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Elementary School Principals' Perceptions  
of the Instructional Role of the School Library Media Specialist

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

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November 2007

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
ABSTRACT .....	viii
CHAPTERS	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study .....	4
Rationale and Significance of the Study.....	5
Literature/Research Background .....	6
Instructional Role of the Library Media Specialist.....	6
Impact on Student Achievement.....	7
Principals' Perceptions .....	8
Sources of Principals' Perceptions .....	10
Research Questions.....	11
Methodology.....	12
Summary.....	14
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	15
Instructional Role of the Library Media Specialist .....	16
Standards in the Field of School Library Media .....	16
Impact of the Library Media Specialist on Academic Achievement .....	21
Library Media Specialists' Perceptions of Their Instructional Role .....	24
Principals .....	31
Standards in the Field of Educational Leadership .....	31
Role of the Principal in Supporting Library Media Programs .....	32
Principals' Perceptions of the Role of the Library Media Specialist .....	36
Sources of Principals' Perceptions .....	42
Methodology .....	45
Survey Research and Statistical Analysis of Data .....	45
Demographic Factors .....	46
Open-ended Questions .....	47
Critical Incident Theory .....	47
Critical Incident Theory in the Fields of Library Media and Educational Leadership .....	48

Definition of Terms .....	49
Summary .....	51
III. METHODOLOGY .....	53
Research Design .....	53
Sampling of Subjects .....	54
Instrumentation .....	57
Survey Construction .....	60
Pilot Study .....	61
Reliability .....	61
Validity .....	62
Data Collection .....	63
Data Analysis.....	64
Delimitations and Limitations .....	67
Summary .....	68
IV. FINDINGS .....	70
Sample Demographics .....	71
Respondent Characteristics.....	73
School Characteristics .....	76
Teacher Role of the Library Media Specialist.....	82
Instructional Partner Role of the Library Media Specialist.....	88
Relationship between the Dependent and Independent Variables.....	92
Principals' Perceptions of Library Media Specialist as Teacher ..	93
Principals' Perceptions of Library Media Specialist as Instructional Partner.....	94
Source of Principals' Perceptions of Library Media Specialist Instructional Role.....	96
Negative.....	98
Positive .....	100
Expectations for Library Media Specialists.....	103
Summary.....	104
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	105
Overview of Findings .....	105
Demographics .....	105
Library Media Specialist as Teacher .....	107
Library Media Specialist as Instructional Partner .....	110
Library Schedule as Independent Variable.....	113
Source of Principals' Perceptions.....	115
Critical Incidents.....	117
Limitations.....	119
Low Response Rate .....	119

Non-Response Bias.....	121
Type II Error .....	122
Reliability .....	122
Validity .....	123
Implications for Current Practice in Applied Settings.....	123
Recommendations for Further Research .....	125
Summary.....	127
REFERENCES .....	128
APPENDICES .....	143
VITA.....	157

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning .....	18
2. Elementary Schools and Emails .....	56
3. Research Questions, Instrument Items, and Data Analysis .....	67
4. Total Years of Classroom Teaching Experience .....	73
5. Content Areas of Classroom Teaching .....	74
6. Grade Levels of Classroom Teaching Experience.....	75
7. Total Years of Administrative Experience .....	75
8. Virginia Elementary Schools by Region .....	76
9. Virginia Elementary Schools by Region and Setting .....	78
10. Elementary School Grade Level Configurations .....	80
11. Elementary School Enrollment.....	81
12. Type of Library Schedule .....	81
13. Teaching Students to Use Resources .....	83
14. Teaching Students to Work with Information within Sources .....	84
15. Teaching Students Ethical Behavior in Information Use .....	85
16. Access to and Use of Student Test Data.....	86
17. Staff Development for Teachers in Information Use .....	87
18. Collaborating to Plan Information Literacy Instruction .....	89
19. Collaborating to Teach and Evaluate.....	91



20. Initiation of Collaboration .....	92
21. Perceptions as Teacher .....	94
22. Analysis of Variance for Perceptions as Teacher .....	94
23. Perceptions as Instructional Partner.....	95
24. Analysis of Variance for Perceptions as Instructional Partner .....	95
25. Source of Principals' Perceptions .....	97
26. Context of Formal Training in Principal Preparation Program .....	98

## ABSTRACT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE  
INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

By Audrey P. Church, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2007

Director: Dr. Michael D. Davis,  
Professor, School of Education

Studies conducted in numerous states by various researchers demonstrate that library media specialists who take an active role in the instructional process positively impact student achievement in their schools. Principals are the instructional leaders of their schools, yet the research indicates that they are not knowledgeable regarding the role of the library media specialist.

This study explored Virginia elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist, the effect of library schedule on these perceptions, and the origin of these perceptions. Principals who responded to the study strongly endorsed the role of library media specialist as teacher of information literacy skills and as instructional partner. There was no statistically significant difference in perceptions based on the type of library schedule in place—fixed, flexible, or mixed/combination. Respondents indicated that they learn about the instructional role of

the library media specialist from library media specialists with whom they work, either in their current positions as principals or through their previous experiences as classroom teachers. Principals form their views based on both negative and positive interactions with library media specialists and base their expectations of their current and future library media specialists on these prior experiences and expectations.

This finding indicates that school library media specialist preparation programs should prepare their graduates to positively present their key instructional role and that training in this area should be provided for those library media specialists already in the field. Another key finding was that principals place primary responsibility for initiation of collaboration at both the individual teacher and the school level with the library media specialist. Further research is warranted to explore how principals facilitate full implementation of the instructional role of the library media specialist in their schools.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In years past the school librarian was expected to build well-rounded library collections and to be an effective circulator and manager of library resources. An analysis of research and standards in the field across the past fifty years shows that the instructional role of the librarian has steadily evolved from passive to static to active (American Association of School Librarians [AASL], 1998; Craver, 1986). Today's library media specialist is called upon to take an active role in the instructional program of the school, serving not only as program administrator and information specialist but also as teacher and instructional partner (AASL, 1998). National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation standards for programs preparing school library media specialists emphasize both teaching and learning and collaboration and leadership (American Library Association [ALA], 2003). National Board Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for library media also stress the collaborative teaching role of the library media specialist (National Board, 2001). The library media specialist of the 21<sup>st</sup> century should actively participate in the curriculum and instructional program of the school in the areas of curriculum development, collaborative teaching, and information literacy instruction.

Principals serve as the instructional leaders of their schools. They establish school climate, determine performance expectations, and set priorities for effective

teaching and for student learning (Campbell, 1991). Principal advocacy is key to the development of a strong school library media program that supports and enhances teaching and learning (Haycock, 1989; Henri, Hay, & Oberg, 2002b). Principals foster effective library programs through budgetary decisions which impact collections and staffing, through organizational decisions which impact scheduling, and through the expectations that they set for library use by students and teachers (Hartzell, 2002c).

#### Statement of the Problem

In a study completed by Wilson and Blake (1993), 68% of principals who responded indicated that they did not have a good understanding of the role of the library media center in today's schools. Although standards and best practice demonstrate that library media specialists should play an active role in curriculum and instruction in the school, principals are typically not aware of the instructional potential of the library media specialist. They tend to hold the more traditional view of the library media specialist as one who selects, purchases, organizes, and circulates materials (Buchanan, 1982; Dorrell & Lawson, 1995; Kolencik, 2001).

Today's school library media specialist should function as a collaborative instructional partner, planning, teaching, and evaluating with fellow educators. The library media specialist should also function as a teacher of information literacy skills, teaching students to access, evaluate, and use information in the context of their content area curricula (AASL, 1998). When library media specialists fulfill these roles, taking an active part in instruction in their schools, student achievement increases (Lance, 2005).

Publications in the educational leadership field rarely address school libraries (Hartzell, 2002b), and few principal preparation programs include the topic in their coursework (Hartzell, 2002b; Veltze, 1992; Wilson & McNeil, 1998). Also, while most principals are former teachers, few have worked as library media specialists (Buchanan, 1982; Naylor & Jenkins, 1988). School libraries are not mentioned in the seven standards or in the 27 elements that make up the *Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership for Principals, Superintendents, Curriculum Directors, and Supervisors* (National Policy Board, 2002). Lack of principal knowledge regarding the role of the library media specialist in teaching and learning prevents the library program from developing to its full potential and prevents the library media specialist from actively contributing to student learning to the greatest possible extent.

This problem is particularly pronounced at the elementary school level, where 51% of school libraries currently operate on a fixed schedule (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Elementary school libraries which operate on a fixed schedule of weekly class visits for library time do so primarily to provide classroom teachers daily planning time. Historically, elementary school libraries have been scheduled in this manner as part of a resource rotation of art, music, and physical education. Library media specialists functioning in a fixed schedule environment are less able to practice their instructional role than those library media specialists who operate on a flexible schedule (McCracken, 2000; Putnam, 1996; Tallman & van Deusen, 1995).

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to focus on elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist. Most studies done in the field examine principals' views across grades K-12. If a grade level has been singled out, it has traditionally been at the secondary level, as evidenced by studies completed by Burnell (1978), Campbell and Cordiero (1996), and Kolencik (2001). Most studies completed have examined principals' overall perceptions of library media specialists, although one focused on their leadership role (Gustafson, 1982). The purpose of this study is to focus on the elementary level and the instructional role: to determine how elementary school principals view the library media specialist as a teacher, to determine how elementary school principals view the library media specialist as an instructional partner, to determine the relationship between these perceptions and type of library schedule, and to determine the source of these perceptions.

*Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (AASL, 1998) clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the library media specialist in the areas of teaching and instructional partnerships. Neither university principal-preparation programs nor educational leadership journals nor educational leadership conferences address the role of the library media specialist in the school (Hartzell, 2002b). Principals participating in Campbell's study (1991) indicated that their primary source of knowledge regarding the roles of the school library media specialist was the library media specialist with whom they were currently working. Other researchers (Buchanan, 1982; Hartzell, 2002b) suggest that principals' perceptions of the role of the library

media specialist are also formed through library experiences as students and library experiences as classroom teachers. The purpose of this study is to determine how elementary school principals view the teaching and instructional partnership roles of today's library media specialist, to determine the relationship of these perceptions to type of library schedule, and to determine the origin of these perceptions.

### Rationale and Significance of the Study

New national standards for school libraries, *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, were published in 1998, placing an increased emphasis on the instructional role of the library media specialist. Yet, the majority of studies examining the role of the library media specialist in schools was completed during the 1980s and 1990s. Since educational emphasis on standardized test scores has increased with the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act*, research needs to address the teaching role of the library media specialist and the potential contribution to be made to student learning. Library media specialists, collaboratively partnering with classroom teachers, can enhance instruction in the state Standards of Learning, if allowed to participate to their fullest potential.

Student learning, as measured by standardized test scores, is higher in schools in which the library media specialist takes an active role in instruction. Research completed in 16 states demonstrates the positive impact that the school library media specialist has on student achievement. As library media specialists teach information literacy skills to students, collaborate with classroom teachers for instruction, and provide staff development for teachers in the area of information technology, scores on



standardized tests increase (*School Libraries*, 2006). On the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), for example, elementary students' reading test scores were 21% higher in schools which had high levels of collaboration between the library media specialist and classroom teachers (Lance, Rodney, & Hamilton-Pennell, 2000). Hartzell (2002b) asserts that these types of activities take place more often when the principal encourages them and facilitates their occurrence. It is important to have an accurate snapshot of elementary school principals' understanding of the instructional role of the library media specialist and to identify the source of that understanding.

#### Literature/Research Background

##### *Instructional Role of the Library Media Specialist*

Tracing the evolution of the instructional role of the library media specialist, *Standards for School Library Programs* (AASL, 1960) suggest that instruction in library skills and in the use of materials be a cooperative venture involving the principal, the department chair, the classroom teacher, and the librarian. *Standards for School Media Programs* (AASL, 1969) note that library media specialists should provide instructional resources to teachers, work with teachers on curriculum planning, and serve on teaching teams. *Media Programs: District and School* (AASL, 1975) require that the media specialist show competency in curriculum development and in teaching and learning strategies, while *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (AASL, 1988) specifies that library media specialists function both as teachers and as instructional consultants. *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (AASL, 1998) requires that library media specialists function

as teachers and instructional partners to collaboratively teach information literacy skills in the context of content area curriculum. Throughout the standards issued over the past fifty years, a common and developing strand is that of the active instructional role of the library media specialist.

Similarly, candidates enrolled in initial programs for school library media specialist preparation which are nationally recognized by NCATE and AASL must demonstrate their ability to provide students with a stimulating learning environment, knowledge of learners and learning, skills as effective and knowledgeable teachers, and ability to integrate information literacy skills instruction into the content curriculum, as well as their ability to function as instructional partners and educational leaders (ALA, 2003). Practicing library media specialists pursuing National Board Certification must demonstrate teaching competencies such as knowledge of learners, learning styles, human growth and development and knowledge of the principles of teaching and learning and must be able to integrate information literacy into the content curriculum through collaboration with classroom teachers (National Board, 2001). Both newly-trained library media specialists and experienced library media specialists striving for professional excellence are expected to practice a strong instructional role.

#### *Impact on Student Achievement*

Numerous studies completed by Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Pennell (2000, 2001, 2002, 2005) and others have demonstrated that student achievement is higher when library media specialists take an active role in teaching and learning. Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) fourth-grade reading test scores were 18% higher

in schools where library media specialists planned cooperatively with teachers, provided in-service training to teachers, and taught information literacy skills to students (Lance et al., 2000). Baughman (2000) found that Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores were higher at the elementary level when a library instruction program aligned with the state curriculum framework was in place.

Todd (2003), surveying over 13,000 students in Ohio schools, found that 99% felt that school libraries had helped them in some way with their learning. He reported that library media specialists help students to learn by teaching them information literacy skills of accessing, evaluating, and using information and that the library plays a critical role in facilitating student learning. In their 2005 Illinois study, Lance et al. examined Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) scores, finding that students in elementary schools with flexibly scheduled libraries scored 10% higher in reading and 11% higher in writing than students in schools with less flexibly scheduled libraries. They concluded that students benefit when library media specialists function as teachers and co-teachers and that libraries should be an integral part of the instructional program of the school.

### *Principals' Perceptions*

Findings from studies which examine principals' perceptions of library media specialists demonstrate that principals do not have a clear understanding of the role of today's library media specialist in schools. Naylor and Jenkins (1988) studied North Carolina principals' perceptions of the terminology used in a new statewide

performance evaluation instrument for library media specialists and found that principals were not aware of the range of services provided by library media specialists. Those principals who described the climate in the library media center as low viewed library media specialists as managers of materials, inventory, and budgets, while those who described the climate as high tended to view the library media specialist in more of an instructional role: principals' responses were split in half between low and high, which suggests that only 50% of principals grasped the instructional potential of the library media program.

Hortin (1989) compared principal and teacher attitudes toward library media programs in rural and small schools in Kansas and found that while both had positive attitudes, overall, principals had higher positive attitudes toward the school library media program than did teachers. Principals rated library media specialists higher on teaching library skills to students and on teaching students and teachers about microcomputer technology than did teachers. In his conclusions, Hortin pointed out that library media specialists need to know how students, teachers, and principals perceive them in order to better communicate and to meet their patrons' needs.

Surveying elementary school principals and library media specialists in North Carolina regarding the principals' relationships to the library media program, Campbell (1991) concluded that the effectiveness of the school library media program is dependent on a partnership between the principal and the library media specialist. He found a significant difference in how principals rated their relationships to the library media program and how their library media specialists rated them: principals rated

themselves higher than did their library media specialists, suggesting a need for better communication between the two.

Kolencik (2001) studied principal support of the school library media program and information literacy instruction in secondary schools in western Pennsylvania. Surveying both principals and library media specialists, Kolencik found that principals considered the major role of the library media specialist to be that of reference and research service, while school library media specialists defined their primary role as that of information literacy instruction. Principals in the study cited lack of funding as the primary impediment to integrating information literacy instruction into the curriculum, while library media specialists cited lack of understanding of the role of the library media specialist as an instructional partner as a major barrier.

Marcoux (2005) reported on a survey of K-12 principals in the state of Washington to identify their perceptions of responsibilities of various roles of their library media specialists. In the areas of information specialist, information manager, and instructional partner, principals rated integration of instructional technologies, management of the library collection, and teaching high but failed to connect these responsibilities to curriculum development and integration and to evaluation and student achievement. Findings from these studies demonstrate that principals do not have a clear understanding of the role of the library media specialist in today's schools.

#### *Sources of Principals' Perceptions*

To be able to adequately address principals' lack of knowledge regarding the role of today's library media specialist, it is important first to identify the source of

principals' knowledge. Hartzell (2002b) noted that, while principals are classroom teachers before they become administrators, few teacher-training programs provide information to future teachers concerning library media specialists as partners in curriculum and instruction. Over 75% of NCATE accredited graduate principal-preparation programs surveyed by Wilson and McNeil (1998) reported that they did not include information about school libraries in their coursework. Professors in educational administration programs identified the need for more school library information in their textbooks and journals (Veltze, 1992).

Several researchers have attempted to ascertain the source of principals' perceptions regarding libraries. Naylor and Jenkins (1988) reported that principals learn about library media specialists from personal observation, from faculty, student, and parental comments, and from conversations with the library media specialist. Campbell (1991) found that principals gain most of their knowledge about school library media programs from their current library media specialists. Buchanan (1982) and Hartzell (2002b) suggested that principals' perceptions of the role of the library media specialist are also formed through library experiences as students and library experiences as classroom teachers. It is important to identify the source of principals' knowledge regarding library media programs so that a plan of action for better communication might be developed.

#### Research Questions

Focusing at the elementary grade level and examining the instructional role of the library media specialist, four basic research questions guided the study:

1. How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills?
2. How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as an instructional partner?
3. What relationships exist between the dependent variables, principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills and as an instructional partner, and the independent variable, type of library schedule?
4. What is the basis for elementary school principals' views of the instructional role of the library media specialist?

#### Methodology

Principals of the 1,177 elementary schools in Virginia were the target population. A proportional stratified random sampling method was used to select elementary schools from the sampling frame. The first level of stratification was by the eight Superintendents' Regional Study Groups, and then, within each Region, the second level of stratification was by urban and non-urban setting. By using this approach, the sample was designed to be representative of the elementary school population.

As indicated in the literature review, the most commonly used methodology for this type of study is survey research (Campbell, 1991; McCracken, 2000). A survey was developed that was adapted from those used by Alexander, Smith, and Carey (2003), Kolencik (2001), and McCracken (2000), using the terminology and constructs located in the standards of the field--*Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*

(AASL, 1998), *National Board Professional Teaching Standards for Library Media* (2001), and *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs of School Library Media Specialist Preparation* (2003). Survey item development was also informed by the findings of a mini-qualitative research project conducted by the researcher in spring 2006 in which two principals and two library media specialists were interviewed regarding the instructional role of the library media specialist.

The survey consisted of statements regarding the teaching role of the library media specialist, the instructional partner role of the library media specialist, and overall contributions that library media specialists make to learning. Principals were asked to rate these statements on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The survey concluded with an open-ended question: “Think back to a situation or incident which you have had with a library media specialist which helped to form your view of the role of the library media specialist in the school. This incident could be a positive one, or it could be a negative one. Please describe the incident.”

Following review by content experts in the fields of school library media and educational leadership, the survey was reviewed by a small number of practicing elementary library media specialists to identify any key questions or areas that had been omitted. After needed revisions were made and after approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the survey, constructed in *Inquisite*, was piloted with a small number of practicing elementary school principals. Again, after needed revisions were made, an email was sent to Virginia elementary school principals with a link to the online survey. Schools from which library media specialists or principals



participated in the instrument review and pilot study were eliminated from the sampling frame.

Descriptive statistics were run in the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, SPSS 13.0*, to present principals' responses to the survey statements. Responses were then analyzed to explore the relationship between principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as teacher and as instructional partner and type of library schedule. Responses to the open-ended question were examined using content analysis within the framework of critical incident theory (Flanagan, 1954).

### Summary

Library media specialists play a key instructional role in their schools, serving as teachers and collaborative instructional partners. In schools where the library media specialist takes an active part in teaching and learning, student achievement is higher. Principals are the instructional leaders of their schools, and they play a key role in the implementation of an effective school library media program. Yet, principals do not learn about the potential of the library media program through principal preparation coursework, professional journals, or conference attendance. The purpose of this study was to determine how elementary school principals view library media specialists' instructional role and to determine the source of those perceptions.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

The purpose of the study is to examine elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist and the source of those perceptions. This chapter presents a review of literature regarding the instructional role of the library media specialist, first looking at standards in the library media field, next noting the impact that an instructionally active library media specialist has on student achievement, and then exploring library media specialist role perceptions. The chapter then presents literature regarding the role of the principal in supporting and facilitating the library media program, standards in the field of educational leadership, principals' perceptions of library media specialists, and the source of those perceptions. The chapter concludes with literature which supports the methodology developed for the study, survey research and statistical analysis of the data as well as the use of critical incident theory both in the field of library media and in the field of educational leadership. Databases used to locate information include *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *ERIC (Education Resources Information Center)*, Thomson Gale's *InfoTrac OneFile*, and H. W. Wilson's *Library Literature*. Keywords and descriptors searched in various combinations include "critical incidents method," "elementary education," "elementary secondary education," "librarians," "media specialists," "principals," "role perception," and "school libraries."

## Instructional Role of the Library Media Specialist

### *Standards in the Field of School Library Media*

In examining national standards and research literature of the field from 1950 to 1984, Craver (1986) described the evolution of the instructional role of the library media specialist from study hall monitor to curriculum developer. While the 1950s were a decade for a passive role of supplying resources and guiding students in their use, the 1960s offered increased federal funding for school libraries, additional resources, and, Craver notes, a more developed but static instructional role. Educational change and implementation of various new methods of instruction in the 1970s allowed the library media specialist to take a more active role in instruction. The 1980s provided great technological advances, stimulating the role of the library media specialist as instructional designer, integrating technology into instruction.

Although earlier national standards (*Standards for School Library Programs*, 1960; *Standards for School Media Programs*, 1969; and *Media Programs: District and School*, 1975) mention the instructional role of the library media specialist, it is in the 1988 *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* that the role is presented more fully. According to *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (1988), the school library media program should be an integral part of the curriculum of the school, central to the instructional process. This integration is achieved through collaborative partnerships of library media specialists, administrators, teachers, and parents. The library media specialist's roles are defined as those of an information specialist, one who not only provides appropriate resources but

also connects patrons to those resources at the point of need; that of a teacher, one who teaches both students and teachers to use these resources; and that of an instructional consultant, one who actively participates in the development of curriculum and instruction and in the effective use of technology.

*Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, published in 1998, further develops the instructional role of the library media specialist. The standards title itself is significant: school library media programs promote information power and information literacy through collaborative partnerships developed to promote learning. Central to these standards for school library media programs are nine information literacy standards for student learning, and library media specialists are charged to teach these standards to students in the context of content area curriculum (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning*


---

 Information Literacy

Standard 1: The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively.

Standard 2: The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently.

Standard 3: The student who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively.

## Independent Learning

Standard 4: The student who is an independent learner is information literate and pursues information related to personal interest.

Standard 5: The student who is an independent learner is information literate and appreciates literature and other creative expressions of information.

Standard 6: The student who is an independent learner is information literate and strives for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.

## Social Responsibility

Standard 7: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society.

Standard 8: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and practices ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology.

Standard 9: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.

---

*Note.* From *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (p.8-9) by the American Association of School Librarians, 1998, Chicago: American Library Association. Copyright 1999 by the American Library Association.

The 1998 *Information Power* retains two of the roles set forth in the 1988 *Information Power*, teacher and information specialist. Program administrator is added, and the term “instructional partner” replaces the term “instructional consultant,” further emphasizing the need for partnerships and teaming to facilitate student learning.

To prepare library media specialists to practice this instructional role, the *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Library Media Specialist Preparation* (2003), approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, place a strong emphasis on instruction. Of the four standard categories, two focus on instruction: Standard 2, Teaching and Learning, and Standard 3, Collaboration and Leadership. Of the thirteen elements which programs must demonstrate that their candidates have mastered, seven directly address instruction: 1.1 Efficient and Ethical Information-Seeking Behavior, 1.4 Stimulating Learning Environment, 2.1 Knowledge of Learners and Learning, 2.2 Effective and Knowledgeable Teacher, 2.3 Information Literacy Curriculum, 3.2 Instructional Partner, and 3.3 Educational Leader. Candidates completing these library media specialist preparation programs must demonstrate effective teaching and must show evidence that they positively impact student learning.

Practicing library media specialists may demonstrate their instructional excellence by achieving National Board Certification in Library Media. According to the *NBPTS Library Media Standards* (2001), to earn national board certification in library media, a library media specialist must demonstrate various knowledge and skills. Among the requirements are knowledge of student learners and their learning styles,

knowledge of the principles and pedagogy of teaching and learning, knowledge of the content of library and information studies as well as the ability to integrate information literacy instruction into content curriculum by collaboratively partnering with classroom teachers to plan, implement, and evaluate instruction. To earn National Board Certification in Library Media, a library media specialist must exhibit excellence in teaching.

Recognizing the teaching role of the school library media specialist, Virginia requires that a library media specialist be licensed as a teacher (Virginia Department of Education, 1998). Library media specialists in Virginia public schools earn licensure through one of two routes. They either hold endorsement in a content area and add Library Media PreK-12 to their teaching licenses through the completion of 24 credit hours of library media coursework and a supervised clinical experience, or, if they come to education from another career field, they complete 15 credit hours in professional education studies plus their required library media coursework and an extended, supervised clinical experience.

Standards for school library media programs emphasize the teaching role of the library media specialist. Standards for the educational preparation of library media specialists require candidates to demonstrate competence in teaching and collaboration. Standards for library media specialists who desire to be nationally recognized for excellence in the profession focus on teaching. Virginia requires that library media specialists be licensed as teachers. The intent is that today's library media specialists are teachers and instructional partners.

*Impact of the Library Media Specialist on Academic Achievement*

Numerous studies completed in various states have demonstrated that when library media specialists take an active role in instruction, student achievement is higher. Lance et al. (2000) compared Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) reading test scores for fourth graders from schools with well-developed library media programs, defined in terms of staffing, collection, and budget, to scores for fourth graders in schools with less-developed library media programs: reading scores were 18% higher in schools with more fully developed library programs. Reading scores for students in schools with the most collaborative programs were 18% to 21% higher than for students in schools where the least collaboration occurred. Scores were higher in schools where library media specialists planned cooperatively with teachers, provided in-service training to teachers, and taught information literacy skills to students.

Baughman (2000) examined the relationship of Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) math, language arts, and science scores to library media programs in schools. He found that test scores were higher in elementary schools which had a full-time library media specialist, library clerical staff, and larger budgets. Other key factors he identified at the elementary level were the presence of an instructional program in library information skills and the alignment of this instruction with the state curriculum framework.

Lance et al. (2001) examined scores of fifth graders on Oregon's state reading test. Reading scores were higher in schools whose library media centers had larger print collections, had higher numbers of individual student visits to the library media center,



and had higher numbers of student group visits to the library media center for information literacy instruction. Student visits to the library increased with higher library staffing levels and with active involvement by the library media specialist in teaching and learning activities.

Smith (2001), working with data collected from a random sample of Texas school library media centers, investigated the impact that school library media programs had on student performance on the reading component of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). At the elementary school level, she discovered a positive and statistically significant correlation between the school's reading test scores and the library media specialist meeting with the principal and other school administrators, serving on the school's curriculum committee, planning instructional units with classroom teachers, team teaching with classroom teachers, and providing training to teachers.

Examining Iowa schools, Rodney, Lance, and Hamilton-Pennell (2002) studied the relationship of school library media programs and reading scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Scores were higher for fourth graders in schools where library media programs had more library staff hours per week, where library media staff spent more hours per week planning and teaching cooperatively with classroom teachers and managing computer information networks, and where students had more in-library usage of library materials.

Looking at 208 elementary schools in New Mexico, Lance et al. (2002) examined fourth graders' scores on the language arts portion of the New Mexico

Achievement Assessment Program. They found higher language arts scores in schools where the library was better staffed, where the library collection contained more print materials and more subscriptions to electronic databases, and where the library media specialist spent more time meeting weekly with administrators, providing in-service training for teachers, and promoting reading.

Rodney et al. (2003), exploring the impact of school libraries on students' academic achievement in Michigan, examined reading test scores in the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MAEP). They found that fourth graders' test scores were likely to increase when students spent more time in the library and when the library media specialist spent more time developing collections, planning and working collaboratively with teachers, and teaching information literacy skills to students.

Todd and Kuhlthau (2004) conducted a study in Ohio, examining ways in which library media specialists and library media programs helped students learn. Surveying over 13,000 students served by 39 effective school libraries, they concluded that school library media specialists in Ohio are agents of resources, information literacy development, knowledge construction, academic achievement, independent reading and personal development, technological literacy, and individualized learning. The assistance provided by library media specialists is strongest in the elementary school where students need more instruction to develop into information-literate, independent learners.

Lance et al. (2005) studied the relationship of library indicators and Illinois fifth graders' scores on the reading and writing portions of the Illinois Standards

Achievement Test (ISAT). Key findings linked higher reading scores (13%) and higher writing scores (17%) to higher library staffing; higher reading scores (6%) and higher writing scores (11%) to higher book circulation; higher reading scores (7%) and higher writing scores (11%) to newer library collections; and higher reading scores (10%) and higher writing scores (11%) to libraries which were flexibly scheduled. As noted by Lance et al., when library media specialists take an active role in instruction, student achievement, as measured by standardized test scores, increases.

#### *Library Media Specialists' Perceptions of Their Instructional Role*

As the role of the library media specialist has evolved, researchers have conducted studies to determine library media specialists' perceptions and performance of this role and to identify factors which inhibit or enable its successful implementation. Master and Master (1988) surveyed Nevada school library media specialists to examine self-perceptions of their role as curriculum and instructional leaders in their schools. Seventy-nine percent of the 167 respondents viewed themselves as school instructional leaders, supporting content area instruction, promoting reading, and teaching information literacy skills. Seventy percent of the respondents noted that the principals' understanding and support of their instructional role was a key factor in how they were viewed by the school faculty and staff. Elementary school library media specialists ranked teaching information literacy skills as their top daily routine function and ranked administrative and clerical functions lower on the scale.

Surveying a random sample of 200 South Carolina school library media specialists, Ervin (1989) explored the implementation of their curricular, instructional

role in the context of their experiences as classroom teachers and as library media specialists, their educational level, and the subject content area they previously taught. She examined their philosophical acceptance of the role, their perceived assumption of the role, and barriers they perceived in role implementation. Of the library media specialists responding, 89.1% accepted their curricular, instructional role, and 63.4% felt that they were implementing it. Barriers that they identified were lack of time and fellow educators not understanding or valuing the role. No overall significant relationship was found between the demographic factors and the assumption or acceptance of the curricular, instructional role. Ervin concluded her study with recommendations that administrators in South Carolina schools be surveyed to determine their awareness of the instructional potential of the library media program and that organizational factors such as flexible scheduling be examined.

Pickard (1993) surveyed 126 DeKalb County, Georgia, library media specialists to ascertain how important they perceived their instructional design and consultation role to be and the extent to which they perceived they were practicing this role. She grouped survey item responses into the categories of reactive, proactive, and interactive, with reactive tasks lowest on the instructional involvement scale and interactive tasks highest on the instructional involvement scale. While the majority of the respondents rated statements describing their instructional role as either very important or important, only 10% indicated that they practiced these activities to a great or very great extent.

Johnson (1993) surveyed library media specialists from 87 rural public schools in 21 southern Illinois counties to determine the extent to which they perceived and

practiced the instructional consultant role as defined in the 1988 *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*. Using Pickard's (1993) grouping structure of reactive, proactive, and interactive, she found that library media specialists consistently rated interactive tasks higher in perceived importance than in actual practice. Inadequate budgets and lack of clerical assistance were noted as barriers. Only 25% of the elementary library media specialists surveyed felt that they practiced at the interactive level, working as team teacher and curriculum developer.

Building on the work of Pickard (1993) and Johnson (1993), Putnam (1996) explored the instructional consultant role at the elementary school level, perceived importance and actual practice, in the context of the library program scheduling pattern in place. She drew her random sample of 296 from members of the American Library Association who were elementary school library media specialists. Her findings demonstrated that while elementary library media specialists affirmed the importance of their instructional design and consultant role, they did not practice it fully. Comparing the practice of those library media specialists whose programs operated on a flexible schedule as opposed to a fixed schedule, library media specialists whose programs were flexible were able to practice their instructional role more than those library media specialists whose programs were fixed.

Tallman and van Deusen (1995) surveyed a random sample of 1500 elementary school library media specialists to explore factors that impacted their ability to implement their instructional role--collaboratively partnering with classroom teachers to integrate information skills instruction with content area curriculum. Key findings

reported were as follows: in schools where principals set the expectation for collaboration between classroom teachers and the library media specialist, more collaboration occurred; library media specialists who met with teams of teachers reported more collaboration than those who met with teachers individually; library media specialists with flexible scheduling reported significantly more teaching and more curriculum consultation than those with fixed scheduling; library media specialists with flexible scheduling reported 62% of their units as collaboratively planned, compared to 22% for library media specialists with fixed scheduling.

Shannon (1996) surveyed 61 school library media leaders in Kentucky to capture a snapshot of how major education reform efforts in the state had impacted the school library media programs. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents stated that students' use of the library media center had changed significantly since 1990, with one elementary school library media specialist noting that teachers were beginning to acknowledge her instructional role. Seventy-four percent reported that their library/information skills curriculum had changed, and 66% noted that their role as a teacher had changed. They mentioned more involvement with curriculum, more cooperation and collaboration with classroom teachers, and more use of library materials since the curriculum was no longer textbook driven. Barriers to the development of exemplary programs noted were lack of time, lack of funding, lack of clerical support, and lack of flexible scheduling. Principals' lack of understanding of the library media specialist role was also noted.

In a qualitative study, van Deusen (1996) used a case study approach to explore the contributions an elementary school library media specialist made to the instructional planning process. She found three categories of contributions: the resources category, in which the library media specialist connected teachers to quality resources needed for instruction, a traditional role; the planning category, in which the library media specialist participated and actively contributed to the planning of lessons and units; and the coordination category, in which the library media specialist demonstrated her capacity to see the school, instruction, and learning as a whole rather than in an individual classroom teacher perspective. Teachers noted that the library media specialist improved the quality of instruction for students.

Using a combination of survey and observation, McCarthy (1997) examined 48 library media programs in New England to determine how well the roles of teacher, information specialist, and instructional consultant, as set forth in *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (1988), were being implemented. Forty-two percent of the respondents believed that the principles set forth in *Information Power* were realizable in their schools, while 27% noted that they were somewhat realizable. Reasons given for negative responses, particularly at the elementary level, were lack of flexible schedule and lack of support staff. Library media specialists who operated with flexible schedules specified that the best feature of their programs was the integration of the library program into the curriculum through collaborative planning with teachers and meaningful assignments for students. Library media specialists who

operated on a fixed schedule noted library time was viewed as preparation time for teachers and that it was difficult to connect their library programs to the curriculum.

Using a random sample, McCracken (2000) surveyed 1000 K-12 library media specialists across the United States to compare their perceptions of the roles set forth in the 1988 *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (information specialist, instructional consultant, teacher) and the 1998 *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (information specialist, instructional partner, program administrator, teacher). She examined the perception of the importance of the role to the library media specialist as well as the perception of the level of actual practice of the role. Her findings showed that, for all roles, library media specialists rated them higher in importance than in actual practice. Roles were ranked as follows: information specialist, program administrator, teacher, instructional partner, instructional consultant.

It should be noted here that the role of instructional partner in the 1998 *Information Power* replaced the role of instructional consultant found in the 1988 *Information Power*. When this research was conducted in 2000, the 1998 standards were in effect. One must question whether use of both roles provided a valid comparison, since the definition of each as presented in the standards and reflected in the study is very similar.

McCracken (2000) found scheduling format at the elementary level impacts the ability of the library media specialists to practice their roles: elementary school library media specialists who practice flexible scheduling are better able to implement their



roles than those who work under fixed schedules. Library media specialists noted that principal support was the most important factor for the expansion of their roles. Barriers to implementation of their roles included lack of time, lack of funding, lack of teacher support and interest, a fixed schedule, lack of clerical support, and lack of administrator support.

Lance, Rodney, and Russell (2007) explored perceptions of Indiana library media specialists, principals, and teachers related to library programs and the impact of these perceptions on Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) test scores in reading/language arts and mathematics. They found that test scores were higher in elementary schools where library media specialists felt that principals and teachers understood their roles as school leaders, curriculum designers, administrators, and teachers.

National standards require that library media specialists perform as teachers and instructional partners. When library media specialists take an active role in the instructional program of their schools, student achievement increases. Library media specialists work to implement their roles of teacher and instructional partner. Principal support for this effort is identified as a common theme throughout the studies examined. Library media specialists feel that principal support of the library media program is key, both in the expectations that are set and the support that is provided. The most frequently cited barriers to full implementation of the instructional role of the library media specialist that are within the principal's realm of influence and control include

lack of teacher understanding of the role of the library media program in instruction, lack of time, and lack of a flexible schedule for library use.

### Principals

#### *Standards in the Field of Educational Leadership*

After conducting a survey of NCATE accredited principal preparation programs and finding that over 75% of them do not include information about school library media programs in their coursework, Wilson and McNeil (1998) urged library media specialists to take action, to contact NCATE and other accrediting bodies, and to lobby for the inclusion of school library information in educational leadership programs. Examination of the current national standards for principal preparation, *Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership for Principals, Superintendents, Curriculum Directors, and Supervisors* (National Policy Board, 2002), shows that this had not occurred. Libraries are not mentioned in any of the seven standards, nor are they mentioned in any of the 27 elements of the standards.

While the standards for the field of educational leadership are silent on school library media programs, it should be noted that the federal government sends mixed messages regarding school library media. The *No Child Left Behind Act* includes the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program which promotes literacy and reading through funding to school libraries (ALA, 2006a). It also includes school library media specialists in its definition of instructional staff (ALA, 2006b). The *NCLB Act*, however, does not require that school libraries be staffed by highly qualified library

media specialists; in fact, it does not address the qualifications for school library media specialists (ALA, 2006a).

Similarly, it is only with the July 2006 release of the *Current Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2003-04* that the National Center for Education Statistics changed its classification of library media specialists to include them under the category of instruction-related expenditures (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Prior to this recent change, NCES utilized its 1950s classification of library media specialists as support staff--instruction (ALA, 2006b), relegating them to support staff and failing to recognize their active instructional role.

The federal definitions and classifications have been slow to evolve with the profession, and the contribution of school library media specialists to student learning is not fully acknowledged at the federal level. Despite the fact that national standards for educational leadership do not address the importance of school library media programs in instruction and that federal expectations are inconsistent, library media specialists play an important role in student learning, and principals are the key.

#### *Role of the Principal in Supporting Library Media Programs*

The principal, as the instructional leader of the school, must provide support for the library media program. Buchanan (1982) asserted that the principal must see the library media program as an integral part of the instructional program of the school, must insure that the library media specialist is truly a member of the school's instructional team, and must encourage teachers to view the library media program and library media specialist in this light. Pearson (1989) noted that the library and its

instructional programs should be an integral part of the school instructional environment and that a good working relationship between the principal and the library media specialist made this possible.

Similarly, Campbell (1991) proposed that the relationship of the principal to the school library media program was critical to its success, that the principal must understand clearly the role and purpose of the school library media program in the context of the entire school, must set high expectations for the program, must support the program through personal commitment and sufficient funding, and must communicate to teachers and students the importance of the program.

Henri and Hay (1995) noted that support of the principal was a crucial factor in the ability of the library media specialist to influence instruction. The quality of the relationship between the principal and the library media specialist impacted the library's place in the school culture as well as funding for the library media program. Library media programs were most effective when the vision of the principal and the library media specialist aligned.

In a qualitative study, Oberg (1996) examined the concept of principal support as defined by seven library media specialists in two Alberta, Canada, school districts. She found that principals supported the school library media program by promoting the program to teachers and making clear to teachers that it was to be an integral part of instruction. Principals also supported the library media program by showing personal commitment to it, affirming its value and modeling library use. They supported the library program administratively with adequate budget, adequate clerical staff, and

flexible scheduling which allowed library media specialists to collaboratively plan with teachers. Finally, they supported the program by placing the library media specialist in leadership roles within the school.

Hafsteinsdottir (1997), exploring attitudes of elementary school principals in Iceland toward their school libraries, surveyed principals and library media specialists in 27 schools. Barriers to the development of an information literate school which he identified included lack of funding, lack of technology, and lack of knowledge regarding the school library's potential contribution to the instructional program.

Kolencik (2001) noted that the principal's leadership in promoting and supporting the library media program contributed to a positive collaborative school culture that led to school improvement and to increased student learning.

Henri, Hay, and Oberg (2002a) surveyed principals and library media specialists in seven countries, Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Japan, Scotland, and South Korea, to examine the principal's role in developing school library media programs. General patterns of beliefs and values held across cultures. Although principals' and library media specialists' beliefs concerning the principal's role generally were in alignment, they differed most in their views on the principal's role in facilitating the development of an information-literate school community. They also differed in their beliefs concerning the amount of time the principal spent on facilitating and advocating an information-literate community, on supporting collaboration between the library media specialist and teachers, on providing support staff in the library, and on providing adequate time for the library media specialist to complete administrative duties. Henri et

al. (2002a) noted that principals must support library media programs by being committed to them, by promoting teacher-library media specialist collaboration with new staff members, and by working to integrate the library media program into the total instructional program of the school.

Speaking at the 2002 White House Conference on School Libraries, Hartzell (2002b) encouraged principals to reconceptualize and think of the library program as an investment rather than a cost. From his work with the DeWitt Wallace Foundation's Library Power program, he reported that effective school libraries have both dynamic library media specialists and committed principals. Principals develop school schedules and foster a school climate which either inhibits or facilitates collaboration.

Hartzell (2002c) noted that a barrier to full implementation of the library media program was lack of faculty awareness concerning the library media program's offerings. It was the principal's duty to promote with teachers the library's instructional potential. Principals also influenced the extent to which information literacy instruction was integrated into the curriculum of the school, and they controlled the library media specialist's ability to serve in leadership positions in the school.

Lance et al. (2007) examined the impact of library media specialists', principals', and teachers' perceptions of the library program on student achievement. They reported that Indiana students across grade levels earned higher standardized test scores in schools where principals valued collaboration between classroom teachers and library media specialists and where principals supported flexible scheduling for the library.

Van Hamersveld (2007) surveyed school administrators in Texas regarding their perceptions of the potential of the school library media program to positively impact student achievement. She suggested that further research into administrators' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist is needed if library media programs are to be fully integrated into the instructional program of the school.

Principals set the tone and establish the learning environment within their schools. For full implementation of the library media program to occur, principals must establish a culture of collaboration and set the expectation with teachers that the library will make an active contribution to instruction. For this to occur, principals must have a clear understanding of the instructional potential of the library media program.

#### *Principals' Perceptions of the Role of the Library Media Specialist*

Various studies have been conducted to determine principals' perceptions of the role of the library media specialist in the school. Gustafson (1982) focused her study on elementary school principals' perceptions of the leadership role of the school library media specialist. Surveying 140 randomly selected elementary schools in 10 counties in Maryland, she examined the leadership role in the context of the library media specialist's gender, educational background, and work experience. Using multiple regression and controlling for various school, principal, and library media specialist characteristics, she compared matched responses from principals and library media specialists. She found no statistically significant relationship between principals' perceptions of the library media specialist leadership role and any of the demographic factors.

Naylor and Jenkins (1988) surveyed a stratified random sample of 30 elementary and secondary principals across North Carolina to determine their understanding of terms used in a new evaluation instrument for North Carolina media specialists and to determine the sources of the principals' knowledge for assessing the library media specialists' performances. Only 18% of the principals surveyed described library media services and library media specialists' competencies as instructional in nature. Naylor and Jenkins concluded that principals needed to improve their understanding of the roles, services, and performance of library media specialists in schools.

Hortin (1989) surveyed principals and teachers in 400 rural and small schools in Kansas to explore principal and teacher attitudes toward the library media program and its instructional development services and to analyze how the attitudes of the two groups differed. Questions focused on the library staff's attitudes toward teachers, the success of library instruction for students, and library staff's knowledge of microcomputer technology and their training of students and teachers in microcomputer use. While both teachers and principals displayed positive attitudes toward the library media programs, principals' attitudes were generally higher. Recommendations included that the library media specialist work to communicate to principals, teachers, students, and parents the curriculum and instructional potential of the library media program. Since teachers' and principals' attitudes differed, Hortin encouraged library media specialists to consider the audience when informing them of programs and services.



Using a random sampling technique, Campbell (1991) surveyed 400 North Carolina elementary school principals and their library media specialists using a 29-item questionnaire to determine perceptions of the principal's relationship to the school library media program. He also explored various demographic factors as well as the source of principals' perceptions of school libraries. None of the demographic factors studied were significant. The greatest difference in mean scores for the views of the principal and the library media specialist were in the areas of library media specialist involvement with curriculum planning, integration of the library media program into the curriculum, and flexible scheduling.

Using a random sample of public and private K-12 schools, Schon, Helmstadter, and Robinson (1991) surveyed 224 Arizona principals and library media specialists to examine library media specialists' competencies in professional matters, library materials, management, human behavior, planning and evaluation, and learning. Principals and library media specialists strongly agreed on competencies and skills important in each area, demonstrating that their understanding and expectations were aligned. In the area of learning, both ranked positioning the library program as an integral part of the school's instructional program first. They ranked planning learning activities which help students become independent learners second.

Dorrell and Lawson (1995) surveyed a random sample of 160 Missouri high school principals to determine their perceptions regarding the school library media program. They examined library staffing and budget, principals' views of the importance of the school library, the importance of various tasks performed by the

library media specialist, the importance of professional development for the library media specialist, and their quality of communication with their library media specialists. In contrast to Schon's et al. (1991) findings, Dorrell and Lawson found that Missouri high school principals held a traditional view of the library media specialist as one who performed clerical duties and selected, purchased, cataloged, and circulated materials. Tasks such as curriculum planning and conferences with teachers, tasks which demonstrate the instructional role of the library media specialist, received only average ratings of importance from principals.

Kolencik (2001) compared secondary school principals' perceptions of the role of the school library media program and the school library media specialist to perceptions held by the school library media specialists. Surveying 171 school districts in western Pennsylvania, she also explored principals' and school library media specialists' assessment of the integration of information literacy skills into the school's curriculum. According to principals, the library media specialists' major role was reference and research service. They viewed library media specialists as keepers and circulators of library materials and as people responsible for technology. According to library media specialists, their major role was information literacy instruction to facilitate student learning. While principals considered budgetary challenges the major barrier to integrating information literacy into content curriculum, library media specialists indicated that lack of time and lack of teacher understanding of the instructional partner role of the library media specialist were the greatest barriers.

In 2002 *School Library Journal* surveyed 242 principals across the United States to determine their level of knowledge and understanding about the school library media program. Eighty percent of the respondents strongly believed that the library contributed to the overall value of the school. However, only 47% acknowledged a direct connection between the school library media program and student achievement, and only 41% noted that the library program had a direct impact on student scores on standardized tests (Lau, 2002).

Alexander et al. (2003) surveyed 180 K-12 principals in Kentucky to determine the importance that they placed on school library media programs. Using a 35-item questionnaire based on five areas from *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (1998) and examining certain demographics, they explored the following: whether formal training about school library media impacted the principals' views; whether principals' perceptions of funding adequacy related to their views of the overall importance of the library media program; and whether principals' perceptions of library media specialists roles differed by grade level of school.

Their findings revealed that principals who had taken a course which included content related to school library media programs rated the library media program as more important than those who had not. They also found that those who rated library funding as adequate rated their library programs higher. In rating the importance of the library media specialists' roles in the five areas (information literacy, collaboration/leadership/technology, learning/teaching, information access/delivery, and program administration), learning/teaching was rated the lowest across all grade levels.

Across all roles, middle and high school principals rated the library media specialists significantly higher than did elementary school principals. The authors hypothesize that this low rating may be a result of elementary school principals' continued view of the library program as support for but not integral to teaching and learning.

Marcoux (2005) reported on a survey of 372 K-12 Washington state principals to identify their perceptions of the responsibilities of various roles practiced by their library media specialists. Respondents indicated that they viewed library media specialists as reading advocates, information specialists, information managers, and instructional partners. In examining responsibilities within these roles, however, principals rated reading advocacy, integration of instructional technology, management of the library collection, and teaching higher than they did the responsibilities of curriculum integration, curriculum development, evaluation, and assessment of student achievement. Marcoux concluded that principals do not have a clear understanding of the instructional role of the library media specialist and how it contributes to student achievement.

Kaplan (2006) reported similar findings, characterizing principals' knowledge of and attitude toward school library media specialists as one of benign neglect. She concluded that principals are not aware of the instructional role of the library media specialist and that they do not set high enough expectations for the contributions that the library media specialist can make to the instructional program of the school.

Principals in the studies reviewed tended to view the library media specialist as a resource person, a provider of reference services, and administrator of library duties

and clerical tasks. With the exception of Hortin (1989) and Schon et al. (1991), none strongly identified the teaching and instructional role of the library media specialist or the potential academic contributions to be made.

### *Sources of Principals' Perceptions*

Studies examined show that principals have varying levels of understanding and expectations for the instructional role of the library media specialist. It is important to determine the source of principals' perceptions and knowledge concerning school library media programs. Buchanan (1982) noted that principals were former teachers but typically had no prior experience as library media specialists. They did not receive instruction regarding school libraries in their principal preparation programs.

Naylor and Jenkins (1988) stated that principals' views and expectations of the library media specialist were often based on their past personal experiences as classroom teachers with library media specialists. They found that as principals assessed library media specialists' job performance, their sources of information were personal observation; input and feedback from faculty, students, and parents; and conversations with the library media specialist. The most important source of information named was the library media specialist.

Pearson (1989) noted that principal preparation coursework did not include information in the importance of role of the library in the school's instructional program. He suggested that it was the responsibility of the library media specialist to inform and educate the principal concerning the library's potential contribution to student learning.

In his study of elementary school principals in North Carolina, Campbell (1991) found that the largest percentage of principals (28 %) indicated that their primary source of knowledge regarding the role of the library media specialist was the current library media specialist in their school. Only eight percent of the principals responding listed college coursework as the source of their knowledge of library media specialists.

Veltze (1992) surveyed professors of educational administration from 144 universities in the United States to determine the status of information about school library media programs in their principal preparation programs. She found that 90% did not see principals as encouragers of collaboration between teachers and library media specialists, that 51% felt that library media specialists should be more involved in clerical duties in the library media center, and that 47% did not include information about school library media programs in the courses they taught. Fifty-six percent indicated that they would increase the amount of school library media information included in their coursework if their textbooks contained such information, and 84% felt that their principal preparation students should read more about school library media programs in professional library journals. Those professors with K-12 administrative experience before 1970 and between 1985 and 1991 presented the most positive attitude responses toward library media programs. Veltze hypothesized that these periods were times of great change in school libraries, particularly in the area of technology, raising principals' awareness of the library media specialist in a very active role within the school setting.

Wilson and Blake (1993) surveyed 1,000 principals and 1,000 library media specialists to determine principals' knowledge of library media programs. Ninety percent of the 572 library media specialists who responded felt that principals were not knowledgeable about library media programs. Of the 423 principals who responded, 68% agreed. Ninety percent of the library media specialists felt that information about library media programs should be included in principal preparation coursework; 78% of the principals agreed.

Hafsteinsdottir (1997), surveying 27 elementary schools in Iceland, found that 18 of the 27 principals reported having had no discussion of school libraries during their teacher or principal preparation courses. Twenty-two of the 27 would educate themselves more about school libraries if they were given the opportunity. Wilson and McNeil (1998) surveyed principal preparation programs at 250 United States universities which were accredited by NCATE. Over 75% of the respondents indicated that information about school libraries was not included in their coursework.

Hartzell (2002a) proposed that principals' lack of knowledge regarding school libraries is due to two factors: "the occupational invisibility of most school library media specialists and the occupational socialization of school principals" (p. 95). Regarding occupational invisibility, he noted that much of the library media specialists' work is fully integrated into what teachers and students are doing, that library media specialists are typically isolated as one-person staffs in their schools, and that library media specialists typically write for and present to library media specialists rather than other audiences. Regarding occupational socialization, Hartzell suggested that

principals form their views of library media specialists from their own educational experiences as students, from their coursework and experiences in teacher training programs (where library media content is lacking), from their experiences as classroom teachers, and from their coursework in principal preparation programs (where, again, library media content is lacking). Incorrect or inadequate perceptions of the role of the library media specialist exist at the personal professional level, the building level, and the field of education level, as potential is not realized. Alexander et al. (2003) proposed that administrators' perceptions of the role of the library media specialist are based on day-to-day, on-the-job experiences that they have had, perhaps even experiences that they had as students.

Findings from this review of the literature indicate that principals receive little or no information concerning the role of the school library media program in their principal preparation coursework. Perceptions and understandings that they have of the role of the library media program and the library media specialist in the school develop from their interactions and experiences.

### Methodology

#### *Survey Research and Statistical Analysis of Data*

To study elementary school principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as teacher of information literacy skills and as instructional partner and to ascertain the source of these perceptions, survey research methodology was used. Of the 27 research studies examined for this review of literature, 25 were quantitative, descriptive studies which utilized closed-choice questions and collected various



demographic information. Twenty-four of these 25 studies used the *SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*, for data analysis. Studies also utilized open-ended questions to further inform survey findings.

### *Demographic Factors*

With the exception of Oberg (1996) and van Deusen (1996), who performed case studies using qualitative research methods, all other researchers whose studies were reviewed here chose to use survey research methodology. In addition to closed-choice questions, researchers collected various demographic data. School enrollment, school location (rural, suburban, urban), level of education, and numbers of years of experience were commonly collected demographic factors. Less commonly examined factors of interest included number of school library media courses taken in prior coursework, if any (Campbell, 1991; Haftsteinsdottir, 1997); subject content area taught prior to becoming a principal (Ervin, 1989); and scheduling model in place in school--fixed or flexible (McCracken, 2000; Putnam, 1996).

The majority of studies examined which explored demographic factors found no statistically significant relationship between the demographic factors and other variables studied. Hambleton and Wilkinson's (1994) study of the role of the school library in resource-based learning in elementary schools in Saskatchewan and the Western Ontario Region in Canada was one exception. Hambleton and Wilkinson surveyed principals, teachers, and library media specialists to explore the relationship of an effective school library media program and the school's ability to implement resource-based teaching/learning and to explore the role of the library media specialist in the

planning and implementation of the programs. While principals' years of experience had no significant effect on responses, size of the school in terms of enrollment and the location of the school in terms of rural, suburban, or urban had a significant effect.

Smaller schools and rural schools had lower scores.

### *Open-ended Questions*

Johnson (1993) included four open-ended questions at the end of her survey. Comments were categorized as they related to the research questions. Hambleton and Wilkinson (1994) also provided space for comments within their questionnaire. Contents were analyzed and ranked to inform and expand the statistical data collected from the survey. Shannon (1996) used open-ended questions also and coded responses.

At the end of her survey, McCracken (2000) asked two open-ended questions regarding factors which enabled role implementation and factors which inhibited it. During data analysis, she organized and rank ordered responses. Kolencik (2001) included two open-ended prompts and two open-ended questions. Responses were analyzed for content and categorized according to similarities. Henri et al. (2002a) included 12 open-ended questions in addition to the closed-choice questions in their international survey on the principal's role in developing and supporting school library media programs. Responses to these questions were analyzed using a qualitative software package.

### *Critical Incident Theory*

“The critical incident technique is a procedure for gathering factual information about the behavior of individual members of a group involved in the performance of

certain well-defined tasks or activities” (Shirey, 1971, p. 288). Flanagan (1954) noted in his seminal article regarding the theory that incidents reported are those that “represent a fairly substantial deviation from the norm...” (p. 333). He also asserted that “the critical incident technique has been applied in a few instances to gather factual data regarding specific actions involving decisions and choices. These studies suggest that critical incidents of this type may be a very valuable supplementary tool for the study of attitudes” (p. 353).

*Critical Incident Theory in the Fields of Library Media and Educational Leadership*

Precedent has been set for the use of critical incident theory in both the library and educational leadership fields. Andrews (1991) used it to discover difficulties that students had when using an academic library. Radford (1996) utilized it when exploring students’ perceptions of reference encounters in three academic libraries, categorizing the incidents as either relational (interpersonal) or content (information) oriented. Todd and Kuhlthau (2004) used it in their study of services offered by effective Ohio school library media centers, allowing students to answer an open-ended question to give concrete examples regarding helpful library incidents. To evaluate and improve library service, Ozkaramanli (2005) studied librarians’ perceptions of positive and negative chat reference encounters in 10 academic libraries. Radford (2006) used the critical incident technique to evaluate the New York Connecting Libraries and Schools Project (CLASP) to determine how successful it had been in improving students’ attitudes toward the public library.

In the field of educational leadership, Russell (1985) used the critical incident technique to analyze behaviors and activities of secondary school principals that contributed in either a positive or negative way to school effectiveness. Using the critical incident technique, Christensen (1993) explored activities of the principal in a restructured school which featured collaborative decision-making and shared power. Zalman and Bryant (2002) looked at incidents defined by elementary school principals as high-conflict encounters with parents, with students, and with staff, analyzing the behaviors of the principal that led to either successful or unsuccessful resolution of the conflicts.

#### Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions are used:

Collaboration--“one or more teachers and the school library media specialist working together to design experiences that shape student learning” (Hughes-Hassell & Wheelock, 2001, p. 36)

Critical incidents--“extreme behavior, either outstandingly effective or ineffective with respect to attaining the general aims of the activity” (Flanagan, 1954, p. 338).

Elementary school--a school which includes grades kindergarten through five, in any configuration; the school may also include pre-kindergarten and/or grade six

Fixed schedule--“the method of scheduling class time in the library media center for instruction or use of resources on a regular basis (usually weekly)” (Tallman & van Deusen, 1995, p. 202)

Flexible schedule--“the method of scheduling instructional class time in the library media center based on the library media specialist and teacher(s) planning together for instruction or use of resources based on student learning needs within a curriculum unit” (Tallman & van Deusen, 1995, p. 202)

Information literacy--the ability to access, evaluate, and use information (AASL, 1998)

Instructional partner--one who collaboratively plans, teaches, and evaluates with at least one fellow educator (AASL, 1998)

Library media specialist--the individual who is employed by the school district to implement and manage the school library media program; holds licensure or certification for K-12 library media; may also be referred to as library information specialist, school librarian, or teacher librarian

Mixed schedule--the method of scheduling class time in library which includes classes in some grades visiting the library on a fixed schedule while classes in other grades visit the library on a flexible schedule; a common configuration for a mixed schedule would be fixed for grades K through two and flex for grades three through five.

Principal--the individual who is employed by the school district to serve as the administrative head of the school, the instructional leader of the school, and the overall manager of school resources, both physical and human (Virginia Department of Education, 2006d)

Principal-preparation program--the prescribed program of study which prepares individuals to achieve licensure in educational leadership and administration and supervision in order that they may serve as principals in schools

## Summary

In 1986 Secretary of Education William J. Bennett formed a Study Group on Elementary Education to make recommendations to improve elementary education in the United States. At the request of Shirley L. Aaron, president of the American Association of School Librarians, Vandegrift and Hannigan (1986) developed an AASL position paper on the role of elementary school libraries in the instructional process. Vandegrift and Hannigan noted that elementary school libraries are more than collections of resources; they are places of learning. Their recommendations included the suggestion that teacher and principal preparation programs include information about the role of elementary school library media centers in the educational process in their coursework and that a marketing strategy be initiated to ensure that citizens become aware of the importance of elementary school library media centers in preparing students for lifelong learning in the information age.

In *First Lessons: A Report on Elementary Education in America* (1986), Bennett mentioned libraries but in a more traditional sense. While he admitted that the school library is evolving and that students must learn to do research, his primary focus for libraries and library media specialists was the promotion of books and reading. Although he stated, “the librarian should be an integral part of the instructional staff,” he immediately followed this assertion with “by leading children to good books...the librarian can play an essential role in enriching curricula” (p. 38). “In league with classroom teachers, the librarian can foster in children a taste for good literature and a love of serious study. Good librarians can be great teachers” (p. 39).

Bennett's writings are in sharp contrast to the words of Edward Gonzalez, Principal of Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Madera, California, who was awarded *School Library Journal's* inaugural Administrator of the Year Award in 2003. Explaining why he is such a strong advocate for the library media program and the library media specialist, Gonzalez "...sees the library as the 'hub of the school's curriculum' and understands the importance the principal plays in driving that message home. 'The staff sees her as an active teacher, not just a card cataloger...The biggest single contribution that [Owen] makes is teaching information literacy...I make it a priority to send her to conferences so that she can keep our staff abreast of new strategies and resources...A healthy, dynamic library will do more for the academic success of a school and community than any stand-alone curricular program that money can buy'" (Whelan, 2003, p. 45).

This review of literature demonstrates that Gonzalez's view of the role of the library media specialist in instruction is not a view commonly held. Many of the studies illustrate that we have not moved far from Bennett's view. The purpose of this study is to examine elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist, the relationship of those perceptions to type of library schedule, and the source of those perceptions.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods and procedures for data collection and analysis. This chapter describes the research design and methodology used, the target population, the subjects and how they were selected, the research instrument used, the data analyses utilized, and the potential limitations and delimitations of the study. Four basic research questions guided the study:

1. How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills?
2. How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as an instructional partner?
3. What relationships exist between the dependent variables, principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills and as an instructional partner, and the independent variable, type of library schedule?
4. What is the basis for elementary school principals' views of the instructional role of the library media specialist?

### Research Design

The research design selected for the study was nonexperimental, descriptive survey research. As Mitchell and Jolley (2004) note, descriptive research is appropriate when the researcher wishes to describe variables and the relationships among those



variables. It is important as the researcher seeks to describe and to explain behavior. Powell and Connaway (2004) assert that survey research methodology works well for studies with large, geographically dispersed populations when the researcher wishes to study the current status of a phenomenon and analyze relationships. Mitchell and Jolley suggest studying a large, random sample and using statistics to explore the likelihood that the results from the sample generalize to the population. By using a carefully selected random sample, representative of the population, the researcher is able to use statistics gathered from the sample to make inferences for the entire population (Powell & Connaway).

#### Sampling of Subjects

The target population for the study was elementary school principals in Virginia. According to the Virginia Department of Education (2006b), there were 1,177 elementary schools in Virginia for the 2006-2007 academic year. To create the sampling frame, the All Public Schools and Principals file from the *Virginia Educational Directory* (Virginia Department of Education, 2006a) was downloaded and saved as an Excel file. Schools were sorted by school type, and all schools other than elementary (alternative, career, charter, combined, high, middle, special, and unknown) were deleted from the file. Any school containing only grades PK and K, only grade six, and only grades six and seven, although labeled “elementary” by the Virginia Department of Education, was deleted from the file. The Superintendents’ Regional Study Group for each school was listed in Field1.

In the *Common Core of Data*, the U. S. Department of Education's primary database which provides basic information and descriptive statistics for all public schools in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.), the National Center for Education Statistics assigns each school a Locale Code for location of school in relation to populous areas. Locale codes include 1 for large city, 2 for mid-size city, 3 for urban fringe of large city, 4 for urban fringe of mid-size city, 5 for large town, 6 for small town, 7 for rural, outside a core-based statistical area, and 8 for rural, inside a core-based statistical area (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a). The NCES assigned Locale Code for each Virginia elementary school was located by using the NCES *Common Core of Data* Search for Public School Districts (U.S. Department of Education, 2005b) and was entered into the Excel file. All schools classified with Locale Codes 1 through 4--urban city, mid-size city, and the two urban fringes--were recoded as 1, urban. All schools classified with Locale Codes 5 through 8--large town, small town, and the two rurals--were recoded as 2, non-urban. Geographic setting, therefore, was either urban or non-urban. Any school for which the Locale Code was not available in the NCES *Common Core of Data* was eliminated from the Excel file.

Principals' email addresses were obtained from school Web pages linked through the Virginia Department of Education's School Divisions listing (Virginia Department of Education, 2006c). In instances in which the principal's email address was not available on the school Web page, an email was sent to the school division's central office requesting that address. The sampling frame consisted of Virginia elementary school principals whose email addresses were known (n=927).

A proportional stratified random sampling method was used to select elementary schools. The first level of stratification was by the eight Superintendents' Regional Study Groups, and then, within each Region, the second level of stratification was by urban and non-urban setting. By using this approach, the sample should have been representative of the elementary school population in Virginia. According to Powell and Connaway (2004), use of stratified random sampling "...reduces the number of cases needed to achieve a given degree of accuracy or representativeness" (p. 100). Table 2 shows the number of urban and non-urban elementary schools by region, the number of email addresses available for each, and the number of emails needed for a sample size of 500.

Table 2

*Elementary Schools and Emails*

Region	Urban			Non-urban		
	Total schools	Emails available	Emails needed	Total schools	Emails available	Emails needed
1	121	97	52	35	34	15
2	195	101	82	33	26	14
3	20	17	9	41	38	18
4	269	257	116	58	43	25
5	38	30	15	85	83	37
6	57	46	25	65	58	29
7	12	12	6	87	49	39
8	0	0	0	42	36	18
Total	712	560	305	446	367	195

Sample size was determined by conducting a power analysis. Population size, sampling error to be tolerated, desired confidence interval, and variability of the population were considered. (Dillman, 2007; Mitchell & Jolley, 2004). Consideration was also given to sample size suggestions regarding type of research: McMillan and Schumacher (2001) recommend “in survey research studies there should be about one hundred subjects for each major subgroup that is analyzed and twenty to fifty subjects for minor subgroups” (p. 177). With a population of 1,158, a 5% margin of error, a confidence level of 95%, and response distribution of 50%, minimum suggested sample size, assuming 100% response rate, was 289 (Raosoft, 2007). Average response rate in recent studies using similar methodology (Alexander et al., 2003; Kolencik, 2001; McCracken, 2000) was 48%. To insure sufficient power for this study, therefore, sample size was set at 500. Based on the NCES *Common Core of Data* Locale Codes (U.S. Department of Education, 2005b) which categorized 61.5% of the elementary schools in Virginia as urban and 38.5% of Virginia elementary schools as non-urban, 305 urban schools and 195 non-urban schools were selected.

#### Instrumentation

As indicated in the literature review, the most appropriate instrument for this type of study is the survey (Campbell, 1991; McCracken, 2000). Mitchell and Jolley (2004) assert that a survey is appropriate when research hypotheses are known, when the questionnaire accurately measures the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors which are the focus of the study, and when the results are generalizable to the defined population. A

survey can be used to collect a large amount of information from a large sample in a short time.

A questionnaire survey was used to collect data in this study. Similar surveys were located and examined during the literature review: the majority tended to be broad in nature, and most were developed and administered prior to the publication of *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* in 1998. However, survey instruments used by Alexander et al. (2003), Kolencik (2001), and McCracken (2000) as well as the terminology and constructs located in the standards of the field-- *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (AASL, 1998), *National Board Professional Teaching Standards for Library Media* (2001), and *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs of School Library Media Specialist Preparation* (2003)--provided a basis for survey development. Question construction was also informed by the findings of a mini-qualitative research project conducted by the researcher in spring 2006 in which two principals and two library media specialists were interviewed regarding the instructional role of the library media specialist.

Theoretical scales for the constructs of “teacher” and “instructional partner” were embedded within the survey. These two instructional roles of the library media specialist are well-defined in *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (1998). Expectations set forth in *National Board Professional Teaching Standards for Library Media* (2001), and *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs of School Library Media Specialist Preparation* (2003) further develop these roles. Studies completed by Lance et al. (2000, 2001, 2002, 2005), Rodney et al. (2002, 2003), and Smith (2001)

provide examples of tasks and duties completed during implementation of the teacher role and the instructional partner role. Both the standards and the literature review guided the development of these theoretical scales.

The survey consisted of four sections plus one open-ended question (see Appendix A). Section one included statements regarding the teacher role of the library media specialist. Section two included statements addressing the instructional partner role of the library media specialist. In sections one and two, principals were asked to rate statements on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, neither disagree nor agree). “Neither agree nor disagree” was placed as the final item on the scale to encourage respondents to make a choice, rather than in the middle allowing them to easily choose middle ground (Dillman, 2007). Section three addressed overall contributions that library media specialists make to learning and the source of principals’ knowledge regarding the library media specialist. Section four addressed demographics such as school enrollment, geographic setting, type of schedule on which the library operates, total years, content area, and grade levels of classroom experience, and total years administrative experience. The survey concluded with an open-ended question: “Think back to a situation or incident which you have had with a library media specialist which helped to form your view of the role of the library media specialist in the school. This incident could be a positive one, or it could be a negative one. Please describe the incident.”

Survey items were reviewed for content and clarity by experts in the field.

Faculty members in Longwood University’s Educational Leadership and School

Library Media programs reviewed the survey instrument and provided feedback. Feedback was also solicited from a small number of practicing elementary school library media specialists. Schools from which library media specialists participated in the instrument review were excluded from the sampling frame.

### *Survey Construction*

The survey was constructed and administered using *Inquisite 7.5* through Virginia Commonwealth University's license. Dillman (2007) asserts that Internet surveys are appropriate for survey populations with high levels of computer access and proficiency, such as those in the field of education. He recommends that careful attention be given to the format and design of the survey to enhance response rates.

As suggested by Dillman (2007), the survey opened with a welcome screen which restated the purpose of the study and gave basic instructions for survey completion. Use of color in the survey was minimal, not only to improve readability but also to avoid influencing answer choice. Drop-down boxes for answer choices were used only in the demographics section. Respondents were not required to answer one question before moving to the next, and the entire survey was set up as one scrollable document so that respondents were able to move back and forth within the questions and to determine how many questions remained to be answered. Dillman notes that attention to these details during survey construction should improve response rates.

Required Institutional Review Board forms were completed and submitted for approval (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2006b). Once IRB approval was

granted, the survey was posted on Virginia Commonwealth University's dedicated Web server (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2006a).

### *Pilot Study*

Once IRB approval was granted, the survey was piloted with a small number of practicing elementary school principals from various Virginia school divisions. Principals from multiple school divisions were included in the pilot study to allow for optimal testing of the Web-based survey. Various computer brands, operating systems, Internet connection speeds, and browser software were included to identify potential technological issues. Attention to these technological details during the pilot study should have facilitated final survey administration and improved overall response rates (Dillman, 2007).

Feedback was also requested regarding the clearness of the directions for survey completion, the accuracy of the estimated length of time given for survey completion, and clarity of the survey questions. The survey was revised based on feedback from respondents. Schools from which principals participated in the pilot study were excluded from the sampling frame.

### *Reliability*

Reliability refers to the consistency of an instrument to produce stable results over time that are not strongly influenced by random error (Mitchell & Jolley, 2004). Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006) assert that, as an instrument is developed, at least one type of reliability is typically established for that instrument. Since the survey to be used in this study was developed by the researcher, reliability was established



using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Theoretical scales for the concepts of "teacher" and "instructional partner" were embedded within the survey. Internal consistency reliability for these theoretical scales of the survey was established using Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Lodico et al., 2006). Responses were averaged within each scale resulting in measures of library media specialist as teacher ( $\alpha = .896$ ,  $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = 0.23$ ) and library media specialist as instructional partner ( $\alpha = .922$ ,  $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 0.24$ ).

### *Validity*

Validity refers to "a judgment of the appropriateness of a measure for specific inferences or decisions that result from the scores generated" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 239). Measurement validity, "the extent to which an instrument measures what it is designed to measure" (Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 44), includes both construct and content validity. In the context of this study, construct validity was addressed through the development of the survey instrument based on surveys used by previous researchers (Alexander et al., 2003; Kolencik, 2001; McCracken, 2000) and based on the standards in the field: *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (AASL, 1998); *National Board Professional Teaching Standards for Library Media* (2001); and *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs of School Library Media Specialist Preparation* (2003).

Content validity was addressed through instrument review by experts in the fields of educational leadership and school library media as well as by practicing elementary school library media specialists. Content of the survey was first reviewed by faculty members in the Educational Leadership and the School Library Media graduate

programs at Longwood University. Once these faculty members reviewed the survey items for content and clarity and appropriate revisions were made, the survey was distributed to a small number of elementary school library media specialists who are graduates of Longwood University's School Library Media Program with at least three years experience as library media specialists. Feedback was solicited regarding content and clarity of the survey questions as well as suggestions for key questions or areas that might have been omitted. Revisions were made to the survey instrument as needed.

Content validity was also addressed through the pilot study conducted with practicing elementary principals. As needed, the survey instrument was revised based on their feedback. Attention to both construct and content validity should have reduced measurement error (Powell & Connaway, 2004).

#### *Data Collection*

Once IRB approval was granted, the survey pilot had been tested with the group of practicing elementary school principals, and any necessary revisions had been made, an email pre-notice message explaining the study was sent to those Virginia elementary school principals who had been randomly selected for participation in the study (see Appendix B). The purpose of this email pre-notice message was to alert principals that an email regarding the survey would arrive within the next several days: Dillman (2007) notes that use of such a pre-notice increases response rate to the survey. This pre-notice email also contained basic information regarding the Informed Consent Form.

The following week, an email message was sent to principal participants with an invitation to participate and a link to the survey loaded on the dedicated VCU Web

server (see Appendix C). When participants clicked on the link, prior to actual survey questions, participants were taken to the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix D). If they accepted the conditions presented in the Informed Consent Form, they moved to the survey questions. If they declined to accept the conditions presented in the Informed Consent Form, their browser was redirected to the home page for Virginia Commonwealth University.

For electronic surveys, Dillman (2007) suggests that four contacts plus the pre-notice typically achieve response rates comparable to those of postal mail surveys. One week following the invitation-to-participate email, a follow-up email message was sent to participants who had not yet responded, requesting their participation (see Appendix E). A week later, a follow-up email message was to be sent to those participants who had not responded (see Appendix F). Response rate was to be analyzed, and an additional follow-up email message was to be sent one week later to non-respondents, if needed (see Appendix G).

#### Data Analysis

*Inquisite* survey responses were exported into the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, SPSS 13.0 for Windows*. Initial analyses included descriptive statistics such as frequencies to understand overall responses to the survey items. Frequency tables were constructed and reported for survey items.

Research questions from the study, the instrument items which address those questions, and the data analyses to be used for each research question are summarized in Table 3. For research question one, frequencies were used to report responses to

survey items for principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills. For research question two, frequencies were used to report responses to survey items for principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as an instructional partner.

For the purpose of analysis for research question three, two dependent variables were present: principals' perceptions of the teacher role of the library media specialist and principals' perceptions of the instructional partner role of the library media specialist. The independent variable of interest was the type of library schedule in place in the school. This independent variable had three levels, fixed schedule, flex schedule, and mixed.

Using the theoretical scales for "teacher" and "instructional partner" which were embedded in the survey instrument, with 1 reflecting the lowest agreement with the statement and 5 representing the highest agreement with the statement, an average scale score was calculated for each construct to create a continuous variable. This dependent variable was used in a one-way analysis of variance to examine research question three to explore the relationships of the dependent variables, principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as teacher of information literacy skills and principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as instructional partner, and the independent variable of type of library schedule. Chi-square analyses were to be run at the individual survey item level to test whether the observed frequencies showed a true difference from expected frequencies for type of library schedule (Lodico et al., 2006).

For research question four, frequencies were used to report responses to the survey item for the source of principals' perceptions. Additionally, for research question four, responses to the open-ended question on the survey were systematically examined within the framework of critical incident theory (Flanagan, 1954) using content analysis to identify common key words, categories, and themes (Mitchell & Jolley, 2004; Powell & Connaway, 2004). Critical incidents were first classified as positive or negative, then further classified as informational (content) or relational (attitudes) (Radford, 1996). Key words and concepts to be used in analysis of the open-ended question included the following: approachability, assistance, attitude, collaboration, knowledge of field, information provider, interpersonal skills including communication, partnerships, and teaching.

Table 3

*Research Questions, Instrument Items, and Data Analyses*

Research question	Instrument items	Data analyses
1. How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills?	Section 1, items 1-12	Descriptive statistics: frequencies
2. How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as an instructional partner?	Section 2, items 13-18, 20, 21	Descriptive statistics: frequencies
3. What relationships exist between the dependent variables, principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills and as an instructional partner, and the independent variable, type of library schedule?	Section 1, items 1-12 Section 2, items 13-18 Section 4, item 27	One-way ANOVA Chi square
4. What is the basis for elementary school principals' views of the instructional role of the library media specialist?	Section 3, item 22 Section 4, item 32 Open-ended question	Section 3, item 22; Section 4, item 32 Descriptive statistics: frequencies Open-ended question: Content analysis

## Delimitations and Limitations

This study was conducted in the context of several delimitations, limitations imposed on the research design by the researcher's choice. In order to complete a focused and relatively narrow study, subject participation was limited to the population

of elementary school principals and further limited to those working in Virginia public schools. A second delimitation was in the decision to use a Web-based survey as opposed to a paper and pen survey. A third delimitation relates to potential sampling error, although through the use of stratified random sampling, every effort was made to make this sampling error as small as possible (Dillman, 2007).

The study was also performed in the context of several limitations, limitations over which the researcher had no control. Coverage error was an issue, since email addresses for all principals in the target population were not available (Dillman, 2007). Completion of the survey was voluntary in nature. Non-response bias came into play. Finally, responses were self-reported perceptions which cannot be objectively and accurately measured. While principals responding indicated how they view library media specialists as teachers of information literacy skills and as instructional partners, it was not possible to determine how accurately their responses reflected their actual views.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist, the relationships of those perceptions to the type of library schedule, and the source of those perceptions. Using a stratified random sample, the researcher used a Web-based survey to gather data on principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills, as an instructional partner, and on the source of those perceptions. Survey responses were exported to *SPSS 13.0*, the *Statistical Package for*

*the Social Sciences, Version 13.0*, and analyzed using frequency distributions, Chi-square, one-way analysis of variance, and, for the open-ended question, content analysis.



## Chapter 4

### Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the Web-based *Inquisite* survey examining elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist, the relationships of those perceptions to the type of library schedule, and the source of those perceptions. The chapter is organized into five main sections: a summary of the demographics of the sample, frequency distributions for survey items regarding the teacher role of the library media specialist, frequency distributions for survey items regarding the instructional partner role of the library media specialist, statistical analyses for significant relationships between the dependent and independent variables, and frequency distributions and content analysis of survey items regarding the source of principals' perceptions. Research questions guiding the data analysis were as follows:

1. How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills?
2. How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as an instructional partner?
3. What relationships exist between the dependent variables, principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills and as an instructional partner, and the independent variable, type of library schedule?

4. What is the basis for elementary school principals' views of the instructional role of the library media specialist?

Two modifications were made to the proposed research design. Originally the researcher planned to place the “neither disagree nor agree” response as the final item on the Likert scale of survey responses to encourage respondents to make a choice, rather than in the middle allowing them to easily choose middle ground. Due to limitations in *Inquisite*, this was not possible, and “neither disagree nor agree” remained as middle choice. Also, while Dillman (2007) suggested four contacts plus the pre-notice email to achieve response rates comparable to those of postal mail surveys, due to restrictions required by the IRB, two contacts were made following the pre-notice email.

#### Sample Demographics

According to the Virginia Department of Education (2006b), there were 1,177 elementary schools in Virginia for the 2006-2007 school year. Schools containing only grades PK and K, only grade six, and only grades six and seven, although labeled “elementary” by the Virginia Department of Education, were excluded from the study as were any schools for which the Locale Code was not available in the NCES *Common Core of Data*. A total of 1,158 schools remained in the sampling frame.

Email addresses, gleaned from school Web pages linked through the Virginia Department of Education's School Divisions listing (Virginia Department of Education, 2006c), were available for 927 Virginia elementary school principals. On May 11, 2007 a pre-notice email was sent to the 500 principals who had been selected for the study

sample by proportional stratified random sampling. Thirty-eight principals declined to participate; therefore, the first email with survey link went to 462 principals on May 14, 2007. A follow-up reminder email was sent on June 4, and the survey closed on June 19. Sixty-four responses were received, a response rate of 14%.

Due to the low number of responses, a second IRB proposal was submitted to gain permission to survey the remaining 427 principals who had not been selected for the first round. IRB permission was granted, and, on August 1, the pre-notice email was sent to the remaining 424 principals for whom email addresses were available (three principals served two schools each). Thirty-four principals declined to participate; therefore, the first email with survey link was sent to 390 principals on August 6. A follow-up reminder email was sent on August 13, and the survey closed on August 21. From the second sample, an additional fifty-one responses were received, a response rate of 13%. The two sets of responses submitted through *Inquisite* were combined for a total of 115 responses. Data analysis showed that five respondents had declined to participate after reading the Informed Consent Form, making the final number of usable responses from both data collections 110, a response rate of 13%.

Demographic data were gathered to facilitate description of the sample and to allow for determination of its representativeness of the population. Participants were asked to specify their total years of classroom teaching experience, content areas in which they taught, grade levels they taught, and total years administrative experience. They were also asked to specify the superintendents' regional study group in which

their schools were located, their schools' setting, grade-level configuration, enrollment, and type of library schedule.

### *Respondent Characteristics*

Participants were asked to note the total years of classroom teaching experience which they had. Over 70% (71.8%) of the respondents reported fewer than sixteen years of teaching experience; 20% reported five or fewer years. Table 4 presents a summary of the data.

Table 4

### *Total Years of Classroom Teaching Experience*

	Frequency	%
0-5	22	20.0
6-10	31	28.2
11-15	26	23.6
16-20	15	13.6
21-25	8	7.3
Over 25	8	7.3
Total	110	100

Participants were also asked to specify all content areas which they had taught as classroom teachers. The four most common teaching areas reported were the four major content areas: English, history/social sciences, mathematics, and science.

Responses are noted in Table 5.

Table 5

*Content Areas of Classroom Teaching*

	Frequency	%
Computers/Technology	29	26.4
Driver Education	4	3.6
English	73	66.4
Fine Arts	18	16.4
Foreign Language	2	1.8
Health	39	35.5
History/Social Sciences	73	66.4
Mathematics	73	66.4
Physical Education	19	17.3
Sciences	64	58.2
Other (Band/choir, Counseling, Elementary, Library media, Reading, Special education, Speech, Vocational/home economics)	21	19.1

Participants were asked to indicate all the grade levels at which they had taught. Responses are summarized in Table 6 and illustrate that most elementary school principals' classroom teaching experience is at the elementary school grade levels 3-5, although almost 74% (73.6%) report experience at the middle and secondary grades.

Table 6

*Grade Levels of Classroom Teaching Experience*

	Frequency	%
PreK-2	50	45.5
3-5	74	67.3
6-8	55	50.0
9-12	26	23.6

When asked to specify their total number of years of administrative experience, almost 42% (41.9%) of the principals reported six to ten years administrative experience, and almost 24% (23.6%) reported 11 to 15 years. Table 7 details responses.

Table 7

*Total Years of Administrative Experience*

	Frequency	%
1-5	16	14.5
6-10	46	41.9
11-15	26	23.6
16-20	12	10.9
21-25	6	5.5
Over 25	4	3.6
Total	110	100

### *School Characteristics*

Participants were asked to specify the Superintendents' Regional Study Group in which their schools were located. All regions of Virginia were represented in the sample, as demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 8

#### *Virginia Elementary Schools by Region*

Region	Total elementary schools in sampling frame		Total elementary schools in final sample	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	156	13.5	19	17.3
2	228	19.7	7	6.4
3	61	5.3	5	4.5
4	327	28.2	29	26.4
5	123	10.6	18	16.4
6	122	10.5	11	10
7	99	8.6	15	13.6
8	42	3.6	6	5.5
Total	1,158	100	110	100

Although response counts were low (N=110), the sample provided regional representation for all elementary school principals in Virginia. Region 2 was most underrepresented, comprising 6.4% of the final sample, whereas 19.7% of elementary

schools in Virginia are located in Region 2. Regions 3, 4, and 6 were slightly underrepresented by an average of 1% (4.5% in sample to 5.3% total, 26.4% to 28.2%, 10% to 10.5%, respectively). Regions 1, 5, 7, and 8 were overrepresented by an average of 4% (17.3% in sample to 13.5% total, 16.4% to 10.6%, 13.6% to 8.6%, and 5.5% to 3.6%, respectively).

Participants were asked to describe their school settings as either urban or non-urban. Using the eight Superintendents' Regional Study Groups from the Virginia Department of Education and school setting of either urban or non-urban, Table 9 shows the number and percentage of schools in each region by setting and the number and percentage of schools by region and setting in the final sample.



Table 9

*Virginia Elementary Schools by Region and Setting*

Region		Total elementary schools in sampling frame		Total elementary schools in final sample	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1	Urban	121	10.5	9	8.2
	Non-urban	35	3.0	10	9.1
2	Urban	195	16.9	2	1.8
	Non-urban	33	2.9	5	4.6
3	Urban	20	1.7	0	0
	Non-urban	41	3.5	5	4.6
4	Urban	269	23.2	5	4.6
	Non-urban	58	5.0	24	21.8
5	Urban	38	3.3	4	3.6
	Non-urban	85	7.4	14	12.7
6	Urban	57	4.9	5	4.6
	Non-urban	65	5.6	6	5.4
7	Urban	12	1.0	3	2.7
	Non-urban	87	7.5	12	10.9
8	Urban	0	0	0	0
	Non-urban	42	3.6	6	5.4
Total	Urban	712	61.5	28	25.5
	Non-urban	446	38.5	82	74.5
Total		1,158	100	110	100

While the sample was relatively balanced regionally, it was not as representative of the elementary schools in the state in regard to school setting. In response to the survey item which asked participants to describe their school settings, 25.5% of the respondents (n=28) characterized their schools as urban, and 74.5% characterized their schools as non-urban (n=82). In contrast, using NCES *Common Core of Data* Locale Codes, 61.5% (n=712) of elementary schools in Virginia are characterized as urban, and 38.5% (n=446) are characterized as non-urban (U.S. Department of Education, 2005b).

To further describe their schools, participants were asked to specify the grade-level configuration for the school in which they were principal. The most common grade-level configurations reported were PreK-5 (n=46, 42.2%) and K-5 (n=29, 26.6%), but other configurations were noted as well, as shown in Table 10. One participant did not respond to this question.

Table 10

*Elementary School Grade Level Configurations*

	Frequency	%
PreK-2	2	1.8
3-5	5	4.6
PreK-5	46	42.2
K-5	29	26.6
K-6	8	7.3
K-7	4	3.6
PreK-6	11	10.1
PreK-7	2	1.8
PreK-4	1	1.0
1-7	1	1.0
Total	109	100

Participants were asked to note enrollment at the school in which they were principal. As shown in Table 11, eighty respondents (72.7%) indicated enrollment of 300 to 749 students; twenty (18.2%) specified enrollment of 100 to 299, while ten (9.1%) indicated enrollment of 750 to 1,499.

Table 11

*Elementary School Enrollment*

	Frequency	%
100 to 299	20	18.2
300 to 749	80	72.7
750 to 1,499	10	9.1
Total	110	100

Definitions of fixed, flexible, and mixed/combination library schedules were provided, and participants were asked to specify the type of schedule on which the library in their school operated. Fifty-six respondents (50.9%) indicated that their libraries operated on a fixed schedule. Six respondents (5.5%) indicated that their libraries operated on a flexible schedule, while 48 (43.6%) noted a mixed/combination schedule. Table 12 shows these results.

Table 12

*Type of Library Schedule*

	Frequency	%
Fixed	56	50.9
Flexible	6	5.5
Mixed/combination	48	43.6
Total	110	100

### Teacher Role of the Library Media Specialist

Twelve survey questions dealt with the teacher role of the library media specialist. Three questions asked about teaching students to use various information resources--print, electronic subscription databases, and free Web sites. Slightly over 90% (90.9%) of principals responding either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students to use print resources. Almost 90% (87.3%) either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students to use electronic databases, and just over 80% (81.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students to use information found at free Web sites. Table 13 summarizes responses.

Table 13

*Teaching Students to Use Resources*

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teach students to use print materials to write reports and complete classroom projects	2	1.8	2	1.8	6	5.5	57	51.8	43	39.1	0	0
Teach students to use electronic subscription databases which contain journal articles and other reference material	3	2.7	3	2.7	8	7.3	45	40.9	51	46.4	0	0
Teach students to use information found at free Web sites to write reports and complete classroom projects	3	2.7	3	2.7	14	12.7	57	51.8	33	30.0	0	0

Next, participants were asked about library media specialists teaching students how to locate information within sources, how to evaluate information found, and how

to take notes and organize information. Almost 95% (94.6%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students how to locate information within sources. Over 86% (86.4%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students to evaluate information for accuracy and reliability. Almost 75% (74.6%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students how to take notes and organize information. Table 14 summarizes responses.

Table 14

*Teaching Students to Work with Information within Sources*

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teach students how to locate information contained in print and electronic sources	3	2.7	2	1.8	0	0	28	25.5	76	69.1	1	0.9
Teach students how to evaluate information for accuracy and reliability	3	2.7	2	1.8	10	9.1	40	36.4	55	50.0	0	0
Teach students how to take notes and organize information	3	2.7	9	8.2	14	12.7	51	46.4	31	28.2	2	1.8

Two questions addressed the topic of library media specialists teaching students to respect intellectual property and to practice ethical behavior and follow acceptable use policy guidelines in their use of information. Almost 94% (93.7%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students to respect intellectual property, cite sources, and respect copyright laws. Almost 92% (91.9%) either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students to practice ethical behavior in their use of information by following acceptable use policy guidelines. Table 15 summarizes the responses.

Table 15

*Teaching Students Ethical Behavior in Information Use*

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teach students to respect intellectual property	4	3.6	0	0	1	0.9	30	27.3	73	66.4	2	1.8
Teach students to practice ethical behavior by following acceptable use policy guidelines	4	3.6	0	0	2	1.8	28	25.5	73	66.4	3	2.7



Two items on the survey addressed library media specialists' access to and use of standardized test data. Eighty percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should have access to student standardized test data, and almost 83% (82.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should use this data to develop information literacy instruction. Table 16 summarizes responses.

Table 16

*Access to and Use of Student Test Data*

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Have access to standardized student test data	2	1.8	10	9.1	10	9.1	52	47.3	36	32.7	0	0
Use standardized test data to develop information literacy instruction	2	1.8	7	6.4	10	9.1	52	47.3	39	35.5	0	0

Two survey items addressed library media specialists providing staff development for teachers in effective use of electronic resources and in areas such as intellectual property and copyright. Over 86% (86.4%) of principals responding either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should provide staff

development for teachers in areas such as effective Web searching and effective use of subscription databases. Similarly, over 86% (86.3%) of principals responding either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should provide staff development for teachers in the areas of intellectual property and copyright. Table 17 summarizes responses.

Table 17

*Staff Development for Teachers in Information Use*

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Provide staff development for teachers in areas such as effective Web searching and effective use of subscription databases	2	1.8	4	3.6	7	6.4	52	47.3	43	39.1	2	1.8
Provide staff development for teachers in areas such as intellectual property and copyright	2	1.8	3	2.7	8	7.3	48	43.6	47	42.7	2	1.8

### Instructional Partner Role of the Library Media Specialist

Eight survey items addressed the instructional partner role of the library media specialist. Over 90% (91.8%) of principals responding either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should collaborate with teachers to teach information literacy skills in the context of content curriculum. When asked about the library media specialist collaborating with individual teachers to plan lessons which integrated information literacy into the curriculum, just over 85% (85.4%) of principals responding either agreed or strongly agreed that this should occur. When asked about the library media specialist collaborating with teachers at grade levels to plan lessons which integrated information literacy skills into the curriculum, almost 92% (91.8%) of principals responding either agreed or strongly agreed. Table 18 summarizes these responses.

Table 18

*Collaborating to Plan Information Literacy Instruction*

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Collaborate with teachers to teach students information literacy skills in the context of content curriculum	3	2.7	1	0.9	5	4.5	36	32.7	65	59.1	0	0
Collaborate with individual teachers to plan lessons which integrate information literacy into the curriculum	3	2.7	2	1.8	11	10.0	48	43.6	46	41.8	0	0
Collaborate with teachers at grade level to plan lessons which integrate information literacy into the curriculum	3	2.7	0	0	6	5.5	48	43.6	53	48.2	0	0

The next survey item addressed library media specialists collaborating with teachers to teach lessons which integrated information literacy into the curriculum, and the following item addressed library media specialists collaborating with teachers to

evaluate student work from lessons integrating information literacy into the curriculum. Almost 90% (89.1%) of principals responding either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach collaboratively with classroom teachers, but just over 73% (73.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should evaluate student work collaboratively with classroom teachers. Next principals were asked their views of the role the library media specialist should play in the school improvement process. Almost 94% (93.6%) of principals responding either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should play an active role in the school improvement process. Table 19 details responses.

Table 19

*Collaborating to Teach and Evaluate*

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Agree		Strongly agree		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Collaborate with teachers to teach lessons which integrate information literacy into the curriculum	3	2.7	2	1.8	7	6.4	55	50.0	43	39.1	0	0
Collaborate with teachers to evaluate student work from lessons which integrate information literacy into the curriculum	3	2.7	8	7.3	18	16.4	55	50.0	26	23.6	0	0
Play an active role in the school improvement plan/process	3	2.7	0	0	3	2.7	32	29.1	71	64.5	1	0.9

Two items questioned principals regarding who should be the primary initiator of teacher-library media specialist collaborations at the individual teacher level and at the school level. About 12% (11.8%) of respondents said that the administrator should initiate collaboration at the individual teacher level, while over 38% of the respondents said that the administrator should initiate collaboration at the school level. Almost 70%

(67.3%) felt that the library media specialist should be the primary initiator at the individual teacher level, while almost 60% (57.3%) felt that the library media specialist should be the primary initiator at the school level. Details of responses are shown in Table 20.

Table 20

*Initiation of Collaboration*

Question	Administrator		Library media specialist		Teacher		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Primary initiator of teacher-library media specialist collaboration at the individual teacher level?	13	11.8	74	67.3	22	20.0	1	0.9
Primary initiator of teacher-library media specialist collaboration at the school level?	42	38.2	63	57.3	3	2.7	2	1.8

## Relationship Between the Dependent and Independent Variables

Theoretical scales for the concepts of “teacher” and “instructional partner” were embedded within the survey. Twelve items were designed to measure the library media specialist’s role as teacher. These items addressed activities in which the library media specialist performed an active teaching role such as teaching students how to locate information and how to evaluate information and teaching faculty and staff how to

effectively use electronic subscription databases. Eight items on the survey were designed to measure the library media specialist's role as instructional partner. These items addressed activities in which the library media specialist collaboratively worked with classroom teachers to improve instruction, participating as a partner on the instructional team. Using a scale of 1 to 5, 1 expressed the lowest level of agreement and 5 the highest level of agreement with the activity stated.

Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to determine internal consistency reliability for these theoretical scales. Responses were averaged within each scale resulting in measures of library media specialist as teacher ( $\alpha = .896$ ,  $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = 0.23$ ) and library media specialist as instructional partner ( $\alpha = .922$ ,  $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 0.24$ ).

Using the theoretical scales for teacher and instructional partner, an average scale score was calculated for each construct to create a continuous variable. This scale score was used in a one-way analysis of variance to explore the relationships of the dependent variables, principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as teacher of information literacy skills and principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as instructional partner, and the independent variable of type of library schedule--fixed, flex, or mixed/combination.

#### *Principals' Perceptions of Library Media Specialist as Teacher*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted on principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills and type of library schedule--fixed, flex, or mixed/combination. No statistically significant difference was



found in principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as teacher based on the type of library schedule in place,  $F(2, 107) = 2.13, p=.124$ . See Tables 21 and 22 for details.

Table 21

*Perceptions as Teacher*

	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Fixed	56	4.19	0.65
Flex	6	3.88	1.20
Mixed/Combination	48	4.35	0.43

Table 22

*Analysis of Variance for Perceptions as Teacher*

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between groups	1.55	2	.776	2.13	.124
Within groups	38.99	107	.364		
Total	40.55	109			

*Principals' Perceptions of Library Media Specialist as Instructional Partner*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted on principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as an instructional partner and type of library schedule--fixed, flex, or mixed/combination. No statistically significant difference was found in principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as instructional partner based on

the type of library schedule in place,  $F(2, 107) = .314, p=.731$ . See Tables 23 and 24 for details.

Table 23

*Perceptions as Instructional Partner*

	<i>n</i>	M	SD
Fixed	56	4.23	0.65
Flex	6	4.11	1.54
Mixed/Combination	48	4.32	0.69

Table 24

*Analysis of Variance for Perceptions as Instructional Partner*

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between groups	.341	2	.170	.314	.731
Within groups	58.16	107	.544		
Total	58.50	109			

Chi-square analyses were run at the individual survey item level to test whether observed frequencies showed a true difference from expected frequencies based on type of library schedule. Due to limited variability in participants' responses, it was not possible to ascertain accurate significance levels.

### Source of Principals' Perceptions of Library Media Specialist Instructional Role

Respondents were asked to specify their primary source of knowledge of the instructional role of the library media specialist. Over 65% (65.5%) noted that their knowledge of the instructional role of the library media specialist was derived from interactions with library media specialists during their administrative careers. Over 26% (26.4%) stated that their knowledge of the instructional role of the library media specialist was derived from interactions with library media specialists during their teaching careers. Less than 3% (2.7%) noted that their knowledge came from professional journals, and less than 2% (1.8%) noted that their knowledge came from coursework during their principal preparation programs. See Table 25 for details.

Table 25

*Source of Principals' Perceptions*

	Frequency	%
Coursework in principal preparation program	2	1.8
Interactions with library media specialist during my teaching career	29	26.4
Interactions with library media specialist during my administrative career	72	65.5
Readings in professional journals	3	2.7
Other	3	2.7
No response	1	0.9

Of the three “other” responses, two were formerly library media specialists, and one noted that perceptions were formed by “expectations from our library media instructional specialist for the district and best practices.”

As a follow-up question, participants were asked if they received any sort of formal training related to library media specialists during their principal preparation programs. Almost 91% (90.9%, n=100) of respondents said that they had not; slightly over 9% (9.1%, n=10) said that they had. These ten were asked to elaborate on the context in which they received training related to library media specialists. Their responses are detailed in Table 26.

Table 26

*Context of Formal Training in Principal Preparation Program*

	Frequency	%
Entire course in school library media	1	10.0
Topic of discussion in several courses	5	50.0
Topic of discussion in one course	3	30.0
Other (Master's was in library media)	1	10.0

An open-ended question at the end of the survey asked participants to elaborate on an incident which helped them form their perception of the role of the library media specialist: "Think back to a situation or incident which you have had with a library media specialist which helped to form your view of the role of the library media specialist in the school. The incident could be a positive one, or it could be a negative one. Please describe the incident." Of the 110 principals who completed the survey, 83, or 75%, answered the open-ended question. To facilitate analysis, their responses were first categorized as negative or positive, then as informational/content or relational/attitudes. Common themes were identified.

*Negative*

Although negative responses were not frequent, two strands emerged in the area of information or content along the theme of a "traditional" library media specialist:

library media specialists who do not have current technological skills and library media specialists who do not see the need to teach research or information skills. Regarding the lack of up-to-date computer skills, one respondent described the library media specialist as “a librarian who runs an organized library where students check out books and are read to... We are waiting for her to retire (next year) so that we can get someone who is truly a media specialist.” Another respondent noted, “We are currently moving toward more technology in our program. This had been somewhat of a struggle because my librarian is not as computer savvy as I would like... Ultimately, I would like to see a total integration of library and technology.”

In the area of teaching research or information literacy skills, one respondent stated, “In my experience within this school division, the LMS professionals do not initiate quality lessons with children, but merely manage the circulation of the library.” Another noted, “Six years ago, I inherited a school and school library media specialist that did not see the value in aligning library instruction with the classroom, student data and instructional needs. The librarian was very traditional in the sense that she delivered her own lessons without regard to what was taking place in the classroom or student learning abilities, levels, or interests.” Another principal stated, “My media specialist continues to need reminders that she is expected to teach library and research skills to all students.”

Responses were more frequent in the negative relational or attitude area. One principal noted the library media specialist’s lack of proactivity: “she is too shy to bring the library to life... she waits for me to say order things instead of begging me to give

her money...teachers complain about not having enough books on high and low levels, yet I feel I have to tell her to order them.”

More common were comments regarding the library media specialist’s interpersonal skills and the environment in place in the library: “My current librarian is retiring and the entire school community is happy to see her go...She gives the impression that she just does not like children. She did not work well with other teachers.” “My current LMS is not a very approachable/cooperative person. I inherited her and she is very self-centered and doesn’t see the BIG picture.” “The library was not a friendly place to be. The teachers and students were intimidated when they visited the library and all of the resources were guarded instead of being freely given for use.” “During my grade school years, I did not like the library media specialist because they were often very mean and strict about talking and using books in the library. They did not make coming to the library a very enjoyable experience.” The library was very “non-welcoming for both students and teachers.” The librarian “ran the library as a fiefdom.” “Students would attempt to access the library during the school day only to find that the library was locked.” “The library should not be a place of hoops to jump through--it should be a welcoming place.”

### *Positive*

In the area of positive comments regarding relationships or attitudes, principals described library media specialists using words such as “welcoming,” “inviting,” and “collaborative.” They described a library media specialist who was “eager to collaborate with classroom teachers in planning instructional programs for students”

and one who “was so on board with what each teacher was teaching and provided excellent resources for them. She liked the children to use the library and come in at other times, not just the assigned time.”

One principal said the librarian was “very enthusiastic and loved children. The library was a fun place for kids to go and they learned to be independent in the library by the librarian and teachers working together.” Another noted that “students were excited to go the library because everything she planned was fun and interesting and pertinent to what we were studying.” Principals characterized library media specialists in positive terms such as “a life-long learner,” an “advocate for the program,” and “a team player who volunteers to participate in the collaborative process.” They described library media specialists who “effectively interact with other staff members and step out to meet them and provide support,” who “initiated team teaching of social studies,” and “was embedded in the school culture in a positive way.” One respondent noted, “She first made the media center welcoming to students and staff; she encouraged teachers to use her and the media center as a resource by initiating collaboration with a teacher in each department.” Another principal characterized the library media specialist, “open door, readily available, proactive instructor serving all children.”

Positive comments regarding informational or content related incidents fit into five categories: connections to Standards of Learning, use of curriculum pacing guides, attention to standardized test scores, teaching of research skills, and staff development in the area of information resources. Ten respondents mentioned the library media specialists’ attention to the Standards of Learning, either by providing resources (“I



have had the library media specialist to collect large plastic tubs of materials which support a specific Virginia Standard of Learning”) or by connecting library information lessons to SOL content (“My library media specialist asked to meet with all the teachers to coordinate what she did to go along with the SOL they were teaching in the classroom,” and “she taught lessons in the media center that focused strongly on needed SOL skills”).

Three respondents specifically mentioned library media specialists’ attention to curriculum pacing guides: “She uses the SOL data and our pacing guide to help guide her lessons as well as to offer support to the teachers for their instructional planning.” “She uses each grade level’s pacing guides to plan her library lessons.” “When first developing yearly curriculum maps for each grade level, I recall how our librarian reacted so very positively to having these maps. She was thrilled to know what the content plans were for each grade level so that she could make her plans to support that instruction through the IMP (Information Management Process) used in our school district.”

Three respondents noted special attention of the library media specialist to test scores. The library media specialist “realized that our school’s SOL scores were low in reference materials; she asked me if she could take a lead role in pulling selected students for intense work in this regard. I agreed and I appreciated her initiative.” “Through disseminating test scores as well as scores on the Tests for High Standards, areas of weakness were noted. The media specialist was made aware of these areas, and she worked very closely with the classroom teacher to reinforce material which had

been covered in the classroom.” “The library media specialist wanted to review the SOL scores in order to enhance the instructional program for the students.”

Principals related that library media specialists “taught the students research skills.” One stated, “I remember the library media specialist reinforcing research skills with my 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. This helped me to be more successful as a teacher and my students benefited from the extra reinforcement activities.” She “collaborated with classroom teachers to develop research skills for students...she met with teachers the week before for planning and together they developed the media lesson that was supportive of the classroom instruction...The students understood the connection that the media center was an extension of learning. It was not an isolated place we go with no connection to the live learning of the classroom.” One principal also reported, “My librarian presented excellent information to our PTA and staff about using online databases and why they are more reliable than search engines such as Google or Yahoo.”

#### *Expectations for Library Media Specialists*

Several principals specifically noted that they based their expectations for the instructional role of their library media specialist on a strong library media specialist with whom they had worked: “In my first job as a teacher, I probably had the chance to work with the best librarian I have seen...I judge all librarians by her.” “I have formed my opinions about the importance of that position by watching how important her role is in our school and seeing how her influence can extend far beyond the walls of the library.” “I was fortunate to work with an outstanding library media specialist who

made herself be an integral part of the whole school operation....From her very positive impact, I have carried that expectation on to other school settings to share with library media specialists who had never entertained the idea of working in this manner.” “I worked with a wonderful media specialist. She used lesson plans that coordinated with the grade level standard course of study and integrated regular classroom curriculum into the library experience....She has been the ruler by which I measure other media specialists.”

### Summary

Data collected in this Web-based survey of elementary school principals in Virginia shows that principals accept the role of the library media specialist as teacher of information literacy skills and as instructional partner. There is no significant difference in principals’ perceptions of this instructional role based on the type of library schedule in place in the school. The primary source of principals’ views of the instructional role of the library media specialist is their interaction with library media specialists in their current role as administrators and in their previous role as classroom teachers. Principals form their views based on both negative and positive interactions with library media specialists and base their expectations of their current and future library media specialists on these prior experiences and interactions.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter contains a discussion of the findings of the Web-based *Inquisite* survey of elementary school principals in Virginia regarding the instructional role of the library media specialist. It is organized into sections that include an overview of the findings and how they relate to existing literature, discussed in the context of the four research questions; limitations of the study; implications for current practice in applied settings; and recommendations for further research.

#### Overview of Findings

##### *Demographics*

Demographic data were collected to facilitate description of the sample and to allow for determination of its representativeness of the population. Although response counts were low (N=110), the sample provided regional representation for all elementary school principals in Virginia. Region 2 was most underrepresented, comprising 6.2% of the final sample whereas 19.7% of elementary schools in Virginia are located in Region 2. Regions 3, 4, and 6 were slightly underrepresented by an average of 1%, and Regions 1, 5, 7, and 8 were overrepresented by an average of 4%.

Although the sample was relatively balanced regionally, it was less representative of the elementary schools in the state with regard to school setting. In response to the survey item which asked participants to describe their school settings,

25.5% of the respondents (n=28) characterized their schools as urban, and 74.5% characterized their schools as non-urban (n=82). In contrast, using NCES *Common Core of Data* Locale Codes, 61.5% (n=712) of elementary schools in Virginia are characterized as urban, and 38.5% (n=446) are characterized as non-urban (U.S. Department of Education, 2005b). One explanation for this discrepancy could be that school settings were self-defined and self-reported; a more likely explanation, however, is that the data are truly skewed in regard to school setting. Of the underrepresented regions of the state, Region 2 includes larger urban school divisions such as Hampton City, Newport News City, Norfolk City, and Virginia Beach City.

Definitions of fixed, flexible, and mixed/combination library schedules were provided, and participants were asked to specify the type of schedule on which the library in their school operated. Fifty-six respondents (50.9%) indicated that their libraries operated on a fixed schedule. Six respondents (5.5%) indicated that their libraries operated on a flexible schedule, while 48 (43.6%) noted a mixed/combination schedule. No statistics have been located showing library scheduling practices in elementary schools in Virginia. However, when compared to the national norm as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics in 2004, the percentage of schools reporting a fixed schedule is identical, while there is variation in the areas of flex and mixed. According to *The Status of Public and Private School Library Media Centers in the United States: 1999-2000*, 50.9% of elementary public school libraries operated on a fixed schedule, 21.6% on a flexible schedule, and 27.5% on a mixed schedule (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Lacking Virginia statistics and noting

that the national statistics are from data collected in 1999-2000, it is not possible to ascertain the representativeness of the scheduling data from the study. In the areas of flex and mixed, the data may be skewed; it may show that Virginia differs slightly from the national average; or it may indicate a trend away from flexible schedules to mixed/combination schedules over the eight-year period from 1999 to 2007.

### *Library Media Specialist as Teacher*

Research question 1: How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills?

Twelve survey questions were designed to measure principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills to answer research question one. Elementary school principals in Virginia who responded to this survey strongly supported the library media specialist teaching students to use resources in various formats--print, electronic databases, and free Web sites--in order to write reports and complete classroom projects. They endorsed teaching the use of both print materials and electronic subscription databases (with just at 90% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing) more strongly than they endorsed teaching the use of free Web sites (with just over 80% either agreeing or strongly agreeing). This may suggest that principals appreciate the accuracy and reliability of information found in print and in subscription databases but are a bit more hesitant regarding students' use of information found on the free Web.

Standards in the field emphasize the integral role of the library media program as part of the instructional program of the school. They define a major role of library

media specialists as that of teacher of information literacy skills in the context of content area classroom instruction and in collaboration with classroom teachers (AASL, 1998; ALA, 2003; NBPTS, 2001). The literature shows that when library media specialists take an active role in instruction, student achievement is higher. Test scores are higher when library media specialists teach information literacy skills to students (Lance et al., 2000; Rodney et al., 2002, 2003; Smith, 2001).

Almost 95% of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students to access or locate information. Over 86% either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students to evaluate information. Just at 75% of respondents, however, either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach students to use information by taking notes and by organizing information found. This difference may suggest that while principals view the library media specialist as one who should teach students to find and to evaluate information, they consider it more the classroom teacher's role, or perhaps the instructional technology resource teacher's role, to teach students to use the information found.

Virginia elementary school principals believe that it is the library media specialist's role to teach students to use information ethically, respecting intellectual property, citing sources, respecting copyright laws, and following acceptable use policy guidelines. Over 90% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed in this area.

*Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (1998) delineates information literacy standards for student learning and charges library media specialists with helping

students to master these standards: students must learn to access information efficiently and effectively, evaluate information critically and competently, use information accurately and creatively, and do so in an ethical manner.

Virginia elementary school principals agree that library media specialists should have access to standardized test data (80%) and that they should use these data to develop information literacy instruction (83%). Eisenberg (2003) suggests that library media specialists familiarize themselves with content area standards, standardized test formats and questions in order to better connect information literacy instruction to content area curriculum.

Over 86% of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach teachers, providing in-service training and professional development opportunities in searching the Web effectively, using electronic subscription databases, and observing intellectual property rights and copyright laws. The literature shows that student achievement is higher when the library media specialist provides professional development in these areas and takes an active role as a teacher of teachers (Lance et al., 2000, 2001; Smith, 2001).

Standards in the field set the stage for the library media specialist as teacher. The literature in the field demonstrates the instructional benefits of the library media specialist as teacher of information literacy skills. In contrast to Naylor and Jenkins (1988) who found that only 18% of principals surveyed described library media services and library media specialists' competencies as instructional in nature and to Alexander et al. (2003) who found that principals rated learning/teaching as the lowest of library



media specialists' roles, those Virginia elementary school principals who responded to this Web-based survey strongly endorsed the role of library media specialist as teacher.

### *Library Media Specialist as Instructional Partner*

Research question 2: How do elementary school principals view the library media specialist as an instructional partner?

Eight survey items were designed to measure principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as an instructional partner to answer research question two. Over 90% of Virginia elementary school principals responding to the survey either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should collaborate with classroom teachers to teach information literacy skills in the context of content curriculum. Just over 85% either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should collaborate with individual teachers to plan instruction, while almost 92% either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should collaborate with teachers at grade level to plan lessons which integrate information literacy into the curriculum. Tallman and van Deusen (1995) reported that library media specialists who met with teams of teachers reported more collaboration than those who met with teachers individually.

The literature shows that when library media specialists take an active role in instruction, partnering and collaborating with classroom teachers to plan, teach, and evaluate instruction, student achievement is higher. Test scores are higher when library media specialists plan instruction with classroom teachers (Lance et al., 2000; Rodney et al., 2002, 2003; Smith, 2001). Standards in the field emphasize the integral role of the

library media program as part of the instructional program of the school and define a major role of library media specialists as that of instructional partner (AASL, 1998; ALA, 2003; NBPTS, 2001).

Almost 90% of Virginia elementary school principals responding either agreed or strongly agreed that library media specialists should teach collaboratively with classroom teachers. Less accepted by principals, however, was the concept that library media specialists should evaluate students' work: just over 73% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that this should occur. This may suggest that while principals support the library media specialist planning and teaching with the classroom teacher, they are less comfortable with library media specialists evaluating student work. Student achievement is higher when library media specialists team teach with classroom teachers (Lance et al., 2001; Rodney et al., 2002; Smith, 2001), and standards in the field suggest that library media specialists should collaboratively evaluate students' work (AASL, 1998; ALA, 2003; NBPTS, 2001).

Two survey items were designed to measure principals' perceptions regarding initiation of collaboration between the library media specialist and classroom teachers. If library media specialists and classroom teachers are to collaborate to plan, teach, and evaluate, someone must initiate that collaboration. Over 67% of principals responding felt that the library media specialist should be the primary initiator of teacher-library media specialist collaboration at the individual teacher level, while 20% felt that this was the teacher's responsibility and almost 12% felt it was the responsibility of the principal.

When questioned regarding the primary initiator of teacher-library media specialist collaboration at the school level, again the majority of principals (57.3%) felt this was the library media specialist's responsibility. Just over 38% felt that this initiation of school level collaboration was the principal's responsibility and not quite 3% stated that it was teachers' responsibility.

While principals felt that initiation of collaboration was more of an administrative responsibility at the school level than at the individual teacher level, in both cases, the majority of principals ascribed the responsibility of initiating this collaboration to the library media specialist. Principals serve as the instructional leaders for their schools, and, according to Henri and Hay (1995), their support is a crucial factor in the ability of the library media specialist to influence instruction. Hartzell (2002c) asserts that it is the principal's duty to promote the library's instructional potential with teachers, and Tallman and van Deusen (1995) found that more collaboration occurred in schools where principals set the expectation for collaboration between classroom teachers and library media specialists. Elementary school principals responding to this survey, however, expect library media specialists to be the initiators, to be proactive, and to be advocates for their programs.

Standards in the field set the expectation for the library media specialist to function as an instructional partner. The literature in the field demonstrates the instructional benefits of the library media specialist as instructional partner. Virginia elementary school principals responding to this Web-based survey strongly endorsed

the role of library media specialist as instructional partner and placed the onus of initiating this collaboration on the library media specialist.

#### *Library Schedule as Independent Variable*

Research question 3: What relationships exist between the dependent variables, principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as a teacher of information literacy skills and as an instructional partner, and the independent variable, type of library schedule?

This study focused on principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist. One-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine the relationships between principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as teacher and as instructional partner and the type of library schedule in place in their schools. No statistically significant difference was found between principals' perceptions of the library media specialist as teacher based on type of library schedule in place nor between principals' perceptions of library media specialist as instructional partner based on type of library schedule in place. Virginia elementary school principals who responded to this study strongly endorsed both the teacher and the instructional partner roles of the library media specialist, yet their views of these roles did not differ significantly by type of schedule in effect in their schools.

Elementary school libraries operate on varying types of schedules--fixed, flexible, and mixed/combination. Putnam (1996) found that library media specialists functioning in a fixed schedule environment were less able to practice their instructional role than those library media specialists who operated on a flexible schedule. Tallman

and van Deusen (1995) noted that library media specialists with flexible scheduling reported significantly more teaching and more curriculum consultation than those with fixed scheduling and that library media specialists with flexible scheduling reported 62% of their units as collaboratively planned, compared to 22% for library media specialists with fixed scheduling. McCracken (2000) found that elementary library media specialists who practiced flexible scheduling were better able to implement their instructional roles than those who worked under fixed schedules. Putnam, Tallman and van Deusen, and McCracken surveyed library media specialists regarding implementation of their instructional roles.

It is evident that library media specialists' views of the impact of scheduling on their instructional role, as noted by Putnam (1996), Tallman and van Deusen (1995), and McCracken (2000), and principals' views of the impact of scheduling on the instructional role, as demonstrated by the findings in this study, differ. One explanation may be that library media specialists speak from experience whereas principals are removed from the actual situation and do not have accurate perceptions of the reality of the situation. Another explanation may be that library media specialists in the schools of responding principals are doing a good job and making a difference in student learning, despite the challenges presented by scheduling. A third possible explanation is that principals expect library media specialists to perform their instructional role, no matter what type of schedule is in place.

### *Source of Principals' Perceptions*

Research question 4: What is the basis for elementary school principals' views of the instructional role of the library media specialist?

Analysis of the data shows that over 65% (66.4%) of the respondents reported teaching in the major content areas of English, history/social sciences, and mathematics, and almost 60% (58.2%) reported teaching in the sciences. While the highest percentage of principals (67.3%) had taught in grades three through five, almost 74% (73.6%) reported teaching at the middle and high school levels. The teaching emphasis in the four content areas and at the secondary level suggests that many elementary school principals' teaching experience may not be at the elementary level. It stands to reason, then, that many elementary school principals come to their administrative positions with little experience in or understanding of elementary school libraries.

Review of the literature demonstrates the key role that the principal plays as the instructional leader of the school and the importance of principal understanding of and support for the library program. If the program and its services are to develop to the fullest potential, the principal must support it through personal commitment, funding, staffing, and communication of its importance to faculty and staff (Buchanan, 1982; Campbell, 1991; Henri & Hay, 1995; Henri et al., 2002a; McCracken, 2000). As noted in the literature, however, principals typically do not receive information regarding the instructional role of the library media specialist in their principal preparation programs (Buchanan, 1982; Pearson, 1989; Wilson & McNeil, 1998). Less than 2% of the

respondents to this survey indicated that coursework in their principal preparation programs was their primary source of knowledge regarding library media specialists.

Naylor and Jenkins (1988) suggested that principals develop their views and expectations of the library media specialist based on their personal experiences as classroom teachers. Campbell (1991) found that the primary source of knowledge regarding the role of the library media specialist was the current library media specialist in their school. Alexander et al. (2003) asserted that perceptions are developed through day-to-day, on-the-job interactions.

Data from this study confirm the findings of Naylor and Jenkins, Campbell, and Alexander and colleagues. Over 65% of the elementary school principals in Virginia responding to the survey indicated that their primary source of knowledge of the instructional role of the library media specialist was derived from interactions with library media specialists during their administrative careers. Over 26% stated that their knowledge was derived from interactions with library media specialists during their teaching careers.

Elementary principals in Virginia public schools form their views of the role of the library media specialist in their schools through their interactions with practicing library media specialists. Pearson (1989) suggested that it was the responsibility of the library media specialist to inform and educate the principal concerning the library's potential contribution to student learning. Findings from this study validate Pearson's charge.

### *Critical Incidents*

For the open-ended question of the survey, principals were asked to relate information regarding a critical incident, either positive or negative, which helped them to form their views of the library media specialist's role in the school. Respondents shared both positive and negative incidents providing, as Flanagan (1954) suggested, "a very valuable supplementary tool for the study of attitudes" (p. 353).

As noted previously, principals responding to the survey questions strongly supported the teaching role of the library media specialist, and their comments reflected this as well: principals shared dissatisfaction when library media specialists did not teach or taught library information skills in isolation, "she delivered her own lessons without regard to what was taking place in the classroom or student learning abilities, levels, or interests." On the positive side, they noted instances in which the library media specialist aligned information literacy instruction with content curriculum, used curriculum pacing guides to facilitate connections, and analyzed SOL test scores in order to address areas of weakness, "uses the SOL data and our pacing guide to help guide her lessons as well as to offer support to the teachers for their instructional planning."

Principals responding to the survey questions also strongly supported the instructional partnership role of the library media specialist. The incidents which they described, both negative and positive, further reflected this. On the negative side, they described library media specialists who "did not work well with other teachers" and who did not "see the BIG picture." On the positive side, principals mentioned library



media specialists who “were eager to collaborate with classroom teachers in planning instructional programs for students.”

Principals expressed strongly that they expected the library media specialist to initiate collaboration within the school setting. One principal, in sharing negative comments, characterized the library media specialist as “too shy to bring the library to life.” Positive statements focused on the proactive efforts of the library media specialist to promote the library program and services and to take the first step toward collaborating with classroom teachers: “she encouraged teachers to use her and the media center as a resource by initiating collaboration with a teacher in each department.”

Further incidents shared in the open-ended question supported the finding that the source of principals’ perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist is primarily library media specialists with whom they have worked. Principals related that they judge library media specialists by excellent professionals whom they previously encountered: “In my first job as a teacher, I probably had the chance to work with the best librarian I have seen...I judge all librarians by her,” and “I was fortunate to work with an outstanding library media specialist who made herself be an integral part of the whole school operation...From her very positive impact, I have carried that expectation on to other school settings.”

Principals who gave negative responses to the open-ended question described interactions with the more traditional, stereotypical librarian who completed conventional library duties but did not effectively instruct or participate as an integral

part of student learning. Principals who gave positive responses had interacted with proactive library media specialists who contributed to instruction and learning in their schools. They described library media specialists who collaboratively planned and taught with classroom teachers, who were knowledgeable about curriculum standards, and who worked to align the library program with the overall mission and goals of the school.

### Limitations

#### *Low Response Rate*

The primary limitation of this study comes from the low response rate to the survey. Examination of the literature review provided no clear indication of expected response rate when surveying principals. In her 2001 paper and pen survey of Pennsylvania secondary school principals, Kolencik had a return rate of 39%. Lau surveyed 2000 K-12 principals in the United States using a mailed questionnaire in 2002 and had a 12% return rate. In contrast, Alexander et al. had a 56% response rate when they surveyed Kentucky K-12 principals in 2003 using a paper and pen survey. No instances of a Web-based survey with principals were found in the review of literature.

For this study, a proportional stratified random sample of 500 was drawn from the initial sample frame of 927 email addresses. Response to the initial survey was extremely low, n=64, for a response rate of 14%. In an attempt to increase the response rate, a second proposal was submitted to the IRB, requesting permission to survey the remaining 427 principals not selected for the first round. Permission was granted, and

the survey was then sent to the principals remaining in the sample frame. Response to the second call was low also,  $n=51$ , for a response rate of 13%. The researcher identified four possible explanations for the low response rate.

One possible explanation is the use of a Web-based survey. Dillman (2007) suggested that careful attention to Web-based survey construction and administration enhances the response rate. He also noted that Internet surveys are appropriate for survey populations with high levels of computer access and proficiency, such as those in the field of education. Although it was not indicated in the pilot study with practicing elementary school principals, it is possible that elementary school principals did not feel comfortable with the Web-based survey and that the format impacted the response rate.

A second explanation is timing of the survey. The original intent was to distribute the survey in early April 2007 and collect data over a three-week period, prior to administration of SOL tests and end-of-the-year school activities. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the researcher, the survey was not issued until May 14. With testing and the end of the school year, May and June are, admittedly, extremely busy months for principals. The second survey was distributed in early August as many principals were beginning to prepare for the upcoming school year, another busy time for principals.

A third explanation for low response rate relates to the larger school divisions in the state. Some principals from larger school divisions contacted the researcher and noted that, although the survey requested personal perceptions and did not request any information regarding the school division, policies, procedures, or personnel, they

would not be able to complete it without prior approval from their central offices. In the current data-driven, accountability-oriented educational environment, the expectation for research is well established. Policy makers encourage higher education institutions to conduct research in K-12 settings, yet significant barriers to this collaboration exist.

A fourth explanation for low response rates is strongly grounded in the literature and the premise of the study: principals are not well informed regarding the critical role that library media specialists and library media programs can play in instruction. Numerous research studies demonstrate that when library media specialists teach information literacy skills and collaborate with classroom teachers to plan, teach, and evaluate instruction, student achievement is higher (Lance et al., 2000; Rodney et al., 2002, 2003; Smith, 2001). The library media specialist has the potential to positively impact student learning, and administrator support is key in making this happen. When choices regarding activities and tasks must be made, however, libraries rank low on principals' lists of importance. The majority of the 110 elementary principals who responded to this survey seem to be well aware of the strong contributions that the library media specialist makes in the school, and they overwhelmingly endorsed the library media specialists' instructional role. It may be that the remaining 800 plus elementary principals do not value school libraries and do not recognize the potential that exists.

#### *Non-Response Bias*

Principals responding to the survey strongly supported the instructional role of the library media specialist, in contrast to the findings from several earlier studies. Only

18% of principals surveyed by Naylor and Jenkins (1988) described library media specialists' duties as instructional in nature; Kolencik (2001) noted that principals characterized library media specialists as keepers and circulators of materials; Alexander et al. (2003) found that principals rated learning and teaching as the lowest of five library media specialists' roles. The positive perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist by principals in this study are not indicated in the literature. There is a danger of non-response bias. The researcher has no way of accurately knowing the views of the principals who did not respond.

#### *Type II Error*

Additionally, since response rate was so low, there is the possibility of Type II error. The one-way analysis of variance failed to detect a statistically significant difference based on type of library schedule in place. Overall response rate was low, and the number of principals responding for whom the library operated on a flexible schedule was very low, n=6. It is possible that a statistically significant difference does exist in the perceptions of principals regarding the instructional role of the library media specialist dependent on the type of library schedule in place but that this study did not obtain sufficient responses to determine it.

#### *Reliability*

The survey instrument used in this study was developed by the researcher based on standards in the field and on instruments previously used in studies. Internal reliability of the theoretical scales for the constructs of teacher and instructional partner was established using Cronbach's alpha.

### *Validity*

“Validity is assessed depending on the purpose, population, and environmental characteristics in which measurement takes place” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 239). Construct and content validity of the survey instrument were established through several procedures. Survey items were developed based on standards in the field and on previously used instruments. Experts in the fields of educational leadership and school library media at Longwood University reviewed the instrument for content and clarity. Practicing Virginia elementary school library media specialists also reviewed the instrument. It was then pilot tested with practicing Virginia elementary school principals. To ascertain external validity, the full instrument should be administered again in similar studies.

### Implications for Current Practice in Applied Settings

Findings from this study provide implications for current practice at the university preparation level, at the professional level, and at the practitioner level. At the university level, there are implications for both educational leadership preparation programs and school library media preparation programs. The research demonstrates that library media specialists who play an active instructional role in their schools positively impact student learning (Lance, 2005). As the instructional leader of the school, principals are concerned about student achievement. If students are to achieve at the highest level, the instructional potential of the library media specialist cannot be overlooked. Of the Virginia elementary school principals responding to this survey, less than 2% named coursework in their principal preparation programs as their primary

source of information regarding the instructional role of the library media specialist. Less than 10% (9.1%) noted that they had received any sort of formal training related to library media specialists during their principal preparation programs. To best prepare their graduates for their roles as instructional leaders in their schools, university educational leadership programs should add information regarding the instructional role of the library media specialist to their curricula.

Findings from this study have implications for school library media preparation programs and for state departments of education, school divisions, and professional organizations as well. This research clearly demonstrates that principals learn about the instructional role of the library media specialist from either library media specialists with whom they work as an administrator (65.5%) or from library media specialists with whom they worked as a teacher (26.4%). School library media preparation programs must prepare their graduates to positively present their key instructional roles. Library media specialists already working in the field must have the opportunity for training and professional development. The importance of communication with administrators, of developing positive interpersonal relationships, and of marketing, public relations, and advocacy for the school library media program should be included in the curriculum of school library media preparation programs. For those library media specialists in the field, training in these areas should be presented in the format of workshops, in-service opportunities, and conference sessions.

For the practicing library media specialist, findings from this study offer both tremendous responsibility and challenge. Principals base their perceptions of the

instructional role of the library media specialist on interactions which they had as classroom teachers and on interactions which they have as principals with practicing library media specialists. Principals learn what library media specialists can and should do from library media specialists. This places a tremendous responsibility on library media specialists to implement their instructional roles to the best of their ability in the educational environment in which they work. At the same time, library media specialists face the challenge of maintaining professional skills, keeping up-to-date not only on best instructional practice but also on marketing, public relations, and advocacy skills.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

While findings from this study provided answers to the research questions, further research in the area of principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist is indicated. Response rate was extremely low for this study. Timing during the school year may have been a problem which impacted the response rate; however, given the seemingly low importance which principals place on school libraries, timing for the study may make no difference. The study should be replicated in other states and at the national level to determine if similar results occur.

In future replications, data in the area of school setting should be carefully examined. The majority of the respondents to this survey indicated that they served as principals in non-urban elementary schools. Schools in urban settings often include many students from lower socio-economic groups who face additional instructional challenges. Do principals in these schools hold different views of library media



specialists' instructional role? More research is needed to explore the urban/non-urban factor.

The issue of scheduling should be explored further. Previous studies indicated that the type of library schedule in place in a school impacted the ability of the library media specialist to collaboratively plan, teach, and evaluate (Putnam, 1996; Tallman & van Deusen, 1995; McCracken, 2000). This study found no significant difference in principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist based on the type of library schedule. Additional research is needed in this area.

Elementary school principals responding to this survey strongly endorsed the instructional role of the library media specialist as both teacher and instructional partner. Questions in the survey focused on what the library media specialist should do. Based on these findings, additional research should be conducted to determine what activities principals put in place in their schools to facilitate the full implementation of this role. Do principals stress the importance of the library media specialist's instructional role with teachers, as the literature suggests they should (Hartzell, 2002c; Master & Master, 1988)? Findings from this study demonstrated that principals expect the library media specialist to initiate collaboration with classroom teachers. Do they set the tone and climate for collaboration, and do they provide common planning time to allow collaboration to occur? A follow-up study focusing on principal actions should be conducted.

This study focused on elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist. It is important to ascertain how

secondary school principals perceive the instructional role of the library media specialist as well. The survey instrument should be adapted, as appropriate, and a similar study conducted at the secondary level. Modifications of the survey instrument may be needed, not only to address library media program differences at the secondary level but also to capture and express the instructional role of the library media specialist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As new technologies emerge, principals will be concerned about their impact, and survey items should address them.

### Summary

Library media specialists who play an active instructional role in their schools positively impact student learning. Principals are instructional leaders in their schools, and their support is critical to full development of the library media specialist's potential. This study provides evidence that Virginia elementary school principals view the library media specialist as a teacher and an instructional partner. It confirms that they develop their perceptions of the library media specialists' instructional role from the library media specialists with whom they work. Hortin (1989) pointed out that library media specialists need to know how principals perceive them in order to better communicate and to meet their patrons' needs. Armed with the evidence provided by this study, elementary library media specialists can take a proactive role, initiating collaboration with classroom teachers, teaching information literacy skills, and raising principal awareness of the library's contribution to student learning.

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## Appendix A

## Survey: Elementary School Principals' Perceptions of the Instructional Role of the Library Media Specialist

**Section One: The Teacher Role of the Library Media Specialist**

Directions: Please read each of the following statements and select the answer that best represents your response. Answer choices are Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree, Neither disagree nor agree.

1. My library media specialist should teach students to use print materials to write reports and complete classroom projects.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
  - e. Neither disagree nor agree
2. My library media specialist should teach students to use electronic subscription databases which contain journal articles and other reference material (*eLibrary*, *SIRS Discoverer*, and *Kids InfoBits*) to write reports and complete classroom projects.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
  - e. Neither disagree nor agree
3. My library media specialist should teach students to use information found at free Web sites to write reports and complete classroom projects.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
  - e. Neither disagree nor agree
4. My library media specialist should teach students how to locate information contained in print and electronic sources.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree

- e. Neither disagree nor agree
- 5. My library media specialist should teach students how to evaluate information for accuracy and reliability before using it in a report or project.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
  - e. Neither disagree nor agree
- 6. My library media specialist should teach students how to take notes and how to organize information to be used in a report or project.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
  - e. Neither disagree nor agree
- 7. My library media specialist should teach students to respect intellectual property (avoid plagiarism, cite sources, respect copyright laws).
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
  - e. Neither disagree nor agree
- 8. My library media specialist should teach students to practice ethical behavior by following acceptable use policy guidelines in their use of information.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
  - e. Neither disagree nor agree
- 9. My library media specialist should have access to standardized student test data.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
  - e. Neither disagree nor agree
- 10. My library media specialist should use standardized student test data as he/she develops information literacy instruction.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
  - e. Neither disagree nor agree

11. My library media specialist should provide staff development for teachers in areas such as effective searching on the World Wide Web and effective use of electronic subscription databases.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
  - Neither disagree nor agree
12. My library media specialist should provide staff development for teachers in areas such as intellectual property and copyright.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
  - Neither disagree nor agree

### **Section Two: The Instructional Partner Role of the Library Media Specialist**

Directions: Please read each of the following statements and select the answer that best represents your response. Answer choices are Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree, Neither disagree nor agree.

13. My library media specialist should collaborate with teachers to teach students information literacy skills (accessing, evaluating, and using information) in the context of content curriculum.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
  - Neither disagree nor agree
14. My library media specialist should collaborate with individual teachers to plan lessons which integrate information literacy into the curriculum.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
  - Neither disagree nor agree
15. My library media specialist should collaborate with teachers at grade level to plan lessons which integrate information literacy into the curriculum.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
  - Neither disagree nor agree

16. My library media specialist should collaborate with teachers to teach lessons which integrate information literacy into the curriculum.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
  - Neither disagree nor agree
17. My library media specialist should collaborate with teachers to evaluate student work from lessons which integrate information literacy into the curriculum.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
  - Neither disagree nor agree
18. My library media specialist should play an active role in the school improvement plan/process.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
  - Neither disagree nor agree

### Section Three: Overall Contributions of Library Media Specialist to Instruction

Directions: Please read each of the following statements and select the answer that best represents your response.

19. My library media specialist should be a(n) (Check all that apply)
- Advocate for the Library Program
  - Instructional Leader
  - Instructional Partner
  - Master Teacher
  - Member of the Leadership Team/Principal's Advisory Council
  - Other (please specify)
20. Who should be the primary initiator of teacher-library media specialist collaboration at the individual teacher level? (Check one)
- Administrator
  - Library media specialist
  - Teacher
21. Who should be the primary initiator of teacher-library media specialist collaboration at the school level? (Check one)
- Administrator
  - Library media specialist
  - Teacher

22. What would you specify as the primary source of your knowledge of the instructional role of the library media specialist? (Check one)
- Coursework in my principal preparation program
  - Interactions with library media specialists during my teaching career
  - Interactions with library media specialists during my administrative career
  - Presentations at conferences which I have attended
  - Readings in professional journals
  - Other (please specify)

#### Section Four: Demographics

Directions: Please respond to each of the following questions.

23. Superintendents' Regional Study Group in which your school is located (Check one)
- Region 1: Charles City County, Chesterfield County, Colonial Heights City, Dinwiddie County, Goochland County, Hanover County, Henrico County, Hopewell City, New Kent County, Petersburg City, Powhatan County, Prince George County, Richmond City, Surry County, Sussex County
  - Region 2: Accomack County, Chesapeake City, Franklin City, Hampton City, Isle of Wight County, Newport News City, Norfolk City, Northampton County, Poquoson City, Portsmouth City, Southampton County, Suffolk City, Virginia Beach City, Williamsburg-James City County, York County
  - Region 3: Caroline County, Colonial Beach, Essex County, Fredericksburg City, Gloucester County, King and Queen County, King George County, King William County, Lancaster County, Mathews County, Middlesex County, Northumberland County, Richmond County, Spotsylvania County, Stafford County, West Point, Westmoreland County
  - Region 4: Alexandria City, Arlington County, Clarke County, Culpeper County, Fairfax City, Fairfax County, Falls Church City, Fauquier County, Frederick County, Loudoun County, Madison County, Manassas City, Manassas Park City, Orange County, Page County, Prince William County, Rappahannock County, Shenandoah County, Warren County, Winchester City
  - Region 5: Albemarle County, Amherst County, Augusta County, Bath County, Bedford City, Bedford County, Buena Vista City, Campbell County, Charlottesville City, Fluvanna County, Greene County, Harrisonburg City, Highland County, Lexington City, Louisa County, Lynchburg City, Nelson County, Rockbridge County, Rockingham County, Staunton City, Waynesboro City

- f. Region 6: Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Covington City, Craig County, Danville City, Floyd County, Franklin County, Henry County, Martinsville City, Montgomery County, Patrick County, Pittsylvania County, Roanoke City, Roanoke County, Salem City
  - g. Region 7: Bland County, Bristol City, Buchanan County, Carroll County, Dickenson County, Galax City, Giles County, Grayson County, Lee County, Norton City, Pulaski County, Radford City, Russell County, Scott County, Smyth County, Tazewell County, Washington County, Wise County, Wythe County
  - h. Region 8: Amelia County, Appomattox County, Brunswick County, Buckingham County, Charlotte County, Cumberland County, Greensville County, Halifax County, Lunenburg County, Mecklenburg County, Nottoway County, Prince Edward County
24. School setting (Check one)
- a. Urban
  - b. Non-urban
25. Grade level configuration which best describes the school in which you are principal (Check one)
- a. PreK-2
  - b. K-2
  - c. 3-5
  - d. PreK-5
  - e. K-5
  - f. Other (please specify)
26. School enrollment (Check one)
- a. 1 to 99
  - b. 100 to 299
  - c. 300 to 749
  - d. 750 to 1499
  - e. 1500 and above
27. Type of schedule on which library operates (Check one)
- a. Fixed, defined as the method of scheduling class time in the library media center for instruction or use of resources on a regular basis (usually weekly)
  - b. Flexible, defined as the method of scheduling class time in the library media center based on the library media specialist and teacher(s) planning together for instruction or use of resources based on student learning needs within a curriculum unit
  - c. Mixed/Combination, defined as the method of scheduling class time in library which includes classes in some grades visiting the library on a fixed schedule (ex. K-2) while classes in other grades visit the library on a flexible schedule (ex. 3-5)
28. Total years of classroom teaching experience which you have (Check one)

- a. Dropdown menu here, 0 to 25 years, Over 25
- 29. Content area(s) you taught as classroom teacher (Check all that apply)
  - a. Dropdown menu here, use SOL content area as choices plus other
- 30. Grade level(s) you taught as classroom teacher (Check all that apply)
  - a. PreK-2
  - b. 3-5
  - c. 6-8
  - d. 9-12
- 31. Total years of administrative experience which you have (including the current academic year) (Check one)
  - a. Dropdown menu here, 0 to 25 years, Over 25
- 32. In your principal preparation program, did you receive any sort of formal training related to library/media specialists?
  - a. No
  - b. Yes
    - If yes, in what context? (Check one)
    - a. Entire course in school library media
    - b. Topic of discussion in several courses
    - c. Topic of discussion in one course
    - d. Presentation from guest lecturer
    - e. Other? (please specify)

**Open-ended Question:**

Directions: Please respond to the following open-ended question in the space provided.

“Think back to a situation or incident which you have had with a library media

specialist which helped to form your view of the role of the library media specialist in

the school. This incident could be a positive one, or it could be a negative one. Please

describe the incident.”

Thank you very much for completing this survey. If you have any questions or are interested in the results of this research study, please feel free to contact the researcher at [churchaa@vcu.edu](mailto:churchaa@vcu.edu).



## Appendix B

Email Subject line: Library Research Study Information

March <<date inserted>> 2007

Dear <<Principal>>,

I am a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University conducting a research study regarding elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist. Data collected from this survey will add to the body of literature on the impact of the library media specialist on student learning and will help to inform best practice in our schools.

You have been randomly selected to complete the survey, and your participation is completely voluntary. The survey is Web-based and will take about <<number determined from pilot study>> minutes to complete.

There are minimal risks associated with this survey. Your responses will be confidential. Data will be reported in a doctoral dissertation and may be used in aggregated form in presentations and publications. Demographic information will be used only for analysis purposes, and any identifiers will be destroyed upon approval of the dissertation. This demographic information is collected to insure that the sample is representative.

Early next week, you will receive an email from me with the link to the survey. At the beginning of the survey, you will find an Informed Consent Form which you should read carefully. The survey will be available through April <<date inserted>> 2007. If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact me at Virginia Commonwealth University, Doctoral Studies Office, either by phone 804-827-2657 or by email at churchaa@vcu.edu.

I truly appreciate your time, and I value your opinions.

Sincerely,  
Audrey Church, Doctoral Student  
Virginia Commonwealth University

## Appendix C

Email Subject line: Library Research Survey Available

March <<date inserted>> 2007

Dear <<Principal>>,

This is a follow-up to the email which you received from me last week. As noted, I am a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University conducting a research study regarding elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist. Data collected from this survey will add to the body of literature on the impact of the library media specialist on student learning and will help to inform best practice in our schools.

You have been randomly selected to complete the survey, and your participation is completely voluntary. The survey is Web-based and will take about <<number determined from pilot study>> minutes to complete.

There are minimal risks associated with this survey. Your responses will be confidential. Data will be reported in a doctoral dissertation and may be used in aggregated form in presentations and publications. Demographic information will be used only for analysis purposes, and any identifiers will be destroyed upon approval of the dissertation. This demographic information is collected to insure that the sample is representative.

The survey is available at <<URL to be determined>>. When you click on this link, you will first be taken to an Informed Consent form. Please read this consent form carefully. If you agree to its terms, click Accept and you will be taken to the survey questions. The survey will be available through April <<date inserted>> 2007.

If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact me at Virginia Commonwealth University, Doctoral Studies Office, either by phone 804-827-2657 or by email at churchaa@vcu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Office of Research, Virginia Commonwealth University, 804-827-2157.

Again, I truly appreciate your time, and I value your opinions.

Sincerely,  
Audrey Church, Doctoral Student  
Virginia Commonwealth University

## Appendix D

**RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

**TITLE:** Elementary School Principals' Perceptions of the Instructional Role of the School Library Media Specialist

**VCU IRB NO.:** HM10812

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this research study is to determine how elementary school principals view the library media specialist as a teacher and as an instructional partner and to determine the source of these perceptions.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are an elementary school principal in a Virginia public school.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT**

In this study you will be asked to complete an online survey. The survey consists of 32 closed-choice questions and one open-ended question. It will take approximately <<number determined from pilot study>> minutes to complete.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to agree to the terms of this consent form by checking the "Accept" box at the end of this form.

**RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Minimal possible psychological risks or discomforts have been identified as a potential result of participating in this study.

**BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS**

You may not get any direct benefit from this study; however, the information learned will help to improve the utilization of school library media programs across the state.

**COSTS**

There is no cost for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in completing the survey.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

The information that you provide will be confidential. It will not be possible to link responses to you as an individual. Data will be reported in a doctoral dissertation and may be used in aggregated form in presentations and publications. Demographic information will be used only for analysis purposes, and any identifiers will be destroyed upon approval of the dissertation.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without any penalty. You may skip questions. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study.

### **QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions about participation in this study, now or in the future, please contact:

Audrey P. Church  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
School of Education Doctoral Studies  
P.O. Box 842020  
Richmond, VA 23284  
Telephone: 804-826-2657  
Email: churchaa@vcu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office for Research  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 113  
P.O. Box 980568  
Richmond, VA 23298  
Telephone: 804-827-2157

### **CONSENT**

I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. Checking the Accept box indicates that I voluntarily consent to participate in this research study.

- Accept
- Decline

## Appendix E

Email Subject line: Library Research Survey Participation

April <<date inserted>> 2007

Dear <<Principal>>,

The purpose of this email is to follow-up on the email which you received from me last week regarding my doctoral research study on elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the library media specialist.

The survey is available at <<URL to be determined>> and will take about <<number determined from pilot study>> minutes to complete. Would you please consider responding at your earliest convenience?

When you click on the link above, you will first be taken to an Informed Consent form. Please read this consent form carefully. If you agree to its terms, click Accept and you will be taken to the survey questions. The survey will be available through April <<date inserted>> 2007.

If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact me at Virginia Commonwealth University, Doctoral Studies Office, either by phone 804-827-2657 or by email at churchaa@vcu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Office of Research, Virginia Commonwealth University, 804-827-2157.

Thank you so much for your time and for your opinions.

Sincerely,  
Audrey Church, Doctoral Student  
Virginia Commonwealth University

## Appendix F

Email Subject line: Library Research Survey Request

April <<date inserted>> 2007

Dear <<Principal>>,

You are receiving this email because you have not yet completed the survey on elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the school library media specialist. I know how very busy you are!

The survey is available at <<URL to be determined>> and will take about <<number determined from pilot study>> minutes to complete. Would you please consider responding at your earliest convenience?

Just a reminder that when you click on this link, you will first be taken to an Informed Consent form. Please read this consent form carefully. If you agree to its terms, click Accept and you will be taken to the survey questions. The survey will be available through April <<date inserted>> 2007.

Again, if you have any questions regarding the study, please contact me at Virginia Commonwealth University, Doctoral Studies Office, either by phone 804-827-2657 or by email at churchaa@vcu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Office of Research, Virginia Commonwealth University, 804-827-2157.

I truly appreciate your time and your opinion!

Sincerely,  
Audrey Church, Doctoral Student  
Virginia Commonwealth University

## Appendix G

Email Subject line: Follow-Up Library Research Survey Request

April <<date inserted>> 2007

Dear <<Principal>>,

Please assist me.

You have received this email because you have not yet completed the survey on elementary school principals' perceptions of the instructional role of the school library media specialist. It is critical that I receive a sufficient number of responses to validate my findings.

The survey is available at <<URL to be determined>> and will take about <<number determined from pilot study>> minutes to complete. Would you please consider responding at your earliest convenience?

Just a reminder that when you click on this link, you will first be taken to an Informed Consent form. Please read this consent form carefully. If you agree to its terms, click Accept and you will be taken to the survey questions. The survey will be available through April <<date inserted>> 2007.

Should you have any questions regarding the study, please contact me at Virginia Commonwealth University, Doctoral Studies Office, either by phone 804-827-2657 or by email at churchaa@vcu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Office of Research, Virginia Commonwealth University, 804-827-2157.

I truly appreciate your time and your opinion!

Sincerely,  
Audrey Church, Doctoral Student  
Virginia Commonwealth University

## VITA

Audrey Puckett Church was born on December 12, 1957, in Richmond, Virginia. She grew up in Keysville, Virginia with her parents, Aubrey and Faye, and one brother, Mark. In 1976 she graduated from Prince Edward Academy in Farmville, Virginia. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English, summa cum laude, from Bridgewater College in 1980 and a Master of Science in Education, Concentration in School Library Media, in 1993 from Longwood College. She worked as a library media specialist in Lunenburg County Public Schools for 20 years, three years at Kenbridge Primary School and 17 years at Central High School. In 2000, she became Coordinator of the graduate program in School Library Media at Longwood University.



