

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARIAN IN PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR THE SPECIAL CHILD

by

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent of media services and programs to handicapped and gifted children as perceived by the teacher of the special child and by the media specialist. Areas covered include: how materials were selected; the availability of equipment and other materials; how often the library media specialist participated in the instruction of media skills; and the methods employed by the library media specialist to involve himself/herself in the programs for the handicapped and gifted. This study was also designed to determine if library media services to handicapped and gifted children are different from services provided to other children.

Methods and Procedures

The author reviewed the literature of special education and library services involving the handicapped and gifted child. A questionnaire was formulated and mailed to fifty teachers of special children and media specialists in the metro-Atlanta area. The counties involved were Fulton, Cobb, Gwinnett, DeKalb and Douglas. From the responses received, the data were analyzed and presented through the use of tables.

Results

Of the fifty media specialists and classroom teachers who were mailed a questionnaire, forty-two were received by the researcher, representing a return rate of eighty-four percent. Results of the survey revealed that the majority of the respondents reported that special adaptations and services should be available for special children. However, one classroom teacher indicated that the library media specialist was not involved with the school's special education program. A library media specialist reported that since the school has no handicapped children, that there is no need for special adaptations or special media services.

Conclusions

The primary goal of the library media specialist should be the provision and implementation of media services to all children including the gifted and the handicapped. The library media specialist has a unique opportunity of ensuring the role of the library media center in educating gifted and handicapped children in the future and in further improving the quality of media services to all children.

THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARIAN IN
PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION
FOR THE SPECIAL CHILD

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is to determine what concerns, if any, are being shown for special children. The problem is two-fold. One being the handicapped, a small segment of the library's clientele that is usually locked into their own immediate environment by physical or mental disabilities and the other being the gifted who needs an equal amount of concern as the handicapped. Most children are of average ability, but there are others who have more than average ability and can get through the barriers of elementary level work. Yet what of the extremely bright boy or girl, consistently scoring 140 or more on intelligence tests and doing equally as well on tests for creativity. This problem raises the question: How involved are library media specialists in helping children to reach their highest potential?

Significance of the Problem

In today's society, educators cannot ignore the existence of special children. They cannot ignore the role educators play in helping children develop their abilities to the highest potential whether they are average, handicapped, or gifted, nor can they ignore the fact that all children need to be allowed to learn, to grow, and develop to the very limits of their abilities.

There are many children who have handicaps. Some of the handicaps are classified as severe and others are classified as mild. In most states, there are special schools for the handicapped, but there are children whose handicaps are not severe enough for a special school and are therefore put in the mainstream of a regular school setting. For example, children who think normally but have some mild disability may be restricted to wheelchairs or crutches. There may also be some who are partially blind or partially deaf but can function in a normal school setting so as to secure an equal education as other children, example: some children might have blurred vision. These are the children for whom administrators need to make special adaptations.

All student have needs. Like the average students, handicapped students need educational opportunities that will enable them to achieve optimum growth and development in keeping with their own unique nature and individual capacity. Therefore, the school librarian should provide library services and guidance to serve both the curricular and the personal needs and interests of the students. Although the general objectives of library services are the same for all students, including the handicapped student, the library facility, equipment, organizational patterns, materials, and services should be provided and adapted according to the needs of the particular type of handicaps.

The gifted child presents a particular challenge to the school librarian and the teacher. Among the many teaching tasks facing them, librarians must include the challenge of stimulating and maximizing opportunities for growth of gifted children in their schools.

It has been documented through statistics from the Department of Education that "there are approximately two million children in the United States, or between two and four percent of all pupils in elementary and secondary schools in the United States are gifted."¹ Sidney Marland, a former United States Commissioner of Education, and later associated with the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey states:

Gifted children have been called "our most neglected students." It is possible that less than five percent of the number identified as gifted, or talented actually get the enriched and special instructional programs needed to fully develop their potential.²

As with the mentally and physically handicapped, school library media programs can play an important leadership role in fulfilling the promise of enriched programs for the gifted learner. Improving the way in which the gifted learner can get to a variety of materials and helping them to use these materials should be the prime concerns and the prime responsibilities of the library media specialists.

According to Philip Baker, "education for the gifted or talented learner is too important a matter to be left to a haphazard state of sporadic, disconnected efforts and proposals, which are too often the sum and substance of our good intention in educational planning."³

¹Philip Baker, "School Library Media Programs and the Gifted and Talented," School Library Journal (February 1981):22.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Library media specialists should be able to fully use their considerable gifts of persuasion in addition to their other personal and professional talents. Library media specialists and teachers can serve as double advocates for the students on one hand, and the institution on the other. They can interpret the rights and the needs of gifted and talented students, as well as harmonize these needs with those of the institution which will take diplomatic ability of the highest order.

Philosophy and Functions of the School Library

Libraries have played an important and major role in our cultural society. Our way of life depends on a public who reads and is knowledgeable. Due to barriers which prevent some children from using the public library, it is unwise to depend totally on the public library to provide all library services. Considering this limitation and remembering that one of the most powerful factors in creating interest in books, developing good reading habits, and total library usage is accessibility. Schools wishing to foster such interest and habits must make available a varied selection of books and other materials.

All these factors are especially significant for the child who experiences hearing problems. The partially deaf child faces a greater difficulty in finding books that are appropriate to his level, and needs more reading guidance from adults who have some insight into his special problem.

All children have the right to sources of information. This includes children who are normal, handicapped or gifted. Children with hearing

impairment or visual impairment should be provided with specially selected and organized library collections and services throughout their school lives. As DeQuin stated:

No authority is needed for the fundamental American principle that a public school education through high school is a basic right of all citizens.⁴

President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, on November 29, 1975. This was a culmination of a long and hard struggle. Many individuals, including parents, lawyers, legislators, educators, and other advocates, had been involved in this effort to secure equal education for all children and young people who are disabled.

Various segments of society in the United States have been affected by the requirement and implications of this national law. Librarians in all types of libraries -- school, public, academic, and special have felt the effects of Public Law 94-142 because the right to an education implies the right to library services, since libraries are educational institutions. As disabled children and young people are incorporated more completely into the mainstream of education and society, they will also use the resources and services of all types of libraries to a greater extent.

The functions of a school library media center, in addition to providing books are: (1) to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to reading and studying; (2) to provide an opportunity for the individual

⁴Henry C. DeQuin, Librarians Serving Disabled Children and Young People (Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, 1983), p. 45.

child to read and proceed at his own rate of speed according to his own individual taste; and (3) to provide an accessible collection of reference and supplementary non-fiction books for study and reference use. The school library should also provide group instruction in the use of all types of books and reference materials as well as instruction in the use of tools, such as the card catalog and indexes. Provisions should be made for group use of visual education materials which are especially important to students with hearing impairment. These services are needed in order for all students to reach or develop their greatest and highest potential.

The idea that the gifted child might pose an educational or library problem is quite surprising. We are also accustomed to considering the special needs of retarded children and accepting them as a particular challenge that we sometimes omit the gifted child who because of his abilities is left alone with no guidance or instruction.

Even though gifted children seem to have many advantages, their intellectual age is sometimes not matched with their emotional development. However, chronologically and emotionally, they are children who may be aware that they are different from their peers and begin to develop a defensive mechanism and may even fail to master such basic skills as reading, until the right stimulus brings out their basic potential.

They too have special needs in education that have to be met in order to develop their maximum potential. If their school days are not intellectually challenging and they are not rewarded and encouraged for excellent performance, gifted children are apt to lose interest in

learning. Therefore, efforts should be made to motivate and stimulate them to reach the limits of their abilities.

Assumptions

1. Many library media specialists identify the problems and needs of the special child.
2. Library media specialists are well qualified to design and formulate effective programs to meet the challenge of special children.
3. Library media specialists have become more and more aware of the library clientele.
4. Schools are in compliance with Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act.
5. Due to the architectural design and the school's failure to make adaptations, many handicapped students do not use the library media center.

Limitations

This study measures the role perception of library services offered to the special children (handicapped and gifted) in the Metro-Atlanta area including Cobb, Dekalb, Douglas, Fulton and Gwinnett counties as perceived by teachers of special children and library media specialists.

The limitations of this study are:

1. The levels of library services (K-12) were not delineated resulting in less specific implications for the study.
2. Parents of special children who are usually involved in the learning activities of the school program were not utilized as respondents.
3. Geographic constraints of the Metro-Atlanta area may limit the use of the findings to other areas of the United States where budgets may be different.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this paper, the following definitions clarify the terms used in this study.

- Barriers - Whatever hinders or prevents persons from obtaining information which they desire, or experiencing the pleasures of recreational reading or viewing.
- Deafness - A severe impairment of hearing; inability to function in many hearing situations without help.
- Disability - The differences in body or the functioning of the body that cause problems in learning or getting along in the environment.
- Exceptional Children - A term used as a synonym to special children.
- Gifted - A term used to describe an individual who possesses high intellectual ability.
- Handicapped - Crippled or physically disabled.
- Hard of Hearing - An impaired sense of hearing. The person may be able to function in some hearing situations.
- Impairment - The actual damage to an organ or tissue that interferes with the ability to function well.
- Instruction - A term used in developing competencies.
- Intelligence-Quotient (IQ) - Estimates learning potential as determined by a standardized test.
- Mainstreaming - A process of grouping handicapped and non-handicapped together according to their educational needs.
- Media - Consists of all forms and channels used in the transmittal of information.
- Media Collection- Includes all forms of print and non-print materials at a variety of levels to meet the needs of students and school-personnel.

- Media Services - Activities which facilitate the functioning of the media center.
- Media Specialist- A person with appropriate certification and broad professional preparation, both in education and media, with competencies to carry out a media program. Formerly called librarian.
- Physically Handicapped - Having lost partial control of arms and legs, or of muscles that control part of the body. .
- Physical Impairment - Skeletal, neurological, or loss of strength and stamina.
- Program - A system in which the media staff makes the facility, equipment, and media collection accessible to the entire school community through media services, instruction, and enrichment activities.
- Retarded - A slowness in mental and physical growth as compared with most others of the same age.
- Role - A part or function assumed by anyone.
- Special Children- Those children who are handicapped as well as gifted.
- Special Education - A designed instruction for handicapped children three to twenty-one years of age.

Summary

The role of the library media specialist is constantly changing due to the technological revolution, modern educational trends, and the high demand to meet the special needs of all children. Media specialists are being asked to become more involved in curriculum planning and development as well as instructional technology. If library media specialists are to be effective in this emerging role, they must understand the various potentialities and communicate them to administrators and classroom teachers.

According to Eleanor Brown, library media specialists are feeling the impact and the need for increased and wider attention toward disabled persons.⁵ Legislation and several court cases during the seventies culminated in the widespread observance in 1981 of the International Year of Disabled Persons. A Proclamation by the United Nations and a subsequent proclamation of the United States Congress designated 1982 as the National Year of Disabled Persons. Library media specialists are now responding to this increased concern for disabled persons by endeavoring to plan and implement library services and programs for all ages and types of disabled persons and to provide materials (print and non-print) for their informational and educational needs. In order to respond effectively, library media specialists need to broaden their knowledge of disabled persons, as well as expand and update their professional expertise in serving the needs, interests, and abilities of disabled persons.

In no way should gifted children be overlooked. Today in many schools, there are special programs for the gifted. The library media specialist needs to provide various kind of media, print or non-print so that these children may be challenged beyond the basic requirements of the school curriculum. Many gifted students demonstrate talent and show interest in many areas which should be accommodated by a diversity of materials in the library media center.

⁵Eleanor Frances Brown, Library Service to the Disadvantaged (New Jersey: Scarecrow, 1971), p. 98.

If programs are developed and services are provided to meet the educational needs of all children, then they will be better prepared to meet the challenges of today's society.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Special Children: Who They Are

The literature review for this study included an examination of books and journal articles about the special child which were published between 1975 and 1985. In conjunction with and immediately following the passing of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, many publications were produced. Emphasis on the topic has decreased, though not diminished, since 1981 which was declared the International Year of Disabled Persons.

Elnora Alexander discussed the school system in Houston, Texas and described it as a place where the school library is becoming more than a resource center from which pupils and teachers draw out materials. She goes on to say that Houston developed a scheme known as Plan A, a brain-child of the Texas Education Agency. The main purpose of this plan was to provide special services to special children. Under this plan, children needing special attention no longer remain in self-contained classrooms unless their problems are extremely severe. Instead, they go to regular education classes where a team comprised of the regular teacher, principal, and a diagnostician, plus a school counselor, nurse and librarian appraise each and every problem.⁶

Disabled and non-disabled children are now integrated or mainstreamed in classrooms and school libraries. DeQuin wrote that:

⁶Elnora Alexander, "All Students Are Exceptional," Learning Today 6 (Spring 1975):30.

Library programs which are aimed at integrating disabled children and young people must be well planned before being implemented. Resources persons both inside and outside the institution should be consulted and include the library staff, parents of the disabled children, and the children themselves to the extent possible.... All programming should be based upon the needs, interests, and abilities of the children or young people who will be involved in the program.⁷

Gifted and talented students need to seek and explore. Therefore various materials need to be made available to them. Children are often locked in by structural and administrative restrictions that inhibit their development. The student should be allowed to go beyond the set curriculum if he chooses. The role of the librarian comes into play when the necessary materials are provided allowing gifted students to research and inquire. The librarian can also aid in fostering curiosity which the students need daily.

Bridges reported the experimental work conducted by the Brentwood College of Education dealing with gifted children from local primary schools, tutors, and student volunteers working with small groups in a variety of activities. This was an attempt to stimulate and enrich children, and to gain insight into their abilities and responses. From this experiment as stated by Bridges, it was found that very little had been specifically written about library work with the gifted.⁸ The gifted child cannot manage entirely with library materials that have been selected for his average classmates. Therefore, materials should be selected to reach each child's needs no matter how varied they may be.

⁷Henry C. DeQuin, Librarians Serving Disabled Children and Young People (Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1983), pp. 126-127.

⁸S. A. Bridges, Gifted Children: The Brentwood Experience (New York: Pitman, 1979), p. 43.

The Total Program: Delivering the Instructional Message

The school library media center plays a dynamic role in delivering the instructional message. It is not only a place where books are stored and circulated, but serves as a coordinating hub in which materials, the curriculum, and the children's academic and personal needs converge.

Baskin and Harris indicate that the school media center program consists of those activities directed by the librarians which develop reference skills, promote reading, provide enrichment, and supplement the curriculum.⁹ Students, according to Baskin and Harris, are taught to use the library independently and are introduced to famous and exciting authors, as well as other spectrums of literature. Activities such as storytelling, dramatization with puppets, and creative writing, all engender enthusiasm and understanding. Such aesthetic experiences which literature provides should incorporate the entire literary experience.¹⁰

Baskin also states:

The delivery of service to the exceptional child provides the hookup between the setting, equipment, prescriptive materials and the recipient's cognitive and affective development. The components of a successful programs are: (1) careful planning, (2) having knowledge of sources and materials, (3) being aware of the instructional media, (4) being sensitive to needs and requirements of the special child, (5) being knowledgeable of successful strategies with a willingness to experiment with several approaches, (6) ability to target in on procedures which proves to be beneficial to special children, energy and endurance to persist when confronted with obstacles or resistance, and coordination with other concerned faculty.¹¹

⁹Barbara Baskin and Karen Harris, The Special Child in the Library (Chicago: American Library Association, 1976), p. 91.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 91.

So librarians must be willing to reexamine the mode of delivery of services to ascertain whether their orientation, style, personal preferences, or other behaviors are appropriate to suite the exceptional child's requirements. The librarian must accept and welcome all the diverse segments of the school's population. According to Baskin "the program must be modified to accommodate the needs of each child rather than insisting that each child conforms to the demands of a preconceived protocol, and this adjective must be accomplished without impinging on the reasonable demands of other users."¹²

The dissertation of Cozetta White Buckley, conducted at the University of Michigan, examined the practices and perceptions of school media specialists in selected southern states. Buckley found that media specialists perceived the collections to be "moderately adequate"; however, the adaptation of media facilities to meet the needs of the physically handicapped was lacking.¹³

Mullen and Peterson, from The Special Child in the Library, explained how a large urban library system met the extraordinary needs of all categories of exceptional children. They found fewer problems in a single school or a relative small system. They also found that sufficient flexibility was maintained to provide library service despite the dissimilarities in the classroom structure. Programs had to be consistent

¹²Ibid., p. 92.

¹³National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, That All May Read: Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped People (Washington, D. C.: The Library of Congress, 1983), p. 366.

with the school's policy, yet responsive to the highly specific needs of each child. The success of such programs required a great deal of planning for development, implementation, and evaluation by special educators and librarians. Mullen and Peterson further stated that a stimulating library program should be axiomatic for gifted children whose requirements are often overlooked on the assumption that they are self-directed and capable of satisfying their needs without guidance.¹⁴

Although librarians frequently develop creative and challenging opportunities for gifted children, there is very little specific guidance as to what should be done or how to do it. Occasionally, there are complaints from members of the community. "We are wasting our most precious resources, our academically talented students." Demands are being made to "do something." Most librarians are more than willing, but need to know what this "something" is.

Gifted children comprise one of the least served groups in the public schools. Their needs are often discounted or overlooked. Librarians are too often unaware of the ability of these high achievers and therefore are unable to bring their considerable knowledge to bear on the problem.

The role of the library media specialist in gifted education must be clearly defined, as must be the role of the teacher. These roles, although very different in function, must be closely aligned in terms of goals and responsibilities and must be compatible and supportive of gifted students. Janice Smith emphasized that the thrust of the role

¹⁴Barbara Baskin and Karen Harris, The Special Child in the Library (Chicago: American Library Association, 1976), p. 92.

of the library media specialist is basically one of extension in a two-fold manner: extending skills that the library media specialist already possesses as a result of his/her formalized training and experiences in the field to meet the special needs and interest of the gifted and facilitating the extension of gifted students' knowledge, skills, and attitude.¹⁵

Allen Figurel gives several suggestions for practical and effective programs for gifted children. He suggests: (1) the establishment of a critical reading lab; (2) the use of appropriate reference books; and (3) the initiation of opportunities to evaluate the library experience. He further illustrates how the librarian's tools and skills could enlarge the gifted reader's world.¹⁶

Figurel also developed a concept of the library as a learning laboratory for gifted children. "Specific activities should be included to encourage divergent thinking, experimentation, intellectual growth, and creative imaginative responses to literature." He again states that there should be diversity in reading behaviors, greater involvement in library experiences and curriculum related enrichment activities.¹⁷

Batchelor, as stated in The Special Child in the Library, has further explored this theme and examined the central role which books

¹⁵Janice Smith, "Media Services for Gifted Students: An Overview," School Media Quarterly 8 (Winter 1980):161.

¹⁶J. Allen Figurel, Reading and Realism (Newark: IRA, 1979), p. 144.

¹⁷Barbara Baskin and Karen Harris, The Special Child in the Library (Chicago: American Library Association, 1976), p. 92.

and reading play in the lives of gifted children. He states that:

Gifted children must be educated in the skills and encouraged in the desire to engage in a lifetime of self-directed learning. Even though media and direct personal experience provide much information, the printed word is still a critical format through which most ideas are exchanged, explored, and analyzed. Therefore, the gifted child's facility in using the library will influence his ability to mature scholastically.¹⁸

In my observation and in dealing with children, the child who reads a lot is usually gifted. The librarian should work toward increasing analytical reading abilities and promoting the enjoyment of difficult reading matters. Susan Swanton explains:

The gifted child has a well-developed mind which needs exercising, and science fiction/fantasy has few if any present-day reference points, forcing the reader to stretch his or her imagination. On the other hand, youngsters who are considered average may still be attempting to master reading skills, which may explain why comedy/humor and adventure tales appeal so much more strongly to them.¹⁹

It is essential that storytelling be included in programming for the special child. Storytelling teaches new vocabulary, stretches attention span, introduces cultural events, norms and values, provides a socializing experience, develops attitudes, and can be the stimulus for language practice, dramatic interpretations, artistic expression, creative writing, and research projects. A form of storytelling can be done in all grades, kindergarten through twelveth.

Although storytelling is a common library practice and has gained much popularity, it creates problems with the handicapped. The usual

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Susan I. Swanton, "Minds Alive: What and Why Gifted Students Read for Pleasure," School Library Journal 30 (March 1984):7.

planning and delivery considerations which apply in a storytelling situation with sighted children are not always appropriate for the visually impaired. The facial expressions and bodily gestures have little value to them. What is important to them are voice quality and inflection which increase the possibility of their receiving pleasure or being able to comprehend. The blind child may react differently from his peers, and librarians who are not familiar with working with these children will have to moderate their expectations.

Elizabeth Johnson and Thelma Merriweather list the main objectives of library programs for the blind: the partially seeing and blind students should be enabled to develop healthful mental attitudes towards themselves and others; to read books by other children; to recognize opportunities available to them through using varied types of media; to identify with and relate to the librarian, sighted children, and the library; to recognize reality through the sense of touch; to listen to stories, and to communicate ideas from what they have learned and heard.²⁰

Storytelling with deaf children is an even more complex problem because of the language barrier and their dependence on visual cues. There have been five sections of a story identified: (1) introduction, (2) buildup, (3) action, (4) reaction, and (5) climax. So the librarian will have to follow this blueprint when a handicapped child is a member of a class in order to acquire the key to storytelling enjoyment.

²⁰Elizabeth Johnson and Thelma Merriweather, "A Casebook of School Library Services: Blind Children Learn to Relate," American Libraries 1 (February 1980):28.

Ruth Velleman reports that in John F. Henne's article from School Library Journal (December 1978) methods were discussed which could be used with visually impaired children in the library. Henne points out that blind children can enjoy films when someone describes what is taking place on the screen and that most visually handicapped students will be able to see much of the action if they sit closely enough.²¹

Library Accessibility and Adaptations for the Handicapped

The school library media center should provide accessibility of all facilities to the handicapped. According to Ruark in How to Jump into Library Services for the Handicapped, schools should follow this checklist for school library media centers in providing quality service for the handicapped:

1. Does the location of the library media center make it easily accessible for all users?
2. Do libraries have study carrels and tables that are accessible by wheelchair users?
3. Is there a clear height of twenty-eight and a half inches from the underside of the work surface of a carrel or table to the floor?
4. Are aisles between shelves wide enough to allow wheelchair passages?
5. Are reachers available in order that the handicapped can reach books on upper shelves?
6. Is a soundproof booth, carrel, or room available for the handicapped student to use tape recorders or talking book machines?
7. In a theater or auditorium, is there a level or ramped access to the stage?

²¹Ruth A. Velleman, Serving Physically Disabled People: An Information Handbook for All Libraries (New York: Bowker, 1979), p. 292.

8. Is the card catalog easily accessible to wheelchair users?²²

"Most school systems throughout the country have either enlarged or enriched their library programs or replaced them with instructional materials centers"²³ and libraries have become an extension of the classroom for children in the school.

Since most students usually spend part of each school day reading, studying, or experimenting, it has been widely suggested that the library media center be centrally located or on the first floor. This makes it easily accessible to children. It has also been suggested by Barbara Baskin and Karen Harris that sufficient light be provided so that every child can read with ease and comfort. They further state that "the visually handicapped constitutes the smallest group of exceptional children and indicates that the majority of these children are not blind but partially seeing and may vary in their amount of useful vision."²⁴

The following are characteristics of a library well adapted to the visually handicapped. This list is based on Baskin's list in The Special Child in the Library:

1. The library is located in a relatively quiet part of the building away from outside noises and distractions.
2. The level of illumination within the room is increased by means of wall of pastel colors, white ceiling, bulletin boards with light backgrounds, dull-finish furniture, and floors and carpeting which are light in color.

²²Ardis Ruark, How to Jump into Library Services for the Handicapped (South Dakota: United States Department of Education and Welfare, 1978), p. 35.

²³Barbara Baskin and Karen Harris, The Special Child in the Library (Chicago: American Library Association, 1976), p. 10.

²⁴Ibid., p. 11.

3. The area surrounding the child's visual task, such as table top and floor when he is reading, is not less than one-third the physical brightness of the task itself.
4. Desk with adjustable tops are provided for the partially seeing.
5. The desk or table top which the blind child uses for reading is flat and large enough to support his braille book, and no higher than his elbow level when he is seated.
6. Carrels have ample table top space and electrical outlets.
7. Easily accessible shelves are reserved for large type and braille books.
8. Some easily accessible storage space, such as small cupboards or a few shelves, is handy for easy storage of supplies by the visually handicapped.²⁵

The librarian can also give aid to the visually handicapped by modifying certain activities. Baskin and Harris make the following suggestions:

1. Make library signs large and clear enough to be seen easily.
2. Arrange bulletin board displays with large pictures and little detail.
3. Make displays with few objects. This makes it less confusing and easier to comprehend.²⁶

In addition, many of the materials and equipment found in modern libraries, if carefully selected, can enhance the learning opportunities of the visually limited.

The following are examples of superior materials as given by Baskin and Harris in The Special Child in the Library:

1. Maps and globes with definite outlines and distinct color.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

2. Tapes and recordings that are color coded.
3. Filmstrips and previewers that low-visioned children can use in dark areas.
4. Science models, such as human organs or systems accompanied by tapes or cassettes that describe and explain the model.²⁷

It is most important for the librarian to help the visually handicapped child to know the location of materials and equipment and how to know the location of materials and equipment and how to use them. It is even more vital to help in the guidance and personal growth of these children and to assist them in developing good habits of reading for information as well as for pleasure.

Before the child enters the library media center for the first time with his peer group, the librarian or an aide should show and explain the layout of the room. The librarian should also provide a wide variety of tapes, cassettes, and records for the children's use.

Due to the different degrees of blindness, the role of the librarian will vary. However, the most important goal should be to provide quality service to all children. This can be accomplished by making information easily accessible to all children.

Minimal architectural and room adaptations plus common sense should enable disabled students to participate in library activities which may otherwise be inaccessible to them. Most of the above suggestions can be incorporated into any traditional school library.

Disabled children are usually cut off from participating in many activities that are undertaken by other children. They are limited to

²⁷Ibid., p. 12.

varying degrees in social interactions, recreational opportunities, academic progress, and acquisition of life skills. Lucas points out that "through the library media center, disabled children can be involved in cultural and recreational pursuits."²⁸ They can acquire information and vicarious experiences by participating in book and other media related activities. So therefore, librarians cannot simply provide materials and expect disabled children to progress without guidance.

Karen H. Harris reports that: the first problem that the library media specialist encounters in dealing with the physically handicapped is getting them into the library media center; but once the architectural barriers are removed and the handicapped actually come into the library media center, the problems of selection are not so complex.²⁹ She further states that the overriding principle in selection is to deal with interests and abilities "...We ought to be able to challenge them in the areas in which they are interested and at whatever levels they are functioning."³⁰

Library media specialists have a major responsibility in selecting materials for the nonimpaired that promote understanding of the handicapped. Sarah Bonnet Stein's About Handicaps tells the story of Matthew and his concern about his neighbor who has cerebral palsy.³¹ This book is important because it helps to interpret handicap children. It also

²⁸Linda Lucas, The Disabled Child in the Library: Moving into the Mainstream (Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, 1983), p. 105.

²⁹Karen H. Harris, "Selecting Library Materials for Exceptional Children," School Media Quarterly 8 (Fall 1979):23-25.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Sarah Bonnet Stein, About Handicaps (New York: Walker, 1975), p. 23.

deals with unreasonable fear of the handicapped.

Other books that deal with the handicapped are:

1. Deenie by Judy Blume
2. Winning by Robin Brancato
3. Father Arcane's Daughter by E. L. Konigsburg
4. Racecourse for Andy by Patricia Wrightson
5. Hey Dummy by Kim Platt

The Library and Information Needs of
Disabled and Gifted Children

It has been emphasized by Lucas that "disabled children cannot be expected to adapt themselves to the demands of the library collection; rather, the materials should be selected and/or adapted to meet the children's interests, needs, and learning modes."³² Librarians must find ways to make materials accessible to all. They must learn to manage limited resources wisely, to look at materials in new ways, and to emphasize the strengths rather than the limitations of the users.

When most people think of library services to disabled persons and how to adapt services to fit their needs, we first think of providing accessibility to the library media center itself and to its materials. Some adaptations that may be made are: (1) widening aisles to allow access by wheelchairs, (2) providing levers rather than knobs on doors so that persons with limited strength or dexterity can open them. Even though providing books in braille or recorded format, HI/LO books and

³²Linda Lucas, The Disabled Child in the Library: Moving into the Mainstream (Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, 1983), p. 107.

multimedia materials may be expensive and time consuming, they are clear-cut responses to the needs of disabled children.

In the past few years, there has been a reawakening of the need for challenging gifted students, not only for the betterment of society, but for their own self-actualization as well. As stated by Janice Smith: Gifted programs by their very nature, depend upon the use of extensive resource materials and media equipment with and by gifted students. Thus, the library media specialist, working cooperatively with the teacher, has a distinct role as a practicing professional in gifted education: that of active participation beginning with the process of instructional development and design of curriculum for the gifted moving through the entire teaching/learning cycle, and ending with the final evaluation phase of the complete education process.³³

Teachers and library media specialists should avoid boring gifted and talented children as explained by Richard Bach taken from Jonathan Livingston Seagull.

What he had once hoped for the Flock, he now gained for himself alone; he learned to fly, and was not sorry for the price that he had paid. Jonathan Seagull discovered that boredom and fear and anger are the reasons that a gull's life is so short, and with these gone from his thought, he lived a long life indeed.³⁴

Teachers and parents working with a gifted student need to remember that many gifted and talented students are well rounded and possess many talents. The gifted and talented child may not be recognized or he may

³³Janice Smith, "Media Services for Gifted Students: An Overview," School Media Quarterly 8 (Winter 1980):161.

³⁴Richard Bach, Jonathan Livingston Seagull (New York: McMillan, 1970), p. 35.

not achieve to maximum potential until adolescence or adulthood. Each child needs help in achieving his full potential. Therefore, it becomes an important role of the librarian in conjunction with teachers to identify, plan and implement a quality program to meet the needs of the gifted child in the library media center.

Summary of Related Materials

The literature points to a need for library media specialists to become more involved in the total school and educational program which includes curriculum planning and development, instructional design, and serving the needs of all students. Yet previous studies indicate a general lag where library media specialists are concerned in meeting the needs of the special child.

CHAPTER III
THE COLLECTION AND THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

The Collection of Data

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perceptions of the library media specialists and teachers in the special education program in the metro-Atlanta area including Cobb, Dekalb, Douglas, Fulton, and Gwinnett counties concerning the role of the librarian in providing a quality education for the special child. From the information gathered by reviewing the literature, a survey instrument was formulated for use by the media specialists and teachers of special children in the above mentioned counties. Role statements were developed and used in designing the final survey instrument (see Appendix B).

The survey was mailed in April 1985 to fifty media specialists and teachers of special children in the metro-Atlanta area. Responses were received in May and June. They were scored according to the number and percentage of responses. The data collected were analyzed and presented in the form of a table. The study was completed by presenting major findings, conclusions, and recommendation for further study. The sample of teachers was determined by sending a survey to the special teacher of every third school from a list of schools in the metro-Atlanta area. This ensured that special teachers were represented proportionately.

The survey instrument consisted of eighteen major statements of library programs and services with several sub-statements. The respondents

TABLE 1

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY AS PERCEIVED BY MEDIA SPECIALISTS AND TEACHERS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE METRO-ATLANTA AREA RANKED BY NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE

Role Statements	Essential		Very Important		Could Get by Without		Do Not Need	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1. The library should be designed to be more accessible to the disabled child.	15	35	15	35	10	23	2	4
2. The library should be centrally located to enable all students to reach it more easily.	20	47	22	52	0	0	0	0
3. Shelving should be adapted for the handicapped.	10	23	20	47	10	23	2	4
A. Perimeter wall shelving should be provided for the wheelchair student.	9	21	19	45	10	23	2	4
B. If book stacks are used, 30" and 5' space should be provided between stacks.	10	23	19	45	11	26	2	4
4. Library furniture consisting of three 29" high apronless tables should be provided to accommodate wheelchairs.	12	28	20	47	8	19	2	4
5. Low stools should be provided for older students of small stature.	0	0	10	23	31	73	1	2

TABLE 1 - Continued

Role Statements	Essential		Very Important		Could Get by Without		Do Not Need	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
6. Card catalogs should be placed on a special 16" high base to make them low enough to be completely accessible to students in wheelchairs.	19	45	10	23	9	21	2	4
7. If extra drawers are needed, another base and the card catalog should be placed side by side.	19	45	10	23	9	21	2	4
8. The flooring in the media center should be appropriate for students in the wheelchair and students who use crutches and braces.	18	42	20	47	4	9	0	0
9. These methods should be used in the media center:								
Talk to all students	10	23	20	47	8	19	4	9
Talk to teachers	15	35	12	28	12	28	3	7
Create media displays	5	11	15	35	10	23	2	4
Make announcements	10	23	14	33	15	35	3	7
Write newsletters/memos	15	35	22	52	6	14	0	0
10. Special areas should be available for individual/small group instruction.	10	23	15	35	10	23	6	14

TABLE 1 - Continued

Role Statements	Essential		Very Important		Could Get by Without		Do Not Need	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Study carrels	20	47	10	23	10	23	1	2
Conference room	8	19	10	23	15	35	8	19
AV production room	2	4	4	9	32	76	3	7
Computer room	3	7	10	23	27	64	1	2
11. The staff participates in planning activities for the gifted.								
Principal	8	19	8	19	26	61	0	0
Media specialist	2	4	3	7	35	83	2	4
Department chairpersons	0	0	2	4	10	23	30	71
Other teachers	0	0	1	2	11	26	30	71
Counselor	0	0	1	2	12	28	29	69
County coordinator	8	19	29	69	5	11	0	0
12. Equipment should be made available for checkout through the media center.	10	23	32	76	0	0	0	0
13. These methods should be used by the media specialist to become acquainted with gifted students:								
Visit gifted classes	0	0	4	9	25	59	13	30
Give book talks	4	9	10	23	27	64	1	2
Accompany field trips	0	0	0	0	40	95	1	2
Assist with academic bowl	0	0	10	23	32	76	0	0

TABLE 1 - Continued

Role Statements	Essential		Very Important		Could Get by Without		Do Not Need	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
14. Media Services to gifted students:								
Practice flexible volunteers	25	59	15	35	2	4	0	0
Use parent volunteers	0	0	3	7	35	83	4	9
Extend loan periods	4	9	8	19	30	71	0	0
Use interlibrary loan	8	19	4	9	25	59	5	11
Select materials of a higher reading level	12	28	28	66	2	4	0	0
Involve teachers in selecting materials	10	23	12	28	14	33	6	14
Select professional books about gifted children	20	47	8	19	10	23	4	9
Provide reading guidance	6	14	10	23	8	19	2	4
Teach advance reference skills	10	23	12	28	15	35	5	11
Teach media production	15	11	3	7	25	59	9	21
Develop original media	5	11	4	9	29	69	4	9
Make computer and computer programs available to the media center	10	23	8	19	18	42	6	14
15. Media services to the handicapped:								
Seek resources from the community	2	4	4	9	32	76	4	9
Utilize parent volunteers	4	9	3	7	32	76	3	7
Make available a carrel or booth to listen to recorders or talking machines	12	28	25	59	5	11	0	0

TABLE 1 - Continued

Role Statements	Essential		Very Important		Could Get by Without		Do Not Need	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Provide bibliography relating to the handicapped	8	19	10	23	19	45	5	11
Read books written about children with handicaps	4	9	10	23	22	52	6	14
Provide individual as well as group library instructions	6	14	23	54	4	9	9	21
Show films dealing with handicapped	1	2	4	9	34	73	6	14
Have people with handicaps visit the school	1	2	3	7	28	66	10	23
Provide individual reading guidance	8	19	16	38	9	21	9	21

SOURCE: Data compiled by the researcher from questionnaires' responses mailed to library media specialists and teachers of special children in the metro-Atlanta area (Cobb, Dekalb, Douglas, Fulton and Gwinnett Counties).

used a Likert-type scale to rate each statement to the degree of importance placed on it by the respondent. The survey concluded with an open-ended statement allowing respondents to add any additional statement not covered. A rating scale was provided so respondents could rate any additions that were made. Respondents were also provided space to give additional comments (see Appendix B).

The data collected were tabulated by determining the number of responses to the role statements and dividing them by the number of respondents. In order to arrive at a percentage of returns, the number of surveys returned was divided by the total number of surveys mailed. The response categories were as follows: essential-1, very important-2, could get by without-3, and do not need-4.

The Analysis of Data

Questionnaires were mailed to fifty media specialists and teachers of gifted and handicapped children. Responses from the questionnaires that were returned were scored and the data analyzed according to the number and percentage of responses. The respondents represented all school levels and responses were received from forty-two of fifty media specialists and teachers surveyed or eighty-four percent. Twenty-five were mailed to teachers, either gifted or handicapped.

A discussion of the responses taken from the survey as perceived by media specialists and teachers of special children in metro-Atlanta area will follow:

Role Statement 1

The library should be designed to be more accessible to the disabled child.

According to the survey, thirty-five percent of the respondents reported that designing the library to be more accessible to the disabled child is "essential." Thirty-five percent reported this statement "very important," twenty-three percent indicated they "could get by without" and four percent indicated they "do not need."

Role Statement 2

The library should be centrally located to enable all students to reach it more easily.

A very high percentage indicated that the library should be centrally located to enable all students to reach it more easily. Forty-one percent reported that this statement is "essential" and forty-two percent reported that it is "very important." There was no response to categories "could get by without" and "do not need."

Role Statement 3

Shelving should be adapted for the handicapped.

- 1) Perimeter wall shelving should be provided for the wheelchair student.
- 2) If book stacks are used, thirty inches and five feet space should be provided between stacks.

Adapting the shelves for the handicapped was of high importance according to the survey results. Ten or twenty-three percent of the

respondents indicated that the general statement is "essential," twenty or forty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that this statement is "very important," ten or twenty-three percent reported they "could get by without" and two or four percent reported they "do not need." Nine or twenty-one percent reported that perimeter wall shelving is "essential," nineteen or forty-five percent reported this sub-statement to be "very important," ten or twenty-three percent indicated that they "could get by without" and two participants or four percent indicated they "do not need." If book stacks are used, thirty inches or five feet space should be provided between stacks. For this sub-statement, ten or twenty-three percent indicated that this statement is "essential," Nineteen or forty-five percent indicated that this statement is "very important," eleven or twenty-six percent indicated they "could get by without" and two participants or four percent indicated they "do not need."

Role Statement 4

Library furniture consisting of three twenty-inches-high apronless tables should be provided to accommodate wheelchairs.

The participants showed great interest in adapting the library furniture. Twelve participants indicated this statement to be "essential" and twenty participants indicated it to be "very important." Yet eight participants reported they "could get by without" and two reported they "do not need."

Role Statement 5

Low stools should be provided for older students of small stature.

Very little interest was shown for this role statement. No participant responded to the "essential" category, while ten reported it to be "very important." A large number, seventy-three percent, indicated they could "get by without" and one respondent or two percent reported they "do not need."

Role Statement 6

Card catalogs should be placed on a special sixteen-inches-high base to make them low enough to be completely accessible to students in wheelchairs.

The card catalog was also high on the priority list for the participants. Forty-five percent reported that it is "essential," and twenty-three percent reported that it is "very important." Twenty-one percent indicated they "could get by without" and four percent indicated they "do not need."

Role Statement 7

If extra drawers are needed, another base and the card catalog should be placed side by side.

Forty-five reported this role statement is "essential," twenty-three reported it is "very important," twenty-one reported they "could get by without" and four percent indicated they "do not need."

Role Statement 8

The flooring in the media center should be appropriate for students in the wheelchair and students who use crutches and braces.

Out of forty-two participants who responded, thirty-five or eighty-three percent reported that appropriate flooring is "essential" for students in the wheelchair as well as those who use crutches and braces. Seven or sixteen percent of the participants indicated that this statement is "very important." There was no response to the "could get by without" and "do not need" categories.

Role Statement 9

These methods should be used in the media center:

- Talk to all students
- Talk to teachers
- Create media displays
- Make announcements
- Write newsletters/memos

Most respondents showed that good public relations is needed in libraries. Twenty-three percent indicated talking to all students is "essential," forty-seven percent indicated talking to students is "very important," nineteen percent indicated they "could get by without," and nine percent indicated they "do not need." Talking to teachers was also ranked high among the participants. Thirty-five percent reported this statement to be "essential," twenty-eight percent reported that it is "very important," twenty-eight percent indicated they "could get by without" and seven percent indicated they "do not need." Eleven percent of the respondents reported that creating displays is "essential,"

thirty-five percent reported it to be "very important," twenty-three percent indicated they "could get by without," and four percent indicated they "do not need." Making announcements was reported to be "essential" by twenty-three percent of the respondents. It was reported to be "very important" by thirty-three percent of the respondents. It was also indicated that thirty-five percent of the respondents "could get by without," while seven percent reported they "do not need." Thirty-five percent of the participants indicated that writing newsletters/memos is "essential," fifty-two percent indicated that it is "very important," and fourteen percent reported they "could get by without." There was no response for the "do not need" category.

Role Statement 10

Special areas should be available for individual/small group instruction:

- Study carrels
- Conference room
- Audiovisual production room
- Computer room

Many of the participants showed, according to the survey, that they could get by without most of the special areas listed. For the general statement, twenty-three percent indicated this role statement to be "essential" and thirty-five percent indicated it to be "very important." There were twenty-three participants who reported they "could get by without" and fourteen percent reported they "do not need." For the individual areas, forty-seven percent indicated that study carrels are "essential," twenty-three percent indicated that they are "very

important," twenty-three percent indicated they "could get by without" and only one participant or two percent indicated they "do not need" the study carrels. Nineteen percent of the respondents reported that the conference room is "essential," twenty-three percent reported it to be "very important," thirty-five percent indicated they "could get by without," and nineteen percent indicated they "do not need." According to this survey, seventy-six percent of the participants indicated they "could get by without" the audiovisual production room, seven percent indicated the "do not need," while nine percent reported that this room is "very important" and only four percent reported this room to be "essential."

Role Statement 11

The staff participants in planning activities for the gifted.

Principal
Media specialist
Department chairpersons
Other teachers
Counselor
County coordinators

According to the responses on the survey, only county coordinators received a high rating for planning activities for the gifted child. Nineteen percent of the respondents reported that it is "essential" for the principal to participate, nineteen percent reported it is "very important" for the principal to participate, sixty-one percent indicated they "could get by without" the principal's participating, and no response was given for the "do not need" column. Most participants, eighty-three percent indicated they "could get by without" the media

specialist's assistance in planning activities, four percent indicated they "do not need," while seven percent reported it is "very important" and four percent reported it is "essential" for the media specialist to participate in planning activities for the gifted.

Role Statement 12

Equipment should be made available for checkout through the media center.

This statement was also high on the priority list of the respondents. Twenty-three percent reported this statement to be "essential" and seventy-six percent reported it to be "very important." Again, there was no response to the "could get by without" and "do not need" columns.

Role Statement 13

These methods should be used by the media specialist to become acquainted with gifted students:

- Visit gifted classes
- Give book talks
- Accompany field trips
- Assist with academic bowl

The survey showed that many participants ranked these methods very low. Twenty-five participants, representing fifty-nine percent, indicated they "could get by without" visiting gifted classes, while thirteen, representing thirty percent, indicated they "do not need." Only nine percent reported that it is "very important" to visit gifted classes. There was no response indicated for the "essential" category. Sixty-four percent of the respondents reported they "could get by without" giving book talks, thirty percent indicated they "do not need," twenty-three

percent indicated this was "very important" and nine percent reported that book talks are "essential." It was also observed from the survey that forty participants, representing ninety-five percent, "could get by without" accompanying field trips, two percent reported they "do not need." No response was reported in the "essential" and "very important" columns. Very few respondents showed interest in assisting with the academic bowl. The categories "essential" and "do not need" received no response. Seventy-six percent reported they "could get by without" and twenty-three percent indicated that assisting with the academic bowl is "very important."

Role Statement 14

Media services to gifted students:

- Practice flexible scheduling
- Use parent volunteers
- Extend loan periods
- Use interlibrary loan
- Select materials of higher reading level
- Involve teachers in selecting materials
- Select professional books about gifted children
- Provide reading guidance
- Teach advance reference skills
- Teach media production
- Develop original media
- Make computer and computer programs available in the media center

The survey showed that these services are of average importance to the respondents. In the "essential" column, fifty-nine percent of the respondents responded to practicing flexible scheduling, thirty-five percent responded to the "very important" column and four percent responded to the "could get by without." There was no response to the "do not need" category. There was also no response in the "essential"

category for parent volunteers. However, seven percent of the respondents reported parent volunteers to be "very important," while eighty-three percent reported they "could get by without" and nine percent reported they "do not need." For extension of loan periods, nine percent reported this is "essential," nineteen percent reported it is "very important," seventy-one percent reported they "could get by without," and there was no response to the "do not need" column. Nineteen respondents reported interlibrary loans to be "essential," nine percent reported this to be "very important," fifty-nine percent indicated they "could get by without" and eleven percent indicated they "do not need." Twenty-eight percent reported selecting materials of higher reading level is "essential," sixty-six percent reported this statement to be "very important," four percent indicated they "could get by without" and there was no response to the "do not need" category. Twenty-three percent indicated that involving teachers in selecting materials is "essential," twenty-eight indicated this is "very important" and twenty-three percent reported they "could get by without." There was fourteen percent of the participants who reported they "do not need." Selecting professional books about gifted children received forty-seven percent for "essential," nineteen percent for "very important," twenty-three percent for "could get by without" and nine percent for "do not need." Providing reading guidance received fourteen percent for "essential," twenty-three percent for "very important," nineteen percent for "could get by without" and four percent for "do not need." Teaching advanced reference skills received twenty-three percent for "essential," twenty-eight percent for "very

important," thirty-five percent for "could get by without" and eleven percent for "do not need." Eleven percent of the respondents reported teaching media production is "essential," seven percent reported it is "very important," fifty-nine percent reported they "could get by without" and twenty-one percent reported the "do not need." For developing original media, eleven percent of the respondents reported this is "essential," seven percent reported this is "very important," fifty-nine percent reported they "could get by without" and twenty-one percent reported they "do not need." Making computers and computer programs available received twenty-three percent for "essential," nineteen percent for "very important," forty-two percent for "could get by without" and fourteen percent for "do not need."

Role Statement 15

Media services to the handicapped:

- Seek resources from the community
- Utilize parent volunteers
- Make available a carrel or booth to listen to recorders or talking machines
- Provide bibliography relating to the handicapped
- Read books written about children with handicaps
- Provide individual as well as group library instructions
- Show films dealing with the handicapped
- Have people with handicaps visit the school
- Provide individual reading guidance

It was observed from the survey that media services to the handicapped were similar to those of the gifted in that most of them received low interest rating from respondents. For the statement, seeking resource from the community, four percent of the participants reported it to be "essential," nine percent indicated it is "very important,"

while seventy-six percent reported they "could get by without" and nine percent reported they "do not need." Nine percent of the participants indicated that it is "essential" to utilize parent volunteers and seven percent indicated that this statement is "very important." Again, seventy-six percent indicated they "could get by without" and seven percent reported they "do not need." Most of the respondents showed great interest in making available a carrel or booth to listen to recorders or talking machines. Twenty-eight percent reported it is "essential," fifty-nine percent reported it is "very important," eleven percent reported they "could get by without" and no responses was given to the "do not need" category. Providing bibliography relating to the handicapped received a nineteen percent ranking for "essential," twenty-three percent for "very important," forty-five percent for "could get by without" and eleven percent for "do not need." Reading books written about children with handicaps rating respondents, nine percent reported this statement to be "essential," twenty-three percent reported it to be "very important," while fifty-two percent indicated the "could get by without" and fourteen percent reported they "do not need." Fourteen percent reported that providing individual as well as group library instructions is "essential," fifty-four percent reported it is "very important," nine percent indicated they "could get by without" and twenty-one percent indicated they "do not need." The statement showing films dealing with the handicapped received a two percent ranking for "essential," nine percent for "very important," seventy-three percent for "could get by without" and fourteen percent for "do not need."

Having people with handicaps visit the school received a two percent ranking for "essential," seven percent for "very important," sixty-six percent for "could get by without" and thirty-three percent for "do not need." Providing individual reading guidance received a nineteen percent ranking for "essential," thirty-eight percent for "very important," twenty-one percent for "could get by without" and twenty-one percent for "do not need."

Summary of the Analyzed Responses

As concluded from the data in the table, the importance of special services to the handicapped and gifted students has been considered of low priority in the education of special students. Therefore, in order for these students to reach their highest potential, it is necessary that a closer look be made into their needs, interests, and availability of the facilities and adaptations of their respective schools.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of the library media specialist is constantly changing. The role has changed from one of selection and organization to one of contributing skills in new technology such as video and microcomputers and meeting the needs of library users. Modern trends also summon library media specialists to involve themselves in the instructional design and join teachers in planning the curriculum which meets the needs of all children. The changing role of library media specialists must be recognized and understood by library media specialists and classroom teachers if media specialists are to reach their full potential contributing to the total instructional program of the school. For many years, very little attention was given the handicapped children and the education of the nation's gifted and talented children was neglected.

Because handicapped children are not the same as normal children, they have been most often put aside or left alone. Public Law 94-142 gives all children the right to a quality education, thus enabling them to be put into the mainstream with other children.

Even though some children classified as the gifted and talented are usually high achievers, teachers have left them to work independently with little or no supervision. Gifted children have been traditionally considered friends of the library media center and actually receive less attention from the library media specialist than other children. As special programs in the curricula are developed for the gifted and

handicapped, there should be an increased awareness of the role of the library media center in this area.

A survey instrument listing fifteen major role statements and including other sub-role statements with space provided for additional comments was sent to fifty library media specialists and teachers of special children in the metro-Atlanta area, including Cobb, Dekalb, Douglas, Fulton and Gwinnett counties. These educators were asked to rate role statements from "do not need" to "essential" using a scale of one through four with one meaning the highest and four meaning the lowest.

The survey was mailed in April to all participants. Responses were received in May and early June. The researcher scored the responses according to the number and percentage of answers. The author then analyzed the data gathered from the survey and presented the data in the form of a table. The researcher completed the study by presenting major findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

Data collected from the survey indicated that most library media specialists and teachers of special children surveyed in the metro-Atlanta area are in agreement with the services and programs that should be offered to special children in order to receive a quality education. As evidenced by the respondents' answer to the open-ended question on the questionnaire, some of them, not realizing some students have unknown disabilities, stated that since they have no known handicapped children in their school that there is no need to provide special services. One media specialist stated that since the special teacher takes resources to the classroom that there is no need to provide special services to special children.

But according to the schools surveyed, audiovisual equipment should be accessible to all students and teachers. The majority of respondents said the library media specialist's scheduling was flexible.

A review of the literature by the author revealed some media services expressed as being beneficial to both gifted and handicapped children. The services noted were the production of original media for use in the gifted curriculum and instruction in media production as well as making necessary adaptations for the handicapped. The results of the survey disclosed that these services are not being offered to students in the majority of schools surveyed.

At the outset of the study, the author expected to be able to cite several innovative ways the library media specialists were involving the library media center in the special education program. An unexpected finding of the study was the negative comments about the media program made by some teachers. There is an apparent lack of communication between the media specialist and the teacher of special children in some schools.

Conclusions

The provision and implementation of media services to all children should be the primary goal of the library media specialist. Children in the special education program should not be neglected or left alone by the library media specialist, as the library media center can and should offer numerous opportunities and challenges for their growth. If the library media center is not to be ignored by those educators who design the curricula for special children, then the library media

specialist must seize every opportunity to promote the use of media resources with these children.

The library media specialist must discover techniques to improve communication between himself/herself and the teacher of special children. No longer can library media specialists allow the library media center to be on the periphery of the school's instruction program. Alliance for Excellence: Librarians Respond to a Nation at Risk, United States Department of Education (1984), summons media specialists to provide a broad based media program geared to preparing students for the Information Age in which they will live. For this to happen, media specialists have to recognize the contributions they can make in all areas of the instructional program of the school and communicate the diversified functions of their role to the classroom teacher.³³ Once classroom teachers understand how the media program can contribute to the instructional goals of the school, library media specialists and classroom teachers can work as a team in preparing students for the future.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Since administrators are the instructional leaders of the schools and were not surveyed for this study, a continuation of this study could be made to determine how principals perceived the role of library media specialists. This research would make it possible to ascertain if administrators are aware of the potential contributions library media

³³United States Department of Education, Alliance for Excellence: Librarians Respond to a Nation at Risk (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1984), p. 74.

specialists are capable of contributing to the curriculum and the total instructional program of the school.

Although this study was limited to the metro-Atlanta area, other studies analogous to this one could be conducted in other systems to reflect the different goals, philosophies, socioeconomic level, and values of those systems. Similar studies in different school systems with different variables might show different results.

APPENDIX A

CHAPEL HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL
3989 Chapel Hill Road
Douglasville, Georgia 30135

Dear Colleague,

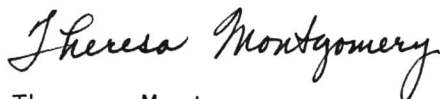
In my work as media specialist at Chapel Hill Middle School, I have become concerned about the need of media services to the special child (gifted/handicapped) and the role the library media specialist plays in his/her life. Therefore, as part of a graduate research study, I am conducting a survey to determine what library media specialists feel about special services and what is actually being done to aid in providing quality education for the special child.

A questionnaire has been mailed to media specialists and a random sampling of teachers of special children in the Metro-Atlanta area. I would appreciate your completing this questionnaire and returning it to me in the self-addressed-stamped envelop by April 30.

Hopefully, the information from this survey will enable the media specialist to provide better media services to all students making necessary adaptations for the special child.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theresa Montgomery".

Theresa Montgomery
Media Specialist

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

Please indicate your position by checking () the appropriate name:

_____ Teacher _____ Media Specialist

Instruction for completion: Indicate your opinion of the need for media services and adaptation to accommodate the special child in your school by circling the correct number.

1	2	3	4
Essential	Very Important	Could Get by Without	Do Not Need

Circle your response.

Library Adaptations

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The library should be designed to be more accessible to the disabled child. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The library should be centrally located to enable all students to reach it more easily. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Shelving should be adapted for the handicapped. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| a. Perimeter wall shelving should be provided for the wheelchair student. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. If book stacks are used, 30" and 5' space should be provided between stacks. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Library furniture consisting of three 29" high apronless tables should be provided to accommodate wheelchairs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Low stools should be provided for older students of small stature. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Card catalogs should be placed on a special 16" high base to make them low enough to be completely accessible to students in wheelchairs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. If extra drawers are needed, another base and the card catalog should be placed side by side. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. The flooring in the media center should be appropriate for students in the wheelchair and students who use crutches and braces. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

9. These methods should be used in the media center:
- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Talk to all students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Talk to teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Create media displays | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Make announcements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Write newsletters/memos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
10. Special areas should be available for individual/
small group instruction.
- | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Study carrels | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Conference room | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| AV production room | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Computer room | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
11. The staff participates in planning activities
for the gifted.
- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Media specialist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Department chairpersons | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Other teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Counselor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| County coordinators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
12. Equipment should be made available for checkout
through the media center.
- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|---|---|---|---|
13. These methods should be used by the media
specialist to become acquainted with gifted
students.
- | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Visit gifted classes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Give book talks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Accompany field trips | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Assist with academic bowl | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
14. Media services to gifted students:
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Practice flexible scheduling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Use parent volunteers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Extend loan periods | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Use interlibrary loan | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Select materials of a higher reading level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Involve teachers in selecting materials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Select professional books about gifted children | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Provide reading guidance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Teach advance reference skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Teach media production	1	2	3	4
Develop original media	1	2	3	4
Make computer and computer programs available in the media center	1	2	3	4

15. Media services to the handicapped:

Seek resource from the community	1	2	3	4
Utilize parent volunteers	1	2	3	4
Make available a carrel or booth to listen to recorders or talking machines	1	2	3	4
Provide bibliography relating to the handicapped	1	2	3	4
Read books written about children with handicaps	1	2	3	4
Provide individual as well as group library instructions	1	2	3	4
Show films dealing with the handicapped	1	2	3	4
Have people with handicaps visit the school	1	2	3	4
Provide individual reading guidance	1	2	3	4

A rating scale is provided below if you wish to add any services or necessary adaptations not covered in this survey.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| 16. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Please add additional comments below.

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