THIRD SPACE: CREATING A LIBRARY ENVIRONMENT THAT OPENS DOORS FOR COLLABORATION, VALUE, AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

by

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An Abstract

of a research paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Library Science and Information Services in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development University of Central Missouri

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ABSTRACT
The idea of creating third space in a library environment is emerging in the profession of librarianship. Oldenburg calls one's "first place" the home and those that one lives with. The "second place" is the workplace — where people may actually spend most of their time. Third places, then, are "anchors" of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction (Wikipedia). Libraries are competing with bookstores to attract and keep patrons by creating a valuable atmosphere that encourages teacher and librarian collaboration and student achievement. This research problem is a review of literature on the concept of third spaces in libraries. This research draws upon journal articles and blogs from professionals in the library field. The research concluded third space libraries will attract and keep patrons if a welcoming and interesting environment is presented. Furthermore, given a third space in the library, teachers and librarians were more willing to collaborate with each other and students and academic achievement was at a greater level for students.
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May, 2012

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The idea of third space has become a popular buzzword in the world of library science. With the invention of big brand bookstores, librarians have had to reconsider how to attract and keep patrons and how to create an environment that can compete with spaces other than home or work. This research paper explores the need to define what a third space looks like in a library setting and how librarians are creating such spaces. Secondly, once a third space is created, how to create value and acceptance in this setting is described. Researchers such as Skerrett claim that third spaces can become a place of expanded and heightened learning for all involved (70). Librarians want to encourage collaboration with teachers and see student achievement reach greater heights, and many believe third space libraries are a catalyst for such accomplishments and goals.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to review the literature that surrounds the idea of third space libraries. Libraries are competing with bookstores like never before, and librarians are taking on a more business minded approach to running their spaces and keeping their patrons. If library spaces are to attract and keep patrons and encourage collaboration and student achievement, then librarians might consider what library spaces should look like for the twenty-first century learners.
Purpose of the Study

Literature was reviewed to determine how librarians are thinking about and presenting library spaces to their patrons. The purpose of this research paper is to explore the creation of third space libraries. Particular attention was paid to how a third space library is created and the resources need for librarians to attract and keep loyal patrons. The results of this study demonstrated that effective third space libraries make students and staff feel welcomed, encourage collaboration among librarians and teachers, create a sense of value for the library and acceptance among peers, and increase student academic achievement due to the dynamic purposeful learning that is occurring is these spaces.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research and investigated the idea of third space and how it could be created by the librarian and his or her staff. These questions posed an in-depth study of third space and the advantages surrounding this environment for a library and its patrons.

1. Why should a librarian create a third space library?

2. Why should a librarian create a culture of value for the third space library?

3. Is student academic achievement affected by a third space library?
Limitations

The limitations of the study include the limited timeframe available for this study due to deadlines for course completion. There were also limited availability of journal articles and texts from professional individuals because the idea of third space in libraries is a fairly new concept. A range of data was collected, included journals, articles, blogs, and books discussing third space in the library environment for a school setting. This study served as an analysis of the effectiveness of third space libraries in relation to collaboration, student acceptance, and student academic achievement.

Definition of Terms

Collaboration—Collaboration is a trusting, working relationship between two or more equal participants involved in shared thinking, shared planning, and shared creation of innovative integrated instruction” (Montiell-Overall, “A Theoretical,” 32).

Third Space—Oldenburg calls one's "first place" the home and those that one lives with. The "second place" is the workplace — where people may actually spend most of their time. Third places, then, are "anchors" of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction (Wikipedia).

Design of the Study

This research study collected previously published information pertaining to the creation of third space in school libraries and how this encourages collaboration, value, and student academic achievement. No original research was conducted. Rather, existing literature relating to the topic was reviewed for the purpose of this study. At no time was there an effort
to create new research or to examine existing data, privately or publicly held that would
necessitate any type of permission.

Articles were retrieved from the following databases, *Library, Information Science &
Technology Abstracts* and *Library Literature & Information Science Full Text*. Such terms
included “library and third space*,” “third space* and societies,” “collaboration* and
librarians,” and “student academic achievement and libraries.”

**Conclusion**

This study includes three chapters exploring the creation of third space libraries, how
librarians are creating cultures of value and acceptance in third space libraries, collaboration in
third space libraries, and creating a third space library that increases student academic
achievement. Chapter two is a review of the literature. Chapter three consists of answers to
the research questions posed in chapter one and a discussion that includes conclusions and
recommendations.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

School librarians are pushing to make a mental shift, discarding the traditional concept of library space as space for books, transforming library space needs so that it attracts and keeps patrons and increases student and teacher collaboration. The mental shift for librarians stems from the growing competition of big name bookstores trying to replace library spaces with their inviting reading areas and coffee bars. It also stems from librarians and teachers seeing the value in collaboration and seeking an appealing space surrounded by resources where they and their students can meet and push towards greater academic achievement. This mental push describes the new way librarians are thinking about and presenting library spaces to their patrons. This paper will explore the creation of third space libraries, how librarians are creating cultures of value and acceptance in third space libraries, collaboration in third space libraries, and creating a third space library that increases student academic achievement.

Creation of the Third Space Library

This section will explore the definition and idea of third space and how third space libraries attract loyal patrons by creating a welcoming environment. In his Blue Skunk Blog, Doug Johnson explores the term ‘third space’ by examining the ideas of sociologist Ray Oldenburg in his book, A Great Good Place. Doug explains this term ‘third space’ was coined by Oldenburg to describe an area where informal social gatherings take place besides the first place (work) and second place (home). Oldenburg calls one's "first place" the home and those that one lives with. The "second place" is the workplace — where people may actually spend...
most of their time. Third places, then, are "anchors" of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction (Wikipedia).

Third space can exist in almost any facet of society. Teachers might try to create third spaces in the classroom as a safe place for both students and the teacher to critique each other academically and to experience the freedom of self-expression (Schapiro 435). The third space becomes an added resource for the teacher to use. In a classroom third space, the teacher helps students reach new levels of personal growth and exposes them to various forms of cultural differences and social situations while at the same time giving them a space to feel safe and to collaborate together.

The third space can become a place of expanded and heightened learning for all involved (Skerrett 70). For example, elementary school teacher, Ryan Flessner, decided to use the theory of third space as a resource in his classroom. He noticed that many of his students did not know each other and were reluctant to share their thoughts or work together in groups. The comfort level was not present in this traditional classroom setting, and Flessner found himself doing all of the talking with no participation from his students. It was his desire for students to feel comfortable enough in his classroom that they would begin making connections between math in the classroom and how it can relate to real world applications. He worked with fifth grade students to perform a case study in which he hoped to create a third space that his students would adapt to. He encouraged them to share their work and cultural differences in a safe and respectful manner, to develop trust in each other. However, the study results showed that the students were able to enact the third space idea more organically than Flessner ever imagined. The students felt comfortable enough among
themselves to instigate mathematical problem solving in small groups. They formed their own third space in the classroom by bringing in their own cultural and life experiences to share with others in a safe environment to creatively develop problem solving in math groups (Flessner 439). Flessner only had to provide the students with the space to create this environment.

The idea of third space can be extended beyond the classroom walls and into the world of science. It is a concept that finds its niche in many aspects of societies and cultures. In Malawi, scientists are studying sustainability in nature through talks with indigenous tribes. They are creating a third space atmosphere in which tribesmen feel comfortable negotiating and sharing with the student scientists in this area. The scientists have created a third space environment in a building in which the environment beckons the tribesmen to make themselves comfortable. No harsh language or demeaning attitudes are harbored towards the tribesmen, so they feel valued enough to share their opinions. The first space is made up of their cultural identities, the second space is the Western ideas brought to the school about sustainability, and the third space is a physical area for tribesmen and student scientists to negotiate their beliefs and theories. These scientists and tribesmen have created a third space where they come together and collaborate with their topics at hand (Lanier, et. al. 128). Both Oldenburg and Johnson claim that this space is vital for healthy societies to thrive, and Johnson suggests that a “third space” is important for libraries and librarians who wish to stay relevant (Johnson).

**Aesthetics and the Third Space Library**

Librarians embracing the concept of third space are changing the face of the library in order to meet user expectations. James Elmborg explains that libraries fill a traditional role in
our culture of being an absolute space that is powerfully organized, much like a cathedral or temple (345). From the highly systematic ways many libraries are organized to the stereotypical shushing and stifling personalities of many librarians, it has proven to be very difficult for some to make this mental shift towards creating a third space atmosphere in the library. This can make it difficult to prove to the outside user that twenty-first century libraries are not the normal, stale environment many individuals may have grown up in. Elmborg explains that what makes a library efficient can also make users feel controlled. For instance, when users step into many libraries, signage explains who is designated to be in certain areas, and whether or not food, drink or talking is allowed (345). Many librarians use this type of control to encourage a systematic way of how they think users should access the library. Some users thrive on this type of organization and systematic approach. However, librarians are faced with the challenge of changing the atmosphere towards a third space approach, with fewer constraints, due to users’ changing expectations of library space. This is especially true for teen users, according to Kimberly Bolan. She focuses on how teen users have different expectations of how the library space should be used compared to how their parents might have used libraries. Bolan explains that “during the last 10 years, many librarians have transformed their young adult areas into more efficient, innovative, and inspirational spaces” (44). Teen and adults users often need a collaborative space that they can feel connected to both personally and physically.

Additionally, computers and Internet access are vitally important in creating a third space library. This added feature in a library can often be the only life line some students have with the Internet. Providing computers helps students accomplish their needs that might
otherwise go unmet in a different setting. For example, students might have to fill out forms on the Internet—like college and scholarship applications, and many of them do not have Internet access from home or work (Breeding 30). The librarian that creates a welcoming third space takes these factors into consideration when planning to meet student needs and expectations.

With all of these factors in mind, librarians are changing the traditional environment of what libraries have looked like in the past and foraging ahead to what libraries look like for twenty-first century users.

Next, research indicates that once librarians create third spaces, they tend to use aesthetics to attract and keep users. Librarians who have adopted the third space mentality, such as creating welcoming environments that students and teachers would want to inhabit, have not thrown out all of the benefits of how a library is organized. Instead, they have kept the backbone of how a library is traditionally organized and used aesthetics to make the space more appealing to their users. Elmborg explains, for example, how many of the major chain bookstores have capitalized on creating spaces to entice their users to relax and interact with books (339). These bookstores have used lighting, comfortable seating, coffee and food choices, space to socialize with peers, and books to keep their customers returning. Librarians have noticed that today’s students and teachers have come to appreciate a comfortable space for them to enjoy books and each other.

Elmborg pushes the issue that if librarians want to compete with bookstores to keep their clientele coming back to the library, they will create these third spaces that make their users feel welcomed. Library users want to avoid the almost hospital-like feel of some libraries with the fluorescent lights and stark atmosphere, claims Elmborg (339). Users who enjoy
bookstores often enjoy the smells, sights, sounds, and space of them. They like being able to move furniture around, socialize with others about books they are reading, and hold meetings in these spaces. Many students meet at bookstores, instead of libraries because school libraries do not have a third space atmosphere, to study and collaborate on projects.

Paula Heeger explains that teens and students need physical spaces much like the bookstore has to offer. It is apparent that this generation of students has a deep need for socialization, evidenced by their use of virtual social sites like Facebook. Heeger argues that third space options are becoming limited for teen students, and thus it is important for libraries to provide the type of atmospheres teens want to occupy. However, she explains that many libraries have updated their spaces to become a third space for students, but they are still not able to keep their users. These library spaces might attract students in the beginning, but the librarians are not able to keep their customers due to the staff not tolerating this age group of students. Heeger encourages librarians to think about their staff and if they are able to fully support the third space ideas (27). It takes appreciation for this type of space and clientele in order to help it run successfully.

Furthermore, if librarians are using aesthetics to create third spaces and keep users coming back to their libraries, then the discussion turns to how librarians are taking on a more business-minded approach to marketing this product called third space. In his article, Elmborg makes a point of how librarians are consistently told they should run their libraries more like small businesses (339). He realizes that bookstores are librarians’ direct competition and librarians must win this race. Like all good business owners, librarians should market this third space idea to keep their customers coming back for more, he explains
An example of this marketing technique is discussed by Erminia Gallo. She has been a teen services librarian for more than 10 years. She worked at a bookstore for six months before she became a librarian and learned about what it looks like to hook readers in a created space and keep them coming back. Gallo mentions that spaces for displays are what hook readers and make them want to linger. The displays will draw students into a third space area and increase circulation if they are done correctly. For example, interesting displays, Gallo explains, contain humor and creativity and will keep students returning to see what will be next (32). Creating a display of the latest graphic novels to come into the collection might attract that reluctant reader and make him or her return to the library looking for more. Displays that contain holiday themes or new releases by favorite authors will attract students by using high interest materials for the displays.

Furthermore, in regards to the collection and its enticement, the students want to feel successful in finding the material they desire to read. Mardis explains, when students look for material on shelves, the signage should be clear and easy to use, and the librarians should provide the right amount of support finding material instead of hovering over students (ii). A third space library would contain interesting signage to direct students towards the correct call numbers for popular book sections. Students reported wanting to feel independent in their search for finding supportive material for school or personal work (Mardis ii). All these factors come into play when creating a third space that encourages user success and retention.

Overall, aesthetics and friendly staff are what make the third space library different from other libraries. When patrons are able to access movable furniture, when lighting creates a sense of ambiance and warmth, when displays showcase interesting books, and when
computers to access the Internet are available, students will want to come back for more. The third space library is comparable to entering someone’s home that feels warm and inviting and beckons you to kick your feet up and stay awhile. If the host or hostess is hospitable and the environment is enjoyable, people will want to visit often.

Creating a Culture of Value and Acceptance in Third Space Libraries

Library publications have discussed the methodology for creating, marketing, attracting, and keeping students coming to a library. Few, however, discuss how to create a culture that values this third space in libraries. This section will explore how libraries have traditionally held value in cultures, how a library’s collection can create a sense of value, how students identifying with a space can create value, and how acceptance spreads when students find value in a third space library.

Elmborg’s work goes deeper into this idea of third space and culture. Elmborg reflects that cultures create spaces and places that hold value for people. These spaces become valuable based on what that culture deems important, and the space is then managed by these values (343). Focusing on the creation of a meaningful third space, Elmborg recommends that libraries become “socially meaningful institutions with a higher role and calling” (349). Libraries have always held a source of value in societies much like cathedrals did in the medieval Europe. Melvil Dewey predicted the library would be an essential part of every progressive community because it housed the best of mankind’s recorded knowledge (Grossman, 105-106). Thus, the library third space will differ from the bookstore’s third spaces because librarians create the culture of value within their institutions. An enticing and extensive collection is one way librarians create a sense of value for their patrons. A third space library presents itself as a
space where students and teachers feel comfortable and at ease to work and where the librarian is a guide to direct adventures. The third space atmosphere provides a link between the collection and the user with the librarian there to guide the way (Elmborg 346). Learning and projects go as far as the participants can take them when the librarian functions as a guide to all the material in the library. In a third space library, the user will feel able to approach the librarian with questions. This way the librarians bring a human interface to the collection by discussing their favorite reads and helping users find just the right book. By offering the collection to the patrons in this way, librarians are creating a sense of value for the third space library.

Furthermore, the library is a center, the hub of a school, in which students and teachers talk to each other and use the available resources (Lin, Chen, and Chang 342). This brings in the second point of how, when students identify with a space such as a third space library, they create value for the library. Lin, Chen, and Chang mention how third spaces make students feel at home when welcomed by staff and enticed by and comfortable with their surroundings. They believe that students who feel at home will be better motivated and learn more efficiently. Students feel socially welcomed when surrounded by friendly staff willing to help them learn (Lin, Chen, and Chang 343).

No longer can a library be just a place to check out materials; it is a place that students identify with. Mardis has followed the blog reports of researcher Nancy Everhart, 2011/2012 president of the American Association of school Librarians (AASL). Nancy has traveled to many schools and observed students asking the questions, “Is this library my kind of place?” and “Can I be successful here?” (i). When many students first enter a library space, they want to feel
connected to it. They are searching for warmth of space and staff and if the space holds any interest or connection for them. This generation of young people is aware of their carbon footprint, and most feel a sense of responsibility to the environment. If a library environment mimics the students’ belief systems in some way, they are more likely to identify with this space and call it their own. Mardis reports that often students want to see recycling bins, easy access to technology, an area that is free of clutter, and which has comfortable furniture that invites socialization and collaboration for homework or projects (ii). The students are looking for a place to call their own.

Lastly, when students feel they have a place to call their own, such as a third space library, they are more willing to accept those around them into this cultural space of value they have discovered. Students need a safe place in their school to feel welcomed and accepted in order to explore self-development skills (Johnston and Bishop 2). The third space library has become just this place for many students. The more students feel connected to a space personally, the more they are apt to have meaningful learning experiences (3). Students who feel isolated in other school settings, such as sporting venues or other social events, can often find solace and acceptance in a third space library’s inviting atmosphere (4). They can socialize with other students with similar personalities and can develop a sense of acceptance and tolerance for others’ interests. In general, third space libraries can obtain a sense of value and acceptance from students through the collection and the attitudes of the librarians. Students can identify with the space feel accepted into the space and therefore welcome others.
Collaboration in the Third Space Library

Once the third space library is created and valued, and the school culture finds value in this setting, collaboration is the next natural occurrence. This section will explore how the third space library provides a comfortable space for building teacher and librarian relationships which encourage collaboration, how the library can act as a supportive hub for the school, how collaboration can take place between the librarian and the community, and how collaboration creates a positive display of teamwork for students. The library as third space also invites networking among teacher and librarians.

Patricia Montiel-Overall provides a definition of collaboration between teachers and the librarian stating “Collaboration is a trusting, working relationship between two or more equal participants involved in shared thinking, shared planning, and shared creation of innovative integrated instruction” (“A Further Understanding” 32). Before collaboration takes place, generally a minimal relationship must be developed to begin this working partnership. Third space libraries provide a place that invites this type of networking among teachers and librarians to occur by providing a setting where it is comfortable and practical to meet and by hosting resources that are accessible to all users.

Montiel-Overall mentions that trading shared interests and goals is essential in building the trust relationships necessary to work on projects together (“A Theoretical Understanding” 30). She explains that shallow forms of networking in education can begin around the drinking fountain or while waiting in line with students at lunch time, but there a need for deeper partnership (“A Theoretical Understanding” 30). Third space libraries provide a welcoming atmosphere where this deeper connection and higher level thinking and planning can take
place between teacher and librarian. Montiel-Overall explains how several participants mentioned the need for a comfortable, convenient place to meet for collaboration. Having meetings off site often resulted in frustration due to parking and teachers being tired at the end of the day (“A Further Understanding” 45). A third space library provides an ideal setting for this type of collaboration due to the convenience for both teachers and librarians. Montiel-Overall also explains how few educators see the librarian outside of a traditional role. She explains that many educators lack understanding of how a librarian can collaborate with them for curriculum instruction and plan higher-level thinking projects for students (“Further Understanding” 32).

In a case study conducted by Montiel-Overall and colleagues, observations were made over the effect of teacher and librarian collaboration on the science information literacy of Latino students in grades 3-5 (“A Further Understanding,” 34). The teachers and librarians were to put together professional workshops for other educators to attend regarding how to present the science curriculum to Latino students the following year. Data were collected during the collaboration meetings, and the levels of collaboration among teachers and librarians were noted. Montiel-Overall reports that initially teachers did not understand what collaboration meant or what it should look like. The librarians gave several examples of what a typical teacher and librarian collaboration looked like. Many teachers did not know that the librarian’s literacy standards were deeply rooted in core curriculum standards. It took much planning, demonstration, and collaboration for the participants to fully grasp what true collaboration between the teacher and librarian should look like.
Lastly, in order for true collaboration to take place, the teacher and librarian need to be clear about the project and the common goal they are trying to reach (Montiel-Overall, “A Theoretical Understanding” 38). If this goal is not clearly established in the beginning, the collaboration can become frustrating and unfocused, and valuable time from both parties can be lost.

If the atmosphere of a third space library is inviting and welcomes networking, the teacher and librarian can work together to establish clear goals and be successful collaborators in building high-achieving lessons for students. The librarian and classroom teacher work together as a team to vertically integrate information between grade levels and between subjects in order to increase student learning experiences (Purcell 32). An example is when the Common Core Standards being taught in the classroom are extended for deeper learning in the library setting. The result is a rich learning environment that would not exist if the librarian and teacher worked alone in separate learning areas. Pat Hare and Margene Ryberg explain that often teachers feel isolated from adult interaction. The library can serve as a third space setting in which teachers and librarians interact.

The third space library not only provides an excellent environment to support collaboration between teachers and librarian, but it also provides a supportive meeting place for clubs and various advisory boards within the school to meet. As the hub of the building, this third space offers a multifaceted program to the entire school community. For example, librarians might invite others to use the third space in the library to host their monthly book clubs (Price 15). The librarian could set up a schedule for snacks, find bibliographic information on the author of the book of the month, and provide the books. In addition there is no quicker
way to help others feel ownership of the library than to get them thinking and talking about things to implement in the collection and design of the library. A third space librarian invites these discussions to occur in a comfortable setting within the library.

Next, collaboration can be extended and encouraged beyond the school walls and into the community. As mentioned, the library as third space becomes a safe haven for students. The librarian uses his research skills to investigate what type of community exists beyond the school’s walls and extends this community into the library. Johnson and Bishop found that a student will identify with a library space if she feels welcome and is able to identify with how this space reflects her interests and how it pertains to her life. This is only accomplished by examining the community (5). Geographic Information Systems gives the librarians the ability to analyze the demographics that surround their library. Bishop and Johnston mention that this is a tool used by many community developers around the world (5). The information gathered with this research tool is also used to manage collections within the library to further help students identify with this space (Johnston and Bishop 5). If the students have books available that suit their interests and reflect their culture and community, they feel accepted and are more willing to come back to this space due to a feeling of warmth and acceptance. Bishop and Johnson further agree that it is “necessary for teacher librarians to learn about the community and the various environments their students come from” (Johnston and Bishop 6). Students become more engaged in the collection if it reflects their interests and more involved in the programs offered by the library if they know thought has gone into understanding them as a society within the school’s culture.
Patricia Montiel-Overall discusses how teachers teaching in isolated classrooms are becoming a thing of the past. The need for teachers and librarians to work together to create student-centered learning environments is becoming increasingly important (“A Theoretical Understanding” 25). Teachers and the librarian are feeling added pressure to incorporate Common Core Standards into their various teaching environments. The third space library is an ideal setting where this type of teamwork can occur and students can benefit from teachers and librarians working together to plan engaging lessons that teach important information literacy skills. It is a space that encourages academic engagement to its fullest when colleagues come together and are able to share resources from their fields of expertise to benefit student achievement. By and large, the design of the third space library encourages the use of space for collaboration, the creation of ideas, and great learning experiences (Lin, Chen, and Chang, 339).

**Creating a Space that Increases Student Academic Achievement**

Third space libraries encourage user success but also increase student academic achievement. This section will explore how students benefit from third space libraries when shared knowledge between teacher and librarian creates dynamic purposeful planning and learning. It will also explore how students with special needs benefit from a third space library.

In a study from the University of Michigan, researchers looked at various studies representing third space in a traditional classroom setting and its effect on content area literacy. They examined multiple, an exact number was not mentioned in the study, Latino and Anglo students over a five year period in school settings. These researchers observed how students bring different levels of knowledge from different discourse areas of their lives. In
discussing this idea, Moje and colleagues claimed, “Such a third space is important because it provides opportunities for success in traditional school learning while also making space for typically marginalized voices. Indeed, each of the studies...has demonstrated both increased academic engagement and learning gains” (Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, and Collazo 44). The students felt more comfortable when they were able to bring in shared cultural traits with fellow students. The students finally felt they had a voice among others. The researchers concluded that no matter the setting of the third space, whether in a classroom or a library, students benefited due to the shared knowledge they felt comfortable bringing to this type of setting from different discourse areas of their lives (Moje, et. all 67).

Furthermore, in the third space library, teamwork is modeled between teacher and librarian to improve student learning. When teachers and librarians are collaborating, students benefit by seeing adults consult, compromise, make decisions, have conflicts, and then resolve them (Hare and Ryberg 12). As students see successful teamwork taking place among adults, the same results are modeled by students as they bring in various background knowledge bases to the third space setting and collaborate on teacher-led projects.

Kenedy and Monty take a deeper look at collaboration in third spaces and discuss how critical skills are developed in students when faculty and librarian collaborate to produce dynamic, purposeful learning. They developed a project over several years. The students at various grade levels had contact with the librarian throughout the course, and the librarian and faculty member worked together closely to develop assignments. They staged assignments throughout the course in order for students to receive constant feedback from the teacher and librarian. When given course evaluations, “the students consistently reported that information
literacy sessions [with the librarian and teacher] enhanced their learning and increased their capabilities as researchers” (Kenedy and Monty 117). Although this level of collaboration would not be possible with every classroom teacher in a school, when it is possible, research demonstrates that student academic learning will be increased.

Cynthia Anderson points out that school librarians are “naturals at presenting the world’s best literature and using it as a springboard to teaching the curriculum and supporting the components of the reading initiative” whether it is Accelerated Reader, Scholastic Reading Inventory, or the teacher’s incentive program to get the students reading more (22). Librarians are able to work in partnership with classroom teachers in bringing the best literature to the curriculum. Even non-readers become engaged with a text and increase their success with the help of the school librarian and a third space setting where they linger and read. Anderson claims that having a valuable collection of fiction and non-fiction materials in many formats reaches every student (22), even those at higher education levels.

Finally, the topic of third space would not be complete without observing how students with special needs are accommodated in the library and how their academic success increased in such spaces. The library provides a wealth of technology in a third space area that helps special needs students be more successful than in the standard classroom setting. Clint Winter collaborated with the librarian in his building to seek guidance in finding books and websites that would be helpful to his students (38). Winter claims that many students with disabilities struggle to navigate the library, even if it is a welcoming environment for them. Some special needs students struggle with organization and get distracted by due dates and research skills (Winter 38). Winter, a special needs teacher in Georgia, focuses on collaborating with the
librarian to create a more welcoming virtual third space for his students. Winter and the librarian utilize free graphic organizers online that help his students stay focused as well as adding special starter pages and widgets to the library’s home page that help students read texts (38).

The library home page helps build a third space for special needs students outside and within school walls. The home page will provide tools for students and teachers to collaborate together. Winter imagines the ultimate third space library emerges from a positive partnership between special needs faculty and the librarian. Such collaboration breaks access barriers in the library for special students and their self-esteem drastically increases (Winter 39).

In conclusion, evidence from research points to the many benefits of creating a third space within the walls of a library. From an increase of student clientele to a boost in teacher and librarian collaboration which increases student academic success, third space libraries are becoming part of the twenty-first century aspect of librarianship. When librarians embrace this mindset of third space, users reap the benefits of such a setting.
CHAPTER 3
CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has explored how librarians create third space libraries and attract new clientele, how a culture of value and collaboration is created in these third spaces, and how third spaces encourage user success and increase student academic achievement through collaboration. This chapter answers the following questions: why should a librarian create a third space library, why should a librarian create a culture of value for the third space library, and can student academic achievement be linked to a third space library?

The Need for a Third Space in the Library

Research has shown that students will navigate toward a space where they feel welcomed and are able to access information. A third space library will serve as a collaboration space for both teachers and librarians, extending the curriculum beyond the classroom walls. Another benefit of creating a third space library is the attraction of new patrons. Librarians who embrace this new mentality have found students and teachers more willing to use the library as a gathering place for collaboration and academic activities.

Creating a Culture of Value

Libraries are competing with major bookstores to keep their patrons coming to the library and using its resources. Librarians are marketing their libraries in new ways in order to attract patrons and show them the valuable resources a library holds. The school library that feels like a third space will not only be a valuable place to check out books, but also a place for students to use resources they find valuable. Easy access to databases, computers, and friendly staff are all part of a third space atmosphere that is valuable to students and teachers. All of
these features have an added value of advocacy for the importance of the school library and the librarian who creates it.

**Student Achievement in a Third Space Library**

Research shows that students who feel welcome in a third space library will continue to frequent it. Frequent users of the library tend to value what the library has to offer to support their academic achievements. Students are more likely to collaborate with their teachers and fellow students on projects that encourage academic success. Third space libraries have also been shown to contain more student-centered learning activities and resources due to the teacher and librarian sharing knowledge towards dynamic, purposeful learning. This teamwork between teacher and librarian can benefit any student that walks into a third space library.
WORKS CITED


