



FUTURE READY FRAMEWORK:
Instructional Partnership



COLLABORATION: PARTNERSHIPS AND BEYOND

WORKING WITH ADMINISTRATION, STAFF, PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY ALLOWS FOR COMPLETE INTEGRATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

LAFAYETTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, CA

An integral member of the Long Beach Unified School District since the 1999-2000 school year, Katherine “Kat” Tacea, Teacher-Librarian, has become known for her ability to conceptualize successful partnerships and implement and train her fellow educators on any number of digital elements critical to current K-12 innovation and success. If she had to sum up her skillset in one word, it would be “collaboration.” Collaboration doesn’t just refer to the partnerships Tacea forges between teacher-librarians and their many fellow supporters, though it is a critical part of the process. Collaboration is also a defining characteristic of today’s digital literacy, in which users interact with digital material itself as well as with one another. Ultimately, effective digital citizenship depends on collaboration, of which Tacea’s work at Lafayette Elementary School is a prime example.

“Our principal decided to create a Technology Cadre to research, advise and implement technology in the classroom and campus-wide. In December of 2015, we became one of six national winners of \$100,000 for our detailed grant proposal outlining a timeline of tech integration. I have been instrumental in growing our Tech Cadre from five members to thirteen and, as chairperson, helped establish roles and responsibilities and encouraged collaboration with grade-level colleagues.”

- **KAT TACEA**, Teacher-Librarian
Lafayette Elementary School
Long Beach, CA

“These are truly amazing times! To quote the fantastic teacher-librarian Jane Lofton, I like to say ‘I provide lifetime support.’ Knowing each staff member and how they best receive information allows me to reach out through their preferred mode of communication. I post assignments and resources in Google Classroom, send emails, go to grade-level meetings, make announcements at staff meetings, go door-to-door, send FB messages, text and call. Being a future ready librarian means constantly evolving and being a true helper. I hope to serve as a model of collaboration for the entire learning community.”

- **KAT TACEA**, Teacher-Librarian



LEADING THE WAY

At Lafayette, the collaborative model began two years ago in the fourth and fifth grades. Combining the library and the lab into a Library Media Center – one seamless learning environment – is year three of the school’s overall transformation. Being part of a school district that recently adopted GAFE (Google Apps for Education™), all classrooms at Lafayette are sharing carts of iPads or Chromebooks weekly. Being a teacher-librarian as well as her school’s Tech Cadre Chairperson, Tacea supports technology integration every day in collaboration with the classroom teachers. To prepare the necessary foundation for an effective collaboration, she worked with the principal and computer teacher, as well as the district EdTech Leader and coaches, to design a Technology Summer Institute PD for the entire staff. Tacea followed it up with 1:1 coaching as implementation efforts began in earnest.

Kelly Borchartt, Fourth Grade Teacher and fellow Tech Cadre Member, enthusiastically

describes Tacea and their partnership: “Because of our collaboration, my teaching focus now includes digital pedagogy: 21st-century teaching and learning. Kat is pushing and dragging us, supporting and coaching us, into the 21st century. With her guidance and direction, we are growing in our practice. Other sites are missing a ‘conductor’ and I am sure they are not doing half as much as we are because she is the one driving our train.”

LEADING TRANSFORMATION

No journey is complete without roadblocks, and Kat Tacea has faced her fair share. From budgetary obstacles unique to California to the natural skepticism of those in districts not yet experiencing the digital literacy and support a future ready librarian can provide. Tacea has seen it all. She advocates remolding “the outdated mindset that believes librarian services are limited to print,” and being proactive in “our role in the digital age beyond isolated digital citizenship lessons and

research and reference skills.” As the only person in a large urban school (she works without a media assistant), Tacea is the one doing the lion’s share of the promoting, changing and growing – and is the first to admit it can be exhausting and overwhelming at times. But just as Ramona Quimby and generations of eager readers learned, a principal can be your pal, and Tacea feels fortunate to work with an administrator who provides a proactive strategic approach to change. Wholeheartedly sharing her mission for the library as a community resource, Lafayette’s principal continually ensures the necessary time, advocacy and professional development opportunities necessary for Tacea to keep the school’s growth on track.

PARTNERSHIPS BEYOND THE SCHOOL WALLS

Today’s teacher-librarians also have the opportunity, and the need, to develop partnerships far beyond a supportive administration and capable classroom counterparts. Tacea exemplifies what it means

to be a future ready librarian by establishing partnerships with district technology and informational services, purchasing, technology instruction and the Board of Education. She reached out to these groups to create the collaborative space and purchase the necessary hardware and software. She's also reached beyond the traditional educational institutions to build relationships with the local community to improve learning and student collaboration. Tacea works with Farmers Insurance, the Long Beach City Council and the Long Beach Press Telegram and Gazette, all of which have spotlighted the efforts.

Parents, of course, are any educator's first partner, and Tacea leverages their collective power by building relationships with the Parent Booster Club (promoting library services such as "Browse and Borrow" times before and after school) and helping Parent VIPs learn to assist in the process of enrolling iPads and Chromebooks. "Our parent workshops promote digital literacy, digital citizenship and the use of technology at home," explained Tacea. "I provide information to help them understand not only what we're teaching but why, including a lesson in eBook usage for educational purposes." Tacea also described how she's currently in the process of establishing "Technology VIPs" to assist teachers in technology implementation efforts as those tech carts roll into classrooms.

EBOOKS: CHANGING THE RESOURCE GAME

Two years ago Tacea purchased sixty Follett eBooks from the Destiny® online catalog database to begin bringing content-rich digital resources to her learning community. She realized that unlimited simultaneous access was a game-changer. "For example," said Tacea, "all third graders working on a biome project can access the same resources at the same time. It used to be that print resources were shared between 6-7 classrooms (approx. 120 students), which meant I would not have enough to share. Using eBooks, though, all students and teachers can access everything simultaneously!"

BUILDING A CLASSROOM POWERED BY COLLABORATIVE TECH

The first step to bringing a school online with collaborative online tech is to train those who will be working in tandem with the teacher-librarian. Tacea is currently in demand as a presenter for GAFE as well as for other digital content, training her fellow staff members in the Google Classroom platform and designing activities for students and teachers to use while learning Google Docs, Slides and Research Tools and image searching within various Google apps.

The ability to comment on and share digital documents provides a seamless way for teachers and students to continually

communicate while preparing students for responsible digital citizenship using everyday, authentic assignments and tasks. This will ultimately prime them for success in a job market in which cloud-based, open-source-style document sharing will be the norm.

Creating a stronger educational network by establishing partnerships, as well as building the necessary resources (creating Thinglinks, adding valuable websites, linking databases, adapting and creating hyperdocs, etc.) is one of the many points of added value a teacher-librarian, like Tacea, brings to the job. By utilizing web tools to further engage learners in critical thinking and creation, and by connecting what she does to others in her school and the community at large, Tacea consistently illustrates and utilizes her expertise and skill. This empowers her and helps her students prepare for success in the future.

