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Library curriculum integration: weighing the advantages and disadvantages

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LIBRARY CURRICULUM INTEGRATION:

WEIGHING THE ADVANTAGES

AND DISADVANTAGES

by
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A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Shari L. Hayes. Library Curriculum Integration: Weighing the Advantages and Disadvantages. 1999. (Under the direction of Dr. Holly G. Willett, Program in School and Public Librarianship).

In an attempt to discover whether or not integrating the library curriculum into the classroom curriculum should be implemented, this study was designed to identify any advantages and/or disadvantages that this procedure may have. Two schools, chosen randomly, from each county in New Jersey were asked to participate. One librarian and four teachers from each school were sent questionnaires that consisted of one double-sided page of multiple choice and open-ended questions. Nine of 42 school library media specialists and 18 of 168 teachers of fifth and sixth grade students responded to this survey. Comparisons were made between responses from librarians of integrated and non-integrated libraries and between responses from teachers with school libraries that were integrated and school libraries that were non-integrated. All of the librarians from integrated and non-integrated libraries believed that the library curriculum should be incorporated into the classroom curriculum. All of teachers with and without integrated school libraries supported curriculum integration. Librarians and teachers shared the opinion that curriculum integration not only increased student motivation, but also showed them the importance of learning across content areas and reinforcing skills. Lack of planning time was the only disadvantage cited in curriculum integration.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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Disadvantages. 1999. (Under the direction of Dr. Holly G. Willett, Program in School

and Public Librarianship).

This study asked school media specialists and teachers in New Jersey their

opinion of integrating the library curriculum into the classroom curriculum. Not all of

the participating schools were integrated. The lack of planning time was the only

disadvantage listed. Overall, the advantages of library curriculum integration outweighed

the disadvantages.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Thesis Problem

This study looked at the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating library skills into the classroom curriculum. Why might curriculum integration be beneficial to students? What drawbacks, if any, might exist for a librarian who teaches library skills by integrating them into what the students are learning in the classroom? What is the participating faculty's reaction to collaborating with the librarian when teaching content areas? Also, do faculty members see an increase student motivation for learning library skills and/or enhanced learning of what is taught in the regular classroom?

The intentions of this study were to draw attention to information literacy and the role which a librarian may play in the education of students. By justifying whether or not a library curriculum should go hand in hand with the school curriculum, the study attempts to show others not of the profession how library skills may be applied in all aspects of life. In many schools, library class often takes a back seat to other classes. This study also attempts to show some proof that integrating the library curriculum into the classroom curriculum will benefit the students. Hopefully, by reading this study non-library supporters may change their views on the importance of the role that a librarian plays in the success of their students.

Most librarians support the integration of their curriculum. However, some don't, and some faculty members are not very supportive either. Some educators fear change. They see change as a requirement of doing more work than they are already doing. Some

fear that they will not be able to keep up with all the changes that are occurring in education today. In order to keep information literacy alive, librarians attempt to demonstrate the value of learning library skills for students today.

In New Jersey, curricula are modeled after the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards. These standards emphasize teaching across the curriculum content areas. Educators are required to teach skills that are related to other subject areas. Administrators are forced to study their curricula and revise them to fit the guidelines of these standards. Monitoring of schools include reviewing curricula and how the standards are applied. Despite this push for cross content teaching, some educators are hesitant to support integrating the library curriculum into their classroom curriculum.

In some schools, library curriculum is not incorporated into the school curriculum. This study may aid readers in deciding whether or not this will benefit their school to do so. In addition, before curriculum revision occurs, the results of this study may be shared with the faculty and administration of non-integrated schools. This will help to convince them whether or not the library curriculum should be designed around the classroom curriculum.

Procedures

In order to perform this study, the cooperation of various schools was necessary. Two schools from each county in New Jersey were selected randomly. Because this deals directly with school librarians, initially they were asked through a questionnaire whether or not their curriculum is integrated into the school curriculum. At this point, further questions were asked (see Appendix). These types of questions were intended to

examine how curriculum integration took place in these schools and what results occurred.

Four faculty members from these schools were also surveyed on how they think that integration has affected learning in their school. By surveying both groups, two points of view were evaluated. Faculty members could evaluate success by grades or by measures of observation. They could measure student motivation by observing increases or decreases in student participation. Teachers know their students better than anyone and could identify any changes in behaviors relating to integrating the curriculum.

Also included in the selected schools were several schools without integrated curriculums. These librarians were also questioned with the same questionnaire. However, they only answered questions that applied to them (see Appendix). By also using data from non-integrated school libraries, comparisons were to determine the value of curriculum integration in the minds of librarians with non-integrated curricula.

Although curriculum integration may occur in all grades of school libraries, the focus of this study was students in grades five and six. The study was limited to public schools only. However, it was not limited to school size, economic background, or racial composition. Schools were selected at random.

Initially, these schools were selected from a list of New Jersey schools on the Internet. Addresses were found through the Yahoo Yellow Pages. A questionnaire was sent to establish the history and results of curriculum integration within the schools. A survey was sent to at least four teachers who taught fifth or sixth grade to determine their thoughts or evaluation of curriculum integration in their school.

Finally, faculty members were surveyed on how their opinion of the importance of teaching library skills has changed. Do they view their librarian and library differently? Has curriculum integration changed their role in educating students in their classroom? Has integration benefited their students? What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of integrating curriculums?

In addition to this study, research that has been written about this topic already was studied. New articles have written on the integration of the library curriculum. In New Jersey, integration may play even a bigger role in education with the addition of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards. Articles in both library and education publications have been found on this topic. Not only are librarians concerned about this topic, but educators and administrators also are expressing opinions on this topic. Much of the research shows that success depends on the collaboration of all three groups. Comparisons were made between schools that integrate and those that don't in order to ascertain opinion and identify advantages and disadvantages.

Definitions

Integration can be defined as "coordinating into a functioning or unified whole" (Webster's, 1989). Based on this definition, curriculum integration would enable both the library and classroom curriculums to be taught together. Both teacher and librarian would work together to teach students content area and research skills. Succeeding in one area will give students a better opportunity of succeeding in the other. On the other hand, by failing in one area, students may also have a better chance of failing in the other.

When integration is defined this way, curriculum integration allows library skills to play an even more important role in educating students. More weight is placed on the

library curriculum. A librarian's responsibility is greater. Also, faculty, administrators, and even parents may look at learning library skills in a positive light. Although some support these skills already, many people see library skills as a subject used to fill in during a teacher's preparatory period. Therefore, an increase in the value of library skills would promote library usage and place emphasis on the librarian's role in maintaining its function.

In this study, an advantage is defined as a benefit that results from the integration of library and classroom curricula. Such a benefit might be increased motivation in a student to complete a lesson. Another example might be an increase in independent library use by students in order to know more about the subject being studied in the classroom. An increase in scores on standardized tests would also be considered as an advantage. Although these benefits may be difficult to gauge, they may be observed over a period of time.

On the other hand, a disadvantage is defined as an unfavorable condition occurring as a result of the integration of the library and classroom curricula. If student participation decreased as a result of integration, this may be considered disadvantageous. In this case, integration would not benefit the student or the curriculum.

Conclusion

Learning library skills may benefit students throughout life. Library skills can be incorporated into any subject in school. Students will retain what they learn and use those skills they learn in the "real world". Although students were not questioned in this study, faculty members were able to give some information on how learning library skills

add to the success of their students. An increase in library attendance or circulation may also support the integration of curriculums.

It was hoped that, each step of this study would advocate library curriculum integration. The literature review identifies support documented in previously printed materials. Questionnaires received from schools in each of New Jersey's counties will also support the incorporation of library skills into the classroom curriculum. When all information was gathered, the results were listed and the data analyzed. From the gathered data, the advantages and disadvantages that exist were defined. Finally, a conclusion was drawn as to whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages or whether curriculum integration has too many disadvantages to be considered.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

For many years, studies have been made that focus on the integration of library skills into the school curriculum. Library skills are viewed as being necessary for success in higher education and in life. Much of the success of integrated curriculums results from collaboration among teachers and librarians. Studies in which teachers and librarians worked together seem to have the highest rate of success. When teachers and librarians work together, the students perceive that library skills and content area go hand in hand with each other.. Thus, students are motivated to perform well.

Most integrated curricula researched have been from libraries with flexible scheduling. Very little was found for schools whose librarians cover teachers' preparatory periods. Many studies emphasize the importance of a flexible schedule for the library as a key for making curriculum integration work.

Historical Context

Curriculum integration is not a new idea in library instruction. In fact, research dates back to the early 1960's (Kreiser, 1993). Despite early research on this topic, findings show that in 1958, only 50% of public schools had library media centers. However, because of federal funding, the statistics increased in 1985 to 93%. Federal programs supplemented the purchase of school library materials. Over the past 40 years, increasing numbers of libraries have been implemented into schools. Thus, libraries have

become a central focus of instructional concepts in many, but not all, schools (Montgomery, 1992).

One of the most important studies in the early stages of the development of curriculum integration was that of Frances Henne. Henne felt that learning how to locate information was not as important as knowing what to do with it when found (Henne, 1966). Analyzing information is more productive. Indeed, technology has certainly made accessing information much faster. This leaves more time for interpreting and reflecting on data collected (Kreiser, 1993).

In 1963, Mary Gaver used achievement scores of fourth and sixth graders in five basic curricular areas to study the importance of school libraries and professional librarians. She found that "elementary schools with centralized libraries and professional librarians had higher student achievement" (Kreiser, 1993, p362). In 1965, C. J. Gengler's studies supported Gaver's. Gengler saw improvement in problem solving skills for sixth graders taught by both teacher and librarian (Kreiser, 1993, p. 362).

From Henne's and Gaver's beginnings, an increase of studies based on curriculum integration followed. Studies by DeBlauw, Smith, Bowie, Didier, and many others throughout the 1970's and 1980's found school library media programs were positively related to student achievement. R. A. DeBlauw's three-year study looked for the effects of a multi media program on students. Student achievement in elementary grades was high while no changes were found in high school students (DeBlauw, 1973). In 1978, J. S. Smith found improvements in the development of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders when integrated with the curriculum. In 1984, Bowie found gains in student test scores when

they have and use media centers. Finally, in 1985, E. Didier's study shows a positive relationship between student achievement and the school media center.

In 1987, David Loertscher led the way in researching curriculum integrated school libraries. His term for this was the "resource-based school library" (Kreiser, 1993, p363). In his study done with Ho and Bowie, he found that an increase in staff made more services available. They also found that the integration of the curriculum was improved with flexible scheduling (Kreiser, 1993).

Curriculum integration was tested in the late 1980's. J. P. Nolan studied two areas of library instruction. Nolan found that students learning by the curriculum integrated method performed much higher than students who learned library skills by more traditional methods (Kreiser, 1993).

In 1992, Bell and Totten found that schools with higher academic success had teachers and librarians that cooperated with one another when it came to instruction. In 1991, P. M. Turner stated that regardless of the library schedule, a librarian's role should be that of an "instructional consultant". Because of teacher's schedules and librarians serving as coverage for preparatory periods, working together on curriculum was difficult to plan for. The greatest difficulty was in gaining access to the curriculum and giving instructional input (Kreiser, 1993). From there began further studies on flexible scheduling.

From that point on, a curriculum-integrated library became the program of choice. Flexible scheduling was also supported. All of this led to a more centralized school library with initial help of early federal programs. Finally, Kreiser found in 1991 that

student attitudes are more positive toward libraries in schools with curriculum-integrated programs (Kreiser, 1993).

Theoretical Framework

Traditionally, classroom teachers deal with teaching information, and the librarian deals with accessing the information. However, with the concept of curriculum integration, the librarian and the teacher become involved with both teaching and accessing, and the role of both educators expands. The American Library Association supports the idea that the librarian has three roles. They are as information specialists, teachers, and instructional consultants (*Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, 1998). In order to fulfill each of these roles, the goals and objectives of the school library must go hand-in-hand with those of the school district (Montgomery, 1992).

According to Paula Kay Montgomery, changing social factors such as demographics, evolving curriculums, advances in technology, and economic standings make the process difficult. School districts have to weigh the costs of having an integrated curriculum with the costs of not having one. Costs of integration could include hiring more professional librarians and support staff and purchasing materials necessary to complement the curriculum. On the other hand, not integrating could mean giving up a program which emphasizes information literacy. Montgomery believes that information literacy is essential for the growth of society (Montgomery, 1992).

H. R. Johnson surveyed school library media specialists. He asked them to share practices that were successful for them as they worked toward integrating their library

into the school curriculum. From his study, he concluded that the role of the school librarian is much more than someone who helps students to locate materials. He believes that a positive relationship between librarians and teachers can enable students to have a more positive attitude toward both the subject matter and the library. Library lessons are more meaningful to students if they can connect it with what they do in the classroom. Technology has helped reintroduce teaching to the role of a librarian. By seeing how well they can work together in this area, teachers are becoming more comfortable working with librarians in other areas of instruction (Johnson, 1996).

Also supporting the idea of a good relationship leading to success is Brenda Dales. She found that students tend to "read" the feelings between their teachers and librarians. When staff work positively together, student success increases. Without a good working relationship between teachers, librarians, and even administration, curriculum integration would not work (Dales, 1990). In a study done in thirty-nine Texas public elementary schools, teachers were asked to choose other school staff to cooperate with in teaching part of the curriculum. Teachers in academically successful schools tended to choose librarians for cooperation more often than teachers in unsuccessful schools (Bell, 1992).

According to Jane Bandy Smith, both teachers and librarians are concerned with the same "overall learning task". However, she points out that each approaches the task in different ways. By working together, they may be able to accomplish twice as much. Students benefit by realizing that knowing the skill will help them learn the subject. Library media instruction presents, relates, than integrates (Smith, 1989).

In 1995, Smith stated that the benefits of curriculum integration are worth the effort, but that sometimes faculty members are hard to persuade. Much change occurs in

curriculum integration and some faculty may feel that the change will only benefit

librarians. However, this change may help them teach better and help students learn

better. By integrating the curriculum, the instructional program is followed, and

activities are based on the needs of the learner. Because of the increase in information

that exists, information literacy becomes that much more important. When teachers and

librarians collaborate, both content and information skills can be learned at the same time

(Smith, 1995).

Ten principles were reviewed and approved by the American Association of School

Libraries (AASL) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology

(AECT). They are stated and defined in *Information Power: Building Partnerships*

Learning. All but three of these principles include integrating the library media program.

The first principle states that the program "must be fully integrated into the curriculum to

promote students' achievement of learning goals". The second principle states that

information literacy standards are "integral to the content of the school's curriculum".

Both of these principles advocate integration of library skills into the school curriculum.

These principles are based on effective school library media programs (AASL and

AECT, 1998).

Summary

These studies support the integration of library skills into the classroom curriculum.

They also point out that opposition does exist from some faculty members. However,

when collaboration exists between teachers and librarians, programs have more success.

Varied learning styles can be adapted by librarians and teachers when working when the

curriculum is integrated. Students can better relate what they learn in the library to their subject areas.

Although only a few specific advantages are pointed out, studies do show that students, when tested, scored higher when the curriculum is integrated than when it is not. Reports on disadvantages for students have not been uncovered. A disadvantage mentioned for librarians is the limited amount of time to collaborate with classroom teachers. This is especially true for school library media centers that do not have flexible scheduling. The literature supports that librarians should be included in instructional decisions and curriculum development and that communication plays an important role in the success of an integrated library program.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

Integrating the library curriculum into the classroom curriculum requires research, time, and cooperation from all parties involved. Before taking the initial step, consideration should be made as to whether or not the integration process is advantageous to the students and the whether or not it will enhance the curriculum. In this study, the advantages and disadvantages, if any, of curriculum integration were determined by asking the opinion of teachers and librarians. The results help define whether or not library curriculums should be written to coincide with the classroom curriculum.

Description

In order to identify the advantages and/or disadvantages of library curriculum integration, a random selection of schools were surveyed. A self-administered questionnaire accompanied by a letter of explanation and a self-addressed stamped envelope was selected for gathering data. Questionnaires were sent by mail. Librarians and teachers who received these questionnaires were expected to complete the questionnaire, put it in the envelope, and return in by a requested date. An address label was also included for respondents interested in the results to be returned with the questionnaire.

Design

  Mail distribution was considered to be the best way to contact a large number of teachers and librarians in a limited amount of time and within the available budget. Some respondents may find returning questionnaires to be too much trouble. However, telephone contact would result in the expenditure of scarce time and money. In addition, with mail distribution, respondents may remain anonymous and still answer questions that will benefit the research. Mail-in questionnaires eliminate some bias made in telephone or person-to-person contact (Babbie, 1998).

  Separate questionnaires were distributed to librarians and teachers. First, schools were selected from county lists on the Internet. Then, addresses were obtained from the Yahoo yellow pages. The questionnaires were designed to be one page, double-sided. Four teacher questionnaires and one librarian questionnaire were sent to each school librarian. In a cover letter, the librarian was asked to distribute the questionnaires to teachers of classes defined. The librarian was also asked to return one questionnaire. Specific directions were attached in a cover letter to each questionnaire as well as the self-addressed stamped envelope and address label. Follow-up postcards were sent to schools who did not return questionnaires by the requested date.

  Each questionnaire was coded so that each school could be identified. The color of the questionnaire identified the respondent as a librarian or a teacher.

  The results of the questionnaires were tallied and analyzed. From these results, a list of advantages and/or disadvantages was compiled. Data supporting whether or not library curriculums should be integrated into classroom curriculums was identified.

Sample and Population

In order to investigate the school libraries of New Jersey, two schools were selected from each of the twenty-one counties. Locating schools on the Internet helped to set up the process of only selecting schools with fifth and sixth grade students. Schools were not chosen according to their student numbers, economic status, or ethnic make-up. A number was chosen randomly from a table of random numbers. From this number, three numbers were obtained. Therefore, every third, twelfth, and twenty-first school in each county was selected. At this point, addresses from each of the first two schools in each county were gathered. If an address was not obtainable, the third school was selected as a replacement.

After a list of schools and addresses were compiled. The librarian at each school was sent a questionnaire. Forty-two librarians received questionnaires. The librarian was then asked to distribute four questionnaires to classroom teachers of fifth and sixth grade students. One hundred and sixty-eight teachers were expected to receive questionnaires. Potentially, each county had eight teachers contributing to the research.

Instrumentation

Before being sent, the questionnaires were pre-tested by graduate students in the Program in School and Public Librarianship at Rowan University in New Jersey. Several students read the questions and identified any mistakes or inconsistencies. Appropriate corrections were then made.

As already stated, two different questionnaires were sent to each school. One questionnaire was sent to the school librarians. A definition of curriculum integration as considered for this research was included on the top of every questionnaire. Because

many researchers mention that flexible scheduling contributes to the success of an integrated library curriculum, the initial question for librarians asked if they follow a flexible schedule. A second question asked if their curriculum was integrated into the classroom curriculum. From there, librarians followed two different paths, one for integrated libraries and one for those who were not integrated.

Questions focused on student response to the curriculum, faculty cooperation, and personal experience and opinion. The "yes or no" questions allowed quick response to direct questions while open-ended questions allowed librarians to express their own opinion or insight on curriculum integration. Questions for non-integrated library curriculums also allowed for opinion on whether or not integration was desired by the librarian.

The questionnaire for teachers followed a similar format. They were first asked whether they were a fifth or sixth grade teacher and if their library curriculum was integrated. This response should have corresponded with their school librarian's response unless some confusion is present on the definition of curriculum integration. Teachers were asked if they support curriculum integration. Questions also focused on their role and how it has changed since integration occurred, response from students, and how they viewed the school library before and after integration. Teachers were also asked to list any advantages and/or disadvantages, which they have experienced in the integration process.

By getting opinions of both librarians and teachers, it was believed that less bias would be present in the final analysis of the data. What seems advantageous for one party may not seem that way to the other. Because curriculum integration requires a

close working relationship between librarians and teachers, responses from both were necessary to identify the advantages and disadvantages as perceived by both parties.

Data Collection

As the questionnaires were returned, a tally sheet was marked to identify which schools had responded. A percentage of response was then calculated. A second tally sheet identified how each question was answered. Both teacher and librarian responses were included on the separate tally sheets.

From this data, several things were determined. A percentage of integrated library curriculums was calculated from the participating schools. Advantages and/or disadvantages recognized might give some idea as to why those percentages are what they are. Next, lists of advantages and/or disadvantages were created. A note was also made as to whether librarians and/or teachers considered these advantages or not. At this point, a graph was made indicating how teachers responded to curriculum integration in comparison with librarians. From this list, recommendations were made as to whether or not integrating the library curriculum into the classroom curriculum might benefit students and enhance the classroom curriculum.

Data Analysis Plan

Initially, a quantitative analysis with descriptive statistics was applied to the data. Percentages were calculated of the positive and negative responses to curriculum integration, such as the percentages of teachers and librarians who find advantages in curriculum integration as compared to the disadvantages and the ratio of advantages and disadvantages.

Although quantitative analysis is important, a qualitative analysis focused on the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Answers suggested opinions on the positive and negative sides of curriculum integration. The data provided a look at how teachers and librarians really feel about working together to educate a student. It also identified whether this collaborative effort is perceived to benefit the students enough to suggest that all librarians should make an attempt toward integrating the curriculum. Finally, the data pointed out what are considered to be disadvantages and whether or not they can be overcome enough to support curriculum integration.

All of these things need to be considered when looking at the data: How teachers and librarians feel about the process, how they feel about working together, and how they believe it benefits the students contribute to deciding whether or not curriculum integration is a good thing. This study tried to find out if this is the path that educators should take when designing a library curriculum in their schools. If this is a positive step toward enhancing the future of libraries and their impact on schools, this study could show how far along New Jersey is in improving education.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Introduction

Despite efforts to create questionnaires that would support this research and despite sending questionnaires to teachers and librarians within the guidelines of the research, the number of responses was overwhelmingly small. Reminder postcards were sent to the schools in an attempt to increase the number of responses. This did little to change the number of initial responses. However, those who participated did contribute to the research data.

Of the forty-two schools selected in the state, nine librarians returned questionnaires. Of the 168 questionnaires sent to teachers, 18 were returned. Therefore, approximately 21% of the librarians and 11% of the teachers responded to the questionnaire. Although two schools in each county were sent, not all New Jersey counties are represented in this data. Two librarians with integrated curriculums represented Camden County, one represented Middlesex County, and one represented Gloucester County. The four librarians with non-integrated curriculums represented Hudson, Hunterdon, Warren, and Sussex counties. Hudson, Camden, Salem, and Passaic counties each had two teachers representing schools with integrated library curriculums. Monmouth and Essex each had one teacher from an integrated school. Camden County had four teachers representing schools with non-integrated library curriculums. Essex, Gloucester, and Hudson counties each had one teacher from a non-integrated school.

One of the nine librarians returned a teacher questionnaire instead of a librarian questionnaire. This data was not used in this research. A second librarian of a non-integrated library did not fill out the questions but wrote a narrative explaining that his or her curriculum does not call for integration, but he or she partially integrates his or her curriculum with the classroom curriculum by finding out what students are being taught. This information does not answer specific questions asked, and was not used except as a noted response. Therefore, seven or approximately 17% of the librarians returned fully usable data.

One of the 18 teacher responses was returned but not completed. There was no data to record, and therefore, this questionnaire was not used for the research. When asked if the library was integrated, a second teacher answered both "no" and "no answer". This data also was not used in the research. A third teacher did not check whether or not the curriculum was integrated. However, this teacher did indicate through a narrative that integration was attempted with the library despite not being included in the written curriculum. This teacher did complete the non-integrated section of the questionnaire. This data was used for the research. Therefore, 16 or approximately 9.5% of the teachers participated in this research.

Librarian responses

Librarians with integrated curricula. Of the librarian responses used, four indicated that their library curriculum was integrated into the classroom curriculum. Three responded that they were not integrated. When asked about the library schedule, two out of four of the integrated libraries and one out of four of the non-integrated libraries followed a flexible schedule. Observations can be made as to whether this type

of scheduling had any relationship with whether or not library curriculums were integrated.

Following the responses of the integrated libraries first, number of years of integration is identified (see Table 1). Libraries 2 and 4 have been integrated for less than five years, Library 3 between five and ten, and Library 1 more than ten. Integration was initiated by the administration in Libraries 1 and 2. Administration and faculty (including the librarian) initiated integration in Library 3. A previous librarian initiated integration in Library 4.

In all four libraries, the response of students to the integration process was indicated as being positive. All four also experienced cooperation from the teaching staff. The feedback from the staff was positive in Libraries 2 and 3. A response from Library 1 indicated a staff who was indifferent toward integration. Librarian 4 did not answer this question.

Table 1

<u>Description of Integrated Libraries</u>

Lib. #	Flexible Schedule	# of Years Integrated	Student Response	Cooperation	Who Initiated Integration	Feedback
1	Yes	>10	+	Yes	Admin.	Indiff.
2	Yes	<5	+	Yes	Admin.	+
3	No	5-10	+	Yes	All parties	+
4	No	<5	+	Yes	Prev. librarian	No answer

<u>Note.</u> In the category Who Initiated Integration, "parents" were included on the original questionnaire; however, no one checked that response. "Indiff." means indifferent.

Based on personal experience, these librarians were asked their overall opinion of curriculum integration. They were also asked to include a list of any advantages and/or

disadvantages. Librarian 2 viewed integration of curriculum as positive, while Librarian 1 supported curriculum integration, but did not give an opinion of it or list any advantages or disadvantages. Librarian 3 believed that "library skills should not be a separate entity." He or she also felt that full integration should be in place. Librarian 4 believed that integration benefited everyone. He or she believed that integration allowed for reinforcement of skills. He or she also indicated that more communication was required from teachers to maintain its success.

Librarians with non-integrated curricula. Despite not being integrated, librarians of non-integrated libraries seemed to support curriculum integration (See Table 2). All librarians who responded correctly to this survey believed that library research skills should be incorporated into the classroom curriculum. They indicated that it would be beneficial to students. Again, reinforcement of skills necessary for life-long learning was indicated as a possible benefit as opposed to out-of-context skills. "Applying what is taught" is considered a benefit to students by Librarian 6. This librarian believed that the current curriculum teaches too many skills in isolation. He or she also supported a flexible schedule with an integrated curriculum.

Unfortunately, all of those librarians indicated that curriculum integration is not currently being considered in their schools. None of the four librarians indicated any foreseen disadvantages to curriculum integration. Despite their opinions, they have no indication that their library skills curricula will be integrated at any time in the near future.

Table 2

Description of Integrated Libraries

Lib. #	Flexible Schedule	Should be Integrated	Benefit Students	Integration Considered
5	No	Yes	Yes	No
6	No	Yes	Yes	No
7	Yes	Not answered	Not answered	Not answered
8	No	Yes	Yes	No

Although Librarian 7 indicated that he or she follows a flexible schedule but is not integrated, he or she did not answer the questions posed. Instead, a narrative was written explaining what is done in Library 7. Skill integration is done informally. The librarian follows a curriculum and arranges to work with teachers and integrate skills into what students are learning in the classroom. No explanation is given as to how this is accomplished.

Teacher responses

Teachers with integrated curricula. Teachers with integrated library curricula all responded that they were initially supportive of the move to integrate (See Table 3). They were not against integrating the library curriculum into the classroom curriculum. Nine of the ten teachers also responded that their opinions of integration did not change after it was implemented. Teacher 3 responded with "no answer". This does not indicate whether or not he or she was satisfied or unsatisfied with the integration process. Therefore, nine or 90% of these particular responses remained in favor of integration after its implementation.

When asked whether or not students responded positively to the implementation of library curriculum integration, only Teacher 8 gave no response. The other nine teachers responded that student response to this approach to learning was positive. Teachers were not asked to indicate how they measured student response. Again, 90% of the teachers felt that curriculum integration affected their students in a positive manner.

Table 3

Description of Teachers with Integrated Library Curricula

Tchr. #	Grade Level	Initially Supportive	Feelings Changed	Student Response	Role Changed	Job Since Integ.	Alter Opinion Of Library
1	5	Yes	No	+	No	S	No
2	5	Yes	No	+	No	S	No
3	5	Yes	No answer	+	No	E	No
4	5	Yes	No	+	Yes	E	Yes
5	6	Yes	No	+	No	S	No
6	6	Yes	No	+	No	E	No
7	5	Yes	No	+	No	S	No answer
8	6	Yes	No	No answer	No	D	Yes
9	6	Yes	No	+	No	E	No
10	5	Yes	No	+	Yes	E	Yes

Note. E=easier; D=more difficult; S=same. "Integ." means integration.

In addition to how students responded, teachers were also asked whether or not their role in teaching their students had changed. All, but two indicated that their role had not changed. Teacher 4 supported his or her answer by replying that "study skills are taught in unison". Either both teacher and librarian teach these skills together, or they teach the same skills during the same time period in the school year. Which option is

meant by this answer is unclear. Teacher 10 responded that her or she has become more involved in the student learning process.

Although 90% indicated that their role in educating students had not changed, those teachers held varying beliefs on whether or not curriculum integration made their jobs easier, more difficult, or remain unchanged. Teachers 1, 2, 5, and 7 responded that their job remained the same. Teachers 3, 5, 6, 9, and 10 responded that his or her job was made easier by integrating the curriculum. Teacher 8 indicated that their job became more difficult after integration was implemented.

At this point in the survey, teachers were asked how they viewed the library in their school before curriculum integration. Only Teacher 3 did not respond to this question. The majority of respondents, Teachers 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8 saw the library as a resource center where students and teachers could find information. Teacher 9 responded that he or she saw the library as a place where students were taught library skills such as how to use various reference books. Teacher 6 responded that he or she worked together with the librarian informally integrating curricula even before integration was formally implemented. He or she saw the value of educating students in this way even before it was made mandatory. Teacher 10 saw the library simply as a place to read books.

Following that question, teachers were asked to indicate whether their opinion of curriculum integration had been altered since its implementation (see Table 3). Only Teachers 4, 8, and 10 believed that curriculum integration had changed their opinion on the importance of library skills. Although they were asked to explain their answers, Teachers 4 and 8 gave no indication as to whether or not this change was positive or

negative. Teacher 10 responded that with curriculum integration all subject matter is brought to the library.

Even the final question posed to teachers with integrated curriculums did not decipher this change in opinion. The question was based on individual experience. Teachers were asked to describe their opinion in their own words. Advantages and/or disadvantages were also to be listed. Teachers 1 and 2 believed that curriculum integration showed students that library skills can be used for all content areas and not just for borrowing books. Teacher 4 was happy to work together with the librarian and share responsibilities on specific projects. Teacher 3 simply described integration as being positive. Other advantages included reinforcement of skills and additional expertise to draw from. Teachers believed that students benefited by understanding the value of learning library skills and using them for content areas. For Teacher 6, students put more effort into completing assignments because they were graded for several subject areas. This teacher also found that students overall had more research time to complete classroom projects. Teacher 10 indicated that with two teachers teaching the subject matter in different ways student interest was piqued.

As for disadvantages, only one was listed. Time was a valuable commodity. More planning was required by both teachers and librarians to integrate smoothly. Not only did planning take more time, but also, time needed to coordinate plans with each other was limited. In addition to this, Teacher 8 found that less class time was available to accomplish other things.

Teachers without integrated curricula. When teachers without integrated library curriculums were asked whether their curriculums should be integrated into the

classroom curriculum, the response was unanimous (see Table 4). Each felt that library

skills should coincide with the classroom curriculum. Unfortunately, curriculum

integration was being considered by very few of their schools.

Even without the experience of integrating the library curriculum, these teachers

all felt that integration would benefit their students in some way. Several felt that

students would be better able to do independent research by finding the appropriate

Table 4

Teachers Without Integrated Library Curricula

Tchr. #	Grade Level	Should Curriculum Be Integrated	Currently Being Considered
11	6	Yes	No
12	6	Yes	No
13	6	Yes	No answer
14	5	Yes	No
15	6	Yes	No
16	5/6	Yes	Yes

resources for their topic. Others felt that students would see a connection between what

they have learned in library and what they are doing in the classroom. Students would

also be more comfortable using the library as a resource center. Teacher 3 noted the

importance of "repetition, review, and re-involvement" for students in a topic or skill.

Curriculum integration was also seen as advantageous for the teachers. Two teachers

would not be required to teach the same thing; however, students would apply skills

across the subject areas.

Summary

Overall, the librarians and teachers who participated in this study favored integrating the library curriculum into the classroom curriculum. The advantages of integration outnumbered the disadvantages. Even those librarians and teachers whose curriculums were not integrated believed that they should be integrated. Both parties indicated that integration would benefit the students. They also indicated that despite time constraints and additional planning, they worked together in order to implement curriculum integration.

As indicated by this survey, New Jersey schools still have a long way to go before curriculum integration becomes the norm. This survey did not attempt to suggest why. It only attempted to show how some school librarians and teachers feel about curriculum integration. Also, this survey attempted to list advantages and disadvantages as indicated by those participating.

Chapter 5

Final Analysis

Summary

Despite the small number of responses received from selected schools, usable data was collected. As a group, the 17 % of the librarians and 9.5% of the teachers surveyed contributed enough to give some insight on how curriculum integration is faring in the state of New Jersey. Only four of the eight librarians with usable data work in libraries that have integrated curriculums. Only ten of the 16 teachers with usable data have classroom curriculums that are integrated with the library curriculum.

The librarians and teachers in this study each represented seven different counties. In addition, the counties represented by librarians were not the same seven represented by teachers.

Both librarians and teachers identified student response to curriculum integration as positive. This could have been measured in different ways. Regardless of how they measured student response, the overall feeling was that curriculum integration could be a factor in increasing student motivation.

As for teacher response to integration, 100% of the librarians indicated that they had cooperation from teachers. One hundred percent of the teachers indicated that they were supportive of integration. Whether or not it made their job easier, more difficult, or if it stayed the same, teachers' opinions of the library did not change in a negative manner. Responses given by librarians and teachers listed similar

advantages. Overall, they seem to support the notion that library research skills and content area should be taught together by both librarians and teachers. Shared responsibilities, reinforcement of skills, and understanding the value of using the library to learn more about the content area were all advantages of integrating the curriculum. Even librarians and teachers with non-integrated curricula felt that these advantages would exist if their curricula were integrated.

Lack of time was the only disadvantage listed. For teachers and librarians to plan curricula together, they have to be available at the same time. Unfortunately, schedules aren't always made to accommodate these plans. Two out of three of the librarians with integrated curricula had flexible schedules. Only one of the four librarians with non-integrated curricula had a flexible schedule.

Conclusions

Although the majority of responses returned were usable, they may not be enough to receive a valid overall outlook on library curriculum integration in the state. Several reasons for the low response rate may exist. Although a definition of curriculum integration was supplied on the questionnaire (see Appendix), some respondents may not have understood exactly what it means. An example might have been given to demonstrate it better. Also, an initial question might have asked respondents if they understood the meaning of curriculum integration as applied to the survey.

Because questionnaires were sent to librarians to be distributed to teachers, this may account for some lack of response. Whenever third parties are involved, the possibility of participants not receiving the survey increases. In addition, although

address lists were thoroughly researched, some schools may not have received the surveys.

Another possibility would be the occasional overwhelming workload that is often placed on educators. The surveys were sent out in February. At this time, most marking periods are ending and/or mid-year reports are being sent. Educators are also preparing for the vigorous testing schedule that often follows in the spring. Although those responses received were greatly appreciated, no sure reason for a lack of responses can be found at this time.

By looking at what was gathered, the overall opinion is that curriculum integration is beneficial to students. Libraries used to be used to find a good book to read. Eventually, that changed to include learning of library skills so patrons could access the information they wanted from the shelves. Now that technology has been incorporated to the media center in most places, new ways of accessing information have formed. In addition, librarians are not just teaching skills but also contributing to content area instruction. Having the librarian and teacher work together enhances the student's learning experience. The content area is reinforced, and students receive different perspectives. Thus, a broader set of student learning styles may be covered.

One major drawback to curriculum integration was given. Planning time is often limited to after school or before school hours. In order to enable integration to exist, some school libraries have changed to a flexible schedule. Flexible scheduling means "that there is room to accommodate classes which may wish to meet on a daily basis for a period of time as well as encouraging regular access to the library media center" (Fox, 1998). Classes are not assigned to the library for set blocks of time. With a flexible

schedule, librarians may set aside time to meet with teachers during their preparatory periods. Although this may inconvenience the teacher, it allows for another time period to plan together. Other solutions such as curriculum meeting times set aside during the school day are an option, but often not attainable.

Another drawback might be establishing a good working relationship between librarian and teacher. In some cases, parties may not work well together for personal reasons. In another case, the librarian and teacher's teaching styles may clash. Finally, they both may have different opinions about what should be taught at any given time.

Despite these drawbacks, the role of the librarian expands in positive ways. Teachers and students view the librarian as a valuable asset to instruction and content area learning. With the implementation of curriculum integration, librarians play an active role in helping students learn content. Librarians participate in team teaching with every teacher in a school. In addition, they may play a role in revising curricula and become members of curriculum committees. No more will people visualize Marion the Librarian. Instead, they will see the importance of working with the librarian to educate students in way that will fulfill all content area requirements.

Recommendations

The main recommendation is: Integrate! Even librarians without integrated libraries support it. In classrooms today, teachers of different content areas are team teaching to enhance student learning. New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards require classroom teachers to teach across the curriculum. Some educators were doing it before it was required. Why shouldn't "specials" teachers get in the act? Not only will students benefit from the reinforcement in teaching content area, but they will also

benefit from having two professionals to assist in the instruction. What better person to be involved in integration than the librarian?

When students need to do research, where do they go? The library has so much more to offer today than it did 30 years ago. Great quantities of information can be found on any subject. Students need someone to show them how to access it, sort through it, and present it in a way that will satisfy their needs. The librarian and teacher together can accomplish this task in a way that will keep students coming back for more.

Initial steps to integrating should include researching flexible scheduling. Because time seems to be the biggest obstacle, a flexible schedule will enable a librarian to work around the schedule of a teacher. Teachers usually have set schedules and set preparatory times. Librarians can set up times to collaborate with teachers and prepare units of instruction.

In addition, once a week is not enough time to utilize the library for accessing information. When a content area is being taught, doing research is a continuing process which can last days and weeks. In some schools, it may be a year-long process. Daily instruction and application will help students stay involved with what they are learning. Flexible scheduling allows classes to be in the library on an as-needed basis.

Finally, the librarians and teachers are not the only people who should be involved in implementing curriculum integration. School principals should be provided with information that supports why the school should participate. Curriculum integration benefits everyone involved. It should be a partnership that helps bring library resources into classroom learning. Integrating information concepts, search skills, and thinking skills into the classroom, and working together as partners will enhance classroom

learning and establish within students a motivation to learn. Taking this positive step

toward enhancing the future of libraries and their impact on schools, New Jersey is in

position to improve education.

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Appendix

P.O. Box 562, Morton Ave.
Rosenhayn, NJ 08352
February 10, 1999

Dear Librarian:

I am conducting research for my Master's Thesis at Rowan University. I am investigating the advantages and disadvantages of integrating the library curriculum into the classroom curriculum. I am asking for your help in filling out this questionnaire so that it may be used for research purposes only. I am also asking that you distribute questionnaires to four faculty members in your school to respond to. The faculty members must teach fifth and/or sixth grade students in a traditional classroom setting. Responding to this questionnaire is strictly voluntary and neither you nor your school will be named in this thesis. Please respond only to the questions that you feel comfortable answering. Every response that you make will be helpful in completing my research.

Please return the completed questionnaire by February 22, 1999. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for this purpose. If you would like to receive a summary of results from this questionnaire, please fill out your name and address on the address label provided.

Further questions may be answered by contacting my faculty sponsor Dr. Holly G. Willett at (609)256-4759.

Thank you for distributing the questionnaires. You are not required to collect the responses of the other faculty members. I have enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelopes for each questionnaire. Thank you for your cooperation in participating in this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Shari L. Hayes

I agree that I am participating in this survey voluntarily.

_____   _____
signature   date

<u>Questionnaire- Curriculum Integration In Libraries</u>

Curriculum integration means that a teacher and librarian collaborate in order to teach specific classroom assignments to students. Library research skills are taught in the context of these assignments.

Please answer the following questions about curriculum integration in your school as thoroughly as possible.

1. Does your library follow a flexible schedule?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

2. Is your library curriculum integrated into the classroom curriculum?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer
   IF YOU CHECKED "NO", PLEASE GO TO QUESTION # 9.

3. How long has your library curriculum been integrated?
   ☐ less than or equal to 5 years   ☐ between 5-10 years   ☐ more than 10 years

4. Do students respond positively to this approach?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

5. Do you have cooperation from the faculty members?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

6. Who initiated the integration of the curriculum?
   ☐ you   ☐ administrator   ☐ faculty member   ☐ parent

7. Has the feedback from teachers been:
   ☐ positive   ☐ negative   ☐ indifferent

8. Based on your own experience, what is your overall opinion toward curriculum integration. Please include a list of any advantages and/or disadvantages.

(Continued on back)

End of questionnaire for libraries with integrated curriculums.

9. Do you think that library research skills should be incorporated into the classroom curriculum?
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

   If yes, how might this benefit your students?

   _____

   _____

10. Is this something currently being considered in your school?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐   No answer

End of questionnaire-THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

P.O. Box 562, Morton Ave.
Rosenhayn, NJ 08352
February 10, 1999

Dear Teacher:

I am conducting research for my Master's Thesis at Rowan University. I am investigating the advantages and disadvantages of integrating the library curriculum into the classroom curriculum. I am asking for your help in filling out this questionnaire so that it may be used for research purposes only. Responding to this questionnaire is strictly voluntary and neither you nor your school will be named in this thesis. Please respond only to the questions that you feel comfortable answering. Every response that you make will be helpful in completing my research.

Please return the completed questionnaire by February 22, 1999. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for this purpose. If you would like to receive a summary of results from this questionnaire, please fill out your name and address on the address label provided.

Further questions may be answered by contacting my faculty sponsor Dr. Holly G. Willett at (609)256-4759.

Thank you for your cooperation in participating in this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Shari L. Hayes

I agree that I am participating in this survey voluntarily.

_____   _____
signature   date

<u>Questionnaire-Curriculum Integration in Libraries</u>

Curriculum integration means that a teacher and librarian collaborate in order to teach specific classroom assignments to students. Library research skills are taught in the context of these assignments.

Please answer the following questions about curriculum integration in your classroom as thoroughly as possible.

Please check your position in your school.
    ☐ 5th grade teacher   ☐ 6th grade teacher

1. Is your library curriculum integrated into the classroom curriculum?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer
    IF YOU CHECKED "NO", PLEASE GO TO QUESTION # 9.

2. Initially, were you supportive of curriculum integration?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

3. Has your initial position changed?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

4. Do students respond positively to this approach?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

5. Has your role in educating students changed?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer
    If yes, how?_____

6. Since the curriculum was integrated, is your job:
    ☐ easier   ☐ more difficult   ☐ about the same

7. Before curriculum integration, how did you view the library in your school?

    _____

    _____

8. Does curriculum integration alter your opinion on the importance of teaching library skills?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

    If yes, please explain_____

    _____

(Continued on back)

9. Based on your own experience, what is your overall opinion of curriculum integration. Please include a list of any advantages and/or disadvantages.

End of questionnaire for teachers with integrated curriculums.

10. Do you think the library curriculum should include skills that would coincide with your classroom curriculum?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

If yes, how might this benefit your students?

_____

_____

11. Is this something that is currently being considered in you school?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ No answer

End of questionnaire-THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Reminder Note

Many schools have not returned their curriculum integration questionnaires. They are

still being accepted. Any reminder that you make to teachers to return them would be

greatly appreciated by me. Thank you.

Shari L. Hayes

Note: This reminder was sent on a stamped postcard approximately ten days after questionnaires were to be returned.