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The paradox of collaboration in the partnership between primary schools and public libraries

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how Finnish teachers and public librarians worked together after attending a literacy programme. During the programme the participant partners planned and implemented literacy activities which they shared with other participating partners. After the program, four participating partners were interviewed. A theoretical model that distinguished levels of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration was used in the analysis of the interview data and in describing the depth of partnerships. Despite experience in the programme the partnerships between teachers and librarians were mostly cooperative and coordinative. This study highlights the need to clarify the meaning of the concepts pertaining to working together as previous research has mostly applied the concept of collaboration to partnerships that do not meet the associated criteria.

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Interprofessional collaboration; teacher-librarian collaboration; collaboration; public libraries and schools; the Joy of Reading programme

Introduction

The importance of teachers and school librarians or teacher-librarians working together to promote student learning has been widely recognised in international studies, including several conducted in China (Chu, Tse, and Chow 2011), the United Kingdom (Gildersleeves 2012), and the USA (Loertscher and Woolls 2017; Kuhlthau, Maniotes, and Caspari 2007; Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Pennell. 2002).¹ According to Kuhlthau, Maniotes, and Caspari (2007), school librarians also play an important role in teachers' media- and information-literacy instruction. Despite the need for teachers and school librarians to work together, their relationship has traditionally not been strong enough for them to truly work together in instruction (see studies in Australia [Merga 2019], the USA [Latham et al. 2016], Asia [Lo et al. 2014], Singapore [Mokhtar and Majid 2006], and the UK [Smith and Hepworth 2007; Williams and Wavell 2006]). According to studies in Ireland (McGuinness 2006) and the USA (Montiel-Overall 2007), most partnerships between teachers and school librarians are based on traditional tasks, such as school librarians offering services and teachers treating them as a resource for material. Furthermore, in many countries, the relationship is not always perceived as equal, and educators tend not to recognise the role of school librarians as partners in education (Merga 2019; Lo et al. 2014; Mokhtar and Majid 2006; Smith and Hepworth 2007; Williams and Wavell 2006).

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It is difficult to bridge the communication boundaries between teachers and librarians who work in different organisations, have different disciplinary backgrounds (Montiel-Overall and Grimes 2013), and use different conceptions and terminology related to literacy (Ojaranta 2019). The two professions partially share the same goals and tasks, but they differ in their methods of reaching these goals.

Teachers' expertise lies in the teaching and knowledge of their students. Donham and Green (2004) suggest that librarians' expertise, in comparison, lies in resources and information literacy and in teaching these skills. Their expertise could be incorporated into the school environment in a manner similar to consultant expertise. In such a case, the librarian would be seen mostly as a supporter of student learning rather than as a teacher (Gärdén et al. 2006). The pedagogical aspects of the librarian's role have been given more weight as students have come to need more support in information-literacy skills (Limberg and Alexandersson 2010). Accordingly, teachers' and librarians' interest in working together has increased in recent years (Montiel-Overall and Grimes 2013). Finding a suitable and beneficial way for these professionals with different types of expertise to work together is likely to present a challenge irrespective of their common goals.

As studies have shown that the relationship between school librarians and teachers is not optimal, one can assume that the relationship is even more challenging when public libraries are expected to work with schools, as is the case in Finland. In contrast with school libraries, public libraries are seldom located in the same building as schools. This may hinder working relationships. Studies of the relationship between teachers and public librarians are much more uncommon than studies of school librarians; however, some scholars in Finland have reached comparable results that support the notion that the working relationship between school librarians and teachers is not strong in instruction (Pietikäinen, Kortelainen, and Siklander 2017; Lindberg 2014).

It is worth noting that public libraries are highly appreciated and frequently used in Finnish society (Kietäväinen 2016), which indicates that reading is also highly valued. However, despite the traditionally strong reading culture and excellent Finnish education, students' motivation to read is very low, according to the Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) 2010). In order to increase students' engagement in reading, Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture funded the Joy of Reading programme (JofR 2012–2015). Thirty school–public library pairs around the country volunteered to participate. A pair consisted of one school and one local library, selected for the programme based on their ideas for cooperation in their applications. The JofR programme's approach to transformation was based on bottom-up planning in which participants developed, selected, and tested a wide range of participatory literacy activities. These activities were presented in seminars for sharing ideas on how to increase 6- to 16-year-old students' literacy engagement – their "joy of reading".

Two studies were conducted during the JofR programme: Pietikäinen, Kortelainen, and Siklander (2017) study focused on one school and one library, while Suorsa's (2017) study focused on one school community comprised of one regional library and seven schools. Pietikäinen, Kortelainen, and Siklander (2017) found that the librarians viewed their role as being supporters of the teachers, while the teachers

understood the librarians as being supporters of the students. This finding suggests that although the main goal of the JofR programme – to support students' engagement with literacy activities – was reached, the two professions did not truly work together.

Suorsa's (2017) study revealed that daily routines and schedules hindered the participants' engagement in working together, leading to new working methods. These findings do not deviate much from those of earlier studies reviewed above since the librarians were seen as supporters of teaching instead of true collaborators. The lack of time to work together was an obstacle for renewing the practices.

It is worth noting that these two studies were conducted during the JofR programme when partnerships were still being formed and finding methods for transformation. The aim of the present study was to identify the state of partnerships between the schools and libraries that participated in the JofR programme and to determine if an enduring reading community (see Lave and Wenger 1990 for communities of practice) developed after two years of involvement and training in the programme. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine how four school–public library pairs continued to work together after participating in the JofR programme when they were no longer supported by the other school–public library pairs involved in the programme. At the time of the study, the pairs had started to write new local curricula including school–library partnership with some activities they implemented during the programme. In these circumstances, the study aimed to investigate the partnership between schools and public libraries and to describe its depth using the theoretical concepts of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

Theoretical framework

The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) has been commonly used as the basis for research into the interaction between teachers and librarians (Montiel-Overall 2005, 2007, 2008, 2017; Sundin, Francke, and Limberg 2011). Vygotsky (1978) uses sociocultural theory to determine how these professionals negotiate meaning in their social relationships. Meaning is a condition for creative thinking, problem-solving, and innovation, which provides an opportunity for collaboration.

Although the importance of collaboration has been recognised widely (Elliott 2001), there is a lack of understanding of the concept and the process involved in the collaborative relationship (Jenni and Mauriel 2004). Thus, many ways of conceptualising collaboration persist in both research and practice. Among these are partnership, alliance, cooperation, and coordination. Some researchers argue that these concepts are often used interchangeably without distinguishing the elements that characterise them. Indeed, several scholars, such as Dillenbourg (1999) and Montiel-Overall (2017), have defined concepts such as coordination and cooperation and found similarities between them.

Dillenbourg et al. (1996) identified a clear difference between collaboration and cooperation based on how the division of labour is handled. In cooperation, a task is split into independent sub-tasks, and coordination is needed only when one is connecting smaller results to form complete output entities. Collaboration, in comparison, involves working together throughout the process, though some spontaneous division of labour may occur.

(Dillenbourg et al. 1996.) Some researchers do not see a need for the joint work to remain on the same level throughout the process (Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh 2008; Mattessich and Monsey 1992; Winer and Ray 1994). They suggest that it could instead take place at various levels, starting with cooperation and moving towards coordination and collaboration. In these models, the amount of involvement, communication, and performance of common tasks increases in the shift from one level to the next.

Though there are clear differences between the models of joint activities, there are also certain common elements in definitions of collaboration across various fields of research. These elements include common goals; the sharing of knowledge, resources, rewards, and responsibility; and the development of a working relationship (Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh 2008; Mattessich and Monsey 1992; Winer and Ray 1994). In addition, collaboration in its deepest form has been characterised as requiring a large amount of commitment (McGuinness 2006), a mutually beneficial relationship (Mattessich and Monsey 1992), and trust (Huotari and Iivonen 2004, 2005; Kirschner, Dickinson, and Blosser 1996). Winer and Ray (1994) and Schrage (1990) highlight how, by collaborating, partners can achieve results they could not have produced on their own. Furthermore, collaboration in a trusting relationship has been found to promote transformative learning (see Taylor 2017), which can lead to change in the partners' work culture.

In the teacher–librarian context, Montiel-Overall (2017) criticises previous research for confusing collaboration with other notions of the same type. She proposes a definition of collaboration that highlights the involvement of joint work throughout the teaching process:

Collaboration is a trusting, working relationship between two or more participants involved in shared thinking, shared planning and shared creation of innovative integrated instruction. Through a shared vision and shared objectives, student learning opportunities are created that integrate subject content and library curriculum by co-planning, co-implementing, and co-evaluating students' progress throughout the instructional process in order to improve student learning in all areas of the curriculum. (Montiel-Overall 2017, 260)

To distinguish between collaboration and lower-intensity activity, Montiel-Overall (Montiel-Overall 2005/2017) proposed the Teacher and Librarian Collaboration Model. The model describes four facets: a) coordination of schedules, b) cooperation that includes division of responsibilities, c) integrated instruction (occurring throughout the school or school district) that makes the library part of the education process, and d) an integrated curriculum. This model presents a taxonomy via a continuum with differences in levels of various attributes. In the model, individual attributes support each other, with higher intensity encouraging deeper mutual engagement in activities. In contrast, most other models have regarded the various elements as isolated parts or building blocks for developing a collaborative working culture (e.g., Mattessich and Monsey 1992).

Theories and models for categorising the depth of work relationships developed in various fields of research are summarised in (Table 1). The table represents a framework for the features of teachers and public librarians working together to increase students' reading motivation in this study. In addition, it demonstrates the qualities of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, which have been collected and synthesised from selected theories related to the domain of this study. The categorisation of features is



Table 1. The literature's framework of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration in the context of organisations in general, public libraries, and school libraries.

Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration	References
Informality Occasional nature; Shorter-term interaction	Informal arrangements Informal but regular communication; Relationships' building and development; Communication channels Loose commitment	Formal policies Lasting work relationship, networks for communication; Long-term, time-intensive and concrete activity Committed managers; Trust	Fitzgibbons (2000); Lindberg (2014); Mattessich and Monsey (1992); Winer and Ray (1994) Fitzgibbons (2000); Lindberg (2014); Mattessich and Monsey (1992); Winer and Ray (1994)
Loose commitment	Compatible project-specific goals; Some planning and division of roles and responsibilities	Full commitment; Committed managers; Trust	Fitzgibbons (2000); Huotari and Iivonen (2004, 2005); Kirschner, Dickinson, and Blosser (1996); Lindberg (2014); McGuinness 2006; Mattessich and Monsey (1992); Winer and Ray (1994)
Lack of mission; Separate goals, structure and planning	Compatible project-specific goals; Some planning and division of roles and responsibilities	Common visions and goals; Joint planning, implementation and evaluation; Systematically planned activities; Shared responsibilities	Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh (2008); Dillenbourg (1999); Dillenbourg et al. (1996); Lindberg (2014); Mattessich and Monsey (1992); Montiel-Overall (2005); Winer and Ray (1994)
Separate organisational structure	Organisations function relatively independently	Joint organisational structure	Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh (2008); Lindberg (2014); Mattessich and Monsey (1992); Winer and Ray (1994)
Separate resources; Lack of mutual benefits	Some sharing of resources; Shared benefits	Shared resources; Mutual benefits	Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh (2008); Mattessich and Monsey (1992); Winer and Ray (1994)
Static nature	Static nature	Development of new ways to act; Innovations	Lindberg (2014)

based on research into learning, organisations, schools and universities, public libraries, school libraries, and faculty libraries.

Although authors have attempted to distinguish collaboration from other concepts (e.g., Dillenbourg 1999; Donham and Green 2004; Montiel-Overall 2005), many researchers (e.g., Montiel-Overall 2017; Yukawa and Harada 2009) still use collaboration as the primary concept when describing teachers and librarians' mutual working methods. In this study, collaboration is differentiated from other, less ambitious activities for a contribution to knowledge of the level reached by teachers and public librarians' partnerships. This study examined the nature of teachers and librarians' partnerships after they completed the JofR programme and were no longer supported by other school–public library pairs and university experts. The study addresses the following research question: What concepts characterised teachers and librarians' partnerships to increase students' reading motivation after they regularised their activities following the JofR programme?

Method

The study was conducted as a qualitative case study to examine how teachers and librarians worked together after the conclusion of the JofR programme. All participating librarians were from public libraries. As noted above, there are few school librarians who meet the definition of qualified teacher-librarian in Finland, as in many other countries, such as the USA and Canada (Probert 2009). Therefore, public libraries usually perform the functions handled by school libraries in other countries. Finland's network of public libraries is strong. Cities or municipalities usually have a centrally located city library and smaller branch libraries.

Participants and the collection of data

School–public library pairs were selected for interviews based on pilot interviews, except for one pair whose selection was based on their reports the pairs wrote regarding their participation in the JofR programme. A total of twelve interviewees – seven teachers and five librarians – were selected from four school–public library pairs. The sample was selected to represent several regions of Finland. The interviewees' features are presented in (Table 2). The interviews were semi-structured group interviews. Teachers and librarians were interviewed together to stimulate the participants' contributions (Fontana and Frey 1998).

The interviews were conducted after the conclusion of the JofR programme with the aim of identifying mechanisms that facilitate highly advanced joint work aimed at

Table 2. Participants, the related labels used in the study, and interview duration.

Joy of Reading UNIT	PARTICIPANT(S)	n	DURATION
L-S 1	L1, T1, T2	3	01:53
L-S 2	L2, L3, T3, T4	4	01:40
L-S 3	L4, T5, T6	3	01:25
L-S 4	L5, T7	2	01:14

Note: The label L-S refers to a library-school unit, L for a librarian and T for a teacher.



Table 3. An example of the data categorisation.

Example original expression	Reduction from data	Subcategory	Main category
"[The tradition of working together] has existed for a long time." (L5)	Long traditions	Working together before Joffr	Work culture
"[T]he networks already existed. The school-library team of teachers as well." (T1)	Existing networks		
"[T]he god librarians for each school started their work then." (L1)	Familiarity		
"At our school, it [the Joy of Reading program] raised enthusiasm." (T7)	Enhanced motivation	Working together during Joffr	
"[W]hen the school comes for 'library recesses', we become more acquainted with the pupils. It has become easier for the children to approach us." (L2)	Librarians' familiarity		
"[The principal] has supported and arranged all that is needed." (T3)	Support	Role of the principal	
"The principals in this municipality have a very positive attitude towards [the joint efforts]." (L5)	Positive attitude		
"Our principal is so enthusiastic that it was originally his idea, the whole thing [applying for the program]." (T6)	Activity		
"I give the freedom to go and do the work at schools." (L5)	Support	Role of the library head	
"The [school] head acted very positive when the Joy of Reading program was beginning." (L6)	Positive attitude		
"Support from the head of education has been important for the program." (L1)	Support	Role of the city's Department of Education	

increasing students' reading motivation. The interviews were structured around five themes: 1) partnership between the school and the library, 2) methods applied in working together, 3) JofR's influence on the partnership, 4) enablers and hindrances, and 5) future development (see Appendix). All interviewees were encouraged to talk openly about their experiences (Hara et al. 2003) of implementing activities to improve students' reading culture. The interviews were both audio- and video-recorded, but the videos were used only as necessary to clarify the speaker. These 85- to 113-minute interviews were held at school or library sites after school hours. In total, the transcripts comprise eighty-four pages of text.

Data analysis

The first author analysed the data, but the data categorisation was discussed and decided by both the first and second authors. The analysis of the interviews was carried out via an inductive approach, as prescribed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). An inductively oriented design was appropriate as it allowed a deep understanding of the case by "not speaking for ... participants" but enabling them to "speak in voices that are clearly understood and representative" (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 56). The software application QSR NVivo 10 for Macintosh was used for data management.

The data-driven analysis started by identifying descriptions of working together. Next, specific themes were gathered based on the original expressions. For instance, themes such as *positive attitude* and *support of management* were found. The themes were organised by identifying similar expressions from among the data and grouping them together. For example, descriptions of formal planning times and librarians attending school meetings indicated joint planning.

Subcategories were formed by organising the themes. For instance, issues concerning common strategies, teachers' and librarians' positive attitudes, and regular meetings were subcategories under the theme of *promoting working together*. After this phase, the subcategories were placed under four main categories that emerged from the data by means of axial coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998). These four main categories were 1) *practices of working together*, 2) *commitment*, 3) *roles in instruction*, and 4) *work culture*. The *practices of working together* category described the jointly implemented methods and activities. *Commitment* described mutual goals and the involvement of the management. The *roles in instruction* category described the activities of both librarians and teachers. Finally, descriptions of the work environment and relationships constituted the *work culture* category.

An example of the data categorisation method and statements from which a category of work culture was derived is presented in (Table 3). The original expressions were reduced into themes, such as *familiarity* and *support*. These themes formed five subcategories related to working together before JofR, working together during JofR, the role of the principal, the role of the library head, and the role of the city's Department of Education. The subcategories related to working together before and during JofR were derived from descriptions that related to a certain time. The librarians and teachers also worked together before the programme, but they became more familiar and involved with each other during the programme. The other three subcategories referred to the

roles of teachers' and librarians' superiors who facilitate their work by maintaining a positive attitude and by being supportive and active.

The theories presented in (Table 1) were categorised and analysed first by means of qualitative content analysis (Schreier 2012). These theories typically included three or four different ways of working together. These were then synthesised into three main categories: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, with each of these deemed to have features arising from relevant theories, as presented in (Table 1). Cooperation referred to activity with very loose engagement. Coordination included some arrangements and communication. Collaboration referred to activity with full commitment. Next, the first author compared the content of teachers' and librarians' concepts of the data with the theoretical models in (Table 1). The framework in (Table 1) was employed to identify the depth of the partnerships in the data.

Findings

This study investigated how several school–public library pairs continued to work together to improve reading engagement after attending the JofR programme. It also looked at how their partnership can be described with the concepts presented in (Table 1). Collaborative, coordinative, and cooperative features of the partnership were identified from the interview data.

Features of collaboration

The partnerships between school–public library pairs were integrated into formal policies, local curricula, and collaboration plans. These policies helped to establish joint work, bring equal access to services, and ensure continuity of efforts irrespective of staff changes.

The analysis revealed teachers and librarians had been working together in all but one of the communities before the JofR programme. This finding indicates lasting working relationships between teachers and librarians. A positive attitude towards working relationships was a typical feature in the data. For example, one librarian hoped to work with schools on new projects. She stated that the librarians need to have pedagogical know-how and that the attitude towards working together had changed in a more positive direction in public libraries. All the teachers and librarians felt that familiarity of the team members and networks for communication were important. These networks can eventually develop into trusting relationships.

Long-term, time-intensive, and concrete activities were characteristic of the working relationships. For instance, the usage of library services was the most regular activity in every school. Schools that were physically near the library visited it periodically, and a mobile library paid visits to schools that were a long distance from the library. The JofR programme motivated schools and libraries to work together. This led to the partnerships becoming more systematic, regular, and stable when schools and libraries implemented their plans in the programme. As one teacher put it, "[I]f I think about other teachers than myself, [JofR] has had an influence ... I have noticed the change ... Our practices have been refined".

After the programme, the participants' joint activities generally decreased because the working load experienced during the programme was felt to be too heavy. However, well-

tried methods entered into continuous use, according to one teacher: "Our goal was that [the methods] would become a part of the school's routine so that we could continue with them naturally without pushing all the time". A librarian pointed out that the same methods were still used with the available resources since the programme concluded.

Teachers, librarians, and their leaders were fully committed to enhancing reading motivation. The head of each library and the school principals had an equally positive influence on the act of working together. Indeed, the commitment of the management, such as the leaders of education departments, was seen as enabling schools and libraries to work together, even though these people were not active in the concrete activities, such as planning. It was highlighted that support from management is key to spreading the developed customs.

The promotion of reading motivation was viewed as a common vision and goal. It was a prominent part of the work culture rather than just a project. As one teacher stated, "We have never had a project that [once completed, has] remained as a project lasting for one year only. Instead, we always try to take it into the next years". Participants also enjoyed teamwork. A librarian and two teachers stated that it is more productive to work together towards additional value. However, teachers and librarians did not engage systematically in the joint planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities to improve reading motivation even though activities were implemented regularly during the school year.

The participants expressed an intention to engage regularly with each other and to stabilise and refine their existing ways of interacting while working together within the limits of their existing resources. Developing new ways to interact provided an incentive for schools and libraries to work together. As one librarian stated, "Now we have had great happenings ... and new, versatile methods, which motivate [students]". A teacher confirmed, "Indeed, we have broken down traditional things". For instance, several librarians referred to innovative methods featured in the programme. These included "library adventure" and "a day at the library", which involved the librarians and the teachers planning and implementing activities to increase reading motivation together.

Features of coordination and cooperation

The data revealed a weakness in the joint planning, even if there were designated contact persons responsible for working together. Some planning occurred in formal meetings that were held at the beginning and end of the semester. These involved the contact teachers, the librarians, and the principal. Otherwise, teachers and librarians rarely sat together to plan activities. There was almost no informal or spontaneous planning between the teachers and librarians because they used separate workspaces. This was a sign of rather separately functioning organisations.

The interviews revealed that the process of teachers and librarians working together traditionally involved a division of roles and responsibilities. Usually, the responsibilities during the lessons were divided. The librarians gave instructions, and the teachers maintained order among the students. The most common activities designed to promote reading motivation were library introductions, information-seeking instruction for students, and book talks. Most of these and other lessons involving the libraries were planned and implemented solely by the librarians. The librarians designed teaching

materials for the activities often without student-specific topics. For instance, the information-seeking instruction was usually arranged for certain grade levels throughout the comprehensive school. The contents were mostly unconnected to the themes students dealt with at school, but many teachers and librarians acknowledged the importance of schoolwork containing relevant content.

The lack of joint planning seemed to have caused a rather static nature of working together. Traditional activities involving teachers and librarians, such as the provision of material to teachers, book talks, reading diplomas, and the introduction of students to the library, appeared to prevail among all school–public library pairs, even among the most active ones. The analysis suggests that if a tradition of working relationships did not exist before the programme, a lack of knowledge of potential ways of working together prevented changes in these relationships. As one teacher put it, “Now we have, with this [programme], learned that the library is very willing to collaborate. We have found out many things, which we probably had not noticed before or even dared to ask. We had thought that the library has other tasks”. However, some librarians felt that they had many other duties that did not involve working with schools. In many cases, a lack of time was another issue that prevented professionals from doing things differently. Instead, they conformed to their traditional work methods and ways of working together.

Discussion

The Ministry of Education and Culture launched the JofR programme (2012–2015) based on the need to increase teachers’ capacity to support students’ literacies and motivation. This study included four selected school–public library pairs who attended the programme to improve their literacy practices. The aim of this study was to examine the partnership between these school and public library pairs and then, based on the findings, describe the partnership with the concepts of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

In the JofR programme, the teachers and librarians interviewed in the present study received support and joint training on how to improve their mutual efforts. During the programme, they planned and implemented a variety of literacy activities together. Although the participants were highly motivated and shared tasks and implemented literacy activities successfully, the partnership between the teachers and the librarians did not show much change after the programme. In particular, joint planning decreased after the programme. The findings revealed that the efforts included mixed features of collaborative, coordinative, and cooperative categories (see [Table 1](#)) described by the concepts surrounding the nature of working together.

Formal documents, such as local curricula that promoted working together, were indicative of a high level of commitment in this study. Formal strategies are a feature of collaboration, as suggested in the studies of Mattessich and Monsey (1992) and Winer and Ray (1994). In addition, Montiel-Overall (2017) highlighted the importance of having a local curriculum that integrates collaboration. The schools and libraries in this study had agreed on common strategies, which encompassed working together. These strategies were typically attachments to the local curriculum of each school.

In this study, a positive work environment and good working relationships were an important feature that evidenced collaboration, as found in earlier research by Montiel-

Overall (2008). The school–public library pairs found that the existing working relationships with familiar team members facilitated their communication. They appreciated the positive attitude and the support of the administration, which is a key factor in collaboration (Oberg 1996). The findings show that the established practices of the school–public library pairs were refined in the programme. Additionally, most interviewees indicated that they were motivated by the new work methods and wanted to develop these methods themselves. Despite these results, the school–public library pairs generally showed a reduction in joint activities after the programme. The workload during the programme was too heavy, and it was impossible to maintain the same intensity. Researchers (Mattessich and Monsey 1992; Winer and Ray 1994) have pointed out that the level of working together can vary depending on what the activity requires.

Commitment, highlighted by Fitzgibbons (2000) and McGuinness (2006), is another essential feature pointing to collaboration. Although the level of working together decreased after the programme, the school–public library pairs spoke of being committed to promoting reading motivation and to working together. The aims of the JofR programme were viewed as a permanent part of the school culture rather than a single project, and therefore, as a common goal among the teachers and librarians. Collaboration in its deepest form encompasses common goals (Dillenbourg 1999). In this study, the goal shared by the teachers and librarians was the joint promotion of students' reading motivation.

Even if the school–public library pairs had permanently incorporated features of collaboration into their working relationships, working together included more features of cooperation and coordination than collaboration for several reasons. First, there was an absence of joint planning, implementation, and evaluation and a lack of time to complete these tasks, especially after the programme ended. According to previous studies, teachers generally think that the most effective way of working together entails both parties taking care of their own responsibilities; they also think that planning on their own is faster and easier than planning with librarians (Kuhlthau 2004; Pietikäinen, Kortelainen, and Siklander 2017). The presence of some joint planning (Mattessich and Monsey 1992; Winer and Ray 1994) and the division of roles and responsibilities (Dillenbourg et al. 1996; Montiel-Overall 2017) characterise coordinative work in this study (see Table 1). A lack of time for joint planning could create pressure for activities to remain the same. It seems that the participants in the study were adding new elements to their work culture rather than developing its fundamental structure. This points to rather static actions, as presented by Lindberg (2014). From a sociocultural perspective, collaboration would require opportunities for creative thinking and higher levels of performance (Vygotsky 1978). A work culture of the latter type and the establishment of a lasting reading community demands more joint planning and opportunities for implementation and evaluation than were evident in this study.

As noted above, the division of responsibilities indicates coordination (Dillenbourg et al. 1996; Montiel-Overall 2017). In this study, the responsibilities were found to be separate, as the two institutions usually implemented teaching on their own premises. Library introductions and information-seeking instruction for students were typically planned and implemented solely by the librarians. The content handled by the library seemed mostly unconnected to the themes being addressed with students at school. This is in line with previous studies' findings that librarians are rarely involved in developing

media- and information-literacy skills in conjunction with classroom instruction (Lo et al. 2014; McGuinness 2006; Mokhtar and Majid 2006). Furthermore, teachers and school librarians' partnerships have been found to be generally course-specific and even assignment-specific (Latham, Gross, and Witte 2013). Support for media- and information-literacy skills requires a connection to the learning that occurs in the classroom (Donham and Green 2004; Geiken, Larson, and Donham 1999).

Montiel-Overall and Grimes (2013) pointed out that there is a gulf between what librarians are recommended to do (that is, taking the lead in initiating and cultivating collaborative planning with teachers) and educators' knowledge of librarians' role. Another factor that contributes to the cooperative nature of working together is the traditional role of the librarians, which includes tasks such as providing material and giving book talks. These findings point to the static nature of working together (see Table 1) and are consistent with those of previous studies among teachers and school librarians (McGuinness 2006; Montiel-Overall 2007) and teachers and public librarians (Lindberg 2014; Pietikäinen, Kortelainen, and Siklander 2017).

For the partnership between teachers and librarians to involve more features of collaboration, long-term development work must be devoted to enhancing the process of working together. Successful integration of librarians into instruction necessitates administrative-level support. The Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland noticed this need and created the JofR programme based on bottom-up planning. Models developed bottom-up at the grassroots level are a prerequisite for building both professional and personal relationships among those working at schools and public libraries alike. Although some operation models were developed in the JofR programme, there was insufficient time to put them into practice permanently during the programme. Real transformation is a long-term process (Einarsdottir 2014).

To enhance the continuity of improved practices, teachers and librarians need a mutual understanding of the importance of working together. Teachers and librarians' partnerships are important for promoting students' literacies (Gildersleeves 2012). Professionals' different educational backgrounds make this a particularly great challenge. Pre- and in-service training is essential for individuals to build an understanding of others' professions and expertise. Library and information science education would benefit from pedagogical studies and pedagogical competence when working together with schools. Furthermore, student teachers could take advantage of studies on information literacy. Their expertise could benefit from more flexible opportunities to specialise during their education.

Although the findings of this study are quite similar to those of earlier studies, some limitations can be found in this study. The data were gathered from a single programme and from a relatively small sample of respondents. Also, librarians and teachers were interviewed together, which may have restricted their ability to speak in a reliable manner about each other. Nonetheless, the answers were consistent between participants, and the work highlights a clear way of advancing conceptual understanding.

Conclusions

Libraries and schools are different types of organisations that are addressed by separate research disciplines. The expectation of equal collaboration is paradoxical because there can be differences in the way teachers and librarians understand the concept due to the differences in their education. Indeed, it would be beneficial to examine if teachers and librarians have a mutual understanding of other concepts related to working together, such as collaboration and literacies.

Referring to collaboration in the context of partnerships between schools and libraries should be reconsidered *ab initio* because the word refers to a fairly in-depth form of working together. In light of this and earlier work, its current use in writings pertaining to teachers and librarians working together is paradoxical because partnerships are not truly collaborative. This paper has attempted to refine the concept of collaboration by distinguishing it from cooperation and coordination. Based on the results of this study, the term *partnership* is suggested as an alternative to *collaboration*. The concept, as such, says nothing about the quality of the joint activities and enables features to emerge from all the categories: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

Note

1. A variety of terms have been used to define school librarians in literature, such as teacher-librarians, school library media specialists, and media specialists in a number of countries, including the USA, Canada, and Australia. In these countries, school librarians are typically fully trained and qualified as both educators and librarians (Montiel-Overall 2008; Probert 2009). To avoid confusion, this study uses the term school librarian. Note that school libraries and school librarians are uncommon in Finland, where the study took place.

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Appendix

Questions used to guide the semi-structured interviews.

Partnership between the school and the library

- 1) Describe the partnership between schools and libraries before the program.
- 2) Describe the beginning of working together.
- 3) Describe the objectives for working together in the program.
- 4) Describe the partnership during the program.

Methods applied in working together

- 5) What library services do schools use (e.g., a mobile library, material deliveries, or the library as a learning environment)?
- 6) What other ways of working together do you have?
- 7) Describe joint activities for promoting reading motivation.
- 8) Describe joint activities for promoting information literacy.
- 9) Who is responsible for working together?
- 10) Who takes initiative for the activities?
- 11) Describe the planning of the activities.
- 12) Do you have time arranged for planning?
- 13) How do the head of the library and the head teacher participate in the planning and implementation of the activities?
- 14) How does the head of education take part in working together?
- 15) How do the staff take part in working together?
- 16) Describe teachers' and librarians' roles and responsibilities in instruction.
- 17) What kind of a plan for working together do you have between schools and libraries?

Joy of Reading's influence on the partnership

- 18) Which of the above-mentioned methods were created in the Joy of Reading program?
- 19) Has the conception of the partnership between schools and libraries changed during the program? If it has, describe how.
- 20) Has the program affected plans for working together? If so, describe how.
- 21) Are the activities developed in the program still in use? If they are, indicate which activities.
- 22) Have you developed new activities? If you have, describe these activities.

Enablers and hindrances

- 23) What motivated and enabled working together in the Joy of Reading program?
- 24) What kinds of challenges or obstacles were there to working together in the Joy of Reading program?

- 25) What kinds of challenges to working together exist after the Joy of Reading program?
26) If you described challenges, describe how they could be overcome.

Future development

- 27) How would you want to develop the partnership between schools and libraries?
28) Would it be possible to increase working together? If it would, what would this require?