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**THE ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES OF SIXTH GRADE TEACHERS
TOWARDS LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS ON EITHER A FIXED OR A
FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE**

by
Lori Cooney

A Thesis

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 16, 2003**

Approved by

Date Approved

May 16, 2003

c 2003 Lori Cooney

ABSTRACT

Lori Cooney

THE ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCES OF SIXTH GRADE TEACHERS TOWARDS LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS ON EITHER A FIXED OR A FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE

2003

Dr. Marilyn Shontz

Masters of Arts in School and Public Librarianship

This study was designed to discover if fixed or flexible scheduling in library media centers was related to the attitudes and experiences of sixth grade teachers towards library media specialists. Surveys were sent to selected sixth grade teachers working in public schools in Burlington County, New Jersey. Questions were designed to gain information from sixth grade teachers on their attitudes and experiences in regards to planning and team teaching opportunities with the library media specialists, availability of the library media specialist and the library media center during the school day, and the ability of the library media specialist to assist with technology and gathering resource. The results from the surveys showed that flexible scheduling is more prevalent in library media centers that service sixth grade teachers in Burlington County. Data gathered also showed that sixth grade teachers and library media specialists did not collaboratively plan or teach lessons to a large degree with either fixed or flexible scheduling.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Research Problem and Rationale

One important responsibility of a library media specialist is to meet the needs of his or her patrons, which include students and staff. Some of the services that library media specialists provide are: maintaining the library collection, providing both print and nonprint resources for students and teachers, teaching library skills classes, team teaching with teachers in various subject areas, answering questions, assisting with technology, and promoting the love of reading. The type of schedule that a library media specialist follows (either fixed or flexible for this study) may have an effect on how and what a library media specialist spends his or her time on. Studies have outlined the differences between flexible and fixed scheduling in elementary library media centers. There has also been much discussion on whether fixed or flexible scheduling in library media centers provides both staff and students with adequate library media center services. Studies have also shown that scheduling affects the way teachers and administrators view the importance of a library media specialist's role in the school community. Many library media specialists find themselves in a situation where most of their time is spent teaching heavy class loads in order to meet contractual preparation time for teachers. These library media specialists may find it impossible to provide other services beyond their teaching duties. They do not have sufficient time to collaborate with classroom teachers, assist with technology or promote their library media centers as inviting places for

students and staff to use on a daily basis.

The questions in this study were directed towards sixth grade teachers. This grade level was chosen based on the assumption that the sixth grade curriculum requires more tasks and assignments in which students and teachers would need the library media center and the expertise of the library media specialist. Teachers should be aware of the schedule they are on, the benefits and limitations the library media specialist's schedule imposes on his or her ability to provide services and the options in scheduling that are available. Sixth grades teachers whose library media specialists operate on either fixed or flexible schedules were asked to share their attitudes and experiences in regards to how their library media specialist uses his or her time, the availability of the library media center, and the extent to which the library media specialist participates in planning and team teaching. Knowing the services that a library media specialist provides under his or her current schedule (fixed or flexible) can help to establish where the strengths and weaknesses are in the library program. If a change in schedule is needed, reasons for that change should be provided with research evidence to support those reasons. This study provided data that the library media specialists and teachers involved can present to school administrators to support a change in scheduling if the results show a change is needed.

The results of this study can be used to show how the library media specialist was involved in the school curriculum and team teaching with sixth grade teachers. This study also showed how sixth grade teachers perceived the availability of the library media specialist for the purpose of collaboration and team teaching based on the circumstances of their schedule.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes and experiences of sixth grade teachers who work in schools where the library media specialist was either on a fixed or a flexible schedule. The effect that fixed or flexible scheduling in the library media center had on the services the library media specialist provided to sixth grade teachers was an important question addressed in this study. The researcher asked about the availability of the library media specialist and the library media center, team teaching and collaboration with the library media specialist, and services the library media specialist provided to sixth grade staff.

Research Questions

These were the research questions answered through the data gathered by this study :

- *Do sixth grade teachers collaborate with the library media specialist for the purpose of team teaching if the library media center operates on a flexible schedule?**
- *Do sixth grade teachers collaborate with the library media specialist for the purpose of team teaching if the library media center operates on a fixed schedule?**
- *How available is the library media specialist to gather print and nonprint resources for sixth grade students and staff?**
- *Do sixth grade teachers ask the library media specialist's assistance with questions concerning technology?**
- *Is the library media center accessible at all times during the school day?**
- *Are the services of the library media specialist accessible at all times during the school day?**

Answers to the above research questions provided information on the strengths and weaknesses of both flexible and fixed scheduling and how the type of scheduling allows the library media specialist to serve patrons (sixth grade teachers and students) within the schools surveyed.

Definitions

The following definitions used in this study were taken from the *Dictionary for school library media specialists: A practical and comprehensive guide* (McCain & Merrill, 2000).

Library media center - An area in a school that contains 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.

Library media specialist - The professional administrator of a library media center who has the appropriate degree and meets the requirements for state certification.

Patron - An individual who is a regular library user or a library supporter.

Fixed scheduling - A way to use a library media center where classes are scheduled for a specific day and time regardless of student need. Student access to the library media center is limited, information literacy skills are taught in isolation, and classes are often sent to the library media center without cooperative planning between teachers and the library media specialist.

Flexible scheduling - A type of library media center organization that permits classes and individual students to use the library media center as the need arises. Teachers and the

library media specialist collaborate with instruction, information literacy skills are integrated into the curriculum and students have more open access to the library media center.

Team teaching - The sharing of the responsibilities for teaching a given class or groups by 2 or more teachers. Each member of the team has a unique function and responsibility. All team members participate in planning, scheduling, and evaluating team activities.

For the purposes of this study, the following operational terms and definitions were used:

Sixth grade teacher - A teacher in Burlington County New Jersey who teaches students who have completed all state requirements to be promoted to grade six.

Sixth grade student - A student (male or female) who attends a public school in Burlington County, New Jersey and has completed all state requirements in order to be in a sixth grade classroom.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study, the researcher assumed that the participating sixth grade teachers worked in schools that have a library media center and at least one fully certified library media specialist working full time in that library media center. The researcher also assumed that the library was within the school building and accessible to all sixth grade teachers and students. It was the researcher's assumption that all sixth grade teachers involved in the study were following a similar curriculum for that grade level and needed the resources within the library media center. Further assumption was that the sixth grade teachers and library media specialists involved in this study answered

all questions truthfully and provided information that was accurate for their individual situations.

Limitations

This study was limited to the participating volunteer schools in Burlington County, New Jersey that the researcher contacted for this study. The study was also limited to the attitude and experiences of the sixth grade teachers who worked in the participating schools. The results of the study were based on participants that replied to the survey.

References

McCain, M.M., & Merrill, M. (2000). *Dictionary for school library media specialists: A practical and comprehensive guide*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Scheduling is a major part of a school library media center program. School media specialists must find ways to meet the needs of all students and staff that they serve, no matter what type of schedule has been put into place, fixed or flexible. A flexible schedule permits students and classroom teachers to access the media center whenever needs for information or resources arise. A fixed schedule provides a set time period each week for students and staff to use library resources. A fixed schedule usually involves the library media specialist provision of planning time for teachers. Therefore, the teacher does not accompany his or her class to the library media center. There have been several books written on the advantages and disadvantages of fixed or flexible scheduling in school media centers. *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (ALA and AECT, 1998) offers the most compelling statement for the implementation of flexible scheduling in school media centers. According to *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, Principle 4 of the Information Access and Delivery Principles of School Library Media Programs states: "Library media programs require flexible and equitable access to information, ideas and resources for learning. If flexible access to the library is not provided, a student-centered school media center is less likely. Fixed or rigid scheduling can stifle the natural curiosity of students as they work towards becoming self learners" (ALA and AECT, 1998).

In the 14 years since the previous guidelines from *Information Power: Guidelines for School Media Programs* (AASL, 1988) were published, what kinds of improvements have been made in the way school library media programs have been implemented? A study by McCarthy (1997) attempted to answer this question by assessing the status of 48 school library media programs in the New England region (Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Maine). Before discussing this study, a review of the guidelines set forth by *Information Power* (1988) was necessary. According to *Information Power* (1988), in order to create an effective school library program, three factors were required: 1) full integration of the library media program into the curriculum; 2) a partnership among the library media specialist, district-level personnel, administrators, teachers, and parents; and 3) the serious commitment of each of those partners to the value of universal and unrestricted access (flexible scheduling) to information and ideas. To assess if these guidelines were being carried out in the New England region's school media centers, a survey was designed and distributed to 104 potential respondents. The respondents consisted of 48 library media specialists and 56 student interns. Qualitative research was also used in this study. The researcher who observed the student interns in their school and library practicum sites recorded information regarding learning climate, customs, expectations, and practices of teachers, administrators, library media specialists, parents, and students. The results showed that 42% of the library media specialists and 48% of the student interns indicated a positive response when asked if the mission, objectives, and challenges of *Information Power* were possible at their schools. When asked if it was possible for the standards set forth in *Information Power* to be fully realized, 58% of the media specialists answered negatively

and 52% of the student interns concurred. Reasons for the negative responses were: lack of support for budgets, resources, technology, and staff; lack of a flexible schedule to allow for collaboration; lack of support and commitment from school committees, administrators, unions, and teachers reluctant to change; lack of an educational philosophy or vision supportive of *Information Power*; and the inability to fulfill the instructional consultant role. Results indicated the middle and high schools had full-time library media specialists with clerical help and were on full flexible schedules. The elementary library programs were not on flexible schedules and did not have support staff. In some cases, the elementary library media specialist was assigned to more than one school. Negative responses regarding their library program were given by 50% of the respondents while the other 50% gave positive responses regarding their library programs. This data reflected the number of library media specialists on flexible versus fixed scheduling. The type of scheduling that a library media specialist followed had a relationship to their attitudes towards their media program.

According to Buchanan in *Flexible Access Library Media Programs* (1991), flexible scheduling does not mean a complete lack of a schedule or a lack of routine. She stated that administration did not determine the schedule, but there was a schedule determined by the teachers in consideration of the needs of their students. In Buchanan's experience, the schedule for library use was based on student needs and interests and therefore different each week. When rigid or fixed scheduling was used each class was given a set time each week for library class. This type of scheduling was usually part of a master schedule that provided teacher preparation and planning time. Sometimes the library media specialist had input into this master schedule, but usually an administrator did this

type of scheduling. In Buchanan's opinion, "Using the library media center solely as a classroom and the library media specialist primarily as a teacher deprives students and staff of the uninhibited use of resources. Such limited use ignores the unique contributions the library media specialist can make to the educational team of the school" (1991, p. 3).

Creating a flexibly scheduled library media center takes a full commitment from the library media specialist as well as the building principal. Educating the staff was another vital component of flexible scheduling that should not be overlooked. In Buchanan's experience, teachers were not eager to lend support to a program that they did not understand or had never experienced firsthand. Changing teacher attitudes was a primary goal. In order to facilitate a change in attitude towards the library media program among teachers, an ongoing teacher education program needed to be implemented. Training, according to Buchanan, should be short and to the point, benefits of flexible scheduling should be outlined, and the training sessions should provide different mediums, approaches, and methods. For example, training sessions, small group sharing sessions, individual assistance, and feedback meetings should be several options for teacher education. Once the flexible schedule was in place and the teachers were trained then the library media specialist must take on a leadership role and promote cooperative planning with teachers so all the benefits of a flexible schedule can be realized (1991).

There were also reports of library media specialists working in schools with fixed scheduling that use their limited time to serve students and staff even though they taught class loads each day. Doug Johnson, a media and technology director, wrote that not all

media specialists in flexible scheduled programs were good and not all media specialists in fixed scheduled programs were bad (2001). He listed several benefits to fixed scheduling. The first benefit was that students need to come to the library media center in order learn and use its resources. What happens to the students if their teacher never brings them to the library media center? If classes were scheduled on a regular basis (fixed) then all students were given the same opportunity to learn and use library resources. Also, with a fixed schedule, the promotion of reading and the love of reading gained exposure on a weekly basis. A final benefit was that teaching research skills was not the only job of the media specialist. According to Johnson, "Like it or not, we operate in a real world with budgets, differing teaching styles, and community expectations that impinge on our professional dignity. All good professionals play the best game they can with the cards they've been dealt. Never let a fixed schedule be an excuse for an ineffective program" (Johnson, 2001, p. 39).

The literature available especially after *Information Power: Guidelines for School Media Programs* (1988) was published clearly suggested that flexible scheduling should be the choice for elementary, middle, and high school library media centers. Most media specialists would agree that flexible scheduling would enhance their media program by providing nonrestricted access to the library media center and time for team planning with teachers but were faced with factors in schools that do not make flexible scheduling possible. These factors included using the library media center as a scheduled period for teacher preparation, lack of support personnel, budgetary constraints, and resistance by administration.

Research on Scheduling in School Media Centers Conducted in Texas, Arizona, Missouri
and Iowa

Fixed versus flexible scheduling in school media centers was an issue that attracted attention in school districts in many areas of the United States. Several states have done research in their elementary, middle, and secondary schools related to the benefits and shortcomings of fixed and flexible scheduling in their school media centers. In Texas, a study was done to determine how much time elementary school media specialists spend teaching classes in relationship to their other duties which included lunch and recess monitoring, committee meetings, and clerical and other library duties (Hokanson-Kroeker, 1989). Questionnaires were sent to 117 elementary schools in the Texas Education Service Center Region 17. Questions requested information about staffing, student enrollment, grade level range, schedule type, schedule preparation, teacher involvement, and purpose of class visits. Results from the Texas elementary schools that provided information were, at the very least, unexpected and startling. Approximately 12 of the schools that responded to the questionnaire did not have a certified media specialist working in their school media center. Seventy-one schools responding stated that they shared a media specialist with at least one other school in their district or with another district. When Hokanson-Kroeker calculated these results, the importance of her study shifted to the revelation that school media centers were operating without qualified media specialists working in them. Hokanson-Kroeker stated, "This sharing situation is legal (except where there is no media specialist), but it is far from satisfactory. One problem is that students and other clients tend to see the person filling in behind the circulation desk, usually a clerk or aide in shared situations,

as the library media specialist. Sharing also results in lack of time and divided loyalties, so that at least one of the schools do not receive the full services and attention necessary to do the job properly" (1989, p. 28).

The second most important discovery was that most of the library media centers were scheduled by building principals with little or no input from the media specialist. This meant that an individual who did not have a clear picture of what a library program should look like shaped the most important aspects of the library program. The survey also showed that a very low number (6%) of the schools surveyed had some type of flexible scheduling. From the results of the survey, the researchers concluded that library media centers in Texas' Region 17 were not available to staff and students outside of their scheduled library period. Unfortunately, this limited the services the media specialist can offer both students and staff. Even though the results on the absence of flexible scheduling were overwhelming, the author reaffirmed that scheduling issues were minor compared to the results that indicated that a certified elementary library media specialist was not present in a full time capacity in a large number of the Texas elementary schools surveyed.

School districts across the United States have different school and grade level arrangements based on size, geographic location, and budgetary constraints. In Missouri, there was one arrangement of schools known as a K-12 combined school. This arrangement housed both the elementary (kindergarten to grade 6) and the secondary (grades 7 to 12) schools on one campus. In many cases, the elementary and secondary schools shared teachers and services, such as the school media specialist and the library media center. In a study conducted in Missouri's combined K-12 schools (Abdoler-

Shroyer, 1999), 88% of the schools responding to the survey reported that the library media specialist was being used as a planning-time resource for the elementary teachers. Elementary classes were scheduled on a weekly fixed schedule in 87% of the schools responding. The secondary schools were scheduled on a flexible schedule in 83% of the districts responding to the survey. Many of the high school students did not have weekly access to the library media center. In one of the K-12 combined schools during the 1995-1996 school year, 13 elementary classes were scheduled in the library media center for one period each week. The secondary school students had only one day a week open to schedule time in the library media center when elementary classes were not in attendance. It was possible for individual students or small groups of secondary students to schedule time in the library media center during the one open day. Scheduling entire classes of the older students for research purposes with only one open day was not possible.

Another issue that surfaced from information gained through the Missouri K-12 survey was that a school district policy did not allow for a substitute when the library media specialist was absent. Two problems were reported based on this situation. The library was left unlocked in many schools when the library media specialist was absent. Students and staff could gain unsupervised access to the library media center. The result was an increase in the amount of materials lost or stolen. A second concern when the media specialist was absent was the question of who was responsible for students and activities in the library media center.

This study's unique population from the K-12 combined schools in Missouri produced results which reflected the dilemma of scheduling and access. This dilemma

being the denial of access for one student population (high school) while another student population (elementary school) was dominating the library media center.

Barbara Hutchinson, a school librarian, conducted a study in the Catalina Foothills, which is located in the one Arizona School District. Meeting the needs of teaching library skills to elementary students and the problems experienced when a computerized circulation system was installed in her library, led Ms. Hutchinson to reevaluate the library program in her Arizona school. She decided to produce a questionnaire and send it to library media specialists in Arizona based on a list that was provided by the School Library Division of the Arizona Library Association. Questionnaires were sent to 750 library media specialists in the state of Arizona. The study (Hutchinson, 1985) explored the size of the school, number of staff and volunteers, and types of scheduling for the media center. Teacher involvement in the library program and staffing were key questions asked in the survey. A total of 184 questionnaires or 24% were returned for analysis. Results indicated that library media specialists in junior high and high school did not feel that scheduling was a problem. Flexible scheduling was usually the norm at that age and grade level. Elementary results differed. Of the library media specialists surveyed who were in elementary schools or K to 8th grade buildings, 91% saw students for either one half hour per week or three-quarter-hour-per-week time periods. Only 8% of the elementary and 12% of the K to 8 library media specialists reported other forms of scheduling. A second factor that surfaced was that the size of the school played a part in library scheduling. The smaller the school, the less of an issue scheduling in the library media center became. The author of the study reported that scheduling does not become a problem until the population of

the school reaches about 400. Of the 68 responses from schools with 400 or more students, 46% offered negative responses on scheduling and job satisfaction (Hutchinson, 1985).

Scheduling, curriculum involvement, and library skills integration in curricular content were the topics of a study done by Donham van Deusen (1993). Library media specialists and fifth grade teachers from 9 school districts in Iowa were surveyed to determine if: 1) library media programs with flexible scheduling had more curricular involvement than library media programs with fixed scheduling, and 2) library media programs with flexible scheduling provide for more integration of library skills into the curriculum than library media programs with fixed scheduling. Advantages of fixed and flexible scheduling for library media programs were noted in this study. Fixed scheduling provides release time for teachers, allows the library media specialist to account for his or her time, and provides that each student in the school visits the library media center at least once a week. Flexible scheduling provides for a closer relationship of the library curriculum and the classroom curriculum and increased use of library skills in classroom assignments and activities. Along with completing a survey, fifth grade teachers and library media specialists listed all units of study for a six-week period in which collaboration occurred. Collaboration was defined as the library media specialist completing the tasks of gathering resources for the classroom teacher, designing objectives along with the classroom teacher, collaborating with teachers, delivering instruction, and evaluating units. Results from the data obtained from library media specialists were compared to the results from fifth grade teachers. The most significant finding obtained from the data gathered on tasks was that media specialists with flexible

scheduling participated more in the evaluation process than library media specialists with fixed scheduling. The relationship between the planning style of teachers and library media program scheduling produced significant results. Flexible scheduling along with team planning produced more curriculum involvement than at least one of the other scheduling / planning combinations. Donham van Deusen's study found that there were no significant results related to scheduling and library skills integration into the curriculum. In conclusion, Donham van Deusen found that library media specialists that were most likely involved in the curriculum were on a flexible schedule in which team planning with teachers occurred.

Scheduling and how it affects access to the school media center and the services that the library media specialist can provide to students and staff are issues that effect schools of all sizes in different areas of the United States. The common thread that runs through the studies presented was the need for a qualified library media specialist in each school that can meet the needs of students and staff within a schedule that allows each and every member of the population free and equal access to the library media center.

Duties of the Library Media Specialist

Most library media specialists have duties including teaching, book circulation for students and staff, distribution and maintenance of audio visual equipment, committee meetings, and lunch / recess duty. Discovering how elementary library media specialists spend their time was the topic of a second research study done by Donham van Deusen (1996). Her study not only investigated how elementary library media specialists spent their time but compared how their time was spent in relationship to five independent variables: automated circulation systems, scheduling, support staff, whole language, and

number of buildings served. The study was conducted in Iowa through the Iowa Educational Media Association. Questionnaires were sent to 177 members of the Iowa Educational Media Association who were identified as elementary school media specialists. Questions focused on availability of automated circulation and catalog, number of paid support staff, scheduling (flexible, fixed, or mixed), characteristics of a "whole language school", positive support from the principal, full-time status of the library media specialist, and the number of buildings the library media specialist served. Results indicated that 33 of the 57 respondents worked full-time but served multiple schools or worked part-time serving one or more schools. Equal amounts of time were spent interacting with students as well as performing library management duties. Cataloging, professional development and selection of materials registered almost no time spent. The author explained that these duties were usually performed by library media specialists outside of the normal school day. Elementary library media specialists in this study (Donham van Deusen, 1996) spent 16.4% of their time teaching and meeting with groups of children. This was in comparison to a study done by Everhart (1992) which indicated that high school library media specialists spend 6% of their time teaching. Elementary library media specialists on flexible scheduling reported slightly lower instances of teaching compared to elementary library media specialists on a fixed schedule (Donham van Deusen, 1996). The difference was insignificant at 9 instances in two days versus 11 instances for the same time period. Since the influx of technology into the world of the library media specialist, duties classified as electronic support have become added responsibilities. Electronic support activities included troubleshooting equipment, setting up equipment, videotaping, and installing software. Elementary

library media specialists on fixed scheduling spent less time on electronic support activities than those on a flexible schedule.

Services to students and staff are the mission of the library media specialist and the library program. Several factors noted in the Donham van Deusen study (1996) helped to increase the library media specialist's ability to meet the needs of staff and students. The automated circulation system positively influenced time spent on consultation work, individual assistance to students, and electronic support for teachers. Flexible scheduling had a positive effect on time spent for individual assistance to students, electronic support to teachers, and consultation work performed for teachers. The results of this study set a standard for the needs of the library media center in the future. Activities related to electronic support will probably increase over the next several years. The trend towards more team planning and team teaching may become a catalyst for increased use of flexible scheduling in library media centers in the future.

Library media specialists take on many different roles in a school community. One of the roles the media specialist fulfills is the instructional role of design and consultation. In the Putnam study (1996), the instructional consultation role of the library media specialist was researched as it was perceived and practiced by a sample of elementary media specialists. Participants in this study were chosen from a population of members of the American Library Association. Questionnaires were sent to 296 randomly selected members. A total of 234 questionnaires were returned and 197 were usable. Results indicated that library media specialists did not practice the instructional design and consultation role to the same extent to which they believed they should. Eighteen instructional role statements which were similar to those developed for a study

by Pickard (1993) were listed and respondents were asked to rate each statement with a five-point Likert scale. One rating for the importance to the professional role and one rating for the actual work practice. In 11 of 12 instructional consultant role statements, lower mean values were shown than in statements dealing with traditional roles of warehousing and making materials accessible. Library media specialists agreed that the design and instructional consulting role was important but did not practice it to a great extent.

Scheduling in relationship to the instructional consulting role of the library media specialist was compared for both fixed and flexible scheduling. The results indicated that the library media specialist on a flexible schedule reported practicing the instructional consulting role more often than the library media specialist on a fixed schedule. Flexible scheduled programs scored higher on all statements on the questionnaire. Putnam's study (1996) supported the results presented by Pickard (1993) which concluded that even though library media specialists believed their role as instructional consultant was important, they still believed that this role was supportive to the teaching process.

The final study that is applicable was done by Fedora (1993). This study investigated two kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools. One school, which was known as the Williams School for this study, was on a flexible media center schedule. The other school, known as the Carroll School for this study, was on a traditional or a fixed media center schedule. The method of research was qualitative consisting of case studies of each school, interviews with teachers, library media specialists, administrators and observations done at both schools by the researcher. The results showed that the Williams school (flexible schedule) provided students with more

opportunities to use library/ information skills, promoted team planning and team teaching, and provided a library program that was more accommodating to students' needs. The Carroll School (fixed schedule) provided each student with access to the library media center for at least one period per week and assured that all students were getting the same instruction in library / information skills. In the Carroll School, even though the library media specialist was on a fixed schedule, she attempted to integrate her weekly lessons into the curriculum by following a timeline of scheduled units that was created by the teachers at each grade level. Her library lessons were geared to units that were being covered in the classroom in different subject areas. This system was plagued by difficulties at times. Teachers changed the order of units and forgot to tell the media specialist or they would not send supplies and materials with their students that were requested for class on a particular day. The library media specialist at the Williams School reported that most teachers were willing to plan units of study with her and bring their classes to the library media center as often as needed. For the reluctant teachers, the library media specialist would remind and solicit their attendance but it was up to the teacher to make sure his or her class was receiving adequate time and access to the library media center and to the expertise of the library media specialist. In conclusion, Fedora stated: "the media specialist's role was found to be altered significantly by the flexible schedule. No longer provided with a weekly schedule to follow, the flexible schedule is directed entirely by the media specialist and teachers. With a flexible schedule, the program dictated the schedule, with a fixed schedule, the schedule controlled the program" (1993, p. 239).

Teachers Perceptions of the Duties of the Library Media Specialist

Teachers have their own ideas of the role the library media specialist plays in the school community. Many experts in the field say that the library media specialist should be a consultant, a co-teacher, a leader, and a gatherer. According to Baker in *The Library Media Program and the School* (1984), the teacher expects the library media specialist to serve as a member of the teaching team that sees him or herself as a professional equal. The teacher does not see the library media specialist as the support person who fulfills the role of teacher's assistant. Teachers want the library media specialist to be aware of resources and new ideas as well as the methods to present this information to students with varied ability levels.

Getting to know the duties of the library media specialist became the focus of a study conducted by DeGroff (1997). To fully understand what the author was describing as the duties of the media specialist, the three components of the library media specialist's role described in *Information Power* must be reviewed. *Information Power* (1998) described the library media specialist as fulfilling the roles of information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant. In her study, surveys were sent to 150 elementary schools across the United States. Four copies of the survey were sent to the library media specialist in each building. The library media specialist was asked to distribute the survey to the building administrator, a primary grade teacher, and an intermediate grade teacher. The fourth copy was for the library media specialist. Completed surveys were received from 148 individuals, which translated into a 25% return rate. The breakdown consisted of 47 librarians, 29 administrators, and 72 teachers. Results from this study indicated that the administrators placed a higher value on survey items that dealt with the

information specialist role than the teachers or the librarians did. Duties under the role of information specialist category included supporting flexible scheduling; sharing books, resources, and information; selecting new materials; and knowing about titles, authors, and books available for children. Examples of tasks rated high by all respondents in the library media specialist teacher role category were teaching children how to select books and resources; promoting reading; teaching information literacy and principles; respecting copyright and first amendment issues; and teaching parents the techniques that are useful when reading at home with their children. In the role of library media specialist teacher category, there was little difference in how administrators, teachers, and librarians rated these survey items. All three groups gave these items high ratings. Teachers valued the role of instructional consultant less than the other groups did. Selecting books and other resources was important to teachers, but planning, implementing, and assessing units with the library media specialist scored a lower value on the survey. The role of instructional consultant was rated lower than the other roles of information specialist and library media specialist teacher. As part of this survey, teachers were asked to comment on how the relationship between the teacher and the library media specialist could be fostered. The response from teachers indicated that the librarian's knowledge, personality, and interests were the most important items that would promote a good working relationship between teachers and librarians (DeGroff, 1997). According to Dales (1990) in an article in *Language Arts*, a trusting relationship between teachers and library media specialists should be established in order to promote confidence in each other's work within their respective professions.

Summary

To summarize, flexibly scheduled library media programs allow for access to the media center and its resources when needed and promote greater collaboration between the library media specialist and the classroom teacher. Flexibly scheduled programs have proven beneficial only if team planning and collaboration are fostered within the school. Library media specialists on fixed scheduling may not have unscheduled time periods to meet with teachers for the purpose of collaboration and team planning. Some of those media specialists have discovered alternate ways to provide for curriculum integration of the library / information skills taught during their assigned class visits.

When research was done to discover scheduling patterns and preferences, results indicated that the problem in some schools was not the scheduling patterns but the lack of a qualified library media specialist for each school. Research also indicated that flexible scheduling was more apparent in middle and high schools than in elementary schools. Library media specialist's attitudes about their positions were affected by the type of schedule they follow. *Information Power: Guidelines for School Media Programs* (AASL, 1988) advocated flexibly scheduled library media programs that promoted integration of library skills into the curriculum and saw the library media specialist as an instructional consultant. Studies show that library media specialists, teachers, and administrators see the library media specialist in these roles at times but not to the extent of fully fulfilling the goals and objectives of *Information Power*.

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CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY
Research Design

This study was designed to gain insight into the experiences and attitudes of sixth grade teachers who teach in a school where the library media specialist operated on either a fixed or a flexible schedule. The researcher chose applied research because of the significance of scheduling in school library media centers. The type of schedule, fixed or flexible, is a factor that has a connection to what the attitudes and experiences of sixth grade teachers are towards the library media specialist, then this research can be used to justify a schedule change. According to *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (AASL & AECT, 1998), no one is better suited to ensure information literacy for students and staff than the school library media specialist. The library media specialist is a leader in helping teachers, students and others learn how to gain access to concepts, facts and opinions provided by both traditional and electronic information resources. The data gathered in this study about the experiences and attitudes of sixth grade teachers can be used to determine what type of scheduling, fixed or flexible, allows the library media specialist to serve his or her population more effectively.

Survey or descriptive research was chosen because the researcher wanted to use the information obtained from this study to show that the type of schedule that a library media specialist follows was related to the attitudes of sixth grade teachers in

general. Sixth grade teachers were chosen over other grade levels because the researcher felt that the curriculum in sixth grade required that students and teachers use resources provided in the library media center. The researcher felt that the expertise of the library media specialist would be useful to both sixth grade students and teachers.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes and experiences of sixth grade teachers who work in schools where the library media specialist was either on a fixed or a flexible schedule. If answers to a questionnaire differed based on whether the library media specialist was on a fixed or a flexible schedule, then the researcher can determine whether the schedule type has a positive or negative effect on the attitudes and experiences of sixth grade teachers. Research questions that were answered through data gathered from this study included:

- *Does the type of scheduling a library media specialist has effect the services the library media specialist offers to sixth grade students and staff?
- *Do sixth grade teachers collaborate with the library media specialist for the purpose of team teaching if the library media center operates on a fixed schedule?
- *Do sixth grade teachers collaborate with the library media specialist for the purpose of team teaching if the library media center operates on a flexible schedule?
- *How available is the library media specialist for the purpose of gathering print and nonprint resources for sixth grade staff and students?
- *Do sixth grade teachers ask the library media specialist's assistance with questions concerning technology?

*Is the library media center accessible at all times during the school day?

*Are the services of the library media specialist accessible at all times during the school day?

Answers to the research questions was determined by the information gathered from a survey of a sample of sixth grade teachers. The survey was directed to sixth grade teachers so the information gathered regarding the services provided by the library media specialist to students was based on individual teachers' attitudes and experiences.

Population and Sample

The sample for this study was chosen from a population of sixth grade teachers from public schools in Burlington County, New Jersey that contained a sixth grade. Burlington County is located in southern New Jersey with a population of 423,394 as of April 2000. There are 30 school districts in Burlington County, New Jersey. To determine the population for this study, the researcher called all public schools in Burlington County to determine the total number of sixth grade public school teachers in Burlington County. The total number of sixth grade public school teachers in Burlington County was determined to be 362. To determine the size of the sample, the researcher referred to *Basic Research Methods for Librarians* (Powell, 1999) which indicated that a sample of 186 of the population was needed. Based on that number, the researcher sent surveys to each school in Burlington County that had grade six classes. The library media specialist was asked to randomly distribute surveys (see Appendix A) and the corresponding cover letter (see Appendix B) to sixth grade teachers in his or her building. A survey was also included for each library media specialist (see Appendix C) along with a cover letter (see Appendix D) in each of the 47 schools in Burlington County that had

sixth grade teachers. The purpose of sending the brief survey to the library media specialist was to gain information about the type of schedule followed and to assess the staffing in each library media center.

Variables

Independent variables determine or produce a change in the dependent variable. In this study, the independent variable was the type of scheduling the library media specialist followed either fixed or flexible. The dependent variables were the various attitudes and experiences of sixth grade teachers. This study gathered data to determine if the type of scheduling that a library media specialist followed was related to attitudes and experiences that were different based on which type of scheduling was followed.

Questionnaire

Two types of questionnaires were sent to each participating school in the study. The first questionnaire in Appendix C (on yellow paper) was a 4-question survey sent to the library media specialist for the purpose of establishing the type of scheduling, either fixed, flexible, or other, whether sixth grade teachers stay with their classes during library visits, the amount of time the library media specialist spends at one or more library media centers and the staffing at each library media center. The second questionnaire in Appendix A (on white paper) was for the participating sixth grade teachers in the study. The sixth grade teacher questionnaire consisted of 9 questions. Question type consisted of “yes / no” questions and Likert scale questions. (agree / disagree and always, sometimes, never) Question one asked respondents to list the number of times that their classes visit the library media center. Questions two and three asked if the library media center and the library media specialist were available during the school day. Question

four asked the participant to express their attitudes towards the library media specialist's role in the instructional process in the school. Questions five and six asked sixth grade teachers if the library media specialist assisted them in gathering print and other resources and if those resources were used within their lessons. Question seven asked if the library media specialist assisted with technology questions. Question eight and nine asked if the sixth grade teachers and the library media specialist collaboratively planned and / or taught lessons together.

Data Collection

Forty-seven survey questionnaire packets were sent to the library media specialists in schools in Burlington County that house sixth grade classes. A total of 190 surveys were sent to Burlington County schools for distribution to a randomly selected number of sixth grade teachers. Surveys sent to the library media specialist were duplicated on yellow paper and surveys sent to the sixth grade teachers were duplicated on white paper in order for respondents and the researcher to distinguish between the two surveys. A cover letter instructed the library media specialist to complete the survey (on yellow paper) and return it in a self-addressed stamped envelope. The library media specialist in each school was directed to distribute the teacher surveys and accompanying self-addressed stamped envelopes to a random sample of sixth grade teachers in their building. The sixth grade teachers were asked to complete the survey (on white paper) and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope. The surveys sent to the library media specialists were coded using letters of the alphabet beginning with "A" and continuing to "Z". Beginning with the twenty-seventh packet, the coding began with "AA" and continued to the forty-seventh packet,

which was coded with the letters “UU”. The surveys for sixth grade teachers were coded with the same lettering pattern as the surveys sent to the library media specialists in each of the forty-seven schools. Along with the letter or letters, the surveys sent to the sixth grade teachers were numbered so the researcher could keep a count of surveys sent to each school.

Reliability and Validity

The survey was pretested by several sixth grade teachers who were not participating in the study and who teach in an adjacent county. The library media specialist survey was pretested by colleagues of the researcher and a library media specialist in a different county.

This research project could be replicated in another county using the procedures that the researcher followed for this project.

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CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Response Rate

Forty-seven packets containing a random number of surveys were sent to library media specialists who work in schools in Burlington County with sixth grade teachers. The total number of surveys sent to sixth grade teachers in Burlington County was 190. The survey packets were sent out on February 9, 2003. Each packet contained a 4 question survey for the library media specialist which was copied on yellow paper to make a distinction between the two types of surveys enclosed in each packet. Of the 47 surveys sent to library media specialists, 32 were returned. Two of the surveys were unusable because one indicated that the school had no library media specialist and the other survey was valid but none of the sixth grade teachers returned surveys from that particular school. This was a return rate of 53%.

A random number of surveys were included in each of the packets. The surveys for sixth grade teachers were reproduced on white paper. The media specialist in each school was asked to distribute a random number of surveys to sixth grade teachers in each school. 101 surveys were returned. Of the 101 surveys returned, 3 were unusable because the media specialist from that school did not return his or her survey.

Data Coding and Adjustments

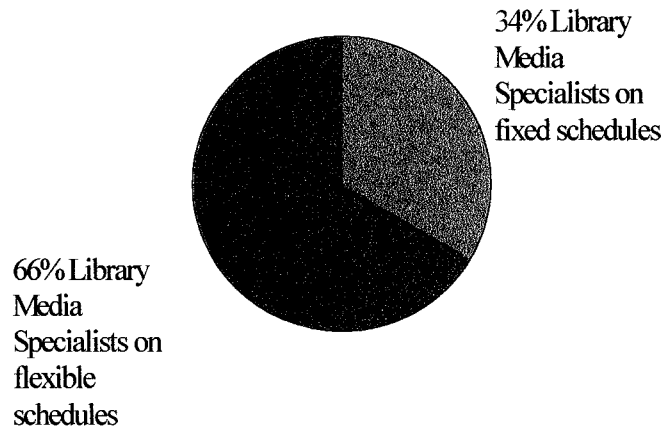
After the deadline passed for return of the surveys (approximately 3 weeks after they were sent), each survey was coded by giving each possible answer a number. Surveys were separated into library media centers that were on a fixed schedule and library media centers that were on a flexible schedule. The two surveys, the one from the library media specialists and the surveys returned by the sixth grade teachers, were combined for the purpose of inputting data. Data were coded and entered into the computer spreadsheet program, Excel. Excel was used to compute data, find percentages, and create pie graphs. Pie graphs illustrated the results for each of the 13 questions which consisted of the 4 questions answered by the library media specialists and 9 questions answered by the sixth grade teachers.

Presentation of Results: Library Media Specialist Survey

The first question on the survey for the library media specialist asked the library media specialist to mark whether the library media center operated on a fixed or a flexible schedule. Of the 32 usable surveys returned, 66% of the library media centers operated on a flexible schedule and 34% operated on a fixed schedule as shown in Figure 1.

Library Media Specialists on Fixed versus Flexible Schedules

Fig. 1

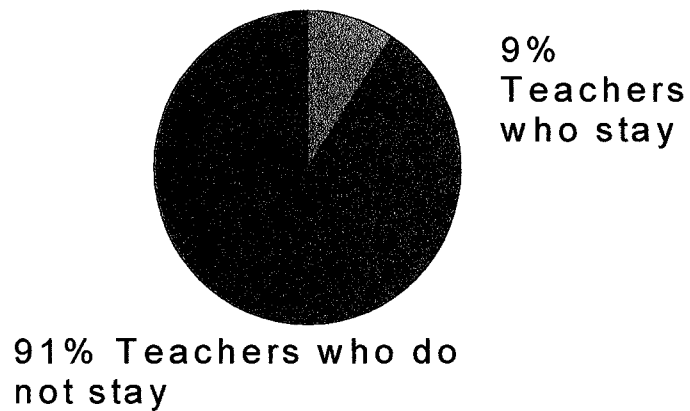


Question two asked the library media specialist if sixth grade teachers stayed with their classes during library classes. Library media specialists on a fixed schedule responded yes, teachers did stay with their classes 9% of the time and no, teachers did not stay with their classes 91% of the time as shown in Figure 2. Library media specialists whose library media center operates on a flexible schedule responded yes, teachers stayed with their classes 94% of the time and no, teachers did not stay with their classes 6% of the time as shown in Figures 2a.

Sixth Grade Teachers and Whether They Stay With Their Classes During Library Time

Fixed Schedule

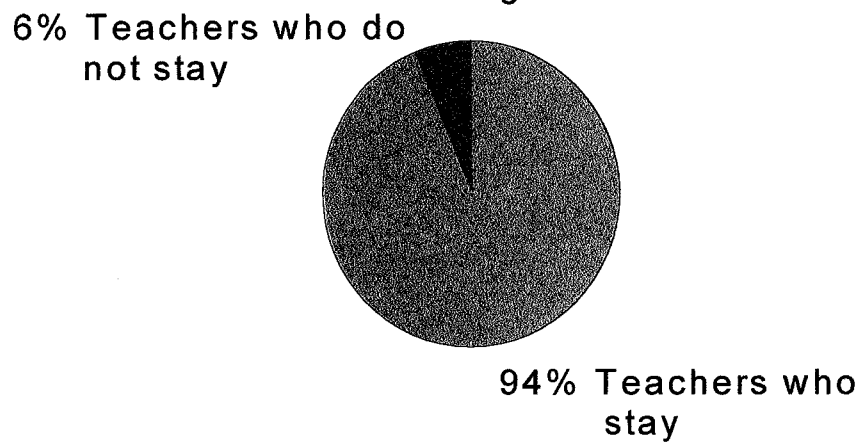
Fig. 2



Sixth Grade Teachers and Whether They Stay With Their Classes During Library Time

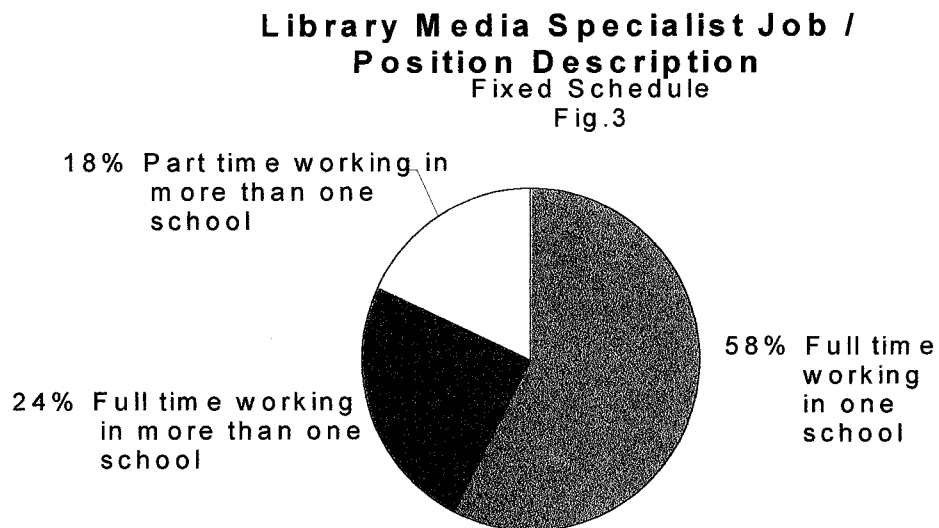
Flexible Schedule

Fig. 2a



Question three asked library media specialists to describe their position. A total of 58% of the media specialists on a fixed schedule responded that they were full time media specialists in one school. Media specialists hired as full time and working in more than one school comprised 24% of the total respondents. Part time media specialists working in one school totaled 18% and while there were no part time media specialists working in more than one school as shown in Figure 3.

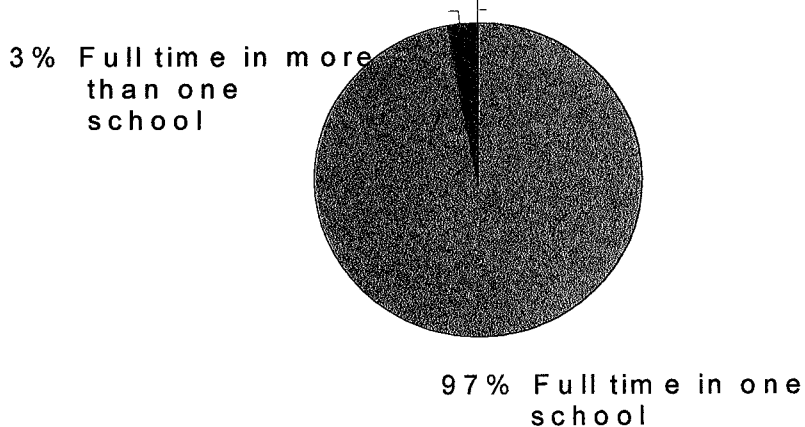
Library media specialists on a flexible schedule reported that 97% were full time media specialists working in one school. Full time media specialists working in more than one school totaled 3%. There were no part time media specialists working in one school or part time media specialists working in more than one school as shown in Figure 3a.



Library Media Specialist Job / Position Description

Flexible Schedule

Fig. 3 a



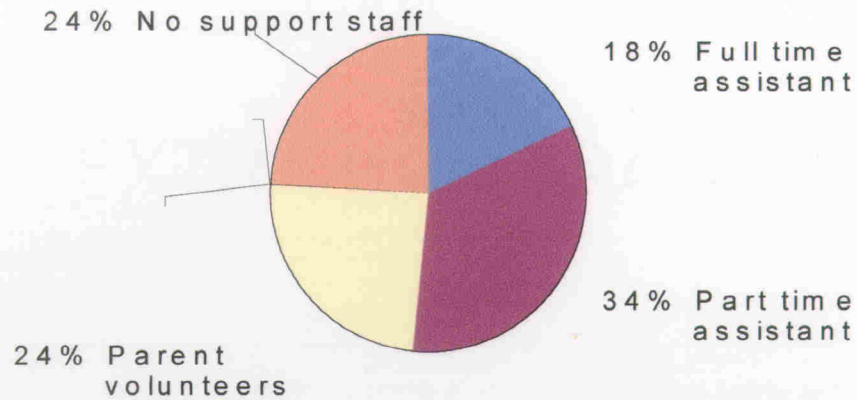
Library media specialists on a fixed schedule responded that their support staff consisted of 18% with full time assistants, 34% with part time assistants, and 24% consisting of parent volunteers. A total of 24 % of the library media specialists responded that they had no support staff (see figure 4).

The library media specialists on a flexible schedule responded that their support staff consisted of 48% with a full time assistant, 9% with a part time assistant, 15% reported help from parent volunteers only. A total of 15% reported a combination of a full time assistant and parent volunteers (see Figure 4a).

Support Staff in Library Media Centers

Fixed Schedule

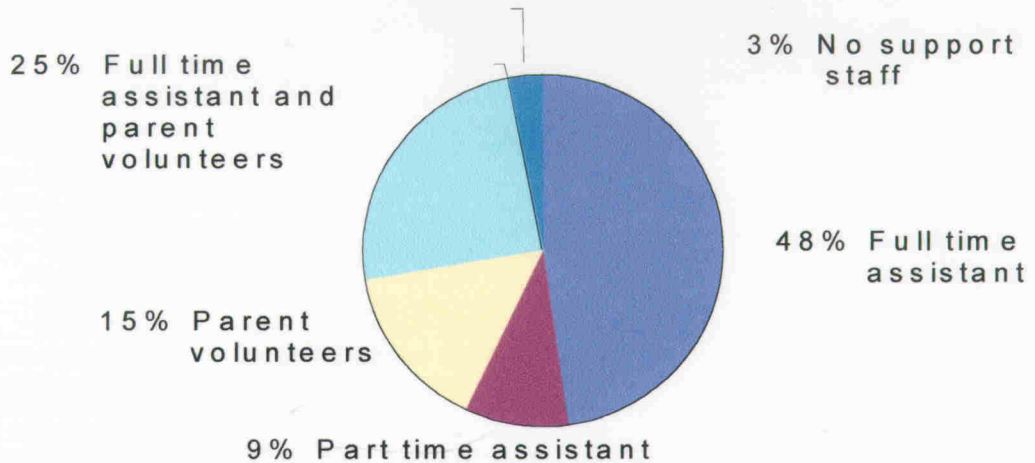
Fig. 4



Support Staff in Library Media Centers

Flexible Schedule

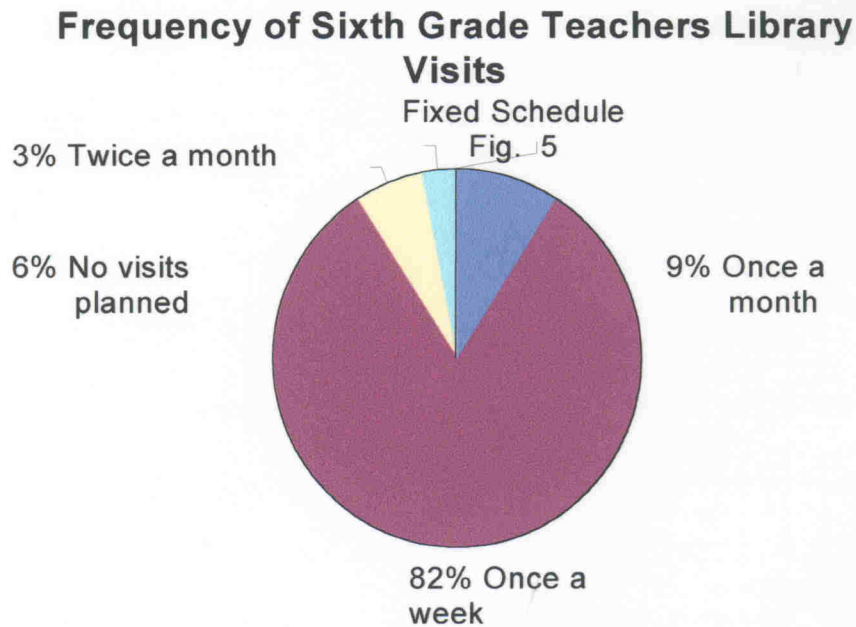
Fig. 4a



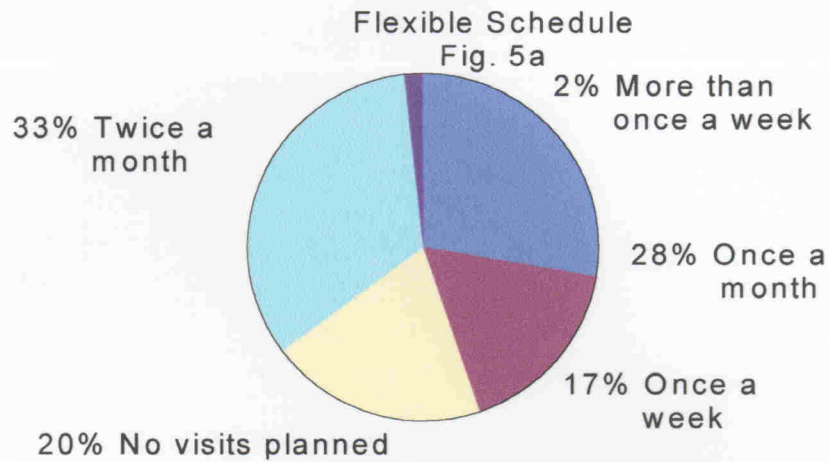
Presentation of Results: Sixth Grade Teachers

Frequency of library visits for sixth grade teachers on a fixed library schedule showed that 82% of the respondents visited the library once a week. A total of 9% of the sixth grade teacher respondents reported visits to the library occurring once a month, and 3% reported visits occurring twice a month. Respondents reporting that they had no planned visits totaled 6% (see Figure 5).

Frequency of library visits for sixth grade teachers on a flexible library schedule showed that 33% of the classes visited the library media center twice a month and 28% reported visiting the library media center once a month. Classes visiting the library media center once a week totaled 17%, and classes visiting the library media center more than once a week totaled 2%. Classes with no visits to the library media center planned equaled 20% (see Figure 5a).



Frequency of Sixth Grade Teachers Library Visits

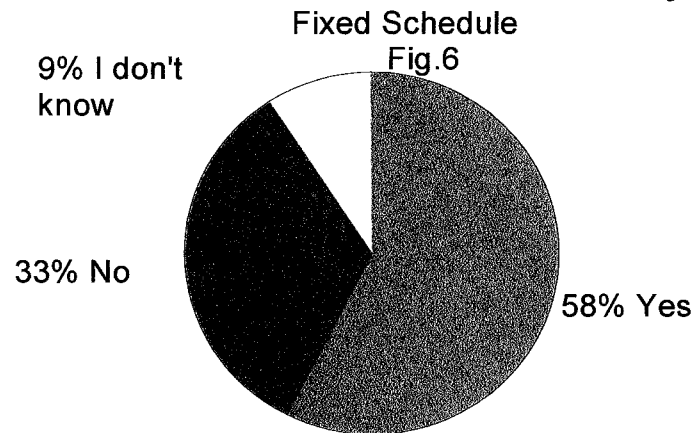


The next question asked sixth grade teachers if the library media specialist was available to meet with them sometime during the school day. For sixth grade teachers whose library media center operated on a fixed schedule, 58% responded yes that the library media specialist was available to meet with them during the school day and 33% responded no that the library media specialist was not available to meet with them during the school day. A total of 9 % responded that they did not know (see Figure 6).

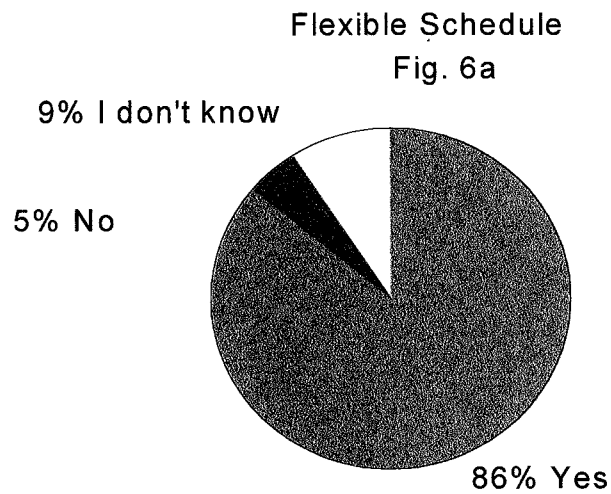
Of the sixth grade teachers whose library media center operated on a flexible schedule, 86% responded yes when asked if the library media specialist was available to meet with them during the school day, and 5% reported no, that the library media

specialist was not available to meet with them during the day. A total of 9% said that they did not know (see Figure 6a).

Library Media Specialist Availability to Meet With Sixth Grade Teachers Daily



Library Media Specialist Availability to Meet With Sixth Grade Teachers



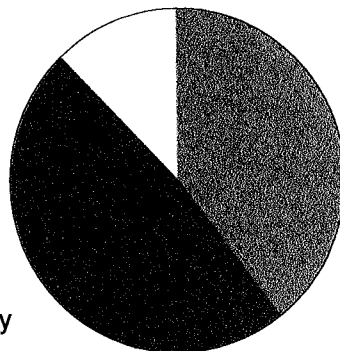
According to the next question, sixth grade teachers were asked if the library media center was closed to them at any time during the school day. A total of 39% of the sixth grade teachers whose library media center operated on a fixed schedule responded yes, that the library media center was closed to them at times during the school day, and 49% said no, that the library media center was not closed to them at any time during the school day. A total of 12% of the sixth grade teachers responded that they did not know if the library media center was closed at any time during the school day (see Figure 7).

Sixth grade teachers whose library media center operated on a flexible schedule responded yes, for a total of 46%, that the library media center was closed to them at times during the school day. An equal number of sixth grade teachers responded no, that the library media center was not closed to them at any time during the school day. A total of 8% of the sixth grade teachers stated that they did not know if the library media center was closed to them during the school day (see Figure 7a).

No Access to the Library Media Center At Any Time During the School Day

Fixed Schedule
Fig.7

12% I don't know

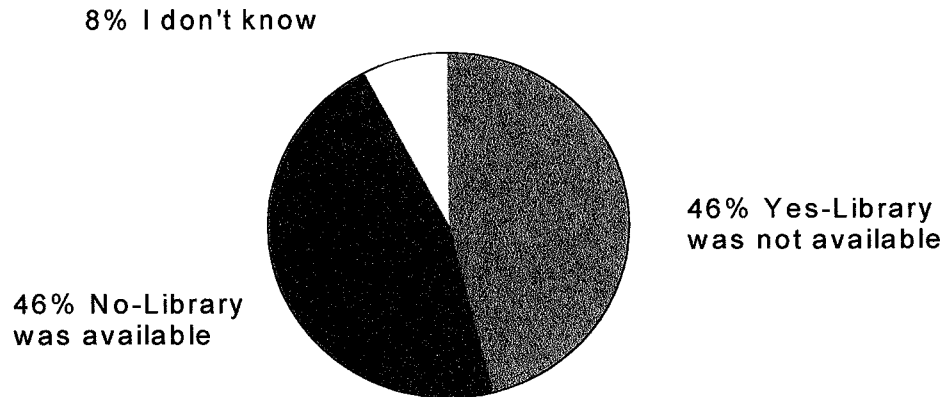


39% Yes-Library was not available

49% No-Library was available

No Access to the Library Media Center At Any Time During the School Day

Flexible Schedule
Fig. 7a



Sixth grade teachers whose library media center operated on a fixed schedule were asked if the library media specialist played an active role in the instructional process of the school. A total of 49% of the sixth grade teachers surveyed reported that they Strongly Agreed with this question and 30% of the sixth grade teachers Agreed that the library media specialist played an active role in the instructional process of the school. A total of 12% of the sixth grade teachers Disagreed and 9% Strongly Disagreed that the library media specialist played an active role in the instructional process of the school (see Figure 8).

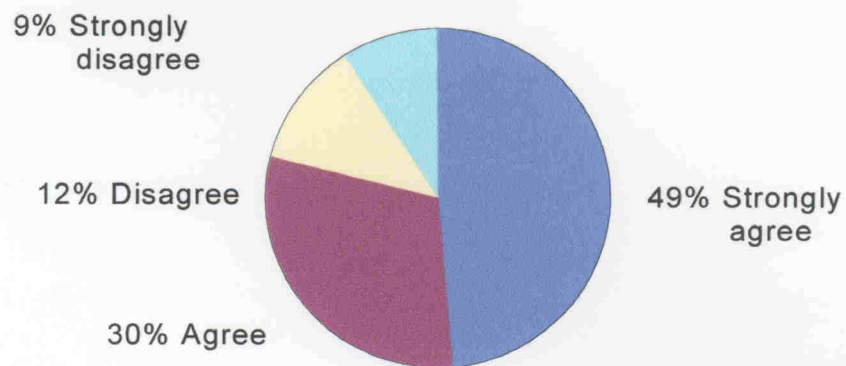
Sixth grade teachers whose library media center operated on a flexible schedule reported 16% Strongly Agreed and 62% Agreed with the statement that the library media specialist played an active role in the instructional process of the school. Sixth grade

teachers who did not agree responded at a rate of 17% that Disagreed and 5% Strongly Disagreed (see Figure 8a).

Library Media Specialist Plays An Active Role in Instructional Process

Fixed Schedule

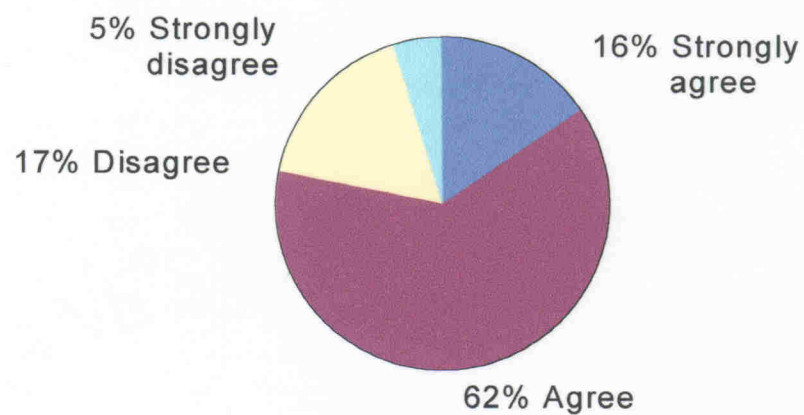
Fig. 8



Library Media Specialist Plays An Active Role in the Instructional Process

Flexible Schedule

Fig. 8a



Question five asked sixth grade teachers if the library media specialist was helpful in locating print and other resources. Sixth grade teachers whose library media centers operated on a fixed schedule responded at a rate of 78% that Strongly Agreed and 22% that Agreed that the library media specialist was helpful in locating print and other resources (see Figure 9). There were no negative responses to question five for this group.

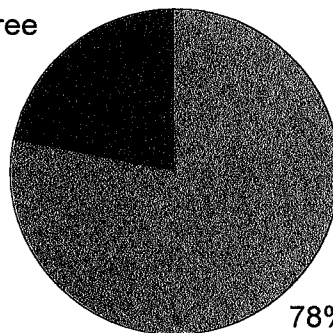
Sixth grade teachers whose library media center operated on a flexible schedule responded at a rate of 70% Strongly Agreed and 28% Agreed that the library media specialist was helpful in locating print and other resources. Unlike the fixed schedule group, 2% Disagreed that the library media specialist was helpful in locating print and other resources (see Figure 9a).

Library Media Specialist Helpfulness Locating Print and Other Resources

Fixed Schedule

Fig. 9

22% Agree

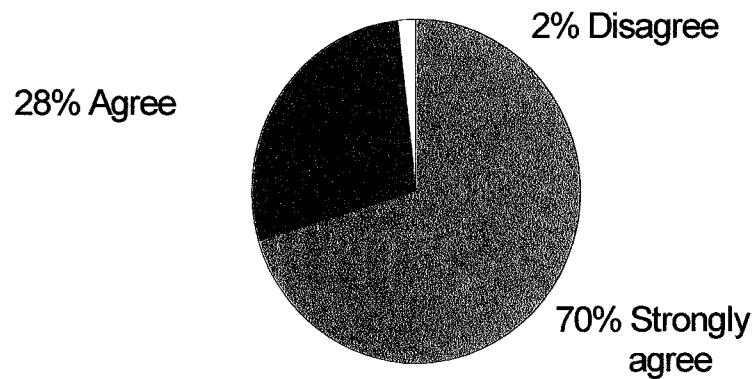


78% Strongly Agree

Library Media Specialist Helpfulness Locating Print and Other Resources

Flexible Schedule

Fig. 9a



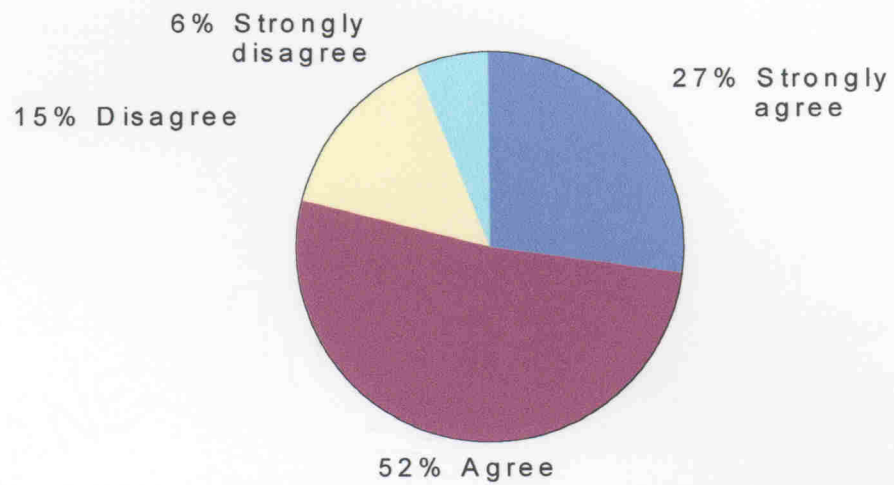
Sixth grade teachers on a fixed library schedule were asked if they used library resources in their lessons. A total of 27% said that they Strongly Agreed that they did use library media center resources in their lessons and 52% Agreed that they used library media center resources in their lessons. The negative responses included 15% Disagree with the statement that they used library media center resources in their lessons and 6% Strongly Disagreed (see Figure 10).

Sixth grade teachers on a flexible schedule reported at a rate of 36% that they Strongly Agreed that they used library media center resources in their lessons and 58% Agreed that used library media center resources in their lessons. Only 6% of the sixth

grade teachers surveyed Disagreed that they used library media center resources in their lessons. (see Figure 10a).

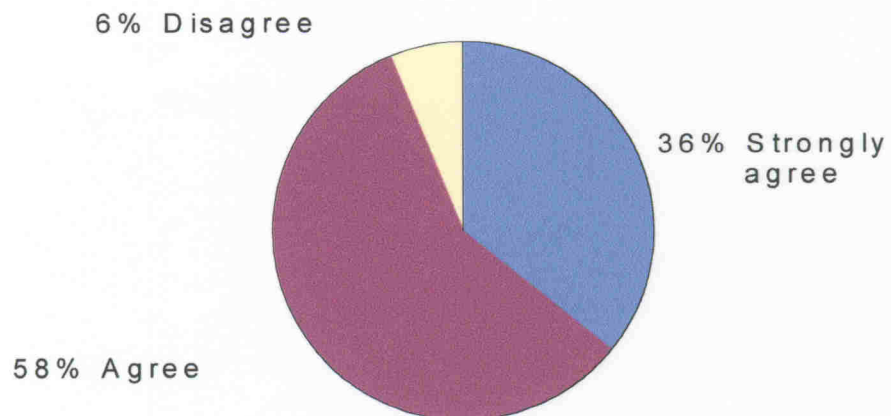
Library Media Center Resources Use in Classroom Lessons

Fixed Schedule
Fig. 10



Library Media Center Resources Use in Classroom Lessons

Flexible Schedule
Fig. 10a



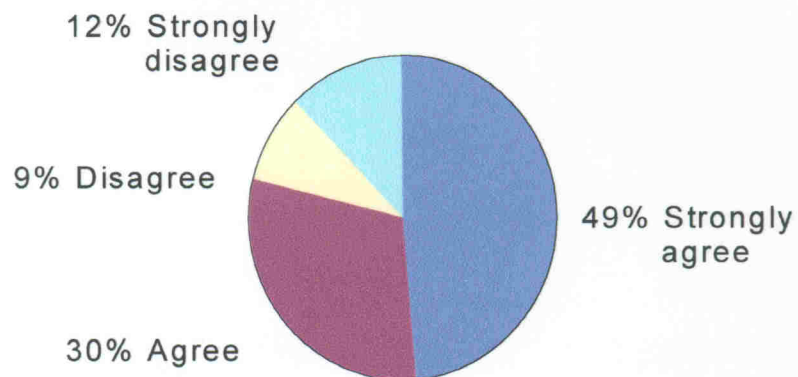
The next question asked sixth grade teachers if they felt the library media specialist was approachable with regards to technology questions. Results showed that if the library media center was on a fixed schedule, 49% of the sixth grade teachers Strongly Agreed and 30% Agreed that the library media specialist was approachable with regards to technology questions. A total of 9% of the sixth grade teachers Disagreed and 12% Strongly Disagreed that the library media specialist was approachable with regards to technology questions (see Figure 11).

The results for sixth grade teachers whose library media center operated on a flexible schedule showed 54% Strongly Agreed and 36% Agreed that the library media specialist was approachable with regards to technology questions. Negative responses include 8% Disagree and 2% Strongly Disagreed that the library media specialist was approachable with regards to technology questions (see Figure 11a).

Library Media Specialist Approachability With Regards to Technology

Fixed Schedule

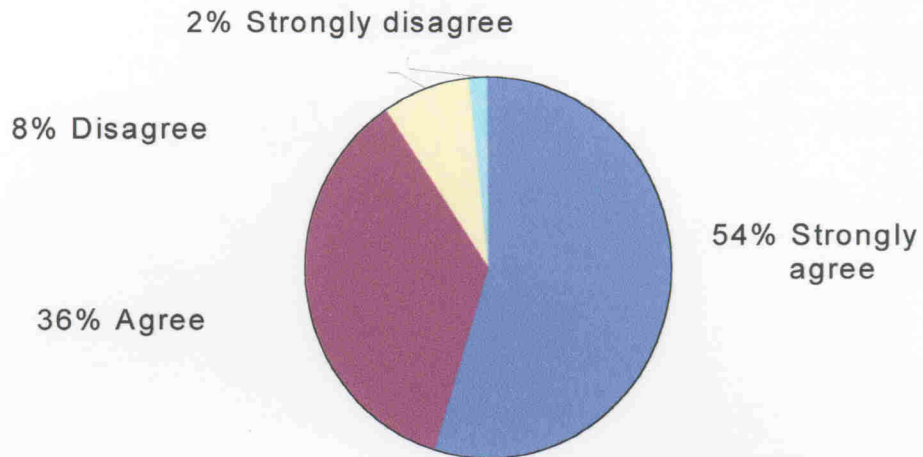
Fig. 11



Library Media Specialist Approachability With Regards to Technology

Flexible Schedule

Fig. 11a

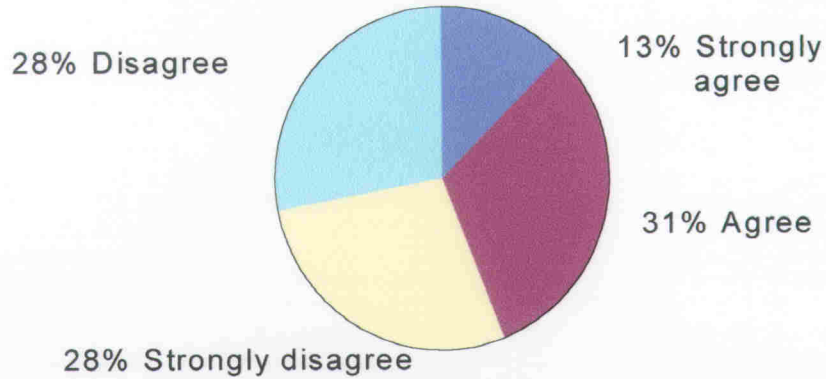


Question eight asked sixth grade teachers if they planned instructional units together with the library media specialists. A total of 13% of the sixth grade teachers on a fixed library media center schedule Strongly Agreed that they did plan instructional units together and 31% Agreed. Strong disagreement was shown when 28% of the sixth grade teachers surveyed Strongly Disagreed when asked if they planned instructional units with the library media specialist and 28% Disagreed (see Figure 12).

Of the sixth grade teachers whose library media center operated on a flexible schedule only 3% reported that they Strongly Agreed and 23% Agreed that they plan instructional units with the library media specialist. Furthermore, 14% of the sixth grade teachers surveyed Strongly Disagreed and 60% Disagree that they planned instructional units with the library media specialist (see Figure 12a).

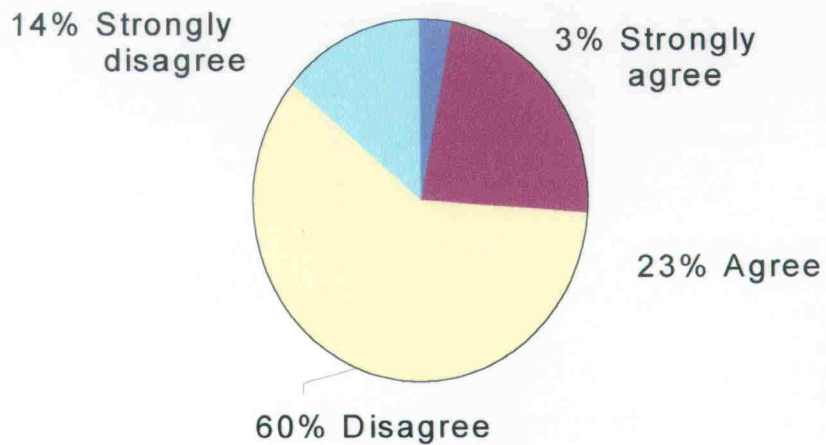
Library Media Specialist and Sixth Grade Teachers Collaboratively Plan Instructional Units

Fixed Schedule
Fig. 12



Library Media Specialist and Sixth Grade Teachers Collaboratively Plan Instructional Units

Flexible Schedule
Fig.12a



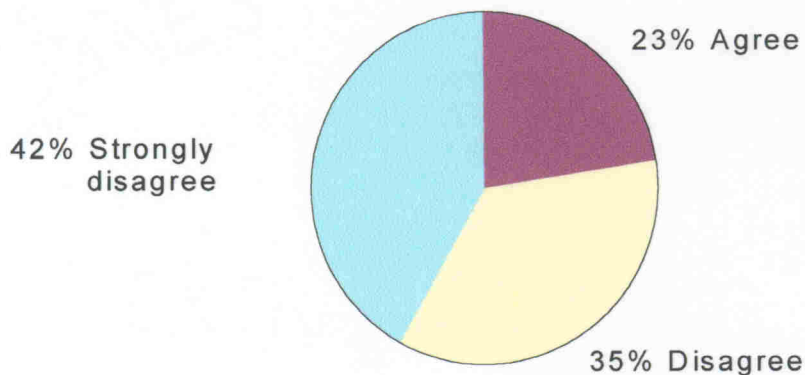
Sixth grade teachers were asked if they collaboratively teach instructional units with the library media specialist. Those on a fixed library media center schedule responded at a rate of 23% Agreed, 35% Disagreed, and 42% Strongly Disagreed (see Figure 13).

Sixth grade teachers on a flexible schedule responded that they agreed at a rate of 19% that they did collaboratively teach instructional units with the library media specialist. On the negative side 56% Disagreed and 25% Strongly Disagreed when asked if they taught instructional lessons collaboratively with the library media specialist (see Figure 13a).

Library Media Specialist and Sixth Grade Teachers Collaboratively Teach Instructional Units

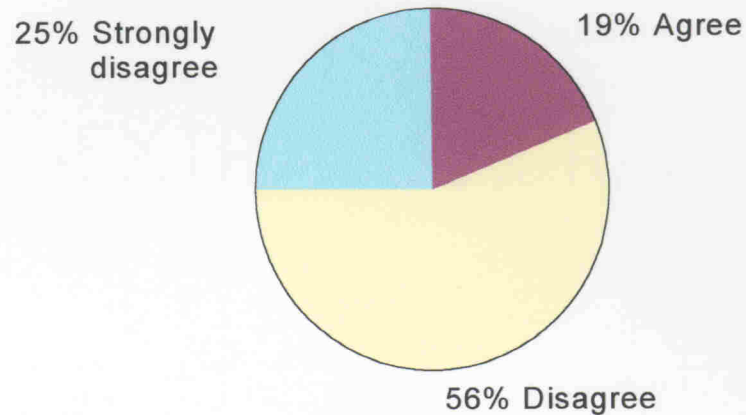
Fixed Schedule

Fig. 13



Library Media Specialist and Sixth Grade Teachers Collaboratively Teach Instructional Units

Flexible Schedule
Fig. 13a



Summary

The results of the surveys indicated results that were expected in some instances and unexpected in others. The researcher observed that for flexibly scheduled media centers, 20% of the sixth grade teachers that responded had planned no library media center visits. The researcher also noted the large positive results for both fixed and flexibly scheduled media centers in regards to the library media specialist's assistance with technology questions. The use of library media center resources in classroom lessons for fixed scheduled media centers produced a combined 21% of the respondents in disagreement. Data also indicated the strong lack of collaborative planning and teaching between the library media specialists and sixth grade teachers on either type of

scheduling, fixed or flexible. In the next chapter, the researcher will discuss these results and other results in regards to the original research questions presented in Chapter I.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to interpret the results of the survey, the researcher began by looking at the results of the 4-question survey sent to the library media specialists. This survey was sent to the library media specialists in order to gain information on scheduling, staffing, job description, and whether teachers stay with their classes during library visits. The data indicated that 34% of the library media specialist who returned surveys operated on a fixed library schedule and 66% of the library media specialists who returned surveys operated on a flexible schedule.

The norm in library scheduling for the elementary level is typically fixed scheduling in order to provide preparation time for teachers. As the grade level goes up, library media center schedules seemed to move towards flexible scheduling. Since a number of school systems in Burlington County include kindergarten to grade four as elementary, and schools with sixth grade teachers were surveyed, a higher number of library media specialists who returned surveys operated on a flexible schedule.

Library media specialists on a fixed schedule reported that the teachers did not stay with their classes during library time. This result was expected since library time for teachers on a fixed schedule usually becomes their preparation time and is spent in their classrooms or in meetings with teachers, administrators or parents. Teachers whose library media centers operated on a flexible schedule usually stay with their classes and the results from the survey indicated that 94% of those teachers did stay. In theory, teachers stayed because they were working with library media specialist on classroom

projects that require library media center resources and the expertise of the library media specialist.

The results indicated that library media specialists working with a flexible schedule were more likely to have full time positions at one school, 97% for flexible schedule and 56% for fixed schedule. The researcher was surprised at this result because it would seem that if the library time provided a prep time for teachers and the teachers did not stay with their classes, then a full time library media specialist would be needed to teach and cover classes throughout the school day. The results could indicate that the library media specialists who were either full time in more than one school or part time in more than one school and on a fixed schedule may be from smaller schools serving smaller school populations.

Survey results for support staff in the library media centers indicated that flexibly scheduled library media centers were more likely to have a full time assistant. According to the results of the survey, fixed schedule library media centers were also more likely to have no support staff. The reason for this could be population or the size of the school. If the elementary schools in a district include kindergarten to grade four, then the schools serving the sixth grade population may be middle schools with larger school populations and therefore, a larger library media center staff. In a flexibly scheduled library media center, more than one class could use the library at one time. The library media specialist working with several classes and teachers would not be available for circulation duty and a full time assistant would become necessary. In a fixed scheduled library media center, circulation becomes part of their library class and the duty of the library media specialist or a parent volunteer. Survey results indicated that parent volunteers as support staff in

fixed scheduled library media centers totaled 24% of the library media specialists surveyed.

The remaining nine questions and the data gathered from them were from the sixth grade teachers surveyed in Burlington County, New Jersey. In order to discuss and present the results of this study, the original research questions presented in Chapter I were addressed.

***Is the library media center accessible at all times during the school day?**

***Are the services of the library media specialist accessible at all times during the school day?**

To begin answering these questions, it became important to look at the frequency of library visits based on the type of scheduling that was in place. Sixth grade teachers surveyed on a fixed schedule visited the library once a week. This answer was consistent with the fact that library time was sometimes used to guarantee teachers their daily prep time established by contract. Sixth grade teachers surveyed who were on a flexible schedule had a greater variety of times to schedule library visits. Generally, most sixth grade teachers surveyed visited the library once or twice a month. A negative aspect revealed through this survey was that 20% of the sixth grade teachers surveyed who were on a flexible library schedule had no library visits planned at all. One of the main problems of flexible schedules is reaching teachers who are not regular library media center users. The job of reaching out to these teachers falls on the shoulders of the library media specialist and clearly this was not happening for 20% of those sixth grade teachers.

Library media specialists must do as much as they can to attract teachers and students to the library media center. This can be done by developing a useful and stimulating collection of resources, providing a comfortable and attractive atmosphere, and becoming involved in the school curriculum. According to a study by DeGross (1997) in which she investigated how teachers and administrators perceive the roles and relationships of the library media specialist, the single most important factor affecting the ability for teachers and library media specialists to work together was the library media specialist's knowledge, personality, and attitudes or interests. In summary, the library media specialist is the key to fostering a working relationship with teachers and a comfortable atmosphere in which to work with staff and students.

Library media specialists who operated on a flexible schedule were more available to meet with sixth grade teachers on a daily basis than library media specialists on a fixed schedule. Without having regular classes scheduled, there would be times during the day when the library media specialist on a flexible schedule could meet with teachers in the library media center or in the classroom. Library media specialists on a fixed schedule typically had classes scheduled almost every period throughout the day making it difficult to meet with teachers.

Results indicated that for both groups, fixed and flexibly scheduled library media centers, the library media center was inaccessible at some times during the school day. Since a percentage of the respondents for both types of scheduling also indicated that the library media center was accessible at all times during the school day, the researcher concluded that the library media specialists attempted to provide access to the library media center at all times no matter which type of scheduling was in place. The researcher

concluded that in some situations, the library media specialist kept the library media center open during his or her lunch and prep periods. There was no relationship between the two types of scheduling and access to the library media center. Some of the reasons for the library media centers inaccessibility that were listed on the surveys by the respondents were: the library media center was closed during the library media specialist's lunch or the library media center was closed to accommodate a scheduled class or classes.

***Do sixth grade teachers ask the library media specialist's assistance with questions concerning technology?**

The results from the survey indicated that sixth grade teachers do seek out the assistance of library media specialists regarding technology questions regardless of which type of scheduling was in place. If the percentages for the "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" choices were added together for both fixed and flexible scheduling, 79% of the teachers on fixed scheduling seek help with technology questions and 90% of the teachers on flexible scheduling seek help with technology questions. The slightly higher number for flexibly scheduled library media centers referred back to reason given for availability of the library media specialist. If the library media specialist was working on a fixed schedule with classes scheduled nonstop throughout the day, he or she would have less time to assist teachers with technology questions. The researcher assumed that the results from this question would indicate that the library media specialist was a source to go to for technology questions. Questions regarding technology were related to library media center use and also to general technology use and maintenance.

In a school library media center one of the main services the library media specialist offers is locating print and other resources. These resources are used to support the approved school curriculum and the concepts that are presented in the classroom. The survey indicated that for both types of scheduling, the library media specialist was helpful in locating print and other resources. The researcher expected these results since most library media specialists do find time in their respective schedules to locate resources or they will delegate this task to any available support staff assigned to the library media center. If no support staff is available, this task is done by the library media specialist before or after school hours.

Library media center resources and their use in classroom lessons produced results concerning how scheduling influences services. For the flexibly scheduled library media center, 94% (combining percentages for Strongly Agree and Agree) of the sixth grade teachers used the library media center resources in their classroom lessons. The results for fixed scheduled library media centers indicated that 79% (combining percentages for Strongly Agree and Agree) of the sixth grade teachers surveyed used library media center resources in their classroom lessons. Even though the results indicate a large percentage do use library media center resources in their classroom lessons, the lower percentage for fixed scheduled media centers may be the result of a lack of communication between teachers and the library media specialist in their school. Another reason for the lower percentage for fixed scheduled library media centers may be that the survey previously indicated that the library media specialist who works on a fixed schedule is not as accessible during the school day for consultation. Teachers may not know about the resources available in the library media center or how to use them.

Results from these two survey questions were use to formulate possible conclusions to the next research question:

***How available is the library media specialist to gather print and other resources for sixth grade students and staff?**

In summary, sixth grade teachers regardless of the schedule that their library media center operated on felt that the library media specialist was available to gather print and other resources. The slight discrepancy occurs in the use of these resources in the classroom. Sixth grade teachers surveyed whose library media centers operated on a fixed schedule reported a slightly lower percentage of respondents that were in agreement that they use library media center resources in their classroom lessons.

***Do sixth grade teachers collaborate with the library media specialist for the purpose of team teaching if the library media center operates on a fixed schedule?**

***Do sixth grade teachers collaborate with the library media specialist for the purpose of team teaching if the library media center operates on a flexible schedule?**

The researcher discovered that sixth grade teachers on either type of library media center scheduling did not agree that they collaboratively taught lessons with the library media specialist. The researcher expected these results for teachers that worked with library media specialists on fixed schedules. It is much more difficult to meet and collaborate when the library media specialist has classes scheduled every period of the day on a regular basis. Such a small degree of agreement (19%) in reference to collaboration to

plan lessons between sixth grade teachers and library media specialists on a flexible schedule was an unexpected result. One of the main advantages of flexibly scheduled library media centers is the ability to meet and plan with teachers so information skills are not taught in isolation. According to a study by Donham van Deusen (1993) on the effects of scheduling on curriculum involvement, the library media specialist most likely to be involved in the school curriculum has a flexible schedule where team planning occurs. Her findings indicated that no significant difference existed between fixed and flexible scheduling in relationship to collaborative teaching unless there was a change to team planning.

In conclusion, the researcher believes that the type of scheduling that a library media specialist functions with may not be as important as the desire for teachers and library media specialists to collaboratively plan and work together in a team planning situation. Significant differences in the way in which teachers and library media specialists work together comes from a commitment and a climate within the school that fosters team planning.

Further Areas of Investigation

In reflecting back to the results of the survey, library media specialists surveyed in Burlington County responded that a greater percentage were on flexible scheduling in their library media centers than fixed scheduling. The researcher felt that the reasons for these results may be the configuration of the grade levels or the size of the population of the school. In order to find out other factors that may influence scheduling, the researcher suggests a study, possibly done in more than one state or areas of the United

States, that would focus on the different configurations of grade levels and how that affects library media center scheduling.

Another area that would suggest further investigation is the lack of collaborative planning and teaching between library media specialists and sixth grade teachers. Since the survey indicated that more library media centers operate on a flexible schedule than on a fixed schedule, it would lead one to believe that there would be more time for collaboration in planning and teaching lessons. The results indicated that sixth grade teachers and library media specialists did not collaboratively plan or teach lessons to a large degree with flexible scheduling. Teachers do not see the library media specialist as a teacher. A study focusing on how the image of the library media specialist should be changed to promote his or her role as a teacher and competent educational partner could produce interesting results.

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APPENDIX A Library Use Survey for Sixth Grade Teachers

Please put a check next to one answer for each question.

1). My sixth grade class visits the library:

_____ once a month _____ once a week _____ no visits have been planned
_____ twice a month _____ more than one time a week

2). Is the library media specialist available to meet with you sometime during each day?

_____ yes _____ no _____ I don't know

3). Is the library media center closed to you and your students at anytime during the day?

_____ yes _____ no _____ I don't know

Please circle one answer for each question.

4). The library media specialist plays an active role in the instructional process in our school.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

5). The library media specialist is very helpful to me when I need assistance locating both print and other resources.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

6). I include library media center resources in the materials needed for my lessons.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

7). I feel I can approach the library media specialist when I need assistance with technology questions.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

8). The library media specialist and I collaboratively plan instructional units together.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

9). The library media specialist and I collaboratively teach instructional units together.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

Thank you for your participation!

Have a great year!

Lori Cooney

APPENDIX B Cover Letter for Sixth Grade Teacher Survey

February 2, 2003

Dear 6th grade teachers,

My name is Lori Cooney and I am a graduate student at Rowan University completing my masters' thesis in school and public librarianship. I am currently collecting data for my research. Would you please complete the attached brief survey and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided? All information is confidential and names are not required.

Thanks again for your participation and have a great year!

Sincerely,

Lori Cooney

APPENDIX C Library Use Survey for Library Media Specialists

Please check your answer.

1). Check the type of schedule that your library media center operates on:

_____ fixed

_____ flexible

_____ other (briefly explain)

2). Do 6th grade teachers stay with their classes during library visits?

_____ yes

_____ no

3). Check the answer that describes your position.

_____ full time media specialist at one school

_____ full time media specialist working at more than one school

_____ part time media specialist working at one school

_____ part time media specialist working at more than one school

4). Check the answer that describes the support staff, if any, that work in your library media center.

_____ full time assistant

_____ part time assistant

_____ parent volunteers

APPENDIX D Cover Letter for Library Media Specialist Survey

February 2, 2003

Dear Library Media Specialist,

My name is Lori Cooney and I am a graduate student at Rowan University completing my masters' thesis in the area of school and public librarianship. I am currently collecting data for my thesis. Could you please complete the brief survey on the yellow paper and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided? I am also requesting that you randomly give the remaining packets to sixth grade teachers in your building. I have included a predetermined number of packets. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at: 856-778-6083.

The enclosed bookmark is yours to keep. Thanks for your help and have a great year!

Sincerely,

Lori Cooney