



Setting the Stage for Collabora

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Close your eyes and imagine you are standing at the doorway to a large square room the size of a small gym. The room is completely empty—void of furniture, books, chairs, tables—not even a circulation counter! You walk in and put your bag down on the one chair you pulled in from the hallway.

Welcome to your new library. What do you do first?

This past year, I have had the opportunity to open a brand new library. Developing a library program from the ground up has been an exciting process. A driving force behind the decisions made in the first year was ensuring that the pieces for a sustainable collaborative model were in place. We all know what the research says—there is no question that team-teaching and collaboration have far greater impact than teaching skills in isolation. We also know that development of information literacy skills is most effective when the teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher are two equal partners in the process. What better place to take these guiding principles for a spin than in a new school?

About the school

Bill Crothers Secondary School opened in Markham in August, 2008. The school has a focus on sports, athletics, and the pursuit of healthy, active living. Students apply for admission through two distinct profiles. The Active Sport students enjoy competing in and training for intercollegiate competitions, or as a part of community programs. They like to be active and are engaged in sport and focused on personal well-being. They may also take part in the management of sport within the school. The High Performance students compete at a highly competitive level and train on average 15 or more hours per week. They are engaged in an intensive, time-committed training program designed to support their sport and athletic aspirations and goals. These students are pursuing competition at the provincial, national, or international level. BCSS is a specialty school, so it has some unique features that have an impact: students will commonly miss class for competitions; lunches are often inconvenient for meetings due to coaching (but we have Shared Thinking Time weekly for staff development); we operate on a balanced school year that begins in August; and imbedded in the schedule for students are Integrated Learning Instructional Periods (ILIP) and Cross Curricular Tasks (CCT) where every course has a culminating task that is connected to a particular school-wide theme.