals which gathered 421 usable results to determine which factors contributed to knowledge sharing in their institutions and determined knowledge sharing was influenced by an individual’s trust, organizational rewards and culture, and the quality of a knowledge management system (Tan, 2016). Participants also revealed open communication and face-to-face communication with others influenced their desire to share knowledge with their colleagues (Tan, 2016).

**Librarians and Learning**

Burgeoning technologies have changed the landscape of higher education and altered the traditional duties of librarians to include the creation of more digital resources and remotely accessible tools (de Lima, Maculan, & Borges, 2017; Medaille & Shannon, 2012). Librarians have increased their opportunities to interact with faculty and students on campuses by teaching library information literacy classes; however, many librarians have reported a lack of confidence in their teaching abilities and feeling unsure of whether to consider themselves teachers (Medaille & Shannon, 2012; Zanin-Yost, 2018). Library administrators have assisted their
employees in gaining the new skills needed to keep up with today’s ever changing climate in various ways including, creating a learning environment by developing a training program for library staff to learn new and innovative skills and developing an institute where librarians are encouraged to foster a research and learning culture (Decker, 2017; Jacobs & Berg, 2013).

Like their faculty counterparts, librarians have utilized collaborative initiatives such as the SoTLs to create communities which provide support for teaching and learning (Hays & Studebaker, 2019; Otto, 2014). Librarians utilized the SoTL to address the confusion librarians faced when considering their identity, particularly regarding their identity as a teacher, and conduced a mixed methods study to explore the value of the SoTL as a tool for professional development (Hays & Studebaker, 2019). Quantitative and qualitative results indicated most of the study participants revealed they had a teacher identity, and when participants were perceived as a teacher by others at their institution, they felt empowered and identified as a teacher (Hays & Studebaker, 2019).

Medaille and Shannon (2012) posited that librarians can improve their instruction and teaching skills by teaching more and collaborating with others who have more teaching experience. Therefore, developing coteaching relationships with other information professionals can expand librarians’ instructional skills and develop creative teaching strategies (Medaille & Shannon, 2012). Librarians have explored the concept of becoming blended librarians, which are “creative managers, as strategic mediators of information and as educators, whose concerns are focused on the development of information literacy of the community served” (de Lima et al., 2017, p. 473). A blended librarian engages in continuous learning to help increase their institutions’ successes while adding valuable services and develops a relationship with faculty to
assist their integration of library resources and technology into their in-person and hybrid or blended courses (de Lima et al., 2017).

In addition to utilizing the blended librarian model, librarians have also engaged directly with faculty as liaisons or embedded librarians by collaborating on instructions for topics such as reference, collection development, and library resources (Zanin-Yost, 2018). Librarians have found that collaborating with faculty is beneficial and outweighs the risks because “these collaborations are long-lasting, multidisciplinary, and further the role of the library in creating and supporting teaching and learning” (Zanin-Yost, 2018, p. 162). Working with faculty and sharing their specific knowledge base has assisted with student learning and has helped to solidify the librarian’s critical role in their campus communities (Zanin-Yost, 2018).

**Conclusion**

Research has shown successful organizations continuously develop and update employees’ skills and knowledge through learning processes that compel innovation (Seyednazari et al., 2018), and Sarjeant-Jenkins and Walker (2014) argued that benefits to partnerships and collaborations include the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and ideas. Higher education institutions have also encouraged their newly hired academics to participate in professional development activities and programs to ultimately change the culture of teaching and learning among the faculty (Drew & Klopper, 2014). It has been commonplace in higher education institutions for employees to feel as if there is no one they can share ideas with; however, programs such as the PLC have helped educators understand they were not alone (Terry et al., 2018). SoTLs have been utilized by both faculty and librarians to create communities for learning and collaboration (Barczyk et al., 2012; Hays & Studebaker, 2019; King et al., 2019; Otto, 2014). Librarians have adjusted their services and skillsets to meet the
needs of the changes in higher education; therefore, embracing the role as a teacher has become vital to librarians’ ability to meet the needs of their library users (de Lima et al., 2017).

Summary

This chapter explored three strands of literature which included: the development of collaborative experiences of organizations, faculty, and librarians; how culture affects collaborations of organizations, faculty, and librarians; and how learning occurs among organizations, faculty, and librarians. The experiences and perceptions of each group was explored separately, as all three entities contribute different cultures and learning methods to collaborations. Understanding how and why individuals within organizations work together contributes to the knowledge base among campus administrators, faculty, and staff.

Although collaborations occur among librarians and faculty in higher education institutions, they continue to be infrequent. Organizations have acknowledged the need to collaborate within and outside of their institutions; however, the culture of academia has encouraged extensive collaborations among university employees in or out of their institutions. As librarians and faculty have observed the behaviors and culture of their siloed institutions, they have been less likely to engage in collaborations. The literature revealed the negative stereotypes held by librarians and faculty regarding each other and showed how these stereotypes have created additional barriers to collaborations.

The siloed culture of higher education has affected its ability to become a learning organization. In order to address today’s changing technological needs, organizations have gradually adjusted to incorporate more collaborative opportunities for employees. Increased community engagement and the creation of professional learning communities have provided employees the opportunity to learn together and share knowledge. The literature revealed faculty
and librarians have been challenged to meet the new developments in higher education, and the researcher found that when librarians and faculty learn and work together, they can change siloed cultures and improve the negative stereotypes maintained by both groups.
Chapter 3: Research Design

The purpose of this research study was to examine the factors that influence ongoing collaborations within college librarian and faculty pairs, and to evaluate their perceptions of the impact of collaborating. The following research question guided this study:

How are collaborations developed and maintained between college librarian–faculty pairs?

Subquestions included:

1. How do librarians perceive the impact of their collaborations with faculty?
2. How do faculty perceive the impact of their collaborations with librarians?
3. How do librarians and faculty learn from each other during collaborations?

This chapter reviews the qualitative research approach and the narrative inquiry methodology. Facets of the study such as the participants, procedures, data analysis methods are also discussed. Criteria for quality qualitative research is described, including ethical considerations, credibility, transferability, an internal audit, and methods for self-reflexivity and transparency. The chapter concludes with a description of the study’s limitations.

Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research methods are used to examine the context of social phenomenon, and their history is associated with philosophers such as Descartes, Comte, and Kant (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Dilthey’s writing during the 1860s–1870s focused on the importance of understanding and studying the lived experiences of individuals within a specific historic and social context (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Max Weber attempted to bridge the interpretivist and positivist viewpoints and posited that the aim of the social sciences was to understand
meaningful experiences in a subjective manner (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Qualitative research is a blanket term for the various methods used to study natural social life (Saldaña, 2011).

Qualitative research is an approach used to explore human behaviors, experiences, motivations, and perceptions (Clissett, 2008). Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) define qualitative research as “research that involves analyzing and interpreting texts and interviews in order to discover meaningful patterns descriptive of a particular phenomenon” (p. 13). Qualitative techniques are often less structured than quantitative ones and produce large amounts of data from a limited number of research participants (Walker, 1985). Creswell (2012) identified the following as characteristics of the qualitative research process:

- evaluating a problem and developing an understanding of the phenomenon;
- conducting a literature review to justify the problem;
- gathering data from a limited number of participants by collecting the participants’ viewpoints;
- analyzing the data and text to find larger meaning; and
- writing a report using flexible and evaluative methods, including the researchers’ reflexivity and bias.

Genres of qualitative research include, but are not limited to: ethnography, phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and critical inquiry (Saldaña, 2011).

This study utilized narrative inquiry because the purpose of the research was to explore the perceptions of the participants as they reflected on their experiences with collaboration. Narrative inquiry focuses on participants’ personal stories and allows the researcher the opportunity to capture the subject’s emotions, attitudes, interpretations, and beliefs while also focusing on the interpersonal relationships and group cultures (Holdstein & Gubrium, 2012).
Narrative inquiries are divided into two groups based on Bruner’s (1985) two types of cognition: paradigmatic and narrative, and collected data is used to create explanatory stories (Polkinghorne, 1988). Although “stories” oftentimes relate to fictional writings, the researcher utilized Polkinghorne’s (1995) definition of true life stories (i.e., stories based upon previous events and experiences).

Creswell (2012) identified seven major characteristics that are central to narrative research:

- individual experiences,
- chronology of the experiences,
- collecting individual stories,
- restorying,
- coding for themes,
- context for setting, and
- collaborating with participants.

As the research participants described their attitudes and perceptions of working together, the researcher painted a verbal picture of the impact of collaborations. Narration was used to provide a “sense of immediacy of an event unfolding before the reader’s eyes” (Zeller, 1995, p. 76). During informal conversations with both librarians and faculty, the research has been privy to positive and challenging collaborative experiences as told by members of both groups. In gathering and analyzing these experiences in the study, the intended outcome of utilizing this strategy was achieved through sharing the personal stories of librarians and faculty and developing a blueprint of collaborative methods that can either be utilized in the reader’s home institution.
Reissner (2005) determined that if an individual is interested in learning, then he or she should be willing to listen to stories and share their interpretations. The researcher aimed to accomplish more than gathering the participants’ stories, as the purpose if the study was to gather knowledge and give meaning to the events through “exploratory, open-ended conversations, prioritizing holistic understanding situated in lived experience” (Trahar, 2009 p. 5). The researcher has observed through conversations with librarians and faculty that both groups have vivid perceptions of the effectiveness of collaborating with each other. Adams, Gaffney, and Lynn (2016) utilized narrative inquiry in a similar study to understand the “unique stories of how the collaborations began and were sustained” (p. 700). With the utilization of narrative inquiry, the researcher gained a holistic understanding of the participants’ experiences by allowing them to share their stories in their responses to open-ended questions during semi structured interviews.

When individuals create meaning from their experiences, they organize those encounters into stories (McCance, McKenna, & Boore, 2001). Trahar (2009) posited that it is hard to know the stories research participants want to tell, so she invited the study participants to share stories that they found meaningful without the guidance of interview questions. The researcher provided more structure during the interviews to ensure the conversations flowed, but the concept of allowing the participant to guide the conversation may result in a more genuine account of the participant’s experiences.

The researcher utilized an interview protocol as a method to structure the interviews and a tool to take notes (Creswell, 2012). Semi structured interviews provided structure with flexibility and allowed the researcher to change the order or the way the questions were phrased (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). As mentioned above, although the researcher intended to maintain
flexible, semi structured interviews, tools such as an interview protocol with a few open-ended questions helped to keep the conversations on track.

One-on-one interviews were audio recorded to obtain a verbatim record of the interview (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). The recordings were transcribed and made available to the researcher by text documentation. The researcher also collected documents from the participants including emails, Power Point presentations, handouts, and other forms of documentation (Creswell, 2012).

Analysis of the data is commonly achieved by organizing and transcribing the data to obtain a sense of the material and then coding the data to obtain description and themes (Creswell, 2012). The software program NVivo assisted the researcher during the coding process (Creswell, 2012). After the coding process, the researcher utilized notes and journal entries to create a detailed description of the interview settings. Themes were determined based upon the codes, and in conjunction with the description, the researcher represented the findings.

**Participants**

According to McCracken (1988), when deciding on the number of participants in a study, researchers should follow the principle “less is more,” with eight respondents serving as the “perfectly sufficient” number (p. 17). Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research method which lends itself to smaller sample sizes, illustrated by the utilization of four sets of academic librarians and education faculty partner participants in a study by Adams et al. (2016). The researcher utilized a small sample size with ten and conducted in-person interviews similar to the study by Adams et al. (2016).

Purposeful sampling was utilized in this study, as the researcher intentionally selected individuals from a specific site to examine the collaborations between librarians and faculty
(Creswell, 2012). Participants included librarians and faculty who had collaborated on a project and were currently employed in the same Central New York region as the researcher. Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003) suggested that researchers sample locations to determine if the individuals within the organization meet the selection criteria prior to deciding on the research site. The researcher gauged interest by contacting specific community colleges whose staff directories listed at least 10 full-time librarians. In a study of relationship building among faculty and subject specialists at Ohio State University, the research team invited nine librarians to participate in the interview process, and the seven librarians who accepted provided the researchers with the faculty with whom they had collaborated. Five of those faculty members accepted the invitation to participate (Díaz & Mandernach, 2017). The researcher gathered participants utilizing a similar model, while aiming to achieve a balanced sample, such as age, gender, employment activity, years of service, and area of specialization within the college setting (Ritchie et al., 2003). The researcher gathered demographic information such as years of employment, position title, subject specialties, and additional characteristics when the participants were identified. Table 1 shows study sites and participants.
Table 1

*Study Sites and Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Employee Status</th>
<th>Years of Service at Current Institution</th>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Years of Collaborative Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Sue, Sam</td>
<td>16, 14</td>
<td>Midsize, 2-year community college</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Diana, Selina</td>
<td>3, 7</td>
<td>4-year, state university</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>Patty, Lucy</td>
<td>7, 30</td>
<td>Private research university</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 4</td>
<td>Amelia, Dylan</td>
<td>3, 6</td>
<td>Small, 2-year community college</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 5</td>
<td>Heather, Calder</td>
<td>5, 19</td>
<td>4-year, STEM institution</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

Once the participants were identified, their narrative stories obtained during one-on-one interviews served as data for this research study. The narrative inquiry methodology influenced the research questions, data collection, and analysis of the data. Details about the data collection and analysis procedures are described in more depth below.

**Data Collection**

The data for this narrative inquiry study was obtained once institutional review board approval was granted. The researcher provided participants with consent forms and collected the
signed forms prior to beginning the interviews. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant and their organization, which protected their anonymity (Creswell, 2012).

Five pairs from multiple institutions participated in this study. Purposeful sampling matched the intent of the study, as sampling occurred at the organizational and individual levels prior to the selection of the site and participants. Creswell (2012) posited it is better to select a few participants or sites in a qualitative study to obtain an in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon.

Semistructured interviews were conducted one-on-one in each participant’s office. When there was no mutually convenient time for the participant and researcher to meet in person, they held a telephone interview. The interviews were recorded using voice recording software on a cell phone, and the researcher took brief handwritten notes when permitted by the participants. The interviews spanned approximately one hour.

The interview questions were open ended and were asked according to the semistructured interview protocol. Although the researcher had specific questions to ask the participants, the interviews were flexible, allowing the researcher to adjust the sequence or phrasing of the questions (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). During the interviews, probing questions were asked to elicit more information from the participants (Creswell, 2012). After the interviews, the participants were thanked, assured of the confidentiality of their conversations, and asked if they would like a summary of the study’s results (Creswell, 2012).

The researcher maintained a journal during the research study, which provided the opportunity to take more detailed notes during the interview process. The researcher also collected e-mail and other types of correspondence that the participants had exchanged. Other
documentation was collected such as presentations, or projects that the participants completed to further illustrate their collaboration efforts.

**Data Analysis**

This study utilized narrative analysis to examine the experiences and perceptions of the research participants. Riessman described narrative analysis as the identification of “the basic story which is being told, focusing on the way an account or narrative is constructed, the intention of the teller and the nature of the audience as well as the meaning of the story or ‘plot’” as cited in (Spencer, Ritchie, & O’Connor, 2003, p. 200). In telling stories, individuals make sense of events which have occurred in their lives; therefore, the goal of narrative analysis is to preserve the participant’s experience or determine cultural narratives which individuals share (McAlpine, 2016).

Creswell (2012) identified six steps commonly used when analyzing qualitative data, which includes organizing and transcribing the data. The researcher developed a table to help organize the research materials. The narratives and supplemental documentation were kept in individual files for each participant, and duplicate copies were made of all forms of data (Creswell, 2012).

The interviews were transcribed utilizing a paid service. Once the researcher received the transcription, the data was read, and an initial hand analysis of the narratives occurred. During a hand analysis, the research read the data, marked it by hand, and used color coding to mark specific parts of the text (Creswell, 2012). During the initial read of the transcripts, the researcher identified the intricacies of the conversations, including pauses and laughter. After the initial hand analysis, the researcher organized the data using a table or spreadsheet in a Microsoft Word document.
General procedures for using computer software programs when analyzing qualitative data include selecting a program which has storing and organization features, assigning codes, and searching the data. When coding, labels are provided to blocks of text throughout the entire document. Next, similar codes should be identified and matched, with the code labels collapsed into a few broad themes or categories (Creswell, 2012). The data in this study consisted of mostly narratives, so codes were created from the participants’ verbatim words using in vivo codes. This method allowed the researcher to identify the similarities or variances in the participants’ language and terms (Spencer et al., 2003). As similarities and differences were identified, a second level of analysis was conducted to determine patterns of shared meaning (McAlpine, 2016).

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical standards were sustained throughout the entire research process (Creswell, 2012). The researcher gained informed consent from the participants and provided them with information detailing the purpose of the study and how the data would be used (Ritchie et al., 2003). The researcher considered procedural, situational, culturally specific, relational, and exiting ethics throughout the study to maintain good qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). Procedural ethics refer to actions prescribed by the organization’s governing body, such as the institutional review board. Anonymity and confidentiality methods were made clear to the participants, and some details were changed to disguise the participants’ identities (Ritchie et al., 2003). Procedural ethics includes an adherence to participants’ rights, as well as securing personal documents and data by locking materials in a drawer and password protecting digital data. Transcripts and documents were not labelled in a way that could display personal information or compromise anonymity (Ritchie et al., 2003).
Situational ethics refer to specific circumstances or situations that arise during fieldwork. The researcher reflected upon research methods and the data that was shared to determine if it would cause harm and if it was worth exposing (Tracy, 2010). Researchers should not give advice or place judgment upon the participants’ decisions other than to express empathy (Ritchie et al., 2003). Relational ethics refer to the respect the researcher should show to others, and the of role relationships and maintaining a strong moral compass during the research process. Lastly, Tracey (2010) identified the ethical considerations the researcher should maintain after the data collection process has been completed, specifically regarding how researchers leave the site and share the results. The researcher practiced procedural, situational, culturally specific, relational, and exiting ethics to ensure ethical considerations throughout the study.

Credibility

Credibility addresses the trustworthiness, reliability, and plausibility of the research findings (Tracy, 2010). Activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation can increase the probability that the research findings are credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement means the researcher remains at the site for a prolonged time period and serves as a validity procedure and an opportunity for the researcher to build the participants trust (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During persistent observation, the researcher identified elements most relevant to the research problem and focused on them in depth; however, to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher must be able to describe the identification process in detail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Member checking is a technique used to establish credibility by providing the data and the researcher’s interpretations to the participants so that they can confirm the validity of the narrative (Creswell & Miller, 2000). During this process, the participants may be asked if the
themes make sense and if the report is accurate, allowing the participants to add credibility to the data and final narrative (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Trustworthiness is gained when researchers show the data were ethically collected, analyzed, and reported, and conducting member checking can increase the researcher’s trustworthiness (Carlson, 2010). Member checking serves several purposes including:

- provides the opportunity to assess what the participant intended to share,
- gives the participant the chance to correct errors or adjust incorrect interpretations of their words,
- allows the participant the opportunity to add additional information,
- serves as an account or summary of the participants responses, and
- provides the participant a chance to assess the quality of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researcher provided all participants the opportunity to member check by including the procedures in the consent form, as individuals may be encouraged to participate in the study if they have the opportunity become more involved in the research process (Carlson, 2010).

**Transferability**

The intent of this study was to share and make meaning of the participants’ stories by producing findings that could be applied outside of the study’s setting (Malterud, 2001). Transferability will be achieved when readers consider the story as one that overlaps with their own experiences, and they can transfer the research into action in their personal settings (Tracy, 2010). The study was conducted in the college and university setting, but the findings are applicable to other organizations where employees participate in collaborations.
Thick description is an important method for achieving credibility (Tracy, 2010). Through thick description, the research described the participants, setting, and themes of the study in rich detail (Creswell & Miller, 2000). When a researcher relates the participants’ story using as much detail as possible, the reader is transported into a situation or setting, which helps the reader decide if the findings are applicable to other similar settings or contexts (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Internal Audit

The researcher maintained an internal audit of the interview and research process. The audit trail provides the reader insight into the main stages of the research process, including the research design and fieldwork methods (White, Woodfield, & Ritchie, 2003). Halpern created audit trail categories which include: raw data; data reduction and analysis products, which include field notes; data reconstruction and synthesis products, including the structure of categories and themes; process notes; materials relating to intentions and dispositions; and instrument development information, which includes forms, schedules, and surveys (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Self-Reflexivity and Transparency

Reflexivity is a procedure wherein researchers self-disclose their beliefs, assumptions, and biases that might shape the research study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Researcher reflexivity is a practice for goodness that serves as an example of the researcher’s sincerity (Tracy, 2010). In this section, the researcher has described her own bias of the topic, including a plan to manage potential bias.

Malterud (2001) suggested that researchers begin the process of reflexivity by identifying preconceptions and representing previous professional experiences. The researcher has a long
history with libraries: she has been employed as a full-time librarian for approximately 10 years and has worked in libraries in various capacities for approximately two decades. The researcher has had experience working at Ivy League and private research universities as a librarian and is currently employed as an associate professor/librarian in a community college in New York. During her time as a librarian the researcher has had the opportunity to interact and collaborate with various faculty members. Many of these relationships formed during library instruction visits, when the faculty member brought their students to the library to learn about its resources. Some collaborations also took place as a result from committee work, service to the campus during an event, or while assisting a faculty member in their own library research.

Although the researcher has collaborated with numerous faculty members in her current institution, she assumed that many of the faculty have not yet considered working with librarians. The researcher believes the faculty’s use of the library directly influences some students’ exposure to the library’s resources, because the researcher has observed during library instruction classes that she provides that many students would not enter the library unless instructed to do so by their professor. The researcher can also attest that collaborations between librarians and faculty benefit the institution in addition to providing students and faculty with instruction on using library books and databases; however, if librarians are solely viewed as the staff members who organize the books, collaborative opportunities for campus-wide initiatives will be few and far between.

As a librarian who also currently holds status as a faculty member, the researcher has had the unique opportunity to participate in meetings and conversations that she was not privy to as a librarian staff member in other institutions. The researcher still experiences the divide as a faculty member who does not teach, and she believes faculty may still be unaware of the
contributions and knowledge base of librarians. The researcher’s personal bias stems from her experiences with attempting to collaborate with faculty and her unique viewpoint of a librarian who is also a faculty member. Addressing the researcher’s biases and previous experiences are crucial, as the researcher should not confuse her personal knowledge with the data provided by the research participants (Malterud, 2001).

The researcher maintained a journal documenting a log of the decisions made, as well as the researcher’s emotions and feelings during the fieldwork process (Sparks & Smith, 2012). Research suggests that journaling will raise self-awareness as the researcher engages in constant self-dialogue, which can lead to more complex and emotionally engaged storytelling. Engaging in narrative analysis requires the researcher to avoid getting too close or becoming too distant; however, the researcher can empathize with the participant and remain engaged as an active listener (Sparks & Smith, 2012).

During the interview process, the researcher sought to remain neutral and avoided responding in a favorable or adverse manner to the participants’ responses (Legard et al., 2003). Additional methods the researcher used during the interview process to turn assumptions or comments into questions included:

- Never assume what the participant is trying to say. Instead, turn the assumption into a question.
- Refrain from commenting on an answer by saying something like “that’s interesting.”
- Refrain from summarizing the participant’s answer, and ask a question for more clarification if necessary.
- Refrain from finishing off the participant’s answer.
- Avoid extraneous remarks such as “right” or “okay” (Legard et al., 2003).
Although the researcher has experience as a librarian and faculty member, she acknowledges that her interpretation is one of many, and she does not hold her report in higher regard than the interpretations of the reader, participants, and other researchers (Creswell, 2012).

**Limitations**

Choosing a limited number of participants through purposeful sampling is a common method for acquiring qualitative material; however, the study’s findings may not be transferrable to larger population groups (Malterud, 2001). Additionally, a specific area in New York state served as the research site. Part-time librarians, part-time faculty, and administrators were not included in this study, but subsequent research can be done to obtain the experiences of these individuals.
Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to understand how ongoing collaborations are developed and maintained within college librarian and faculty pairs. As the literature indicated, librarians have continued to struggle when developing and maintaining collaborations with faculty in their institutions. Therefore, this qualitative research study examined the factors that contributed to ongoing collaborations in five institutions of higher education. For the purpose of this study, librarians with and without faculty status were labeled “librarians” and faculty were labeled “faculty.” This chapter provides narrative data collected through interviews with librarian–faculty pairs who have worked together on multiple projects within the last 2 years. This study was guided by the following main research question:

How are collaborations developed and maintained between college librarians and faculty pairs?

Subquestions used in this study included:

1. How do librarians perceive the impact of their collaborations with faculty?
2. How do faculty perceive the impact of their collaborations with librarians?
3. How do librarians and faculty learn from each other during collaborations?

The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the origins of the collaborations between the librarian–faculty pairs. Narrative stories of specific collaborative experiences between the librarian–faculty pairs are explored. The final section presents the recurring themes identified in the narratives, including quotes from the participants’ interviews.

**Overview of Collaboration Origins**

Five librarian–faculty pairs participated in this study, with four of the five pairs working in the state university system of higher education in the central New York region. The four
institutions within the state university system included: two community colleges, a 4-year state university, and a science based 4-year doctoral granting institution. The fifth institution was a private research university with multiple campus libraries. The participants in this study represented a variety of professional and academic backgrounds, with some librarians serving as generalists and others working with faculty in specific departments such as creative writing and chemistry. The following section provides a descriptive analysis of each college library and faculty pair.

**Sue and Sam**

This collaborative partnership began approximately three years prior to the study between two colleagues who had both been employed at a midsize 2-year community college for over 14 years. The initial descriptive analysis revealed similar recollections of how their collaboration was established, as they had focused on programming and facilitating special events in the library and across campus. Their narratives continued to describe how both initially felt the advantages of this partnership and how they continued to develop it overtime. It seemed evident in each of their descriptions that they mutually respected their different knowledge-based roles.

Sue was drawn to Sam’s willingness to try new ideas and her repeated desire to partner with the library as the opportunities arose. Sam explained that she often considered involving Sue and other librarians into her events and programming when she said:

> Well, if I want to plan an event or if I’m working on a committee, I want to go to the library first if I want to do something and get something done. If I want to plan the new event, I’m going to the library to see who wants to work on the event.

When asked to share an example of a meaningful collaboration, both Sue and Sam described their experience working together on campus Common Read events. For the Common Read
program, a committee chooses a book that the campus focuses on for an academic year, building curriculum and programming special events around this single piece of literature. The librarians at the college consistently hosted special events that coincided with campus initiatives and looked for opportunities to collaborate with other faculty and staff on campus.

Sue stated her decision to collaborate with Sam on the Common Read event stemmed from an escape room presentation she attended at a conference that she wanted to recreate at the community college library. Sam was the chair of the Common Read committee at the time, so Sue reached out to her to see if she would like to partner on an event that would be held in the library. Sue described how the escape room event tied into the campus Common Read, and she and Sam reached out to other faculty on campus for additional collaborators. Both Sue and Sam found the collaboration meaningful because the process from conception to completion was successful, and they reached their anticipated goals.

**Amelia and Dylan**

This collaborative partnership began approximately three years ago with two colleagues who had also both been working at small 2-year community college in the central New York area for 3 to 6 years. The partnership began during the librarian’s first year at the institution, which was similar to another pair at a 4-year institution. During the college’s reaccreditation process, the committee recommended an increase in information literacy across the curriculum. Amelia’s efforts to address this included teaching and assessing library instruction sessions; therefore, she primarily collaborated with faculty members such as Dylan when she taught library instructional sessions. They hoped their ongoing collaborations would inspire faculty across campus to take advantage of librarians’ expertise and increase their participation in information literacy classes held in the library.
When considering his partnership with Amelia and the library, Dylan referred to his membership of the Library Advisory Committee, which was in the beginning stages of working on several campus-wide initiatives focused on information literacy and research skills within disciplines. His efforts to increase information literacy skills in his English 101 course included collaborating with Amelia, as he stated:

So, this librarian and I were new faculty at around the same time, and she suggested that we do a more kind of in-depth collaboration where instead of I bring in whatever assignment I have developed in advance, that we sit down together and build an assignment collaboratively. So, she brings her insights as a librarian. I bring my insights as an English professor. And we create something that asks students to sort of exercise those two skill sets at the same time, so a sort of compositional critical thinking, but also information, literacy, research skills.

Amelia visited Dylan’s class three times a semester, and the pair worked together to develop a research assignment. Creating the assignment was a collaborative experience for Amelia and Dylan as they agreed that although the students would be able to choose their own topic, which was important to Dylan, they would use a specific database that Amelia recommended, which encompassed a variety of topics. When asked if other departments were considering collaborating with Amelia or other librarians to increase information literacy instruction, Dylan stated:

We’re not sure, to be honest. That’s one of the things the librarian and I are thinking about working on, is maybe going to some of the division and giving a presentation. But it’s tricky, because it’s not our curriculum, so we’re sort of just in the beginning stages of thinking about how we would present this to other areas in college.
Dylan stated he would be in favor of having the 1-credit Library 102 course be required for all students. He and Amelia were also thinking beyond Library 102 and English 101. They were thinking about how to more consistently introduce research and information literacy to all students during their time at the college. They planned to begin sharing their experiences with others on campus as a possible model for other English faculty who were considering revising or revamping the research component of their English 101 courses.

Diana and Selina

This collaborative partnership began approximately three years prior to the study with two colleagues at a 4-year state university. Both participants had been at their institution for 7 years or less. Both participants reported the collaborative relationship started during the first year of the librarian’s start at the university. When speaking about the origination of her ongoing relationship with Selina, Diana stated:

The first thing that I worked with Selina was: I went to a department meeting of creative writing and kind of put myself out there and talked about stuff I could do with them and then she was the one who had the idea of what she wanted my help with.

Diana and Selina have collaborated on projects such as facilitating events for Banned Books Week as well as showcasing student work in the library. Diana had also assisted Selina with her personal research needs which included finding books and articles from different libraries. Selina applauded Diana’s efforts to reach out to university departments to offer help and stated: “If she had not come to our creative writing department meeting, I wouldn’t have thought I’m gonna talk to her about screening my students’ film for my Pages to Production event.”
Selina described the origins of their collaboration as a result of Diana’s outreach efforts where she attended department meetings and asked how she could help. Selina described her first interaction with Diana as follows:

She came to a staff meeting and this was something really smart that she did. She went and visited, I believe anyone who was willing to have her come to a staff meeting. Creative writing, we have our own meeting separate from the larger English department. She came to our staff meeting and there were about six of us there. She said, "I'm new. I'm here to help you in any way that I can. Just let me know what you want." Now, I always jump on that when somebody says that. I think I talked with her a few days later or something because one of the things I'd had a collaboration where my students wrote these short scripts and then they were filmed by the production class and I wanted to have a big screening.

While describing their first Pages to Production collaboration, Selina stated:

She's just a great source because I know that I can always go to her and she can find me a space and I love that and then she promotes it and puts it up at the entrance. Fantastic. No one had ever done that before. That was great. That was the first collaboration.

During this Pages to Production event, Diana and Selina worked together to host a screening event for films written, directed, and produced by students. After the screening event, Diana placed a monitor in the front of the library so the films would be displayed on a loop for several months. Selina found the collaboration successful as she stated:

It was fantastic because the kids who wrote the films, the kids who directed and produced the films, they could tell their friends, "Hey, let's go to the library." They were there at
the front and sometimes they might have to wait awhile until it got to their film. But that didn't matter, they were watching them. It was an added thing at the library.

Diana and Selina shared a second example of a meaningful collaboration when they planned events for Banned Books Week on campus. During this week, the librarians and faculty members in the English and creative writing departments organized various activities students could engage in outside of the library focusing on books that had been banned over the years. The combined efforts of the librarian and faculty created a successful event as approximately 180 students participated in the activities. Selina appreciated Diana’s efforts and stated:

She always gets my input. I help her tweak it, we go back and forth, but it's really all her and I'm just tweaking up stuff to make it whatever it needs to be. It's been great, great working with her and we're [going to] continue doing that. On our own, when I did that event the first year, it was okay, but it didn't have the same; it wasn't as profound an event as doing it with the library. Diana is just fantastic with that.

**Patty and Lucy**

This collaborative partnership began 6 years before the study between two colleagues at a private research university and was the longest partnership of the pairs of participants in the study and the only partnership in a private research institution. Unlike the previous pairs described, this pair had a significant difference in their tenure at this institution, although they both were relatively established with 7 plus years. The faculty member was also an administrator and had been with the private research institution for 3 decades and her narrative was very definitive on the value of these collaborations. Both participants reported on the connection between their partnership and the fact this was a research institution.
Patty’s efforts to develop a rapport with faculty resulted in her meaningful collaborations with Lucy, a faculty member in the institution’s language institute. Although Patty interacted with many faculty members across campus, her experiences with Lucy stood out as meaningful and important to share in this study. Throughout the years, library instruction sessions had served as the root of their collaborative relationship.

Lucy’s work with Patty and her international students began with Lucy’s library liaison duties with the language institute. Patty stated that her colleagues and students would work with any librarian assigned to collaborate with the language institute, but she was appreciative of Lucy’s efforts to cater her instruction sessions to the specific population of students who may have needed extra help with understanding how to find and cite research articles. When considering Patty’s rapport with the faculty and students, Lucy stated it could be hard to find the right fit with librarians, as the institute experienced working with a librarian who wasn’t used to tailoring her vocabulary choices or her rate of speech when speaking to the students. Lucy found that Patty seemed to understand some of the particulars of the institute’s population and had a natural sensitivity to working with international students.

Patty’s proclivity towards building relationships with the institute’s students and staff was evident as she organized a book signing event to celebrate the documentation of the international students’ experiences into a published book. The idea for this collaboration took place over a cup of coffee, as Lucy described:

I happened to be having coffee with [Patty]. I just offhand mentioned this project to her, kind of what I just said to you more or less. She said, “Oh, we should have a party. We should have a launch when the book is really done.” I thought it was just an offhanded comment. I didn’t know she was serious. I think this was in June. Then in July, I hear
from my director that she had met with him and this other, the other person, the other professor we were collaborating with. The idea was gaining traction. We did have a book launch.

While working with Patty on the event, Lucy stated that the experience made her thirtieth work anniversary feel “more like a 30-year anniversary somehow.” The working relationship between the pair had morphed into a friendship that Patty and Lucy valued and both hoped would continue to develop.

**Heather and Calder**

This collaborative pair had worked together for approximately six years, which was also the duration of the librarian’s tenure at the institution. These participants were the only ones in the study who were employed at a STEM-focused institution; however, their college was a member of the same state and university system as three of the other librarian–faculty pairs. Both members of this collaborative pair had at least 10 years of experience in their field, and they had primarily worked together in the classroom during library instruction classes. The librarian, Heather, served as the liaison to a number of departments in her institution, including chemistry, environmental resources engineering, and environmental science, and had shared a meaningful collaborative experience with Calder, a faculty member in the chemistry department.

Calder purposefully initiated a collaboration with Heather because he realized students needed librarian instruction in the beginning of their academic careers. Calder explained his reasoning behind working with Heather in his careers skills course:

Our students, they need to write and they need to write research proposals as undergraduate students. And they also need to write papers from a chemistry point of view. They need to use library resources to search for articles. What we used to do is we
used to say, "Go and find these resources." And what happened was students were unable to do that. And even though there is a library course that does this, it occurs a year before we ask them to do anything. And so, we realized the best thing to do is when we ask them to write the paper, we should involve the librarian at that point. And so we have a very much focused librarian collaboration that basically comes into my class and teaches them how to do researching and finding literature and information for that specific class.

Heather’s integration into Calder’s career skills course included a visit halfway through the semester and she taught during two class periods. Calder stated:

She gets to do whatever she wants during those periods. She has assignments during those periods, she grades those assignments, and that all becomes part of the whole class grade of individual students’ grades.

The pair had collaborated in this capacity for three to four years and continued to develop the partnership each semester. Calder stated that it started out with the librarian coming in to teach something, such as a literary search technique. Although that method was effective the first year, they realized it would be better to have specific assignments that were librarian based. Initially, it was one; then it became three assignments, and the students attended two sessions with Heather instead of one.

Heather and Calder attended a chemical education conference and presented on their collaboration. Heather stated, “It was great, because they had a whole symposium part of the conference that was just about library instruction and integrating information literacy into the chemistry curriculum.” The organizers of the symposium were librarians, and the American Chemical Society approached the pair about publishing a book of the presentations. Heather and Calder converted their presentation into a chapter, which was included in the book.
Codes and Themes

This study was intended to explore how ongoing meaningful relationships between librarians and faculty are developed and sustained. Qualitative research served as the data collection method in this study, and the participants’ experiences were obtained through semistructured narrative interviews. Creswell (2012) stated that narrative researchers retell the participants’ stories and analyze the stories through themes, which are commonly presented after retelling the story.

In Vivo coding was utilized as the first-cycle coding method in this study, and the participants’ actual words were collated to determine themes. Creswell (2012) suggested that every line in a manuscript not be assigned a code, but explained that utilizing lean coding allows the researcher to only assign a few codes during the first time reading a manuscript. While determining In Vivo codes during the first-cycle coding, the researcher applied Creswell’s (2012) approach to transcript coding and wrote handwritten notes and codes in the margins of each transcript. Codes were written on the left side and ideas and emerging themes were kept on the right side of the margins. Boxes were placed around key words or codes, and brackets were drawn around broader ideas or longer quotes that the researcher wanted to include in the research study. The researcher created a table listing the codes, ideas, and potential themes by participant, and implemented second-cycle coding utilizing pattern coding.

Saldaña (2011) defined pattern coding as a way of gathering summaries identified through first-cycle coding into a smaller number of themes or categories. Saldaña (2011) posited that “pattern coding is appropriate for examining social networks and patterns of human relationships” (p. 236). Pattern coding was utilized in this study because it aligns with Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory through which researchers examine human intelligence
and experiences by observing their interactions within their social environments. While examining the In Vivo codes identified during first-cycle coding, the researcher collected similar codes to determine commonalities in the data.

The qualitative data analysis software NVivo was utilized to gather passages of interview text into separate nodes or preliminary themes, which were identified during the pattern coding process. Saldaña (2011) noted that several pattern codes can develop during second-cycle analysis, and many patterns codes are illustrated in the form of metaphors such as “dwindling efforts” and “interactive glue” (p. 239). Saldaña (2011) considered pattern codes as hunches and posited that some will work as a major theme to analyze and develop, while some will not work out.

Creswell (2012) identified several types of themes including: ordinary themes, unexpected themes, hard-to-classify themes, and major and minor themes. The researcher evaluated the data from the 10 interviews to gather multiple perspectives, which “provide several viewpoints from different individuals and sources of data as evidence for a theme” (Creswell, 2012, p. 250). The researcher identified 185 first-cycle In Vivo codes and highlighted several ordinary or expected themes and phrases, which were repeated amongst the participants. These included words and phrases such as “value,” “partnerships,” and “buy-in.” The patterns identified during second-cycle coding uncovered four major themes in the data. Minor or secondary themes were also identified under the major themes.

**Findings**

As previously mentioned, the researcher applied In Vivo codes during the first cycle of coding and found the study participants repeated words and phrases across all 10 interviews. The researcher focused on the commonalities found in the data, as many of the participants
shared similar observations of the impact and measure of success during collaborations. The three major themes uncovered in the data included: perceptions of librarians and faculty of themselves and each other, reaching out and working together, and perceived success.

**Contrary perceptions of librarians and faculty.** Results from the data were revealed as participants described characteristics of their departmental colleagues and collaborative partners. Although some faculty participants were reluctant to speak for all faculty, their responses were quite similar to the other faculty and librarian participants. The responses from the librarians were also parallel and described a shared experience of trying to work with faculty with various levels of success.

**Librarians’ perceptions of librarianship.** Librarians held either the Master of Library Science or Master of Library and Information Science degree, thereby sharing the same types of courses and learning experiences. The librarian participants described librarians as “helpful,” “supportive,” and “persistent.” This persistence was revealed when all four librarian participants stated they constantly try to connect and reach out to their faculty colleagues. Working with others is inherent in librarianship as Sue stated: “It’s a basic part of our job. It’s an expectation that we are going to collaborate and be seeking out those relationships with our fellow faculty. It’s a general expectation of the positions we all have.” However, as Diana pointed out during her interview, although all librarians share the same advanced degree and many positions include collaborative duties, many library science students are not taught how to develop collaborative relationships in school.

The concept of “support” was referred to by all four librarians when they discussed their desire to help faculty and students accomplish their goals. Amelia stated she continued to work with her faculty partner because she valued him and was “happy to keep supporting his and his
students’ work.” When asked how her department supported her work with faculty, Patty stated that although they had separate liaison areas, wherein they focused on specific academic departments in their organizations, librarians supported each other when there were intersections. She provided an example of her work with international students who fell into the STEM field and her work with the STEM librarian, explaining that by “combining forces so the other librarian understands what I do and vice versa and help to introduce each other to those students that maybe she wouldn’t have been able to see otherwise.” Sue explained librarians in her department encouraged each other to be on committees and supported each other by encouraging their librarian colleagues to share and explore ideas. Sue also stated that being supportive was “in our job descriptions, through personally encouraging each other, and just in the structure of our department. We have it built in.”

Although most of the librarian participants felt being supportive was built into the culture of librarianship, Diana described some librarians as uninterested in collaborating. When asked how librarians approached initiating and working with faculty during collaborations, she said: “That’s so hard. I really think it varies depending on the person. I think there’s a lot of personalities that affect how people approach being a liaison. Some people are more outgoing than others.” Patty reiterated Diana’s viewpoints when she stated that it was important that librarians have social skills to be able to successfully work with others.

Maintaining outgoing and persistent personalities had positively affected the quality and number of collaborations between the librarian participants and their faculty partners. All four librarians stated they constantly reached out to faculty and academic departments on their campuses as a reminder of their availability to collaborate. Patty was motivated to build relationships and rapport with her faculty partners by getting to know them on a personal level.
Amelia and Diana admitted they both needed to increase their efforts when reaching out to their faculty partners. Sue felt outreach was inherent to librarianship and stated: “Our work day, our whole place on this campus is constantly, naturally, outreach and reaching out.”

**Faculty perceptions of themselves.** Most of the faculty participants were hesitant to speak on behalf of all faculty members; however, they all acknowledged that the silo structure made it difficult to collaborate with others. Sam stated the organizational structure was not as strong as it could be for collaborations. Although she was a frequent collaborator across campus, she found herself juggling various job duties and feeling overwhelmed. She posited that librarians have more time and means to focus on collaborations than faculty.

When asked if his departmental colleagues supported his collaborations with librarians, Calder stated they were not interested in the collaborations and, to his knowledge, he was the only faculty member in his department who was actively partnering with a librarian. He stated that the academic environment was insular and there was a lack of impetus to collaborate within the educational system. Calder, Sam, and Selina all mentioned the challenges of the faculty workload, and Calder stated collaborations were not encouraged because of the time and effort required to make them successful.

Proprietary feelings over class time and curriculum were also identified as factors faced by faculty when considering working with librarians. Although Dylan and Calder dedicated more than one class period when their librarian partners could work with their students, they both acknowledged the hesitation their faculty colleagues exhibited when asked to dedicate the same time to librarians in their classes. Dylan explained why faculty are territorial when considering collaborating with librarians when he stated:
I think faculty can be very protective of their courses and their assignments, and so I think there would be some resistance to that kind of collaboration where you are not just handing an assignment to the librarian, but the librarian is helping to build that assignment. There is also a kind of skittishness about that kind of collaboration that touches so closely on what happens in the classroom.

Although Selina consistently sought out others to collaborate with, she stated that the insular nature of faculty caused them to stay close to their departments and not venture outside to work with others. When considering working with librarians, Selina stated that faculty “just don’t bother to ask for their help. I don’t think professors in the creative field think that students are going to go to the library, which I think is a shame.” Like Sam, Selina felt that faculty duties limited their availability to collaborate, but she acknowledged that librarians were essential partners who helped lighten their load when working on events or projects across campus.

Librarian and faculty perceptions of each other. The librarian participants used words such as “valued,” “supportive,” “receptive,” and “busy” when describing their faculty colleagues. Although librarians found that working with their faculty partners was beneficial, they acknowledged issues such as a lack of faculty and academic department interest. Most of the librarian participants suggested that faculty were so focused on their students, departments, and personal scholarship they did not remember librarians were available to assist them and their students. The librarians agreed with their faculty partners who stated that faculty were usually busy and had numerous job duties that made collaborating difficult. Most of the librarian participants used the word “silo” when describing their interactions with faculty and their desire to break through the silos to collaborate more consistently.
Librarians and faculty participants stated that faculty who did utilize library services took what they needed and left, as mentioned by professors Sam and Dylan and librarian Heather. Dylan suggested that faculty act like squirrels, wherein they “run up to the library and very quickly exchange something and then they run away again.” Librarians Sue, Amelia, and Patty saw faculty as a group of people who did their own thing in their specific environments. Amelia stated that faculty may or may not notice librarians and felt faculty moved with their own purpose:

I don’t know that this is the norm necessarily, but faculty are not actively antagonistic to the library. They are not bothered by the library, but they have so much on their plate that making it a part of what they do requires a little extra effort.

Diana compared faculty to cats, stating:

When they work with you, they’ll be really great and then sometimes they just forget you exist. It’s not on purpose, they just have a ton of stuff going on, and it’s not like we’re always on the front of their mind. A lot of the time, they don’t remember about us or don’t remember to talk to us, but then when you actually link up with them and end up working together, then it’s a really great experience and something really good comes of it.

Common words the faculty participants used to describe their librarian partners included: “flexible,” “eager,” “helpful,” “excited,” and “interested.” Although the four faculty members stated they had found librarians to be good collaborative partners, Lucy and Calder both used the word “stereotype” when speaking of how librarians were viewed by faculty and their organizations. Lucy stated: “I think people may stereotypically think, ‘Oh librarians. They just help you get information and help you do research and point you in the right direction.’” Calder
considered librarians as people who were always eager to do something and stated that every time he’d initiated projects with librarians, they had been helpful and active collaborators. He stated that eagerness is a broad generalization and a stereotype, but it had been his experience when working with librarians. He indicated that “librarians are interested in service. They actually like helping people and scientists don’t.” Sam concurred with Calder’s viewpoints on the helpfulness of librarians, stating that she felt librarians were “encouraging” and “consistent” and that they “model” how to conduct successful collaborations. Although most of the participants described librarians as “helpful” and “excited” collaborators, another characteristic assigned to librarians included “cautious.” Dylan stated that librarians were “very careful about not overstepping what the instructors would see as their territory.”

All the librarian and faculty participants used similar terminology to describe their specific profession and their collaborative partners. The term “silo” was repeated as a hurdle both groups faced when attempting to collaborate. Although librarians saw themselves as a group who continuously reached out, some faculty did not see their efforts, such as Calder who mentioned that librarians “rock,” but that faculty had no idea of what librarians do and they needed to do a little better in their advertising and marketing. He also felt that no one articulated what librarians do behind the scenes, and faculty had no clue of the variety of resources available in the library. Amelia and Dylan intended to advertise their collaborative partnership to address the issue previously posited by Calder, and they believed that sharing their experiences and success stories would influence other faculty across their institution to embark on similar collaborative partnerships.

**Reaching out and working together.** Collaborative partnerships were developed maintained through open communication, shared goals, equal contributions, and relationship
building. Both librarians and their faculty partners exhibited these qualities while working together, and most of the participants acknowledged librarians consistently reached out and initiated collaborations. The librarians felt outreach was inherent in their profession; however, their perceptions on the frequency and levels of effort they put into outreach varied. Table 2 shows representative feelings and attitudes about reaching out among the participating librarians.

**Table 2**

**Representative Quotes From Librarians About Reaching Out**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>We librarians meet to talk about instruction, and I think we want to do a little more in reaching out to faculty, but we all get excited when we get into a new class or work with someone new.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>I think one thing that I don’t do well enough here, and I’d like to get more established, is a semester-long plan for reaching out and communicating with faculty members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patty</td>
<td>So, I’ve been working with our STEM librarian because she reaches a lot of those students. I reach out to a lot as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Occasionally, special projects come up either initiated by a faculty member or something that I’ve reached out to them to do, or if I’m running a library event and I’m trying to bring them on board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>We’re constantly reaching out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>Supporting faculty is kind of built into the way things are structured in our department, and then we’re reaching out in different ways regularly as a department to try to encourage that too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>So, a lot of the time I feel like I don’t have the time and energy to devote to reaching out to the faculty more, going to more of their department meetings, forming those relationships, and figuring out what it is they need.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Open communication.** Most of the participants stated that they communicated with others in their departments daily and with their collaborative partners at least two to three times
per academic semester. While discussing their methods of reaching out to faculty, Amelia and Diana acknowledged they needed to increase her levels of communication with their faculty partners. Diana stated that although she made some efforts to reach out to faculty, she admitted that she thought some librarians reach out to faculty more than she does and were in constant communication with the faculty they work with. She said it was difficult for her to keep up high levels of communication because she had several job duties and failed to think about reaching out and communicating. Amelia posited that her delayed responses to Dylan’s communication might have deterred him from wanting to work with her. She stated:

Dylan is so good and communicating and very responsive, and I sometimes wonder if my being a couple of days behind him makes him feel like his class was an afterthought to me, or that I don’t really have time to work with him. I don’t want those kinds of perceptions to cloud how he feels about our collaboration.

Amelia stated she intended to be more proactive in communication efforts with Dylan and planned to use their collaborative relationship as a springboard for starting conversations with other faculty members he worked with to potentially develop other collaborations.

Many of the pairs communicated shortly after the collaborations to discuss how they perceived the impact of the event or library instruction class. The participants also referred to meeting in the summer to either revise previous collaborations or to solidify plans for the next academic year. Librarian and faculty participants agreed that getting on the same page and determining goals helped to maintain the quality of their collaborations.

**Shared goals and equal contributors.** When asked how they would define meaningful collaborations, concepts such as “working together,” “creating something together,” “build something new,” and “end goals” were mentioned. Additional concepts such as “same level,”
“value,” and “equality” were also repeated throughout the participants’ interviews. As indicated in Table 3, librarians and faculty most frequently described meaningful collaborations as partnerships where both parties developed shared goals and served as equal contributors.

Table 3

Representative Quotes Regarding Shared Goals and Equality During Collaborations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patty</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Collaborations are meaningful when both parties are able to be involved, so it’s not just one-sided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I think we have a shared vision of what we want the student experience to be, and I think that’s what fuels our willingness to keep trying when something doesn’t work out, because the design is something we both had a hand in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I think collaborations are most meaningful when both, or however number in the collaboration have things to contribute and someone doesn’t feel like they’re taking on the burden of the load and everyone’s got a specialty or unique perspective they’re bringing to that collaboration and the load.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Collaborations are effective when each person brings their strengths and their interests to the table, and they make something happen that combines all of that, and nobody’s strengths or interests get sacrificed in interest of the other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylan</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>We were really able to come together with a set of common goals and then some goals that were different and figure out, how do we bring this all together without it turning into a Frankenstein’s creature?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calder</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Where both are leaders in how the assignment is made or how things are assessed, but it has to come from both sides so that not one person is in charge and the other person is diminutive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calder</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>We’re basically on equal footing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The librarian and faculty participants suggested that working towards common goals contributed to the success of initiatives such as cofacilitating an event or teaching information
literacy during more than one class session. Sue stated that collaborations are effective when
“you’re working together for a common goal that you all believe in.” Sue and Sam’s
collaborations have spanned several years, and they both credited their willingness to experiment
and learn as their key to success.

Relationship building. Several of the participants credited the relationships they had
developed with their collaborative partner over the years as the reason they continued to work
together. Patty stated that she and Lucy had worked together in the classroom for years and had
gotten to know each other more in that venue. She stated that, “in order to be successful, you
have to maintain a constant relationship with that person. Even if it’s just casually, like an
informal coffee here or there.” When asked what suggestions she had for other librarians who
want to begin a collaboration with a faculty member, but aren’t sure where to start, she suggested
that talking to faculty members and getting to know them may eventually develop into a
collaboration. She continued on to say: “Again, it has to be something that’s really genuine and
not just coming out of the blue, and I think collaborations, in order to be successful, it’s about
relationship building too.”

The participants utilized several methods to engage their faculty partners while
developing their relationships. Patty referred to meeting with her faculty partner Lucy at a coffee
shop. Diana stated she attended the department meetings and retreats of the academic
departments where she served as a liaison, and she said she had tried to form individual
relationships with as many faculty members as possible. She stated she had also done “weird
things to get their attention,” such as giving everyone in one of the academic departments a
Valentine’s Day card with a piece of chocolate. She shared another story where she went to the
English department to remind them of the services she could provide, wearing two hats to
illustrate her dual roles as their department liaison and the learning technology librarian. She admitted that her out-of-the-box outreach methods fit in with her personality and she knew her department embraced her efforts because of the relationships that she had cultivated over the years.

Positive relationships between faculty and librarian pairs add value and authenticity to collaborations. Amelia stated that the collaborative process she continued to develop with Dylan made her feel valued as he took her thoughts and suggestions into consideration as they created assignments together. Amelia and Dylan were still relatively new full-time members of their institutions, and Amelia suggested she had a different perspective because she “has not been enculturated either by the institution or by this librarian idea of not being able to be one with faculty. My first collaborative experience has been empowering and affirming in the expectation I have of what a librarian and faculty relationship and collaboration could be.”

**Challenges.** Every participant mentioned lack of time and human resources as obstacles to successful collaborations. Librarians also mentioned a lack of understanding by their faculty colleagues and organizations as additional issues they faced. This lack of understanding was a product of the culture of collaboration in academia, which both librarian and faculty participants referred to as an additional hindrance to working together.

**Finding time and resources.** A lack of time and staffing was an issue repeated numerous times throughout the interviews. The librarians particularly focused on the issue, with many stating they were stretched thin with multiple job duties, and although collaborations were important and vital to librarianship, they expressed having difficulties finding time to conduct quality collaborations with others across campus. Sue stated that inhibitors to successful collaborations included:
The silos, faculty, all of us not having enough time, even though we feel it’s important, not having the time. And not having the staff. I mean if you’re severely understaffed, it doesn’t matter how valuable you think something is, you’re not going to be able to make a lot of progress on it.

Diana and Patty also listed time and resources as issues they faced as librarians in their organizations, where the lack of people caused everyone’s workloads to increase. Amelia cited time constraints as an inhibitor to success and stated although she would like to develop the library instruction and assessment program, she currently felt stretched thin as she taught most of the information literacy classes at her institution. She stated: “I think Dylan and I both invested a lot of time designing and redesigning materials, and that does take time. I think time constraints are problematic and a lot of times that’s because of short staffing.”

Faculty members were also cognizant of issues of time and short staffing. In working with Amelia, Dylan recognized the benefits of library instruction and intended to promote information literacy sessions to his faculty colleagues. He stated that promoting the collaborations more widely was problematic because Amelia was just one librarian, so if more faculty took on that kind of work, then there would be more work for Amelia to do. He suggested he would like to see a second instructional librarian hired so that “everyone would be doing very intense collaborations with their courses and librarians.”

Professors Sam and Calder also identified the lack of time as a challenge and referred to their teaching loads as deterrents to collaborating with librarians. Sam stated that she felt there was time and space in the library to collaborate that she would not necessarily have in the classroom if she was teaching a full load or teaching an overload at 18 credits. She said: “I feel like the juggling starts to get overwhelming, so it is great to have librarians ground you in these
meaningful events that we can host on campus.” Calder stated that faculty had percentages of their workday that was allotted to specific tasks that left little time for collaborations. He expounded on the issue of time, saying:

- We have certain percentages where we have to teach, percentage we have to do research, percentage we have to do outreach or an amount of service. If you want to do a project that’s in teaching, that’s on top of that percentage; you can’t take away from other percentages. There’s no time to do those types of collaborations with librarians because they all have these research-specific collaborations.

_Navigating academe’s culture of collaboration in academia._ When asked how their department supported their work with their collaborative partner, the responses supported the networking and outgoing characteristics of librarians and the individualistic and silo portrayal of faculty. All of the librarians indicated that their library departments supported their collaborations with faculty and encouraged their staff to increase their outreach efforts across campus. Diana stated her library director had been actively pushing for more meaningful liaison work and collaborations, and she had been trying to improve the librarians outreach efforts. Sue was her library department’s chair for approximately six years and explained that collaboration was an expectation of librarians and built into the structure of the library department at her organization. Amelia addressed her department’s service model when she stated: “There’s also a real culture in our department, that I think is rollover of the past director, who said: ‘Whatever the faculty member wants we’ll do.’ So, if faculty come in and need something that is kind of our first concern, if there isn’t a student in front of us.” Heather described the excitement her librarian colleagues shared when they collaborated with new faculty or additional departments across campus.
When asked how their organization supported their work with faculty, the librarian responses became less unified as some recognized their organization’s efforts to encourage collaborations, while others had less obvious experiences of support in their institutions. Both Sue and Amelia cited their faculty status as a method through which their organizations showed support to librarians in academia. Both librarians suggested their faculty status provided them with access to faculty-only committees, and they had been able to have more meaningful conversations and collaborations with their faculty colleagues. Heather also held faculty status on her campus and stated librarians may receive more respect when they are also faculty members. She suggested the campus culture seemed to offer some level of credibility and respect to librarians and stated it might be “trickier in collaborating in classes if we weren’t faculty.”

Patty mentioned the collaborative nature of her institution and stated the university had recently embarked on a mission to bring everyone together, when she said:

We are made up of a lot of different schools, colleges, and departments that can be really siloing. So, our upward administration really wants to try to still create one culture of everyone who comes to this institution. You are part of one big thing. You’re not just part of this department.

Diana expressed a contrasting experience to Patty’s when she said: “I don’t know that the college as a whole pays a ton of attention to the library.” Like Amelia, Diana’s library director had tried to promote the library more to college administration by discussing the things the librarians were doing and to let them know what was going on in the library. She stated that, although administration did not stand in their way, she did not know if they cared either way.
She explained: “I think they’re more interested in what faculty are doing than in what we’re
doing, so if we have a meaningful collaboration, they might care about it from a faculty end.”

The faculty members shared similar experiences when asked how their departments and
organizations supported their work with librarians, as most of the participants reflected that they
had experienced some departmental support with limited organizational support. Lucy described
a unique situation where the culture of her department had morphed into a more collaborative
environment, where faculty and instructors had been allotted more autonomy when working with
others on campus rather than having to follow directives being initiated from a top-down
structure. Several participants referred to needing organizational support when initiating
collaborations with others across campus but would prefer that the support not be directed down
and controlled from the administration. Table 4 shows representative feelings and attitudes of
faculty regarding their departmental and organizational cultures.
Table 4

**Representative Quotes From Faculty Regarding Departmental and Organizational Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>In terms of the department supporting my specific work with events that might not, there might not be a support per se there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>I think the structural piece that supports this collaboration is maybe not as strong as it could be, and I think that within any large organization that they lose sight of the goal because they can't always get the structure right. I guess the organization does support it in some ways, but in other ways they missed the mark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selina</td>
<td>Oh yeah, the organization supports our work with others, because they always send out emails saying do this, do that. But I’m saying, does anybody do it? I don’t know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Our current director and our previous director were supportive of collaborations with librarians, I mean, it’s been a long relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylan</td>
<td>There’s certainly no resistance to our collaborations from administration, and it would be important to have institutional support at higher levels, so maybe the ideas are coming from us but then to have some institutional structures built into this that can make it more consistent from course to course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calder</td>
<td>My department is not really interested in my collaborations with librarians to be completely honest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Librarian and faculty participants stated they would like to see their organizations facilitate a collaborative environment by encouraging collaborations across departments. Some suggested that facilitating communication and creating opportunities for employees to work together would begin to change the culture of singular departments working towards their own goals. Although the participants reiterated that they did not want all initiatives dictated from the top down, they welcomed support of administration in the form of time to collaborate and resources to make the collaborations successful.
**Perceptions of success.** As the researcher progressed with interviewing the librarian and faculty participants, she discovered they had varied viewpoints on what made their collaborations successful. For some, completing a project from beginning to end equated success, but for others, revising and trying an event or library instruction class that was not previously successful indicated success. Accomplishing goals, increasing ongoing collaborations, and sharing knowledge were markers of success to the participants, and their perceptions of their experiences are explored in this final section.

**Goals accomplished.** The librarian and faculty participants who collaborated in the classroom indicated increased student information literacy skills when researching and writing research papers would accomplish the goal of that collaboration. Many of the librarians posited that if they could help the students and faculty be successful, then their goals were achieved as well. The participants also considered the conception and completion of a successful department or campus event as an achievement, as individuals from two or more departments worked together to create something the students, faculty, and staff could enjoy.

Participants stated that implementing a project or event and accomplishing what the facilitators were hoping to do determined a successful outcome. Sue stated:

> I’ve been in a lot of collaborations where we start, and we have all this great stuff going on, and then we don’t do anything. Sometimes that’s okay, that was the point to just brainstorm ideas, but oftentimes you want to get somewhere and sometimes you don’t.

Sue’s faculty partner, Sam, reiterated her viewpoints and stated that brainstorming an idea, deciding it is a good project to work on, planning out the project, and then working on it constituted an accomplishment of the organizer’s goals. Diana referred to successful collaborations as those that went beyond the typical liaison work and related to a special interest
or class that the faculty member was teaching and something that they were excited about. Patty shared similar perceptions of successful collaborations as Diana and stated, “partnerships where both parties are generally interested and invested in it, and where there’s just so much energy and excitement around it” are more meaningful. Heather posited that her collaborations with Calder had always been successful because they had the same goals. She stated that every year success looked a little different, but she felt their collaboration had been successful when it was evident that the students learned something.

Several the participants described the process of determining joint goals as a give-and-take process. Amelia and Dylan shared their experience working on a class together and their methods of understanding each other’s goals for what they wanted the students to get out of the library instruction session. Amelia conveyed the hesitance she experienced when Dylan provided her with a class assignment that required her to help the students find library resources. After working together to come to a common understanding and goal, Dylan continued to allow the students to choose the topic they were most interested in researching while Amelia settled on teaching the students one library database that would encompass many of the topics the students had chosen to research.

Sue shared a similar experience while working on the campus Common Read event with Sam. Sue stated she thought it was important to Sam that the students read the book, so she was trying to come up with activities that would encourage them to read at least a page or a chapter. As the pair worked together more, she realized having the students read from the book was not Sam’s goal, instead it was about having discussions about themes that came from the book whether they read the book or not. She stated that if the students were talking or engaged in themes from the book that year, then Sam saw it as a success. Realizing Sam’s goals allowed
Sue to create events and collaborate more effectively with Sam and the Common Read committee.

*Increasing collaborations.* All the librarian–faculty pairs had collaborated on an ongoing basis and had seen positive results from their partnerships. The participants had worked together for years and all stated they hoped to continue collaborating in the future. As shown in Table 5, the librarian–faculty pairs referred to factors such as successful completion and increased student success as contributors to increasing ongoing collaborations.

Table 5

*Representative Quotes from Librarians and Faculty about Ongoing Collaborations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I found that if I bring an idea to faculty and it leads somewhere once, and we work together to make it successful, that usually leads to more collaborations down the road because of that initial one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I definitely try to give everyone credit and promote that we’re working together, and I hope that that brings in more people interested in doing collaborations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>I think we’re just going to continue to evolve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I think continuing to be really supportive will help continue our collaboration. And I have had two other faculty members approach me and say, &quot;I'd like to work with you in a collaboration like the one you've done with Dylan.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylan</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>I think what's been really helpful for us, in terms of continuing the one we're doing now, is that it has a structure to it, so it has these three class sessions. So, it's easy to continue because it has a structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Doing what the faculty wants has helped continue collaborations, but also coming at it as more of a faculty member who has expertise in teaching this stuff, and thinking about what we want students to achieve during library instruction classes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the participants considered the impact of their collaborations with their partner, the librarians stated they gained faculty allies who tried to help librarians become more embedded into the fabric of the organization. Librarian and faculty pairs were actively working together to share their experiences with others in order to promote collaborations between the two groups. Heather and Calder presented the details of their collaboration at a science conference and converted that presentation into a book chapter that was published by the conference organizers. Heather stated:

I would love to figure out how to take that story to the rest of the faculty on campus and say: ‘This is something we have done. Is this something that we could do in other departments, like in engineering, or wherever else?’

Amelia and Dylan planned to visit various departments in their institutions to discuss their collaborative efforts and to explore how librarian–faculty collaborations could be beneficial in other courses and disciplines. Dylan would like to see librarian–faculty collaborations focused on information literacy embraced on an institutional level, particularly because increasing information literacy across the curriculum was included as a recommendation in the institutions last reaccreditation review. Dylan stated:

The tricky thing is we want to sort of get people thinking about this, but we don’t have the authority to impose it on anyone. So, really all we can do is give presentations and say this was great, and you might consider trying this too, because it's been really enriching for the students and for me, too.

**Sharing expertise.** During the interviews, many of the librarian–faculty pairs stated their collaborations were successful because both individuals brought their own expertise to the partnerships. Some of the librarians mentioned they appreciated it when faculty members
reached out to collaborate as it indicated their expertise as researchers was being recognized by their colleagues. For example, Amelia stated that she and Dylan discussed several versions of the assignment they were developing, and he continuously asked for her feedback. When asked how it made her feel when Dylan shared the revisions to the assignment, they developed together she stated: “It makes me feel awesome and valued. I have had other experiences where communicating my own expertise on what I know the students struggle with to a faculty member hasn’t been as well received as that.” Sue stated that it was important that faculty saw librarians as valued partners in helping students become successful in information literacy initiatives, as librarians had expertise in teaching that skill. She said she would like to see faculty reach out to librarians to work together to help students become successful, whether it was working on assignments together or being infused throughout the curriculum.

When asked what it was about her experience collaborating with Calder that had influenced her decision to continue collaborating with him, Heather stated:

I think it helps that he wants me there, and that recognition that I have some expertise as a library faculty member. I think we have the same goals for the students. I think that is what makes it successful, we want to see the students do well.

Calder stated that librarians already had infrastructures in place to help faculty and students, and he explained that learning about librarians’ job duties opened a new world to him as a faculty member.

**Learning from each other.** When asked if their knowledge had increased as a result of working with their librarian or faculty partner, all the participants responded in the affirmative. The participants stated that the process of sharing knowledge helped with understanding their partner’s goals and eventually helped the collaborations become successful. As educators, the
participants suggested their predisposition to learning was enhanced while working with other educators. Learning together was described as a major aspect of collaborations, and the participants each described how they developed as they shared knowledge with their partner. Table 6 shows representative feelings and attitudes regarding the degree to which the participants learned from each other during collaboration.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I would say one thing I’ve learned because her focus is reading and the value of reading and not that, I mean I’m a librarian so obviously I see great value in reading too, but I like her approach to books, in that and stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Now I'm more inclined to talk about events in the library than I did before, so I talk about the library; I say go to the library, and I didn't always remind them or tell him about events in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I've definitely learned more about the department that I'm supporting and what is going on in the classes that I'm supporting, which is also really useful, which helps me work better with the students as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selina</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>I've definitely learned more about using the library, definitely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patty</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I would say yes, my knowledge has changed after working with Lucy. It would have to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>There are some research tips that maybe I wasn't aware of myself. It was nice that I didn't have to use the brain cells to teach myself. It was nice just to have that kind of plug in, extra support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I also have some better insights into the kinds of things faculty struggle with when teaching students information literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylan</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>So, what the librarian and I are starting to talk about infusing information literacy into the institutional structures and that's sort of enriched my own understanding of my course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>I’ve had to learn a little bit more about the resources, and I've read more about assignments, or how to teach things because I felt like I needed to do a really good job, because they were really excited for me to be there. So yes, I think I did push myself to learn as much as I could to be really good at it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calder</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Librarians are no longer stamping books but are information technology-specific people as well as physical objects. Getting an understanding of the idea that now libraries contain physical objects as well as electronic resources is just a great thing for me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

Developing and maintaining ongoing collaborations takes the willingness to commit time and effort into working towards a joint goal. The participants in this study collaborated by planning events and integrating information literacy into classrooms, which are two major aspects of how librarians interact with others on campus. The librarian and faculty participants acknowledged the benefits of working together and all stated they planned to continue their relationships in the future.

The perceptions held by the participants regarding their librarian and faculty colleagues indicated the librarian’s tendency towards outreach and the faculty member’s predilection towards remaining closer to their department and focusing on their courses and personal research. The faculty participants represented the percentage of individuals who were willing to take the time to plan events or open their classrooms to librarian collaborators. These variances in personalities as depicted by the participants illustrated the lack of a collaborative culture in academia; however, the librarian and faculty participants served as examples of individuals who were determined to work together toward a common end.

In addition to accomplishing their joint goals, the participants determined that factors such as increasing collaborations, sharing expertise, and learning from each other helped to create successful, ongoing collaborations. The librarian–faculty pairs all shared experiences of what they perceived as meaningful collaborations, and the stories told by the participants indicated that working with others outside of their department benefited the entire institution. The participants stated they hoped to develop a culture of collaboration in academia, and the researcher believes the interviews serve as positive examples of how working together can yield more success stories in academia and other professional fields.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

Rising technological and research-based trends in higher education have required academics to collaborate on a more frequent basis within their own institutions and across the globe (Givens et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2010; Zhu, 2015). In order to address these trends, academics have engaged in new types of collaborations, particularly as distance learning and technology have continued to evolve (Buchanan, Luck, & Jones, 2002). Librarians have contributed their technological and research knowledge and expertise by expanding their services and developing new collaborations with faculty within their institutions (Díaz & Mandernach, 2017; Julien & Given, 2003). However, librarians have continued to face challenges when building and maintaining relationships with faculty (Badke, 2005; Douglas & Rabinowitz, 2016; Meulemans & Carr, 2013; Phelps & Campbell, 2011). The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to examine the experiences of librarian–faculty pairs who have collaborated on multiple projects within the last 2 years and to explore the factors the pairs have utilized to develop and maintain their collaborations.

Five librarian–faculty pairs from institutions of higher education in the central New York area participated in this study. The participants were specifically selected because they had frequently participated in collaborations in and out of their institutions. Narrative inquiry was chosen as the methodology for this study for its focus on the participants’ personal stories, interpersonal relationships, and group cultures (Holdstein & Gubrium, 2012). Through utilization of the narrative inquiry methodology, the researcher was able to obtain the participants’ stories of the meaningful collaborations they experienced when working with their librarian or faculty partner. Semistructured interviews allowed the researcher the flexibility to
participate more meaningfully in the interviews and to more accurately represent the participants’ perceptions of their experiences.

The findings of this study aligned with Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural framework, in which he theorized that common goals can be accomplished through interactions between people (Boreham & Morgan, 2004). The findings of this study revealed that the factors influencing ongoing collaborations between librarians and faculty include: (a) the culture of higher education, (b) perceptions of librarians and faculty, (c) learning by sharing knowledge and expertise, and (d) perceived success.

Findings

This chapter presents the findings, followed by a discussion of the implications of practice, wherein the researcher will provide recommendations for how librarians, faculty, and administrators can better facilitate the development of ongoing meaningful collaborations. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

The Culture of Higher Education Impacts the Creation of Multidisciplinary Collaborations

Through his sociocultural framework, Vygotsky’s (1978) revealed the vital role social interactions play when individuals from various backgrounds work and learn together, and he posited that knowledge is constructed from the social environment (Ryder & Yamagata-Lynch, 2013). Researcher’s utilized this sociocultural theory to support the creation of professional development activities for preservice and practicing teachers in two K–12 schools that participated in a special 4-year technology project (Whipp, Eckman, & van den Kieboom, 2005). As the participants of the study engaged in various workshops and group activities, a culture of
collaboration developed and continued to evolve throughout the duration of the 4-year project, illustrating the influence of sociocultural theory (Whipp et al., 2005).

However, in institutions of higher education, academics have found it difficult to work together on interdisciplinary scholarship, as collaborators from different disciplines have been challenged to find a common framework or vocabulary for working on a shared problem of interest (Plank, Feldon, Sherman, & Elliot, 2011). Colleges and universities have faced dilemmas as “creating a responsive culture of engagement can be difficult because promotion and tenure systems do not encourage such activities, and they receive inadequate financial support” (Gahungu & Freeman, 2015, p. 150). The findings support the literature as four of the five librarian–faculty pairs referred to the lack of “impetus” or institutional support when they attempted to collaborate with others outside of their departments. The participants cited factors such as heavy teaching loads, an overwhelming number of daily duties, and a lack of time and resources as issues that affected their ability to collaborate.

As the study participants cited issues that arose when they perceived a lack of institutional support, the consensus of the group remained that working with their partner or with others in departments outside of their own yielded more successful outcomes to their projects than if they had not collaborated. The participants stated they wanted their campus administrators to provide support without “dictating from the top-down.” Smart and Hamm (1993) recommended that “campus leaders may want to consider modifications to prevailing campus culture in an effort to enhance institutional performance” (p. 104).

All 10 of the study participants referred to their institutions’ isolating cultures as a challenge they face when attempting to collaborate. Kezar (2005) sought to address the issues of siloes by examining the research question: “How can colleges and universities move from
bureaucratic structures and siloed disciplinary units to an organizational context that supports collaboration?” The resulting research determined eight organizational features help to create an institutional environment that facilitates collaborative work. The eight features included: a mission that encourages and respects collaboration, the development of networks, integrating new structures, creating rewards and incentives, instilling a sense of priority from employees in senior level positions, working with external groups outside of the institution, relaying positive campus values, and lastly, encouraging learning amongst campus employees (Kezar, 2005).

Organizational structures in higher education have played a crucial role in the perception of autonomy among staff (Zhu, 2015). The findings support this claim, as partners Amelia and Dylan attempted to shift the collaborative culture in their organization by visiting departments to share their stories and described the benefits they have experienced while working together. Similarly, Heather and Calder aimed to share their experience by describing their successful collaborations during a chemistry conference and by composing a book chapter together. Researchers credited faculty collaborations as the catalyst of increased interdisciplinary collaborations and “the heart of strategic planning efforts for the science division at our institution” (Murray, Atkinson, Gilbert, & Kruchten, 2014, p. 50). The findings support this statement, as librarians Patty and Amelia stated they had experienced an increase in opportunities to collaborate within their institutions when their colleagues discovered the benefits of librarian–faculty partnerships.

Perceptions of College Librarians and Faculty Influence the Development and Maintenance of Ongoing Collaborations

Badke (2005) commented that “academic librarians are the Rodney Dangerfield’s of the academic world—they can’t get no respect” (p. 64). Stereotypes, outdated perceptions, and low
levels of respect for librarians’ knowledge in academic disciplines have remained barriers to the
development of collaborations with faculty (Pham & Tanner, 2014). Librarians found faculty
difficult to connect with as they experienced hesitation from faculty to share class time and the
approval to integrate information literacy and library resources into the curriculum (Manuel et
al., 2005). The reported experiences of faculty members Dylan and Calder corroborate the
literature. They both expressed apprehension about collaborating with librarians due to feelings
of proprietorship over their class time and course content. Dylan stated:

I, like a lot of faculty, get very attached to the things that I make. I get very attached to
my course. I get very attached to my assignments. So, I had to adjust and
throw the old out and start with something totally new with Amelia.

Providing service and support to faculty and students is a key charge of librarianship,
while faculty consider service as less important than research or teaching (Walters, 2016).
Librarian and faculty participants similarly referenced the preconceived notions regarding just
what librarians do as deterrents to collaboration. Three of the five faculty participants referred to
the stigma associated with librarianship, and Calder admitted while reflecting on his
collaboration with Heather that “we as faculty have no clue that librarians make research more
accessible in databases because it’s not a book, you’re not checking it out.” The findings
illustrate the difficulties librarians and faculty face when misconceptions arise regarding
individual work roles (Julien & Given, 2003). Faculty member Lucy’s reflections on her work
with librarian Patty coincided with Calder’s statements. She commented: “I think faculty maybe
stereotypically think, ‘Oh, librarians. They just help you get information.’” Faculty member
Selina considered the way librarians are oftentimes viewed by faculty and stated: “Faculty look
at librarians like another species, and they just don’t bother to ask for help. I think it’s a shame
because you can use the library in different ways.”

Yang (2000) explored the viewpoints held by faculty regarding librarians’ roles and
conducted a study to assess faculty members’ needs, expectations, and perceptions regarding the
services provided by librarian liaisons in his institution. Librarian–faculty pair Amelia and
Dylan made similar attempts to assess faculty needs and described their efforts to explain the
benefits of their librarian–faculty collaboration, which focused on increasing students’
information literacy competencies. Dylan stated that although improving information literacy
skills was a charge from the college’s accreditation body, many faculty members continued to
teach the skills themselves rather than reaching out and working together with librarians who are
experts in teaching information literacy.

Faculty member Sam and librarian Heather observed that although faculty do seek out
librarians’ expertise, their interactions are brief and illustrate a one-sided service provided to
faculty instead of a true collaboration. The librarian participants described their efforts to
continuously reach out to collaborate with faculty in their institutions as an ongoing endeavor.
Badke (2005) advised that the increasing amount of literature confirms that effective
collaborations between librarians and faculty is not the norm, but librarians continue attempting
to work together. The librarian and faculty study participants similarly commented on the
hurdles they faced when trying to collaborate, as faculty typically remained close to their
departments and focused on their students and personal research. Diana and Selina reflected on
Diana’s efforts to reach out to Selina’s colleagues by attending a department meeting, and
although Selina observed Diana’s actions were “smart,” she acknowledged the difficulties in
librarians continuously attending academic department meetings due to the lack of availability and time to speak during the meeting.

The librarian and faculty participants acknowledged their partnerships represented a fraction of potential collaborations that could exist between librarians and faculty; however, barriers such as a lack of time, too few resources, and an unwillingness of faculty to collaborate persisted. Doskatsch (2003) suggested that librarians need to let go of preconceptions and practice proactivity instead of negativity to facilitate collaborations with faculty. Librarians have assessed the services they offer to faculty in order to demonstrate their value to students’ education (Douglas & Rabinowitz, 2016). All five of the librarian participants stated they utilized various methods to engage their faculty colleagues such as: approaching them with specific ideas for events or information literacy workshops; remaining in contact and reaching out throughout the academic year; developing personal relationships; and producing scholarship through learning, presenting, and writing together.

Shared Knowledge and Expertise Contributes to Learning and Long-Lasting Multidisciplinary Collaborations

Maintaining a culture wherein teamwork leads to knowledge sharing and learning is critical in institutions of higher education (Buckley, 2012). However, silos exist on many campuses and knowledge is rarely shared across disciplines (Khalil & Shea, 2012). The findings indicate that knowledge sharing and learning occurs across disciplines when individuals make the effort to seek out potential collaborators outside of their specific departments.

Changes in technology and academic environments have expanded the traditional roles of librarians from collecting and organizing information to include developing skills in collaboration and outreach (Zanin-Yost, 2018). Sue and Sam shared their joint excitement
surrounding outreach and event planning and had worked together on large projects for the campus community on multiple occasions. Sue reflected on working with Sam on campus Common Read events and stated that in addition to researching and learning new ways to create campus events, she learned what Sam’s goals and intentions were regarding what she wanted students to take away from participating in their events. Sam commented her knowledge as a faculty member had changed as a result of the collaboration when she stated: “I always encourage my students to go to the library, but now I’m more inclined to talk about events in the library than I did before.”

Long-lasting multidisciplinary collaborations which support teaching and learning increase the role of the library on college campuses (Zanin-Yost, 2018). The four librarian participants who served as academic department liaisons commented that they had learned more about the departments they were supporting and determined how to best to support the curriculum. When reflecting on her classroom collaborations with Calder, librarian Heather stated that her knowledge had developed as she had needed to learn about the resources the students used in the class, so she could help them through the research process. The findings support the literature as students’ success while conducting research has been shown to increase as a result of working with an academic librarian who has expertise in specific academic subjects (Stone & Sternfeld, 2014).

Participants also commented on the importance of recognizing the specific expertise as a librarian or faculty member that contributed to collaborations. Pedagogical opportunities for librarians to share their reference and teaching expertise with students and faculty allows libraries to serve the teaching and learning goals of their entire institution (Otto, 2014). All five of the library participants commented on the importance of their role as teachers in their
institutions, and all five faculty participants voiced similar viewpoints and considered librarians as experts in research and information technology. Collaborative pair Amelia and Dylan’s comments were in sync as they reflected on working together to create an assignment where Amelia would work with Dylan’s students to find academic resources. Amelia commented: “I think the transition from the way we used to do instruction to the way we do it now has been fueled by an idea of librarians having a different expertise than faculty members.” When reflecting on her collaborations with Sam, Sue shared that she appreciates it when librarians are sought out by faculty to collaborate, as she stated:

I hope that faculty see us, the library faculty, as valued partners in the development of information literacy skills, and all those types of things we have expertise in. That we’re working together to be part of helping students be successful in whatever way that is. Whether it’s being infused throughout the curriculum, working on assignments, and that it’s happening across the board.

These findings support the literature, in which researchers have determined learning collaborations are successful when there is a clear understanding for each partner’s “unique expertise and negotiation of mutually shared goals to bring about a quality learning product” (Miller et al., 2010, p. 272).

**Perceived Success Increases Ongoing Collaborations**

Librarians’ influence on student success is demonstrated by measures such as higher grades, increased retention, and employment after graduation (Shreeve & Chelin, 2014). The librarian and faculty participants offered statements that reflected the impact of librarians’ participation in faculty-led events and coursework. For example, librarian–faculty pair Diana and Selina described their initial collaboration of showing student movies in the library and the
development of additional collaborations based on the success of the first partnership. When reflecting on their subsequent collaboration celebrating Banned Books Week, Diana and Selina both equated the success of the event to the expertise each person brought to the partnership. Selina recalled her experience collaborating with Diana on the Banned Books Event in the following way:

In the last 2 years that I've done it with the library, with Diana the librarian, I don't need to worry about literally half the work. Likewise, she doesn't have to worry about getting students. She was getting maybe 10 people. I'm bringing her all the bodies. I'm bringing all the booths and stuff. She's likewise bringing me those major craft things, the photo booth, the buttons, the bookmarks. I think it's a good example of how to collaborate. It's win–win for both of us.

Librarian and faculty members who have collaborated in the classroom have voiced similar stories of success. The findings support the literature as team teaching and librarian–faculty collaborations in the classroom have increased learning and academic success among the collaborative pairs as well as the students in the classroom (Cruz & Geist, 2019; Mezick & Hiris, 2016; Pritchard, 2010; Shreeve & Chelin, 2014). Collaborative pair Amelia and Dylan shared similar experiences as new full-time faculty members in their department, and Amelia credited their fresh perspective and willingness to try new methods of teaching together as the key to their success. They discussed the creation of a joint assignment and the challenges and successes they experienced while working together. Faculty member Dylan stated he felt his experience collaborating with Amelia had been very successful from his point of view, and they planned to continue working together while making small improvements and changes each semester. Dylan
also stated they planned on working together on an additional course as he believed the students
in his developmental writing course would also benefit from working one-on-one with Amelia.

Research has shown that successful collaborations between librarians and faculty in the
classroom occurs when the pair continuously discusses the effectiveness of the assignment to
determine if they are both meeting their goals and course objectives (Meth & Florence, 2012).
Many of the participants met in the summer to discuss the collaborations they participated in
during the academic year, and the librarians and faculty both commented on how they enjoyed
getting together to discuss their successes or the methods they had developed to make their
collaborations more successful. The participants stated every collaboration may not have
culminated in improved students’ grades on research papers, or increased numbers during
campus events; however, all participants stated the process of collaborating with their partner
and regrouping afterwards to determine what they could do in the future to reach their intended
goals equated to success in their point of view.

**Summary of Findings**

Interdisciplinary collaborations and scholarship continue to develop in institutions of
higher education, resulting in an increased opportunity for librarians to connect disciplines with
pedagogical expertise and library information literacy and technological resources (Otto, 2014;
Plank et al., 2011). Librarian–faculty pairs are one example of collaborative groups that have
come together to address the shifting culture in academia, demonstrating the viability of
Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural framework and the necessity of working together to produce
knowledge and facilitate learning. These findings illustrate the benefits of collaborating with
individuals in other departments, as all the participant pairs shared multiple stories of successful
collaborations.
Badke (2005) claimed librarians are overlooked or not seen as true faculty although many hold faculty status, and many serve as employees in institutions that have little understanding of their skills, while faculty lack understanding of the work taking place outside of their small areas of interest. The findings indicate librarians continue to feel misunderstood and faculty remain unsure of what librarians do; however, the participants represent the fraction of librarian–faculty pairs who have developed and sustained collaborative relationships for at least 2 years. Many of the participants defined success as increased visits to the library for instruction or events and higher quality student research papers. The participants also indicated the collaborations were worthwhile and provided them the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with a colleague outside of their department.

Collaborations between college librarians and faculty members are crucial for innovation in educational environments (Pham & Tanner, 2014). The participants remarked on their perceptions of support provided by their organizations, with the majority stating they would like to see more time and resources allotted to developing collaborations, although they would prefer the directives come from the ground up, rather than top down. The stories shared by the participants demonstrate the benefits to the librarians and faculty who collaborated as well as the benefits to the students and campus community. After analyzing the narrative data, the researcher has determined the following four findings illustrate how meaningful ongoing collaborations can be developed and sustained between librarian–faculty pairs:

- The culture of higher education encourages or deters college faculty and librarian collaborations.
- Perceptions of college librarians and faculty influences the development and maintenance of ongoing collaborations.
• Sharing knowledge and expertise contributes to learning and long-lasting multidisciplinary collaborations.
• Perceived success increases ongoing collaborations.

**Implications for Practice**

The findings of this study will benefit individuals in various organizations across the globe. The findings sustain Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural framework and support its theory that learning and knowledge sharing occurs when individuals collaborate with others. The findings are applicable to pairs of two or larger groups that are interested in developing collaborations with others. Administrators and senior-level decision makers may also find the following implications for practice useful when encouraging and facilitating teamwork across their institutions.

**Administrative Support**

As higher education continues to move towards a more collaborative environment, the first recommendation of practice is that administrator’s and senior level decision makers give support to employees who want to develop cross departmental collaborations. Participants perceived that higher-level support would help to facilitate collaborations with others; however, they expressed a desire to see support in the form of release time and additional resources, such as more staff and funding. Administrators can create opportunities such as workshops, brown bag lunches, and open forums to encourage conversations amongst their employees around teaching, learning, and scholarship. During these conversations, individuals can learn about the interests of their colleagues and collaborative relationships can develop as a result of these formal or informal discussions.
**Collaborative Opportunities**

The second recommendation is to encourage employees to embrace opportunities to work with others and consider various methods to reach out and develop collaborative partnerships. As the librarian participants indicated, outreach and relationship building are not skills taught in library science school; therefore, individuals must be proactive and creative when initiating cross-departmental collaborations. Suggestions for outreach include:

- Approach the potential collaborative partner with an idea for a specific project or event.
- Attend an event hosted by the library or another department on campus.
- Make connections through attending department meetings or while participating in campus events.
- Promote library resources and information literacy services across campus.
- Encourage collaborations with departmental colleagues by sharing positive collaborative experiences.

**Examination of Perceptions and Preconceptions**

The third implication for practice is that librarians and faculty should examine their perceptions of each other and reconsider outdated preconceptions. The findings indicate stereotypes regarding the role of librarians in institutions of higher education persist, causing a hesitation to work together among potential collaborative partners. Librarian participants also hold perceptions of faculty as individuals who are uninterested in collaborating or unwilling leaving their departments to work with others. Sharing positive collaborative experiences with departmental colleagues is one method to demonstrate the benefits that result from cross-departmental partnerships. Participants emphasized the importance of forming alliances and the benefits of word-of-mouth promotion of successful collaborations. Presenting together inside
and outside of the organization, contributing to scholarship by writing articles and book chapters, and finding new ways to work together outside of the classroom are additional methods collaborative pairs can use to demonstrate ongoing successful partnerships. The findings indicate that participants learn from each other while engaging in collaborations, and the process of sharing knowledge and expertise encourages participants to continue working together.

A Focus on Benefits

The final implication for practice addresses the factors that make collaborations worthwhile and successful. Participants indicated their perceptions of a successful event or experience working together in the classroom directly influenced their desire to work together in the future. The participants stated that meaningful collaborations included factors such as finishing a project or event from beginning to end and any level of student participation in events cosponsored by the library and additional departments on campus. Collaborative partners must determine what they want to achieve as a result of collaborating and agree on a joint goal. Participants stated that collaborations are meaningful when both parties contribute equal efforts and share their skills and knowledge to contribute to a successful event or library instruction class. Both collaborative partners must be committed to fully participating by keeping in constant communication and contributing the necessary resources and time towards accomplishing the goal of the collaboration.

Limitations of the Study

The limited number of 10 participants make this study’s findings nongeneralizable for larger groups; however, the small number of participants chosen through purposeful sampling is common to qualitative studies (Malterud, 2001). The study may have benefitted from including a survey to be distributed more broadly to librarians and faculty to obtain a more accurate
perspective of how many individuals were currently participating in ongoing, cross departmental collaborations in their organizations. This study was also limited to a specific area in central New York. The experiences from librarians and faculty in other areas of the country would contribute to a more accurate description of collaborations in various institutions.

The selection process specifically targeted individuals who the researcher knew were engaged in ongoing collaborations with librarians or faculty colleagues. The participants of the study were also predominately female. Although the researcher purposefully selected individuals from a private university, community college, a public university, and an institution with a specialized focus on the sciences, there are additional types of institutions that were not included in this study due to the purposeful selection process.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Classroom collaborations between librarians and faculty are frequently described in the literature; however, the methods to develop and sustain ongoing relationships require further study. Through the utilization of Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theoretical framework, this study confirms that individuals gain knowledge more effectively in social groups and collaborating with others leads to successful outcomes. This study adds to the knowledge base relating to developing relationships and working together on projects, and the researcher offers recommendations for future research below.

Additional methods of research can be conducted to add breadth and depth to this type of study. For example, conducting a mixed methods study utilizing surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one, semi structured interviews would allow researchers access to more participants. Including additional participants in the sample size would allow individuals from various demographic backgrounds to contribute to the study’s findings. Quantitative data would be an
effective method to present findings with multiple numeric variables, providing researchers access to more generalizable results.

A comparison study could be conducted, wherein collaborations at 4-year colleges and universities are compared to 2-year community colleges. It is unclear if community colleges innately foster more collaborative environments compared to 4-year institutions; therefore the researcher recommends comparing the cultures and collaborative experiences of the two types of institutions utilizing Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theoretical framework. The researcher also recommends that the study be expanded to campus presidents and senior level administrators, as they can provide insight into the historical background and cultures of their organizations.

Lastly, the researcher recommends that the narrative study be replicated in organizations outside of higher education. Learning and knowledge sharing occurs in all organizations, and it would be fruitful to gather collaborative experiences from individuals employed in various fields. Presenting additional stories and experiences of how employees perceive their collaborations and develop relationships will contribute to the literature and add greater insight into how humans learn and share knowledge while working together.
References


*Technology, Pedagogy and Education, 24*(1), 65–79.

doi:10.1080/1475939X.2013.822414
Appendix A
Librarian Email Participation Letter

Subject: Potential Participation in Doctoral Research Study

Hello xxx,

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of the following request. I am currently a doctoral candidate pursuing a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Organizational Leadership at Northeastern University. I am sending this email to seek your assistance and support of my dissertation study. The purpose of my study, titled “Working together: A narrative inquiry study exploring meaningful collaborations between college librarians and faculty,” is to explore the establishment and sustainability of meaningful relationships between college librarians and faculty.

I’d like to meet or speak with you in the near future so that we can discuss the study in detail. If you are interested and available to participate in the study, I am requesting that you provide me with the name of a faculty member you have collaborated with during the last 2 years so they can also participate in study. Please let me know if you are interested in being interviewed for my study. The interviews would be scheduled for one hour at a location of your choosing.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. I have received IRB approval from Northeastern University.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Regards,

Fantasia Thorne-Ortiz
Northeastern University Doctoral Candidate
thorne-ortiz.f@husky.neu.edu
Appendix B
Unsigned Consent Document

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies
Name of Investigator(s): Principal Investigator, Dr. Rashid Mosley, Student Researcher, Fantasia Thorne-Ortiz
Title of Project: Working together: A narrative inquiry study exploring meaningful collaborations between college librarians and faculty

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but I will explain it to you first. You can ask me any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell me if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, I will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

- We are asking you to participate because you have been identified as a librarian or faculty member who has participated in a meaningful collaboration within the last 2 years.
- The purpose of this research is to examine librarian and faculty relationships and explore the differences and similarities between the experiences of 3–5 librarian/faculty pairs.
- If you decide to take part in this study, I will ask you to:
  - Answer questions during an in-person, one-on-one interview.
  - Answer follow-up questions either in person or by telephone after the interview is over if necessary.
- You will be interviewed at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will take about one hour.
- There should not be any risks or discomfort to you.
- There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study. However, the information learned in this study may help librarians, faculty, administration and individuals in other fields understand how meaningful collaborations are established and sustained.
- Your identity as a participant in this study will not be known. A pseudonym will be assigned to you to protect your anonymity.
- After the data from the audio recording has been transcribed, I will delete the recording. Transcriptions will be stored on a hard drive that I will keep locked in a cabinet draw in my home. Handwritten notes will be stored in the same manner.
- No special arrangement will be made for compensation or for payment as a result of your participant in this study.
- Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or you decide to quit,
you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would have otherwise have [as a student, employee, etc].

- It will not cost you anything to participate.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact: Fantasia Thorne-Ortiz at thorne-ortiz.f@husky.neu.edu, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Rashid Mosley at r.mosley@northeastern.edu, the Principal Investigator.

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, Mail Stop: 560-177, 360 Huntington Avenue, Northeastern University, Boston, MA, 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

I agree to take part in this research.

____________________  ___________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part   Date

____________________
Printed name of person above