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TECHNIQUES USED BY ELEMENTARY LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS
TO TEACH CALDECOTT MEDAL AND HONOR AWARD BOOKS

by
Kathy Lee Simpkins

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
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Approved by
Professor

Date Approved May 8, 2006

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ABSTRACT

Kathy Lee Simpkins

TECHNIQUES USED BY ELEMENTARY LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS TO TEACH CALDECOTT MEDAL AND HONOR AWARD BOOKS

2005/06

Dr. Marilyn Shontz

Master of Arts in School and Public Librarianship

The purpose of this study was to determine elementary library media specialists' perceptions of the usefulness of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in the elementary library media center curriculum. The study was conducted to measure the techniques elementary school library media specialists considered the most effective towards increasing student reading and reading choices. A total of 255 people responded to the 11 question survey on SurveyMonkey.com. Of these 255 responses, 250 were used in this research. The majority of respondents stated that their library programs did have written library skill curriculum guides and almost half of the 250 elementary library media specialists stated that their library skill curriculum guides included objectives for teaching Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. The respondents reported various techniques used to teach using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. The majority reported that Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books did motivate students to read more books and to choose literature of higher quality. The results from the survey showed that elementary library media specialists believed that Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies was an important addition in the elementary library media curriculum and had a positive influence on students reading and reading choices.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to: My father, Angelo Ralph Papa, who thought I was the most intelligent person ever born. To my mother, Lena Anne Mastrovalerio Papa, who always said I was a late bloomer and that I would do great things with my life. To my daughter, Rebecca Lee Simpkins Plasket, who more than once got to say, "I get to graduate with my mother...again!" To my very best friend, Josephine Ann Delaurentis Masso, who never let me give up and who helped me in every way she could. When I would get discouraged she would always say, "I have every faith in you." She is a true friend and was always there when I needed her. To Dr. Marilyn L. Shontz, I would like to thank her for all her help, advice, and never-ending patience as I was writing this thesis. Finally, to my husband, Mark Albert Simpkins, who for the past four years vacuumed, did the dishes, folded the wash, brought me cups of hot tea, put up the holiday decorations, gave me constant encouragement, and loved me for the past thirty years. I am truly blessed to have such wonderful people in my life.

Thank you everyone for making my dreams come true!

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Significance of the Topic

For many kindergarten through eighth grade children, their first library experiences are in their school's media center. This is often a child's first relationship with an elementary library media specialist. An important responsibility of being an elementary library media specialist is to motivate students to read a wide variety of literature. This can be done by using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books as part of the elementary school library curriculum.

As Sharon Grimes stated in the article, *The Search for Meaning*, for students to become good readers, library media specialists should "...provide a wide variety of books on diverse reading achievement levels" and "...provide opportunities for students to interact with books" (Grimes, 2004, p. 49). According to Jim Trelease, in his book *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, the *1998 Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States* tested more than 20,000 students in fourth, eighth, and twelfth-grade levels. When surveyed on how often they were allowed to read books of their own choosing, such as during silent sustained reading, it was found that the higher the grade level the less time there was to "...read for pleasure and the fewer choices one has" (Trelease, 2001, p. 112). Trelease also stated in his book, that students who reported the highest reading time outside of school also ranked the highest in reading scores (p. 108). Trelease stated that

reading outside of school was important because annually children spend 900 hours in the classroom and 7500 hours outside of school (Trelease, 2001, p.146).

John T. Guthrie, in his paper *Engagement and Motivation in Reading Instruction*, reported that the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) stated "...over 50% of Grade 4 students read less than once a week for their own interest and about half never take a book home from the library" (Guthrie, 2001, ¶7). This is a problem that many elementary library media specialists face each day with children of all ages. One way to address this problem is to creatively expose children to a wide variety of quality literature such as Caldecott Medal and Honor Award winning books.

Many children are visual learners who are drawn to books with characters seen on television or in movies. SpongeBob, Scooby-Doo, and Disney princess books are many children's first choices when it comes to book selection in the library media center. This often presents a problem for library media specialists who want to encourage students to choose higher quality literature. One way many elementary library media specialists motivate students to broaden their perception of desirable literature is to teach using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books.

The Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, annually gives the Caldecott Medal and Honor Awards to the artists of the most distinguished American picture books for children. Over an almost seventy year time period that has celebrated artistic achievement, Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are outstanding choices for an author/illustrator study. The volume of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books available allows elementary library media

specialists and elementary school students the opportunity to examine a wide variety of high quality literature.

The results of this study can be used by elementary library media specialists to implement an elementary school library curriculum that incorporates Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. This curriculum can be used to motivate elementary school students to expand their reading choices in the library, in school, and at home.

Purpose of the Proposed Study

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the perceptions and experiences of elementary library media specialists who taught using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books to kindergarten to eighth grade students. The researcher surveyed elementary media specialists to determine the techniques used to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books and the effectiveness of these techniques. The researcher also surveyed elementary library media specialists to determine if they observed students reading higher quality literature due to their study of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books.

Research Questions

1. With what grades and to what extent were Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books taught in the elementary school library curriculum?
2. Which techniques used by elementary library media specialists to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books did library media specialists consider the most effective?
3. How important did elementary library media specialists view using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books as a component of the library curriculum?

4. Did elementary library media specialists see a relationship between teaching about Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books and student reading and reading choices?

Definition of Terms

- Author – “...person chiefly responsible for the intellectual or artistic content of a work; writer of a book” (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Author study – careful examination or investigation of the life and work of a writer of a book or story (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Children’s literature – “books and other materials in a diverse range of formats that are written or produced based on children’s experience and understanding” (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Elementary library media center (ELMC) – “an area in a school that has varied formats of materials and equipment with programs and services provided by a library media specialist and additional staff as needed and as funds are available. It functions as a learning laboratory for students. This is the more current term for school library” (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Elementary library media specialist (ELMS) – “professional administrator of a library media center who has the appropriate college degree and state certification; required to have a master’s degree in most states; also known as school librarian” (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Elementary school – a place for teaching or learning the basic subjects of education; for this study elementary school is defined as grades pre-kindergarten/kindergarten to eighth grade (Merriam-Webster, 1998).

- Elementary school library curriculum – sequential course of study offered by an elementary school to teach library skills (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Elementary school students – for this study, elementary school students are defined as grades pre-kindergarten/kindergarten through eighth grade (Merriam-Webster, 1998).
- Caldecott Medal and Honor Award – “an award presented annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book published in the preceding year. The award, which began in 1938, is named after Randolph Caldecott, a British illustrator of children’s books” (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Curriculum – The totality of ideas and activities designed by an educational institution to meet the learning needs of students and to achieve the desired educational goals (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Illustrator – “an artist who uses the visual elements of line, color, shape, and texture through such media as ink, woodcuts, oils, watercolors, acrylics, collage, or photography to create a visual picture to complement and enhances a story” (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Illustrator study – careful examination or investigation of the life and work of an illustrator of a book or story (McCain & Merrill, 2001).
- Reading motivation – incentive or inducement that incites an individual to read more literature (Merriam-Webster, 1998).

- Technology – for the purpose of this study, defined as computer equipment and/or programs to facilitate the instruction and the learning process in an educational setting.

Assumptions and Limitations

For the purposes of this study, the researcher made several assumptions about the value of using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books study as part of an elementary library media center curriculum. The researcher assumed that educators generally agreed that it was important to motivate students to read a wide variety of literature. Elementary library media specialists who teach using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were determined to be the best source for information about including this type of study in the elementary library media center curriculum. A second assumption in this research study was that the elementary library media specialists surveyed answered honestly and accurately when they responded to the survey.

This study was limited to elementary library media centers and elementary library media specialists. This study was conducted using a non-randomly selected sample of elementary library media specialists in public elementary schools who answered an electronic survey. The study was limited to the attitudes and experiences of elementary library media specialists who were using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in their elementary library media center curriculum. This study was also limited by the fact that elementary library media specialists introduced students to Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books using many different methods that varied from school to school. These factors limited the generalization of the study's results.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books

In the 1920s, bookstores and libraries were starting to devote entire sections to children's literature (Lucas, 1999, ¶2). Frederic G. Melcher (1879-1963), president of R. R. Bowker Publishing Company, was an editor and publisher committed to promoting books and reading. He was responsible for the creation of both the Newbery Award and the Caldecott Award. In recognition of his efforts to improve and expand the book industry, he received numerous honors during his lifetime (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2005, ¶1).

At the 1921 meeting of the American Library Association (ALA), Melcher suggested the creation of the Newbery Award for excellence in children's literature. This award would be given to "...encourage original creative work in the field of books for children. To emphasize to the public that contributions to the literature for children deserve similar recognition to poetry, plays, or novels. To give those librarians, who make it their life work to serve children's reading interests, an opportunity to encourage good writing in this field" (ALSC, 2005a, ¶3). Melcher suggested that the award be named after the eighteenth-century English bookseller John Newbery (1713-1767). The idea was accepted and approved by the ALA Executive Board in 1922. René Paul Cambellan (1893-1955) was given the task of designing the Newbery Medal. Chambellan

was born in West Hoboken, New Jersey and studied art in Paris and New York City. He specialized in architectural sculpture and was one of the foremost practitioners of the French Modern Style (Wikipedia, 2005, ¶2). The first Newbery Medal Award was awarded in 1922 and is annually given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children published in the United States by a United States author (ALSC, 2005b, ¶3).

However, at that time there were no awards for illustrators of children's books. Many people felt that artists who illustrated picture books for children were as deserving of honor and encouragement as were the authors of children's chapter books. In 1937, Melcher suggested that an award for excellence in illustrations in children's literature be adopted and named after Randolph Caldecott (Lucas, 1999, ¶2). Chambellan, who also designed the Newbery Medal, was chosen to create the Caldecott Medal. In 1938, the first Caldecott Medal, donated by Melcher, was awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published in the United States by a United States citizen during the preceding year.

The name of Randolph Caldecott was chosen for the medal because Caldecott (1846-1886) was a famous English illustrator of books for children. Caldecott was one of a group of three influential children's illustrators in England in the 18th century. The two other illustrators were Kate Greenaway (1846-1901) and Walter Crane (1845-1915). While the other two illustrators were talented artists in their own right, what set Caldecott's illustrations apart from his contemporaries was that his contained "...humor, the ability to create a sense of movement, vitality, and action that complemented the

stories” (ALSC, 2005a, ¶5). Caldecott’s artistic style transformed the world of children's books in the Victorian era.

The Caldecott Medal was designed in 1937 by René Paul Chambellan. The illustration on the front of the Caldecott Medal, which is taken from Caldecott’s illustrations for “The Diverting Story of John Gilpin,” is a perfect example of the humor, vitality, and sense of movement found in Caldecott’s work (ALSC, 2005, ¶6). The illustration shows John Gilpin astride a runaway horse, accompanied by squawking geese, braying dogs, and startled onlookers (ALSC, 2005a, ¶6). The words “The Caldecott Medal” surround the illustration.

The back of the bronze medal has the winner’s name and the date engraved and is also inscribed with the words, “Awarded annually by the Children’s and School Librarians Sections of the American Library Association.” There is a center illustration of John Gilpin holding a goose (ALSC, 2005a, ¶1).

The wording on the medal has remained the same even though the ALA has reorganized several times. In 1958, the present division, the Children’s Services Division, now named the Association for Library Service to Children, was given the sole responsibility for giving the award to each year’s winner (ALSC, 2005a, ¶1).

In 1937, the Section for Library Work with Children invited the School Libraries Section to name five of its members to the awards committee for that year. Today, the Association for Library Service for Children (ALSC) elects seven members and a chairperson to be on the committee for selecting the Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. The remaining seven members of the 15 member committee are appointed by the elected chairperson. In the course of the year, each member may nominate six books to

be considered for the award, thus, up to 90 books may be considered each year for the award if each member chooses six different picture books. The committee also decides how many books will receive honor medals (Lucas, 1999, ¶5). According to the Association for Library Service for Children, a picture book is defined as a "...book for a child that essentially provides the child with a visual experience" and "...for which children are the potential audiences." Children are defined as "...up to and including fourteen years of age" (Lucas, 1999, ¶5).

The committee members consider the following six criteria in determining the excellence of the books they nominate:

- Interpretation of the theme or concept
- Accuracy of presentation
- Clarity and organization of information
- Development of plot
- Delineation of character
- Delineation of setting
- Appropriateness of style

The winning medal and honor books are announced at the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting (January/February), and the award is presented at the ALA summer conference. A book cannot win both the Newbery and the Caldecott Awards in the same year. If a book is nominated for both awards the committee decides under which heading it shall be voted upon (ALSC, 2005a, ¶7).

While there is only one Caldecott Medal awarded each year, the committee could cite other books they felt were worthy of attention. From 1938 to 1970, these books were

termed “runners-up.” In 1971, the term was changed to “honor books.” The new terminology was made retroactive so that all former runners-up were referred to as Caldecott Honor Books (ALSC, 2005a, ¶4).

To date, eight illustrators have been awarded the Caldecott Medal Award more than once. Marcia Brown had three award winning books (1983, 1962, and 1955). David Wiesner (2002, 1992), Chris Van Allsburg (1986, 1982), Robert McClosky (1958, 1942), Barbara Cooney (1980, 1959), Nonny Nogradian (1972, 1966), Leo and Diane Dillon (1977, 1976), and Chris Van Allsburg (1986, 1982) each earned two. Leonard Weisgard was the only person to win a Caldecott Medal and an Honor Book Award in the same year (1947).

Many Caldecott Medal winning illustrators have also won a Caldecott Honor Award. The following author/illustrators are some of the Caldecott Medal winners who have won at least one Caldecott Honor Award (the years listed are the years in which the Caldecott Honor Book(s) was/were won): Molly Bang (2000, 1984, 1981), Marcia Brown (1954, 1953, 1952, 1951, 1948), Virginia Lee Burton (1948), Ed Emberley (1967), Wanda Gág (1942, 1939), Stephen Gammell (1986), Berta and Elmer Hader (1944, 1940), Marie Hall Ets (1966, 1957, 1956, 1952, 1945), Kevin Henkes (1994), Nonny Hogrogian (1977), Trina Schart Hyman (2000, 1984), Ezra Jack Keats (1970), Robert Lawson (1939, 1938), Blair Lent (1971, 1969, 1965), Leo Lionni (1970, 1968, 1964, 1961), Arnold Lobel (1972, 1971), David Macaulay (1978, 1974), Robert McCloskey (1954, 1953, 1949), Gerald McDermott (1994, 1973), Eveline Ness (1966, 1965, 1964), Peter Parnall (1977, 1976), Maude and Miska Petersham (1942), Dave Pilkey (1997), Brian Pinkney (1999, 1996), Jerry Pinkney (2003, 2000, 1995, 1990, 1989), Eric

Rohmann (1995), Allen Say (1989), Maurice Sendak (1982, 1971, 1963, 1962, 1960, 1959, 1954), Peter Spier (1962), Chris Van Allsburg (1980), Lynd Ward (1950), Leonard Weisgard (1947, 1946), David Wiesner (2000, 1989), Ed Young (1993,1968), and Paul O. Zelinsky (1995, 1987, 1985).

Finally, many author/illustrators have never won a Caldecott Medal but have won the Caldecott Honor Award more than once. Molly Bang (2000, 1984, 1981), Marcia Brown (1951, 1950, 1948), Marie Hall Ets (1957, 1956, 1952), Blair Lent (1971, 1969, 1965), Betsy Lewin (2001), Leo Lionni (1970,1968, 1961), Gerald McDermott (1994, 1973), Jerry Pinkney (2003, 2000, 1995, 1989), David Shannon (1999), Peter Sis (1999, 1997), Dr. Suess, pseudo [Theodor Seuss Geisel] (1951, 1950), and Mo Willems (2005, 2004) all won the Caldecott Honor Award more than once.

Importance and Relevance of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books

Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are rich with teaching opportunities. Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books "...are recognizable, ready-made sources of literature that can be identified as 'real' literature" (Moen, 1991, p.10). Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books contain art that helps tell the story and create meaning. Therefore, each story is "...twice told" through a unique blend of words and illustrations (Moen, 1991, p. 10). This may help a child "...move from the basal to children's literature for language instruction" (Moen, 1991, p. 10). Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books provide a variety of unique language experiences. The richness of language in Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are an example of good children's literature that enhances and extends students' language experiences.

An important aspect of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books is that they contain art that enhances each story. The illustrations help tell the story and create meaning. When students read a Caldecott Medal or Honor Award book, they benefit from experiencing a story that is told twice through a blend of words and illustrations (Moen, 1991, p.10). According to Moen, "...nowhere will you find such a variety of art styles as in the Caldecott collection" (Moen, 2001, p. 41). She stated that students, even without looking at the name of the artist, easily recognized books by Tomie dePaola, Dr. Suess, John Steptoe, and Trina Schart Hyman. Many Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are illustrated by the same artist, so the art of one story can be compared with the art of another, entirely different story (Moen, 2001).

Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books expose readers to a wide variety of unique language experiences. Many contain repetition and predictability that enhances students' language-learning experiences (Moen, 1991, p.10). Also, there is a variety of text lengths that will meet the needs of a variety of readers. Because children often choose books visually, this recognition and familiarity can be used to motivate students to choose a wider range of literature. As James P. Raffini stated in his book, *150 Ways to Increase Intrinsic Motivation in the Classroom*, "...intrinsic motivation is choosing to do an activity for no compelling reason, beyond the satisfaction derived from the activity itself--it's what motivates us to do something when we don't have to do anything" (Raffini, 1998, p.4).

Ethnic Diversity in Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books

From the very beginning, the Caldecott Medal and Honor Awards were open to education of and sharing between different cultures. With the cultural diversity in

Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, these books are embraced by educators as valuable teaching tools. In the United States, people live in increasingly diverse communities. American children and adults are living in a pluralistic society with many parallel cultures (Dresang, 1999). Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books present a variety of unique language and cultural experiences that can provide an opportunity to bridge the gap in our multicultural society.

The first book chosen for the Caldecott Medal in 1938 was a religion based book titled *Animals of the Bible* (Lanthrop, 1937). The following year the winning book was *Mei Li* (Handforth, 1938), a story about the Chinese New Year Fair. These two books set the tempo of multicultural awareness within the Caldecott winners (Lucas, 1999, ¶11). In more recent years this multicultural awareness can be seen in the striking Chinese panel art in *Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story From China* (Young, 1989) and the stylized Pueblo Indian motifs in *Arrow to the Sun: A Pueblo Indian Tale* (McDermott, 1974),

Grandfather's Journey (Say, 1993) provides an opportunity for students to study a Japanese family's cross-cultural experiences. *Smoky Night* (Diaz, 1995) can be used to teach how all people are really the same inside. Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are an excellent foundation for educators interested in children's literature that offers a wide variety ethnicity in subject, author, illustrators, and art forms (Lucas, 1999, ¶21).

Getting Children to Read and Enjoy Reading

Most educators agree that literacy development is directly related to how much a student enjoys reading (Golant, 2004). Yet, what students are asked to read in the classroom is usually not particularly enjoyable (Huck, 1997). Many classroom texts have strictly controlled vocabularies in which the richness of language has been stripped to

make the stories more understandable according to predetermined ability levels (Moen, 1991). According to Jim Trelease, author of *The New Read-Aloud Handbook*, “American literacy scores are due in part to the fact that two-thirds of our children don’t like to read” (Moorestown Friends School, 2005, ¶4). On November 10, 2005, during a speech at Moorestown Friends School in Moorestown, NJ, Trelease stated that to get children to enjoy reading, teachers, parents, and librarians must “...build pleasure bridges to reading” by reading to children and doing other reading based activities which are enjoyable for children. Pleasure bridges are needed because, according to Trelease, “...human beings are pleasure-centered.” Human beings will voluntarily do over and over that which brings them pleasure. Likewise, if human beings associate “unpleasures” with reading at home and at school, they will “...avoid books and print the same way a cat avoids a hot stove burner” (Trelease, 2001, p. 7). Therefore, it is an important goal for elementary library media specialists to “...condition the child’s brain to associate reading with pleasure” by finding what children like to read and engaging children in activities that will keep them reading (Trelease, 2001, p. 6).

Elementary library media specialists have the monumental task of putting the right book into the learner’s hands. Professors Ross Todd and Carol Kuhlthau of Rutgers University’s Center of International Scholarship in School Libraries conducted the first comprehensive study based on students’ evaluation of their media centers. Unlike previous studies by Keith Curry Lance that studied the correlation between effective school libraries and higher test scores, this study demonstrated how school libraries help students learn (Whelan, 2004). The study, *Student Learning Through Ohio School Libraries*, found that 99.4 percent of students in grades 3 to 12 believed school libraries

and their services helped them become better learners. Of the 13,123 Ohio students surveyed, 88.5 percent said that the school library helped them get better grades on projects and assignments, 74.7 percent said it helped with homework, and 92.4 percent said that computers in the media center helped improve their academic work. These findings were evidence that school libraries help children learn and enjoy learning (Tepe, 2004).

In this study, book selection and leisure reading were ranked at the bottom of why students went to the library. It was found that if students wanted books for pleasure reading, they went to the public library. Students perceived the general interest collections in the school libraries as weaker than what could be found in the public libraries. Todd and Kuhlthau concluded that the following characteristics were seen in school librarians that were perceived as effective school libraries:

- Be available to students to assist with their learning needs.
- Provide up-to-date diverse resources to meet curriculum standards.
- Provide up-to-date technology.
- Design lessons that engage students in meaningful activities.
- Provide materials that target and encourage personal pursuits, pleasure reading, and reading for knowledge.
- Foster independent reading, especially in the lower grades (Whelan, 2004, p. 47).

Getting children to read and enjoy reading was a subject frequently mentioned in studies and articles. Sharon Grimes, in the article *The Search for Meaning*, identified

ways that elementary library media specialists can integrate reading strategies into the library program:

- Create a reading environment in the elementary library media center.
- Schedule time for reading.
- Provide a wide variety of books on diverse reading achievement levels.
- Communicate a passion for reading.
- Provide opportunities for students to freely interact with books. (Grimes, 2004, p. 49-52)

Stephen Krashen, in his book *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*, presented a number of reading studies about voluntary reading, in and out of school, that show that free reading impacts students' reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical development. To encourage free reading, Krashen stressed the importance of free reading both in and out of school and the need for adequate access to rich print environment in the classroom as well as the elementary library media center (Krashen, 2004).

Carter stated that reading is both a skill and a behavior. It is a combination of knowing how to read and the desire to do so (Carter, 2000). Children who become lifelong readers not only have access to books but make their own choices about what to read. Trelease stated that current research by Stephen Krashen, Jeff McQuillan, Richard Allington, and Keith Curry Lance "...unmistakably connects access to print with high reading scores and, conversely, lack of access with lower scores" (Trelease, 2001, p. 144). According to Trelease, for children to have high reading scores they need to be exposed to the best print climate in the form of larger school, community, and home

libraries. Higher reading scores can be found in states with better libraries, more bookstores, more print in the home, and more free or independent reading (Trelease, 2001). Research has shown that students' reading abilities improved when they were allowed time to read independently (Kiefer, 2001). However, classroom teachers because of curriculum objectives frequently limit the reading choices of students. Predetermined subjects in the classroom do little to promote reading for pleasure (Carter, 2000). This is where elementary library media specialists can have a major impact on reading motivation.

One aspect of being an elementary library media specialist is to provide students with reading materials they can enjoy. Students who are encouraged to select their own reading material can become lifelong learners and readers. According to Betty Carter in her article *Formula for Failure*, "...being a lifelong reader extends beyond the ability to pronounce words or select the main idea from a passage. Rather, the desire to read grows from the knowledge that print offers something wonderful and meaningful in a person's life. And only to the extent that one senses this kind of wonder will one continue to read" (Carter, 2000, p. 34). She further stated,

The books that help achieve this goal are those that allow youngsters to think about and read about the things they want to think and read about. They're books that let students discover issues and topics they may have never imagined. And they're books that provide children diversion and escape, frequently by encouraging them to return to familiar authors, genres, series, and topics, Such materials help turn novice readers into experienced ones: deciding

independently when they want to read, what they want to read, and how much of a given text they want to read. That is the behavior of a lifetime reader. (Carter, 2000, p. 37)

The elementary library media specialist can further help students by selecting stories with characters and plots that children will enthusiastically respond. Hearing the stories can make them want to read the books again by themselves. Moen stated that reading aloud to students was a simple way to improve reading comprehension, but its merits should not be overlooked (Moen, 2001). Reading aloud "...brings the literature alive," it helps students understand characters, story action, and improves student concentration (Moen, 2001, p. 32).

Elementary library media centers in many countries are increasingly aware of the need to offer the same amenities as the mega-bookstores. While coffee shops may not be appearing any time soon, soft chairs, sofas, and beanbag chairs are becoming common place in many elementary library media centers. Child centered displays, low bookcases, and bright cheerful environments greet many students when they enter today's elementary library media centers. In these child-friendly environments, students can explore quality printed material, such as Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, and develop a lifelong love of reading (Trelease, 2001, p. 47).

Teaching Techniques Using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books

Elementary library media specialists use Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in their media center in many ways. There are many books and Internet sites devoted to teaching using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. Some of the projects and teaching methods listed were such things as literature circles, letters to the

author/illustrator, dramatic explorations, and publishing newspapers about the author/illustrator (Novelli, 1998). Other projects can include a study of an author's writing style, use of fictional elements, character development, setting, point of view, and theme. Students can also examine an illustrator's use of media, design, and colors (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004).

Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books offer diverse possibilities for language arts lessons. *Fables*, (Lobel, 1980) has dialogue that models proper dialogue for students' own writing. *St. George and the Dragon* (Hodges, 1984) has descriptive language that can inspire students' word choices (Novella, 1998). Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books can be used to teach students the structure of a story. *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963), *A Story A Story* (Haley, 1970), *The Polar Express* (Van Allsburg, 1985), and *The Snowy Day* (Keats, 1962) are books that have a sequence of events as their dominant structure. *On Market Street* (Lobel, 1980), *One Fine Day* (Hogrogian, 1971), *The House That Jack Built* (Taback, 2002), and *the Ox-Cart Man* (Cooney, 1979) can be used to teach list-and-sequence structure where items, ideas, or characters in the books are used. A comparing-contrasting lesson can be taught using Robert McCloskey's book *Blueberries for Sal* (McCloskey, 1976). In this book different characters are involved in parallel actions. *Many Moons* (Thurber, 1943) and *King Bidgood's in the Bathtub* (Wood & Wood, 1985) are different books, yet each has a king as its main character. Rhyme and repetition can be taught using the books *Drummer Hoff* (Emberley, 1967) and *May I Bring a Friend?* (de Regniers, 1964). These rhymes are easy to identify and fun to read and listen to. Problem and solution lessons can be taught using *Swimmy* (Lionni, 1963), *It Could Always Be Worse* (Zemach, 1990) and *Lon Po Po* (Young, 1989). These books

all demonstrate how thinking is used to solve problems. Cause and effect is often taught in conjunction with the problem-solution lesson. For example, Tomie dePaola's *Strega Nona* (dePaola, 1979), shows how the main character's inability to pay attention causes a big problem that needs to be solved quickly (Moen, 1991).

Many text to text, text to world, and text to self connections can be made using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. Examples of books with text to text connections are *Knuffle Bunny* (Willems, 2004) and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* (Willems, 2003). Students can point out that a man wearing a T-shirt in the story has a picture of the pigeon on it and the pigeon is the one from *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* (Willems, 2003). Students can study the art in *One Fine Day* (Hogrogian, 1976) and compare the art to that in *The Contest* (Hogrogian, 1976). Students can quickly make the text to text connection as they notice the same woman in both books (Moen, 2001). Text to self and text to world connections can be made using *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* (Gerstein, 2003) as students discuss the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001. Text to self and text to world connections can be made using *Grandfather's Journey* (Say, 1993) as students study their or their family's immigration to the United States. A study of Japan and Japanese Americans can also be done with this book (Novelli, 1998, p. 17).

Art and the study of art are widely used when studying Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. According to Joan Novelli in her book *Using Caldecotts Across the Curriculum*, "Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books introduce children to a wide range of illustrations styles, inspiring their own artistic growth" (Novelli, 1998, p. 4). Novelli stated that children are naturally drawn to artistic experiences. It was often in the

form of early scribbles, drawings, and paintings, but as children see their artwork take shape there was a growing feeling of accomplishment (Novelli, 1998). Caldecott related projects that include lessons in collages, printmaking, origami, mask-making, and Chinese panel art can inspire children to explore the artist in themselves (Novelli, 1998). Novelli stated that the additional benefits of studying art and creating art were that students can:

- Communicate and express themselves through art.
- Build self-confidence and grow as independent thinkers as they try out their own creative ideas.
- Strengthen eye-hand coordination with painting, drawing, sculpting, cutting, and other art skills that will pave the way for the fine motor skills that writing requires.
- Develop an appreciation of individual expression and differences.

(Novelli, 1998, p. 7)

Teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books can extend across the curriculum. They are a valuable resource for elementary library media specialist to use when planning cross-curriculum lessons. *Mirette on the High Wire* (McCully, 1992) is a book about tenacity, compassion, and the scientific concepts of gravity and balance. *Officer Buckle and Gloria* (Rathman, 1995) provides early safety instruction while teaching character education by raising awareness of other people's feelings (Novelli, 1998). *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine* (Ness, 1967) can be used to teach the value of being truthful. *Lon Po Po* (Young, 1988) can be used to research science and the senses through the lives of wolves in the wild and how wolves use their senses to find food (Novelli,

1998). *The Glorious Flight: Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* (Provensen, 1983) can be used to study methods of transportation and the science and history of flight (Novelli, 1998). *Arrow to the Sun* (McDermott, 1974), which is almost exclusively shapes, can help teach the basics of geometry to young children. *Owl Moon* (Yolen, 1987) is a book that encourages the scientific study of birds. *The Little Island* (MacDonald, 1947) can be used to study nature, the seasons, and ocean life. *Make Way for Ducklings* (McCloskey, 1941) can be used in social studies to learn about what makes a home, and in science to study of birds.

Author/Illustrator Studies and Visits

One important way found that elementary library media specialists used Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books was to teach an author/illustrator study during story times and lessons in the elementary library media center. Christine Walker and Sarah Shaw, in their book *Teaching Reading Strategies in the School Library*, stated that it was important to have author/illustrator studies and genre explorations to encourage independent reading in the elementary library media center (Walker and Shaw, 2004). Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are a wonderfully diverse collection of books that are enjoyed by children of all ages. Because these books have such lasting appeal to children they are excellent tools to help children develop a lifelong love of reading.

An author/illustrator study using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books can also help children recognize books that qualify as examples of quality literature. This is important because the use of good children's literature enhances and extends students' reading and language experiences. In the classroom, students often read literature with strictly controlled vocabularies in which the richness of language has been stripped to

make stories more understandable according to predetermined ability levels (Moen, 1991). However, in the supportive environment of an author/illustrator study, students are more willing to take reading risks and expand their literature choices (Moen, 1991).

In addition to an author/illustrator study, an author/illustrator visit can be used to further motivate students to read and enjoy books. As students relate to authors and illustrators as real people, research suggests this helps students develop an interest in reading other books by the same authors and/or illustrators (Jenkins, 1999). Anita Merina in her article *Wow, You Really Wrote That?*, stated that it was important to find ways to motivate students to read and one way to do this is to bring in authors and illustrators. This gives students a chance to talk and learn about their books and about the importance of reading and writing (Merina, 2004).

Jenkins stated that for the visit to be effective, students must be thoroughly exposed to the author/illustrator's books prior to the visit. To make authors and illustrators real for students, it is important to have biographical material available so students can develop a connection with the author or illustrator (Jenkins, 1999). Varied past and current research suggested that students who explored an author or illustrator's background were better able to relate to the author or illustrator and recognize the possibility that they too can be writers and illustrators (Jenkins, 1999).

Trelease suggested using information resources such as *Something About the Author*, the *Fifth Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators*, and *Children's Books and Their Creators* for information on authors and illustrators (Trelease, 2001). Another resource Trelease suggested for author/illustrator studies can be found in the bi-monthly magazine *Book Links*, also available at www.ala.org/BookLinks. According to Trelease

“...each issue contained at least two extensive author/illustrator studies or interviews” and it was “...the best new children’s literature print journal” (Trelease, 2001, p. 90.)

In addition, planning for the actual visit can be time consuming and expensive for a school district. Many elementary library media specialists cut costs by joining together with other schools to help share traveling and lodging. Since, one author/illustrator visit can cost around \$1,000.00 (depending on the popularity and fame of the author/illustrator). Many parent associations aim their fund-raising efforts to help defray the cost of bringing authors or illustrators to a school. Book fairs at the school or the local book store was another way money can be raised to offset the cost of an author/illustrator visit. Some elementary library media specialists write grants to help offset the cost of a visit or some school districts budget money to pay for visits. Many elementary library media specialists set aside a portion of their budget to pay for author/illustrators.

While author/illustrator visits can be time consuming and costly, the benefits for students make author/illustrator visits worth the effort. These benefits are apparent when children focus on the work of an author or illustrator before and during the visit. As students have the opportunity to meet the author/illustrator, they may have their first-time glimpse into the literary world (Huck, et al., 1997).

Technology and Author/Illustrator Studies

The Internet has become a great source of information about a great many children’s writers and illustrators (Brown, 1998, ¶1). One Web site recommended in a *School Library Journal* article was *The Children’s Literature Web Guide* at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/%7Edkbrown/>. This Web site provided links to information about authors, stories on the Web, reader’s theatre, resources for teachers and parents,

literature organizations, publishers and booksellers, and many other topics related to children's literature on the Web (Golant, 2004). Another similar Web site with helpful information on children's authors and illustrators on the Web was the *Children's Literature Web Guide/Authors & Illustrators* on the Web at:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/%7Edkbrown/authors.html>. The links on this site included children's authors' personal Web sites and Web sites maintained by fans, scholars, and readers.

Kay Vandergrift's Web site, *Vandergrift's Children's Literature Page* at: <http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/ChildrenLit/index.html> was an excellent resource for study questions and children's book titles to help educators develop lessons on topics such as ethnic groups, female voice, and censorship. Vandergrift also suggested studying an author or illustrator through videotapes, DVDs, or streaming video (Vandergrift, 2005b, ¶35).

Another Web site that was suggested was Kay E. Vandergrift's *Learning about the Author and Illustrator Pages* at: <http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/AuthorSite/> (Jenkins, 1999). This site had more than six hundred links to Web sites where students could learn about their favorite author/illustrator. According to Vandergrift,

...many readers are curious about the creators of the books they enjoy. Young people especially want to know about their favorite authors/illustrators because they often feel that an author/illustrator is speaking directly and personally to them through the work.

Learning about authors/illustrators can also help young people see possible connections between a creator's life and the works created

and encourage them to consider different techniques and approaches to the compositional act. (Vandergrift, 2005a, ¶30)

Summary

In 1938, the first Caldecott Medal was awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children in the United States by a United States citizen. To date, almost 300 Caldecott Medal and Honor Awards have been awarded. Each year a 15 member committee nominates the books to be considered for the awards. The winning books are announced at the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting and the awards are presented at the ALA summer conference.

Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are rich with teaching opportunities. The books contain art that enhances each story. They also expose readers to a wide variety of unique language experiences. Ethnic and cultural diversity are common themes in Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. With the United States becoming more culturally diverse with each passing year, these books are embraced by educators as valuable teaching tools.

Elementary library media specialists have the task of putting books into student's hands and getting them to read. Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are a way for elementary library media specialist to encourage children to enjoy reading, to read more often, and to choose from a wider selection of quality literature.

Elementary library media specialists used Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books to teach in a variety of ways. Literature circles, art projects, author/illustrator studies, comparing-contrasting, problem solving, and text, world, and self connections are some of the ways Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books can be used to teach in

the elementary library media center. The researcher found many books and Web sites that offered ideas and suggestions for lessons. The opportunities for teaching using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are endless and only limited by the imaginations of students and educators.

There was support in the form of studies, journal articles, and books that stated that using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in the elementary library media center and as part of the elementary library media curriculum was important and beneficial. Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books can be part of a program to improve student reading ability, literature selection, and reading enjoyment. The books can also be used in many cross-curriculum lessons to further enhance the learning environment.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Justification

This survey was conducted to determine how elementary library media specialists perceived the role of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies in the school library curriculum. Descriptive research was chosen because the researcher wanted to obtain information that could be used by elementary library media specialists in their curriculum planning. The study was conducted to measure how useful Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies were, and which techniques to teach these books were used most often by elementary school library media specialists. In addition, the study was conducted to ascertain elementary library media specialist perceptions about Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies and the impact on students' reading and reading choices. According to *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, elementary library media specialists were the persons best suited to answer questions about information literacy, student reading and reading choices (AASL & AECT, 1998). The data gathered in this study can be used by elementary library media specialists to better serve his or her student population more effectively.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the perceptions and experiences of elementary library media specialists who taught using Caldecott Medal

and Honor Award books to kindergarten to eighth grade students. The researcher surveyed elementary media specialists to determine the techniques used to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books and the effectiveness of these techniques. The researcher also surveyed elementary library media specialists to determine if they observed students reading higher quality literature due to their study of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books.

Procedures Used

Using the research information from previous chapters, an 11 question written survey was designed and pretested by the researcher. Dr. Shontz made several recommendations to clarify the wording and intent of the questions. Ten colleagues in the 2006 Rowan University's thesis class in the school and public librarianship program also completed a practice test of the survey. Minor changes were made to the survey allowing for the inclusion of open-ended responses at the end of each of the first eight questions. This change allowed the researcher to more clearly ascertain the methods elementary library media specialists used to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books.

Research Questions

1. With what grades and to what extent were Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books taught in the elementary school library curriculum?
2. Which techniques used by elementary library media specialists to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were considered the most effective by library media specialists?

3. How important did elementary library media specialists view using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books as a component of the library curriculum?
4. Did elementary library media specialists see a relationship between teaching about Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books and student reading and reading choices?

Population and Sample

The sample for this study was from the population of elementary library media specialists who were electronic listserv members and who taught pre-kindergarten to eighth grade students. The Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books survey was distributed to two selected listservs. Listservs were chosen because a significant portion of subscribers were known to be elementary library media specialists in public and private elementary schools. The following listservs were used in the study:

LM_Net@Listserv.syr.edu and Infolit@ala.org. The survey used was mainly quantitative and consisted of both closed questions and open-ended questions. The elementary library media specialists self-selected to participate in the survey.

Variables

This study gathered data to determine if teaching about Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books was an important component in the elementary library media curriculum. There were several variables in this study that explored the perceptions of elementary school library media specialists who taught using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, the methods used to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies, the usefulness of teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, and the elementary library media specialist perceptions of the effect of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies on student reading and reading choices. Other variables in

this study were the attitudes and experiences of elementary library media specialist who taught using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, the methods that elementary library media specialists used in Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies, and which methods were perceived by the library media specialists as useful.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire survey using an Internet electronic survey service at SurveyMonkey.com (see Appendix B). The survey consisted of eight closed questions and three open-ended questions. Data collection began on January 24th and continued for four weeks until February 24, 2006.

Instruments Used

A cover letter (see Appendix A) which briefly explained the rationale for this study was e-mailed to elementary library media specialist listserv members inviting them to participate in the study. The introductory letter contained a statement of confidentiality and an explanation of the purpose of the study. After four weeks when 250 useable surveys were returned, the researcher compiled the information on the returned surveys. Data collected from all completed surveys were analyzed utilizing the Microsoft Excel computer program. Frequency charts demonstrating the percentages of responses for answers to the closed questions are in Chapter Four of this research report.

Reliability and Validity

The introductory letter and survey were pre-tested by students enrolled in the school and public librarianship thesis class at Rowan University and by Dr. Shontz, the instructor of the thesis class. The 10 library media specialists in the thesis class were not part of the sample of the study. The library media specialist pretest participants were

asked to complete the questionnaire and comment on the specific questions and possible answers. Based on the responses from the pre-test, adjustments were made to the initial survey form.

Since all respondents were volunteers, they were not considered representative of the entire population of elementary library media specialist listserv members. The results were assumed to be valid for the library media specialist respondents who taught library curricula in public and private elementary schools.

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CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Procedures Used

On January 24, 2006, an introductory e-mail letter that briefly explained the rationale for this study along with a statement of confidentiality was e-mailed to library media specialists who subscribed to the listservs: Infolit@ala.org and LM_Net@Listserv.syr.edu. The introductory e-mail letter (see Appendix A) asked elementary library media specialists if they would like to participate in a research survey that consisted of 11 questions about their perceptions and methods used to teach Caldecott Honor and Medal Award books. The e-mail letter included a link to SurveyMonkey.com which brought respondents directly to the 11-question survey (see Appendix B). The e-mail letter asked for only elementary library media specialists to respond to the survey. Elementary library media specialists who taught in public and private elementary schools grades Pre-K or K through grades eight were chosen for this research because they were usually responsible for organizing and implementing lessons in their libraries and were the persons who analyzed the effectiveness of these lessons. The survey was active for one month. By February 24, 2006, 255 respondents had completed the surveys. Of these 255 surveys, one was incomplete and therefore discarded. Additionally, four of the surveys were completed by respondents who did not teach elementary-age students. These four surveys were also discarded. Therefore, a total

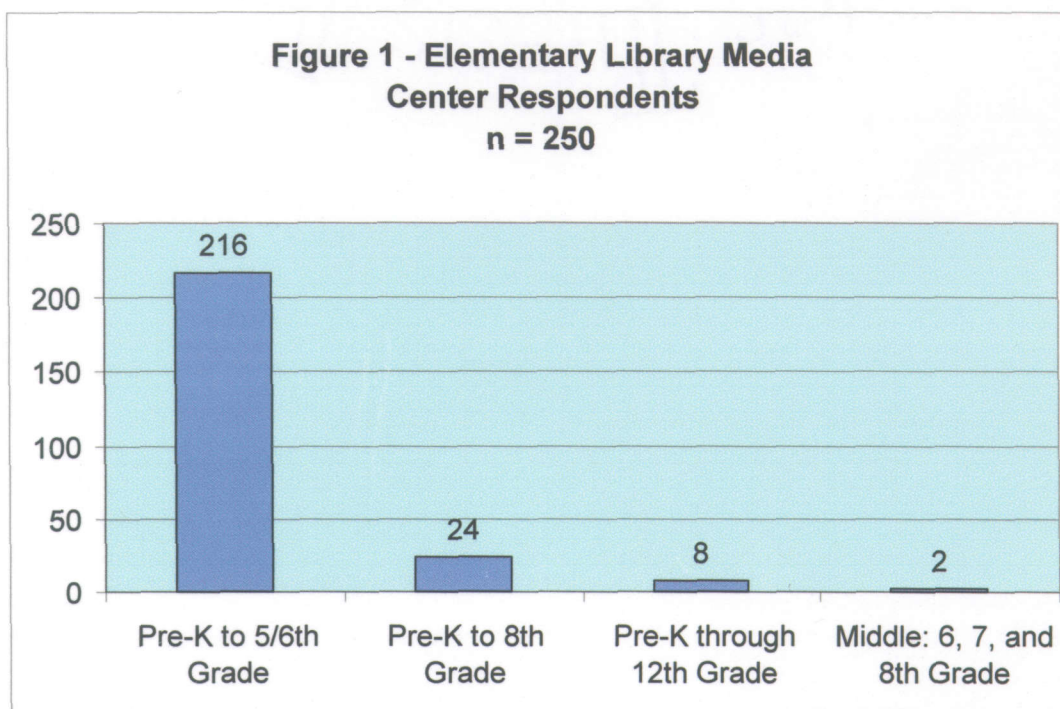
five surveys were discarded leaving 250 usable surveys which were tabulated and used in this study.

Data Coding

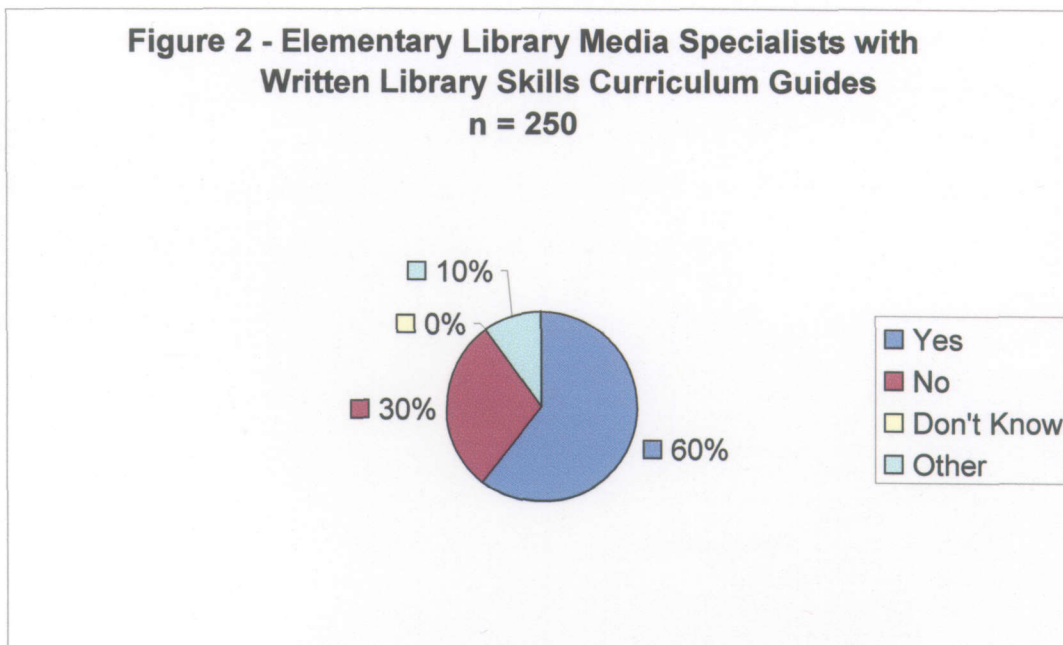
The Microsoft Excel computer program was chosen to compute descriptive statistics, find percentages, and create pie and bar charts. The charts were then imported into Microsoft Word to illustrate the results of the survey. Microsoft Word was the program used for creating the text.

Presentation of Results

When responding to the first survey question, that asked about what grade levels elementary school library media specialists taught, 250 people responded (n=250). Of these 250 elementary library media specialists, 216 taught in Pre-K through 6th grade school, 24 taught in Pre-K through 8th grade schools, two taught in middle school (6th, 7th, and 8th), eight taught in Pre-K through 12 grade schools. Results are in Figure 1.

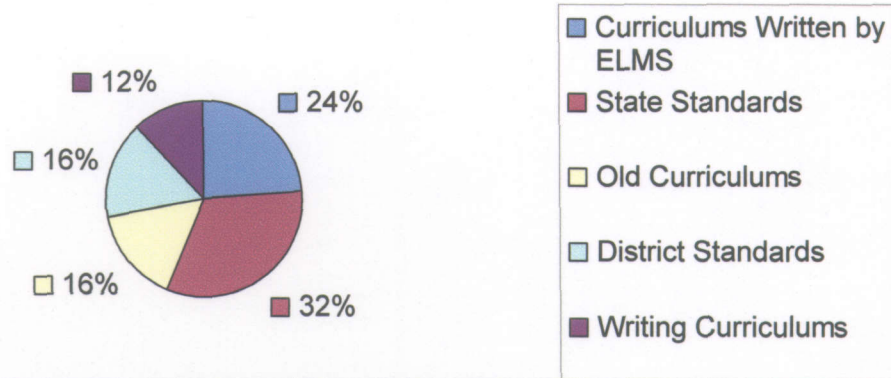


When responding to the second survey question, that asked about a written library skills curriculum guide, 250 (n=250) responded to this question. Of the 250 respondents, 151 (60%) elementary library media specialists had a library skills curriculum guide, 74 (30%) did not have a written library skills curriculum guide, 25 (10%) gave a more specific response, and none (0%) chose the Don't Know option. Results are in Figure 2.



Of the 10% (n=25) who gave more specific responses, six (24%) were using curriculums they wrote themselves, eight (32%) used their state's standards, four (16%) had curriculums but they were very old, four (16%) used their district's general standards, and three (12%) were in the process of writing library skills curriculums. Results are in Figure 3.

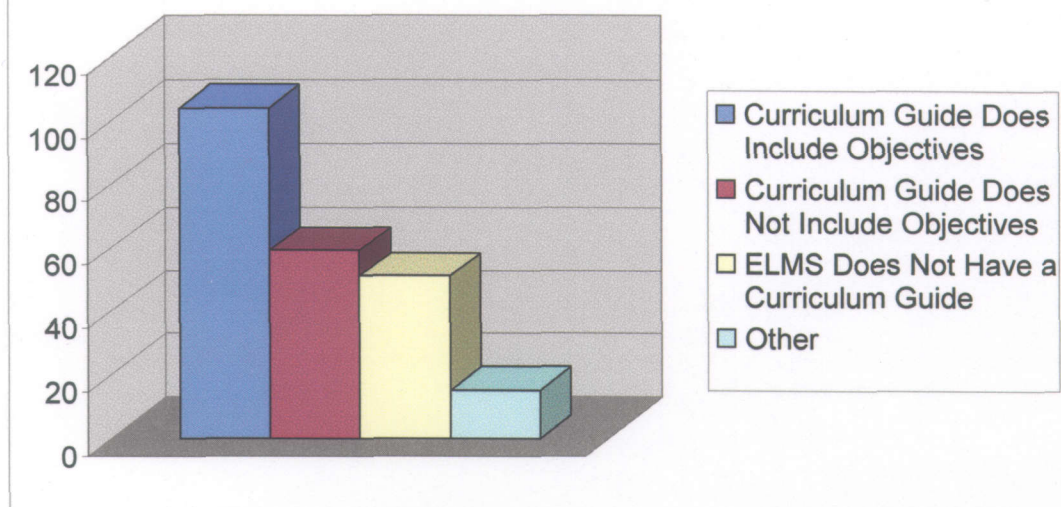
Figure 3 - Specific Responses Given by Elementary Library Media Specialists About Curriculum Guides
n = 25



When responding to the third survey question, that asked if their library programs included objectives for teaching Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, there were 228 responses (n=228). Of the respondents 104 (45%) stated that their curriculum guide did include objectives for teaching Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, 59 (26%) replied that their curriculum did not include objectives, 50 (22%) replied that they did not have a curriculum guide, and 15 (7%) choose other. Results can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4 - Library Skill Curriculum Guide and Inclusion of Objectives for Teaching Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books

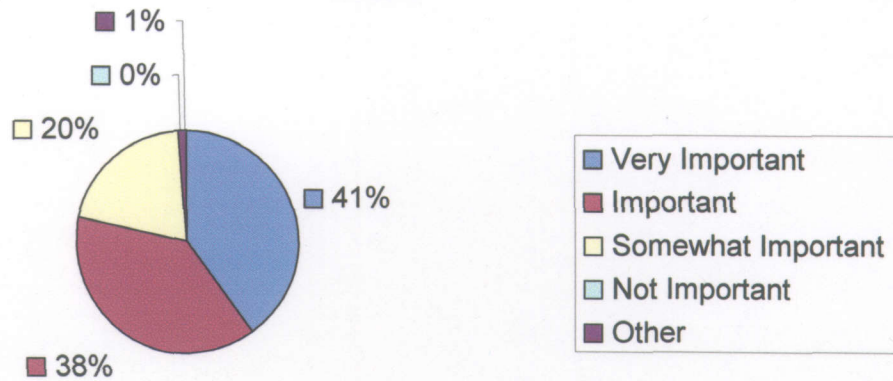
n = 228



When responding to the fourth survey question that asked if Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies were important in the elementary school library curriculum, there were 250 responses. Of the 250 respondents (n=250), 100 (41%) replied very important, 96 (38%) replied important, 51 (20%) replied somewhat important, none (0%) replied not important, and 3 (1%) replied other. Results can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5 - Importance of Caldecott Studies in the Elementary Library Media Center Curriculum

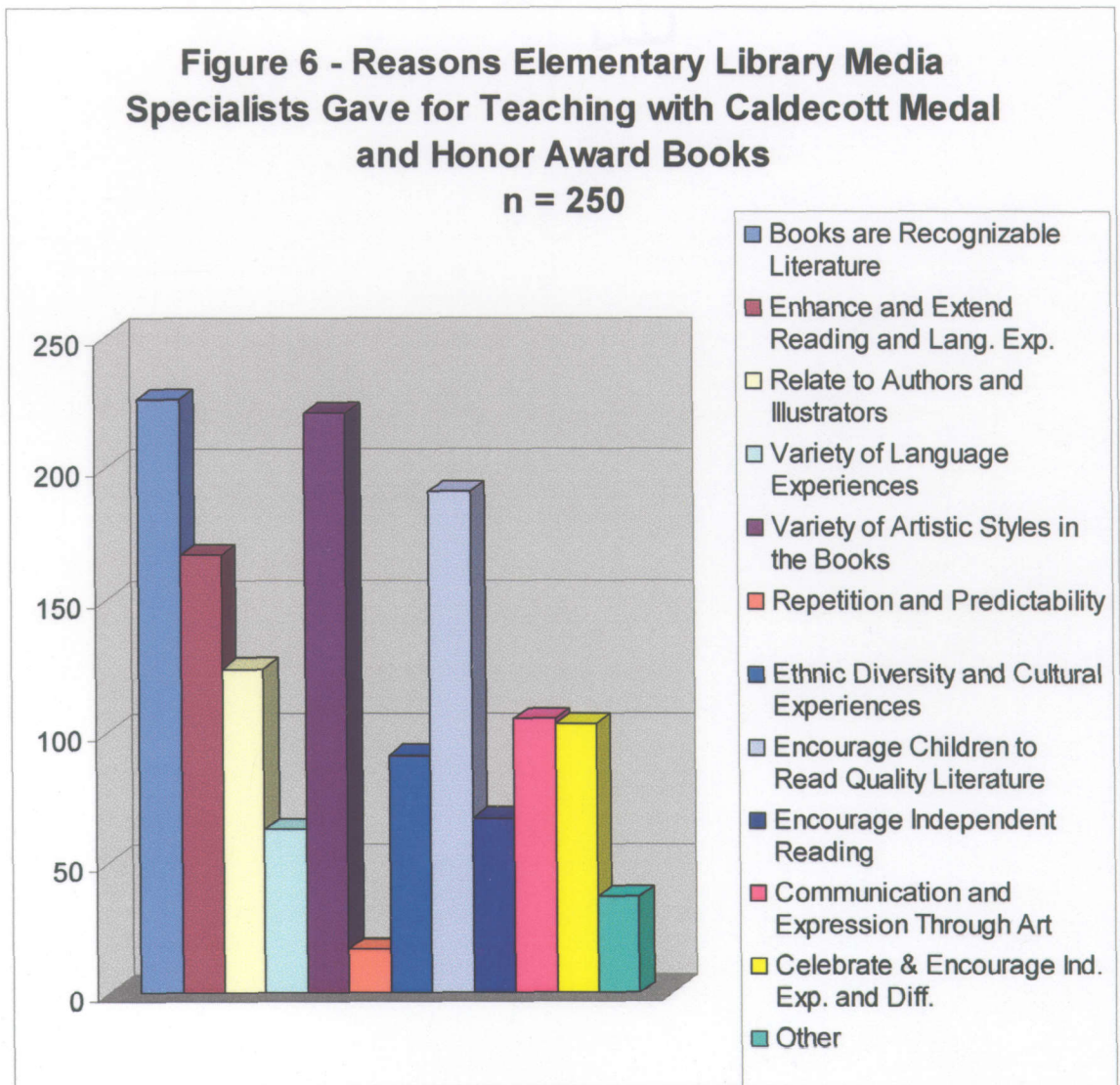
n = 250



Of the 1% (n=3) who gave more specific responses to their beliefs on how important Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies were in the elementary school library curriculum, the 1% responded that Caldecott books were an important way to help children choose quality books but no more important than other forms of literature.

When responding to the fifth survey question, that asked for respondents' top 6 reasons for teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, 250 (n=250) elementary library media specialists responded. The stated reasons were that the books were a recognizable form of quality literature (226), the books provided a variety of artistic styles (221), the books were a way to encourage children to read quality literature (191), the books enhanced and extended students' reading and language experiences (167), the books helped students relate to authors and illustrators as real people (124), the

books encouraged children to communicate and express themselves through art (105), the books celebrated and encouraged individual expression and differences (103), the books offered ethnic diversity and cultural experiences (91), the books encouraged independent student reading (67), the books provided a variety of language experiences (63), other (37), and the books often had repetition and predictability that enhanced student language learning experiences (17). Results can be seen in Figure 6.

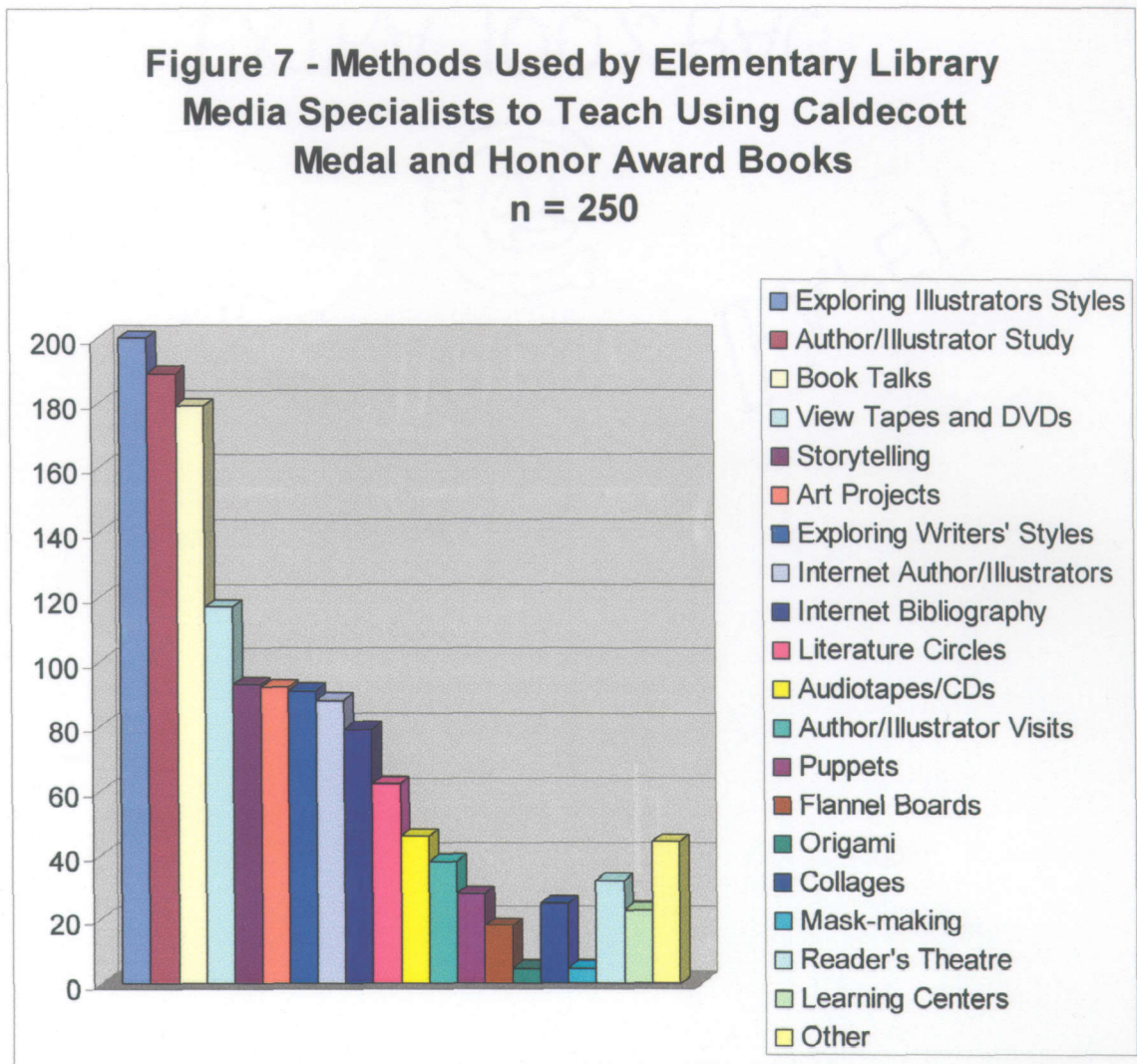


Thirty-seven other reasons for teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were also given; including: the books were award winning books and elementary library media specialists wanted to expose students to a variety of award winning books (11), students were interested in contests and contest winners so students were interested in learning about these books (2), the books encouraged students to recognize quality in literature (5), the books were used to teach about different artistic art styles in the illustrations and encouraged students to recognize the picture book as an art form (6), the medals on the books attracted students' attention thereby helping students to independently look for award winning books (3), teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books encouraged students to explore different genres of books (3), the books were good read-alouds which children enjoyed and therefore this encouraged students to choose other Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books (1), the books were used to show how the view of the world and people had changed throughout the years (1), the books exposed students to a wide range of life experiences and imaginary situations (1), teachers requested a unit on Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books (1), and the books were part of the state library or district curriculum (3).

When responding to the sixth survey question that asked what methods elementary library media specialists used to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in their library program, 250 (n=250) people responded. The survey question asked that respondents check all answers that applied. The most common responses chosen were as follows: exploring the illustrator's style, use of media, design, and colors (200), studying author/illustrator studies (189), book talks (179), viewing videotapes or DVDs (117), storytelling (93), art projects (92), exploring the writer's use of fictional elements,

character development, and setting (91), using Internet sites to view and listen to authors and illustrators (88), using Internet sites to research bibliographical information (79), using literature circles to discuss and study Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books (62), students listening to books on audiotapes/CDs (46), using author/illustrator visits (38), using puppets (28), flannel boards (18), origami (5), collages (25), mask-making (5), reader's theatre (32), and learning centers (23). A total of 44 respondents gave other varied and more detailed methods for teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. Results can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7 - Methods Used by Elementary Library Media Specialists to Teach Using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books
n = 250

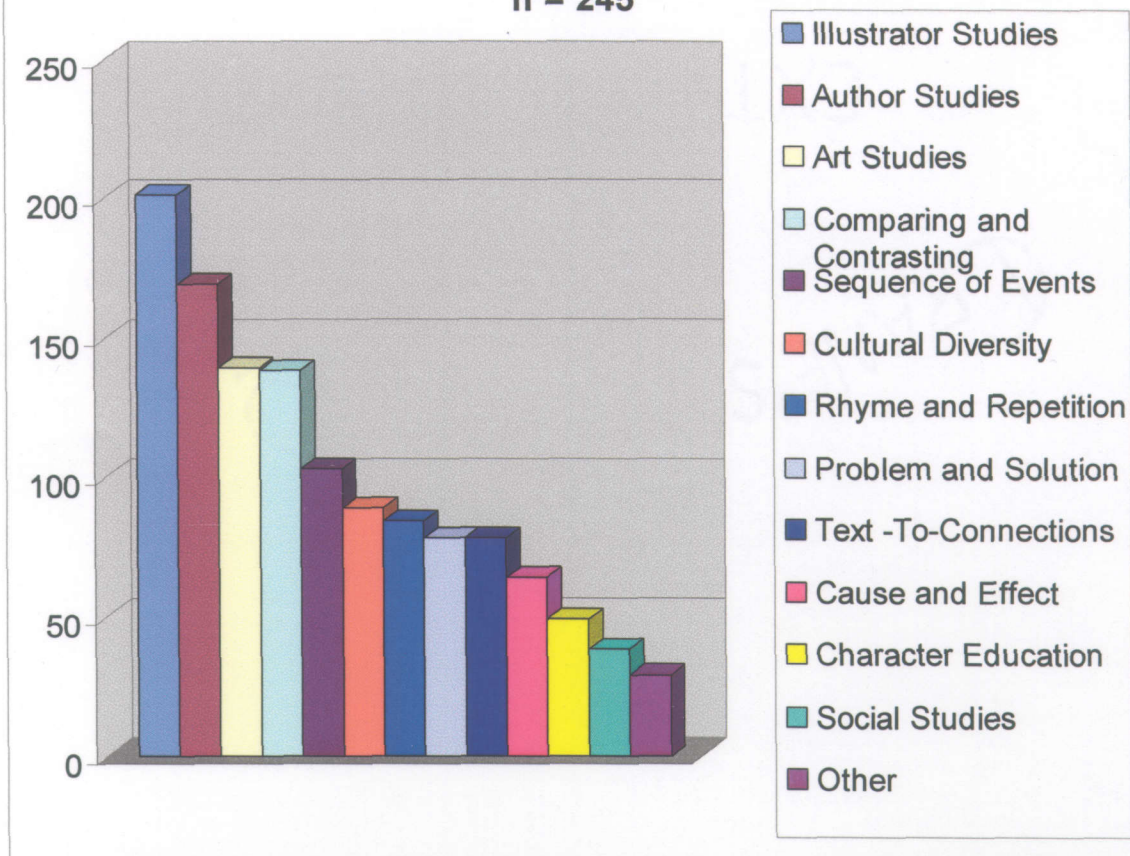


Of the 44 respondents who gave more specific responses for their methods for teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, additional methods included: games, read-alouds, contests, mock Caldecott elections, art projects, PowerPoint presentations, world geography lessons, bulletin boards, comparing and contrasting of illustrators, comparing and contrasting copyrights and award dates, visit by Caldecott Committee member, and special labeling of books, displays, and posters.

When responding to the seventh survey question, that asked elementary library media specialists to check all learning skills they taught using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, 245 elementary library media specialists responded. The most popular choices chosen were: illustrator studies (201), author studies (169), art study (139), comparing and contrasting (138), sequence of events (103), cultural diversity (89), rhyme and repetition (84), problem and solution (78), text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world connections (78), cause and effect (64), character education (49), social studies (38), and other (29). Results can be seen in Figure 8.

Figure 8 - Skills Taught by Elementary Library Media Specialists Using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books

n = 245



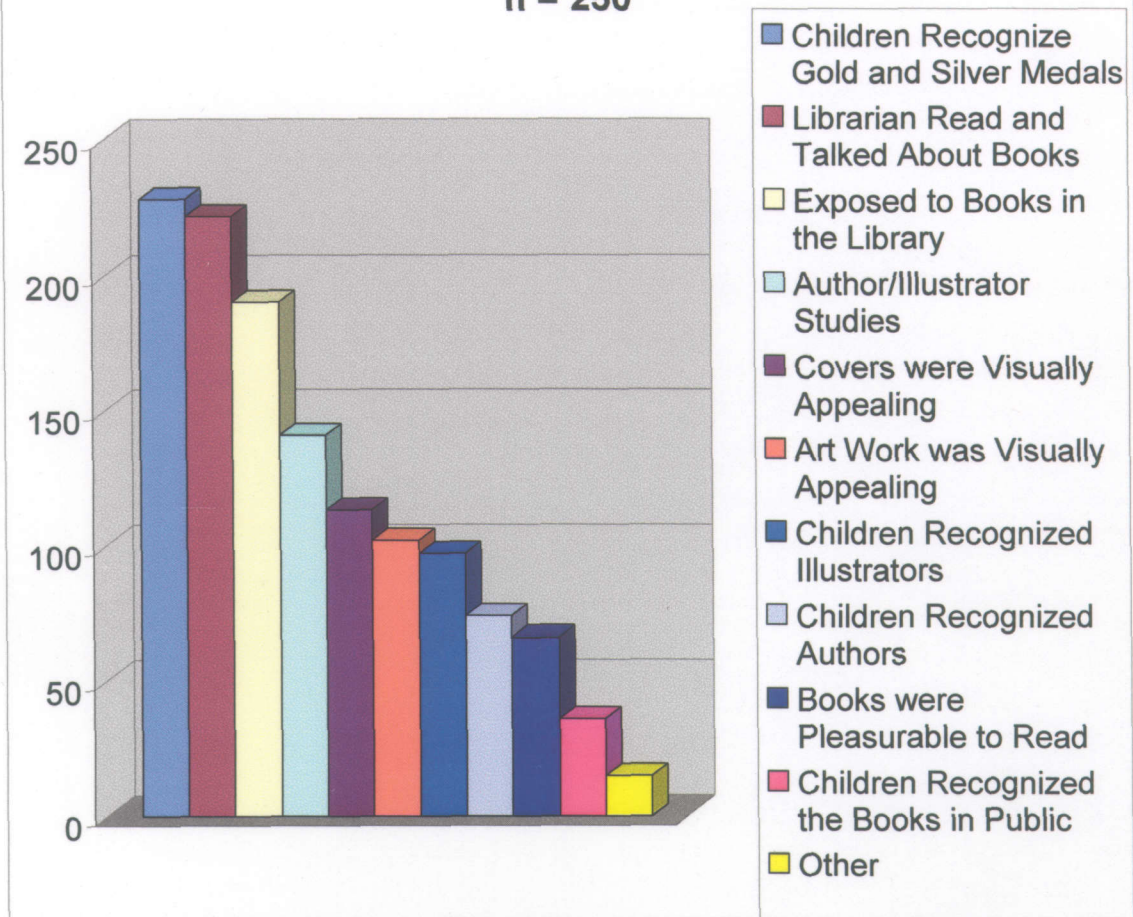
The responses of the 29 who gave more specific responses about skills taught with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books included: a discussion of the process used to choose and award Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, predictions, projects where award winning books were used for oral presentations, illustration to text connections, encouraging independent reading of books, elements of folktales, and lessons specific to annual winners.

When responding to the eighth survey question, which asked elementary library media specialists to check the top five reasons why they believed children chose to read

Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books 250 (n=250) people responded. The respondents stated: children chose Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books because they recognized the gold or silver medals on the books (228), because the library media specialist had read and talked about the books (222), because the children recognized the books from being exposed to them in the library (190), because author/illustrator studies helped students develop an interest in reading other books by the same author or illustrator (141), because the covers of the books were visually appealing (113), because the art work inside the books was visually appealing (102), because the children recognized the illustrators (97), because the children recognized the authors (74), because the books were pleasurable to read (66), because the children recognized the books from seeing them in bookstores, on posters, on television, in magazines, etc. (36). A total of 15 respondents gave other reasons. Results can be seen in Figure 9.

Figure 9 - Why Elementary Library Media Specialists Believed Children Chose to Read Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books

n = 250

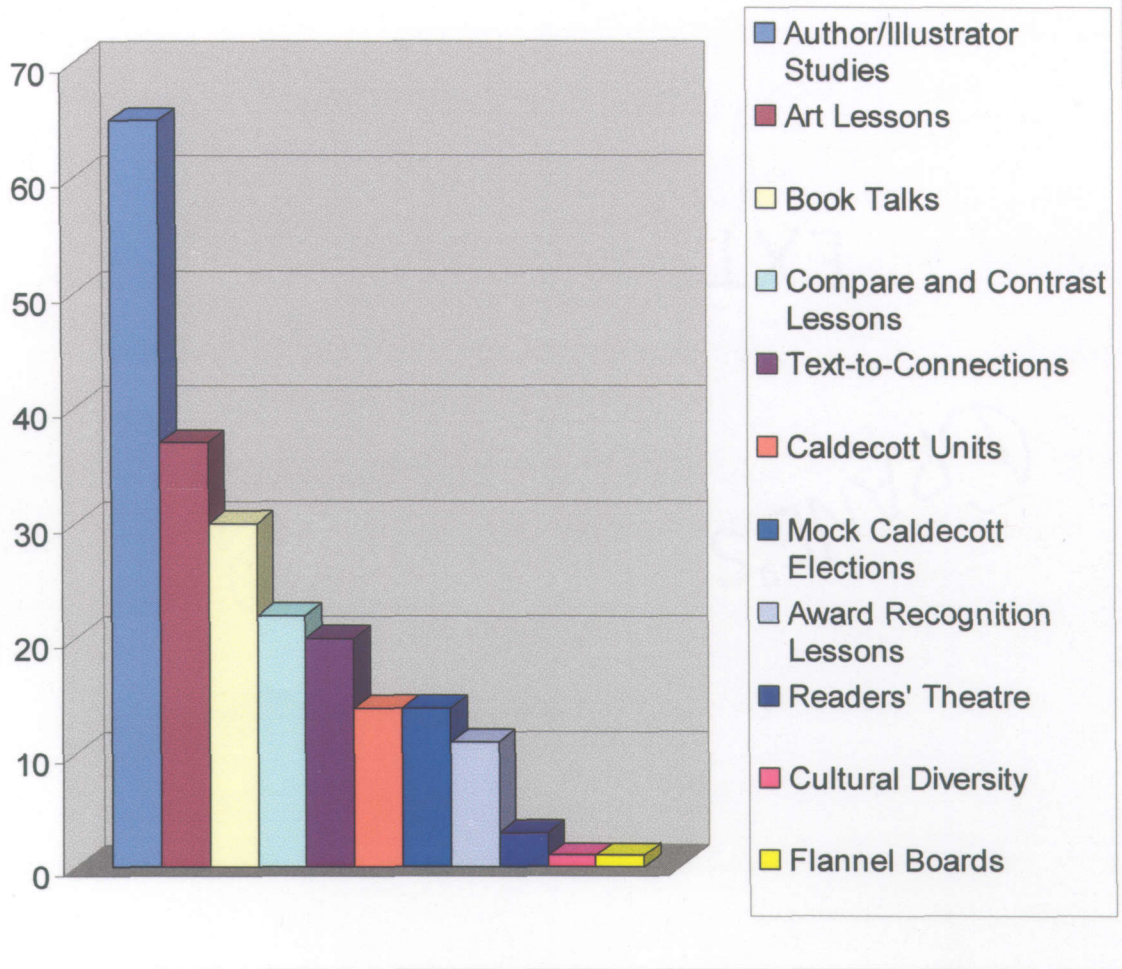


Of the 15 who gave more specific responses as to why they believed children chose to read Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, the responses were: children were exposed to these books in their classrooms, some of the Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books existed in other forms such as movies and this attracted children to the books, Caldecott Reading Clubs encouraged children to read the books, and book fair companies such as Scholastic often featured Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. In addition, one elementary library media specialist placed small stars on the spines of the

books to attract children to the books. Another elementary library media specialist offered reading incentives which attracted children to the books.

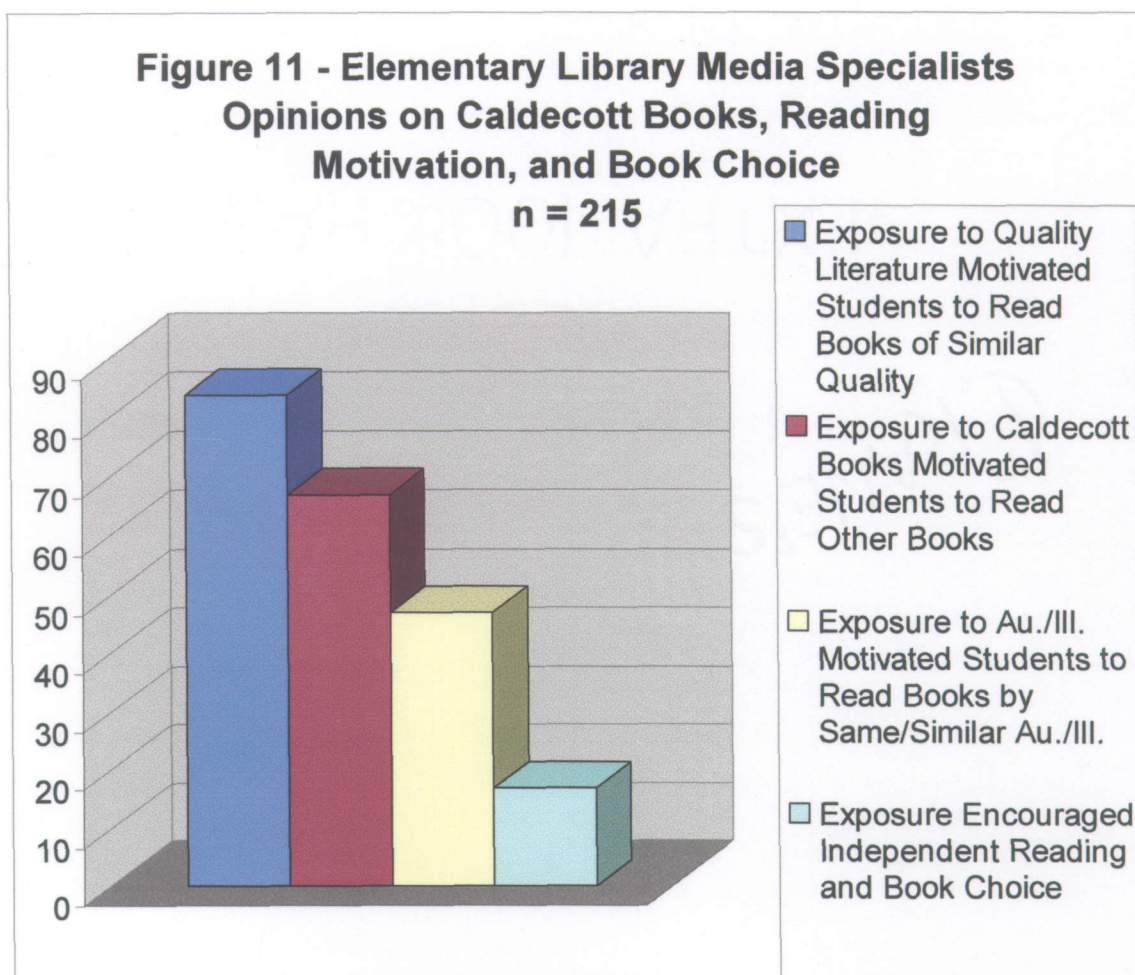
When responding to the ninth survey question, which asked elementary library media specialists what techniques elementary library media specialists considered the most effective to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, 218 (n=218) responded. Of these, the most common answers were: author/illustrator studies (65), art studies (37), book talks (30), compare and contrast lessons (22), text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections (20), multiple-week Caldecott units (14), mock Caldecott elections (14), award recognition lessons (11), readers' theatre (3), cultural diversity lessons(1), and using flannel boards during storytelling (1). Results can be seen in Figure 10.

Figure 10- Techniques Deemed Most Effective by Elementary Library Media Specialists to Teach Using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books
n = 218



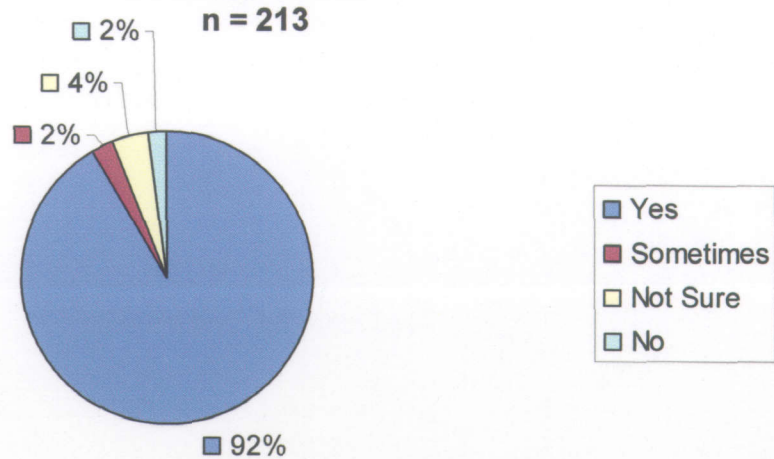
When responding to the tenth survey question, which asked elementary library media specialists their perceptions on how teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books motivated students to read more books, 215 (n=215) responded. Of the 215 respondents, 84 (39%) stated that exposure to quality literature had a positive influence on motivating students to reading books of similar or higher quality, 67 (31%) stated that exposure to Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books motivated students to read more

books, 47 (22%) stated that exposure to authors and illustrators motivated students to read books by the same or similar authors and illustrators, 17 (8%) stated the exposure to Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books encouraged independent reading and increased book choice by students. Results can be seen in Figure 11.



When responding to the eleventh survey question, which asked if elementary library media specialists believed that teaching using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books had a positive effect on student reading and reading choices, 213 (n=213) responded. Of the 213 who responded, 195 (92%) stated yes, 5 (2%) stated sometimes, 9 (4%) stated not sure, and 4 (2%) stated no. Results can be seen in Figure 12.

Figure 12 - Elementary Library Media Specialists' Beliefs About The Positive Effect Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books Had On Student Reading and Reading Choices



Summary

From the responses elementary library media specialists gave to the survey, the researcher observed that Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were perceived to be a valuable teaching tool by the majority of elementary library media specialists. Data also showed the widespread use of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in curriculums used by elementary library media centers. The researcher also noted in the responses given that most responding elementary library media specialists believed Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books did have a positive impact on student reading and book selection.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine elementary library media specialists' perceptions of the usefulness of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in the elementary library media center curriculum. The study was conducted to measure the techniques elementary school library media specialists considered the most effective when teaching using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. Additionally, the researcher attempted to ascertain elementary library media specialists' perceptions of the value of using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books studies in the elementary library media curriculum and the impact these books had on influencing student reading and reading choices.

An inquiry e-mail letter was posted on LM_Net@Listserv.syr.edu and on Infolit@ala.org asking elementary library media specialists to participate in the research. A link was provided in the e-mail which took the self-selected respondents to a survey at SurveyMonkey.com. The link, <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=322121706172>, was available for respondents from January 24, 2006 to February 24, 2006.

A total of 255 people responded to the survey. Of these 255 surveys, one was incomplete and therefore discarded. Additionally, four of the surveys were completed by respondents who did not teach elementary-age students. These four surveys were also

discarded. Therefore, a total of five surveys were discarded leaving 250 usable surveys which were used in this study.

The data gathered through this study were analyzed by the researcher using the Microsoft Excel computer program. This computer program was used to create pie charts and bar graphs. The open-ended responses were analyzed and categorized according to similarities in the responses. This information was then analyzed and categorized using Microsoft Excel.

Significance of the Results

The first research question (and the first survey question) was to determine what grade levels respondents taught. The overwhelming majority (n = 248) of library media specialists who responded to the survey were elementary library media specialists who taught primarily pre-K through eighth grade. This was the expected response, as it was assumed that Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books would be more widely used by elementary library media specialists in elementary library media centers. Only two middle school (sixth, seventh, and eighth grade) media specialists responded to the survey and stated that they taught using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. This low number was also expected because it was assumed that the higher the grade level the lower the percentage would be of library media specialists using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in the curriculum.

The second survey question asked if elementary library media specialists had a written library skill curriculum guide, 60% responded that they did. While 60% seemed high, the researcher found it alarming that the remaining 40% of the respondents stated that they did not have a written library skills curriculum guide. They were using

curriculum they wrote themselves, or they were using curriculum guides that were very old. The researcher wondered why 40% of the respondents were teaching without a written curriculum guide. A future research topic could be to study why so many elementary library media specialists did not have a curriculum guide.

The third survey question asked elementary library media specialists if their library curriculum included objectives for teaching Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. The researcher found that a high number of respondents (45%) stated that their library curriculums did include objectives for teaching using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. The researcher felt that the number of elementary library media specialists who had library curriculums which did not include objectives (26%) was higher than expected. The researcher felt this was an extremely high percentage and wondered why Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were not included in more library curriculums. A future research topic could be to study why so many elementary library media specialists' curriculum guides did not include Caldecott Medal and Honor Award book studies.

The second part of the first research question (and the sixth survey question) was to ask elementary library media specialists to list the methods they most often used to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. The results from this survey concurred with the research findings from the literature. The most widely used methods included: exploring illustrator styles, author/illustrator studies, and book talks. However, it was a surprise to the researcher that technology was not widely used. The respondents who used such methods as the Internet to research authors and illustrators, the Internet to research bibliographies, and watching and/or listening to CDs comprised less than half of the

respondents. A future research topic could be to study why technology was not more widely used in elementary library media centers.

The second research question (and the ninth survey question) asked elementary library media specialists to list what techniques they considered the most effective to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. The technique stated as the most effective by respondents was the use of author/illustrator studies. This response was expected, because the Caldecott Medal and Honor Awards are given to the best illustrated picture books of the year.

What was of interest to the researcher was that cultural diversity was chosen by only one respondent. This contradicts the research finding stated in Chapter Two in which many literature sources confirmed the prevalence of cultural diversity in a large percentage of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. The researcher was therefore surprised that elementary library media specialists did not recognize and utilize this important aspect of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in their elementary school library curriculums. A future research topic could be to study why cultural diversity was not more widely taught in elementary library media curriculums using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books.

Also, the use of readers' theatre was chosen by only two respondents. With the wide availability of readers' theatre scripts on the Internet and in various texts, it was surprising to the researcher that elementary library media specialists did not utilize this interactive activity in their elementary library media centers more often. An interesting research question would be to ask elementary library media specialists why certain activities/lessons were used and why other activities/lessons were not used. The

researcher believes that most elementary library media specialists would say that seeing students for one half-hour time period each week prohibited more involved activities in the library media center.

The third research question (and the fourth survey question) was to ask elementary library media specialists to rate how important they believed Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were as a component of the library curriculum. As the researcher expected, the overwhelming majority (79%) believed that including Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in the library curriculum was very important or important. An interesting finding by the researcher was that three respondents stated that Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were no more important than other forms of literature. While this number is low, it was still startling to the researcher that some elementary library media specialists did not see the importance of using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books as an important part of the elementary library media center curriculum.

The review of literature in Chapter Two suggested that using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in the elementary library media curriculum was an effective way to encourage independent reading and increase reading choice of quality literature. According to Sharron L. McElmeel in her article *Compare & Contrast Caldecotts*, the ability to compare and contrast literacy selections can aid in the development of useful reading strategies (McElmeel, 2006).

The researcher found the statements of McElmeel concurred with the beliefs of elementary library media specialists who responded to the survey. The fourth research question (eighth, 10th, and 11th survey questions) asked elementary library media

specialists about the relationship between teaching using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books and student reading and reading choices. The researcher found that elementary library media specialists overwhelmingly believed Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were useful in developing reading strategies in elementary students which included increased independent reading and encouraging students to choose higher quality literature.

Research also suggested that when students had the opportunities to hear stories read aloud they most often chose to read these books or books that were similar in format and content (Trelease, 2001). Survey results concurred with the research in that elementary library media specialists stated that students chose to read books they were exposed to in elementary library media centers. The most common reasons elementary library media specialists believed students chose to read Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were: they recognized the Caldecott seal on the books, the books were read aloud by the elementary library media specialists, the children recognized the books from being exposed to them, and author/illustrator studies helped students develop an interest in other books written by the same authors and/or the same illustrators.

What the researcher found interesting was that some elementary library media specialists believed that students did not find Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books pleasurable to read. This was surprising to the researcher, because past research has shown that if elementary library media specialists read Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books that students were more receptive to reading these books (Huck, 1997). However, the researcher concedes that students may reject Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books as desirable because some of the topics and illustrations of the older books

may seem dated and therefore unappealing to students. A future research topic could be to study which Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were appealing or unappealing to students and what can be done to encourage students to appreciate these books.

A large percentage of the elementary library media specialists who responded to the survey stated that exposing students to Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books was an effective way to encourage student reading and reading choices. Almost all replied that Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books were important components of the elementary library media curriculum and were a successful way to encourage students to read a wider variety of quality literature. While this may seem to be a contradiction from what was stated in the pervious paragraph, the researcher believes that once children are exposed to Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books they look beyond the covers and discover stories which are enjoyable to read. Through the literature research and the survey research, the researcher feels confident in believing that Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books are a positive addition to any elementary school media center and have much to offer elementary students of all ages.

Recommendations for Further Study

Future research topics could be as follows: to study why some elementary library media specialists did not have written curriculum guides, to study why some elementary library media specialists' curriculum guides did not include Caldecott Medal and Honor Award book studies, to study why cultural diversity was not more widely taught in elementary library media curriculums using Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books, to ask elementary library media specialists why certain activities/lessons were used and why other activities/lessons were not used, and to study which Caldecott Medal and Honor

Award books were appealing or unappealing to students and what can be done to encourage students to appreciate these books.

A more detailed study of the techniques used by elementary library media specialists to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in their elementary library media centers is one suggestion. Another suggestion is to investigate the effectiveness and impact of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books on student reading and reading choices. Additionally, more open-ended survey questions that targeted student reading and book selection choices would be a way for future researchers to gather additional information about the impact of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books on student reading.

Future research could investigate why technology was not used more often by elementary library media specialists as an effective teaching tool. Research questions could be designed to ascertain if the problem was with the elementary library media specialists, the school district, or the universities where elementary library media specialists received their instruction in library science. The results of the study could be used to implement changes in school districts and/or universities.

To further study the effectiveness of Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in the elementary library media curriculum, additional review of current and future literature is recommended. These studies may lead to changes and/or additions in a survey to assist future researchers in their quest for a more detailed answer as to the effectiveness of teaching Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books in the elementary library media curriculum and the impact on student reading and reading choices.

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APPENDIX A – COVER LETTER

January 24, 2006

Dear Elementary Library Media Specialist,

One of the resources used by many elementary library media specialists is teaching about and with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. As a school librarian graduate student at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey, I am in the process of writing a master's thesis on the techniques elementary library media specialists utilize to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Books in the elementary library media center curriculum. I am under the direction of Dr. Marilyn Shontz, Associate Professor; Department of Secondary Education/Foundations of Education.

Would you help me with my research? You can do this by going to the URL provided below and completing the 11 question survey. Your support in this study will help me to identify which techniques elementary library media specialists use to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Award books. In addition, I would be able to ascertain media specialists' perceptions about Caldecott Medal and Honor Award book studies and the impact of these books on students' reading and reading choices.

Although participation is voluntary, your help and support are important and will help make this study a success. All responses will be kept confidential and no individuals or schools will be named in the reporting of the results.

If you have any questions, please email me at kathylees@comcast.net or Dr. Shontz at shontz@rowan.edu.

Please go to the following URL to complete the survey:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=322121706172>

Thank you in advance for your help with this study.

Sincerely,

Kathy Lee Simpkins

Kathy Lee Simpkins, Library Media Specialist
Taunton Forge Elementary School, Medford, NJ
kathylees@comcast.net

APPENDIX B - SURVEY

Design Survey

Show All Pages and Questions

<< Back

Preview

To change the **look** of your survey, select a choice below. Click 'Add' to create your own custom theme.

Theme: Spring Day

Add

Teaching With Caldecott Medal and Honor Books

Edit Title

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1. Introduction

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Dear Elementary Library Media Specialist,

One of the resources used by many elementary library media specialists is teaching about and with Caldecott Medal and Honor Award Books. As a school librarian graduate student at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey, I am in the process of writing a master's thesis on the techniques elementary library media specialists utilize to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Books in the elementary library media center curriculum. I am under the direction of Dr. Marilyn Shontz, Associate Professor; Department of Secondary Education/Foundations of Education.

This eleven-question survey is being administered as part of my master's degree research project. While your participation is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personal information is being requested.

Add Question

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2. Survey Questions

[Edit Page](#)[Delete Page](#)[Copy/Move](#)[Add Logic](#)[Add Question](#)[Add Page](#)[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Copy/Move](#)

1. What are the grade levels in your school? Ex.: K to 6, Pre-K to 5 etc.

(Please type your answer in the box provided.)

[Add Question](#)[Add Page](#)[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Copy/Move](#) [Add Logic](#)

2. Does your library program have a written library skills curriculum guide? (Please check one.)

 Yes No Don't know Other (please specify)[Add Question](#)[Add Page](#)[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Copy/Move](#) [Add Logic](#)

3. If your library program has a written library skills curriculum guide, does it include objectives for teaching Caldecott Medal and Honor Books? (Please check one.)

 Yes No Do not have one Other (please specify)[Add Question](#)[Add Page](#)[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Copy/Move](#) [Add Logic](#)

4. How important do you believe Caldecott Medal and Honor

**Books studies are in the elementary school library curriculum?
(Please check one.)**

- Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important
- Other (please specify)

Add Question

Add Page

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5. What are your reasons for teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Books? (Please check your top six reasons.)

- Caldecott Medal and Honor Books are a recognizable form of quality literature.
- The books enhance and extend students' reading and language experiences.
- The books help students relate to authors and illustrators as real people.
- The books provide a variety of language experiences.
- There is a variety of artistic styles in the books.
- The books often have repetition and predictability that enhances student language learning experiences.
- There is ethnic diversity and cultural experiences in the books.
- The books are a way to encourage children to read quality literature.
- The books encourage independent student reading.
- The books encourage children to communicate and express themselves through art.
- The books celebrate and encourage individual expression and differences.

Other (please specify)

Add Question

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6. Which methods to teach Caldecott Medal and Honor Books have you utilized in your library program? (Please check all that apply.)

- Reader's theatre
- Learning centers
- Literature circles to discuss and study Caldecott Medal and Honor Books
- Author/illustrator study
- Author/ illustrator visits to the school
- Letters to authors/illustrators
- Exploring the writer's use of fictional elements, character development, and setting, etc.
- Exploring the illustrator's style use of media, design, and colors
- Art projects
- Book talks
- Storytelling
- Puppets
- Flannel boards
- Origami
- Collage
- Mask-making
- Research using reference books or periodicals for biographical information

- Use of Internet sites to research bibliographical information
- Use of Internet sites to view and listen to author and illustrators
- Viewing videotapes or DVDs
- Listening to books on audiotapes/CDs
- Other (please specify)

Add Question

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7. Do you use Caldecott Medal and Honor Books to teach any of the following? (Please check all that apply.)

- Sequence of events
- List and sequence
- Comparing and contrasting
- Rhyme and repetition
- Problem and solution
- Cause and effect
- Text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections
- Immigration study
- Cultural diversity
- Art study
- Author study
- Illustrator study
- Science
- History
- Math

Character education

Social studies

Other (please specify)

Add Question

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8. Why do you feel children choose to read Caldecott Medal and Honor Books? (Please check your top five reasons.)

The children recognize the gold or silver medals on the books.

The children recognize the authors.

The children recognize the illustrators.

Author/illustrator studies help students develop an interest in reading other books by the same author or illustrator.

The covers of the books are visually appealing.

The art work inside the books is visually appealing.

The books are pleasurable to read.

The library media specialist has read and talked about the books.

The children recognize the books from being exposed to them in the library.

The children recognize the books from seeing them in bookstores, on posters, on television, in magazines, etc.

Other (please specify)

Add Question

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9. Which techniques that you use to teach about Caldecott Medal and Honor Books (from question 7) do you consider the most effective in your library program? (Please write your response below.)

Add Question

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10. In your opinion, how does teaching with Caldecott Medal and Honor Books motivate students to read more books? (Please explain below.)

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11. Do you believe teaching about Caldecott Medal and Honor Books has a positive effect on student reading or reading choices? If yes, please comment below.

[Add Question](#) [Add Page](#)

3. Thank You

[Edit Page](#)

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Thank you for your time and effort!

If you have additional comments or questions, contact
Kathy Lee Simpkins at kathylees@comcast.net, or Dr.
Shontz at shontz@rowan.edu

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