

2003

## A case study of four school library media specialists' leadership in Louisiana.

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A Case Study of Four School Library Media Specialists' Leadership in Louisiana

Linda Jean Underwood

Dissertation submitted to  
The College of Human Resources and Education  
at West Virginia University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Leadership

Dr. Helen M. Hazi, Ph.D, Chair  
Dr. Paul Chapman, Ph.D  
Dr. Ernest Goeres, Ph.D  
Dr. Virginia Plumley, Ph.D  
Dr. Beth Paskoff, Ph.D., Dean School of Library and Information Science Louisiana  
State University  
Dr. David McCrory, Ph.D

Department of Advanced Educational Leadership Studies

Morgantown, West Virginia  
2003

Keywords: School Librarian, School Library Media Specialist, School Library Media  
Specialist Leadership, School Library Media Specialist Daily Activities

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The purpose of this study was to understand the daily activities of effective school library media specialists in an elementary school, middle school, and high school in a Louisiana parish, non-church, public school system through qualitative research using interviews, observation field notes, and written documentation from the three schools. The importance of the study was that there is little known about the leadership role of the school library media specialist and the role of the school library media specialist. Further, the literature concerning effective schools and effective school library media specialists is separate. The study had four conclusions. First, an effective school library media specialist can be the hub of the school. Second, the effective school library media specialist can lead from the middle through technology expertise, collaborative planning, promoting reading and positive public relations. Next, the effective school library media specialist is supported by the positive perceptions of the superintendent, school principal, library supervisor, and classroom teachers who all realize the importance of the school library media program to academic achievement. Even though the programs do not completely meet the standards, through the leadership that evolved from daily collaboration, the school library media specialists in this study managed to provide effective programs. Last, the school library media specialists are enabled by the positive perceptions of the superintendent, scheduling and financial support from the school principal, the advocacy of the library supervisor, and the use of the center by teachers. However, constraints such as a lack of time for collaborative planning, lack of paraprofessional staff, inadequate funding and no substitutes for the school library media specialists constrain them.

## Acknowledgements

First, without the guidance, support and patience of Dr. Helen M. Hazi, the completion of this document would not have been possible. When we met in New Orleans, Louisiana in April of 2002, she told me to avoid any life altering experiences. However, my world changed drastically within a few months. During the completion of this document, I divorced, accepted a new job and moved. Dr. Hazi is an educator with a heart. There are not many educators that possess her strength, patience, intelligence and generosity.

Second, I would like to thank Dr. Virginia Plumley at Marshall University. Dr. Plumley has been my mentor and friend for many years. She has listened to my trials and tribulations with this document as well as my personal life. I can still hear her telling me, “Please finish your dissertation before I die!” Well, I made it!

Next, I would like to thank the Rev. Jim Berning, S.D.B., Mr. Michael Begg and Dr. Si Nguyen, Ph.D., the administrative staff of Archbishop Shaw High School in Marrero, Louisiana. They supported me during my life changes and presented me with the flexibility to complete the tasks of changing my life and completing this document. These men embrace leadership that never forgets the ever present human factor. They lead with love and respect for human beings.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the Louisiana State University School of Library and Information Science for providing me an opportunity to study the field of school librarianship at an American Library Association accredited university. The experience was intellectually and personally gratifying. I would especially like to thank Dr. Beth Paskoff, Dr. Alma Dawson, Dr. Patsy Perritt and Dr. Carol Barry. Their love of

the field of librarianship and information studies is evident in instruction and personal conversations. They are true scholars and educators.

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## Chapter One: Introduction-A Case Study of Four School Library Media Specialists' Leadership in Louisiana

Effective school library media specialists envision themselves as transformational leaders who collaborate with other teachers to facilitate student development of information literacy skills (American Association of School Librarians [AASL] & Association for Educational Communications and Technology [AECT], 1998; Brown, 1993; Brown, 1999; Burdenuk, 1993; Haycock, 1999a, 1999c). In order to achieve effectiveness, Stripling (1995) states that school library media programs must emphasize research-based learning, not clerical duties such as cataloging or the rote teaching of library skills. According to Information Power (AASL & AECT, 1998), "The goals of today's library media program point to the development of a community of learners that is centered on the student and sustained by a creative, energetic library media program" (p.6).

The effective school library media specialist acts as a change agent, innovator, opinion leader, and monitor (Haycock, 1999c). The qualities of an effective school library media specialist include initiative, confidence, communication skills, leadership qualities, and the willingness to take risks (Russell, 2000). School library media specialists should take the initiative to contact teachers, rather than waiting for teachers to search for them in the school library media center (Callison, 1999). Montgomery (1992) discovered that effective school library media specialists are characterized by an interest in people, an interest in mentoring, a focus on social issues, and a preference for working with others.

Since advocacy for school library media programs often leads to financial as well as center scheduling support, it is the responsibility of an effective school library media specialist to educate principals and other staff members through staff development (Hartzell, 1997a; Russell, 2000; Wilson, Blake & Lyders, 1993; Wilson, Blake & Lyders, 1999; Wilson & MacNeil, 1998). School library media specialists must establish and maintain positive relationships, which are the key to successful instruction, student achievement, and collaboration with other teachers (Muronago & Harada, 1999; Wright & Davie, 1999). Thus, in order to be treated as equals in the school, school library media specialists cannot be perceived as employees who do nothing (Reed, 1996).

The Colorado Study of 1993 provided the documentation of effectiveness that school library media advocates sought. The study determined that students at schools with adequately funded school library media centers achieved higher-than-average reading scores no matter how poor and uneducated the community (Lance, Welborn, & Hamilton-Pennell, 1993). An update to the 1993 study found that Colorado standardized reading scores were higher in schools whose library media programs were better staffed, stocked, and funded (Hamilton-Pennell, Lance, Rodney, & Hainer, 2000; Lance, 2000). Both of the Colorado Studies point to the importance of a school library media program in the development of an effective instructional program. Thus, academic achievement has been proven to be directly related to the strength of the school library media program (Didier, 1984, 1985; Hamilton-Pennell, et al., 2000; Haycock, 1992, 1995, 1997, 1999b; Lance, et al., 1993; Mahar 1983; Manzo, 2000; Woolls, 1990).

Other studies have suggested that the importance of school library media specialists in the school's mission help to develop a student's ability to think (Gross &

Kientz, 1999; Kuhlthau, 1996; Mancall, Aaron & Walker, 1986; Lance, 1994; Pickard, 1993). Since an effective school attempts to provide students with the means to master collecting and analyzing information in a critical fashion, one might assume that school library media specialists are a necessary element in an effective school (National Parent Teacher Association, 1998).

### *Role of School Library Media Centers in Restructured Effective Schools*

In 1994, Nancy Baker Clark studied the correlation between effective school reform and effective school library media centers, discovering that there were two distinct bodies of knowledge concerning effective educational reform research and effective school library media research. Further, the two bodies of research remained independent of each other for more than twenty years, even though the two research literatures shared a similar philosophy.

In studying the role of the school library media center in restructuring public schools, Clark (1994) chose to look at the Coalition of Essential Schools which was organized by TheodoreSizer at Brown University in 1984. The restructured public school teachers in Clark's study saw the school library media specialist as more involved in the curriculum than did classroom teachers in traditionally structured schools. Further, she believed that the AASL and leaders of educational reform should address the lack of research collaboration (Clark, 1994).

Effective school research and effective school library media research focus on the same concepts. Factors in the effective schools' formula include collaborative planning, leadership, unity, independent learning, achievement, adaptive instruction, and sense of community (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). At the same time, effective school library media

literature discusses collaborative planning, leadership, vision, independent learning, achievement, individualized instruction, and community (AASL & AECT, 1988, 1998). Even with the common focus, Keegan and Westerberg (1991) note that educational policymakers often omit school library media centers in school reform. They believe that this is a major oversight, considering the types of information skills required of students in the restructured learning environments.

Yet, many other research projects (Barron, 1989; Barron & Bergen, 1992; Bennett & Bracato, 1991; Breivik, 1991; Gordon, 1993) merged the two bodies of research literature by focusing on the positive impact of the school library media center in the educational reform process. These studies show that the school library media specialist is the natural collaborator for restructuring the learning environment. As the method of teaching reaches beyond the textbook to multiple resources and exploratory learning, the school library media specialist, serving as a transformational leader, moves students and teachers to a resource-based learning structure (AASL & AECT, 1998; Barron, 1989; Clark, 1994; Haycock, 1991, 1999a, 1999c; Yetter, 1994).

In effective schools, school library media specialists serve as important links between students, teachers, administrators, parents, and information resources (AASL & AECT, 1998). During planning to design future information services for the school districts that the school library media specialists served, the specialists collaborated with classroom teachers in the design and delivery of instruction and the utilization of computer networks to extend the reach of the school library media center throughout the school and community (Hamilton-Pennell, et al., 2000; Lance, 2000). Observing the integrated practices of the school library media specialist presents a chance to study the

tactics that the specialist uses to support the district's top instructional priorities (Zweizig & Hopkins, 1999).

Planning opportunities in effective schools provide time for at least 50% or more teacher participation in collaborative planning with other teachers, as well as school library media specialists, than schools that are not considered effective (Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999). Collaborative planning should be in place at the community level with public librarians, community advisory groups, and school advisory programs that monitor and evaluate school progress. Schools need to effectively integrate the school library media program into the curriculum. Where collaboration leads to cohesion around instruction, there are greater gains in academic achievement (Bell, 1990; Bell & Totten 1992; Haycock, 1999b).

Gordon's (1993) study of the Common Principles of Effective Schools determined that the school library media center is a vital link between the Common Principles of Effective Schools and school reform. Since the beginning of the effective schools movement, the emphasis for restructuring schools has centered on nine common principles as a foundation for school change. The Nine Common Principles call for the following guiding characteristics:

1. An intellectual focus, helping students to use their minds well.
2. Simple goals, mastering essential skills and areas of knowledge and embracing the less-is-more concept.
3. Universal goals, applying to all students.
4. Personalization, student-teacher ratios of no more than 8:1 with local control over pedagogies and materials.

5. Student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach or facilitator.
6. Student exhibitions, demonstrating mastery of learning for graduation.
7. Attitude, a tone of trust, fairness.
8. Staff, teachers, and administrators functioning as generalists first and specialists second while serving multiple roles.
9. Budgets providing low student-teacher ratios, competitive salaries, time for collective planning, and per-pupil costs not to exceed the cost of traditional schools by more than 10%. (Sizer, 1988 pp. 2-4)

According to the Effective Schools League (2000), the effective school movement has reached the second generation. The Effective Schools League (ESL) has determined that when second generation correlates are accomplished, educational reform will have moved closer to the mission of providing learning for all. In the first generation, the safe and orderly environment correlate was defined in terms of the absence of undesirable student behavior (ESL, 2000).

Within the second generation, an emphasis should be placed on cooperative team learning in which students actually help each other to learn (ESL, 2000). In order to accomplish the goal of cooperative team learning, teachers must learn the methodologies of teamwork through school scheduling which creates opportunities for collaboration (Haycock, 1999a, 1999c; Russell, 2000). Often classroom teachers and administrators refuse to collaborate because of the time element (Russell, 2000). Further, classroom teachers do not like to relinquish power over the instruction that is required in collaborative planning (Haycock, 1999a, 1999c). Even though collaboration requires more time and involves sharing power, a staff needs to embrace the belief in



collaboration in order to achieve educational goals (ESL, 2000; Haycock, 1999a, 1999c). These collaborative efforts can be achieved by the coordinating of schedules by the principal for collaborative planning among classroom teachers, as well as between classroom teachers and the school library media specialist (Fox, 2000; Haycock, 1999a, 1999c; Russell, 2000).

The second generation correlates concerning leadership call for more than one leader within the school community. With the empowerment of employees, the leadership function becomes one of creating a community of shared values (ESL, 2000). Within the effective school, teachers plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together. Complementary school library media research states that student competence is most effective when integrated with classroom instruction through collaborative program planning and team teaching planned by the classroom teacher and the school library media specialist (Haycock, 1995).

Next, the second generation correlates dealing with the opportunity to learn and student time on task state that more time must be allotted for students who cannot achieve tasks during the average school day. The purpose is to grant students the advantage of time to master material rather than just cover a concept (ESL, 2000). The school library media center may be used to provide students the extra time for complete mastery. Flexible school library media center times allow students the advantage of accessing information beyond specified classroom times (Haycock, 1995; Hodson, 1978; Nolan, 1989).

The next correlate relates to the monitoring of student achievement in order to improve individual student performance as well as the instructional program. Teachers

have always monitored student progress while adjusting their individualized teaching behavior to meet students' individual needs. However, technology development permits teachers to monitor student progress more efficiently (ESL, 2000). Further, assessment will move from the emphasis on standardized norm-referenced, paper-pencil tests and toward curricular-based, criterion-referenced measures of student mastery (ESL, 2000). Moving away from the older assessment models allows for resource-based learning, thematic units, and the use of the school library media center. The center provides the bridge for the entire learning community between formal school learning and independent lifelong learning (AASL & AECT, 1998).

In the first generation correlate dealing with parental involvement, schools wanted unqualified support from parents so parents could ascertain whether or not students were acting as the school desired. Within the second generation, schools know that educators and parents cannot continually confront one another in an adversarial way (ESL, 2000). Trust and communication must be built among the entire learning community (ESL, 2000), and the school library media specialist can be the key to connecting with all members of the learning community, which includes parents, teachers, and administrators. The specialist uses collaboration, leadership, and technology to discover resources and information for all learners (AASL & AECT, 1998).

Muncey and McQuillan (1993) documented that teachers involved in change tended to be isolated in small clusters rather than an entire school collaborating. The researchers determined that it was difficult to restructure an education that was rooted in over 100 years of habit. Further, they believed that the teachers would not have been

isolated in clusters if the school library media specialist had been included in the change efforts.

Barron (1992) determined that the school library media center should be a focus in school restructuring. Barron (1992) suggested that the school library media specialist should:

1. Work with teachers to select resources that address curriculum needs.
2. Serve as an information resource to teachers and administrators so that these individuals can make better decisions concerning the education process.
3. Plan and defend a budget that will supply funding for the resources needed for the instructional program.
4. Keep informed about the realm of restructuring, national goals for education, and national standards and examinations in education. (p. 50)

Bennett and Bracato (1991) alluded to the fact that because the school library media specialist has a management and instructional background, the specialist is in a position to aid in school restructuring. In essence, the school principal and the school library media specialist are the only two individuals in the school to have a global view of the curriculum, maintain contact with all classroom teachers, and share instructional leadership responsibilities. Hartzell (1997b) referred to school library media specialists as “principals in disguise” (p. 11).

### *Effective School Library Media Specialists and Leadership*

Educational leadership and school library media specialist leadership are concerned with the interrelationship of administration, faculty, support staff, students, and the community. Educational leadership literature and school library media literature

respond to the connection between school and society with a group of theories concerning individualistic improvement. Examples of such theories are personal mastery (Senge, 1990), the psychological fit between the institution and the individual (Anderson, 1974), motivation of subordinates and associates (Owens, 1981), and the personality of the school (Hoy & Miskel, 1987).

Just as the effective school literature identifies the transformational leadership of principals as a key ingredient of a school's success in meeting academic goals, library literature identifies the transformational leadership skills of school library media specialists as another key ingredient in the success of a school (Singh, 1997). Yetter (1994) describes effective school library media specialists as change agents, or visionary instructional leaders. She believes the school library media specialist's leadership skills, program management skills, adequate budgeting, and administrative support are linked to student achievement (Yetter, 1994). Without trust, vision, communication, and staff development, school library media specialists cannot lead effectively (Wright & Davie, 1999).

Effective school library media specialists should use transformational leadership in order to create and maintain effective school library media centers (Brown, 1999). However, being a transformational leader, or a catalyst for change, in a school is difficult (Haycock, 1999c), yet an effective school library media specialist can achieve this goal (Brown, 1993, 1995, 1999). In short, since effective school administrators (Singh, 1997) and effective school library media specialists employ transformational leadership for change (Brown, 1999c, Haycock, 1999b, 1999c), it is important to understand the concept of *transformational leadership*.

### *Transformational Leadership*

The idea of transformational leadership was first developed by James McGregor Burns in 1978 and later expanded by Bernard Bass (Blaster, 1992). Although there have been few studies of transformational leadership in schools (Balster, 1992) and the definition of this form of leadership is still vague, evidence shows that there are similarities in this style of leadership, whether it is in a school setting or in a business environment (Hoover, 1991; Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi 1990).

Transformational leaders shape the commitment of an organization's objectives and empower followers to achieve objectives (Yuki, 1998). According to Brown (1993), transformational leadership concerns vision and collaboration. This style empowers, energizes, and focuses the entire school community (Sagor, 1992) while influencing people to work toward group goals. Bass (1998) observed that transformational leadership stimulates individuals to view their work from new perspectives, generates an awareness of the vision, develops colleagues with higher potential, and motivates others to look beyond personal agendas. This shared leadership is concerned with growth rather than control of the group (Brown, 1993, 1999). Bass (1998) and Avolio (1999) believe the higher level of trust needed by transformational leadership comes because of past positive transactions from leaders to the group.

Kenneth Leithwood (1993) adds that transformational leaders foster the acceptance of group goals, convey high performance expectations, create intellectual excitement, and offer appropriate models through their own behavior. These leaders develop people and build teams (Bass, 1990). The goal is to create new learning

opportunities in a supportive environment, to recognize and accept differences in people, to use two-way communication, and to interact in a personalized fashion within the learning community (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

The National Library Power (NLP) initiative opened dialog concerning the transformational leadership style for school library media specialists (Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999). School library media specialists work within the school using collaboration to influence students, staff, and community to achieve curriculum goals (AASL, 1998). The NLP initiative focused on specialists participating in leadership roles in the school, state, and nation (Zweizig & Hopkins, 1999).

According to the AASL, consistent and visionary leadership should be evident in effective school library programs. AASL states, “The opportunity to clarify the nature of learning in an information rich environment and promote a curriculum in which information literacy provides a coherent thread across all subjects and grade levels” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 52). The school library media specialist should take the lead in educational reform by proactively demonstrating the connections between information-based learning and the skill students need in the information society (AASL & AECT, 1998).

What does the literature suggest for the future of school library media centers? There is a call for school library media specialists to inform the principals, teachers, and community about the positive role being played by the school library media center in academic achievement. Any school can have the greatest school library media center, but if the rest of the school organization does not perceive the school library media center as integral to the success of the school, the specialist will have little influence (Hartzell,

1997a). Thus, school library media specialists must become visible leaders (Valenza, 1996; Wright, & Davie, 1999). The time has arrived for the school library media specialist to assume a transformational leadership role (Brown, 1993).

In summary, this study of effective school library media specialists is important because of the present lack of information surrounding the daily activities of a specialist. Even though there is a compelling link between academic achievement and school library media centers, school library media specialists have been eliminated in budget cuts along with bus drivers and custodians (Lord, 2000). By 2005, researchers project a need for nearly 25,000 school library media specialists (Lord, 2000). Thus, this study of four effective school library media specialists examined successful collaborative relationships between school library media specialists, school principals, classroom teachers, district administrators, and the community, resulting in effective school library media programs.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Although much information is found in the literature concerning effective school library media centers, there is little mention of the daily activities of the effective school library media specialist (Bell, 1990; Campbell, 1991; Ervin, 1989; Hartzell, 1997a; Johnson, 1994; Mosqueda, 1999; Norton, 1978; Yetter, 1994). Thus, there exists a gap between the theoretical role of the effective school library media specialist and actual school practices (Kulleseid, 1987; Loertscher, 1982; Pickard, 1993; Wiegand, 1999).

The uncertainty surrounding the daily activities of the effective school library media specialist leads to misunderstandings about their true role with superintendents, principals, and classroom teachers. Simply reading in professional journals that superior school library media programs are the key to student academic success does not tell us

what effective school library media specialists do on a daily basis. Superintendents, principals, and classroom teachers lack the information and understanding needed to develop effective policies, procedures, and collaborative lesson plans for school library media centers.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to understand how and why school library media specialists in an elementary school, middle school, and high school in a parish, non-church related, public school system in Louisiana were effective through qualitative research methods using interviews, observations, and written documentation from the three schools. Effective school library media specialists attempt to fulfill the program administration standards established by the American Library Association (ALA), AASL and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE] (ALA, AASL & NCATE, 1996). However, there remains uncertainty concerning how school library media specialists fulfill these standards. It is important to understand to what extent these standards, combined with other factors, contribute to school library media specialist effectiveness. Effectiveness will be determined by how well these four school library media specialists managed to meet these standards, maximizing enabling factors when faced with constraining factors.

### *Research Questions*

As stated above, we do not have sufficient information about the daily activities of effective school library media specialists (Bell, 1990; Campbell, 1991; Ervin, 1989; Hartzell, 1997a; Haycock, 1995; Johnson, 1994; Mosqueda, 1999; Norton, 1978; Yetter, 1994). In order to provide such information, I explored the effective school library media



specialist phenomenon using qualitative methods of research which allowed me to examine the effective school library media specialist holistically in a specific context rather than in isolation (Yetter, 1994). For the purposes of this study, an effective school library media specialist is defined in relationship to the AASL standards for collaboration and leadership that support authentic student learning (AASL & AECT, 1998).

My study of effective school library media specialists sought to address four guiding research questions:

1. What are the daily activities of school library media specialists in these selected school library media centers?
2. How do key participants (e.g., superintendent, principals, library supervisor, and classroom teachers) perceive the role of the school library media specialist?
3. How are the daily activities of the school library media specialists in these selected schools related to the professional standards of AASL?
4. What are the enabling and/or constraining factors for these selected school library media specialists?

In the spring of 2001, the parish library supervisor identified four school library media specialists at three sites that she believed were effective. My study was designed to provide a descriptive analysis of these four school library media specialists in one elementary school, middle school and high school. Using four guiding research questions, the study focused on how these four school library media specialists' daily activities related to the program administration standards outlined by the AASL in Information

Power: Building Partnerships for Learning as well as factors present that enabled and constrained their effectiveness.

*Justification*

Because of the uncertainty documented in several studies concerning the daily activities of effective school library media specialists (Bell, 1990; Campbell, 1991; Ervin, 1989; Hartzell, 1997a; Haycock, 1995; Johnson, 1994; Mosqueda, 1999; Norton, 1978; Yetter; 1994), the study provides an account of the daily activities of school library media specialists at an elementary school, middle school, and high school. Since research links the importance of the school library media specialist to academic achievement (Hamilton-Pennell, et al., 2000; Lance, et al., 1993), it is important for school principals, classroom teachers, and district officials to understand the role of the effective school library media specialist. Often the restructured effective school movement and the effective school library media movement are parallel but they ignore the fact that both are attempting to achieve the goal of effective education (Clark, 1994). Educational research and school library media research often remain separate, leading to misunderstandings (Clark, 1994). This study contributes to a small body of knowledge in which school library media specialists describe their daily activities.

The significance of this study rests with the answer to the question: Who can use this information? First, school library media specialists can use the information to advocate properly funded and scheduled school library media programs within school districts. School principals can use the information to screen potential school library media candidates as well as classroom teacher candidates for employment. The information derived from this study can be used to develop adequate procedures for principals to use in evaluating school library media specialists. Higher education could

use the information to enhance the professional education of principals, teachers, and school library media specialists by supplementing current courses with content explaining the role of the school library media specialist.

### *Definitions*

In order to clarify several terms used throughout the paper, this section contains definitions.

#### *Parish.*

A Louisiana parish is the same as a county government unit in many states. Parish government is not church related. Thus, a parish school system is public and not related to any church.

#### *Principal.*

The principal is the chief school site administrator. The principal determines staffing needs, sets school climate, determines scheduling, evaluates personnel, guides the curriculum and determines funding for school-based programs. The principals in this study are referred to as the Elementary Principal, the Middle School Principal and the High School Principal.

#### *School library media center.*

The school library media center houses the school's centralized print and non-print recreational and reference materials. In other words, it is the central hub of information for principals, staff and students.

#### *School library media specialist.*

The school library media specialist provides leadership through activities initiated in the school library media center. The specialist designs and maintains the school library media center, provides technology education and service, participates in curriculum

collaboration and integrates the school library media center into learning and teaching within the school. Throughout this study, the school library media specialists are referred to as the Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS), the Middle School Library Media Specialist (MSLMS), High School Library Media Specialist 1 (HSLMS1) and High School Library Media Specialist 2 (HSLMS2).

*School library supervisor.*

The school library supervisor is centrally positioned in the district office to provide district leadership for school library media programs. The school library supervisor provides staff development for school library media specialists and advocates policy and funding that supports school library media centers. She is referred to the Library Supervisor in this study.

## Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature

The review of literature for this study concerning the leadership of effective school library media specialists involved exploration of more than one body of research. The following literature review begins with a historical overview of the history of the school library media specialist. Although libraries have been in existence for centuries, the history of the school library media specialist is a twentieth-century phenomenon (Chernik, 1992). Another body of literature relevant to the school library media specialist concerns the complementary roles that must be played within the organization by district administrators, principals, classroom teachers, and school library media specialists. The literature is specific in regard to the education, the staff development, and the cooperation that are needed by these three distinct groups in order for the school library media specialist to be an effective leader. Finally, literature about library economics is germane to the study of the effective school library media specialist. Thus, private foundation support for school library media endeavors is critical. For example, the National Library Power Initiative (NLP), funded by the Dewitt Wallace Reader's Digest Foundation, supplied the necessary economic stability and positive school library media research for participating public schools to provide facilities, equipment, staff, and staff development, as well as emotional support for participating school library media specialists.

### *School Library History and the Evolving Role of the School Librarian*

According to Foucault (1989), researchers must begin research with history in order to discover the moment a theory, an opinion, or a practice is created. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek historian said, "History is philosophy teaching by examples" (MacMillan, 1989, p. 251). In short, research needs historical awareness in order to view

the present critically. History shows researchers how school library media specialists are connected to educational philosophy. Thus, in order to critically view the present status of school library media specialists, researchers need to use a historical, critical lens. It is important to see how the role of the school library media specialist changes as educational philosophy changes.

With the launching of Sputnik in 1957 and the escalation of concerns about inferiority in the United States educational system, the school library media center became part of the race to provide greater information access for public school students. However, powerful events were occurring prior to the twentieth century to provide school library media services.

*Before Sputnik.*

According to Edward Williams (1937), the school library developed concurrently with the common school movement. In 1835, the state of New York passed legislation which permitted school districts to use funds to establish school libraries (Morris, Gillespie, & Spirit, 1992). In 1837, Horace Mann proposed the same legislation in Massachusetts (Williams, 1937).

Even with the legislation in New York and Massachusetts, the few school libraries that existed before the twentieth century were traveling collections from state agencies or public libraries (Chernik, 1992). Historically, the school collections were placed in classrooms instead of a central library within the school building. Since the method of instruction was basic lecture and memorization, collaboration between the school librarian and the teacher was not necessary.

At the turn of the century, many elementary and secondary schools entered into agreements with local public libraries to meet the extracurricular and the independent reading needs of students. Although the school library mission was identified as different from the mission of the public library (Kuhlthau, 1996), school systems still had the public library provide materials for schools (Hardy, 1889) in order to save money in the school budget. Further, the few school librarians were mere study hall monitors. At this time, the school librarian was not involved with instruction. Library activities consisted of study halls instead of instructional activities that met the academic needs of individuals (Chernik, 1992).

In 1896, the American Library Association (ALA) appointed a committee to collaborate with the National Education Association (NEA) in developing school libraries (Johnson, 1965). The first professionally trained school librarian, Mary Kingsbury, was appointed in 1900 (Woolls, 1994). Kingsbury was the first graduate of a library school in the United States to serve as a school librarian (Morris et. al, 1992). In 1903, Mary E. Hall became the second person to be appointed a school librarian in the nation at Girl's High School in Brooklyn (Pond, 1998; Woolls, 1994). In 1908, David Felmley, the president of Illinois State Normal University, expressed a need for teachers to supplement, strengthen, and broaden instruction using the school library (Yetter, 1994)

After World War I, the NEA pressed for direct control over school library collections (Wiegand, 1999). The call for the secondary school library to be "the very heart of the school"(Davies, 1979, p.37) came in 1918, just one year before the founding of the Progressive Education Association. The NEA advocated the creation of separate libraries to be acquired, staffed, and organized by the school system specifically for

teachers and students to support the school curriculum. The role of the school librarian at this time was seen as being non-instructional, collection management, reading guidance, the promotion of literature, and reference and information services (Eisenberg & Berkowitz, 1988; Wiegand, 1999).

In the 1920s, the NEA developed standards for elementary and secondary school libraries. Some state and local governments began funding school library supervisors, issuing school library handbooks, and publishing recommended book lists. The organization published a Standard Library Organization and Equipment for Secondary Schools, Report of a Committee of the National Education Association Library Organization and Equipment (NEA, 1920). Furthermore, the school library momentum accelerated in the 1920s when regional accrediting agencies specified a high school library with a trained librarian as a requirement for all schools seeking accreditation by school associations (Woolls, 1994). C.C. Certain, Chair of Library Committee of the Department of Secondary Education for NEA, was a pioneer in advocating an instructional link between classroom teachers and the school librarian. He also predicted a conflict between the school library media specialist and classroom teachers as specialists attempted to forge an instructional link with teachers (Yetter, 1994). He believed power struggles between the two would occur as the school librarians pursued a collaborative role (Yetter, 1994).

Events beginning with the stock market crash in 1929 and continuing throughout the 1930s and 1940s interrupted the growth of libraries of all types. Money was needed to support other social programs and government military efforts during World War II.



Library support became a minor issue due to other more pressing situations such as unemployment, starvation, and war.

After World War II, the ALA issued a new set of national standards for school libraries entitled School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow (ALA, 1945). These standards linked the quality of school libraries to the size of book collections and the frequency of classroom teacher use of the library. Further, the school librarian was beginning to be seen as an instructional leader for the "mental, emotional and social growth of young people" (ALA, 1945, p.14).

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) was formed in 1951 to explain the role of the school librarian in the educational process. During the postwar era, schools suffered from a shortage of qualified school library media specialists because of the postwar baby boom. Due to renewed financial support from the federal government and private foundations, 37% of United States secondary schools reported receiving the services of a centralized library by the 1953-54 school term (Craver, 1986).

### *Sputnik.*

The Russian satellite Sputnik, the first artificial satellite to rotate the earth, produced an explosion in United States education funding in 1957. The event scared the United States into providing increased funds for education, including materials to supplement textbooks such as recreational reading and reference books. Before the launching of Sputnik, school libraries struggled financially because of citizen groups who argued against increased taxes to construct schools, employ additional teachers, and purchase new materials. After Sputnik, school reform reports such as The Pursuit of Excellence (Pursuit, 1958) and Conant's (1959) The American High School Today supported increased funding for schools. In 1958, Mary Virginia Gaver wrote in Every

Child Needs a School Library that most elementary schools had neither a library nor a librarian (Hildenbrand, 1996). By the late 1950s, the injection of federal funds under the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 began to have a significant, positive impact on school library development (Yetter, 1994). School librarians were seen as more than curators and warehouse employees (Craver, 1986). In short, school libraries entered a period of unparalleled growth in the 1960s (Woolls, 1994).

*1960s School Library Developments.*

President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1960s Great Society legislation included the Library Services and Construction Acts (1964, 1965), the Higher Education Act (1965), and, of particular benefit to school libraries, the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Chernik, 1992). Influenced by the funding from Great Society legislation, school libraries and public schools increased in number. At the same time, the average size of book collections in public schools increased from 2,972 in 1958 to 8,466 in 1985 (Wiegand, 1999).

In 1960, the AASL issued the Standards for School Library Programs (Davies, 1979). The authors linked educational reform with excellence of the school library when stating, "No recommendations for educational achievement can be fully achieved unless the school has the full complement of library resources, personnel, and services" (Henne, Ersted, & Lohrer, 1969, pp.3-4). Further, the 1960 Standards specified the collaborative leadership responsibilities of the school librarian with teachers regarding curriculum development and textbook selection.

Although NEA's School Library Personnel Task Analysis Survey demonstrated a growth of school libraries after the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education

Act (ESEA) in 1965, the NEA discovered that as the appropriations increased, so did the number of paraprofessionals. The NEA survey noted that even with the influx of money, the use of adult and student volunteer workers increased instead of paid professionals (Hildenbrand, 1996). Thus, school libraries were staffed by paraprofessionals instead of certified school librarians.

Just as Information Power (AASL & American Association for Educational Communications and Technology [AECT], 1988) precipitated the Dewitt Wallace Reader's Digest Foundation's funding of the NLP initiative (Wheelock, 1998), the publication of Standards for School Library Programs in 1960 precipitated a grant from the Knapp Foundation for 1.13 million dollars for a five-year demonstration program to assist in the development of school libraries in the United States (Woolls, 1994). The motion picture And Something More was produced to demonstrate to parents and community members the need for elementary school library programs. The grant, which was conducted in three phases, required cooperation with a teacher education program (Woolls, 1994). The Knapp Foundation supported curricular innovations that included collaborative teaching with the school librarian. For the first time, the role of the school librarian changed from a keeper of materials to an active participant in the academic process. Thus, the Knapp Foundation recognized the importance of the school librarian as an active participant in schools that embraced the new reforms (Gutek, 1986).

After a report in 1964, which was authored by Mary Helen Mahar and Doris C. Holladay for the United States Office of Education, stated that fewer than 50% of United States elementary schools had libraries, private industry became involved. New school

libraries were formed as a result of a lobby that included the ALA, Remington Rand, and the International Paper Company (Woolls, 1994).

Another major factor in the push for educational reform and school library reform of the 1960s was Jerome Bruner's learning theory, which emphasized the use of inquiry (Gutek, 1986). Educators moved from rote learning to the use of electronic computer instructional technologies, which necessitated queries for information, or information retrieval, to gain knowledge (Gutek, 1986). With the publication of the Standards for School Media Programs (1969), the AASL promoted a unified program of "individualization, inquiry, and independent learning for students" (AASL & Department of Audiovisual Instruction of the National Education Association [DAVI], 1969, p.8), following Bruner's lead.

Next, the transition from the term *school librarian* to *school library media specialist* became a part of the literature. Terms such as *media*, *media specialist*, *media center*, and *media program* were used to demonstrate the expanding hub of a unified program of media, print, and non-print materials (AASL & DAVI, 1969). The 1969 Standards for School Media Programs specified numbers for personnel and instructional materials (AASL & DAVI, 1969; Pond, 1998). These standards gave school library media program supporters the suggested numbers needed to present a strong argument for the need of school library media programs in the school budget.

The AASL and the DAVI prepared the Standards for School Media Programs in 1969 in order to demonstrate the move toward audiovisual and technological responsibilities (Martin, 1996; Pond, 1998). School library media specialists were now responsible for non-print materials such as tape recorders, records, filmstrips, and film

loops, which required expertise in technology. With the move toward a technological view of school library media specialists, the school librarian gained more respect (D. Robins, personal communication, June 5, 1999).

*1970s School Library Developments.*

The 1970s were characterized by the back-to-basics movements in education and the school library media program was requested to provide accountability in order to prove an academic need for school libraries. The 1969 Standards were not specific enough since these standards suggested only numbers for personnel, instructional materials, and facilities instead of outcome measures (Pond, 1998).

The Media Programs: District and School of 1975 replaced the 1969 Standards, identifying the school library as critical (AASL & AECT, 1975). Further, the publication officially changed the name of the *school librarian* to the *school media specialist*. The handbook placed the responsibility for the library program within the hands of the principal, district media director, and the school media specialist (Campbell, 1991; Gann, 1998) and emphasized the collaborative planning role of the specialist (Gann, 1998; Martin, 1996). Yet, the most important statement of the 1975 Standards was that the head of a school media program should have a role equivalent to that of an assistant principal or building curriculum supervisor (Gann, 1998).

The 1975 Standards stressed the importance of leadership and participation in curriculum development, while reflecting an expanded role for the school library media specialist within the school (AASL & AECT, 1975). In order to become effective, the school library media center needed specific amounts of equipment, materials, and budget

allocations. The media program of the school was seen as an integral part of the school instructional program (AASL & AECT, 1975).

*1980s School Library Media Center Developments.*

During the 1980s, school library media programs began to focus on the process of learning, or information literacy, rather than on subject content. The information age and the technological growth accompanying it created a need for the development of independent, disciplined learners who could recognize problems, formulate hypotheses, ask questions, locate information, analyze information, evaluate information, and reach valid conclusions (Campbell, 1991; Gann, 1998).

Further, negative reports about American schools headlined newspapers. Perhaps the most influential of these reports was the National Commission on Excellence in Education's A Nation at Risk: the Imperative for Educational Reform (Barron, 1992). The report concluded that the United States had let its formal educational system deteriorate to such a dangerous degree that the United States was becoming a nation at risk for an illiterate, uninformed populous (Chernik, 1992). In response to A Nation at Risk, school library media specialists drafted Alliance for Excellence which states that school libraries should become integral parts of the school, with the school library media specialists providing the leadership for change (Chernik, 1992; Martin, 1996).

From the Alliance for Excellence came Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs, published in 1988 (Barron, 1992). Information Power responded to issues that were raised in A Nation at Risk and resolved in the school library media specialists' Alliance for Excellence statement (Chernik, 1992). The Alliance for Excellence details the steps that school library media center supporters need to take in

order to develop quality school library media services and resources in every school. On the other hand, Information Power provides the quantitative, numerical, and qualitative guidelines and directives to help school library media personnel succeed in developing quality school library media centers while emphasizing a planning philosophy (AASL & AECT, 1988).

The authors stress the concept that the specific educational needs for each school must be considered. Further, the teacher, school library media specialist, and principal must form a partnership in order to achieve the educational goals for that specific school (Ervin, 1989). The school library media specialist is to "provide the leadership and expertise necessary to ensure that the school library media program is an integral part of the instructional program of the school" (AASL & AECT, p. 26, 1988).

The guidelines emphasize that the school library media specialist is to be an information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant within the school (Gann, 1998). The role of instructional consultant "requires participation in curriculum development from the district to the school as well as providing leadership in assessing, evaluating, and following informational and instructional technologies" (AASL & AECT, 1998, 34-39). In short, Information Power presents guidelines instead of standards (Chernik, 1992) and represents a shift in focus for school library media specialists (Gann, 1998). These guidelines moved the school library media specialist into the forefront as a proactive educational leader (Gann, 1998).

#### *1990s School Library Media Center Developments.*

In 1998, Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning was published. The new Information Power was another collaborative effort by AASL and AECT to

expand the concept of the original Information Power and create separate access to the standards discussed in the book for members of the school community. The standards are available in a separate publication entitled Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning. “Information literacy, the ability to understand how to access and use information, is the core of the entire publication” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. vii). Further, Information Power stresses the importance of an instructional leader in the form of the school library media specialist:

Although leadership strategies often work subtly behind the scenes, the information society offers library media specialists new opportunities to use more visible leadership strategies. For example, exerting strong curricular and instructional leadership helps the library media specialist clarify the nature of learning in an information rich environment and promote a curriculum in which information literacy provides a coherent thread across all subjects and grade levels. Similarly, the library media specialist takes the lead in educational reform by showing the connections between information-based learning and the skills students will need in the twenty-first century. (AASL & AECT, 1998, p.52)

In summary, two major studies, Craver (1986) and McIntosh (1994), investigated the changing role of the school library media specialist and discovered that a very distinct evolution had occurred. The shift illustrated the move from study hall monitor to collaborative planner. In other words, as the educational philosophy of the era changed, the school library media specialist’s instructional role changed as well (Craver 1986; McIntosh, 1994; Mohajerin & Smith, 1978). As the prevailing philosophy in education evolved from behaviorism to constructivism, the role of clerk and organizer of materials



altered, and the school library media specialist became an active participant in the learning process.

*School Library Media Education and Certification Today.*

Certification and licensure as a school library media specialist is based on “completion of prescribed areas of study, competence related to the areas of study, competence related to knowledge and skills determined as necessary by professionals in the field of librarianship” (Perritt, 1998, p. 195). Historically, the AASL actively participated in the preparation of standards for certification. Yet, the AASL standards for school library media specialists college preparatory programs have often been ignored (Perritt, 1998).

The ALA and the AASL joined with the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 1988 to produce initial standards for programs for school library media specialists. The program standards were approved in 1993. All institutions seeking NCATE accreditation with onsite visits after the spring of 1996 were required to respond to these program standards (NCATE, 1996). In the past, many school library programs within education departments failed to meet basic library standards (White, 1995). Since many school library media education programs are parts of schools of education and do not meet the ALA's standards for accreditation, the purpose of the AASL and NCATE programs is for the AASL to legitimize any library education programs which do not meet the ALA's rigorous standards for accreditation.

Proponents consider three specific roles in the development and implementation of a school library media program: school library media specialists are to be information providers, consultants, and teachers (NCATE, 1996). These three roles are a composite of

the following specific functions that must be reflected in the coursework and activities:

(a) professionalism, (b) communication, (c) collection management, (d) organization, (e) administration, (f) instructional leadership, and (g) accessibility (NCATE, 1996).

#### *Roles in Effective School Library Media Centers*

The school library media specialist serves as one member of an educational organization. The effectiveness of the specialist is dependent upon the interacting roles played by the superintendent, the principal, the library supervisor, the classroom teachers, as well as the school library media specialist. In addition to the interaction of staff, professional organizations and private foundations often play important roles in developing effective school library media centers.

#### *Role of the Superintendent in Effective School Library Media Centers.*

A statement issued by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) said, “Largely, the quality of America's schools depends on the effectiveness of school superintendents” (AASA, 1993, p. 3). The primary duty of the superintendent of schools is to provide leadership for the creation of a common vision for the educational organization. Then the superintendent must facilitate the conversion of the vision into set priorities (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995).

Shifting national priorities, demographics, political climates, and stances on education have significant influence on the superintendent's formulation of a vision for the school system and the degree to which the vision can be fulfilled. Community ethnic values, standards, requirements, and educational expectations are of paramount importance. As student populations and resources fluctuate, school superintendents must make difficult resource allocation decisions (Lancaster, 1998). World events, state events,

and economic trends influence needed educational funding (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995).

Since the school superintendent develops a budget that the board of education must find fiscally sound, the superintendent's perspectives of the school media center are important (Edwards, 1989; Woolls, 1994). It is imperative for the superintendent to understand the training, education, capabilities, aptitudes, and temperaments required for the professional and support staff positions in a school media center (Yesner & Jay, 1998).

However, many superintendents do not have a clear concept of the importance of the school library media specialist (Valenza, 1996). Often there is an alarming trend toward increasing the student-to-librarian ratio or creating part-time school library media specialists (Sadowski & Mayer, 1993; Simon, 1993). Haycock (1985) said:

Few school districts have a written statement of purpose for the school library media program, thus leaving it in the land of the extra, the educational frill, good to have when you can afford it, but hard to justify when no one really knows what the library is for. (p. 103)

Connors's (1984) survey of superintendents in Massachusetts discovered that over 25% thought the school library media center was a luxury. The survey discovered that superintendents believed that the teaching background and experience of the school library media specialist was too limited to have a significant impact on the school. Although these superintendents were not very supportive of the school library media center, they conceded the fact that teachers would be forced to teach differently without an operational school library media center (Connors, 1984).

According to Lancaster (1998), almost half of the 202 Texas superintendents surveyed spent less than two percent of their total budget on school library media centers. Further, those who did spend more than two percent did not fund the programs adequately. Superintendents based their ideas concerning the school library media program funding on years spent as a principal or in other administrative posts (Yesner & Jay, 1998). Holland (1994) discovered that superintendents who have more than five years of experience have significantly less regard for school library media centers than their younger peers.

In addition, the superintendent is responsible for budgeting for maintenance of school facilities. Thus, superintendents need to know about the high costs of serials, technology, and printed material for budgetary considerations (Wilson, Blake, & Lyders, 1993). The superintendent must approve all major construction projects for school library media facilities as well. Whitman and Foerster (1993) argue that superintendents must believe that the school library media center is a powerful educational tool in order to avoid cutbacks in school library media centers.

*Role of the Principal in Effective School Library Media Centers.*

School effectiveness research during the last twenty years affirms the role of the principal's leadership in school success (Austin & Reynolds, 1990; Bell, 1990; Blasé & Kirby, 1992; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Lindahl, 1987; McIntosh, 1994; Yesner & Jay, 1998). Principals are school managers, personnel administrators, problem solvers, instructional leaders, and initiators of change in the effective school (Fullan, 1991; Vandenberghe, 1995; Yesner & Jay, 1998). Further, Chisholm and Ely (1979) found that the principal's commitment and support are essential to the school library media

specialist becoming more active in the school's instructional policy formation. The effective principal understands the importance of the school library media center and works to assist the school library media specialist in improving student learning (Pfeiffer & Bennett, 1988).

Kinder (1995) discovered that the dichotomy between the theoretical role of the school library media specialist and the actual practices of many school library media specialists suggests that a stronger commitment is needed on the part of principals if the school library media center is to survive. The principal is often the key to whether an innovative program such as the National Library Power (NLP) initiative becomes a school priority (Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999). Because of the importance to the school library media program, Hartzell (1999) documented tips for a school library media specialist to use when interviewing a principal candidate.

The principal sets the climate for the effective use of a school library media center (Cato, 1990; Cox, 1989; Fullan & Park, 1981; Hord & Huling-Austin, 1986; Loucks & Lieberman, 1983; Virgilio & Virgilio, 1984). First, the principal can enhance the school library media program by querying prospective teachers on how they would use the center effectively and include center usage in teacher evaluations (Haycock, 1999a; Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999). Further, the principal can involve the school library media specialist in budgeting and curriculum development (Corr, 1979). In addition, the principal creates the climate of collegiality, communication, and trust for teachers and school library media specialists (Fullan, Anderson & Newton, 1986), as well as providing the time for collaborative, flexible planning for specialists and teachers (Cox, 1989; Fullan, 1985; Fullan et al., 1986; Hellene, 1973; Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999; Pratt, 1980).

The principal also creates staff development opportunities for staff members directed by the school library media specialist (Haycock, 1999b).

Thus, the effectiveness of the school library media program is largely dependent on the principal (Bell, 1990; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1982; Fullan & Park, 1981), since teachers respond to the principal's expectations (Haycock, 1999a). Exemplary, effective school library media specialists are characterized by strong support from the principal (Charter, 1982; Haycock, 1999a; Shields, 1977).

Because the principal has a responsibility to ensure that the school library media center is used effectively, principals need to be better informed concerning the function and management of highly effective media centers. According to Wilson, Blake, and Lyders (1999), the principal needs to:

1. Understand the responsibilities of a school library media specialist.
2. Understand the developments in information technologies.
3. Understand school library media standards and guidelines.
4. Understand the certification requirements for a school library media specialist.
5. Understand the true place of the school library media center in the total school curriculum. (p.272-275)

Pearson (1989) discovered that conflicts between principals and school library media specialists fall into two categories. The first conflict involves censorship, in which principals order school library media specialists to remove books, delete passages, or delete illustrations in order to accommodate complaints from parents, other administrators, or the public. The second conflict involves funding. The school library

media center usually becomes the first area in the school to suffer staff cuts or be assigned new duties extraneous to the library's real purpose and function (White, 1996).

Hartzell (1997a) states that textbooks concerning the job of a principal are almost universally silent on the operation of the school library media center. School library media center issues are usually dealt with in law classes where the media center is treated as a possible source of legal problems, from censorship to violations of copyright.

Wilson, Blake, and Lyders (1993) conducted one of the most extensive national research projects dealing with the relationship between the principal and the effective school library media specialist. Of the 1,000 principals and 1,000 library media specialists surveyed at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, 57.2% of the specialists responded and 42.3% of the principals responded. Over 90% of the school library media specialists and 78% of the principals agreed that the principals were not adequately trained in the management and function of the school library media center.

Again, findings in recent government surveys, which demonstrate that only 16% of building principals surveyed believed that the school library media specialist had curriculum influence, are not a welcome sign. Only 21% of the principals stated that specialists influenced the school budget (United States Department of Education, 1998).

In Dorrell and Lawson (1995), a survey of 77 Missouri high school principals determined that the “majority of principals have a higher opinion of the importance in having ‘a’ media center than they do of the importance of the actual media center in their school”(p. 78). Only 48% gave average importance to curriculum planning, while placing more importance on materials selection, school library media center management, and reference help for students (Dorrell & Lawson, 1995).

Pennock (1988), who was first an elementary school library media specialist and then a principal, states that the school library media specialist and the principal see things from two different vantage points. Few principals have ever been school library media specialists (Campbell, 1991; Pearson, 1989; Wilson & MacNeil, 1998).

Of the 250 principal training programs in the United States, only 18% integrate school library information into coursework (Wilson & MacNeil, 1998). Wilson and MacNeil (1998) developed a two-part program for principals:

1. A curriculum for future principals that devotes at least 45 to 60 minutes in each preparation course to school library media centers; arranges interviews and arranges visits with school library media specialist; and requires principals to spend time during internships in the school library media centers.
2. A plan for practicing principals that recommended principals visit outstanding school library media centers to see what is possible in an effective school library media center. (p. 116)

Barron and Bergen (1992) contend that many principals do not demand enough from the school library media specialist and allow the specialist to perpetuate the traditional clerical roles. McIntosh (1994) states that many principals do not require school library media specialists to fulfill effective professional responsibilities. Olson (1996) believes that many school principals are satisfied with the *status quo*. These principals simply let the school library media specialist refuse to learn new technologies and new methods in order to maintain the *status quo* within the building.



*Role of the Library Supervisor.*

Another critical aspect of an effective school library media center is the creation of a central office staff member designated to develop and resolve school library media issues within the budget. The library supervisor provides information for district administrators, permitting the administrators the option of making budget decisions based on the latest research data concerning school library media centers (Woolls, 1994). During restructuring, the removal of the library supervisor responsible for the school library media program or the reassignment of someone with less knowledge can cripple the school library media program (Woolls, 1994). With no library supervisor responsible for the program at the district level, the school library media specialists in the system have no central person to lobby for the program when the superintendent requests budgetary input (Simpson, 1999).

The library supervisor shares current technological developments with superintendents, principals, and school library media specialists. The library supervisor lobbies for the latest technologies for the school media centers in the district. During staff development for school library media specialists, library supervisors offer instructional strategies for incorporating technology into the classroom (Epler, 1999).

The district library supervisor offers moral support and professional development opportunities for school library media specialists in the district. Further, they serve as a liaison between the different levels of the educational organization for the school library media program. The library supervisor serves on state or district committees, lobbies in state and district government, and often serves in leadership positions in professional organizations for school library media specialists (Woolls, 1994).

*Role of Classroom Teachers in Effective School Library Media Centers.*

In 1993-94, there were 83 school library media center visits each week per 100 public school students. Elementary school students were more likely to visit their school library media center (89 visits per 100 students each week). Secondary school students visited their school library media center fewer times each week [69 visits per 100 students each week] (United States Department of Education, 1998).

The classroom teacher has a significant obligation for the effectiveness of the school library media center, since the more the classroom teachers utilize the school library media center the stronger the program and the greater the financial support. In order for the school library media center to be integrated into the curriculum, there must be teacher support (Abdulrazzaq, 1997). Factors that affect teacher use of the school library media center are: (a) involvement in program planning by the school library media specialist, (b) team teaching, (c) staff development organized by the school library media specialist, (d) administrative support, and (e) behaviors and qualifications of the school library media specialist (Haycock, 1999c).

Effectiveness of a school library media center is severely impaired if teachers simply transfer thirty youngsters to the school library media specialist (Kinder, 1995). Effective school library media instruction does not occur when the school library media specialist teaches library skills classes without collaborating with the classroom teacher (Haycock, 1999a). The most significant changes in the school library media program occurred when the school library media specialist moved to flexible scheduling and curriculum-integrated instruction (Bishop, 1992). The strength of the specialist lies in

providing the classroom teacher with an opportunity to share not only in the planning but also in the preparation and implementation of programs.

The teachers that prefer not to use the services of the school library media specialist become accountable for the development of information skills and strategies of their students. They are responsible for the creation of independent learning skills within the context of state, district, and school guidelines and making certain all school resources are used effectively for student learning. If the program is collaborative, then the teacher divides the responsibility with the school library media specialist (Haycock, 1999a, 1999c).

Oberg (1986) discussed the relationship between teachers and school library media specialists. When classroom teachers and the specialist collaborate, the partnership provides support for the classroom teacher, who usually faces the curriculum planning demand alone. The collaboration can expand and improve the entire school curriculum.

Even with the ideal relationship between the teacher and the school library media specialist described in Information Power, Bell and Totten (1992) note that there are often minimal levels of "instructional cooperation between the library media specialists and classroom teachers" (p.83) because of personality conflicts. On the other hand, DeGroff (1997) believes that with programs such as cooperative learning and whole language, collaboration between school library media specialists and teachers has gone beyond tentative overtures.

Dales (1990) suggested that trusting relationships be developed between the school library media specialist and classroom teachers. When the two disagree, the classroom teacher's initial response is to not use the school library media center (Dales,

1990). Montgomery (1992) suggests that teachers and school library media specialists relinquish some control and share expertise, which requires “mutual respect, communication, and a solid sense of self-esteem” (Montgomery, p 530).

In 1981, Jong discovered that educators who espoused individualized instruction and an open, humanistic approach to education significantly supported a more expanded curricular role for the school library media specialist than did traditionally oriented educators. Jong (1981) discovered that more experienced and advanced educators were in favor of greater involvement in the curriculum than their less experienced and less educated colleagues. Yet, school library media specialists and principals generally desired integrating the school library media center with instruction more than did the classroom teachers.

In 1981, Brackstone conducted a case study in a Canadian high school where school library media specialists were attempting to negotiate changes in the relationships with individual teachers as well as with subject departments. Ironically, the school library media specialists in the study were unaware that no change had occurred. Brackstone discovered that the lack of cooperation was embedded in the issue of territoriality.

If the librarians refer to *co-curriculum* and *co-teacher*, the very prefix *co* is a threatening term for teachers because it implies equality. The librarians' interest in the cooperative activities which teachers claim as theirs by right of their teacher status is seen by the teachers as the librarians' attempt to enhance their professional position at the expense of the teachers' status. Teachers, therefore, attempted to enhance their own position by claiming these cooperative activities were best handled by the teacher alone. Thus, we can see how the territoriality

about job responsibilities was in response to the problem of status maintenance.  
(Brackstone, 1981, pp. 144-145)

Often teachers have erroneous perceptions of the role of the school library media specialist in the school (Kerr, 1978; Woolls, 1994). Many times, scheduled school library media center time is visualized as a teacher preparation period or an extension of study hall rather than an extension of the classroom (Woolls, 1994). Thus, regular collaborative planning sessions between the school library media specialist and teachers is critical to integrating the school library media program into the curriculum (Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999).

Currently, block scheduling at the secondary level of education involves a schedule where classes are longer and fewer. Block scheduling allows more than one teacher to use the school library media center during a 90-minute block of time. Further, there is an increased demand for collaboration with teachers for instruction in schools with block scheduling (Gierke, 1999). With this scheduling, teachers have an opportunity to plan together and teach as a team (Teger & Nunn, 1999). Teachers meet with the school library media specialist in advance and discuss unit goals. With block scheduling, teachers can incorporate school-wide themes and interdisciplinary units as well as resource-based learning experiences. Classes use the school library media center as a curriculum lab, with students engaging in resource-based learning activities (Richmond, 1999).

As teachers increase usage of the school library media center, they need to become knowledgeable about what to expect from the center. The importance of staff development conducted by the school library media specialist is paramount (Richmond,

1999). Without individual or large group presentations, the classroom teacher cannot realize the impact of the center on the curriculum.

Teacher training emphasizes individual classroom interaction between teachers and students, but it seldom involves serious study of collaboration with other staff members (Hartzell, 1997a). Major differences exist between the theory of collaboration and the actual practice of collaboration between teachers and school library media specialists (Brown, 1999). McIntosh (1994) suggests that cooperation between library science departments and education departments at the university could result in a greater understanding of the roles of the teacher and the school library media specialist in the learning environment of the school. She stresses the fact that the required curriculum for teachers does not touch on the school library media center or on the role media specialists play in the educational system. Models of collaborative and consultative work utilized in medicine, law, architecture, and many other professions are rarely employed in education, especially in high school teacher training courses (Hartzell, 1997a).

*Role of the Effective School Library Media Specialist.*

One of the most significant differences between the AASL publication Information Power in 1988 and the most recent 1998 revision is a feature in the discussion of the school library media specialist's teaching role concept. Within Information Power (ALA, 1988), the term used is the *instructional consultant*. However, the newer edition speaks of *instructional collaborators*. Consultant means an *expert, advisor, specialist, authority, or guide*. On the other hand, a collaborator is a *coworker, colleague, partner, teammate, or associate*. The role of the school library media specialist is now portrayed as a team player in the organization rather than as an advisor.

The concept of instructional collaboration is built on the taxonomy for library media programs developed by Loertscher in 1988. This is an instructional design model used to organize the joint instructional efforts of the school library media specialist and the classroom teacher (Putnam, 1996). Within Loertscher (1988), there are eleven levels of school library media program integration with the instructional program of a school. Each sequentially higher level of the taxonomy identifies a more collegial relationship between the school library media specialist and the classroom teacher. The higher the level on the taxonomy, the more collegiality should exist between the school library media specialist and the classroom teacher.

Yesner and Jay (1998) and Urbanik (1989) emphasize the importance of the school library media specialist being a member of a curriculum revision and design team within the school. By being a member of the curriculum revision and design team, the specialist could provide materials based on sound curriculum information. Collaboration on teams allows the specialist to form a base of understanding and confidence between the classroom teacher and the school library media specialist. If students view the school library media specialist and staff members working together for instructional purposes, students come to accept collaboration as a positive tool for learning (Wright & Davie, 1999). One of the more positive elements in collaboration is the fact that the school library media specialist is a member of departmental, school- wide and system-wide curriculum revision committees.

According to Urbanik (1989), the school library media specialist must be involved in collaborative planning from the beginning of any instructional activity. The involvement of the media specialist expands the base of the learning experiences in the

school library media center. Further, Urbanik (1989) emphasizes that the specialist's role is to aid the classroom teacher in reconsidering the methods the teacher uses to plan and teach a unit. However, the planning should be a collaborative approach in order to establish open lines of communication between the classroom and the school library media specialist.

Teamwork is important. However, without flexible scheduling and adequate support staff, the school library media specialist still spends too much time on clerical duties. Callison (1995) calls for paraprofessional school library media center staff with training in school library media center tasks such as acquisition, processing, and material organization in the school library media center. Traditional clerical tasks must be assigned to these paraprofessionals so that school library media specialists can work directly with students and teachers (AASL & AECT, 1998; Callison, 1995; Simpson, 1996). Often, the collaborative role has forced the school library media specialist to maintain instructional television, teach multimedia productions, design units of study, and develop an integrated information skills programs without additional staffing. At the same time the specialist must do traditional clerical tasks for center maintenance. Without adequate paraprofessional staffing, the collaborative programs are doomed to failure.

With the learning environment changing in schools, the library media specialist must venture from the school library media center to collaborate with teachers and administrators. People's attitudes, including those of the specialist, may be the greatest obstacles to success (Wright & Davie, 1999). The addition of technology to the environment enhances information retrieval and offers the media specialist a new avenue in becoming involved in the curriculum. Drucker (1992), calling the world the *knowledge*



*society*, believes individuals need “the ability to present ideas orally and in writing; the ability to work with people; and the ability to shape and direct one’s own work, contribution and career” (p.5). Accessing information is a global experience; it’s not just limited to accessing information within the walls of the traditional school library (Drucker, 1992).

The literature suggests that the role of the effective school library media specialist has developed into a leader who initiates change. The specialist is expected to actively collaborate with teachers and design curriculum (Haycock, 1999a, 1999b). Collaborative curriculum design tasks should be a large portion of an effective school library media specialist’s day. Second, the specialist should take the leadership role and integrate technology into these curriculum designs (Haycock, 1999a).

*Role of Professional Organizations in Effective School Library Media Centers.*

The librarianship benefits when school library media specialists unite in professional organizations to provide mutual encouragement, exchange information, and promote libraries (Budd, 1998). When stepping towards a true profession, the establishment of a learned society is important. Further, professional associations enhance the ability to gather knowledge for a discipline such as librarianship (Budd, 1998). The American Library Association (ALA) was founded in 1876 to promote library services, set standards, and encourage excellence among the members of the organization (Chernik, 1992).

The ALA has a unique organizational structure since it has individual and institutional memberships. Thus, the interests of the employer and the employee are represented in one organization. The ALA allows anyone interested in promoting quality

library services to join the organization as a personal member rather than restricting the membership to professionally trained librarians from accredited programs. Although many librarians object to the membership approach, the ALA has developed a stronger political voice due to this open membership. (Chernik, 1992)

The ALA is divided into numerous divisions, sections, and round tables that enable members of similar interests to share their ideas and resolve problems. The associations are often based on the type of library such as the AASL or a particular area such as the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) and Young Adult Library Services Association [YALSA] (Budd, 1998).

The mission of the AASL is to advocate excellence, facilitate change, and develop leaders in the school library media field. The AASL works to ensure that all members of the school library media field collaborate to (a) provide leadership in the total education program, (b) participate as active partners in the teaching/learning process, (c) connect learners with ideas and information, and (d) prepare students for lifelong learning, informed decision making, love of reading and use of information technologies (ALA, 2000).

Recent statistics demonstrate that 81% of head school library media specialists are members of some type of professional organization. Further, 61% of the head media specialists are members of state/local library or media associations, as well as the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) or the NEA. However, only 18% are members of the AASL, with 12% as members of other divisions of ALA. Only three percent are members of the AECT and five percent are members of other national or international library or information associations (United States Department of Education, 1998).

These statistics support Crowley (1995) who argues that there is no union of school library media specialists. Many media specialists do not realize the importance of a professional library organization. Without professional school library media organizations, specialists do not have a support organization. These library support organizations understand the role of the school library media specialist and use resources to organize support for intellectual freedom, research librarianship, and justify the specialist's position.

Educational organizations such as the NEA or the AFT will accept school library media specialists as educational professionals but not as professional librarians (White, 1995). The NEA and the AFT do not provide specific school library professional development (Woolls, 1994). School library media specialists are unique in that they receive their titles from two professions: education and librarianship (Woolls, 1994).

Membership in the AASL allows school library media specialists to participate in committees and to access intellectual freedom assistance, strategies for defending library media programs, leadership training, and school library research articles from School Library Media Quarterly and Knowledge Quest. In short, school library media specialists need to realize the importance of networking with other librarians for political, economic, and educational gain in order to provide effective libraries (Woolls, 1994).

According to Information Power (AASL & AECT, 1998), professional organizations offer another venue for leadership. These organizations offer opportunities for informal leadership in the form of mentoring or promoting intellectual freedom and property rights. By serving as leaders in professional organizations, school library media specialists strengthen the voice of the profession by communicating the mission and goals

of the school library media program's importance to information literacy and learning. Pride in one's profession and one's role within that profession must be fervent (Anderson, 1987). Professional organizations link school library media specialists to private foundations as well.

*Role of Private Foundations in Effective School Library Media Centers.*

The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, founded in 1988, provides grants in three interrelated areas: public schools, community-based organizations that serve young people outside of school, and collaborative programs between public schools and community-based organizations. A common theme is the investments made in adults such as teachers, counselors, youth workers, and parents, people who have the greatest influence on how children grow to adulthood. The mission is to foster fundamental improvement in the quality of educational and career development opportunities for all school age youth and to increase access to these improved services for young people in low-income communities (DeWitt, 2000).

Many school library media centers became victims to budget cuts in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s because centers were not considered essential to quality education. Surviving school library media centers were often characterized by outdated collections, part-time staffing, and a lack of support from school principals (DeWitt, 2000). The Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund joined with the ALA and the Public Education Network (PEN) to implement the school library media support program that was detailed in the publication Information Power (AASL & AECT, 1988).

The purpose of the project was to create new expectations for public elementary and middle school library programs, boost student achievement by encouraging

collaborative planning and teaching among classroom teachers and librarians, and demonstrate the significant contributions school library programs make to school reform and restructuring efforts (Pennsylvania School Library Association, 2000). Of special importance is the fact that Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund built the National Library Power (NLP) grant on the recommendations of Information Power (AASL & AECT, 1988).

In 1988, the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund launched the NLP in New York City. The purpose was to restore many of the public elementary school libraries that were closed during the city's fiscal crisis of the 1970s (Dewitt, 2000). After the development and evaluation in New York City where libraries in many schools had been eliminated, NLP began expanding nationally in 1991. The NLP spread to other urban east coast locations, experiencing problems similar to New York City, and to southern, mid-western, and western states where outdated school libraries desperately needed refurbishing.

During a ten-year period from 1985-1995, Dewitt Wallace established and funded NLP programs in 700 schools in 19 communities nationwide, eventually affecting more than 400,000 students. These 19 communities shared several similarities: each community housed outdated school library media centers; each developed a vision for improvement of teaching and learning using the school library media center; each mobilized community support for the vision, and each made a commitment to hire a full-time library media specialist; provide professional development and flexible scheduling (AASL & AECT, 1998).

Over the program's lifetime, grants for the NLP totaled more than 40 million dollars, the largest private investment in school libraries in nearly forty years. The NLP was the largest school library media investment since the 1962 Knapp School Libraries Project and is still larger in terms of dollars and numbers of students than many other current school reform efforts (AASL & AECT, 1998). Furthermore, NLP sites raised 25 million dollars from public and private sources from the communities they served.

Even though the NLP is a national program, it reflected the needs of the communities in which participating schools were located. Each NLP project was managed by local education personnel and nonprofit community-based organizations. Under local education personnel guidance, participating schools used their NLP grants to make renovations to library space, purchase books, purchase technology, and underwrite professional development for school library media specialists, teachers, and principals. The professional development was designed to demonstrate methods of integrating the school library media center into the curriculum (Dewitt, 2000).

Further, school districts and the schools themselves contributed to the success of the program. Local school districts agreed to hire full-time school library media specialists for each participating school and implement flexible scheduling, which allows teachers and students to use the library throughout the day instead of during dedicated library instruction periods. In addition, schools agreed to spend their full allocation for book collections, an amount the NLP matched (Dewitt, 2000).

Not surprisingly, the evaluation of the NLP discovered positive restructuring in the educational climate of the participating schools:

1. Learning

The NLP has empowered students to become independent learners.

Information literacy skills are embedded in the curriculum, and students have had flexible and continuous access to school library media centers to use those skills.

2. Teaching

The NLP model is built around collaboration. Teachers have learned to give up absolute control over the learning process and to help students take control of their own learning.

3. Culture

Schools that have successfully implemented NLP have experienced a change in the culture of the school. The school library media center is recognized as the instructional center of the school.

4. Library

Through NLP, reading and literacy have become important focal points for the whole school. In some NLP sites, the school library media center has become an educational resource for the entire community, with materials and programs available on technological literacy, careers, and parenting.

5. Library Media Specialist

Through the NLP, a profound personal impact has been felt by library media specialists. These specialists have developed a new, more professional vision for librarianship. They have increased their self-esteem, leadership ability, political awareness, ability to advocate, and human relations skills.

## 6. Communities

Communities have become involved with their school library media centers in more substantive ways. NLP has helped create a public desire in some communities to offer children the best in learning opportunities through the school library media center, and it has even prompted changes in public libraries. (Stripling, 1997)

The NLP became a catalyst for school change that provided lasting effects on schools and school media programs. The elements of the NLP that have proven to be essential for real change are: (a) focus on integrated vision, (b) impetus and environment for change, (c) collaboration, (d) leadership and support, (e) professional development, (f) new roles, (g) resources, (h) time, and (i) accountability (AASL & AECT, 1998).

However, the major result of any involvement with the NLP was the emergence of the school library media specialist as a leader within the school. Viewing the specialist as a leader was a change for all participants. Partnerships with principals created an association for developing a shared vision (Zweizig & Hopkins, 1999). Collaboration allowed the teachers to view the specialist as a knowledgeable team member. The media specialist was viewed as a person who understood the variety of methods in which students learned and the importance of accommodating diverse learning styles (Zweizig & Hopkins, 1999). In conclusion, the NLP demonstrated the effects of implementing standards developed for an effective transformational leading school library media specialist outlined in Information Power (1998).



### Chapter 3: Methods

Chapter 3 presents the methods used to investigate the leadership of four school library media specialists at three sites in a parish public school system Louisiana. Understanding of the everyday experiences of four school library media specialists striving to meet the standards of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) was one goal of this study and it benefited from a naturalistic, descriptive study. This goal involved writing field notes gathered from observations, interviewing the four school library media specialists and examining written documents at the three sites. An example of an interview can be found in Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview.

Second, the study gathered the perspectives of the superintendent, three principals, the library supervisor, a college professor, and 18 classroom teachers through interviews. These interviews focused on what the interviewees considered the role of the four school library media specialists in this study.

Another goal was to identify factors that facilitated or hindered the work of four school library media specialists at three sites. Thus, the study utilized a research design that permitted the exploration of individual human factors as well as contextual factors related to school culture. Qualitative data collection provided me the opportunity to understand behavior in the context of the participant's own special environments (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The strength of the qualitative narrative is the rich description that results from field work (Glazier & Powell, 1992).

I contacted the parish library supervisor before Christmas of 2000 and she determined the sites to be included in the study. She selected an elementary, a middle school, and a high school in the parish. In order to preserve anonymity, the sites are

called the Elementary School, the Middle School and the High School. The participants are referred to as to as the Superintendent, the Library Supervisor, the College Professor, the Elementary School Principal, the Middle School Principal, the High School Principal, the Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS), the Middle School Library Media Specialist (MSLMS), the High School Library Media Specialist 1 (HSLMS1), the High School Library Media Specialist 2 (HSLMS2) and the Classroom Teacher.

After receiving permission to begin my research from West Virginia University, I contacted the principals at the sites to gain entry into the schools. Then I began my first round of observations in January 2001. I spent approximately one month in each of the three sites observing, interviewing, and reviewing documents. After my initial observations, I contacted the chairperson of my committee for an interim assessment and her suggestions. Interviewing, transcription, coding, analysis, and writing continued throughout the duration of the project.

### *Qualitative Research Paradigm*

Research questions related to process and functions rather than outcomes or products are more appropriately studied using the qualitative research paradigm (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Patton, 1990). Qualitative methods include naturalistic inquiry, ethnographic research, field research, unobtrusive measures, observation, grounded theory research, case study, and interpretive procedures (Glazier & Powell, 1992).

Although library science and education have documented the necessary elements that determine an effective school library media specialist, I was unable to locate studies that documented the daily activities of these specialists. Farwell (1998) observed,

interviewed and reported on collaborative planning between classroom teachers and school librarians. Although collaboration is important it is only one daily activity.

Qualitative methods rely on analysis of data collected from field notes, interviews, and written documents for inferences (Bogdan & Biklen; Bloland, 1992; Patton, 2001). Qualitative methods are naturalistic, since the settings are the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). McIntosh's (1994) study of the school librarian and collaborative planning called for more qualitative research in the school library media field. In viewing the school library media specialists McIntosh studied, qualitative methods were the only useful means of understanding the reality of collaborative planning between the school library media specialist and the classroom teacher.

Eisenberg (1993) reports the overuse of questionnaires in library research is a serious concern. Researchers are cautioned against skimming the surface of problems by gathering quantitative data using surveys or other single method devices (Eisenberg, 1990; McIntosh, 1994). Numbers alone cannot characterize a school (Farwell, 1998). Bloland (1992) believes that our knowledge of culture is circumscribed when we rely only on the information provided by quantitative research. In contrast, qualitative researchers analyze primarily narrative data inductively and capture participants' perspectives as accurately as possible (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) while searching for meaning. Qualitative methods do not skim the surface of problems. The purpose of such research is a greater understanding of the world from the unique viewpoints of the participants studied (Bloland, 1992).

### *Guiding Research Questions*

There remains uncertainty surrounding the daily activities of the school library media specialist (Bell, 1990; Campbell, 1991; Ervin, 1989; Haycock, 1992; Johnson, 1994; Mosqueda, 1999; Norton, 1978; Yetter, 1994). In explaining this phenomenon, I explored the daily activities of four school library media specialists in three schools located in one Louisiana parish public school system using qualitative research methods. I sought to understand the daily activities, relationships and challenges that were occurring with the specialists within each unique school.

### *Setting*

The setting was selected because this parish public school system supports school library media programs, it has access to an American Library Association (ALA) accredited library education program, and it participated in the National Library Power (NLP) initiative. Further, the state of Louisiana has a strong library professional organization that provides professional development for all types of librarians and lobbies the state legislature for funding.

The parish is considered an inner city school system by the Louisiana State Department of Education. The parish supports school library media centers. First, the parish provides for full-time school library media specialists in every school as well as a school library media supervisor in the central office. Rather than having set schedules for school library media centers, the school board adopted flexible scheduling as the preferred method of scheduling the school library media center. Thus, students and teachers can use the media center at any time for research or recreational reading.

Next, the parish requires all school library media specialists to have a master's degree. The parish prefers a master's degree in Library and Information Science (MLIS) from an ALA accredited program of study but will accept certification in library science and a master's degree in a teaching area with a minimum of 9 hours in technology courses within the last five years. The parish prefers the ALA educational program because the ALA program contains more stringent requirements than the normal National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards for school librarianship found in most colleges of education. Further, the ALA program leads to a master's degree in Library and Information Science.

The state of Louisiana contains a strong library professional organization, Louisiana Library Association (LLA), which meets the professional development needs of all types of librarians. The Louisiana School Library Association (LSLA) is a division of the LLA. LSLA lobbies for school library media programs throughout the state and provides professional development for school library media specialists in the field. Thus, school library media specialists can keep their skills updated and remain aware of developments in the field.

### *Sampling*

This qualitative study involved four school library media specialists at three different school sites in one Louisiana parish public school system. Patton(2001) explained purposeful sampling as “the selection of information rich cases so the researcher can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the guiding research questions” (p.46). Purposeful sampling allowed me to explore sites that

were information rich with respect to the purposes of my study. “We can learn a great deal, often opening up new territory for further research” (Patton, 2001, p.46).

I selected this parish public school system because of three criteria. First, this parish public school system was one of the 19 sites selected to participate in the NLP initiative. Through financial grant from the NLP, the school system provided staff development across the parish for district supervisors, principals, classroom teachers, and school library media specialists. Next, the parish adopted flexible scheduling for school library media specialists in for every school in the system. Lastly, Louisiana State University (LSU) provides professional continuing education at their American Library Association (ALA) accredited School of Library and Information Science (SLIS).

The Library Supervisor for the parish assisted me in identifying three schools, from three educational levels: Elementary School, Middle School and High School. She believed effective school library media leadership existed in these three sites. The intent was to achieve an in depth knowledge of the selected individuals, not to generalize from the sample to the population that it represents as in quantitative methods (Patton, 2001). “The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the research than with sample size” (Patton, 2001, p.245).

### *Participants*

At the three schools there were a total of four specialists. In addition, there were two specialists assigned to the high school. The participants also included the superintendent, three principals, the library supervisor, a college professor, and 18 classroom teachers in a Louisiana parish public school system. They were recommended

by the library supervisor and all participants agreed to participate in the study. The school library media specialists worked in an elementary school of 468 students, a middle school of 900 students, and high school of 1, 200 students.

The rationale for using an elementary and a middle school specialist and two high specialists was to view the phenomenon of the effective school library media specialist from different perspectives. In order to preserve anonymity, I do not use the actual names of the participants. Throughout the study, I refer to the school library media specialists as the Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS), the Middle School Library Media Specialist (MSLMS), the High School Library Media Specialist 1 (HSLMS1), and the High School Library Media Specialist 2 (HSLMS2).

The literature pointed to different scheduling designs in the different school levels (Farwell, 1998; Mosqueda, 1999; Yetter, 1994). For example, the process of collaboration for instruction is scheduled differently in elementary, middle, and high schools. In elementary schools, collaboration occurs by grade level and across level grouping, with the school library media specialist meeting with these teachers in some manner. Within middle schools, teams of teachers are formed and the media specialist interacts with the teams (Farwell, 1998; Yetter, 1994). Lastly, high schools use departmentalization, modular scheduling, or block scheduling to achieve collaboration among the staff, with the school library media specialist participating in departmental meetings and academic councils (Gierke, 1999; Lincoln, 1999; Richmond, 1999). Second, having been a school library media specialist at each level during the past, I realized that elementary, middle, and high schools organize instruction differently.

### *Role of the Researcher*

The researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative studies. As the key research instrument, the personal skills, values, and biases of the qualitative researcher are relevant (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Patton, 2001). Since the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry, a qualitative report should include information about the researcher. This information should include experience, training, and the perspective the researcher brings to the field (Patton, 2001).

In relation to this study, it is important to note that I have been a public school classroom teacher, as well as a public school library media specialist, for over twenty years (1970-1998) in the state of West Virginia. During those years, I served as an elementary, middle, and high school library media specialist at various times. These experiences created a negative perspective of the methods school principals used to manage and fund the school library media center. Lastly, the educational levels of school library media programs are different from each other and provided me experiences relevant to this study.

In addition, I recently completed an ALA accredited master's degree in Library and Information Science at Louisiana State University (LSU). The program provided me with the knowledge of the many positive aspects and challenges of the NLP, as well as its common language. The position as a graduate of the LSU program was also beneficial in providing rapport in this parish public school system.

All research is affected by the presence of the researcher. This is especially true in qualitative research. Behavior and ideas of individuals may be altered when they



participate in any study. Often the subjects may feel uncomfortable. I interacted with participants in a natural, unobtrusive manner, blending into the surrounding environment and attempting to have minimal influence on participants' normal behavior. This helped in building rapport with the participants in my study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

There were several strategies for blending into the setting. I wore clothing that reflected what others in the research setting wore. One school library media specialist remarked that I looked as if I belonged in the school (Middle School Notes January 11<sup>th</sup>). Second, I was regarded as a person with discretion because school principals, the library supervisor, classroom teachers, and library media specialists confided in me. Further, by not displaying too much knowledge while talking to participants, I became a natural part of the research scene (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

In addition, I followed Bogdan & Biklen's (1998) advice not to gossip with people who are not in the study since it can fracture trust. My field notes did not include participants' full names, and I guarded the notes carefully in order to maintain confidentiality. Although field notes are an intrinsic part of qualitative research, I did not take notes in front of subjects. Rather, I retreated to a private spot to take notes so as not to intimidate the participants in my study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). However, when a participant was explaining detailed information, I sometimes took notes in order to demonstrate concentrated interest in the topic being discussed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

I learned that qualitative research in a school library media center is much easier than in a regular classroom. People naturally expect individuals in a school library media center to be reading, writing, researching, and using technology. This made it easier to

retreat to a quiet corner of the setting and type notes on my handheld computer. The flexibility of data collection in this setting was a benefit to me.

### *Informed Consent of Participants*

I informed each individual about what would occur during the research study and the intended use of the research data that were collected at each of the sites. Each participant received an oral and written explanation of the procedures to be utilized, which assured them that participation was important and desirable. After receiving permission from the Library Supervisor in the parish and West Virginia University, I contacted the superintendent, the principals, a college professor and school library media specialists in each of the three schools. These individuals were informed that they could withdraw from participation at any time, and their requests would be honored.

Individuals who agreed to participate in the study received a copy of the approved Human Subjects Policies Exemption Letter. In short, informed consent included the participants' understanding that they have the right to withdraw from the research investigation and the freedom to exercise that right (Patton, 2001).

### *Data Collection Procedures*

The use of multiple methods to collect data about the everyday experiences of four school library media specialists enhanced the validity of the findings through a process called *triangulation*. Triangulation means to verify facts by the use of more than one method of data collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Thus, observations, interviews and the examination of written documents were employed in data collection to illuminate the guiding research questions.

### *Participant Observations.*

“The first fundamental distinction that differentiates observational strategies concerns the extent to which the observer will be a participant in the setting being studied” (Patton, 2001, p. 64). In observations at each school, I placed myself near the middle of the participant observer continuum (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In other words, I found a balance between being a complete observer and an active participant in the scene. For the first few days in each site, I remained relatively detached, hoping to be accepted. As the days moved on, I participated more actively. With the permission of the school library media specialist, I assisted students and teachers when the specialist was busy teaching a class. I scanned books for circulation and assisted with minor research questions. However, in the later stages of the research, I became less actively involved as I prepared to exit the field. With too much participation on my part, the goal of the study would have been lost. Becoming a researcher meant internalizing the research goal while collecting data in the field. In short, I attempted to adjust my participation based on the goals of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

I limited observations to an hour or less each day at the sites during the first days of the project. Remaining too long in the field often results in an inability to record field notes fully and accurately. Memory fades if the notes are not addressed immediately. Since the schools were close together, I could often observe in the morning at one site and move to another site or two in the afternoon.

Also, I made observations at different times in the day in order to see the phenomenon of the school library media specialist at different times of the day (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). I attempted to observe the entire range of daily activities which included

maintaining and designing the center, providing technology assistance, providing reading with rewards, collaborating and being involved in public relations. I attempted to observe activities as the four specialists interacted with principals, classroom teachers, and students while providing materials, leadership, instruction and collaborative planning opportunities.

Field notes are the written account of what I experienced and thought while collecting and reflecting on the data in the study (Patton, 2001). In other words, I learned from the participants, attempting to see the world from the perspective of effective school library media specialists, administrators, classroom teachers, and students (Gorman, & Clayton, 1997). I knew my data analysis would rely on accurate, detailed extensive field notes. Therefore, I generated field notes including thorough descriptions of what I heard and saw in each of the three school library media settings, as well as my interpretations and reflections. These notes also provided a personal log that reflected the effects of the data collection on the researcher. An example of field notes can be found in Appendix B: Field Notes. The descriptive part of the field notes were observational describing places, people, activities, and conversations. The interpretive part of the notes is reflexive or analytical, noting ideas and issues that emerged from the observations. The primary concern initially was to describe what I observed. Reflecting began at the start of the process and increased as the study progressed (Patton, 2001).

#### *Interviews.*

In addition to participant observation, I conducted interviews at each site. “We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe” (Patton, 2001, p. 340). The interviews were conducted in conjunction with participant

observation and written documentation. In short, the interview was used to gather descriptive data in the superintendent's, three principals', the library supervisor's, a college professor's, four school library media specialists' and 18 teachers' own words so that I could develop insights on how they interpreted the situation . An example of one transcribed interview is in Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview and the interview guides are in Appendix D: Interview Guides.

In this study, I interviewed the superintendent, three principals, the library supervisor, a college professor, four school library media specialists, and 18 classroom teachers about their experiences with and perceptions of school library media specialists. They were selected because the literature points to these individuals as being keys to school library media specialists' leadership (Haycock, 1999a; Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999; Konnert & Augenstein, 1995; Pearson, 1989; Simpson, 1999; Valenzia, 1996; Woolls, 1994). I used an interview guide in order to make interviewing a number of different people systematic and comprehensive because I determined in advance the issues to be explored (Appendix D: Interview Guides). The interview guide is prepared to ensure the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed (Patton, 2001).

With interviews, I was able to develop greater insights than strict observations could give me, since observation alone can often be deceiving. Each of the interviews was tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were conducted after I was at the sites for a month. Since I remained at the sites for a month, it was easier to establish rapport with individuals because they adjusted to my presence.

*Written Documents.*

I also collected written documents that I thought would provide insight into the phenomenon of school library media specialists' leadership. Organizational employees produce official documents for various purposes. I analyzed these documents by:

1. Getting access to the documents.
2. Understanding how and why the documents were produced.
3. Determining the accuracy of the documents.
4. Linking the documents with other sources, including interviews and observations.
5. Deconstructing and demystifying institutional texts. (Patton, 2001, p. 499)

The parish published the School Library Media Center Handbook that includes specialists' ethics, diversity in collections, intellectual freedom, budgeting, and collaborative planning, and flexible scheduling. I also viewed school documents such as the Elementary School Improvement Plan, the Middle School Improvement Plan and the High School Improvement Plan, which detailed the goals of the school. Lastly, I viewed relevant Web sites, memos, newsletters, yearbooks, and other publications such as Standards and Guidelines for Library Media Programs in Louisiana Schools: Bulletin 1134, Parish Library Media Center Handbook, Information Processing Skills Handbook: An Integrated Approach Grades K-8, and Information Processing Skills Handbook: An Integrated Approach Grades 9-12, which were informative about the sites and school library media centers.

### *Data Analysis*

“Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings” (Patton, 2001, p. 432). My data collection generated field notes, interview transcripts, and analysis of written documents from the three sites. I interviewed a university professor and interviewed the superintendent and library supervisor as well as reviewing written documents in the superintendent’s and library supervisor’s office. Data analysis involved systematically searching and arranging the field notes, interview transcripts, and the analysis of written materials in order to discover meaning. Searching for meaning from data collected during fieldwork is not simple.

The challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed. (Patton, 2001, p. 432)

In this study, I used data reduction to reduce the masses of data created by field notes, interview transcripts and the analysis of written documents. Data reduction called for me to select and focus on the data (Rice-Lively, 1997). I needed to reduce the data to meaningful and manageable amounts. In order to accomplish this, I began with an inventory of what I had collected in order to get a sense of the whole. Transcribing all of my interviews and organizing and typing my field notes provided me an opportunity to immerse myself in the data. The reward of my data reduction was the emergence of meaning that led to the interpretations and conclusions in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

However, data analysis began in the field with the construction of observer comments and memos. In this way, I planned future data collection sessions in response to my previous observations. For example, when reviewing field notes, I thought, “What is it that I do not know yet about school library media specialists?” This type of question led to the decision of whether or not to remain in one site for a longer period.

In order to assist me in organizing my data, I used Atlas ti software. The software helped me to store, code, retrieve, compare and link my material, but I did the data analysis. I began by creating a database that included my field notes and interview transcripts. Then I began to review the material using key words from my guiding research questions. The software helped me code categories for sorting the descriptive data collected so that everything relating to a single topic would be located in the same place. In other words, key words in my guiding research questions became my initial coding.

“Classifying and coding qualitative data produce a framework for organizing and describing what has been collected during fieldwork” (Patton, 2001, p. 465). Without categorization, there can be no real analysis or retrieval of similar material. Coding by controlled vocabulary is the concept used by The Sears List of Subject Headings (Sears) and the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), which school library media specialists use when determining access points for data classification. Just as a library media specialist assigns an access point subject heading for entry into the Online Public Access Public Catalog (OPAC), the qualitative researcher uses a system of keywords to identify each theme noted during the close analysis of data. I used Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) schema of coding categories for data organization and analysis:



1. Setting/context codes: These are codes that I used for general information on the setting, topic, or subjects.
2. Definition of the situation codes: These are the codes that I used to categorize units of data, telling me how the subjects define the setting or effective school librarianship.
3. Perspectives held by subjects: These are the codes that I used to include data that reflect the shared rules and norms which are captured in phrases that the subjects use.
4. Subjects' ways of thinking about people and objects: These are the codes that I used to describe the participants' understandings of each other, of outsiders, and of the objects that comprise their world.
5. Process codes: These are the words and phrases that facilitated categorizing sequences of events, changes over time, or passages from one type or kind of status to another.
6. Activity codes: These are the codes that are directed at regularly occurring kinds of behavior.
7. Event codes: These are the codes that I used to describe units of data that are related to specific activities that occur in the setting or in the lives of the subjects I am observing and interviewing.
8. Strategy codes: These are the codes that referred to the tactics, methods, techniques, maneuvers, ploys, and other conscious methods people use to accomplish things.

9. Relationship and social structure codes: These are the regular patterns of behavior among people not officially defined by the organizational chart.
10. Methods codes: These are codes that isolated material pertinent to research procedures such as problems, joys, and dilemmas. These are observer reflections and memos. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 171-177)

Examples of my coding are included in Appendix C: Sample Coding.

Codes categorize information at different levels. Major codes are more general, with sub-codes to break them into smaller units of analysis. In developing codes, I looked for words and phrases that were key words in my research questions (activities, constraints, and perspectives), activities of school library media specialists (reading, technology) and words related to leadership (catalyst, change, guide, power issues). Eventually, I had 75 major code words (Appendix C: Sample Coding). In short, I developed a coding system that is reminiscent of Dewey's Classification System for books and other materials. Thus, locating data and turning data into information was easier.

### *Limitations*

Limitations apply to this study design. The first concern is the small size of the sample, which was not selected randomly. Thus, these findings cannot be generalized to other schools in the system or elsewhere. Whereas, generalizability is not claimed, the findings may have implications for other sites where context and dispositions match those of the described schools. Second, the High School media program was not part of the NLP grant. Although the Middle School was not part of the NLP, the principal and another teacher were trained in the NLP when they were employed in another school.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Even though the literature contains much information about effective school library media centers, uncertainty remains concerning the daily activities of an effective school library media specialist (Bell, 1990; Campbell, 1991; Ervin, 1989; Hartzell, 1997a, 1995; Johnson, 1994; Mosqueda, 1999; Norton, 1978; Yetter, 1994). Thus, the purpose of the study was to understand through qualitative research methods: What are the daily activities of school library media specialists in an elementary school, middle school and high school?

During the second semester of the school term 2000-2001 for a period of 25 days at each site, within a four month period, through observations, interviews and written documents, I collected data about key participants and the daily activities of four school library media specialists in a parish public school system in Louisiana. During the data collection period, I visited the sites during various times of the day and sometimes an entire day. Often I visited one school library media center in the morning and another in the afternoon. Through answering four guiding research questions, I gained basic understandings about the phenomenon of effective school library media specialist leadership. Chapter 4 addresses the four guiding research questions of the study:

1. What are the daily activities of the school library media specialists in these selected school library media centers?
2. How do key participants (e.g., superintendent, principals, library supervisor, and classroom teachers) perceive the role of the school library media specialist?

3. How are the daily activities of these selected school library media specialists related to the professional standards of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL)?
4. What are the enabling and/or constraining factors for these selected school library media specialists?

*Research Question 1: What are the daily activities of school library media specialists in these selected library media centers?*

The first question is addressed by a typical case study. The Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS) was selected to illustrate the daily activities of a school library media specialist from among the four who had been nominated as school library media specialists in effective school library media centers in the parish public school system by the Library Supervisor. The second, third and fourth guiding research questions are addressed in three separate sections in this chapter.

*Case: Elementary School Library Media Specialist*

For the case study of the ESLMS, I interviewed the superintendent, library supervisor, a principal, a school library media specialist, 7 classroom teachers, and a college professor about their roles and perceptions concerning the phenomenon of the effective school library media specialist leadership. I changed the names of the school, key participants and the parish to preserve the anonymity of study participants. In the following paragraphs, data in the form of facts and quotations that come from interviews (Appendix A: Sample of Transcribed Interview & Appendix D: Interview Guides), the school improvement plan, Elementary School Newsletter, Modisette Award Application and field notes (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes). The source of the data appears in parenthesis at the end of each sentence as necessary.

The ESLMS was selected as a typical case to present to address the first research question. A typical case in qualitative research is that example which is “particularly typical for the average or the majority of the cases. Here, the field is disclosed from inside and from its centre” (Flick, 1998, p. 69). The ESLMS was selected to illustrate the daily activities of school library media specialists from among the four who had been nominated as school library media specialists in effective school library media centers in the parish by the Library Supervisor. Thus, the following case study of the ESLMS provides the reader with a realistic illumination of the phenomenon of effective school library media specialist leadership. The ESLMS served behind the scenes as well as in the front lines of effective school librarianship.

The ESLMS has been a school library media specialist for 9 years and served as a classroom teacher for 20 years prior to becoming a school library media specialist. Her undergraduate degree was in secondary English. The ESLMS holds a Masters of Arts (MA) in Reading Education and a Masters in Library and Information Science (MLIS) from Louisiana State University (LSU), which is an American Library Association (ALA) accredited library science program. She holds certification in educational administration, too. She is a member of the Louisiana Library Association (LLA) and the Louisiana School Librarians Association [LSLA] (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 1).

She was presented an award by the parish for school library media specialist of the year in 1999. The ESLMS was the school library media specialist at one other elementary school and taught at the middle school level in public and private schools before coming to the Elementary School. During National Library Power (NLP), the

Elementary School Principal, hired her in the current position (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 1; Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>). The NLP was a grant from the Dewitt-Wallace Foundation allowing implementation of the standards set by the AASL in Information Power (AASL & Association for Educational Communications & Technology [AECT], 1998). The NLP grant provided the necessary funding for staff development, facilities, books, and school library media staff in the effective use of school library media centers.

The ESLMS' daily activities were extensive. During the day, the ESLMS was in perpetual motion within the school library media center and the school site. Her daily activities required multitasking supported by high energy levels. I would compare her to the White Rabbit in the story of Alice in Wonderland running and saying, "Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I shall be too late" (Carroll, 1981, p.2)! Just as Alice rushed to follow the White Rabbit into the hole, key participants rushed to follow the ESLMS into the school library media center (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>).

Her job description set minimal expectations for the job. However, the ESLMS exceeded the limit. Her daily activities centered around (1) design and maintenance of the school library media center, (2) technology, (3) reading promotion with rewards, (4) collaboration with key participants for instruction that supports the mission of the school and (5) public relations.

These daily activities were derived from data analysis. When the data collection ended the final analysis began. Patton (2001) states that the "investigator has two primary sources to draw from in organizing the analysis" (p.431). First, I used the questions

generated during the design phase of the study. Second, I used “analytic insights and interpretations that emerged during data collection” (Patton, 2001, p. 431).

The core meanings discovered in content analysis are called patterns and themes. According to Patton (2001), there is no “hard-and-fast distinction between the terms” (p.453). However, the term pattern usually refers to a descriptive finding such as, “Almost all the participants expressed a love of flexible schedules in the school library media center.” While a theme, takes a more categorical form such as “flexible scheduling”. Flexible scheduling allows teachers the opportunity to send children to the school library media center at any time. Thus, the content analysis revealed a pattern of participants loving flexible scheduling. On the other hand, “Dealing with scheduling” is a major theme of the school library media program.

#### *Designs and Maintains the School Library Media Center*

According to the AASL:

A well-run, student-centered school library media program that is carefully planned, appropriately staffed, and imaginative and efficiently managed is essential for meeting contemporary learning needs. Such a program, with administrative support, makes a significant contribution to student learning that is strong, stimulating, and vital to student achievement. Creative and effective program administration supports authentic student learning and is indispensable to the development of lifelong, independent learners. (AASL & AECT, 1998, p.101)

Thus, it was important for the school library media specialist to apply leadership skills in designing and implementing an effective school library media program. As the

reader will see, the ESLMS used leadership skills to implement an effective school library media program for the Elementary School.

*Creates an alluring environment.*

The school library media center was located in a central position within the school for easy access from all directions in the school site. At the entrance to the school library media center, there was a small garden complete with concrete benches. The front door was painted with multi colors. It was a colorful door labeled "Media Center."

According to the ESLMS:

The school library media center was built during the NLP as an additional building on the site. This is not a converted elementary classroom, but an actual structure built with the school library media center mission central to the construction. I had full design power for the school library media center (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>).

When I opened the colorful door, a surprise was in store for me. The focal point upon entering was the amphitheater seating for the children. The area was complete with a rocking chair. The carpeting was a cool gray and colorful murals of storybook characters were painted across the top of the walls bordering the ceiling. The ESLMS said, "My son painted the murals" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>). The interior was bright and welcoming to young students.

Bookcases covered 90% of the entire school library media center. The ESLMS kept the lower reading levels on the shorter shelving for Pre-K, kindergarten and first grade students. One of two stand-alone shelves served to divide the amphitheater seating



from the rest of the center. The other shelving unit provided the center with more than three seating areas. Thus, more than one activity could occur with minimal conflict.

The tables for students were circular and rectangular in shape. Colorful covers were added to the backs of the seats. Students entering the library seemed to love to sit at these tables and read books. I often saw students sitting in the center reading, laughing and smiling. They drew pictures with signs saying, "I love the ESLMS," which were displayed on the circulation desk (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 14<sup>th</sup>).

One teacher commented:

It is a fun library. The kids want to go there. They don't have to be quiet. It is a freedom issue. I don't know if I were to go anywhere else that I would see the same response (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 3).

To my surprise, a large statue of a red elephant stood in the school library media center. The same teacher said, "The ESLMS decorated the elephant for Christmas with lights" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 3). The ESLMS told me, "My husband found the elephant and brought it to the school" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>). Students had their pictures taken next to the elephant when they were Accelerated Reading award winners and attended the Principal's Luncheon in the school library media center. The award winning student pictures hung on the walls behind the amphitheater seating.

*Provides flexible scheduling for the school library media center.*

The school library media center maintained a flexible schedule, allowing students to come to the school library media center at any time of the day to check out books or do

research. Flexible scheduling means the principal does not create a formal instructional schedule for the school library media center, for any subject, during the school day.

When asked about flexible scheduling, a primary teacher commented, “Oh, I love it! The kids can go whenever they need to go. I feel like if I need something, I can go anytime” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 2)! The same teacher commented, “I pretty much like it because sometimes you think of things and with the flexible schedule the child can leave the classroom for the library at any time and still get the information as needed instead of waiting” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 2).

Flexible scheduling is important for an effective school library media specialist. Flexible scheduling is Standard 4 under Information Access and Delivery in Information Power. Standard 4 states, “The library media program requires flexible and equitable access to information, ideas and resources for learning” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p.89). Without flexible access, many students would be deprived of timely and equitable access to enrichment and instructional resources. In short, whenever students completed classroom assignments or needed information, students were permitted to visit the school library media center.

A teacher commented, “Letting them go on their own to the library is one of the things that I really like about the open door policy of the library” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 2). Another primary teacher remarked:

Before I came to the Elementary School, we did not have an open library system. It was very hard to get books because the library was always locked, and I needed it for the classroom. I keep 15 books here everyday for them to read when they

finish their work. I need the open access in order to do that (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 2).

One intermediate teacher summed up flexible scheduling with this statement, "When my kids need something, I don't have to say wait until next Thursday because we don't go to the library this week" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 2).

However, the ESLMS scheduled specific times for the Autism self-contained class, as well as the Pre K-1, because "They need the extra support in reading" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary School January 11<sup>th</sup>). These few scheduled times never prevented other students from using the center. The center was always available for students. The ESLMS stressed the importance of flexible scheduling stating:

If you go the other way you end up as a babysitter. There are some librarians that are doing classroom instruction for a couple of hours a day. These librarians are doing nothing more than babysitting a classroom for a couple of hours a day (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 10).

*Provides adequate funding for the school library media center.*

According to the Library Supervisor (Library Supervisor, personal communication, November 11, 2002) each school library media center is allotted money, \$5.00 per pupil under the Federal Consent Decree. These monies are not federal. The parish is required to pay these through parish money resulting from the lawsuit dealing with racial inequalities. Second, the school library media center gets \$2.00 per student for magazines and supplies. All school library media appropriations are made on a per pupil basis. The parish provides subscriptions to the H.W. Wilson standard catalogs and

Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature. In addition, everyone has access to Follett's Alliance Plus Online and Follett's Find-It-All Knowledge Links for middle and high schools. Follett is the publisher of the online cataloging software for school library media specialists (Library Supervisor, personal communication, November 11, 2002).

Any other money needed beyond what was allocated was the responsibility of each school library media specialist to obtain. The ESLMS commented:

I often negotiate with the Elementary Principal for finances. He [the principal] has never told me, No! Whenever the principal has extra money, the ESLMS said that the Elementary School Principal jokes, 'The ESLMS loves to spend money!' He calls me and says, 'I have \$500 bucks, what can you do with that amount of money' (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 15)?

Further, the ESLMS handled the Title I budget. She told me that she determined what resources were needed by acting as "...an instructional consultant with teachers and administration" (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 8).

If there is a \$1,000 left over, I get books. Of course, it is not always books. Last year, I spent \$600 dollars on grading software for the staff. However, this year I am ordering books because we really need to update our printed collection (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 15)!

Thus, the ESLMS wrote grants for needs above the basic money budgeted by the parish. According to the ESLMS the school, received over \$300,000 dollars in money from grants. The ESLMS received \$125,000 in LEARN grant money for technology education and staff development. In addition, she wrote a grant for classroom teachers to

have library books in their classrooms (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 14).

*Acts as the Technology Systems Operator*

Another major daily activity of the ESLMS was technology maintenance for staff and teachers within the building. As the systems operator for the entire school the ESLMS' duties included (1) maintaining the library and school network, (2) ordering and installing all software, (3) planning new Internet connections throughout the school, (4) repairing and troubleshooting technology hardware and software in the building, and (5) web page maintenance.

In an interview the Elementary Principal spoke of the technology role of the ESLMS:

.... An effective librarian is of the utmost importance in our elementary school. Not even to mention the new technologies that we use. Our library is the hub of that. She is our technology guru here. So along with her duties with instruction here she also runs 100 or more computers that are networked at our school. That is not in her job description, but she is willing to do it. And we need someone here who is willing to do that because we don't have the personnel to handle that.

(Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Elementary Principal Question 3)

First, the ESLMS maintained the server and the connecting computers in the classrooms. She installed all software, reframed computers, installed hardware, monitored computer virus situations, and troubleshoot equipment failures for teachers in classrooms. On one occasion, she was interrupted several times during reading to students to help teachers in technology distress (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes

Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>). Further, twice during our interview, maintenance men, who were going to install new wiring for computers in the building, interrupted us. They were sent directly from the office to her for directions for installing the new Internet connections (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Interviewer's Comments).

During a meeting of middle school library media specialists, the ESLMS' web page was used as an example of excellence (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 6<sup>th</sup>). She used the web page to communicate with and educate teachers and parents. She was constantly adding educational links and highlighting school successes to the web page (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 19<sup>th</sup>).

The Library Supervisor spoke of the real importance of technology to the school library media specialist:

Technology is just a tool! I don't see that as the entire focus of the librarian. It's such a tool that has enabled us to expand learning when used properly. Bringing technology to the setting of the library has begun helping people to open their eyes and see the librarian in a different light. Because of the school librarian, who in many cases became that expert on technology or was the first person to begin to learn how to use the computer, the staff sees the librarian as important to instruction. Often the librarian was the first person in the school to have a computer (Appendix A: Interview Guide Administrators Library Supervisor Question 4).

In other words, the ESLMS used technology to expand learning opportunities. Technology was a tool used to initiate collaboration. Through technology, the ESLMS

became a vital instructional component in the school. She used technology expertise and became more than the keeper of books.

*Acts as a technology instructor.*

Another aspect to technology was information literacy. The ESLMS used staff development for instructing personnel on how to properly use the software to get needed information. The Elementary School Improvement Plan (SIP) states, "The school library media specialist will provide professional development for faculty members that will enable them to use multimedia approach to educating during the curriculum and emphasis on curriculum integration" (Elementary SIP, 2000 p. 3).

For example, on my first visit to the Elementary School on January 8, 2001, the ESLMS was preparing for a staff development session and told me:

The principal asked me to prepare a presentation, at the last moment, on using the parish network to post lesson plans, or Whiteboard. The teachers are not using the service. We play good cop and bad cop. I do the presentation and he demands they use the service (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 8<sup>th</sup>).

The ESLMS presented a summer staff development, too. She said, "I taught 6 day all day classes during the summer for the faculty to show them how to use the software we would have on the Local Area Network (LAN)" (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 3). This particular staff development was financed from a grant she wrote for the school (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 3).

Second, she worked with small groups of students from various classes instructing them about proper methods of information retrieval. According to the

Elementary School Improvement Plan (SIP), "The school library media specialist will provide training in developmentally appropriate use of hardware and software to students" (Elementary SIP, 2000, p.3). As students arrived in the library during various periods of the day, the ESLMS showed them how to access their accumulated points from the Accelerated Reading program database, and how to use the computerized card catalog, or online encyclopedias (Appendix B: Sample Field Elementary Notes January 19<sup>th</sup>).

The ESLMS demonstrated to students the use of the Online Public Access Card Catalog (OPAC). She used a unique method for teaching. By projecting her computer screen to a large television, all students could see the computer screen. She stated, "They really enjoy the TV/computer connection. You can see the fascination with technology in the students' eyes" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 19<sup>th</sup>).

*Provides community technology education.*

According to the Elementary SIP, the ESLMS was charged with offering a technology night for parents and community members. The idea was to present parents with realistic views of technology and education. Parents and community members attended demonstrations using the integration of technology. Further, they were shown proper computer usage and various educational sites (Elementary SIP, 2000 p. 3).

The ESLMS took advantage of community opportunities through business, too. With the support of parents, the Elementary received a free television from a program sponsored by AT&T. Further, Computer Heaven donated a computer when parents supported the school by turning in purchase receipts to the Customer Service Center at the Courtyard Mall (Elementary Newsletter, January, 2001).



The ESLMS taught classes for the Parish Office of Technology Management (OEM). These were courses taught to teachers throughout the parish during the school year. She taught classes in web page creation, Internet Explorer, basic computer literacy, Microsoft Word, email and Power Point. Classes were scheduled through the parish in the spring and in the fall (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 3). In other words, more than the Elementary School benefited from ESLMS' technology expertise.

*Promotes Reading with Rewards*

Because of her reading degree and the low achievement scores at the school, the ESLMS emphasized reading. Further, the ESLMS emphasized reading for enjoyment. "When I arrived, students were carrying books around for cosmetic value. Students could not even read the books. They just wanted people to think they were reading" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>). The lack of reading was reflected in their test scores. The ESLMS told me that she ordered all the fiction books she could afford, because "The more they read, the better they read and succeed in every area of academic life" (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 17). "It does not make any difference if the books are award winners. I just want books that students can read" (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question, 20)!

*Serves as the coordinator for the Accelerated Reading program.*

The school library media specialist was the catalyst for the Accelerated Reading program within the building. The Accelerated Reading program was a networked program used throughout the parish. Students took tests after completing a book to assess comprehension skills. Students were awarded points based on the number of questions

answered correctly about a book they read. The more books read and the higher the test scores resulted in more points being earned by students. Further, the ESLMS hosted a school store at the end of the month and students could use earned Accelerated Reader points to purchase merchandise such as pencils, bookmarks, pencil cases, and storybook character toys (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 14<sup>th</sup>).

In addition to providing the reading materials for the program in her collection, the ESLMS maintained the computerized reading database by keeping the records of the number of books successfully read and tested during the month by each student (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 19<sup>th</sup>). One primary teacher said:

The ESLMS promotes the Accelerated Reader where the children read books and take tests on what they read. Depending on the number of books they read, the children get prizes. She comes once a week to our classes and lets them know how well they are doing. She lets them know how many books they have read and the points earned. Then the students know who can go to the store and get prizes (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 4).

The ESLMS presented trophies to the top classes who scored the most points on the Accelerated Reader each month. "I make a big deal about the student coming from a specific teacher's room. I always send trophies to the classrooms. The teachers keep the trophies at the end of the year. This makes them feel included" (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 16). She wanted to provide teachers with a feeling of ownership in the program. In other words, she did not want teachers to feel she was the person totally responsible for student success. She shared the glory.

*Prepares the Principal's Luncheon.*

Further, she planned a Principal's Luncheon for high scoring students at the end of each month. During the Principal's Luncheon, students ate pizza with parents, the ESLMS, and the Elementary Principal. They each received certificates along with bumper stickers proclaiming, *I Attended the Principal's Luncheon at the Elementary School*. Their pictures with the red elephant were mounted on the wall of the center (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 14<sup>th</sup>).

During one of the luncheons, the ESLMS was frantic. Besides having a class scheduled the day of the luncheon, she needed to order pizza and drinks for the luncheon. During the morning, she called the pizza company three times. Then she ran to the other end of the building to get ice for the drinks and get the required money from the secretary to pay the pizza man. The ESLMS realized the importance of the pizza luncheon to the children, parents and administration and wanted them to be pleased. In the middle of everything, she had to deal with a virus-infected computer in the guidance office and questions from students and teachers, too. She truly put forth a supreme effort to make things run smoothly, while conducting classes, seeing to technology and other instructional needs (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup> & February 14<sup>th</sup>).

An example of her efforts to make students feel at ease occurred during the first pizza luncheon I observed. On this occasion, a young man came to the school library media center the day of a pizza luncheon. He shyly said, "My parents cannot come to the luncheon today." The ESLMS immediately told the young boy, "I will be your substitute parent and sit with you at the luncheon." The young boy beamed with relief. Later, she

told me, "His parents work several jobs and cannot get free to come to the school" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>). The ESLMS made everyone feel welcome.

*Guides students to proper reading levels and recreational reading.*

Reading guidance is important for an effective school library media specialist. It is important to guide students to the right levels and interesting topics. The ESLMS always asked the students to choose a book and then read the first two pages. If they didn't miss more than two words and the book was interesting, they could checkout the book (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup> & February 14<sup>th</sup>).

To provide proper reading guidance, the school library media specialist must be aware of children's literature and reading instruction. The ESLMS told me:

I am pushing the books that kids like and that they have success reading. I am all about reading instruction. I am not about award winning books. I tell them if they will not like the book. If it is not the right book for them, I don't want to see them with it (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 20).

Thus, the school library media specialist must know her clientele. At the end of each grading period, the ESLMS wrote the reading level, instructional level and frustration level on 488 student library cards. These levels were derived from the Accelerated Reading program she administered and the Louisiana Educational Assessment Reading (LEAP) scores. She got the standardized scores from the permanent record cards and the Accelerated Reading scores from her own database. In this manner, the ESLMS maintained a watchful eye on reading achievement for each of the 488 students (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 19<sup>th</sup>).

The ESLMS provided reading guidance with ease. A new student arrived in the school library media center. She asked the new student "What do you enjoy reading?" The ESLMS explained the Accelerated Reader and the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) to him. She guided the student to the right shelf and began pulling books on his favorite subject. She asked, "Would you like to sit in the rocking chair and read a few lines before deciding?" The young man was elated and began reading enthusiastically. Eventually another student arrived and told the young man that he needed to return to class and go to physical education. Reluctantly, the boy put down his book. The ESLMS promised to hold the book for him (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 19<sup>th</sup>). The ESLMS used reading guidance to create a positive impression on a new student.

*Reads to students.*

The ESLMS, sitting in her rocking chair, read to groups of students every day during some period of time. The youngest children were scheduled into the center at set times. During the reading time, she awarded students with stickers for answering questions about the reading or simply "Just being good." She made certain every student had a sticker before leaving the session (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>).

She incorporated audio books and videos during a time when she was ill. The congestion kept her from talking for long periods, so she elected to use the audio books and story videos. However, she asked questions and rewarded students for paying attention. All of the audio books and videos related to classroom work (Appendix B: Sample Field Elementary January 19<sup>th</sup>).

With the older students the ESLMS provided guest readers as well as reading to them periodically. She encouraged independent reading for the older students. Further, they were encouraged to read more difficult books for the Accelerated Reader program. However, she often took time to read one page with them and then the student reads a page (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 19<sup>th</sup>). Guest readers came from the volunteer pool. Often the readers were at risk students from the high school. These students teamed with the elementary students to build their self-esteem while helping students who did not have parents who read to them at home. Other guest readers were often volunteer grandparents. They read with students in the library as well as reading with them in the hallways or classrooms. The ESLMS made certain that no student was neglected (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22 & February 22).

#### *Collaborating for Curriculum Improvement*

It is important for the school library media specialist to be involved in collaborative planning in order to provide curriculum support to teachers and the principal. When she arrived at the Elementary, the ESLMS decided to "Put myself into the center of the school and become involved in everything" (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 20). According to the ESLMS, this was part of the training received in the Library and Information Science Program at LSU (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 20), which was based on the tenets of Information Power and promoted the school library media specialist working from the middle (AASL & AECT, 1998). The school library media specialist situated in the

middle is often more accessible and more approachable than the building administrator (Appendix D: Interview Guide Library Supervisor Question 4).

Collaboration means sitting down with teachers and planning lessons and research that make the school library media center part of the teaching process. Because of time restraints, the ESLMS needed to make a special effort to collaboratively plan with teachers. She told me, “I just impose myself on them and say, second grade what are you doing” (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 4)? The ESLMS told me that she constantly "bugs teachers" by asking them what they need for their curriculum (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 16). Further, the classroom teachers often came to the ESLMS for guidance in designing lessons to meet student instructional needs. The ESLMS often collaborated with teachers and provided instructional ideas that incorporated technology in a lesson, used the school library media center or provided needed instructional materials (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 19<sup>th</sup>).

*Plans with teachers in grade level meetings while participating in school improvement.*

The school scheduled grade level meetings were held once a month in the morning before school. A representative from each grade met with the principal, the school library media specialist, and counselor in the administrative suite. According to ESLMS, long-range goals were discussed including the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program, or LEAP test (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 31<sup>st</sup>). The ESLMS became a central figure in these meetings, since as a school library media specialist the ESLMS held a general overview of the entire curriculum. An

intermediate teacher stated, “I see her as part of a team. If she weren't here, we wouldn't be as good as we are. When the test scores come out, I am sure we would be okay, but not as well as with her help” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 3).

The superintendent explained his views on the central role of the school library media specialist and collaborative planning for school improvement:

I think they have to be the most well rounded people in your school. I think the day of one dimensional media specialist is long gone. And that is partly because when you look at what is happening to the ranks of teachers in general, I don't think that you get as much general knowledge of that coming through the door as a classroom teacher. I think that you get folks that are narrow in their understanding particularly at the middle school and high school level. They are subject oriented. They're not going to be able to see the connections that need to be made because they only see the discipline. They only see biology. They don't see biology's impact over social studies or other sciences. They don't see the relationship of biology to the English class (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 2).

In other words, the ESLMS saw the impact and interaction of all subject areas on each other.

The ESLMS also was a member of the school improvement committee. She alternated with other teachers as its chair and typed the plan, no matter who was the chair, and attended all the meetings. She was instrumental in suggesting goals and objectives to meet standards for the entire school (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary



January 11<sup>th</sup>). Within the school improvement plan, the ESLMS was listed many times as the primary person delivering instruction needed to accomplish school goals and meeting standards in language arts, reading, staff development and technology. During the year, the ESLMS measured and recorded reading levels every grading period and compiled statistics to assess the impact of the steps taken to improve reading achievement (Elementary SIP, 2000 p. 3, 6 & 7).

*Collaborates with teachers "on the fly".*

Although time was often a problem for collaboration, teachers made an effort to collaborate with the ESLMS even if it was “on the fly,” while they were standing in the hall (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 14<sup>th</sup>). The Library Supervisor spoke about this type of planning:

Planning time, as you know, is a big, big problem everywhere so you really have to think of ways that you can accommodate them and not be viewed as a person that wants to take a lot of their time. You must present yourself as someone that is willing to do some of the work or a lot of the work, not expecting teachers to do it all (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 2).

One teacher remarked about “on the fly” collaboration:

She finds out what we are doing in a unit in science by talking with us at lunch or in the schoolyard. She knows that we need a certain kit and she will make certain that we get the material. She tells us to stop by the library and get the material.

She initiates collaboration for projects a great deal (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 3).

At another time, the ESLMS spoke with the kindergarten teachers in the hallway and learned they were instructing students about the letter *V* in class. Thus, when reading to the students, she reinforced the letter *V* with questions directed to students about words in the story with the letter *V*. During reading time, she would say, "I know that you are working with the letter *V*. Can someone give me a word that begins with *V*?" When she began to read, she stopped and said, "Let's identify the words on this page that have the *V* sound." She rewarded answers with stickers (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 19<sup>th</sup>).

During second grade reading time, the ESLMS asked students, "What is the difference between *fiction* and *nonfiction*" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 19<sup>th</sup>)? The second grade teachers were working on the difference between the two concepts. All of this is reinforcement for the classroom lesson. In other words, the school library media specialist and the classroom teacher did not work in isolation. They collaborated.

*Supports classroom teachers in high stakes testing.*

What is the responsibility of school library media specialists to high stakes testing in Louisiana? When asked the importance of high stakes testing to school library media specialists in an interview, a professor of library science at LSU's School of Library and Information Science remarked:

We are consumed with high stakes testing. On that front, I have to say that librarians have to be perceived as being a part of the team and not a resistor.

What can the school library media specialist do to work with teachers and administrators to achieve the overarching goals that we have with these high takes

testing? If they pull out and say that's the teacher's responsibility and they don't pull their weight, that divide [between teacher and school library media specialist is going to get larger and larger. In Louisiana, this is the cloud that covers everything--high stakes testing (Appendix D: Interview Guide College Professor Question 2).

The Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) and Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Iowa) testing scores are used to create a School Accountability Report Card.

According to the School Accountability Report Card, the school was judged to be “Academically Below Average” with a School Performance Score (SPS) of 63.6 in 1998 (Louisiana Department of Education, 2001). The SPS is determined by the LEAP, attendance and Iowa test scores. However, the school received an award for Exemplary Academic Growth because the school exceeded its growth target by five points in the fall of 2001. Its SPS for 2000 & 2001 amounted to a SPS of 74.3. An SPS of 79.9 is required to be judged “Above the State Average SPS” is 79.9 (Louisiana Department of Education, 2001).

The ESLMS supported classroom teachers. The ESLMS worked with small, heterogeneous intermediate groups of 5-6 students throughout the day. The ESLMS told me, "I really work hard with the intermediate grades on skills that will be tested" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 22<sup>nd</sup>). With small group instruction, the ESLMS stated, “I can give more individualized instruction” (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>).

Advice about the LEAP came from the Library Supervisor. I attended one meeting where emphasis was placed on the importance of the school library media

specialist's involvement in this testing (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Meeting February 6<sup>th</sup>). The Library Supervisor provided the school library media specialists with an opportunity to share LEAP testing activities created by school library media specialists to provide support for teachers before LEAP testing. At the meeting, the Library Supervisor offered suggestions and stressed the importance of the school library media specialist's awareness of school curriculum needs (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Meeting February 6<sup>th</sup>).

*Provides diversity in collection development.*

Diversity in library media materials is a major issue in the parish and with AASL. The Middle School Library Media Specialist (MSLMS) told me, "We have been told by the parish to pay special attention to African American literature and maintain a diverse collection" (Field Notes Middle February 20<sup>th</sup>). According to Information Power:

Building Partnerships for Learning:

The school library media specialist is a leader in meeting the school's responsibility to provide resources and services that represent diverse points of view and that support and extend the curriculum with current, wide-ranging information. The school library media specialist provides ready access to resources, programs, and services that address the learning needs of students and others and that are free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, or doctrinal disapproval (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 92).

It is important to keep a wide range of materials that meet the recreational and instructional needs of various ethnic groups. The ESLMS made certain classroom collections, as well as her actual domain, promoted African-American, Asian American

and other ethnic groups and all educational needs. The ESLMS accomplished this by collaborating with teachers and then ordering requested materials (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary March 9<sup>th</sup>).

*Plans research projects.*

A collaborative research project is when “... we plan units and special reports that the students might do for classroom credit” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 2). For example, when the students read a story on oceans in class, the ESLMS helped them to write a report on oceans (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 2). On another occasion, the ESLMS helped with a report on landforms for a primary classroom teacher as well as a unit using dictionaries and encyclopedias (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>).

The Library Supervisor emphasized the importance of research projects planned collaboratively between teachers and school library media specialists:

If you want to make it meaningful and something that is really going to carry over beyond an assignment or beyond a class it's got to be something that is planned, that is curriculum related, that has a definite purpose and hopefully beyond just completing an assignment; but that it is related in some way to the real world that the teacher and the librarian planned together, so that it's a very well organized successful experience for kids. Sometime you stumble a little bit because you do not know how a particular activity might work. (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 4).

Planning collaboratively is important. In the words of the ESLMS, if all that a school library media specialist provided was a teacher “potty break” for a half an hour

a week, then the school library media specialist was a wasted position. The ESLMS elaborated with:

I think it would be a mistake to go back to providing potty breaks for teachers. I know that I really could not do it. I could not do it! I would not be willing to do it!

(Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 22).

*Serves as a Public Relations Expert*

During the day the ESLMS greeted anyone coming through the door. She never missed an opportunity to smile and say, "What can I do for you?" Her greeting included hugging each child. When parents arrived for the pizza luncheon, the ESLMS told them, "I am so proud of your child for reading so many books" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 14<sup>th</sup>).

When one student arrived in the school library media center, he told her, "I am moving today." The ESLMS hugged him and told him, "I will miss you, but I hope you will be happy at your new school. Please promise to return and visit me!" The child beamed and said, "I promise to visit you, the ESLMS" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>).

At one of the pizza luncheons a small girl, who was a guest, did not want to return a book when the luncheon was over. She started to cry when her mother put the book on the shelf. The ESLMS told the mother, "Just take the book and send it back by her brother later. There is no reason for her to be so upset." The parent was relieved (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 14<sup>th</sup>).

As teachers arrived and left from the school library media center, The ESLMS complemented them on the terrific job they were doing with their classes. The ESLMS

never missed an opportunity to complement teachers (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>). She told me, "It is important to make teachers feel they are doing a good job" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>).

The ESLMS was always kind to everyone. Once when the maintenance men were repairing her shelving unit in the back, she offered them the best of the candy loot she was dispensing for the children in the school award store. "You can never be too kind to anyone," the ESLMS told me. "You get more help when you are kind" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 23<sup>rd</sup>).

Another example of her kindness and her ability to deal with all kinds of people involved a kindergarten teacher. According to the ESLMS and other teachers, she was a constant complainer. (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>). During a reading time, the ESLMS turned to the kindergarten teacher and said, "Did you not go to school with Paulette Bourgeois the author of the Franklin series?" The kindergarten teacher responded, "Yes, we were sorority sisters at LSU." The ESLMS replied, "Remind me and I will contact her about coming to speak to our students." The kindergarten teacher told her, "I know Cathy Guisewite who writes the Cathy cartoon series, too. We were all at LSU together!" Again, the ESLMS made the teacher feel important in front of her students (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>).

The ESLMS could also make students feel comfortable in awkward situations. Once when a new student was introduced to her, a teacher said that the child spoke no English. I had noted the child seemed uncomfortable. To make the child comfortable, the ESLMS hugged him and gave him a special sticker. The child beamed. Her goal was to

make everyone feel comfortable (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>).

*Recruits new school library media specialists.*

Another key to effective school library media specialists is recruitment. One teacher remarked:

The ESLMS, our librarian, saw me reading a story to students in one of my groups. She thought I should pursue my love for books. She could see my love for books. She started encouraging me to look into the library science program at LSU. I plan to start the curriculum in the summer (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 1).

During the month I observed the ESLMS, I too, saw her encouraging younger teachers to enter the field. On one occasion she talked with student teachers at the Elementary School about becoming school library media specialists (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>). On another occasion, she even tried to recruit me for the parish (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 31<sup>st</sup>).

*Serves as the vice-principal and key communicator.*

The ESLMS became the key communicator in the building and served as the unofficial vice-principal. As one intermediate teacher told me, "She sends out clipboards with announcements from the office. She makes certain we are aware of what is going on. She sends clipboards around and asks teachers what they need. She does initiate communication a lot" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 3). I saw these clipboards on many occasions. Often these memos were directly from the principal's office. The ESLMS was responsible for the circulation of the administrative



directives or memos (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>, February 14<sup>th</sup> & January 22<sup>nd</sup>).

The ESLMS served as the official greeter of the school. According to a special education teacher she was "The first person that I met. I came in the early summer and she took me from room to room and showed me the school library media center. She made me feel part of the team" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 1). I noted this when a new teacher arrived in the middle of the year (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>). The ESLMS spoke with the new teacher about personal concerns and instructional materials the new teacher might need. She offered to help her with any problems that might be encountered in the school (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>). Further, she always greeted parents and community and made them feel welcome. Of course, the staff remembered The ESLMS' kindness and returned to her for guidance and direction within the school (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 1).

Besides being the first person teachers met when arriving at the school, she planned social events, too. These social events ranged from exercise classes to birthday parties. At the time, she was exercising with a young teacher expecting a child before the end of the year. The program included other teachers after school. Further, she planned a baby shower for the expecting teacher (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup> & February 14<sup>th</sup>).

She served as the insurance liaison with the parish school system. This placed her in contact with the entire staff. When the parish changed insurance plans major problems occurred. The cooks, custodians, and teachers came to her throughout the day to clear up

the confusion. The ESLMS made a special effort to solve each and every problem. The custodian stopped in twice to say, "I really appreciate all you did for me" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup> & January 31<sup>st</sup>).

One day at lunch the counselor spoke with the ESLMS about the Elementary Principal and purchasing testing software. The Elementary Principal refused to buy the testing software for the counselor. The ESLMS told the counselor, "I will tell him the software you want is above the standard. I really believe he will relent" (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 22<sup>nd</sup>). Eventually, the software was purchased (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 31<sup>st</sup>). Of course, the ESLMS was able to persuade the Elementary Principal to buy the software for the school. The ESLMS acted as the key communicator between the principal and the staff.

*Serves as the coordinator of school volunteers.*

The ESLMS served as the volunteer coordinator for the entire school, not just for the school library media center. She made certain that classroom teachers had volunteer readers and volunteers to help tutor students at risk through the Volunteers in School Program (VIP). The ESLMS connected with various individuals willing to volunteer and to financially support the school through the United Way and other charitable organizations.

VIP was a primary connection during the NLP grant period. The ESLMS continued to support VIP after the end of the initial grant. She supported VIP by making presentations so that others would see the importance of volunteers in the school. In February, the Elementary Principal and the ESLMS made a presentation to the VIP

convention in the parish. The presentation emphasized the importance of community volunteers in schools and how these volunteers helped the Elementary School.

The ESLMS made certain that teachers got volunteers to tutor and read to students as well as help in the classroom with multitudes of clerical tasks. Students arrived daily from various high schools to tutor at risk students or read to children. Retired individuals were seen in the school library media center reading to students, shelving books, or helping with bulletin boards. These same retired individuals were seen in classrooms reading to students or sitting in the hallways tutoring those students (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 14<sup>th</sup> & January 11<sup>th</sup>).

#### *Other Effective School Library Media Specialists*

Although the case study of the ESLMS illustrates the daily activities of an effective school library media specialist, the three other school library media specialists that were observed used similar methods. For example, these three school library media specialists made an effort to insure that positive public relations were maintained.

At the High School, the High School Library Media Specialist 1 (HSLMS1) and the High School Library Media Specialist 2 (HSLMS2), the two school library media specialists assigned to this school, planned a summer reading program for their teachers. In the fall, they held afternoon teas and presented awards to the staff members who read the most books. According to the HSLMS1, “We begin the year on a positive note” (Appendix D: Interview Guide HSLMS1 Question 3)!

Further, the HSLMS1 sponsored the popular Read Aloud Poetry luncheons in the center every second and fourth Tuesday of the month. The event was advertised on the morning announcements and the school’s web page. Students and teachers signed up

ahead and lunches were delivered to the library. They ate and shared personal poetry, personal poetry favorites and discussed the meanings of the readings. Often music was played softly in the background (Field Notes High School February 8<sup>th</sup>).

Second, the HSLMS1 sponsored the Read Aloud Please Club (RAP). The senior high students were taught how to read to younger children, then read to them on a visit to various elementary schools and read to the younger students. Further, these students used their new reading skills to encourage younger siblings to read. At the end of the year, the HSLMS1 sponsored a dinner at a local restaurant for the club and awarded students with plaques for service (Field Notes High School January 26<sup>th</sup>).

The National Teen Read Week, sponsored by RAP, was celebrated each year at the high school. The members planned readings for every lunch shift for the week, and a winner was chosen for having the largest audience. Readings involved short stories, personal writings, and poetry. The guest readings were presented during English classes throughout the day. Another guest reader performed for as many students who could fit in the library during the two lunch periods. The school library media specialists provided handmade bookmarks so that students could get the reader's autograph. Guests included local television personalities and university professors (Modisette Award Application, 2001).

Positive public relations were also important to the MSLMS by participating in all social gatherings held at the school during lunch. The MSLMS took lunch with teachers in the teachers' lunchroom instead of hibernating in the school library media center. By varying her lunch to one of the three scheduled luncheons, she became visible to the entire staff (Field Notes Middle January 8<sup>th</sup> & February 20<sup>th</sup>). As the Superintendent

commented, "...There is a social side that promotes or advocates the use of the school library media center" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 4).

What amazed me about the MSLMS was the fact she could identify over 900 students by name. When the students arrived in the center, she smiled, made eye contact and called them by name. This is especially important for middle school children, who are constantly changing identities (Field Notes Middle January 11<sup>th</sup>). They loved to stop and talk and she always took the time to listen.

In short, the HSLMS1 and the HSLMS2 captured the essence of the typical day in all of the school library media centers with this statement:

In a typical 10 minutes, a student is shown how to use a digital camera and a television is fixed in a teacher's room. Other students need help with choosing the right book, 14 take the Accelerated Reader quizzes and a student gets help with printing a file brought from home. Then someone needs change for the copy machine, a student is shown how to properly cite a bibliography and an administrator needs a facilitator for a special project. We never make anyone wait. We realize that a burned out overhead projector bulb is a crisis to someone as well as the need for 3 more sources for an English paper (Modisette Award Application, 2001).

### *Summary*

In this summary, the daily activities of a school library media specialist, who is uniquely positioned within the school, will be reviewed. The school library media specialist is positioned in the middle of the key participants like the hub of a wheel, or the

focal point of the school. The school library media specialist acts as a hub, bringing the students, teachers, and principal together to accomplish common goals. Without this central hub, the school mission would not be focused. Figure 1 on this page demonstrates this concept.

**Figure 1. School Library Media Specialist Working From the Middle as the Hub of the School**

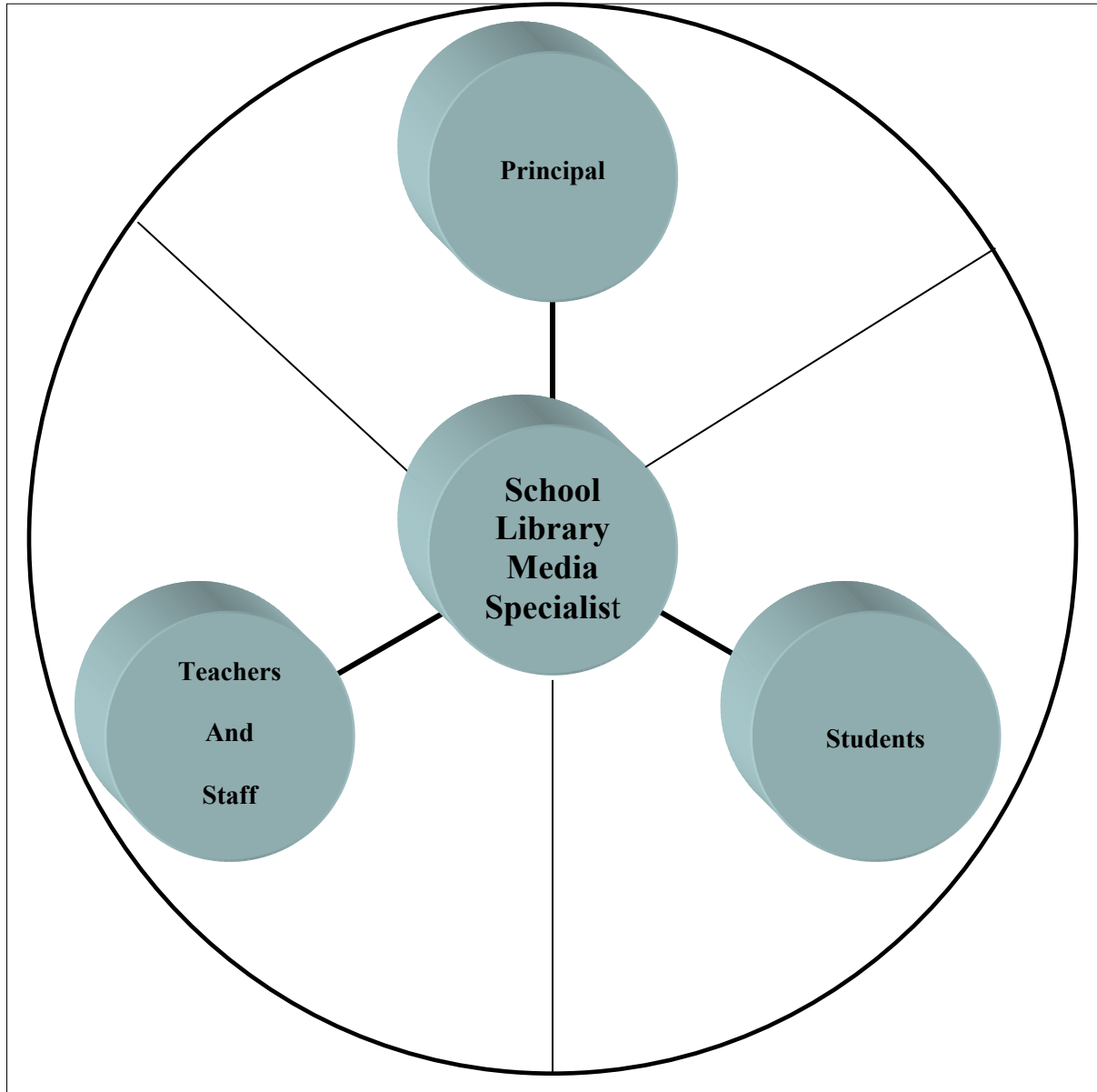
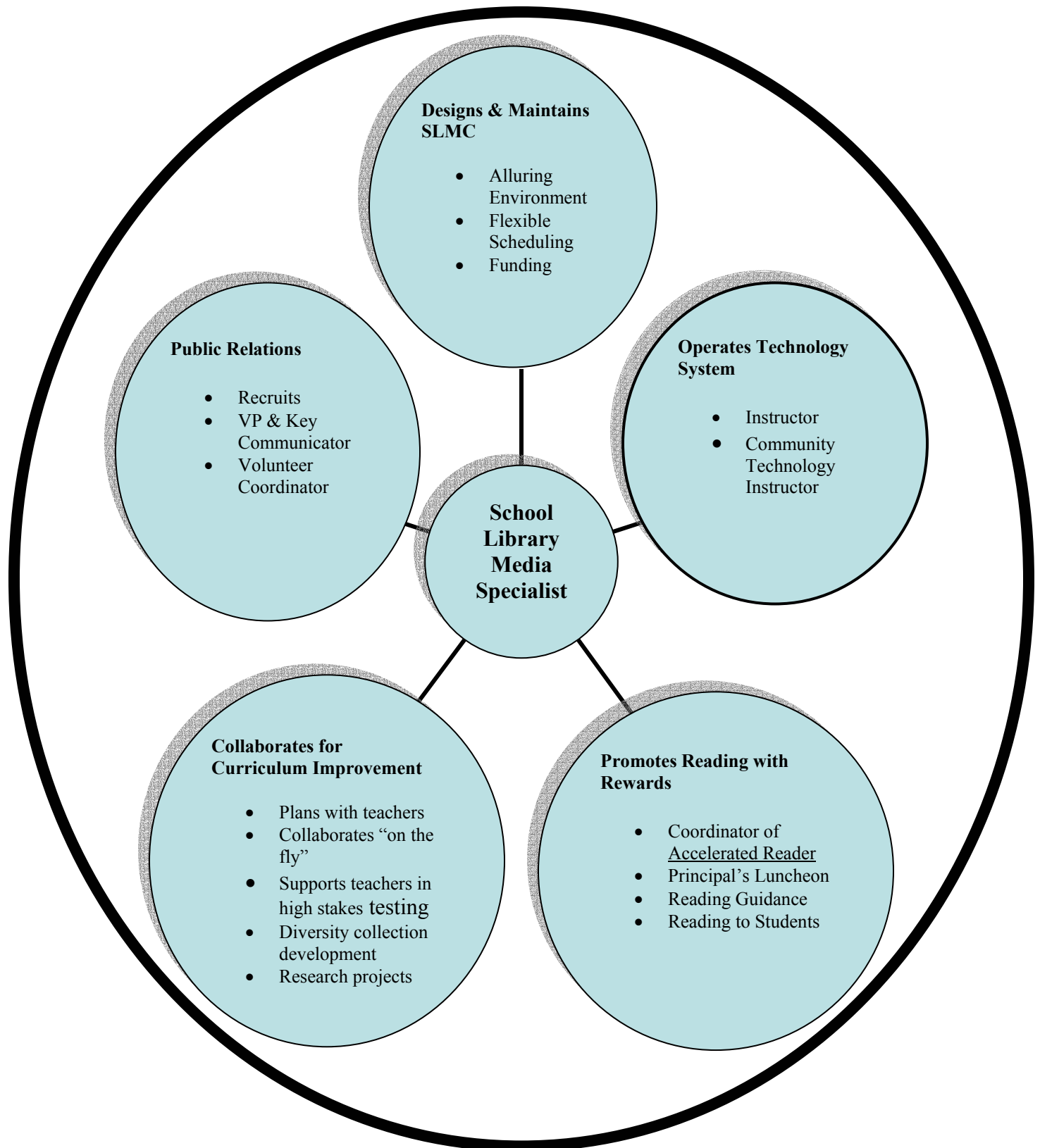


Figure 2 gives the reader a picture of the daily activities that were performed across the three sites each day.

**Figure 2. Daily Activities of School Library Media Specialists**



### *Designs and Maintains the School Library Media Center*

This activity dealt with the administration and creation of a school library media center that encouraged school library media center use, provided flexible scheduling, and obtained sufficient funding for the operation of the school library media center. With the successful design and maintenance of the school library media center, other activities were easier to accomplish.

#### *Creates an alluring environment.*

An alluring environment of a school library media center was bright, colorful, comfortable and inviting which encouraged students and teachers to use the school library media center. The school library media center provided separate areas for more than one activity.

#### *Provides flexible scheduling for the school library media center.*

Flexible scheduling allowed teachers and students the opportunity to use the school library media center at any time. With this type of scheduling, the school library media specialist was able to meet the needs of more teachers and students on a daily basis. No teachers or students needed to wait for a designated time period to speak with the school library media specialist or use the school library media center. They were always welcome.

#### *Provides adequate funding for the school library media center.*

Without adequate funding for recreational reading books, reference books, software, hardware, and supplies, the school library media specialist could not provide adequate services to teachers and students. Because the parish did not provide enough



money, the school library media specialist wrote grants to supplement and provide a higher quality of school library media center service.

*Acts as the Technology Systems Operator*

The school library media specialist maintained, planned technology placement in the building, ordered and repaired technology hardware and software. The school library media specialist coordinated plans for additional technology links within the school site. The school library media specialist conferred with administrators and technicians on a daily basis in order to provide the best possible service for teachers and students.

When computers did not operate, the school library media specialist serviced them. The school library media specialist was the first person contacted within the building by teachers and students for technology assistance. They repaired servers, printers, reframed computers, and installed software. If a technician was needed, the school library media specialist knew exactly what to ask the technician in order to get the correct adjustment or repair. Often, the school library media specialist repaired the equipment without contacting a technician.

*Acts as a technology instructor.*

The school library media specialist used her expertise and provided staff development in technology within the school. The ESLMS taught teachers how to use software and integrate technology into the classroom.

*Community technology instructor.*

The ESLMS taught classes for the parish for other teachers and offered a technology night for parents and community members. Providing technology instruction

beyond the school site provided an opportunity for the school library media specialist to advocate technology.

*Promotes Reading with Rewards*

Reading was an important focus especially with the poor reading test scores that were reflected in standardized testing. To support the reading achievement goals of the school, the school library media specialist promoted reading with a reward system for students and teachers.

*Serves as the coordinator for the Accelerated Reading program.*

The Accelerated Reading program was used across the parish to track student reading achievement and promote reading. After completing an Accelerated Reading book, a student took a test to measure comprehension. The cumulated student scores were used by students for higher grades in the classroom, purchases in the school store, certificates and recognition. The school library media specialist maintained the database and the scores for the students and teachers.

*Prepares the principal's luncheon.*

The principal's luncheon was part of a reward system for reading. Students who earned the most points during the month for the Accelerated Reading program were rewarded with a pizza luncheon. The school library media specialist organized it for the principal, parents and students. The reward included recognition with certificates, pictures and bumper stickers announcing their achievement, all provided by the school library media specialist.

*Guides students to proper reading levels and recreational reading.*

The school library media specialist maintained reading achievement records for each student in the school. The records helped the school library media specialist to select the reading material that best met individual needs. In this way, the school library media specialist also maintained a personal relationship with each child. Reading guidance provided the school library media specialist with an opportunity to make certain that students selected appropriate reading level material.

*Reading to students.*

The school library media specialist found time during the school day to read to children. This was especially important since many students did not have parents reading to them at home. By making reading fun, the school library media specialist provided an opportunity for children to experience reading as more than something used only for academics.

*Collaborates for Curriculum Improvement*

Through maintaining an awareness of the overall curriculum, the school library media specialist interacted collaboratively with teachers to design instructional units that met the goals of the school. The school library media specialist was the curriculum hub during these collaborations.

*Plans with teachers in grade level meeting while participating in school improvement.*

The school library media specialists planned formally with teachers during grade level meetings to be seen as part of the teaching team. They contributed ideas for instructional and thematic units. Further, by serving on the school improvement

committee, the school library media specialist maintained a pulse on the direction of the school goals. This was important because without serving on the committee, the school library media specialist would remain ignorant of the instructional and recreational materials needed by students and staff.

*Collaborates with teachers “on the fly”.*

Time was often a problem for collaboration with teachers. Thus, it was the responsibility of a school library media specialist to use all opportunities to initiate collaboration. Collaboration with teachers occurred on the playground, during lunch periods, or in the hallways.

*Supports classroom teachers in high stakes testing.*

Standardized testing was important for the school. The school library media specialist was part of the school team collaborating with teachers and administrators attempting to increase achievement test scores. The ESLMS supported classroom teachers by working with small groups of students in the intermediate grades on skills that would be tested. During scheduled time in the school library media center, the ESLMS coordinated her reading with the skills taught in classroom.

*Provides diversity in collection development.*

The school library media specialists provided for diverse ethnic needs in collection development for recreational and instructional materials. Students must identify with the characters portrayed in materials. Without this personal connection, students are not motivated to read.

*Plans research projects.*

In order to remain involved in the entire school, it was important for the school library media specialist to initiate research projects that necessitating the use of the school library media center by students and teachers. By initiating new research projects or reevaluating older research policies, the school library media center remained a vital resource.

*Serves as a Public Relations Expert*

Through public relations, the effective school library media specialist promoted the school library media center. Therefore, it was important for the school library media specialist to be seen and heard. She did this by recruiting new professionals to school library media service, as the unofficial vice-principal, as the key communicator, insurance liaison, as the official greeter, social director, and volunteer coordinator.

*Recruits new school library media specialists.*

Within the category of public relations, the school library media specialist encouraged other teachers to become school library media specialists. There is a critical shortage of certified school library media specialists in this area. She encouraged others to use their talents for reading, technology, and collaboration for curriculum goals for school library media centers.

*Serves as the vice-principal and key communicator.*

The school library media specialist was the information hub of the school. The school library media specialist served the dual role of an unofficial vice-principal and information specialist. As the unofficial vice principal, the school library media specialist collaborated with teachers and administrators to improve the academic achievement of

the school. The information specialist provided the technology expertise, the reading expertise and the collaborative methods to reach those goals.

*Serves as coordinator of school volunteers.*

Proper staffing was important for the school library media specialists to provide extensive time collaborating with teachers and students instead of shelving books or maintaining the circulation system. In order to provide for a lack of paraprofessional staff, the school library media specialist coordinated a volunteer recruiting and placement service for the school library media center. These volunteers were retirees, teachers within the school, high school students, students within the school, and students from other schools.

The school library media specialist served as the volunteer coordinator for the entire school. In this manner, she maintained positive relationships with teachers by providing them with volunteer help during the school day. Instead of hoarding the volunteer wealth, the effective school library media specialist shared the wealth with everyone.

*Research Question 2: How do key participants (e.g., superintendent, principals, library supervisor and classroom teachers) perceive the role of the school library media specialist?*

According to the literature in Chapter 2, the perception of the school library media specialist is paramount to the success of the school library media program. School library media specialists cannot afford to perpetuate the belief that the ideal library is quiet and the user of the library the violator of order (Radford & Radford, 1997). Studies such as Dorrell & Lawson (1995) concluded superintendents, principals and teachers viewed ineffective school library media specialists as old maids who processed books. Thus, how

the key participant perceived the role of the school library media specialist is important to the effectiveness of the position. In order to address this research question, interviews were conducted with the superintendent, three school principals, the library supervisor and 18 classroom teachers. The interviewee's answers to the questions were used to address how the superintendent, principals, the library supervisor and the classroom teachers perceived the role of the school library media specialist.

*The superintendent's perspective.*

Since the school superintendent is charged with developing a fiscally sound budget for the parish, the superintendent needs to see the school library media center as a vital, proactive instructional component in the school in order for the school library media program to be adequately funded (Edwards, 1989; Woolls, 1994). Unfortunately, many superintendents lack a clear concept of the vital role (Valenza, 1996). Haycock (1985) explored the lack of clarity in the role played by the school library media specialist:

Few school districts have a written statement of purpose for the school library media program; thus leaving the school library media center in the land of the extra, the educational frill, good to have when you can afford it, but hard to justify when no one really knows what the center is for (p. 103).

However, in the parish the Superintendent valued the school library media specialist with the statement, "I have always believed that the school library media center ought to be the hub of the school" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 2). Further he stated:

... And I feel to this day, the library is the essence of what makes a school function. It is the media specialist, the media center, or the librarian. It is someone that really drives instruction. I think this happens both actively and passively. Passively by just making certain you have a great collection that is well organized and accessible. Actively when the school library media specialist hears things that are going on in the school and offers resources to help people to see where they have common strengths within the curriculum. But that takes a rare individual (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 4).

The Superintendent commented on the vital role played by the effective school library media specialist in collaborative curriculum planning when he said:

I think they have to be the most well rounded people in your school. I think the day of the one dimensional media specialist is long gone. It is partly because of what is happening in the ranks of teachers in general. I don't think classroom teachers get much training in general curriculum knowledge. I think that you get folks who are narrow in their understanding of the entire curriculum particularly at the middle school and high school level. They are subject oriented. They're not going to be able to see the connections that need to be made because they only see the discipline. They only see biology. They don't see biology's impact over social studies or other sciences. They don't see the relationship of biology to the English class. So that brings us back to the media specialist/librarian. This person has to have that broad perspective those people don't possess to help them see where they need to go (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 2).



In short, the school library media specialist must be the hub of the school, which connects the entire curriculum. Without this vital connection, all teachers would remain subject isolated.

Further, the Superintendent believed school library media specialists were leaders: Obviously successful librarians have to be leaders. But I think they are situational leaders as Sergiovanni put it in his work. There are times they are working among a group of teachers who clearly know where they are going and the school library media specialist becomes subservient to the process and supplies resources. On the other hand, in many cases, especially in the parish, they have to be leaders. They must possess a promoter side to them. Their social style is to actually push people who would not actually choose to go there on their own. (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 4).

In this statement the Superintendent saw the effective school library media specialist as the promoter for change in the school.

One interesting perspective was on the type of training that created the most effective school library media specialists. The Superintendent commented on his previous experiences in another state:

One of the things we did in the other state was an initiative where we began to pay attention to our best school library media specialists. We found those teachers who integrated instruction and really understood teaching often made better school library media specialist/librarians than those trained in library science. Number one, these individuals integrated technology and knew how to integrate instruction. To bring them into the library was a natural progression because they

were able to let everybody see the same connections they saw in action....

(Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 2).

In brief, the Superintendent learned about the importance of a school library media specialist and brought this to bear in his current assignment. The Superintendent believed that school library media specialists successfully integrated technology throughout the curriculum. He saw the most effective school library media specialists as successful classroom teachers, who knew how to integrate instruction and technology. Because of his beliefs, he included school library media specialists in every school.

*The principals' perspective.*

The school principal is the key to the success of programs within the school. School effectiveness research during the last 20 years affirms the role of the principal in school success (Austin & Reynolds, 1990; Bell, 1990; Blasé & Kirby, 1992; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Lindahl, 1987; McIntosh, 1994; Yesner & Jay, 1998). In addition, Chisholm and Ely (1979) found the principal's commitment and support essential for the school library media specialist to become active in the school's instructional improvement. Any effective principal understands the importance of the school library media center and works to assist that specialist to improve student learning (Pfeiffer & Bennett, 1988). Hopkins and Zweizig (1999) found that the principal is the key to whether innovative programs such as the National Library Power (NLP) become a school-wide priority or merely an afterthought.

The three principals interviewed spoke of the school library media specialist within their buildings using positive terms. The Middle School Principal referred to the school library media specialist as a "...jack-of-all-trades, a resource, and the technology

leader” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Middle School Principal Question 4). The Elementary School Principal commented, “The ESLMS always volunteers to help with activities in the school. The ESLMS can always be counted on in a pinch” (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 8<sup>th</sup>). The High School Principal added, “The school library media specialists are people generating help, not clock watchers. They are motivated and driven by professional goals, not clocks” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator High School Principal Question 4).

According to the Middle School Principal, the school library media specialist controlled the “spigot on the information flow within the school” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Middle School Question 4). She said:

The MSLMS is open to helping other people, teachers and students, master the technology roadway. Teaching them how to read the map to get to where they need to go. Sometimes it means holding them by the hand and taking them where they might not go on their own (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Middle School Principal Question 4).

The High School Principal added:

They lead through technology. Their use of technology in the resource center drives other parts of the curriculum. Their integration of technology helps us decide how we will integrate technology in the business department. What they are doing by being very creative and proactive in the resource center with technology is helping us decide what we are doing in other areas of the curriculum (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator High School Principal Question 4).

Hartzell (1997a) states textbooks concerning the job of a principal are universally silent on the operation of the school library media center. School library media center issues are dealt with in law classes where the school library media center is treated as a possible source of legal problems from censorship or to violations of copyright (Hartzell, 1997a). None of the principals interviewed remembered learning anything in college about the operation of the school library media center (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Elementary School Principal Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator High School Principal Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Middle School Principal Question 1).

When asked how they learned about the role of the school library media specialist, all of the principals spoke of personal experience (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Elementary School Principal, Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator High School Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Middle School Question 1). Further, the Middle School Principal and the Elementary School Principal participated in the NLP (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Elementary Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Middle School Principal Question 2). Before the NLP, the Elementary School Principal said:

I went into an elementary school when I was a teacher and I knew what a school librarian did. The librarian walked in the library and said, 'Don't talk! Get your book read and shut up! I don't want to hear a pin drop!' That was just the way it was (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Elementary School Principal Question 4).

When the Middle School Principal was principal of another school she was involved in the NLP. She learned of the importance of a school library media specialist in cross-curricular education (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Middle School Principal Question 3). Her training in the NLP helped her determine what type of person is needed to manage a great school library media center. The Middle School Principal recalled an experience with an ineffective school library media specialist, “I won’t have a bad school library media specialist again. I did that for a year” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Middle School Principal Question 4)! According to the Middle School Principal, the bad school library media specialist did not collaborate and did not encourage student or teacher use of the center (Field Notes Middle School January 8<sup>th</sup>).

One action taken by the Middle School Principal demonstrated her feelings about the importance of the school library media center. Unlike teachers, when an absence occurs, no substitute is provided for the school library media specialist. Rather than close the school library media center, the Middle School Principal served as the principal and school library media specialist during the extended absence (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Middle School Principal Question 2).

The High School Principal learned about the vital role of the school library media center from the actions of the HSLMS1 and the HSLMS2. He said, “These ladies get along with everyone and want to help in any manner” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator High School Principal Question 4). The High School Principal recalled the old school library media specialists and students copying reports from World Book and dreading to go to the school library media center (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator High School Principal Question 3). He said:

In the past a library was a place students felt like they had to go. Now, they want to go there. They like computers. The computers are a magnet to draw them there. Then the spiders can teach the flies (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator High School Principal Question 5).

Through the NLP and the efforts of school library media specialists, the principals learned to view the school library media center in a positive light. Because of their positive perceptions, these principals supported the school library media programs in their schools by not demanding the school library media centers follow a rigid schedule (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media HSLMS1 Question 2; Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator High School Principal Question 3; Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist MSLMS Question 2; Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>).

The school library media specialists were given autonomy by the principals to schedule the center as needed. The HSLMS1 commented, “There are seven classes in grades 9 through 12 each day. Each teacher requested the research time she wants to devote and collaborates with us concerning her research needs” (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist HSLMS1 Question 2). The MSLMS said, “Because of the 90 minute block established by the Middle School Principal we have more flexibility in terms of the planning of an activity” (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist MSLMS Question 2). In other words, the school library media centers were scheduled for use by teachers flexibly, or on an as needed basis. Without principal support, there would be no flexibility in the schedule.

*The library supervisor's perspective.*

The Library Supervisor provided her perspective in an interview about the role of the school library media specialist. When the Library Supervisor arrived in this position in 1985, the parish had traditional library programs like those established in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. The Library Supervisor said, “These programs were very solid but the library programs needed to move forward and embrace technology” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 3). She added:

I attempted to position myself from the very beginning in the midst of technology. I stepped forward and volunteered if I was not asked to participate in technology innovations. A school library media specialist would be doing this at the school level, too (Appendix D: Interview Guide Library Supervisor Question 5).

When asked about her role in the school library media program, she answered:

I see my role as educating everyone about school library media specialists. My role is similar to the role of the building school library media specialist because the positions require the holder to be involved and informed about what is happening in the curriculum. We need curriculum information and translate the information into action (Appendix D: Interview Guide Library Supervisor Question 2).

Thus, the school library media specialist should know the curriculum of the school:

The school library media specialist should know the school's specific curriculum as well as or better than anyone else on that faculty. She should be the big picture

and the big idea person (Appendix D: Interview Guide Library Supervisor Question 2).

Teachers should seek out the school library media specialist for problem solving and information:

The school library media specialist should be the person teachers know best in the information chain of command. If classroom teachers are not certain about something, the school library media specialist should be the first person teachers approach and ask after the principal. Let's face it! The principal is often too busy and too inaccessible... (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 2).

In other words, the school library media specialist should be the person most likely sought out because of accessibility.

To gain staff trust, the school library media specialists must have initiative. The Library Supervisor commented, "I think that is just critical to be willing to take some initiative whether or not it is out in front or behind the scenes" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 4). In order to demonstrate initiative, she suggested, "A school library media specialist needs to be volunteering, helping and involved" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 4).

According to the Library Supervisor, the school library media specialist must volunteer to be part of the curriculum and technology. Since the school library media specialist is often the primary expert in technology, this is the first person in the school to have computer access. By embracing technological change, other teachers will follow the



lead of the school library media specialist (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 5).

Added to initiative there should be dependability:

People need to know that if you say you are going to do something, you will do it.

I think that with teachers establishing dependability goes a long way for them to establish collaboration, treating you as an equal and recognizing you as someone that delivers (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 5).

In other words, if the school library media specialist shows initiative and dependability, staff members will grow to trust and accept the school library media specialist as a vital component to the instructional staff.

When asked about school library media specialist leadership, she commented, “Leadership can take many forms. Many people, who do not have forceful personalities, become leaders. There are other styles and other ways to be a leader” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 4). She saw collaboration as one method of leadership. She said:

Knowing how to be an effective collaborator, to interact well, your interpersonal relations skills, to work one on one or with groups of people within your school can be an asset to any program ... That's an effective form of leadership and that is not something that everybody can do. So how do you do that if you are not naturally comfortable taking charge of a group? If you are an effective group member, you do not always have to be the person sitting in the role of the chair or the group leader in order to be an effective leader. You can be the one to be the

catalyst helping accomplish certain things successfully... (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 4).

In other words, the Library Supervisor viewed leadership as evolving from collaboration.

*The classroom teachers' perspective.*

The classroom teachers interviewed appreciated the school library media specialist. They were aware of the tremendous amount of work accomplished during the day, and saw the school library media specialist as having many jobs. As one elementary teacher stated:

The preparation she must do! Of what I have seen from her, she never just sits back. The ESLMS needs two people for her job. She has to be the librarian and she has to be the media specialist. How she keeps up on it? I do not know (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 3).

One middle school teacher thought the MSLMS was required to keep an inventory of every pencil in the school:

... She is *Ms. Inventory* person. I think she keeps an inventory of every pencil in this school. I think this is unfortunate for her. It is always easy to let the librarian to do this and that because people think they don't do anything but shelve books when she really does more (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 3).

What did this teacher see as the MSLMS' real role?

She is an advocate for the teachers. ... Sometimes she inspires us. I see her as more than a support person. I see her as a guide. When I don't know where I am going or what I can do, I can come and ask her and she will say, 'Have you

thought about this and this?’ She will even come into the classroom...(Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 3).

An elementary teacher saw the school library media specialist performing a dual role as a computer CT Question 3). Another elementary teacher described the multiple roles of the school library media specialist:

Well, let me put it this way. The ESLMS does a lot of jobs. She works with us in planning units and special reports the students might do. We have story time. She works with us on technology issues that come up with the computer (Appendix D: Interview Guide Teacher CT Question 3).

Further, she gained staff support by “... planning with us. If we have a question about anything at anytime, she is there for us. She has even helped my son with his homework” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Teacher CT Question 3).

A high school teacher commented:

I see the role of the school library media specialist as that of a very dynamic person, a person that helps me to collaborate. The two ladies here are just tremendous. I see them as making certain that I have the right materials. When I first came to the High School, I did not use the library. I think that the entire library is awesome now. The library is not just a place to check out books. It is an active, dynamic instructional place. They are media specialists instead of just working with books and the old card catalog. They never let library maintenance responsibilities get in the way of helping others (Appendix D: Interview Guide Teacher CT Question 3).

This teacher also commented on the outside of the library activities of the school library media specialist with:

... They do a great deal outside the library. The HSLMS1 is on the multicultural program committee. They give baby showers and things like that at the school.

Within the school these two are well known and very approachable. They have to be (Appendix D: Interview Guide CT Question, 3)!

An elementary teacher commented on how the ESLMS flexibility met the needs of students and staff:

She's everywhere. Everyone wants a piece of her time. She is the right person for this job because she is here and then she is there. She is everywhere she is supposed to be. If something comes up and she has a plan for us to come to the library for something, and something comes up to delay that, she will go out of her way to change her schedule to help meet the needs of the kids (Appendix D: Interview Guide CT Question 3).

A middle school teacher commented about the leadership role assumed by the MSLMS. "Whenever there is something new, a new program or a grant she is always a part of the puzzle. She is a piece of everything we do here" (Appendix D: Interview Guide CT Question 3).

Other classroom teachers commented on their perceptions of the role of the school library media specialist. A high school teacher stated, "They are organizers and problem solvers" (Appendix D: Interview Guide CT Question 5). Another remarked, "The school library media specialists changed my library attitude and I use the center more often" (Appendix D: Interview Guide CT Question 3). Yet another teacher said,

“She is with the office staff in knowing what is going on and what people are doing. She is an Assistant Principal for Academics” (Appendix D: Interview Guide CT Question 3).

An elementary teacher spoke of her first impression of the ESLMS:

She was the first person that I met when I came here to interview for the position.

She took me through the school, showed me the library, explained her background and offered me any help necessary. She told me that she was always right here to help. She says, ‘I know you are busy, would you like me to help’ (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 1)?

Unless the classroom teacher took courses in library science, they learned about the school library media specialist from their personal experiences. One teacher commented:

Before I came to this school, I didn't really think much about the library. But now that I am here I can see that it really does play an important role. She pretty much organizes everything that I need to do. I just come to her and she can tell me what to do and where to go get it. She knows where to go and find things. As far as the computers, she helps us out a lot. She plays a big role in my classroom (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 1).

In other words, the classroom teachers viewed the school library media specialist as more than a support person. They saw the school library media specialist as providing many services and accomplishing many jobs during the day.

### *Summary*

Through interviews, the superintendent, the principals, the library supervisor, and classroom teachers in the three schools provided perspectives about the activities of the

school library media specialists. In short, they saw the school library media specialist as vital for technology advancement, collaborative planning of cross-curricular research projects, dependable and wanting to help in any manner.

*Superintendent's Perspective.*

Since the superintendent sets the budget, it is very important for him or her to be positive about the role of the school library media specialist. The superintendent of the parish saw the school library media specialist as the hub of the school and the essence of what makes a school function by driving instruction through collaboration and technology integration. Without the superintendent, the budget would not reflect budgeting for school library media positions.

*Principals' Perspective.*

The principal sets the tone for the mission of the school. The principals in this study saw the school library media center as vital to instruction and sent that message to classroom teachers. Because of the principals' support the school library media specialists had flexible scheduling and extra money.

*Library Supervisor's Perspective.*

The Library Supervisor is the advocate for the school library media program in the parish. Her advocacy determines whether or not the school library media center moves forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century or remains locked in the 1950s. She advocates for funding, collaborates with other curriculum supervisors, and with the superintendent concerning the school library media program.

*Classroom Teachers' Perspective.*

The perspective of classroom teachers is important. If they see need for the school library media center in their programs, the center will be used. The teachers interviewed in the three schools saw the school library media specialist and the center as important in collaboration for technology integration and curriculum planning.

*Research Question 3: How are the daily activities of the school library media specialist relate to the professional standards of AASL?*

According to views proposed in Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs (AASL & AECT, 1988) and the updated Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning (AASL & AECT, 1998) the school library media center has a clear mission. “The mission of the center is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information” (AASL & AECT, 1998 p. 6). The effective user of ideas and information will be better able to succeed in society. The mission of the school library media center succeeds through active, authentic, creative learning experiences in the school library media center. These learning experiences are student and staff-centered (AASL & AECT, 1998).

To help school library media specialists accomplish the mission, the AASL & AECT established 10 minimal standards for the administration of the school library media program. The following paragraphs address the 10 minimal program standards for school library media program administration related to the daily activities of the school library media specialists in this study. This section will address whether the daily activities of these school library media specialists do or do not meet the minimal standards established by the AASL & AECT.

In order to address this research question, I interviewed the superintendent, three principals, the library supervisor, a college professor, four school library media specialists employed at the three schools, and 18 classroom teachers (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview; Appendix D: Interview Guides). The examples presented are from the selected elementary school, middle school and high school. The names of the three schools, key participants and the parish were changed to preserve the confidentiality of study participants. They are referred to in acronyms that are explained as they are introduced. In the following paragraphs, data is present in the form of facts and quotations that come from interviews, the school improvement plans, and field notes (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes) from the three schools. The source of the data appears in parenthesis at the end of each sentence as necessary.

*“Standard 1: The school library media program supports the mission, goals, objectives and continuous improvements of the school” (AASL & AECT, 1998 p. 101).*

According to AASL, Standard 1 can be accomplished by “continuous collaboration with teachers, administrators, and other members of the learning community” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p.102). The school library media specialists in this study sought to accomplish this goal by involvement in the school improvement process. They were presented as a vital component of the delivery of collaborative curriculum goals in the three school improvement plans.

First, in each of the sites, the school library media specialists were involved in the school improvement process. The HSMS1 explains:

I think that every librarian needs to be on the school improvement team....you have to be because we are just like a big store that everyone comes shopping in



and we've got to know what our inventory has to be... being on the school improvement team is a huge thing (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist HSLMS1 Question 3).

The ESLMS saw the position so important that she continues to serve on the school improvement committee. She said, "...I am no longer listed on the roster, but I still participate" (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 2).

Next, when reviewing the mission goals and objectives that were outlined in the School Improvement Plans (SIP), the school library media specialists were included in these plans as vital components of the entire mission. For example at the High School, the staff discovered a problem in reading when the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students were tested. The goal stated:

Long Range Goal: By the end of the year 2001 school year, IOWA scores in the ninth grade will increase to the district average. Activities include teacher use of the STAR reading program (a component of the Accelerated Reading program) to test the reading comprehension of each student during the first two weeks of school. Teachers will assign at least one Accelerated Reader book to each student appropriate to their level of reading every six weeks. Students will take the Accelerated Reader test and move to higher level accordingly. The librarians are the test administrators and the librarians, teachers and academic vice-principal are listed as working together to achieve this goal (Field Notes High School February 9<sup>th</sup>).

The school library media specialists are the coordinators for the Accelerated Reading program. They work with the teachers to make certain students have the proper reading materials and administer the testing.

A similar goal was part of the Middle School SIP. At the Middle School, the goal of the school was to increase recreational reading (Middle School SIP, 2000). In order to provide evaluation, the school library media center circulation statistics were used for verification. Thus, the school library media specialist coordinated the Accelerated Reading program and provided recreational reading material. The statistics showed student recreational reading improved dramatically. They went from 800 books in a year to over 1,000 in one quarter. Thus, the school library media specialist was tied to the mission, goals and objectives of the school (Middle School SIP, 2000).

Lastly, collaborating with the learning community requires maintaining open communications with the principal and teachers. The MSLMS commented, “Actually, collaboration is a running dialogue that takes place between teachers and the librarian where we discuss what it is that teacher wishes to do with her class and how to use the library resources for a particular research project...” (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist MSLMS Question 5).

Collaboration meant the mission of the school library media specialist supported the mission of the school, because by collaborating the school library media specialist was aware of the instructional resources needed. The school library media specialists grasped all opportunities to collaborate with the principal and teachers. An elementary teacher explained, “We see each other a lot in the hallway or I just pop into the library” (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 3). These school library

media specialists addressed Standard 1 by serving on or chairing school improvement committees while collaborating with instructional staff and the principal concerning curriculum needs. Thus, they met Standard 1.

*“Standard 2: In every school, a minimum of one full-time, certified/licensed library media specialist supported by qualified staff is fundamental to the implementation of an effective library media program at the building level” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 103).*

Standard 2 has two parts. The first part is the professional qualifications of the school library media specialist. The four school library media specialists were each employed full-time by the parish with no teaching duties. The high school had two school library media specialists. Each was fully certified by the Louisiana Department of Education as teachers and school library media specialists. Furthermore, each graduated from an ALA accredited school of library and information science with a specialty in school library media services (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist HSLMS1 Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist HSLMS2 Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist MSLMS Question 1). Thus, each school met the first part of the standard.

The second part of Standard 2 deals with the professional qualifications and evaluation of paraprofessional staff in the center. None of the schools employed paraprofessionals in the school library media center. Since there were no paraprofessionals employed in the school library media center, the school library media specialists were not required to participate in performance evaluations of any personnel

assigned to the school library media center. In other words, they did not meet this part of Standard 2. The schools in the study met Standard 2 partially.

*“Standard 3: An effective library media program requires a level of professional and support staffing that is based upon the a school’s instructional programs, services, facilities, size, and numbers of students and teachers” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 104).*

Standard 3 is concerned with adequate staffing numbers in school library media centers. However, it fails to specify a number or ratio to judge whether a school library media program is adequately staffed. A school library media specialist should be helping to determine the library staff by the instructional programs and number of students and teachers to be serviced by the school library media program. Standard 3 is evaluated by the number of school library media specialists, the number of paraprofessionals, and the amount of staffing power held by the school library media specialists.

Of the three schools, there were two full-time school library media specialists at the High School for 1,200 students. However, the Middle School with 900 students and Elementary with 468 students were staffed with one school library media specialist (Louisiana Department of Education, 2000).

For example, according to my observations, the HSLMS2 had the same books on a cart needing cataloging from the start of my observations until I left in April. Each time she started to catalog, someone needed her help (Field Notes High School January-April 2001). This was true at the middle school, too. The MSLMS would start to work on a clerical project and teachers and students would need assistance (Field Notes Middle February 1<sup>st</sup>). At the elementary school books were often laying on tables or carts

needing to be shelved and the circulation desk was self-service (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11<sup>th</sup>; February 14<sup>th</sup>).

Even though the school library media specialists served on various committees throughout the school and maintained an open dialogue with teachers, none of the four helped determine school staffing. The building principals maintained complete staffing power at all three sites (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 6). The three programs in this study did not meet Standard 3.

*“Standard 4: An effective library media program requires ongoing administrative support” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 105).*

Standard 4 is evaluated by visible signs of administrative support that include flexible scheduling, giving the school library media program extra money, and making teachers aware of the necessity of using the school library media center. In all three sites, there were visible signs of administrative support.

First, the principals in all of the sites made certain that the school library media center maintained a flexible schedule. All of the school library media center schedules were maintained by the school library media specialists. The principals did not determine the school library media center schedule. The school library media specialist maintained complete scheduling autonomy. At the High School, the HSLMS2 stated, “A teacher never ever schedules without discussing what they're going to do and the requirements” (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist HSLMS1 Question 2). Without this important support the principal might schedule the school library media specialists to teach classes (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 8<sup>th</sup>, January 11<sup>th</sup>; Field Notes High School January 26<sup>th</sup>; Field Notes Middle School January 8<sup>th</sup>, January 11<sup>th</sup>).

Another example of principal support came in the form of extra funding. The MSLMS stated, “The Middle School Principal has gotten me what I needed whether it was monetary or personnel or whatever just short of giving me an assistant” (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist MSLMS Question 3). The ESLMS said, “When he has extra money, he spreads the big joke that I love to spend money. He calls me and says he has \$500 dollars and could I use it for the school library media center” (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS, Question 2)?

Another unique sign of support was seen at the elementary school. The principal’s support was apparent at the first glimpse of the parking lot. The Elementary Principal designated a parking spot, marked by a sign, Librarian, for the ESLMS next to the designated principal’s parking (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 8<sup>th</sup>). The parking sign was tangible evidence of the ESLMS’ importance to the school and the support given by the principal. Thus, the three schools met Standard 4.

*“Standard 5: Comprehensive and collaborative long-range, strategic planning is essential to the effectiveness of the library media program” (AASL, 1998, p.106).*

Standard 5 is evaluated by how much the plan of the school library media center correlates with the long-range plan for the school. In order to have plans that correlate, collaboration between principals, teachers and school library media specialists is essential. “Plans are road maps for achieving program goals and objectives, and ongoing and dynamic planning is required to keep the library media program at the core of the school’s learning community” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 107). Except for the formal school improvement committee, collaborative planning was “on the fly” in all of the schools. School library media specialists based their programs on the needs of the teachers.

In each of the schools, the school library media specialists developed collaborative long range plans in part based on the school improvement plans ( Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 11; Field Notes High School January 29; Field Notes Middle School January 20). The school library media centers were included in the school improvement plans. In this manner, the school library media center goals supported the goals of the school (Elementary SIP, 2000; High School SIP, 2000; Middle School SIP, 2000).

However, although there was much collaborative planning between the school library media specialists and the school improvement committees, there were no separate long-range plans articulated by any of the three school library media centers. The only plans were those that grew from the school improvement plan. Thus, the school library media specialists in the three sites did not meet this standard.

*“Standard 6: Ongoing assessment for improvement is essential to the vitality of an effective library media program” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 108).*

With any school library media program, the specialists need to know what works and what fails. This standard called for collaborative assessment with teachers and principals to determine if the program provided adequate information resources for the curriculum. At all three sites, the school library media specialists collected data from the Accelerated Reading program state testing, student reading logs, Accelerated Reading scores, lesson plans, and monthly circulation statistics.

One form of data used for updating the school library media program was state testing results. The state reading results were the basis for other forms of evaluation. For example, incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders at the High School were deficient in reading. Thus, the HSLMS1 and the HSLMS2 added the Reading Renaissance component to the

Accelerated Reading program. This component required students to read at least one hour a day. The school library media specialists were responsible for providing student reading logs while teachers or parents initialed them. I observed the HSLMS1 asking students to show her their personal reading logs. Besides testing for comprehension, students were evaluated on the amount of time spent reading, too (Field Notes High School February 12<sup>th</sup>).

At all three sites, the school library media specialists used the results of the Star Reading program and Accelerated Reading program testing. The Star Reading program is a means of evaluating the level a child should choose a book to read for the Accelerated Reading program. The program is used at the beginning and end of each grading period to assess the progress or lack of progress of each child. When a child completes a book, the child takes a test on the individual book. Each month the school library media specialist generates a report for teachers on each student. At the end of the grading period, the child takes the Star Reading test again to see if there has been any progress. The tests are used as part of the child's total grade for that period in language arts, reading or English.

At all three schools, teacher lesson plans were used as an evaluation tool. Each of the school library media specialists kept copies of old lesson plans. When someone new arrived they reviewed the copies of the lesson plans and revised them. For example, the HSMS1 told me she kept a folder on all research projects done at the High School. "...I keep this folder year after year. When a new teacher arrives, I pull the folder and we revise the plan to fit their needs" (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist HSLMS1 Question 2). At the Middle School, MSLMS revised a collaborative



lesson plan on the Readers' Guide when students scored low on state testing (Field Notes Middle School February 6<sup>th</sup>). This is one form of data used by the school library media specialist to access future collaborative lessons. In other words, they assessed past lesson plans and updated the plans to provide for newer curriculum needs.

Last, monthly circulation statistics were used by the school library media specialists to determine what students were reading. These statistics told them how many students were reading books and the types of reference materials being accessed. Thus, the school library media specialists met Standard 6.

*“Standard 7: Sufficient funding is fundamental to the success of the library media program” (AASL & AECT., 1998, p. 109).*

Funding a school library media center is expensive. Sufficient funding means there is enough money to purchase books, magazines, supplies and new technology to support school goals. With new technologies developing, it is important for the school library media center to have enough money to provide services. Like many educational programs, the school library media center is never given sufficient funding from the state or parish. They prepare a budget based on allocation rather than need. If the allotted money is not sufficient, the school library media specialist must find ways to supplement it (Conversation with Library Supervisor January 25<sup>th</sup>). In two of the three sites, the school library media specialists wrote grants to provide extra funding.

Funding is determined in the parish by a Federal Consent Decree. It is based on individual school populations. By Federal Consent Decree each school library media center is given \$5.00 per pupil. This is not federal funding, but a court order. Then the parish provides an additional \$2.00 per pupil for magazines and supplies (Email Library Supervisor May 25, 2001 & November 25, 2002).

First, the school library media specialists at two of the three sites wrote grants in order to provide for necessary items (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 14; Field Notes High School February 12). Further, because they worked hard to provide services, administrators provided them with extra money when they found an extra dollar (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 15; Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist MSLMS Question 3). By providing adequate funding for the school library media center, teachers believed the funding kept them from spending personal money for materials. A classroom teacher said, "...Often she purchases materials that we would have to use our own money... She has a lot of things I would have to spend my money on, but she has it in the library" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher, Question 3). Thus, the school library media programs do not meet this standard because the schools must rely on grants to acquire enough funding.

*"Standard 8: Ongoing staff development-both to maintain professional knowledge and skills and to provide instruction in information literacy for teachers, administrators, and other members of the learning community- is an essential component of the library media program" (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 110).*

Staff development is important to continue to learn new skills. Ongoing staff development for the school library media specialists includes membership in professional education, staff meetings and professional organizations.

To be a learner, she must participate in professional education through classes offered at higher education institutions. Technology was the common theme of classes taken by these school library media specialists. An example of technology education was given by a school library media specialist:

For instance, I took the very first class offered using computers in the library which were Apple IIs. I took online classes, but we were looking at using cataloging databases. We did do a little bit of ERIC searches through the main library, but things have changed dramatically. Much of my teaching of the latest online databases has been initiated by me on the job (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist MSLMS Question 6).

A high school library media specialist commented on the learner role. “I have managed to keep myself updated because of the rapid changes in technology. Many of the people that I graduated with did not keep up with technology and they are lost” (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist HSLMS2 Question 6).

In order to remain current with school library media trends, they also participated in staff meetings conducted by the Library Supervisor (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 6<sup>th</sup>; Appendix B: Sample Field Notes High School January 19<sup>th</sup>; Field Notes Meeting March 6<sup>th</sup>; Field Notes Middle School February 6<sup>th</sup>). These meetings were for “sharing concerns about school library media centers and school library media techniques.” The meetings were important because the library supervisor shared new developments in testing and school library media services (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary February 6<sup>th</sup>; Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Meeting January 19<sup>th</sup>).

Professional organization membership was one method of continuous learning for the school library media specialist. Three of the four school library media specialists were active in professional organizations at the state and national level (Appendix A: Sample Interview ESLMS Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist HSLMS1 Question 1; Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media

Specialist HSLMS2 Question 1). The MSLMS found the cost of joining professional organizations a current financial burden (Field Notes Middle School February 2<sup>nd</sup>).

The College Professor, professor of library science, supported the importance of professional organizations:

We see what goes on around the country. We hear people's concerns. We hear their success. They love to talk about their successes and then I take the successes and apply it to our local school library media situation. I certainly would not be the professional that I am today without professional organizations (Appendix D: Interview Guide College Professor Question 4).

The school library media specialist was also the one to provide staff development for new methods of information retrieval. The HSLMS1 and the HSLMS2 taught students and teachers how to use software applications as well as how to locate information for reports (Field Notes High School February 12<sup>th</sup>; February 13<sup>th</sup>). The ESLMS and the MSLMS were involved in technology staff development, too (Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 8<sup>th</sup>; Middle School SIP, 2000). The Library Supervisor commented, "I see the school library media specialist as educating everyone" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Library Supervisor Question 6). All of the school library media specialists were involved in staff development.

Standard 8 was met because each of the four school library media specialists continuously upgraded their professional skills through education or staff development and each provided staff development for teachers at each site. They never missed opportunities for personal educational growth or teaching other members of the educational community new skills.

*“Standard 9: Clear communication of the mission, goals, functions and impact of the library media program is necessary to the effectiveness of the program” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 112).*

The school library media specialist served as the chief advocate for the school library media program at the building level, while the library supervisor served as the chief advocate for it at the district level. Standard 9 requires the school library media specialist and the library supervisor to promote the program by being involved in the school and the community. They accomplished this goal by advocating the program through staff development, planning social events for teachers, by being dependable and just being available for teachers ( Appendix B: Sample Field Notes Elementary January 8<sup>th</sup>, January 11<sup>th</sup>; Field Notes High School February 14<sup>th</sup>, February 15<sup>th</sup>; Field Notes Middle School January 18<sup>th</sup>, January 23<sup>rd</sup>). A high school technology teacher explains how public relations influence a teacher’s opinion of the school library media center:

In my experience with librarians, I have found that there are two kinds. Those who believe that the library belongs to them who can’t be bothered and those who do everything they can to get what the teachers want and need as well as what the students want and need. These ladies do an excellent job of keeping us informed of what is here. Anytime that you have someone that works that hard for you, you are going to reciprocate and to help them anyway you can to maintain and improve their program (Appendix D: Interview Guide Classroom Teacher Question 4).

The four school library media specialists in this study promoted the school library media program by staff development, planning social events for teachers, by being dependable and just being available for teachers. Their leadership and example provided

the advocacy needed to bring positive attention to the programs they administered. Thus, Standard 9 was met in these three sites.

*“Standard 10: Effective management of human, financial and physical resources underwrites a strong library media program” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 113).*

School library media specialists who meet this standard are experts at managing complex technology, getting funding, organizing people, organizing equipment, and ordering diverse reading materials. This means that specialists must be able to manage interruptions well. At the same time, school library media specialists must collaborate with teachers, administrators and district leaders. I noted that these four library media specialist were always ready to help individuals and not get upset over every interruption. They were able to handle everything as if it were a routine task. Even though they were interrupted numerous times during the day, they did not even seem to notice. This standard can be evaluated by how well school library media specialists can handle these tasks. However, they met this standard partially because they did not have the help necessary to accomplish all goals. The HSLMS2 and the MSLMS could not get cataloging accomplished and the ESLMS was always in a hurry. Thus, they met this Standard partially.

### *Summary*

In summary, the school library media center is a vital unit within the school. To meet the requirements for providing a dynamic hub, the school library media specialist must meet certain minimal standards. It is important for the school library media specialist to take the initiative to collaborate with superintendents, principals, and teachers to build the best school library media center possible. With everyone working toward a common goal, the school library media specialist can continually move towards

improving the position of the center and meeting the standards. The following paragraphs summarize these 10 minimal standards.

*“Standard 1: The library media program supports the mission, goals, objectives and continuous improvement of the school” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 101).*

They accomplished this by involvement in the school improvement process by serving on the school improvement team, coordinating the Accelerated Reading program and collaboration. Thus, they met this standard.

*“Standard 2: In every school, a minimum of one full-time, certified/licensed library media specialist supported by qualified staff is fundamental to the implementation of an effective library media program at the building level” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p.103).*

The school library media specialists in this study partially met this standard. They had full-time, certified/licensed school library media specialists, but there were no paraprofessional staff.

*“Standard 3: An effective library media program requires a level of professional and support staffing that is based upon a school’s instructional programs services, facilities, size, and numbers of students and teachers” (AASL & AECT 1998, p. 104).*

They had enough school library media specialists, but they had no paraprofessionals. The school library media specialists could not meet the instructional programs based on the lack of staff. Thus, they did not meet this standard.

*“Standard 4: An effective library media program requires ongoing administrative support” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 105).*

All of the school library media programs in this study met this standard. With administrative support, the school library media specialists maintained flexible

scheduling, were given extra money when available and the principals made teachers aware of the necessity of using the school library media center.

*“Standard 5: Comprehensive and collaborative long-range, strategic planning is essential to the effectiveness of the library media program” (AASL & AECT 1998, p.106).*

The school library media programs in this study did not articulate comprehensive and collaborative long-range, strategic planning. The only planning coincided with the school improvement plans. Therefore, they partially met this standard.

*“Standard 6: Ongoing assessment for improvement is essential to the vitality of an effective library media program” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 108).*

The school library media specialists in this study assessed their programs through the use of the Accelerated Reading program, reading logs, lesson plans, circulation statistics and state testing scores. Thus, the school library media specialists in this study met this standard.

*“Standard 7: Sufficient funding is fundamental to the success of the library media program” (AASL & AECT., 1998, p. 109).*

Three of the school library media specialists wrote grants to get sufficient funding for the programs. Because there was not enough money budgeted, the school library media programs did not meet this standard.

*“Standard 8: Ongoing staff development-both to maintain professional knowledge and skills and to provide instruction in information literacy for teachers, administrators, and other members of the learning community-is an essential component of the library media program” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 110).*

The school library media specialists in this study participated in higher education courses and staff meetings. Three of the four participated in professional organizations.



Each conducted staff development for teachers. Thus, the school library media programs met this standard.

*“Standard 9: Clear communication of the mission, goals, functions and impact of the library media program is necessary to the effectiveness of the program” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 112).*

Through advocating the school library media program, the school library media specialist in all three sites met this standard. They accomplished this goal by advocating the program through staff development, planning social events for teachers, by being dependable and just being available for teachers

*“Standard 10: Effective management of human, financial, and physical resources undergirds a strong library media program” (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 113).*

The school library media specialists in this study partially met this standard. They were experts at managing interruptions. At the same time, school library media specialists collaborated with teachers, administrators and district leaders. However, they were not able to accomplish all of their tasks efficiently due to a lack of staff.

*Research Question 4: What will be the enabling and/or constraining factors for effective school library media specialists?*

As with any program, there are factors which encourage the success of the program and factors that detract from and hinder the school library media program. While extracting data to answer the three previous research questions, enabling and constraining factors became apparent in these three school library media programs. Without prioritizing these factors, the following section in parenthesis, as needed, are the coded references to previous research questions that address the enabling and constraining factors at these three sites.

*Enabling Factors*

Enabling factors are positive factors that strengthen the school library media program. Examples of, but not limited to, enabling factors include strong support from the superintendent, strong support from the principal, a district library supervisor and strong support from classroom teachers.

*Superintendent.*

The superintendent sets the budget priorities for the parish. Because he believed the school library media program is the "...essence of what makes a school function" (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 2) money was placed in the budget for school library media specialists in every school (Question 1 Daily Activities; Question 2, Key Participants' Perspective Superintendent; Question 3 Standard 4).

*Principals.*

The principal provides direction for the staff, the type of scheduling for the school library media center and the allocation of funds. Thus, it is important for the principal to feel the school library media specialist is vital to instruction and make teachers aware of the expectation that the school library media center be used (Question 2 Key Participants' Perspective Principal; Question 3 Standard 4).

1. Flexible Scheduling (Question 1 Daily Activities; Question 2 Key Participants School Library Media Specialist & Teachers; Question 3 Standard 4).
2. Adequate Funds (Question 1, Daily Activities; Question 3 Standard 4 and Standard 7).

*Library Supervisor.*

The library supervisor's responsibility is educating everyone in the parish about the leadership role that the school library media specialists play in collaborative curriculum planning. Further, the library supervisor provides the leadership to push school library media specialists to embrace technology integration across the curriculum.

1. Educates everyone (Question 2 Key Participants' Perspective Library Supervisor).
2. Provides staff development for the school library media specialists (Question 3 Standard 8).

*School library media specialists.*

These school library media specialists embraced flexible scheduling for the center thereby enabling many students and teachers to use the center daily when needed. Further, their technology expertise provided them an opportunity to open doors to collaborative planning and the integration of technology throughout the curriculum. They remained visible by serving on school improvement committees, providing social activities, providing staff development and being available to help at anytime.

1. Flexible scheduling (Question 1 Daily Activities and Designs and Maintains the School Library Media Center).
2. Technology expertise (Question 1 Daily Activities Operates Technology System; Question 2 Key Participants Perspective Superintendent, Principals, Library Supervisor, College Professor, School Library Media Specialist and Teachers).
3. Collaborative planning (Question 1 Daily Activities Collaborates for Curriculum Improvement).

4. Staff Development (Question 1 Daily Activities Operates Technology System; Question 3 Standard 8).
5. Social Activities (Question 1, Daily Activities Public Relations; Question 3 Standard 9).
6. Visibility (Question 1 Daily Activities Public Relations).

*School library media center location.*

The school library media center was situated in the middle of all of the school sites. This enabled the school library media specialists to be visible, accessible and approachable. The visibility enabled teachers and students to see what activities were happening (Question 1 Daily Activities Designs and Maintains the School Library Media Center).

*Scheduling designs.*

One of the greatest enablers at the Middle School is block scheduling. Because of this type of schedule, teachers met in teams by grade level. All major subjects, the school library media specialist and minor subject areas were represented on a planning team. Each team had a 90 block of planning time per day and this made collaboration for teachers and the specialist much easier. Further, the 90 minute block of time allowed teachers to do more than one activity in a block of time. They could spend 45 minutes in the school library media center and still have time for classroom instruction. This meant that more than one teacher could schedule center time during a block, too (Question 1 Daily Activities Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator [Superintendent, Principals, and Library Supervisor] Questions 3 and 5; Interview Guide Administrator Question 7; Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist Question 2).

At the high school, each teacher had at least one 60 minute planning period per day. This allowed the teacher time to confer with the school library media specialist at that time. Further, several teachers served a duty period in the school library media center, too. This enabled them to collaborate with the specialists at that time, too. Even though they had only 60 minutes of instructional time, they were able to have more than one type of activity during a period of time. Often students were checking out books for the Accelerated Reader, while others were using the reference materials (Question 1 Daily Activities Appendix D Interview Guide Administrator Question 3 and 5; Interview Guide School Library Media Specialists Question 2).

### *Constraints*

Even with the most effective school library media programs, there are constraints or factors that hinder the program's effectiveness. Without these constraints these effective school library media programs could be even stronger.

#### *Collaboration "on the fly".*

Unlike the middle school and high school, there are no scheduled times for teachers and school library media specialists to sit as a team and collaborate. Collaboration is done in hallways and lunchrooms and on playgrounds or when teachers pop into the school library media center at the elementary school (Question 1 Daily Activities Collaboration for Curriculum Improvement).

#### *Paraprofessional staff.*

There are no trained library paraprofessionals to do clerical and minor technical repairs. Much of the cataloging goes undone because teaching and other responsibilities are more important. Further, circulation chores and the shelving of books must be done by volunteers, students or duty teachers, who are available on a limited schedule With

fulltime, trained paraprofessionals, the school library media centers would be more effective (Question 1 Daily Activities; Question 3 Standard 3).

*Inadequate funding.*

Even though the principals try to give the school library media program as much money as possible, the school library media specialist must spend time writing grants to fund many necessities for the school library media programs (Question 1 Daily Activities; Question 3 Standard 7). Adequate funding would be the necessary amount needed to purchase printed and electronic without grant writing to provide more than the basics.

*No substitutes available.*

When the school library media specialist is absent, no substitute is funded. Thus, if the school library media specialist were to be ill for a prolonged period, the center would be closed. Thus, the principal in one school stepped in and provided the service while serving as a principal (Question 2 Key Participants' Perspective Principal).

*Teacher attitudes.*

Often teachers refuse to use the school library media center. This can be a major restraint to a school library media program. Even with the principal's support there are always a few problems. According to one school library media specialist:

The only barriers that I see are those teachers that still really don't use the library. They don't choose to no matter what you do. Those with resistance and they have done things a certain way for many years and prior to my coming here they strictly didn't use the library. Those that were under that pattern of non-use are still under it. They've been teaching a long time and they have their way of doing things and they are not open to new ideas. We have the same issues with them in

using technology or integrating technology into their classrooms. If it is not something they are comfortable with, they are not going to do it (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist MSLMS Question 4).

When asked about the difficulties of collaborating with teachers, the ESLMS remarked:

Well, they don't want to always tell you. Because I think they are afraid you are going to run to the office say that she is teaching devil worship or something. So I tell them, look, I just need to know what you are teaching so we can teach something together (Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview ESLMS Question 19).

#### *Time.*

The school library media specialists have many responsibilities. This results in being stretched to the maximum. The daily activities that include designing the center, budgeting, technology, reading to students, collaboration with teachers and public relations is a stretch (Question 1 Daily Activities Collaboration for Curriculum Design; Question 2 Key Participants' Perspective School Library Media Specialist and Teachers).

#### *Summary*

In order to have a school library media program, there must be supporting or enabling factors. This study pointed to the superintendent, principals, the library supervisor, the activities of the school library media specialists, and the central location of the school library media center as enabling the programs in the three sites.

However, the programs were faced with constraining or negative factors, too. These were collaborating "on the fly," a lack of paraprofessional staff, inadequate funding, no substitute available, teacher attitudes and time.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions, Discussions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to understand what school library media specialists in an elementary school, middle school and high school did daily to provide school library media services. Often superintendents, principals, and classroom teachers lack the realistic information required to develop policies, procedures, and collaborative plans with school library media specialists. Their perceptions are often based on negative experiences with school library media specialists.

Negative perceptions lead to misinterpretations about the vital, collaborative, academic roles that school library media specialists perform. These perceptions result in school library media specialists who are eliminated from budgets or who suffer benign neglect. Thus, this study attempted to provide realistic information about the daily activities of four effective school library media specialists in a parish public school system in Louisiana.

In the spring of 2001 the Library Supervisor identified four school library media specialists at three sites that she believed were effective. My study was designed to provide a descriptive analysis of these four school library media specialists in one elementary school, middle school and high school. Using four guiding research questions, the study focused on how these four school library media specialists' daily activities related to the program administration standards outlined by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the American Association for Educational Communications and Technology [AECT](1988, 1998) in Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning as well as factors present that enabled and constrained their effectiveness.



### *Methods*

Because of the need for an understanding of the everyday experiences of school library media specialists, I used qualitative data collection and analysis because it provides the researcher the opportunity to understand behavior in the context of the subject's own special environment (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The strength of qualitative narrative is the rich description that yields generalizations documented by specific examples of data from the field (Glazier & Powell, 1992). Thus, this qualitative study of four school library media specialists at an elementary school, middle school, and high school benefited by providing a naturalistic, descriptive study. The data analysis in Chapter 4 was based on field notes from one month at each site, interviews with the superintendent, three principals, the library supervisor, a college professor, 18 classroom teachers, and four school library media specialists as well as pertinent written documents.

### *Summary and Conclusions*

The study was guided by four questions.

*Research Question 1: What are the daily activities of the school library media specialists in these selected school library media centers?*

To address this question, I visited and observed the three sites at various times during the day for a month at each site. I recorded four school library media specialists' activities in field notes. I profiled the elementary school library media specialist in a case study because she best exemplified the daily activities of all four school library media specialists. These daily activities included design and maintenance of the program, technology, reading promotion with rewards, collaboration for curriculum, and public relations.

*Conclusion.*

An effective school library media specialist is the hub of the school who leads from the middle through technology expertise, collaborative planning, promoting reading and positive public relations.

*Research Question 2: How will key participants (e.g., superintendent, principals, library supervisor, and classroom teachers) perceive the role of the school library media specialist?*

The second research question related to the perceptions of the role of the school library media specialist in these three sites. Overall positive perceptions of their role were gathered through interviews with the superintendent, principals, library supervisor, and classroom teachers. The interviewees stated that the school library media specialists modeled and promoted collaborative curriculum planning and encouraged the use of the center by everyone. The participants all agreed that the school library media specialist were curriculum and technology leaders within the school.

*Conclusion.*

The effective school library media specialist is supported by the positive perceptions of the superintendent, school principal, library supervisor, and classroom teachers who all realize the importance of the school library media program to academic achievement.

*Research Question 3: How will the daily activities of these selected school library media specialists relate to the professional standards of AASL?*

Research question number three sought to examine the relationship between the daily activities of the school library media specialists in the study and the 10 program administration standards for school library media programs established by AASL. The

school library media specialists do not meet all of the standards. The data reveals that the school library media specialists in this study meet Standard 1 (support school's mission and goals), Standard 4 (administrative support), Standard 6 (ongoing assessment), Standard 8 (staff development), and Standard 9 (clear communication). Standard 2 (certified and paraprofessional staffing) and Standard 10 (management of resources) are met partially. Standard 3 (number of professional and paraprofessional staff), Standard 5 (long-range, strategic planning) and Standard 7 (sufficient funding) are not met. The failure to meet the standards is due to a lack of trained paraprofessionals, money, and time for long-range collaborative planning.

*Conclusion.*

Even though the daily activities of the school library media specialists do not completely meet the standards, through the leadership that evolved from daily collaboration, the school library media specialists in this study manage to provide an effective school library media program.

*Research Question 4: What will be the enabling and/or constraining factors for the selected school library media specialists?*

Research question number four sought to examine the enabling and/or constraining factors that permitted or hindered an effective school library media program. The school library media specialists in this study are enabled by the positive perspectives of the school library media program that results in support from the superintendent, school principals and classroom teachers. Because of these positive perceptions, the school library media position is funded in the central budget, the school library media center operated on a flexible schedule and the center is used by teachers. Further, through the advocacy of the library supervisor, the school library media specialist continues to be

seen as important to curriculum. Each of the programs is hindered by a lack of designated time for collaborative planning, paraprofessional staff, time and funding.

#### *Conclusion.*

The school library media specialists are enabled by the positive perceptions of the superintendent, scheduling and financial support from the school principal, the advocacy of the library supervisor, and the use of the center by teachers. However, constraints such as a lack of time for collaborative planning, lack of paraprofessional staff, inadequate funding and no substitutes for school library media specialists constrain the program's performance.

#### *Discussion*

Although the literature is specific about the importance of an effective school library media program to academic achievement (Didier, 1984, 1985; Hamilton-Pennell, Lance, Rodney, & Hainer, 2000; Haycock, 1992, 1995, 1997, 1999b; Lance, Welborn & Pennell, 1993; Mahar 1983; Manzo, 2000; Woolls, 1990) and the essential funding, scheduling, collections, staffing, collaboration and technology needed to provide an effective school library media program (AASL ,1998; Ervin, 1989; Hamilton-Pennell, et al., 2000; Haycock, 1996, 1999a; Lance, 2000), the literature does not tell us what actually happens on a daily basis in a school library media center. Because of a lack of qualitative research, there is uncertainty concerning the daily activities of school library media specialists for superintendents, principals and classroom teachers (Bell, 1990; Campbell, 1991; Ervin, 1989; Hartzell, 1997a; Johnson, 1994; Mosqueda, 1999; Norton, 1978; Yetter, 1994).

This study involved the exploration of more than one body of research. I first explored the history of school library media services and the evolution of the leadership

role of the school library media specialist. There has been a definite evolution of the role of the school library media specialist from clerk to leader (Craver, 1986; Gutek, 1986; McIntosh, 1994; Mohajerin & Smith, 1978) and this evolution correlates with educational reform and school library media reform (AASL, 1988, 1998; Gann, 1998; Pond, 1998). Today, school librarians are now called school library media specialists to reflect the expanding role that technology plays in the location of information (McIntosh, 1994; Pond, 1998).

Fargo (1993) defined the role of a school librarian as a person that was to work with other teachers in reading guidance. Reading guidance means that the school librarian was to only deal with guiding students to books for recreational reading. Later, the role was expanded to include non-instructional school participation, collection management, reading guidance, promotion of literature, as well as reference and information services (Eisenberg & Berkowitz, 1988; Wiegand, 1999). Libraries were often used as study halls for students (Chernik, 1992). Thus, the school librarians remained isolated from the school unless a teacher or student took the initiative to use the school library.

Today, school library media specialists take the initiative to contact teachers, rather than waiting for teacher to search for them in the school library media center (Callison, 1999). They establish and maintain positive relationships, which are the key to successful instruction, student achievement, and collaboration with other teachers (Muronago & Harada, 1999; Wright & Davie, 1999). The qualities of an effective school library media specialist include initiative, confidence, communication skills, leadership qualities, and the willingness to take risks (Russell, 2000). The school library media specialists in this study are not isolated and they certainly do not lack initiative. They are

vital, centrally located, totally integrated components of the school improvement plans and collaborate with classroom teachers and principals. The centers are active places of learning. The four specialists in this study provide reading guidance, technology instruction and maintenance, curriculum collaboration, and encourage students to engage in higher order thinking skills. They are *just everywhere*.

In a 1987 article, Wehmeyer described the school library media specialist as a *consigliere*. The *consigliere* was described as a leader within the school by virtue of expertise. According to Cassell's Italian Dictionary, a *consigliere* is a “managing director or an expert advisor” (p.124). The diverse daily activities of the four specialists in this study made them managing directors and expert advisors. They design and maintain the center, maintain technology, provide reading guidance, collaborate with the staff concerning curriculum and the provide public relations.

However, the school library media specialist is cannot stand alone in the goal of effective school library media services. It is important to understand the important roles that are played by the superintendent (Abdulrazzaq, 1997; Haycock, 1985; Lancaster, 1998) and principals (Abudulrazzaq, 1997; Blasé & Kirby, 1992; Edwards, 1989; Hartzell, 1999; Hellene, 1973; Lindhal, 1987; Wilson, Blake & Lyders, 1993, 1999; Wilson, & McNeil, 1998; Yetter, 1994), library supervisor (Woolls, 1994), and classroom teachers (Yetter, 1994) in an effective school library media program.

The mission statement of the, American Association of School Administrators (AASA) said, “Largely, the quality of America's schools depends on the effectiveness of school superintendents” (AASA, 1993, p. 3). The primary duty of the superintendent of schools is to provide leadership for the creation of a common vision for the educational

organization. Then the superintendent must facilitate the conversion of the vision into set priorities (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995).

However, shifting national priorities, demographics, political climates, and stances on education have significant influence on the superintendent's formulation of a vision for the school system and the degree to which the vision can be fulfilled.

Community ethnic values, standards, requirements, and educational expectations are of paramount importance. As student populations and resources fluctuate, school superintendents must make difficult resource allocation decisions (Lancaster, 1998).

World events, state events, and economic trends influence needed educational funding (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995).

Since the school superintendent develops a budget that the board of education must find fiscally sound, the superintendent's perspective of the school media center is important (Edwards, 1989; Woolls, 1994). It is imperative for the superintendent to understand the training, education, capabilities, aptitudes, and temperaments required for the professional and support staff positions in a school media center (Yesner & Jay, 1998).

However, many superintendents do not have a clear concept of the importance of the school library media specialist (Valenza, 1996). Often there is an alarming trend toward increasing the student-to-librarian ratio or creating part-time school library media specialists (Sadowski & Mayer, 1993; Simon, 1993). Haycock (1985) said:

Few school districts have a written statement of purpose for the school library media program, thus leaving it in the land of the extra, the educational frill, good

to have when you can afford it, but hard to justify when no one really knows what the library is used for. (p. 103)

Connors's (1984) survey of superintendents in Massachusetts discovered that over 25% thought the school library media center was a luxury. The survey discovered that superintendents believed that the teaching background and experience of the school library media specialist was too limited to have a significant impact on the school. Although these superintendents were not very supportive of the school library media center, they conceded the fact that teachers would be forced to teach differently without an operational school library media center (Connors, 1984).

According to Lancaster (1998), almost half of the 202 Texas superintendents surveyed spent less than two percent of their total budget on library media centers. Further, those who did spend more than two percent did not fund the programs adequately. Superintendents based their ideas concerning the school library media program funding on years spent as a principal or in other administrative posts (Yesner & Jay, 1998). The Superintendent of the parish spoke of his prior experiences in another state with school library media specialists. He discovered that the best school library media specialist spent some years in the classroom integrating technology rather than coming directly from a school library media higher education program (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 4).

Holland (1994) discovered that superintendents who have more than five years of experience have significantly less regard for school libraries than their younger peers. This negative attitude could be due to a lack of knowledge about current research detailing the positive academic gains when effective school library media programs are in



place as well as negative experiences with a school library media specialist that is not effective. The Superintendent of the parish has less than five years of experience as a superintendent (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 1). Thus, the Superintendent's less than five years experience could be the reason for his positive perspectives concerning the role of the school library media specialist in the school.

In addition, because superintendents are responsible for budgeting for maintenance of school facilities, the superintendents need to know about the high costs of serials, technology, and printed material for budgetary considerations (Wilson, Blake, & Lyders, 1993). Superintendents must approve all major construction projects for school library media facilities as well. Whitman and Foerster (1993) argue that superintendents must believe that the school library media center is a powerful educational tool in order to avoid cutbacks in school library media center budgets. Thus, it is important for the school library media specialist to keep superintendents informed about current research and the increased funding costs for information resources.

Another important person directly responsible for an effective school library media center is the school principal. School effectiveness research during the last twenty years affirms the role of the principal's leadership in school success (Austin & Reynolds, 1990; Bell, 1990; Blasé & Kirby, 1992; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Lindahl, 1987; McIntosh, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1984, Yesner & Jay, 1998). Principals are school managers, personnel administrators, problem solvers, instructional leaders, and initiators of change in the effective school (Fullan, 1991; Vandenberghe, 1995; Yesner & Jay, 1998). Further, Chisholm and Ely (1979) found that the principal's commitment and

support are essential to the school library media specialist becoming more active in the school's instructional policy formation. The effective principal understands the importance of the school library media center and works to assist the school library media specialist in improving student learning (Pfeiffer & Bennett, 1988). In the three sites the principal's support is one of the greatest enablers of the school library media program. They make certain that the school library media specialist assigned to their building is included in curriculum collaboration and cross-curriculum lessons.

Kinder (1995) discovered that the dichotomy between the theoretical role of the school library media specialist and the actual practices of many school library media specialists suggests that a stronger commitment is needed on the part of principals if the school library media center is to survive. The principal is often the key to whether an innovative program such as the National Library Power (NLP) initiative becomes a school priority (Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999). Because of the importance to the school library media program, Hartzell (1999) documented tips for a school library media specialist to use when interviewing a principal candidate. It is very important for the school library media specialist to have a strong principal committed to the integration of the school library media center in the total curriculum. Thus, school library media specialists should be included in any searches for new principals.

The principal sets the climate for the effective use of a school library media center (Cato, 1990; Cox, 1989; Fullan & Park, 1981; Hord & Huling-Austin, 1986; Loucks & Lieberman, 1983; Virgilio & Virgilio, 1984). First, the principal can enhance the school library media program by querying prospective teachers on how they would use the center effectively and include center usage in teacher evaluations (Haycock, 1999a;

Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999). Further, the principal can involve the school library media specialist in budgeting and curriculum development (Corr, 1979). In addition, the principal creates the climate of collegiality, communication, and trust for teachers and school library media specialists (Fullan, Anderson & Newton, 1986), as well as providing the time for collaborative, flexible planning for specialists and teachers (Cox, 1989; Fullan, 1985; Fullan et al., 1986; Hellene, 1973; Hopkins & Zweizig, 1999; Pratt, 1980). The principal also creates staff development opportunities for staff members directed by the school library media specialist (Haycock, 1999b). In all of these schools, the school library media specialists are afforded flexible scheduling and given any extra funding when available. This flexibility and extra funding permits the specialists to provide staff development and collaborate with the staff.

Since teachers respond to the principal's expectations (Haycock, 1999a), the effectiveness of the school library media program is largely dependent on the principal (Bell, 1990; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1982; Fullan & Park, 1981). Exemplary, effective school library media specialists are characterized by strong support from the principal (Charter, 1982; Haycock, 1999a; Shields, 1977). Strong support means that teachers know the center is to be used.

Because the principal's responsibility is to ensure that the school library media center is used effectively, principals need to be better informed concerning the function and management of the school library media centers. According to Wilson, Blake, and Lyders (1999), the principal needs to:

1. Understand the responsibilities of a school library media specialist.
2. Understand the developments in information technologies.
3. Understand school library media standards and guidelines.

4. Understand the certification requirements for a school library media specialist.
5. Understand the true place of the school library media center in the total school curriculum. (p.272-275)

Pearson (1989) discovered that conflicts between principals and school library media specialists fall into two categories. The first conflict involves censorship, in which principals order school library media specialists to remove books, delete passages, or delete illustrations in order to accommodate complaints from parents, other administrators, or the public. The second conflict involves funding. The school library media center usually becomes the first area in the school to suffer staff cuts or be assigned new duties extraneous to the library's real purpose and function (White, 1996). In all of the sites, conflicts are avoided by maintaining open door policies in the principal's office and the school library media center.

Another serious problem leading to a lack of principal support for the school library media program stems from the higher education programs for principals. Hartzell (1997a) states that textbooks concerning the job of a principal are almost universally silent on the operation of the school library media center. School library media center issues are usually dealt with in law classes where the media center is treated as a possible source of legal problems, from censorship to violations of copyright.

Of the 250 principal training programs in the United States, only 18% integrate school library media information into coursework (Wilson & MacNeil, 1998). Wilson and MacNeil (1998) developed a two-part program for principals:

1. A curriculum for future principals that devotes at least 45 to 60 minutes in each preparation course to school library media centers; arranges interviews

and arranges visits with school library media specialist; and requires principals to spend time during internships in the school library media centers.

2. A plan for practicing principals that recommended principals visit outstanding school library media centers to see what is possible in an effective school library media center. (p. 116)

Another issue resulting from a lack of education about the true role of the school library media program results in the school library media specialist failing to perform duties. Barron and Bergen (1992) contend that many principals do not demand enough from the school library media specialist and allow the specialist to perpetuate the traditional clerical roles. McIntosh (1994) states that many principals do not require school library media specialists to fulfill effective professional responsibilities. Olson (1996) believes that many school principals are satisfied with the status quo. These principals simply let the school library media specialist refuse to learn new technologies and new methods in order to maintain the status quo within the building. The Superintendent pointed to this problem when speaking of principals. He noted that school principals are aging and they do not want to try anything new. Changing the role of the school library media specialist to a more proactive position would upset the status quo (Appendix D: Interview Guide Administrator Superintendent Question 2).

Recent documented findings in government surveys are alarming. The surveys demonstrate that only 16% of building principals surveyed believed that the school library media specialist had curriculum influence. These findings are not a welcome sign. Only 21% of the principals stated that specialists influenced the school budget (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

In Dorrell and Lawson (1995), a survey of 77 Missouri high school principals determined that the “majority of principals have a higher opinion of the importance in having ‘a’ media center than they do of the importance of the actual media center in their school”(p. 78). Only 48% gave average importance to curriculum planning, while placing more importance on materials selection, school library media center management, and reference help for students (Dorrell & Lawson, 1995). Thus, it is important for reforms to occur in principal education programs.

Another critical aspect of an effective school library media center is the creation of a central office staff member designated to develop and resolve school library media issues within the budget. The library supervisor provides information for district administrators, permitting the administrators the option of making budget decisions based on the latest research data concerning school library media centers (Woolls, 1994). During restructuring, the removal of the supervisor responsible for the school library media program or the reassignment of someone with less knowledge can cripple the program (Woolls, 1994). With no library supervisor responsible for the program at the district level, the school library media specialists in the system have no central person to lobby for the program when the superintendent requests budgetary input (Simpson, 1999). One of the major strengths of the parish is the leadership of the library supervisor. She plans staff development for all employees and serves as an expert for the superintendent in library media programs. Further, she works with state department of education officials to encourage funding for technology and other information resources.

Next, classroom teachers play an important role in effective school library media programs. C.C. Certain, Chair of the Library Committee of the Department of Secondary

Education for the National Education Association (NEA), was a pioneer in advocating an instructional link between classroom teachers and the school library media specialists. He also predicted conflict between the specialist and classroom teachers as specialists attempted to forge an instructional link with teachers (Yetter, 1994). He believed power struggles between the two would occur as the school library media specialists pursued a collaborative role. That is the reason the principal's support is so important.

Factors that affect teacher use of the school library media center are: (a) involvement in program planning by the school library media specialist, (b) team reaching, (c) staff development organized by the school library media specialist, (d) administrative support, and (c) behaviors and qualifications of the school library media specialist (Haycock, 1999c). The most significant changes in the school library media program occurred when the school library media specialist moved to a flexible schedule and curriculum-integrated instruction (Bishop, 1991). The strength of the specialist lies in providing the classroom teacher with an opportunity to share not only in the planning but also in the preparation and implementation of programs. In all the sites visited the specialists provide staff development, participated in collaborative planning and collaborative teaching with the classroom teachers. Further, they embrace flexible scheduling. However, their personalities are important. The specialists took the leadership role in collaboration, but were willing to accept suggestions from teachers while striving to best serve the academic and information needs of students.

Another relevant body of literature deals with the importance of the relationship of effective schools and academic achievement to the presence of an effective school library media program (AASL, 1998; Lance, 1994, 2000; Lance, Welborn, & Hamilton-

Pennell, 1993). The study that came to be known as the Colorado Study of 1993 provided the documentation of effectiveness that school library media advocates sought. The study determined that students at schools with adequately funded school library media centers achieve higher average scores no matter how poor and uneducated the community (Lance, et al., 1993). The updated version found that Colorado standardized reading scores are higher in schools whose library media programs are better staffed, stocked, and funded (Hamilton-Pennell, et al., 2000; Lance, 2000). Thus, the importance of an effective school library media program is important to improving scores to high-stakes testing programs such as the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP). The improvements at the Elementary School in the parish can be linked to the efforts of the school library specialist. All four school library media specialists work collaboratively with the staff to meet the goals of the state testing program.

Bennett and Bracato (1991) alluded to the fact that because the school library media specialist has a management and instructional background, the specialist is in a position to aid the school in restructuring. In essence, the school principal and the school library media specialists are the only two individuals in the school to have global view of the curriculum maintain contact with all classroom teachers, and share instructional leadership responsibilities. Hartzell (1997b) referred to librarians as “principals in disguise” (p. 11).

The fact that the effective school library media specialist is centrally located and easily accessible makes the specialist important to school reform. Often the school principal is not in the building or involved in other tasks during reform efforts. Muncey and McQuillan (1993) documented that teachers involved in change tended to be isolated



in small clusters rather than an entire school collaborating. The researchers determined that it was difficult to restructure an education that was rooted in over 100 years of habit. Further, they believed that the teachers would not have been isolated in clusters if the school library media specialist had been included in the change efforts. With the centrally located specialist involved, the other teachers can reach to her as the hub of the reform effort. The specialist can connect teachers to other teachers and resources while preventing isolation. This was true with the four specialist involved in this study. They make certain connections across the school are made by being accessible and using technology expertise, collaboration and public relations.

The effective schools reform movement saw the importance of the public relations effort in the entire learning community. In the first generation correlate of effective school reform which dealt with parental involvement, schools wanted unqualified support from parents so parents could ascertain whether or not students were acting as the school desired. Within the second generation, schools know that educators and parents cannot continually confront one another in an adversarial way (ESL, 2000). Trust and communication must be built among the entire learning community (ESL, 2000), and the school library media specialist can be the key to connecting with all members of the learning community, which includes parents, teachers, and administrators. The school library media specialist uses collaboration, leadership, and technology to discover resources and information for all learners (AASL, 1998).

In 1994, Nancy Baker Clark studied the correlation between effective school reform and effective school library media centers, discovering that there were two distinct bodies of knowledge concerning effective educational reform research and

effective school library media research. Further, the two bodies of research remained independent of each other for more than twenty years, even though the two research literatures shared a similar philosophy.

In studying the role of the school library media center in restructuring public schools, Clark (1994) chose to look at the Coalition of Essential Schools which was organized by TheodoreSizer at Brown University in 1984. The restructured public school teachers in Clark's study saw the school library media specialist as more involved in the curriculum than did classroom teachers in traditionally structured schools. Further, she believed that the AASL and leaders of educational reform should address the lack of research collaboration (Clark, 1994). This study of the daily activities of four school library media specialist serves to connect the two bodies of literature and demonstrates that successful educational reform is tied to effective school library media centers. Of course, effective school library media centers are adequately staffed, adequately funded and properly scheduled.

The discussion of results addresses the findings with regard to the national guidelines of Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning (1998), perceptions by the superintendent, principals, library supervisor, and classroom teachers, and the roles and functions as reported in the literature. The findings of the study were relevant and support the information found in the review of literature. The roles of the school library media specialist were compatible with the roles recommended in Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning. The most important finding noted was the overall favorable perception of the superintendent and the principals in regard to the role

of the school library media program and the school library media program within the schools.

### *Recommendations*

The research findings point to recommendations for various members of the educational community. These recommendations would help to create more effective school library media programs.

#### *Higher Education Programs.*

First, educational leadership programs tied to colleges of education should incorporate the role of the effective school library media specialist into the core curriculum as part of personnel courses. Current personnel courses do not discuss the vital supervisory, curriculum collaboration, technology, and academic role played by the school library media specialist. Thus, future school principals and curriculum specialists remain uninformed of the actual role of the school library media program in educational reform efforts.

Schools of library and information science in American Library Association (ALA) accredited universities should schedule time to speak in courses designed for future school principals. This collaboration would result in a clearer view of the role of the school library media specialist. Second, the ALA programs should emphasize leadership as part of the management course currently taught in the core curriculum for school library media specialists.

It is important for schools of education to emphasize the importance of the school library media program in the training of classroom teachers. Classroom teachers need to embrace the collaborative model and build strong relationships with the school library

media specialist. For too long, classroom teachers have remained isolated in the classroom ignoring the vital role played by the school library media specialist within the school.

*Superintendents and Principals.*

Superintendents and principals, who have not had prior classes dealing with school library media specialists, should attend school library media professional conferences to learn of new developments. With proper education, superintendents and principals can discover that school library media specialists are not an extra frill but an academic necessity. Thus, they would be more apt to adequately fund and staff school library media programs.

Further, superintendents need to provide for a school library supervisor within the budget. The supervisor can provide the staff development for principals, teachers and school library media specialists concerning the advantages of collaborative planning with the school library media specialist. Second, the library supervisor can be the advocate and educator at the district level, who keeps policymakers abreast of new developments in school library media.

Next, principals should initiate staff development concerning the positive role the school library media specialist plays within the school. The principal needs to encourage classroom teachers to include the school library media specialist in collaborative planning for research and other curricular projects.

*School Library Media Specialists.*

School library media specialists need to become proactive leaders within the school. When dealing with principals, they must be willing to be flexible, accessible,

dependable and willing to work. They need to serve on the curriculum planning and school improvement committees. If they are technologically challenged, they need to update their media skills.

Often over aggressive specialists are their own worst enemies. School library media specialists must be aware of territoriality issues. Teachers have been shown to dislike the terms *co-curricular* and *co-teacher* (Brackstone, 1981). The prefix *co-* is intimidating to teachers. HSLMS2 warned that the school library media specialist must never cross the line and act superior (Appendix D: Interview Guide School Library Media Specialist Question 4). If they do, teachers will see the specialists as enhancing the specialists' professional status at the expense of teachers.

The concept of instructional collaboration should be built on the taxonomy for library media programs development by Loertscher in 1988. This is an instructional design model used to organize the joint instructional efforts of the school library media specialist and the classroom teacher (Putnam, 1996). Within Loertscher (1988), there are eleven levels of school library media program integration with the instructional program of a school. Each sequentially higher level of the taxonomy identifies a more collegial relationship between the school library media specialist and the classroom teacher. The higher the level on the taxonomy, the more collegiality should exist between the school library media specialist and the classroom teacher. School library media specialists should examine the taxonomy to note the current level and proceed with caution.

In order to move beyond territoriality issues, school library media specialists should employ transformational leadership. Transformational leaders can stimulate individuals to view their work from new perspectives, generate an awareness of the

vision, develop colleagues with higher potential and motivate others to look beyond personal agendas. This type of shared leadership is concerned with growth rather than control of the group (Brown, 1999). The level of trust will increase because of past positive transactions from specialists using transformational leadership. The goal is to create new learning opportunities in a supportive environment, to recognize and accept differences in people, to use two-way communication, and to interact in a personalized fashion with the learning community (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). School library media specialists work within the school using collaboration to influence students, staff, and community to achieve curriculum goals (AASL, 1998).

### *Research*

This qualitative study of the daily activities of school library media specialists is only the beginning of research about effective school library media specialists and leadership. More qualitative studies should be used because this type of research provides the reader with data from actual activity. Below is a list of other suggested topics for further research:

1. Interview school library media specialists about their leadership role in the staff development.
2. Interview school library media specialists about the importance that professional organizations play in their profession.
3. Interview and observe school library media specialists about the positive and negative role that technology plays in their effectiveness.
4. Interview school library media specialists about how they manage long-range strategic planning for the school library media center.

5. Interview school superintendents and school principals about the leadership role played by the school library media specialist.
6. Interview higher education professors about the leadership role played by the school library media specialist.
7. Conduct a qualitative and quantitative study using personality assessment instruments to see what influence personality plays on the leadership role of the school library media specialist.

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## Appendix A: Sample Transcribed Interview

Interview with Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS)  
Elementary School  
March 9, 2001  
12:00 p.m.

Key:

IC: Interviewers Comments  
L: ESLMS  
I: Interviewer  
MM: Maintenance Men

**IC:** I entered the library around noon. I had been at the High School and decided to stop to see ESLMS about scheduling an interview. In her usual dramatic style, she suggested that we could do the interview during the lunch period. ESLMS checked her schedule on the computer and realized that she had a time block beyond the normal routine. During the course of the interview we were interrupted several times. First, ESLMS was interrupted by a problem with a computer in a CT's second grade room. She was attempting to get the machine back on line by reframing the system. I went with her to view the computer. She told her to call when the computer gave her the signal. Later, we then received a call and had to go to complete the task at hand. In other words we were interrupted three times by questions of importance. In the process students kept coming into the library to check out books. The library is never really quite.



Next, the technical men from the board of education arrived and needed to talk to ESLMS about drops for the Internet. She had them come into the library and review the map that she had made. She was somewhat angry that the school board had decided to not place Internet drops in several areas of the school. They told her that due to a cut in funds the board offices had decided to delay some of the requested drops. They told her that they would need a place to store their equipment and she directed them to the custodian. She told them that she wanted to be with them when they started the initial wiring. They told her that it would be at least another week before they started.

**I:** ESLMS, when can we schedule a time for an interview?

**L:** Hey, why not now! Do you mind if I eat my broccoli and cheese leftovers. You could get a lunch in the cafeteria. They are having red beans and rice.

**I:** I think I will pass, but do you have a Diet Dr. Pepper. I will owe you a case of soda by the end of this project.

**L:** Sure, but don't worry about soda.

**I:** I need to get something from my car.

**L:** Great! That will give me time to clear a spot to talk.

**IC:** I returned in a few moments and we decided to sit in her office, which is rarely used except for storage. The ESLMS is one of the most interesting of all of the school library media specialists that I have viewed. She is warm and open. In some ways, she is the Frizzle from the Magic School Bus series. The ESLMS told me once that she was in the Peanut Gallery during an episode of Howdy Doody in New York. I told her that I probably saw her so many years ago on TV, because I watched that program religiously.

**L:** I am glad this is not a video. They could probably see the broccoli in my teeth.

**1. ESLMS, what brought you to the Elementary School?**

**L:** Well, I have been a school library media specialist for nine years and a classroom teacher for twenty years. I have an M.Ed in Reading and a MLIS (Masters in Library and Information Science). I have certification in school administration or leadership. I was the librarian at two other elementary schools and I taught at a middle school. I was at a middle School and a Catholic School before coming to the Elementary School.

**2. Since you came to the Elementary School as the school library media specialist, what are some of your duties?**

**L:** I am a member of the School Improvement Team. I was the chair for a while but I rotated off of the chair position. I am not listed on the roster, but I still do it. I am the Volunteer Coordinator for the school as well as the Systems Operator. So that's about it! That's all I do (laughing).

**I:** That's all you do (laughing).

**L:** I don't do roofing.

**IC:** Telephone rings and it is a CT. She needs the ESLMS to reframe her computer and get it back online. We visit the classroom and reboot the computer with the reframing disk.

**3. I have noticed that you do conduct staff development. What types of instruction do you do for the staff?**

**L:** Mostly technology. The first year that I was here I dealt more with the principles of Library Power, but now I've been doing a lot more in technology like one year we had a \$125,000 grant. Well, that's another thing that I have done. I have written a couple of

grants. We got a big grant and part of it was summer time classes for this faculty. And I conducted 6 day all day classes for the faculty to show them the software that we would have on the local area network. I have also taught classes for OTM (Office of Technology Management), but I don't like doing that too much.

**4. Besides the staff development, how do you maintain communications with the classroom teachers?**

**L:** With the teachers, it is "on the fly". I used to ask them to invite me to their grade level meetings and they would always forget to ask me. So I just impose myself on them and say, '2<sup>nd</sup> grade what are you doing?' Next, week we are going to do a lesson, so tell me what you are doing. I do that sort of thing. They seem to like it, so I bully my way into their lives. Sometimes that is what you have to do.

**IC:** The telephone rings again and we revisit the CT's room to ascertain that the computer is working. Then we return to the interview in the library.

**5. Since you do maintain communication with the classroom teachers, how do you manage to communicate with the principal?**

**L:** I just do. I just think that our principal is just real easy to communicate with. I just talk with him all the time. I email him a great deal. You know that I talk to him a great deal. I would not say that he is aware of the details of my program, but he seems to have confidence in what I am doing. I think that I communicate with him extremely well.

**IC:** Telephone rings and the office tells the ESLMS that they are sending the Internet wiring men to talk to her about the new wiring.

**6. I have noticed that you are able to communicate well with everyone. How do you see your role as in instruction within the school?**

**L:** I think my role as far as reference skills or library skills it is to reinforce what the teachers' are doing. I also think that I am an instructional consultant. I am very much involved in getting books and the multimedia items that they need. I find websites for them. I am always looking at their lesson plans. I am always asking the Elementary Principal what they are up to .So as far as delivery, I see myself more of a consultant. Physically, I do some skills lessons at point of need.

**IC:** Enter the maintenance men from the board. They need to talk to the ESLMS about the Internet wiring. The ESLMS greets them warmly.

**L:** Hello. How are you doing today? You want to wire the school. Well, I am the person that you want to see! I talked with two other men earlier.

**MM:** They are no longer working together, but one of them will be here next week about the wiring. We are just putting in the conduits now. However, we won't start until next week.

**L:** Well, then you really don't need to talk with me today. What we are really concerned with is the fact that we need places that were not wired before wired because we are getting more students next year. Some of these places have no wiring at all.

**M. M.** Here is the map and this is what we were told to do. They have cut some of the drops due to money.

**L:** Well, I will talk with him next week when he comes.

**MM:** Where can we safely store our tools?

**L:** Call the custodian and he can find a place for you. He comes in really early in the morning. That would be your best bet.

**I:** Well, let's try again. You really do so little here and we know that librarians never get interrupted (laughing).

**L:** (Laughing) That's right! This interview is an example of a day in my life.

**7. You were talking about being an instructional consultant, how do consult with teachers helping them with the state mandated benchmarks?**

**L:** The Library Supervisor did a very good job of making us aware of that. There were several meetings about what the benchmarks were. And I do go to the school... I don't go to the individual grade level meetings, but I do go to the school wide things where we have the grade level chair and meet with them. So I have been involved with the benchmarks. And the teachers are to tell me what benchmarks they are to address. I have copies of it. I've got information processing skills handbook back here. I have a pretty good handle on that.

**8. You have talked about collaborating and consulting with teachers on the fly? What do you see as really favorable conditions for collaboration?**

**L:** It would be favorable if we had a block of time, like in middle school, you have an off hour. And if you had a block of time in which is was mandated that teachers met with me. But they have so many other time constraints that it just doesn't happen. It should be mandated. Substitutes should be put in the rooms and I should be sitting down with them at least once a week. But it is very difficult, so I just have to jump in there and hijack them. It is the only way that I can do it.

**9. Do you really believe in the collaborative planning?**

**L:** Yes, for this school and these teachers. I could see where it would not always work. It depends on the librarian. It depends on her relationship with the other teachers, with the principal. But, yes. Do I get everyone in all of the time? No, I do a lot of my work with parents and community and with one on one with the students. You know as a reading instructor to students. But uh....collaboration I don't feel like a complete success with collaboration. But I don't want to go back to scheduled classes because I don't feel that is the best use for my expertise.

**10. Since time for collaboration is so difficult to find, do you see disadvantages?**

**L:** Yes, there are probably disadvantages because it is based on your relationship with people. So there are people that are going to block you out and block you out successfully continually year after year after year. However, the disadvantage is because it is flexible and depends on the individual and other things that are going on in order for it to work properly. It depends on the pressures that are put on the teachers. However, if you go the other way you end up as a babysitter. There are some librarians that are doing classroom instruction for a couple of hours a day. There are librarians who are doing nothing more than babysitting in a classroom for a couple of hours a day. I tell you what! I don't need that. I would walk before I would do that. I really would.

**11. Just a little more about collaborative planning. Who initiates?**

**L:** I do! I always initiate it. Always.....

**12. What is an example of the most recent of these projects?**

**L:** What I am doing now is skills lessons with the fourth graders. I am putting most of my energy into that. Now, let me think what I did before that with the first graders. We looked at websites about butterflies. I got information on types of sources for first graders. That was the last thing that I did with the first graders. What I try to do is if they don't approach me, I get to them in a systematic way. If I am approaching second grade this week, I go to first grade the next week. I am not trying to do units with the fourth grade. I am just trying to hit skills. I know that they would prefer that we did units. But at this time of the year, I think the skills are more important. Getting ready for LEAP this way works better for me.

**13. Using collaboration, how do you decide on the best materials?**

**L:** I think that we do the best job of supporting through the software. I think that our software is very supportive of instruction. And we do have a pretty nice library. I don't think the books... The books are supportive of reading instruction because I do have books kids like on just about every level. I can suit their levels and their tastes in books. Reference we don't have a whole lot, but we are using more online. We are using World Book that online a lot and using the search engines such as Yahoo.

**14. Can they access in their classrooms?**

**L:** Each classroom through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade has three computers that hit have a T1 line that hits the Internet through the (LAN) local area network. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> have two computers in each classroom that hit the LAN. This was all part of the LEARN grant where we got the 125,000 dollars from that. And we also had a Knapp grant which we didn't... I mean I

wrote it. But the only thing that I've gotten out of it is a few books. So that is one way that we support the curriculum is by the grant writing. We've gotten over 300,000 dollars that way through grant writing.

**15. Other than grants, how do you lobby the administration for funding?**

**L:** I negotiate with the principal. He has never told me No. Now, I did notice that he has cut back on my money for books and so we are going to have a discussion about that. He has never literally told me No about anything. And when he has extra money, he spreads the big joke that I love to spend money. He will call be and say, I have 500 bucks.

Another way that I get money is that I do the Title I budget. I handle that. So it's like if there is a thousand left over I get books. It is not always books. It is like last year I spent 600 dollars on some grading software. Now, I am kicking myself because they changed grades and everybody doesn't really use it. So this year I am really trying to get back to my books because my books look bad. I've spent so much time and money on computer stuff. I hooked up everything in this building. I've re-imaged most of them. It's just been so consuming. I'm ready to get back to the books. I think that does more good and the research doesn't even support that the computers do anything.

**I:** I've seen that research, too.

**16. How do you muster any support from teachers?**

**L:** I just bug them all of the time. Supporting Accelerated Reader makes a lot of sense for me. I give trophies to the top classes. So when I make a big deal about the student, I always say well, this is a CT's student. I always send trophies to the classrooms. They keep the trophies at the end of the year and that type of thing. I know that I have broccoli in m teeth



**I:** Laughter

**L:** Specifically, I try not to be a butt about things. Like they know that I will do anything they want me to do. Like they say, “Can I check out 50 books?” I say yes. You know. I give them whatever they want. I help them. I wrote grants for them to have libraries in their classrooms. I give them... Part of our grading is supposed to be using the Accelerated Reader reports. So I do generate the Accelerated Reader reports periodically, sporadically. Just put those in their mailboxes. I think that gives them a grade to use. I really think that we get along pretty well.

**I:** It really seems that way.

**17. Why do you see the media program important to the school?**

**L:** Well, research says that it is the focus of the school. The more students read the better they are succeeding in every area of academic life. That is one part of it. The other part of it if the library has a good collection and a lot of circulation then they are going to read more. So those two things go together. Also, because of my background as a Reading Specialist, I know that if you can read you can do anything. I just believe that. So I just try to get these kids excited about reading.

**18. Do you see yourself as a leader in the school?**

**L:** I see myself as a leader because the teachers come to me for everything. That makes me see myself as a leader. I think I am like an old shoe. They can ask me for anything and I will do anything. If they want me to climb on the roof to get a kid to read a book, I would do it. They know that. I have made it possible to be very accessible and involved with everything. I am waiting for someone to say, “Hey, this is none of your business!” But it hasn’t happened yet. I have a very high energy level and I just knock myself out for

them. They know that I will do anything for them. If that makes a leader, then I am a leader.

**I:** Yes, you have a high energy level. (Laughing) I am worn out just watching.

**19. Do you see any power issues interfering with collaboration?**

**L:** Well, they don't want to always tell you. Because I think they are afraid you are going to run to the office say that she is teaching devil worship or something. So I tell them, look, I just need to know what you are teaching so we can teach something together. Sometimes I really don't know what they are thinking! I just know that I can get them to plan with me. I kind of don't care what they think if I can get what I want out of them.

**20. How did your educational program at LSU prepare you?**

**L:** I really am glad that I went there. I think that I have the philosophical underpinnings and the priorities based on what I got at LSU. Could you do it just based on that, NO! I came in here deciding to put myself at the center of this school involved in everything. Then in the back of my head I am trying to use the things that I learned from the program at LSU. But you have to juggle the two. I serve this school worming my way in so that I can do the things that LSU taught. What actually prepared me for being a librarian are just my life experiences and my experiences as a teacher. If I had all of that good education from LSU but I did not know how to meet people and I didn't have 20 years in the classroom, I don't know if it would work. If I just sat back here and said that I was going to do just what we learned at LSU, I don't know how that would work. That would not work for me. I am not pushing necessarily the books that I studied. I am pushing the books that kids like and that they have success reading. I am all about reading instruction.

Am I about award winning books, not necessarily? I tell them that they will not like the book. If it is not the right book for them, I don't want to see them with it.

**21. What made you decide to go into library science?**

**L:** I don't know. Because I just like to read a whole lot. It's everything good about the classroom without the confinement. It really is.

**22. Is there anything that you would like to add?**

**L:** Well, I just see that everything in this school system is typical and I think that we might be loosing a lot of ground. I hear other librarians about situations in their school where a lot of them are going back into a fixed schedule. And I just think that is terrible. Unless they are just limited talent and this is all they can do is to give a teacher a potty break for a half an hour a week. I think that would be a mistake to go back to that. I know that I really could not do it. I could not do it. I would not be willing to. I don't need it that bad. I have to have the flexibility that I have. I think that I keep my program going by having volunteers in here everyday so that I can do five or six things at one time. It is the only thing that works for me. I am afraid of the old way.

**23. Where did the parking designated parking sign originate?**

**L:** It is funny that you noticed that. No, it was not here when I got here. The Elementary Principal did that for me.

**I:** I have never seen that on a parking lot.

**L:** I haven't seen it either. We are just best friends and it was a Christmas gift one year.

Thanks for your time.

## Appendix B: Samples of Field Notes

Effective School Library Media Specialists  
Field Notes for January 8, 2001  
Elementary  
8:00-8:40  
L. Underwood

Key: Elementary School Principal  
Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ELSMS)  
Secretary  
OC: Observer's Comments

I arrived at Elementary around 8:00 a.m. Elementary sits in a community that seems to be affluent. There are brick entry signs announcing that I have entered Elementary. The houses are brick ranchers and a few are two story houses. The area is well manicured. The Elementary Baptist Church is on one side of the street and St. Thomas More Catholic Church and school are located on Main Avenue, too, which is the main street through Elementary. There are announcements on the signs for neighborhood meetings and dues for the year.

OC: Because of racial problems, I cannot judge the school by the neighborhood. Whites tend to put their children in private schools in order to avoid Blacks.

There are no students today and the ESLMS and I arranged to meet before the students arrive on Wednesday, January 10. Today is considered a staff development day between semesters. While looking for a parking spot, I noted that the school library media specialist has her own parking spot marked LIBRARIAN.

OC: This is the first time that I have ever seen the school librarian's parking spot marked on any school lot. She must have a great deal of respect in this school.

I proceeded to the office to sign in and asked directions from someone that I assumed to be the secretary. She told me to proceed down the hall and through the doors to the next building. The ESLMS was in the next building.

OC: As I walked through the halls, I had a feeling of tranquility. The fact that the walls were unpainted brick made me feel that I was still outside. The normal institutional cinderblock was not here and this was comforting.

As for my initial observation of the main building, the offices are on the right as you come through the door. The offices are a suite with the secretary's office first and the guidance office behind the secretary. All of the offices are interconnected by doors that

lead into the principal's office. The principal's office was open into the hallway. I could see several staff members talking with him in a relaxed manner.

OC: The openness of the offices into the hallway lends the aura of approachability.

Directly across from the office is the school cafeteria. The area is a totally glass enclosure. Besides the main building, the school has two additional wings that are connected by breezeways. One of the wings is to the left and the other is to the right of the main building with the library central to all three wings. **See Figure 1.**

OC: The glass would make eating easier than sitting in a room surrounded by walls. Most elementary students in West Virginia eat in a multipurpose room, which acts as a gym, auditorium and cafeteria. Children in Louisiana do not need to worry about cold weather as often as do students in the North. Therefore, they can play outside most of the year.

The other rooms in the main building were the primary rooms. I could tell by the size of the seats and the types of decorations.

I then went through the doors and crossed under a breezeway to see a multicolored door labeled Media Center. The colors were of a tie-died nature. Outside of the door is a small garden with concrete benches.

OC: I felt like I was opening a surprise. The multicolored door made me wonder what I was going to see behind Door Number 1. I am used to seeing elementary libraries that are nothing more than converted schoolrooms. Thus, I was experiencing some excitement about the condition of the room beyond the door. What is behind the Multicolored Door?

When I entered, my eyes immediately went to the amphitheater seating for children.

OC: The amphitheater seating is the focal point of the setting. A person entering the room will always focus on the seating. This is a great idea for small children to see the seating area quickly.

To my right was the circulation desk. The ESLMS was sitting at the desk talking on the telephone. She immediately excused herself from the telephone and greeted me warmly. She comes around the desk and pulls a chair up to the desk for me. After a few moments, she decides to show me around the facility.

OC: I have discovered that in the South I am always greeted warmly when entering a school site. Often in my prior experiences with public schools, I was ignored and forced to wait for recognition.

There is a telephone at the circulation desk and another telephone on the computer desks behind the circulation center. The circulation desk is a full service desk with a computer and is elementary school children friendly in height.

OC: The circulation desk gives the ESLMS a great vantage point for viewing new entries through the door and maintaining eye contact with those already in the library. Evidently, the architect actually listened to a librarian when developing this site!

I observe when I am behind the circulation desk there is a bulletin board with current news about the school. There are shelves for magazines and some audiovisual materials. There are several news clippings from the local newspaper concerning library and reading events within the school. There are three computers and a printer.

The ESLMS tells me that the computers contain the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) for the school. All of the computers are networked through the main server for the parish. The computers have the Follett Circulation System (Windows Version), STAR Reading Program, Kid Pics, Accelerated Reader, and the Learning Company's Writing Program. There is a folder for computer games and Internet access.

I observe that the entire library was carpeted in gray and the walls were soothing and painted with colorful scenes from children's literature. The colors used in the pictures coordinate with multicolored entrance door.

There is a large statue of a Red Elephant in the library. I asked the ESLMS about the elephant. She told me that her husband found the elephant and brought it to the school as a surprise one day. Now she uses the elephant for a prop when the student scores enough Accelerated Reader points to be the top reader for the month. These children get to have pizza as a reward and she calls this *Lunch with the Principal*. These students invited their parents to the luncheon.

OC: This reminds me of having dinner with the captain of the ship on a cruise liner. This makes the reward extra special for these students and parents.

The ESLMS shows me her office. The office is to the right of the amphitheater seating. Glass meets the top of the amphitheater seating in one wall.

OC: The office helps the librarian to maintain eye contact even when she goes into the office.

The ESLMS tells me that she really does not like to use the office. Most of the time, she completes tasks at the circulation desk or the computer tables behind the desk. She told me that the office serves as a safe place to keep your purse or valuables. She keeps a refrigerator and a small microwave in the office, which contains a sink.

OC: School librarians often do not have time to run to the cafeteria or cola machine. Since the ESLMS is far from the maddening crowd, she needs to keep things close to her in order to save time.

Bookcases surround the circumference of the room. Two shelving units that are easier to reach are stand-alone. These stand-alone shelving units serve to divide the room and

provide shelving on both sides. The ESLMS told me that she keeps the lower reading fiction levels on these two shelves. The shorter shelving housed books for Pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade.

OC: This seems logical because of the height of the small children.

One stand-alone unit shelters the amphitheater seating. The amphitheater seating has a rocking chair. The other stand-alone unit serves to give the library the concept of two seating areas.

OC: In other words, more than one thing can be going on at a time with minimal conflicts.

The library has round and rectangular tables. The seats have colorful covers that have evidently been made for the backs of the seats.

OC: These are the usual ugly plastic chairs used in schools. The seat back covers make the seating more inviting.

There is another storage area room to your left as you come through the front door. There is a table for working in the room, but it contains old audiovisual equipment. This room has another glass-enclosed room with more equipment. There is a sign on the door into this glass-enclosed room that says: **Do not move any equipment in this room without first talking with the librarian.**

OC: I believe that I will ask the ESLMS about the old equipment later and the reason for this sign. The ESLMS refers to herself as the librarian.

One adult was working at a round table in the main library and another adult was working in the audiovisual room. The ESLMS introduces me to them. One young lady is the speech therapist and the other is one of the kindergarten teachers.

OC: This is completely different from any school library in Kanawha County Schools. They are just old classrooms with no circulation desk.

After the initial tour, the ESLMS suggested that we return to the main building to meet with the Elementary School Principal. When we arrived, the ESLMS introduced me to the Elementary School Principal and the secretary was identified as Secretary. The Elementary School Principal and the ESLMS tell me that they are flattered to be selected for my project. The Elementary School Principal stated that, "The ESLMS is more than just a school librarian. The ESLMS is the systems operator for the school as well as maintaining the library. She was part of the school improvement team and always a willing participant in the school. The ESLMS is flexible and can always be depended upon in a pinch."

OC: I can already see why the Library Supervisor suggested this school.

The ESLMS explained that the Elementary School Principal told her at 7:45 that morning that she was going to present part of the agenda for the faculty meeting. It had been a last moment entry based on a meeting of his last Friday at the parish central office concerning technology. I asked her what she planned to present and she explained that the presentation dealt with the school's web page. She is having trouble getting teachers to state what they need in regards to web sites. The teachers are not all using the Whiteboard component to the parish web site, too. The ESLMS tells me that the Whiteboard allows teachers the opportunity to post lessons and announcements on the school's web page. The ESLMS tells me that the Elementary School Principal and the ESLMS were going to play good cop bad cop in the meeting. The ESLMS is going to explain the concept and the Elementary School Principal is going to say "All teachers are going to participate!" The ESLMS explained that the Elementary School Principal and she plan things concerning the library and curriculum in this manner all of the time.

OC: I can tell that the ESLMS and the Elementary School Principal have a strong working relationship. I wonder how much this relationship affects classroom teacher participation in the school library.

We returned to the media center after meeting with the Elementary School Principal. The ESLMS explained that because of her first MA in Reading Education, she really emphasizes reading skills. "When I arrived, students were carrying books around for cosmetic value. They could not even read the books."

The ESLMS uses the STAR reading program to test every student and get the correct reading level at the beginning and the end of the year. Then these students begin recreational reading with books they can read independently without frustration. As they master all of the words in these books, the children move on to higher-level books.

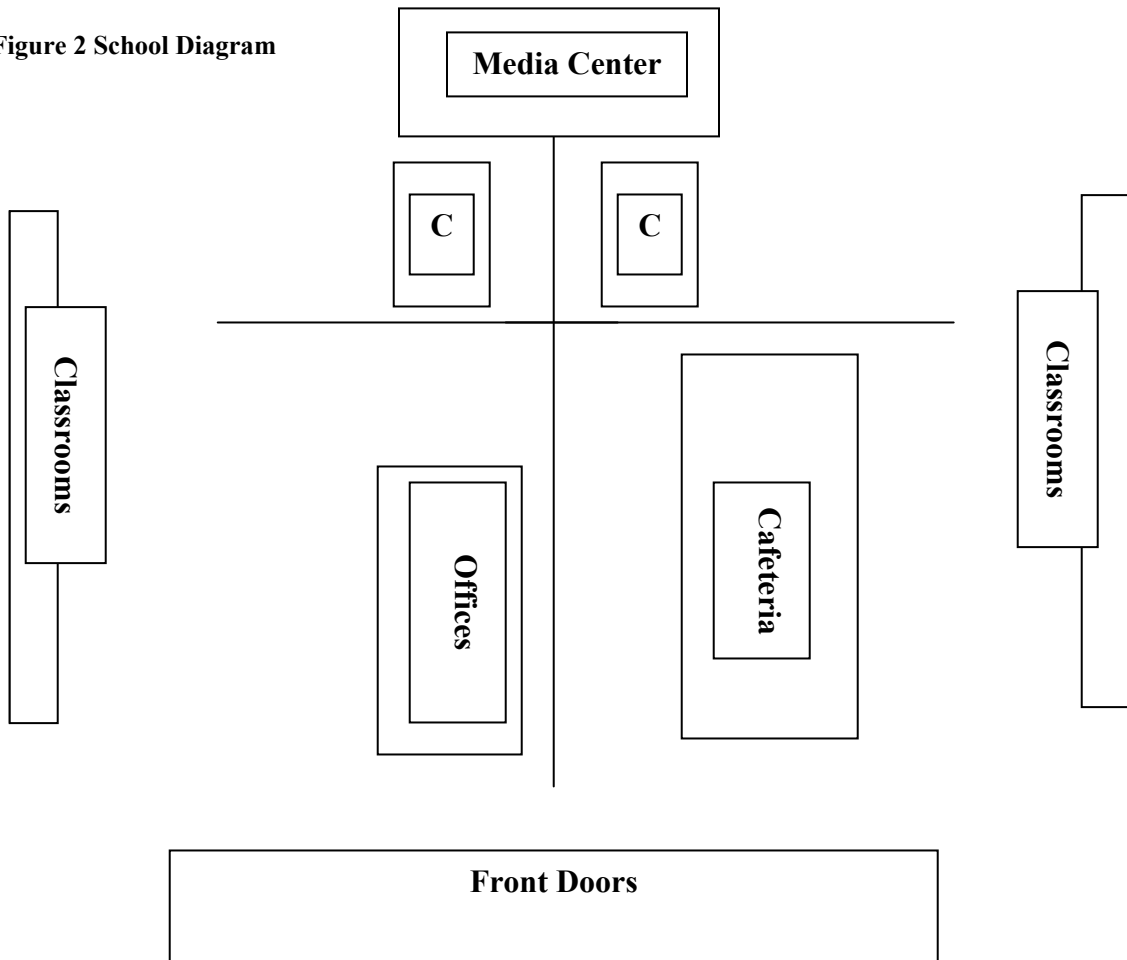
OC: The reading scores have improved according to state testing standards, which I downloaded from the Louisiana State Department of Education Web Site.

Because of her need to prepare for the meeting, I made my departure after arranging to return on Thursday, January 11, 2001, which is the second day for the students. On the way out of the school, I stopped and spoke with Secretary again and asked where I was to sign when I arrived for my observations. She took me to a desk in the hall and showed me where the sign-in book for visitors is in the school.

OC: This is going to be great observing in an elementary school with an elementary school library media specialist's that seems to have administrative support. I will need to ask the ESLMS about the economic status of the children in this school. I note a Title I room in the main hallway. Since I worked with that program, I know that it is for low-income children.



**Figure 2 School Diagram**



Effective School Library Media Specialist  
Field Notes for January 11, 2001  
Elementary  
9:00-11:00  
L. Underwood

Key: Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS)  
Elementary School Principal  
Classroom Teacher-Second Grade (CT)  
Volunteer  
OC: Observer's Comments

As I entered the parking area, I noticed that the parking spaces are marked Principal, Librarian, and Counselor. On my first trip, I noticed the parking spaces, but not the order in the parking lot. I notice that the principal's spot has no car.

OC: I wonder if the order of the parking spaces means that the librarian's position resembles a vice-principal position in this school.

I signed in and proceeded to the media center. I notice that the door to the principal's office is closed today. The halls are quite and students are working in the rooms. There are no loud voices teaching. It is a calm scene. The time is around 9:00a.m

The ESLMS is talking on the telephone when I arrive and students are in the library searching for books. She puts down the telephone and greets me. She tells me that she is preparing for the Lunch with the Principal award for the month. She tells me that the parents of some of the students are coming. She shows me the awards and the pictures of the students on the red elephant that have been taken. The students get a certificate and a bumper sticker which says, "*I am an Accelerated Reader of the Month at Elementary.*"

One boy enters the library and she has him come over to the desk. She tells me that this young man is the award winner for the month. She asks him if he remembers that he is to have lunch with the principal today. He shyly replies, "Yes." She tells me that his parents cannot come today but that she will be his parent for the day. He beams when she says that she will be a substitute parent. She tells me that his parents work several jobs and cannot get free to come to the school.

OC: The young man is Vietnamese. The students in this school are poor and I imagine that his parents cannot afford to miss an hour of work. I will check the school lunch statistics in the future to confirm my suspicions.

In a moment, the door opens and two adults with students arrive in the library. Students

slide books through the slot in the circulation desk.

OC: I notice that the books drop through the slot directly onto the floor. Where is the cart?

The ESLMS greets the group warmly. The ESLMS tells me that these are students from the self-contained special education room. The teacher and the aide take the students to the lower reading level shelf and the students proceed to browse the book collection.

OC: The reason for two adults is the fact that one of the adults is the aide. The ESLMS introduced me to both of the adults and confirmed who the aide was and who the teacher was. The ESLMS is great about introductions/

The ESLMS asks me if she can use my presence to run to the restroom.

OC: When no adults are present, the ESLMS must lock the door and make a dash to the other end of the building. She has a sign that she hangs on the door that says "Be Back in Five Minutes." The worst problem is the fact that the only restroom is near the office. This is a hike for the ESLMS. With the three adults in the library, she feels safe in leaving for a restroom emergency without hanging up the sign.

I sat at the circulation desk. When students come to the desk, the ESLMS allows them to scan their library cards. Each of the cards has their student number and independent grade level for recreational reading. The ESLMS told me that the independent grade level allows her the opportunity to make certain that students do not get books that they cannot read. She wants them to be successful, not frustrated.

OC: Since the teacher is with the student, the ESLMS' departure will not create a problem in determining grade levels.

The ESLMS quickly returns. I asked her about the missing cart in the circulation desk book return slot. She tells me that she could not get to the books fast enough. She likes to check the books in immediately and putting your hands into that cart was more trouble than it is worth.

OC: I would rather dig into the cart than constantly bend over to pick up books out of the floor. Oh, well, I am not their everyday.

Within a few moments, after the self-contained class leaves a CT arrives and wants the ESLMS to locate books on the desert and mountains. Her class is studying landforms in the second grade. Further, she wants Magic School bus video about the desert. The teacher saw the program on television. The ESLMS tells her that all of the Magic School Bus series is in the kindergarten class. The ESLMS tells her that she did not catalog the series for circulation from the school library. The ESLMS calls the office and asks the secretary to tell the Elementary School Principal to add something for her to the morning announcements. The ESLMS wants all of the Magic School Bus videos returned to the

library for circulation. The ESLMS realized that several levels of students could benefit from the videos.

The ESLMS calls the office and requests that the Elementary School Principal make the announcement about the return of the Magic School Bus series. In a moment, the intercom comes on and Elementary School Principal makes an announcement requesting all of the Magic School Bus videos returned. He then proceeds to let two students give the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence is to follow the Pledge.

OC: I noticed that the Elementary School Principal's car was not in the parking slot marked principal when I arrived. Further, his office door was closed. Evidently, the Elementary School Principal has just arrived and this is the reason for the late announcements and the Pledge.

Two boys enter the library to check out books. The ESLMS tells me that they are from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class. She asks them to repeat to her the instructions for checking out a book. They tell us that after they select a book they are to read at least two pages. If they find more than five words they cannot read within the first two pages, they are to choose another book. This keeps them from becoming frustrated with the material and on the correct level. The ESLMS smiles and tells them to proceed in their quest for books.

OC: The ESLMS uses the boys to demonstrate what she has taught them. The boys love to explain things for the ESLMS.

Students continue to come in and out of the school library. The ESLMS asks me to help her locate some books about landforms. She tells me that this a last moment request and that the teacher is coming to the library later this morning.

OC: She seems a little upset that the teacher has waited until the last moment to ask for materials.

A student enters the room and tells the ESLMS that the mouse to their computer no longer works. The ESLMS tells me that he is from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The ESLMS says to the boy that that classroom has had several mouse failures this year. The boy shakes his head in agreement. The ESLMS then hurries to the room to fix the equipment. She told me that normally, she would wait until a volunteer arrives, but this is an emergency. Students continue to enter the library to check out books after she leaves.

OC: The circulation desk is self-service. The students scan their cards individually. They seem to feel at ease and allowing them the opportunity to scan the computers builds self-esteem. Further, they seem to enjoy the computer scanner.

The ESLMS returns in a few moments. She goes into her office to put the rotten mouse into the garbage.

An impeccably dressed woman enters the library. The ESLMS introduces me to her

friend, Volunteer, a volunteer. The ESLMS seems surprised to see Volunteer today. The ESLMS tells me that they are long time neighbors and friends.

OC: Volunteer is an impeccably dressed woman in her 60s. I could tell that the ESLMS was really surprised to see her today.

Volunteer immediately assumes a position at the circulation desk. She brought the morning paper with her to read. I remark that there was a fire at the newspaper this morning. She tells me that is the reason that she has just gotten the morning Advocate. She tells me that she has not been at the school since before Thanksgiving due to illness.

OC: The illness explains the shock on the ESLMS' face. Volunteer seems rather feeble.

Volunteer opens her paper and proceeds to read the news. She comments that a woman died that worked at the Advocate. The ESLMS asked her how well that she knew the deceased woman. Volunteer tells her that she new her when she worked in advertising for the paper. They continue to chat about small things in the neighborhood. Children continue to flow through the door in the quest for books. Volunteer stops to get books from the floor and check the books back into the library.

OC: I thought that Volunteer was going to collapse every time that she leaned over to get those books. It is making me nervous.

Since Volunteer has arrived, the ESLMS leaves on another technology errand in another part of the building. After Volunteer leaves, Volunteer tells me that she has been helping the ESLMS for years. She tells me that the ESLMS is much happier since she became a school librarian. She says that Elementary is a much better situation than another school that she helped the ESLMS in the library. Just then, three rather rambunctious young men arrive in the school library. These three boys are obviously close friends. Volunteer has some difficulty in getting the boys to do as directed. When they find books, they all come to the desk at the same time and create confusion. Volunteer cannot get the books to scan correctly.

OC: The boys are getting on her nerves.

Volunteer tells the boys, "If you think you can scan the books you can do it yourselves. Do you think that you can do a better job than me?" When they try to scan their books into the computer, they make mistakes.

OC: Part of the problem is the fact that Volunteer has the computer set to check-in books instead of on checkout.

Volunteer becomes frustrated with the computer system. She directs them to go to a table and one at a time return to checkout books. The boys comply with her request. As they come to the desk one at a time, Volunteer manages to get the scanner to work. She tells me in front of the boys that these boys are trouble and that she can handle any situation

because she has been here a long time.

OC: I have not opened my mouth. I am just observing the situation. The boys look at me puzzled. I just stand there and say nothing.

The boys leave the school library and I hear them running to get away from the library.

OC: Volunteer's body language and her statements tell me that she detests these students and they were aware of her dislike. They looked around to see if I am watching the scene. If looks could have killed, they boys would be dead

The ESLMS returns to the library. Volunteer tells her that the trio from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade had just left. The ESLMS just shakes her head but proceeds to change the subject.

OC: Evidently, the ESLMS knows the three boys.

Another student enters the library. He tells the ESLMS that he is moving to another school and needs her to sign a paper.

OC: The paper is the standard form that states that the student has no library books.

The ESLMS signs the paper. The ESLMS hugs him and tells him that she will miss him. The ESLMS tells the boy that she will miss him and she hopes that he will be happy in his new school. She makes him promise to return to visit her.

OC: Her body language is sincere. Her relationship to the children seems to be love and respect. She truly loves these children and felt compassion for the young man who was moving. Volunteer looks as if she would die if she had to touch the student.

At 10:00 a.m., the scheduled students have not arrived. The ESLMS tells me that they are from the Autism Class and that the teacher often forgets her scheduled time. The Volunteer remarks that she does not know how that teacher manages those students. The Volunteer says that the students are *pathetic*. The ESLMS calls the secretary and asks her to remind the class of the time. In a few moments, the students arrive and the teacher remains with the class.

OC: The Volunteer is not comfortable with the situation. The Volunteer does use the word *pathetic*. However, using the word *pathetic* seems empathetic for the Volunteer.

The ESLMS begins to read a story. She is reading the Black Cat by David Myers. On several occasions, the teacher calls down a little girl. The little girl in the class is terrified of the large red elephant and is agitated. She tells the little girl that she cannot keep the pink bow if she is not still.

While the ESLMS is trying to read to the students, the Volunteer is attempting to help students check out books. The computer keeps blocking the students and Volunteer needs

a password to override the block .The ESLMS has to continually stop reading and help Volunteer at the computer. Finally, the classroom teacher reads for a few moments so that the ESLMS can undo the computer snafu.

OC: The Volunteer needed the password. There must be a reason not to give Volunteer the password. The ESLMS is in a frenzy because she keeps moving back and forth.

The ESLMS returns to reading the story. The little girl must be removed and the teacher starts to take her out of the library. The ESLMS offers to move the red elephant from the main library. The teacher does not want the statue moved, but wants the girl to adjust. Finally, the teacher takes the child outside because of the child could not be still and see the elephant. The child loses the pink bow for not behaving.

The ESLMS returns to the reading of the story. The other two students are boys and they remain while the ESLMS attempts to read the story. One child is actually sleeping. The teacher returns with the little girl and gives her the pink bow. In only a moment, the little girl must be permanently removed from the library. However, the ESLMS continues to read to the other two students in great animation.

The Volunteer is still having trouble with the computer. The ESLMS must continually move back and forth between the computer and the children. The Volunteer finally tells the students that they cannot check out books until they bring all of the books back that they have out.

OC: This is one of the major problems faced by school librarians. Even when a librarian has a volunteer, they can never complete a task without many interruptions. Having a permanent paraprofessional would enhance the ESLMS' effectiveness.

Eventually, the sleeping boy awakes and asks if he can read. The ESLMS allows him to read and praises him for his efforts. When the students are leaving the two boys are rewarded with a rainbow fish sticker for their behavior. The boys are delighted with the stickers. One boy was going to pick up a rock on the floor, but when he saw the sticker he dumped the rock.

OC: These rewards are important to children that have so little.

Because the little girl could not sit still, she is not rewarded for library time. As they are leaving, the ESLMS complements the teacher and tells her what a wonderful job that she does with these students. After they leave, the ESLMS comments that the girl is better than at the beginning of the year. The student once ran from the library during every library period because of her red elephant fear.

OC: The teacher wants the child to adjust to the red elephant. Realistically the teacher realizes that if the child does not learn to overcome this fear other things will be worse.

The second grade arrives for library time.

OC: The second grade teacher is the last minute teacher that the ESLMS was complaining about earlier.

The teacher scheduled the time when she asked for the Magic School Bus. The ESLMS selects two books about landforms. She asks the students the difference between fiction and nonfiction. The student that responds gets a sticker. She first reads a book that is fiction about the desert and mountains. It is called Amber on the Mountain. When she completes the reading, the ESLMS then asks questions and students get stickers for their efforts.

One student is practicing great behavior. The ESLMS singles him out and gives him a sticker which says, "I was caught being good."

OC: I notice that behavior modification is the rule in the library and the special needs class. I wonder if the practice carries over the entire school.

The door opens and a group of students enters accompanied by a high school student.

OC: The ESLMS told me that the students from the high schools, who are considered "at risk" are allowed to come to the elementary and work with students.

The ESLMS stops reading and asks them if they are here to study. They respond that they are going to study. She tells them that if there is any noise they will have to leave.

The ESLMS begins to read her second selection, which is nonfiction. The nonfiction books is part of a series of nonfiction books in the All About series. In the middle of the book, the ESLMS must stop and call the students that are supposed to be studying with the high school student down for being too loud. The students tone down the noise.

The ESLMS begins to read again. When she is finished reading, she asks students about animals that can be found in the desert. All of her questions relate to the book that she is reading. One of the boys starts talking about snakes.

OC: Evidently, snakes are his favorite.

She tells them not to put up a hand unless they really know the answers to her questions. The ESLMS gives stickers for correct answers to her questions. When the students are getting ready to leave, the ESLMS asks for all students that did not get a sticker to stand. She then proceeds to make certain that every child gets a sticker.

OC: The teacher must be working on fiction and nonfiction as well as the landforms. The ESLMS told me that she tries to reinforce what is going on in the classroom.

As they leave, the pizza man has arrived with the award food for her luncheon. The ESLMS calls the cafeteria and asks for ice. They tell her that they have very little. The



ESLMS says that the guest will have to drink hot pop.

OC: The ESLMS is upset. She likes everything to be perfect and the ice issue is a serious problem.

The ESLMS leaves for the cafeteria. I helped Volunteer spread the table cloths for the festivities. The ESLMS returns with a pitcher of ice with a smile on her face. The ESLMS tells Volunteer that she needs to leave. I decide to exit myself and I tell the ESLMS that I am leaving. She tells me that she will see me next week. Parents and students are arriving for the luncheon. The Elementary School Principal says, Hi, Linda as he enters the library. I leave before I am tempted to eat the pizza.

OC: The entire day was unbelievable. I imagine that this was much like the task of an air traffic controller.

Effective School Library Media Specialists  
Field Notes for January 19, 2001  
Elementary Library  
9:50 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Key: Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS)  
Volunteer  
School Secretary  
Student Teacher 1 (ST1)-Louisiana State University  
Student Teacher 2 (ST2)-Louisiana State University  
Classroom Teacher (CTK)-Kindergarten Elementary  
Classroom Teacher 1 (CT1)-Title I  
Classroom Teacher 2 (CT2) - First Grade Teacher  
Various Students  
OC: Observer's Comments

After missing the ESLMS on Wednesday because of her absence, I check the parking lot for her car. I follow with an email to confirm my visit on Friday, January 19 around 10:00 in the morning. Since I did not hear contrary to my email, I assumed that I was okay for Friday.

Secretary greets me as I come through the door in a friendly manner and remarks about how cold it is becoming outside. She remarks that the temperature is dropping from the early morning 60-degree mark to the present 40-degree mark. She despises the constant cold drizzle that is falling, too. I told her at least it was not snow and she agrees that the rain is a better alternative to ice.

OC: I notice the Secretary is much friendlier towards me since the first time that I entered on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Once people realize that you are not there to do evil things, they are less

suspicious of intentions.

As I walk near the exit door to the library, a young male student rushes to open both doors for me. I told him how mannerly and he beamed. As I walked through the door, I remarked to the ESLMS and the Volunteer what a great gentleman had opened the doors for me.

OC: I have notice that these students have manners. Even though they are economically on the low end of the social ladder, they are behaved and respectful. They want to please. This is unlike many students in affluent areas.

When I entered, the ESLMS apologized for not getting to me about her schedule and missing me on Wednesday. She is currently standing behind the circulation desk attempting to solve a computer problem. She looks like she is in a nervous state of high anxiety. The email system for the school collapsed last week and she lost my email and telephone number. I told her that I learned many years ago that there is always a logical reason for everything surrounding the educational system.

OC: The ESLMS is relieved that I am not upset. She is very conscious of not hurting people's feelings and she is very proud to have been selected by Library Supervisor. However, she has a tendency to be overwhelmed by her job and does misplace things. She is always in a state of high anxiety. The ESLMS reminds me of the *White Rabbit* in *Alice and Wonderland*. Of course, this is no different from me. I just call them *Senior Moments*.

The ESLMS tells me that she has a meeting with the Library Supervisor at 1:00 today. This is the monthly meeting for elementary teachers. She is closing the library at noon today.

OC: If I had known, I would have come earlier.

I move to a table in the library and begin taking off my jacket. The ESLMS returns her focus from my entrance to the computer system. She is attempting to print student library cards but the computer is not reading the printer. The ESLMS needs the cards to print in order to make new student library cards.

Evidently, she has been attempting to resolve the computer problem for several minutes before I arrive. The Volunteer is sitting in the chair and the ESLMS is reading over her shoulder. The Volunteer remarks that the two pieces of equipment do not seem to recognize themselves. She told the ESLMS, that this had happened earlier when she tried to print. Finally, the printer and the computer synchronize and the cards begin to print. The ESLMS removes her copies from the printer.

A bell rings at 10:10 a.m. for the upper two grades to change classes.

The ESLMS is attempting to complete student library card updates for the second

semester. The Volunteer is supposed to be manning the circulation desk and monitoring student transactions.

Two girls enter the library for the first time this morning. The ESLMS asks her if she is going to get another book for the Accelerated Reader. I saw the student smile.

The ESLMS needs to add new students and remove those students that have left for another school. Several students come into the library looking for books. The ESLMS must constantly stop her task to answer questions from Volunteer about the computer, because the system is blocking students with too many books checked-out. Volunteer needs to override the system in order to see what the child has checked-out from the library and the ESLMS must enter the password for her each time the block message appears on the screen.

OC: This similar to the first time that I watched these two together. The ESLMS does not give Volunteer the code so she has to stop every few seconds.

At the same time, the ESLMS is attempting to work on cards at the table in front of the circulation desk. Students keep arriving as others leave. The ESLMS must stop her task every few moments to help Volunteer with the computer. These interruptions are persistent and seem to create more mental chaos for the ESLMS. The ESLMS must tell the students to line up instead crowding the circulation desk. The ESLMS tells the students that they know better than to crowd the desk. The children do as she says immediately.

OC: Elementary has a huge amount of transient students. They are lucky if a student remains more than a semester within the school. Thus, the ESLMS is constantly updating her circulation database, Accelerated Reader database, and STAR Reading Program Assessment Base. This creates extra work for the ESLMS, because of the instability of the student population. Very few students remain their elementary education careers in one school in the parish system.

In a moment, the ESLMS turns her attention to the TV-VCR equipment in the middle of the seating area. She asks one of the students to move the equipment into the back storage area. The boy calls to the ESLMS and asks if he is putting the equipment in the right place. The ESLMS is already distracted and looking for something in her office. He moves the equipment into the storage area with a shrug

The female student and the other girl leave the library without checking out books.

The ESLMS then returns from her office search and looks at the task that she attempted to start in the beginning. She has misplaced some cards. However, Volunteer has them at the circulation desk. The ESLMS left them when she was trying to fix the computer block earlier.

The ESLMS realizes that she needs to leave to make copies of the new cards and

laminates them in the other building. She places most of her work on the small, round table in front of the circulation desk. The ESLMS leaves hurriedly.

OC: The White Rabbit moves quickly from the library.

She is in a hurry because she has an elementary school librarian meeting at 1:00 p.m. with Library Supervisor concerning the March Louisiana Educational Assessment Progress Tests (LEAP).

OC: The LEAP Tests contain a great deal of library skill assessment.

After the ESLMS leaves for the copy room, more students enter the library. Several students ask for the Harry Potter Series Books. Volunteer tells them that the ESLMS has removed them from the shelves because of their popularity and placed them on reserve. In other words, the students must ask the ESLMS for the Harry Potter books. One of the students protests the missing books, and Volunteer gets into a brief power struggle with the student.

OC: The problem with Volunteer is that she really has no skill with students. She constantly gets into power struggles with the kids over minor incidents. Actually, she creates more problems for the ESLMS.

In a few moments, the ESLMS rushes through the rear door with the newly laminated cards and places them on the small, round table. Since there are no students when the ESLMS returns, the Volunteer asks, 'What is the story about the Harry Potter series?' The ESLMS explains that the students that can actually read the Harry Potter books have already read them and most of the students in the school cannot read them. She intends to collect all of the books and place them on reserve. The ESLMS states again that students should not be carrying around books for cosmetic value that they cannot read. She also says that, 'It will not teach them anything, since they cannot read any of the words'.

OC: Harry Potter is written for fifth grade students. If a student is an advanced reader, the book could be read and understood by a younger student. The ESLMS thinks that the book is really too advanced for the average reading level in the school and that the students just want to be seen with the book. However, her tone of voice and body language says that she simply does not like Harry Potter. I will ask about Harry Potter on another day.

The ESLMS returns to the table to begin separating the cards. Just as she starts to cut the cards from the laminated strip, another student has a circulation problem.

One young boy is at the desk attempting to check-out a book. However, the system says that he does not exist. The ESLMS must stop her task again to check the reason for the computer warning. When asked, the boy says that he is moving on Monday.

The ESLMS tells him that because he is moving she has removed him from the system

and he no longer has a card. However, she lets him take the book to his classroom to read with the promise that he will return the book to his teacher.

He asks if he can return the book to her in the afternoon, but she explains that the library will be closed after she leaves for her meeting. He then promises to return the book to his classroom teacher. The ESLMS reminds him to ask his brother to return any books that the brother might have in his room, too. He promises and leaves with a smile on his face.

OC: I have noticed that the ESLMS never tells a child no to a book. She wants to keep her books for others to read, but she does not want to hurt a child that is already upset about moving to another school.

Several more students enter the library. One girl stops by my table and places a book about snakes on the table. She knows to read several pages to see if she can manage the book. I asked her if she liked snakes and she smiled and told me no. She quickly replaces the book on the shelf.

OC: The girl is from the same class that is studying various animals and landforms. She remembered that the ESLMS had shown her the book, but when she saw the pictures, she wanted nothing else to do with the book on snakes.

It is quite for only a moment and then two new students to the school appear in the library. Although they are different ages, they are wearing identical red and blue jackets.

The ESLMS stops her task of cutting laminated cards and asks when they entered the school. The older boy tells her that they came yesterday. The ESLMS stops to welcome them to the Elementary School.

She asks if he has taken the reading achievement test and he told her that he took the test yesterday. The boy then begins to look for a book. The ESLMS goes to the computer and accesses his file. The ESLMS then tells both of the boys that they are excellent readers. Both of the boys beam with pride.

The younger boy has already discovered a book. He is told that all students are allowed one bookmark. The new boy does not have a card, so the ESLMS writes herself a note to add the student to the database. She lets him have the book.

The older boy has still not located a book to read. She asks him if he would like her to help him find a book. He is delighted.

He also asks her to shown him how to access the Accelerated Reading program to see how many points he would get for reading a book. The ESLMS takes him to the computer and shows him how to access information without actually taking a test. You have a record of your own. She shows him how to operate the system.

The ESLMS asks, “What is your teacher’s name?” She chooses new students only

because he is not taking a test. The ESLMS explains to the student how the point system works for the Accelerated Reader. He seems very pleased.

The older brother brings a book to the desk to check out. He is really excited about checking out the book. The ESLMS tells him that the book is too easy. You can read something better because you are an excellent reader. The ESLMS instructs him to sit down with three. The ESLMS walks to the shelf and asks him if he likes baseball.

He is not crazy about baseball. She shows him a skating book. He asks if he will get a library card today. The ESLMS tells him that he will get a card today. She will put them in his teacher's mailbox. He will need to ask the teacher for the card.

She tells him that he wants to get a book can take a test on. The skating book does have a test that he can take. She tells him to sit in the rocking chair and read. Then he can decide if he likes the book. He is delighted to sit in the rocking chair.

He is decides on the skating book. The ESLMS tells him that he has chosen an excellent book.

Then a student comes into the library and tells him that he must go to physical education. Does he have to go to physical education? The student and the ESLMS say that he must go to physical education. The ESLMS puts the book back for him. He can get it tomorrow morning because she will be gone after lunch.

OC: He would rather have stayed in the library. The boy did not really want to return to class. He was stalling.

The ESLMS attempts to return to cutting the laminated cards. It is quiet for only a moment and another student comes into the library. The ESLMS stops to talk to the girl.

The ESLMS asks the girl, "How she did you do with the test for the book?" The girl tells her that she did not do well on the test. The ESLMS questions the girl about why she failed the test. She tells the student that must have not understood what they meant by the questions. The ESLMS tells her that on a book at the same level, the student passed. Maybe the book was too boring for the student.

OC: The ESLMS can't understand how she passed a book with a similar level and failed this test.

She suggests that the girl try another book with fewer chapters this time. "You must take the tests carefully."

OC: The ESLMS wants the girl to have success in reading.

Another student enters the library. He wants to check his records on the Accelerated Reader program.

The ESLMS must stop cutting the cards again.

The ESLMS takes the boy to the computer. She shows him that the test is attached to his name. He has the book, Ghost in 1019. Did you take the test? Yes, he took the test and the record shows that he did great. The ESLMS is very pleased.

She directs her attention to the cards again.

The ESLMS starts to look for the cards that she just made. The cards are not to be found on the table. The ESLMS and the Volunteer start to look for the cards. The ESLMS remembers that she had a practical joker in the library earlier. The boy may have moved the cards because he just thinks it is fun. She leaves to chase down the boy. Maybe he took the cards as a joke?

OC: There is so much movement in the library. It is difficult for the ESLMS to focus on one task at a time. She is always in a hurry.

The ESLMS returns but she still has not located the cards.

The ESLMS asks me for my address, telephone number and email before she can loose it again. The Volunteer puts it in the ESLMS' purse.

The ESLMS is in frenzy over the missing cards. She is searching and retracing her steps. She decides to quickly run to the copy room again to check.

There is peace. There are no students for at least five minutes.

Then on the dust of the ESLMS' heels students follow her into the library. She has not found the missing cards.

One of the students quickly locates a book and goes to the desk to check it out. However, he has no card. The ESLMS tells him that he can check out a book this time without the card, but this is the last time. He knows to get the card from his teacher each time. I do not play games with students.

CT1 and CT2 bring students to check out books. When they come into the library the ESLMS offers to find them some books. She pulls books from the shelves for them to browse.

OC: This is a great idea because these young students will never find anything. Shelves full of books can be overwhelming.

The first grade students are searching for books with the help of their classroom teacher and the Title I Reading teacher.

Volunteer is looking for the cards that the ESLMS has misplaced again. She searches the ESLMS' office and her purse. She even looks in the ESLMS' cabinets in the office. Volunteer returns to the main circulation desk and looks under a pile of papers for the missing cards. She laughs because the cards are nowhere in the library.

Two more students come in and need to get books. The ESLMS stops looking for the cards. The Volunteer sits down at the circulation desk. The ESLMS is helping the students locate books.

OC: The ESLMS has changed directions so many times in the brief time that I have been in the library. This change of direction almost always results in something becoming muddled.

Some of the first grade students are ready to check out their books. However the computer signals that a little girl has too many books checked out from the library. The girl says that she has three books in the room that she can return. Volunteer makes a student promise that she will go directly to her classroom and get the three overdue books. The teacher tells her to go directly to the room and get the books. She leaves to get the books.

CT1 makes them force a straight line so that they can leave. They line at the door. The one student that left to retrieve her three books returns. She scans her books into the system and then gets to check out the new book. The first grade class leaves the library.

Two ST1 and ST2 enter the center. They are looking for books on quilting. They are looking for books to read to students for their thematic unit on Tall Tales. The ESLMS is now showing them how to use the computer in the library.

A student argues about overdue books. The ESLMS turns to the circulation desk and asks the boy to show us what you returned. The little boy points to a book that has been returned. The ESLMS tells him that he cannot check out any more books until he checks in his desk.

The ESLMS then turns to the student teachers and tells them another way to search for books on quilts. She points to a fiction book called The Patchwork Quilt in the OPAC.

The boy returns but does not have any books. The ESLMS stops talking with the student teachers and tells him that he cannot check out any more books until he returns some of the ones that he must have at home.

The ESLMS then takes the student teachers to the shelf and points them to the site of The Patchwork Quilt. She tells them that it is a perfect level. She then takes them into storage room and shows them her thematic unit books.

The ESLMS turns her attention to another student that wants to check out a book. She tells the girl that the book she wants to check out does not have a yellow dot. You would



not be able to take a test.

OC: There is a great deal of emphasis placed on using the Accelerated Reader program. This is one way to maintain control of student reading.

The ESLMS now returns to showing the student teachers where the thematic units are stored.

She talks about the cross-curricular materials and props that are in the room. She must unlock the storage area for the two young ladies.

The ESLMS begins to encourage the two student teachers to go into school librarianship. She tells them that there is a critical need. She tells them that if they are interested in pursuing a Masters in Library and Information Science, she would be willing to talk to Library Supervisor about them.

They tell her that they will graduate this semester. One of the girls tells her that she will check with her again because she wants to get her Masters soon.

They ask about the book called Tar Beach that was suggested by their supervising teacher. She told them it is based on a quilt. The ESLMS tells them that it should be on the shelf.

The ESLMS calls the main office now. She wants them to page the intermediate grade classes. She needs the teachers to send her the library cards they have in their rooms.

OC: The ESLMS makes new cards constantly because the reading levels change.

The ESLMS must put the LEAP scores on new cards five times per year. She asks the student teachers if they would put the levels on their supervising teacher's class for her. They tell her that they would be happy to help.

David returns and is excited to get his book. He wants to get the book before the library closes. The library is closing in an hour because of her meeting. Volunteer shows him how to scan the new book.

OC: David is white, so Volunteer is more than helpful.

The ESLMS tells the Volunteer to check out the materials to the supervising teacher for the student teachers.

The ESLMS leaves in search of the cards again.

ST1 asks for A Snowy Day. The computer says the book is in, but they cannot locate the book on the shelf. Volunteer tells them that the book is on the ESLMS' desk and they need to check with her about the status.

The Volunteer has the student teachers to scan the books, too. It is tricky to learn the operation of the handheld scanner. The circulation system tells her that the supervising teacher has too many books. The Volunteer overrides the computer program but it still did the stupid thing of blocking checkouts. The Volunteer tries something else and it works.

OC: Computers are wonderful when they work.

The ESLMS returns and is still very upset. She still has no luck in finding the cards. The kindergarten is coming in fifteen minutes.

I tell the ESLMS about the trouble that some people are having with the STAR program. She tells me that it has many glitches.

A student returns to the library once again.

OC: The student has enjoyed the attention that she reaped by winning the Principal's Luncheon Award this month.

The ESLMS helps another upper grade student to check out a book. The child wants to know where her card is located. She tells the student that she just made the card and it is in the teacher's mailbox. If does not get the card today, the child is to ask the teacher for the card on Monday.

She needs to know what a second grade teacher is going to teach in class next week. She runs to talk with the teacher.

OC: She will not get to talk with her this afternoon because she is leaving for the meeting.

The ESLMS returns and asks the student if she is going to check out a book. The ESLMS sends one boy back to class because of the noise that he is making in the library. She then asks the boy if he knows where her cards are located. He tells her that he has not seen the cards.

The student is fooling around. The student finally decides to take the Stinky Smelly Book that the ESLMS found for her earlier.

Students just keep coming to check out books. One little girl shows the ESLMS her reading notebook. The ESLMS hugs the little girl and gives her a sticker because she is so very proud of her achievement. The girl gives the ESLMS the drawings that she has been doing. The ESLMS thanks her for the gift.

The CT (KG) enters with her kindergarten class for their reading time.

The students are told to sit quietly in the reading section. The ESLMS hustles to the reading corner and begins her lesson.

OC: The ESLMS basis her lesson on the area that the kindergarten is studying.

The ESLMS says, I know that you are studying the letter *V* in class. Can you think of something that starts with *V* for me.

One of the students says her name incorrectly. She tells him that her name is the ESLMS and the letter is an *E*, not a *V*.

Another student says violet has the letter *V*. The ESLMS gives the student a sticker. A boy tells her that *violin* has the letter *V*. She gives him a sticker, too.

What are some other words that begin with *V*? A boy sitting on the rear row raises his hand and tells her that voucher begins with the letter *V*.

OC: Evidently he listens to the news. All the adults are attempting not to laugh.

ESLMS tells him that is an excellent answer and gives him a sticker and a hug.

Another child answers *vacuum* cleaner. The ESLMS gives him a sticker, too.

Now, the ESLMS introduces the book called Going to Sleep on the Farm. She tells the students to remember to look at the pictures to get clues for reading.

OC: Again, the ESLMS is supporting the curriculum with reinforcements of classroom lessons.

At the end of the story the ESLMS asks questions about how each of the animals sleeps on the farm. She has students point to the pictures and to tell her what is happening. Whenever she solicits a correct answer she rewards the student with a sticker.

OC: The ESLMS will repeat the same lesson with each of the kindergarten classes that are scheduled. She does this because they are all studying the same things in the classroom.

The second book is the Very Quite Cricket by Eric Karl. She tells them to watch for the pictures as clues again.

As she reads the cricket tries constantly to chirp, but the cricket is just a baby. By the end of the story the cricket chirps. Of course, the book makes a chirping sound. The ESLMS tells them that someday she will tell them how the book makes the noise. For now, they will just have to use their imaginations. She tells them that there is a lot of magic in books. They should read as much as possible so that they can find the magic.

The ESLMS then reads the book 6 Empty Pockets by Faye Van Vert. The boy has a habit of collecting things like frogs, string, rocks, and insects. His mother becomes upset when he puts a frog in his dresser. His grandmother suggests that he have six buckets that he can fill each day with items because his pockets could never hold enough treasures. In the end the boy snuggles up next to his father and dreams of what he will put in his buckets the next day. The idea was so that Mom did not have to have frogs in the dresser.

It is now time to leave. The children line up. First all of the girls with sticker are to get into line. Then all the boys with stickers get into line. Last, anyone without a sticker is to get into line.

OC: The ESLMS gives them a sticker as they move towards the line. She will not let them leave empty handed.

After the students leave, ESLMS hurries around attempting to get her materials together. She is leaving in order to pick up some materials before heading for the meeting. We all decide to leave together. What a morning! I feel like I have been in a whirlpool.

#### Effective School Library Media Specialists

Field Notes for January 22, 2001

Elementary

10:35-2:45

L. Underwood

Key: ESLMS, School Library Media Specialist  
Classroom Teacher (CT 1<sup>st</sup>) First Grade Teacher  
Classroom Teacher (CTK1), Kindergarten Teacher  
Classroom Teacher (CTK2), Kindergarten Teacher  
Classroom Teacher (CT3, Pre-K1)  
Classroom Teacher (CT4 Pre-K1)  
Classroom Teacher (CT 5<sup>th</sup>) Fifth Grade Teacher  
Classroom Teacher (CTA) Alternative Teacher  
Guidance Counselor  
High School Library Media Specialist (HSLMS)  
High School Principal  
Library Supervisor  
Student Teacher 1 (ST1)  
Student Teacher 2 (ST2)  
Volunteer Couple  
Children, various grades  
OC: Observer's Comment

I had an appointment with the Library Supervisor at 9:00 a.m. this morning. I want to contact her concerning the project. Further, I need to talk with her about getting a site visit to the High School. She suggests that I just drive over to the school and meet with the High School Principal. They get so busy that they don't follow up on every thing. She

is insistent that the High School is the best choice for me to observe a great high school library media program.

I leave her office and drive to the High School. After talking with the High School Principal and the HSLMS, I leave and drive to Elementary School to observe the ESLMS at the Elementary.

I finally arrive at the Elementary around 10:35. Students are on break. Some students are in the cafeteria eating potato chips and drinking a beverage. Their teachers are with them.

OC: Teachers here are constantly on duty. The only relief is when the students go to physical education.

Some teachers are supervising students in the hallway and making certain that the students go to the restroom during the break.

I notice that a man is putting up a box of potato chips. I ask him if he sells the chips every day. He says that he comes on Monday. Many of the students buy enough for the week.

I am wearing my Marshall University sweatshirt. A tall, lanky female teacher is standing in the hallway near the door to the teachers' workroom she asks if the Marshall means Marshall University in West Virginia. I smile broadly and say, "Yes!"

OC: Gee, someone actually knows about Marshall and West Virginia. It has never ceased to amaze me that people in Louisiana think that I am from Virginia, near Richmond, or Marshall, Texas. Do they teach the fifty states?

She introduces herself as (CT5<sup>th</sup>). She tells me that her husband is retiring from Dow Chemical and they are moving back to West Virginia. Her mother left the house to them and she is anxious to get home. She is retiring at the end of the year.

Continuing her excited babbling, she tells me that she is going to store what furniture that she does not sell.

She asks, "What are you doing in Baton Rouge, Louisiana?"

I tell her that I followed my husband to Louisiana four years ago. I am trying to complete my dissertation research. I explain that I am observing effective school library media specialists for my dissertation. The Elementary was suggested as a great site. She tells me that Elementary is a great school, but she is glad to be going home. She misses her family.

"Are you getting your degree from LSU?"

I explain that I started my program in the Co-Op Doctoral Program that is administered by Marshall University and West Virginia University. My degree will be granted by West

Virginia University.

She says that she is trying to get permission to substitute in WV Public Schools. However, there is a grade requirement that must be met. Her grades were less than stellar in undergraduate school. She tells me that certification told her that the grades today are inflated compared to the grades in the late 60s.

OC: This is an example of a leading political family. She will have no problem getting a substitute position.

Eventually, I free myself from her conversation and make my way to the school library media center.

OC: I wonder if this is a West Virginia environmental thing. I, too, have been accused of talking to anyone that will listen. I just thought that I had been by myself working on this paper too long. This could be another study: An Ethnographic Study of West Virginians in Exile.

I enter the school library media center. There are several children in the library looking for books. The student is here this morning. She was one of the reader award winners for the month of January.

OC: The student loves to come to the library. She likes to be near the ESLMS.

The ESLMS tells the student to help the other student find a great book. The student beams because she is getting to do something important.

OC: The ESLMS helps to build student self-esteem. Many of these students lack that type of help at home.

The ESLMS has the telephone on speaker. You can hear the music playing. The ESLMS greets me warmly. I explain that I was detained because I had an appointment with the Library Supervisor. I then tell her that I met (CT5<sup>th</sup>) this morning. The ESLMS tells me that she dearly loves the woman, but she never shuts up and will talk until you drop.

OC: In a tactful manner, the ESLMS has told me that (CT5<sup>th</sup>) is not one of her favorite people.

The ESLMS explains that she having trouble with the cataloging component in the Follett Circulation Plus software. She has been on hold with them all morning. She is upset because it is almost noon and the problem has never been resolved.

The student and the other students scan their books and leave the library.

OC: Follett is the circulation system and book jobber used by the majority of schools in the United States. Circulation Plus is not the greatest program on the market, but the

schools bit into the program when the first OPACs for public schools were developed. Only recently has the system updated to a Windows version. Until three years ago, the database system was in a Dos Format. You can always be certain to wait for hours to get through to the technical service department.

She explains further that the county ordered books using Baker and Taylor's Title Source and the company sent her the cataloging information on a floppy disk. She is supposed to be able to transport the cataloging from the disk to the OPAC. This will keep her from having to take the time to create original cataloging. However, when it imports it says unknown Microlif format.

OC: The parish school system allowed the school librarians to order directly from Baker and Taylor via the Internet. This is an example of autonomy and site based management.

I tell her that the same thing happened to me at a school. They did not send the correct format from Baker and Taylor. Microlif is the old Dos format for cataloging imports. She will need to call Baker and Taylor.

Light bulbs go off in the ESLMS' eyes. "That makes sense! I used Baker and Taylor when we had the Dos program. I bet they still have that in our profile." She goes into her office and looks at some old disks from Baker and Taylor. The music continues to play from the speaker on the telephone.

More students enter the library in search of books. They return them in the circulation desk and proceed to look for more materials.

She brings an old disk from her office and compares. "You are right, Linda. This is not the new format. Oh, well, I have waited this long for them. I will just let them finally answer me. We pay for the technical service, so I will just let them talk to me!" We both laugh.

I comment about the Aver-Key and the computer. The ESLMS has the computer attached to the TV.

OC: She is using the Aver-Key in order to transmit the signal from the computer to the TV.

I ask if she is using it for a lesson today. She tells me that the children love to see the circulation system operating while they are in the library. She had been trying to catalog books and the children are fascinated. She discovered that the children check out more books just to see the cursor moving on the TV screen. They enjoy seeing her actually process the books for their use.

OC: This is the multimedia generation. I can imagine that they are fascinated.

I proceed to sit at one of the tables in the school library. Two young adult ladies enter the

library. They tell the ESLMS that they are student teaching at the Elementary. They need some tall tales for the unit that they are going to present.

Students approach the desk and scan their books. They leave the library.

The ESLMS immediately rounds the corner of her circulation desk to help the student teachers. The ESLMS begins to show them how to use the OPAC and where to find the books. She questions them about the type of material that they are going to need.

A young boy enters the library and begins to search for a book. The ESLMS stops talking to the student teachers. The ESLMS then turns her attention to a student searching for a book to read that has entered the school library media center. He is getting ready to check out a book.

He asks if he can check out one of the new books. She tells him to wait until she has time to catalog the book. She notices the other book that he has in his hand. She suggests that he look at another book. She does not think that he will like that book.

She shows him something that she thinks that he will enjoy.

OC: What she noticed was the fact that the dot on the book did not correspond with his grade level. He would not have been able to read the book. She was able to see this while talking to the student teachers.

She tells him to sit down and read a few pages in the book before he leaves. She then returns to talking with the student teachers.

The boy goes to the desk and scans the book. The ESLMS stops again from talking with the student teachers, and tells the boy good-bye and come back.

OC: The ESLMS' priorities are with the students she serves. Many school librarians would have continued to talk with the student teachers and ignored the child. This is an important thing for the child. Too often adults ignore them.

The student teachers then begin looking and discussing the books. When they find what they need, the ESLMS checks them out to their supervising teacher in the building.

The ESLMS now turns her attention to another student that has entered the library.

Before they leave, I ask them how many student teachers are at Elementary. They tell me there are 18 student teachers from Louisiana State University in student teaching. Six of the student teachers are at Elementary. They tell me that at the middle of the term they will move to another school. The program director wants them to experience more than one situation during the semester.

OC: This makes sense. Most of these student teachers are going to remain in Louisiana.



The parish provides rural, urban and inner city school experience. This way they get to experience the good, the bad, and the ugly.

As the student teachers open the door, the pre-school arrives for the ESLMS to read to them. They come into the library and go quietly to the reading area. They sit and wait for her to finish with the other student. The teacher stand watches them. It is now 11:35.

OC: There are only three White children, one mixed Black and White child and one mixed Oriental and Black child. It is the United Nations.

Just as the ESLMS settles to read to the student, the technical person begins to speak on the telephone. The teacher agrees to read to the students so that the ESLMS can talk with the technical person. She is reading the Very Quite Cricket.

The CT Pre-K teacher, begins to read the book. The ESLMS begins her conversation with the technical person. She laughs. She says that I am correct. Baker and Taylor sent the wrong disk.

OC: Although she was certain that I was probably correct, I assume that she wanted to test my technical knowledge.

The ESLMS returns to reading the book.

At that moment, an adult enters the library to work with a student individually. The ESLMS stops reading to the students and directs her attention to the woman and the child. She notices that the book that the woman has for the child to read is too difficult.

She stops reading and the teacher starts reading again.

The ESLMS proceeds to pull out lower books for the child to read. She tells the woman to browse through the books and see what she needs. The woman chooses a book and thanks the ESLMS for her help. The ESLMS then returns to the first graders.

The ESLMS tells a student that is misbehaving to find a spot and sit alone because the girl is being naughty. The little girl moves to the table near the door. She is pouting. Another preschool teacher, CT Pre-K 2, enters the room.

OC: There are two preschool teachers in the room with these students. It is the Head Start program.

She questions the little girl about not sitting with the group. The little girl just shrugs and says that she cannot be in the group. Student continues to be disruptive and this teacher calls her down because she is hissing. The girl is still acting out and the teacher tells her to sit down now! The little girl begins to pout.

Just at this time, the door opens and an older student enters with a note for the ESLMS.

She must stop again. She signs the note and the student leaves the library.

The ESLMS returns to read. The teachers ask if they can use the time to run to the restroom. The ESLMS says to go ahead. They run out the door.

OC: These teachers have little time for anything. There is one restroom for teachers to use. The faculty restroom is used by men and women. It is always busy.

The ESLMS introduces the book Going to Sleep on the Farm. She begins to read. How does a cow go to sleep? I go to sleep with a book says the cow.

One boy has turned completely around and is playing with the turtle that is painted upon the wall. The ESLMS tells one boy not to be rude. The wiggly turtle boy turns around and looks at the ESLMS.

The ESLMS says some of you are looking at me and that is good.

OC: Getting these kids to look and pay attention is a problem. They are only four years old and it is after lunch to them.

The ESLMS begins to read again. As she reads, the children become more attentive.

OC: Her voice is calming and the story deals with how different farm animals go to sleep.

The ESLMS tells them to all get on their bottoms. As she continues to read, they become even more quiet. The two teachers return. She asks the students what they remember in the story. Of course, every hand goes into the air at once. She tells them to all put their hands down. She can only talk to one child at a time. They comply.

OC: The pouting little girl is still pouting under the table. What a spoiled brat!

The ESLMS tells them that she only wants to know what is happening on the page that she is showing them. The little girl gives a complete sentence answer. The ESLMS tells her that she is so proud of her whole sentence answer. She sounds like a kindergarten child. She gives the little girl a sticker.

OC: This is another example of the ESLMS giving positive reinforcement and building self-esteem. These are preschool children and speaking in a whole sentence is an accomplishment. It tells how much this little girl has matured.

The ESLMS turns to another page. "Who knows what is going on in this picture?" Don't put all of your hands at one time. Put the hands down. Another little girl gets up and tells the ESLMS what is happening to the duck in the picture. She gets a sticker, too.

The ESLMS asks another boy to point at the picture of the horse. Tell me how the horse goes to sleep? He can point to the horse, but he cannot remember how the horse goes to

sleep. She gives him a sticker for trying.

Another student gets up to tell how the horse goes to sleep. However, the child has a finger in her mouth. She tells her to get the finger out of her mouth and then tell her what is happening. The little girl gives the ESLMS a complete sentence answer and tells The ESLMS that the horse goes to sleep standing up. She gives her a sticker.

OC: The ESLMS is trying to make certain that every child gets a chance to respond. All of this is happening in a very short span of time.

Another boy gets up and tells her that the pigs sleep in the mud. She gives him a sticker too.

The ESLMS calls on them to tell what the hen sleeps on in the barn. She tells them that they all sound like they're kindergarten students because they are speaking in whole sentences. A little boy tells her that the hen sleeps with an egg under her. He gets a sticker.

OC: One boy is sleeping during the entire reading. This is a long day for a four-year-old child.

The ESLMS asks a little boy to point out the pillow in the picture on another page. He gets a sticker.

Who wants to tell what the little boy sleeps on when he comes to the farm? A boy says *bed*. Because he did not give a complete sentence she makes him repeat after her," The little boy goes to sleep on the bed."

OC: The ESLMS is reinforcing what is being taught in the classroom.

The ESLMS tells them, "If you have stickers line up." Then she calls for boys with no stickers. As they file by her, she gives them all a sticker. Now, all girls that have no stickers line up. As they file by her, she gives them a sticker.

OC: The ESLMS is making certain that they do not leave without a reward.

She tells the teachers that the students were great!

OC: The only child not to get a sticker was the pouting, hissing girl. She is still angry. For such a cute kid, she is something. You can tell that her mother took great pride in dressing the little girl for school. She is a doll.

A new student is introduced to the ESLMS. The teacher says that he does not understand English. The ESLMS gives him a hug and a sticker. He is so happy.

It is now 12:00 and the preschool must leave. The ESLMS apologizes to the teachers for

all of the interruptions. The teachers say that there was no problem because they understand that the ESLMS has more than one thing to do in a day.

OC: The teachers did not complain. They knew that the ESLMS was overwhelmed and worked with her as a teammate rather than a slave.

When the students leave, the ESLMS says that she is going to the cafeteria to have lunch. They are having red beans and rice and this is her favorite meal. She suggests that I eat lunch at the school. I tell her that I had a huge breakfast, but I will go with her to lunch. At least, I can get a beverage and relax.

Some students enter the library and the ESLMS tells them that she needs to eat lunch. They understand and leave.

OC: The ESLMS says that she tries to take a lunch break every day that it is possible.

We proceed to the cafeteria. The intermediate grades are eating at this time. I see CT 5<sup>th</sup> eating with her students.

The ESLMS introduces me to the cooks and then to the group sitting at a table in the back. The table includes the counselor, the speech therapist, and the time-out teacher.

OC: Teachers are required to eat with their students. They have little time at this school.

During the lunch break, I talk with the CT Alternative or time-out teacher. She explains that the Elementary has an alternative setting for unruly students. She helps in the office with various administrative tasks, too.

The Counselor enters the cafeteria and begins to talk with the ESLMS about testing software. She wants to purchase a practice program for students to use to prepare for the LEAP testing in March.

The ESLMS tells her that the Elementary School Principal does not want to purchase any testing software. However, she is trying to convince him that there are some good programs. She says that he keeps pointing to the directive from the parish office saying not to use Test Best. She tells the counselor that eventually she will be able to convince him that the other software is okay.

OC: The ESLMS is approached by the counselor to talk with the Elementary School Principal. This is a sign that she is near the top in the sacred circle.

The ESLMS begins talking with the time-out teacher about a student that is having problems. She tells her that he is doing better today. The ESLMS tells her that she hopes that they can help him.

The ESLMS asks about the time-out teachers' family. She tells us that her husband has

just completed his doctorate at LSU. Her son is entering college next year and her daughter is in high school. She just beams.

The ESLMS turns and says that the time-out teacher is great. I don't know what we would do without her at this school. She really helps the students. The lady beams with pride and says thank-you.

OC: the ESLMS has made another friend for life.

Suddenly, the ESLMS remembers that the CTK and her children are coming to the library at 12:30. She says to the Secretary, "She always complains when I am not right there!" The Secretary laughs and says, "I know." Everyone at the table begins to laugh, too. The ESLMS has forgotten that the kindergarten class is coming for her to read.

The ESLMS begins to move in great haste. She needs to get back to the school library media center ahead of the class. She actually runs with her tray to the trash and I hurry to follow her down the hall.

OC: Attempting to keep up with the ESLMS is like trying to race a Cheetah.

As we actually, run down the hallway, the ESLMS tells me that CTK complains about everything. It is just easier to beat her to the door than listen to the complaints and dagger looks. CTK just takes things too seriously.

We make it to the library and no one is there waiting. The ESLMS looks at me as if I was a co conspirator and says, "We made it!"

Within a few moments, the door opens and CT (Kg) enters the school library media center with her kindergarten class. The ESLMS remarks that a little girl is acting so well. The little girl is recognized for being so good when entering the library she is given a sticker that says, "I was caught being good." The ESLMS tells the students to sit without touching. Remember, we have been taught not to touch. We are coming here to read.

OC: The ESLMS does a great deal of behavioral reinforcement with these children.

After the students settle down, the ESLMS tells them that they are acting more like first graders than kindergarten.

OC: She did the same thing with the pre-school students. This is more behavioral reinforcement.

Suddenly, the door opens and the custodian asks the ESLMS about his health insurance.

OC: The ESLMS is the insurance representative from the school to the parish. The parish has just changed insurance plans and there are some major problems.

The ESLMS tells him that everything should be okay, but to check his check stub next time to make certain that the changes were made. He thanks her for helping him again. He tells her that someone called for her while she was at lunch. He answered the telephone in the office. He thought that he recognized the voice as one of the volunteers. He tells her that the person said that they would check back with her later.

OC: All of this is going on while the kindergarten waits for her to begin reading.

He then asks about the computers in the hallway. She tells him that they are to be sent to the warehouse.

He thanks her again and leaves the room.

OC: The computers are some old computers that can no longer be used. The ESLMS told me that she must return them to the central storage site for the parish.

The ESLMS begins her lesson by saying, “I know that you are working with the letter *V* in your room. Can someone give me a word that begins with *V*?”

One of the boys gets a sticker for saying *violin*. The ESLMS asks him, “What you do with a violin.” He says that you play it with a stick and the strings. “How do you know about a violin? You play it in a band says the boy.

Do you know any other words that start with a *V*? The ESLMS tells one boy that she cannot call on him because he called out an answer. You must wait until you are called on before blurting out something.

OC: The ESLMS is teaching the student to ask before giving an answer. This is a problem throughout school.

The ESLMS points to another student. The student responds with the word *vacuum*. She tells what the vacuum does.

OC: Is it not irony that the girl is the one that knows what to do with a vacuum?

The ESLMS points to another student, who says *elephant* begins with *V*. The ESLMS tells him that *elephant* begins with *E*. However, *V* and *E* do sound alike.

OC: She makes the student feel better.

Not every one can talk at once! Put your hands down. A little girl tells the ESLMS that some names start with *V*. The ESLMS asks her to give an example and she tells the ESLMS that her name is Veronica. She gets a sticker.

The ESLMS tells them to all sit down because she is going to read Alexander’s Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. What is the name of the main character? One of the students says Alexander just like me! The ESLMS laughs and so do all of the other

students.

The ESLMS tells the students that the book is written by Judith Viorst. Her last name starts with *V*. What word in the title has a *V*? A student tells her *very*. The ESLMS gives her a sticker.

The ESLMS turns to CT (Kg) and says, “Did you not go to school with Paulette Bourgeois the author of the Franklin series?” Yes, we were sorority sisters at Louisiana State University.

“Well, remind me and I will contact her about coming to speak to our students.” CT (Kg) tells her, “I know Cathy Guisewite who writes the Cathy cartoon series, too.” We were all at LSU together.

OC: CTK is trying to impress me. The ESLMS is trying to include CTK in the situation.

Whenever we talk, they think we can talk. Maybe we should not talk either. The ESLMS turns to the children and says that she is being rude by talking to the teacher instead of to them. “We need to all get our acts together and get busy.”

One of the girls complains of a headache. The ESLMS tells her to go over to the crawfish pillow and lie down. The girl lies down and squirms while sucking her thumb.

OC: Actually several students are sucking thumbs.

The ESLMS tells a little boy not to kick her chair. One boy is looking around the door facing into her office. More of the students are listening to the ESLMS than squirming. Many other students are coming into check out books while the ESLMS is reading. Nora, a little girl, must wait until 1:00 when the class leaves before she can help her to find a book.

OC: The ESLMS told me that the girl was not allowed to participate in Mardi Gras because of her religion.

The ESLMS tells the students that are coming into the library to make certain that the book they get has a yellow dot and four on the book. If they are finished reading a book, they can take a test on the computer.

CT (Kg) questions why these students keep coming while she has students in the class. The ESLMS tells her that the teachers are allowed to send students at any time to check out books.

OC: CT(Kg) does not like to share her time.

The little girl on the crawfish pillow is now tying her shoe.

An announcement is saying there will be outside recess today.

The student is back again. She was here this morning. Another boy is checking out a book and they are talking, while the ESLMS tries to read. CT (Kg), who is sitting at desk tells them to be quite.

At 1:00, CT (Kg) lines up her students to return to the class. The ESLMS makes certain that every student has a sticker.

OC: The ESLMS lets no child leave without something unless they behave like an ogre.

Around 1:05 p.m., CTK2 arrives with her kindergarten class.

The ESLMS repeats the same lesson she performed earlier. She is going to start with Alexander's Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. She will repeat the *V* lesson, too. She gives stickers when they get the correct answer.

OC: The ESLMS continues to reinforce proper behavior. One of the main goals at this level is for children to learn to act properly in the library.

The ESLMS tells one boy that he is doing the right thing so he gets a sticker that says: *I was caught doing something right*.

OC: There are more white children in this class. At least six white children are present.

She gets to read a Very Quite Cricket, too. Notice that this book is about a tiny baby that cannot make a sound, but he keeps trying on every page. If you try hard every day in school, good things happen. She asks the students not to interrupt her.

OC: She had too many interruptions in the first period to get to the second book.

I am very disappointed in this class. Do not interrupt me. I am sorry that we did not get to meet last week, but don't ruin this time.

OC: Even though the ESLMS is disciplining, there is only firmness. She does not scream or become confrontational

As the students line up to leave, the ESLMS gives every student that did not get a chance to name a *V* word to get a sticker.

It is now 1:30 and the grades are having their afternoon break.

After they leave, a girl enters the library. She tells the ESLMS that the Elementary School Principal sent her to the library because she cannot go to free time. She was bad and cannot have free time. The ESLMS tells her to read the article in the encyclopedia twice and then write the report on snails. She is not to write directly, but to put everything in her own words.



The ESLMS says to me in a low voice, “The Elementary School Principal sent her to the library because she was evil.”

OC: Even though the episode was to deprive the girl from free time, there was not a confrontation situation with the ESLMS. The ESLMS was helpful and kind to the girl. The girl seemed to be interested in the material that she was writing.

Two other students arrive to help the ESLMS. They are going to shelve books.

Two volunteers enter the building. They are an elderly couple that I have not seen before. They go to the desk and begin arranging books to reshelv.

OC: The reason that the students are in the library is it is the free period. The girl lost this time for some evil behavior. Some of the older students use the time to help the ESLMS in the library. The ESLMS is very involved in Volunteers in Public Schools (VIP), which is an organization that provides volunteers for schools.

She gives one of the student volunteers a note and tells them to go to CT 3<sup>rd</sup> and get her library cards. Let CT 2<sup>nd</sup> read the note, too. The ESLMS needs her cards, too.

It is now 2:00 in the afternoon. A group of fourth graders appears in the library. The ESLMS has them sit at the joint table that she has prepared.

OC: The ESLMS has the fourth grade teachers send small groups to the library to work on library and information skills for the LEAP tests. She told me that the small groups work better for her than an entire class. She can still service other students and help the fourth grade, too.

CT 1<sup>st</sup>, new teacher, is looking for worksheets on themes. The ESLMS takes her into the back room and points out the thematic unit books for the various grades. CT 1<sup>st</sup> begins to look at the material.

OC: CT 1<sup>st</sup> transferred to the Elementary the second semester. She is replacing the regular teacher in the first grade, who is taking a leave of absence this semester.

The ESLMS tells them that she will explain the lesson briefly, but they will work on their own in the group. The ESLMS tells Jessica to be teacher for this group session so that they can continue to move through the lesson after her instructions. Another girl is to take responsibility for collecting the papers at the end of the lesson. The ESLMS is giving prizes to the fourth grade that does the best on the test. The prizes glow in the dark.

The ESLMS explains that the lesson is on the difference between autobiography and biography. She reminds the students that they talked about the difference in another session.

A boy enters the library with a note for ESLMS. The girl doing the report on snails must return to class now. The girl does not really want to go to class, but ESLMS tells her that she can return to complete the assignment. The girl leaves with the boy with the note.

The ESLMS returns her attention to the group of 4<sup>th</sup> graders again. She explains the difference between 921 and 920 as call numbers. Remember 921 is a single biography and 920 is a collective biography.

Some are not paying attention.

Remember that collective is a collection of things and one person is an individual.

What does thesaurus mean? We just ordered them for your classroom. A girl tells her that the thesaurus contains words about the same thing. The ESLMS says, "That's right. It gives synonyms"

You are to skip numbers 1 2, 3 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. You start with the questions on the biographies. You find those numbers on the thesaurus page. Do them second.

Now, look at the top of the page. What is the opposite of even?

The ESLMS explains that you can tell in the thesaurus whether a word is an opposite, too. You can see that they put the opposite word in italics. One girl is not listening, so she draws her back by asking her to find the synonym of etiquette on the thesaurus page.

Suddenly, the ESLMS says, "The second graders are not to be looking for books together. Boys you are to split up if you want to remain in the library." They comply.

She returns to working with the fourth graders and tells them to cross the opposite out and put the words in alphabetical order. If you do not know the answer, don't worry. You are to work in a team. Talk in soft voice. This is a cooperative group. If no one knows the correct answer, ask her.

The ESLMS tells them that if they are perfectly quite, they probably not working in a cooperative group.

A young boy needs a library card. The ESLMS stops and creates another card for this student.

Two more students need cards. The ESLMS now moves students from the wrong area because they should not be searching for books in that spot. She tells one student to tell her teacher to look for the library card.

The fourth grade students are still working. Some are working together but some are just working to themselves.

Other students from various levels come and go constantly.

The fourth grade students are continuing to work cooperatively. One girl moves to help students on the other side of the table. Two boys are giggling and acting silly. They are looking to see if anyone is watching.

When the elderly volunteer leans over to put books on the shelf, they point and make fart sounds. Then they laugh.

The teacher keeps her deal and moves around the table helping and telling them to work. The two boys work together. Now the girl moves to the boys. They are laughing at the sound the eraser makes on the paper.

OC: I forgot how immature boys are at this age. The girls probably acted as silly a year ago. Boys are at least six months less mature than girls.

By this time, the ESLMS senses that they have completed the assignment. She moves to help the students grade the papers orally. She moves through the answers and solicits responses.

OC: This is a great idea because at least she will know who is missing what type of answers and give them automatic feedback.

It is now nearly 2:30 and the ESLMS sends them back to class. The designated girl collects the papers for the ESLMS and returns them to the table neatly.

The ESLMS tells me that she will be working with these small groups through the LEAP testing in March.

The adult volunteers continue to replace books on the shelf.

It is now nearly 2:45 as I gather my materials for the day.

OC: The ESLMS is involved in the entire curriculum.

Effective School Library Media Specialists  
Field Notes for January 26, 2001  
Elementary  
11:30-1:00  
L. Underwood

Key: ESLMS, School Library Media Specialist  
Classroom Teacher (CT)  
OC: Observer's Comments

After leaving the High School, I stop at the Elementary because of the special day activities. Today is the 100 Days of School Math Celebration. The parking lot is full of additional cars when I arrive. I can see students in the rear activity area of the school. I can see the physical education teacher working with students.

OC: In most elementary schools, teachers do activities that center around the number 100. There are math, physical education, science, social studies and reading activities centering on the theme.

I do not intend to remain for a long period today. I just want to see how the ESLMS involves herself in a massive school endeavor.

OC: The halls are full of excitement. The 100 school day count is a celebration I remember from other elementary schools in my past.

I enter the library and the ESLMS is reading to students. She acknowledges me but continues to read. She is reading Empty Pockets by Fay Van Vert. She is reading to a kindergarten class. The CT (Kg) is not in the room.

OC: The ESLMS is not having regular library hours today. Students are moving from station to station within the building completing cross-curricular activities. I imagine that CT (Kg) has a center, too.

The book concerns a boy that collects things in his pockets. He collects worms, apples, stones, feathers and nails. It is one of those progressive books that allow children to guess what and how much is in the pocket.

The children have necklaces that are made of fruit loops.

OC: I assume that there are 100 fruit loops on the necklaces.

The children are having difficulty leaving the necklaces alone. The ESLMS must caution them on several occasions. The ESLMS asks the students what the boy could have put in his pocket. One boy says that there could be a leaf. The ESLMS gives him a sticker.

A little girl suggests a flower. The ESLMS gives her a sticker, too.

Another little girl suggests a frog. The ESLMS tells her that is a wonderful answer and gives her a sticker.

One boy suggests that the pocket could have a book. The ESLMS thanks him and rewards him with a sticker, too.

She continues fielding answers to what could be in the pocket and rewarding with stickers.

OC: The children love to imagine what could be in the pockets.

Eventually, the CT (Kg) returns and summons her children to line up. The ESLMS makes certain that all the children have been rewarded with stickers.

The CT (Kg) asks one boy where his necklace is located. He ate it! Everyone just shakes their heads and laughs.

The ESLMS tells me that she is not really having regular library hours today. She is on her way to get batteries for the digital cameras so that she can take pictures of the activities in the building.

I suggest that I could use the time to copy the school improvement plan. She has only one copy in the office so I use the remainder of my time to type the document.

The ESLMS leaves me in the library and goes in search of batteries for her camera.

I notice there are construction paper signs in the library concerning the weight of 100 pounds on other planets. The question asks how much would a 100-pound person weigh on another planet? Under the question are some answers.

OC: This must have been part of the early morning activities for the 100 Days Math Celebration.

I begin to type the document into my word processor. When I complete the task, I will leave for today. The library is very quiet.

Effective School Library Media Specialists

Field Notes for January 31, 2001

Elementary

7:30-11:00

L. Underwood

Key: Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS)

Elementary School Principal,

Classroom Teacher Kindergarten Teacher 1 (CTK1)

Classroom Teacher Kindergarten Teacher 2 (CTK2)

Classroom Teacher 4<sup>th</sup> Grade (CT 4<sup>th</sup>)

Classroom Teacher 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (CT 5<sup>th</sup> 1)

Classroom Teacher 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (CT 5<sup>th</sup> 2)

OC: Observer's Comments

I arrived at the school at 7:30 and proceed to sign into the school. I notice that teachers are required to sign into the building, too. There is a book for teachers. The other book includes parts for volunteers, visitors, and specialists from the county.

OC: I have not needed to sign into a building since I taught at Logan High School in 1972-1974. The Elementary keeps a tight track on the teachers.

Today is the ESLMS' breakfast duty. However, they are having grade level meetings in the office. The ESLMS waves from the open door of the Elementary School Principal's office. They meet at the round table near the door. I notice that someone other than the ESLMS is doing the breakfast duty this morning.

The ESLMS steps out and tells me that she will be in the library after the meeting. She has some things that she wants to try to tie into the 8g grant that is being written. She scurries back into the office with the remainder of the group.

The Elementary School Principal continues to make announcements concerning the grade level meeting.

OC: Evidently some of the teachers have not made it to the office for the meeting.

I see CT 5<sup>th</sup> 1, who is one of the fifth grade teachers. She is concerned that she will have to go to the meeting. Suddenly, CT 5<sup>th</sup> 2 enters the hallway from the intermediate wing of the building. CT 5<sup>th</sup> 1 sighs with relief.

OC: CT 5<sup>th</sup> 1 is retiring at the end of the year. She is tired.

We continue to talk and I walk with her to the intermediate side of the building. I tell her that I have not actually been over on that side of the building.

OC: The only person that actually uses the library from this wing is CT 5<sup>th</sup> 2. They use it for book circulation and not research.

The hallways are decorated with student artwork. There are two tables and several chairs in the hallway. This wing houses the fourth and fifth grade students.

CT 4<sup>th</sup> is introduced to me by CT 5<sup>th</sup> 1. CT 5<sup>th</sup> 1 asks her about her tooth. CT 4<sup>th</sup> begins to tell about her emergency room experience over and abscessed tooth. CT 5<sup>th</sup> 1 asks why she even bothered to come to school today. CT 4<sup>th</sup> says that it is too close to the LEAP tests and it is so difficult to get substitutes.

CT 4<sup>th</sup> turns to me and says that she has seen me in the school. What am I doing in the library?

I explain that I am working on my doctorate. My project deals with effective school librarian leaders. The Elementary was suggested as a great place to observe.

CT 4<sup>th</sup> smiles and says that the ESLMS runs a tight ship in the library.

OC: I have an idea that the ESLMS has not made much of an inroad with CT 4<sup>th</sup>. The older the teachers often will not change their ideas about the library. They often do not like the flexible scheduling and would prefer having classes scheduled. Change is difficult.

I listen to their conversations for a few moments and then excuse myself. I really need to return to the other side of the building. The bell rings and students begin to enter the wing. I wonder if the grade level meeting is over.

When I return to the main hallway, I am greeted by CT K1. She is a kindergarten teacher who tells me that she has taught her entire 17 years at the Elementary. She, too, asks me about my study. She wants to know why I am not doing the study in West Virginia. I tell her that they have few school libraries. She believes things are not so bad in Louisiana. The library is important to CT K1.

CT K1 told me that the legislature mandated a 30 minute duty free lunch period. However, at the Elementary they are sitting with their children at lunch. The Elementary School Principal requires them to sit with their students.

OC: This is why the students do not act like animals during the lunch period. I know that teachers deserve benefits but the discipline in an elementary lunch room is awful in WV. They made the librarian at my school do all of the lunch duties.

I walk towards the library and speak to several teachers standing in the hallway. They seem to enjoy each others company.

OC: This is one thing that I have noted at this school. Every person seems to be friendly and on the same page. The children are the priority.

I walk out the rear door, but the ESLMS has not opened the library yet. I decide to walk over into the primary end of the building. The kindergarten wing is the one nearest to the library so I enter the area. CT K2 asks me if I am lost today. I tell her that I am waiting on the ESLMS.

CT K2 is upset that one of her students took her whistle and blew into the object. She tells me that she will probably just throw it away. She thinks the boy spit more than he blew. She hurries into her room holding the whistle in a paper towel looking like she would enjoy throwing up.

While I am walking in the hallway a little girl runs up to me and hugs my legs. She says I knew that you would come today so I drew you a picture. Wait here a minute. She runs

into CT (Kg) room and returns with a folded picture for me. I thank her for the gift and hug her.

OC: What a switch from middle school! They hate you!

I proceed to the library. The ESLMS has arrived. She is late because she has been haggling with the Elementary School Principal over a software program for testing. She is excited because he has agreed to purchase Essential Test Prep for the school. However, she must get written approval from the testing director.

OC: This is the program that Guidance Counselor, talked with her a few days ago at lunch. The ESLMS had told her that she thought that she could get him to order the material.

The ESLMS has a group of new books on the round table near her circulation desk. She tells me that she has just processed these books. They are fairy tales and legends. The ESLMS tells me that the children just love them.

These books are fantastic. She has just entered tests into the Accelerated Reader program. She did not have enough fairy tale books in the program.

Students begin entering the library from CT 5<sup>th</sup> 2s class. The ESLMS tells them about the new books. The boy tells her that he can't read any of those books because CT 5<sup>th</sup> 2 told him to get a chapter book

She tells the boy to go to CT 5<sup>th</sup> 2 and tell him that she is pushing fairy tales. See if he will let you read the book. She cautions the boy to remember that CT 5<sup>th</sup> 2 is the boss. If he says no, then he can't check out the book.

The boy leaves quickly. The other students continue to look at the fairy tale books and browse the shelf.

He returns and tells everyone that they can get the fairy tale books.

The ESLMS tells me that many fairy tales are really too advanced for small children. There are so many hidden meanings and only an older child can truly enjoy the story.

OC: Actually, I think fairy tales are often near the level of horror stories. I have just gotten to the point that I can actually enjoy them. They scared me to death as a child. They are usually so depressing with poison and hatchets. UGH!

She tells them that she has entered them into the system, but there is no yellow dot because they are for older readers.

The boy talks about the book Bunnacula. He just loved the book. The ESLMS agrees that the book is great.



OC: This is about a bunny vampire. It is amusing.

One of the boys decides on John Henry. He tells her that it is his most favorite book.

I ask the ESLMS if she knew that the legend originated in West Virginia. She was surprised. I tell her that the story deals with the creation of the New River Bridge Tunnel for the railroad.

The library is packed with students coming from the fourth and fifth grade. They need books.

The ESLMS sends one of the students with a clipboard. He is to ask CT 5<sup>t</sup> if he can take the message from her to other teachers. She is planning a baby shower for a CT next week after school. She needs to know how many are attending.

OC: The ESLMS is also in charge of planning entertainment for the faculty.

CT 5<sup>th</sup> 1 sends a note to her asking if she can send students during free time that were bad. The ESLMS sends her a note that they can send students on any day but Wednesday because she has outside duty.

OC: The ESLMS has agreed to take students for punishment in the library during free time. This is not a good sign. She can't seem to say no to anything.

The ESLMS explains that this is another concession that she has made with the Elementary School Principal. The teachers have nowhere to send students for free time. The alternative center is for the truly wicked.

The morning continues to be packed with the intermediate children.

The ESLMS picks up Beauty and the Beast. She remarks about the beautiful illustrations. She wonders who will get to read this book first.

She tells me that she has two versions of the Three Little Pigs. There is a third version that is in the making now.

I tell her that the Three Little Pigs was my favorite fairy tale.

OC: I think that I have spent my life fighting the Big, Bad, Wolf. He will huff and puff, but he will never blow my house down.

One of the students is looking for a book and decides on the Island of the Blue Dolphins. The ESLMS tells the child to read the book and then go to see the new movie Castaway.

Some of the students are going to check out books that have no tests in the system. She

tells them, “I won’t keep you as helpers if you have not taken a test.” They decide to look for another book.

According to the ESLMS, the upper grade students are required to read books in the system. In order to help the ESLMS in the library, they must continue to read.

OC: This makes sense. Who wants library helpers that never read?

CT 5<sup>th</sup> 2 sends a note about his library cards. She explains in the return note that he does not have cards because of the laminator.

OC: The laminator is history.

I ask the ESLMS if they will get a new laminator. She tells me that the Elementary School Principal told her that the teachers could use the laminator at the Central Parish Office. He is tired of laminating the world.

She asks a girl if she took a test on a book that she is returning. The girl tells her, no. Why did you not take a test? I did not like the book.

The ESLMS checks the girl’s record in the Accelerated Reader program. She tells her to get another Beverly Cleary book. Did you not like those? The girl tells her that she really enjoyed the book because it was funny.

The girl goes to look for another book.

She tells her that she is getting books that she really did not like to read. The ESLMS tells her that more Junie B. Jones books are coming but they are not here.

She is still looking at the girl’s record in the computer. You got a good grade on Ghost Brother when you took the test. The girl tells her that she did not understand Aliens for Lunch.

The ESLMS says that it is strange that the girl passes hard book tests but fails easy book tests. She tells the girl to take as long as she needs with the book, but come back to the library and take the test where the ESLMS can supervise.

OC: The ESLMS is wondering what is happening to the girl. She has already caught people taking tests for others.

Another boy is looking for the Henry Huggins book. He would really like to read that,

Two student teachers enter the library. They have three boys with them. I can tell by the materials that they are working with Reading Recovery.

OC: I was a reading teacher in the Title I program.

They give them a choice of markers. They set the timer. Star the site words too. They are going to find important things in the book we read. They explain that they are talking about the book that they read yesterday. They are teaching homophones.

OC: This is an example of the library being used by other teachers.

The Elementary School Principal enters the library. The Elementary School Principal speaks to me.

He and the ESLMS go into her office and close the door. They are not there too long.

The ESLMS leaves with the Elementary School Principal and continues the conversation on the outside of the door. The Elementary School Principal calls to the maintenance men that are painting on the outside of the building. They have been painting the metal around the windows.

The Elementary School Principal asks if they can paint the ceiling over the library entrance. The ESLMS explains that someone caught the garbage can on fire and the paint peeled. They agree to paint the ceiling and the door. The Elementary School Principal is concerned about painting the door because it had more than one color. He wanted to talk with the ESLMS first.

OC: The ESLMS' son painted the first door.

The ESLMS returns and tells me that it is always important to be nice to those in the maintenance department.

The ESLMS tells me that the Elementary School Principal is planning a fire drill this afternoon. He needed to tell her so that she could speak to the students about leaving the library. They often forget and want to run back to their classroom.

Two more boys are coming into the library. The ESLMS tells the students to remember that if there is a fire drill, they are to remain and follow whatever teacher they are with at the time. Remember to stay with the teacher you are with at the time. Don't try to return to your regular classroom. That's too dangerous.

She tells a student that they cannot check out another book. She has two books now. When she finishes those two books, you can get a new one.

The student teachers continue asking each student how they feel about the book. They talk about the explanation of an incident in the book.

OC: There is a script with Reading Recovery. You must follow it specifically.

The ESLMS tells me that her son did the art work that is on the wall. She tells me that her

son is now living out of state. He taught art at one Louisiana University and other schools. She was the librarian that came during the Library Power Grant. She replaced a librarian that retired.

She suggests that I apply for a position in the parish public school system. She tells me that there is critical shortage of qualified school librarians.

OC: She is giving me the same recruitment speech that she gives everyone.

The ESLMS tells me that she does recess every so often and breakfast every Wednesday. Although she would like to not be a duty teacher, the Elementary School Principal simply does not have enough bodies. She tries to help however she can at the school.

She tells me that at some other school the librarians are actually teaching reading and other insanities. She says that the Elementary School Principal has been more than fair.

The ESLMS and I discuss authors. She did not like Missing May by Cynthia Rylant.

OC: Rylant is a West Virginia author and Missing May was a Newberry Award winner.

However, she did not realize that John Henry was a West Virginia legend. She told me that I need to come and be a guest reader and do a West Virginia unit. We could claim that we were supporting diversity.

OC: She is really trying to lure me into a librarian position. She even told me that the salary was 8,000 dollars more and the college professors make nothing in LA. I think this a truth everywhere.

It is after 11:00 and I need to visit another school. I excuse myself for the day.

Effective School Library Media Specialists

Field Notes for February 2, 2001

Elementary

8:00-9:00

L. Underwood

Key: Classroom Teacher Kindergarten (CTK)

Classroom Teacher First Grade (CT1<sup>st</sup>)

OC: Observer's Comments

I arrive at the Elementary this morning. I notice that her car is not in the space. The ESLMS is missing again.

OC: When the car is not in the space, the ESLMS is not coming in to the school that day. I am never forewarned. The ESLMS is overwhelmed.

I decide to get out and walk around the building. Several of the teachers greet me warmly when I enter the building.

OC: I wonder what these people think about her closing the library so often.

As I wander out the backdoor towards the library, I notice that the door has been painted the stark gray. The ESLMS told me that several years ago someone set fire to a garbage can and the door and the ceiling had been damaged.

OC: The gray door did not look as inviting as the other door. The yellow sign Media Center really looked like a hazardous waste sign. Danger!

I walk around the building towards my car. CTK is telling another teacher how evil three of her students were during the morning. CT1<sup>st</sup> looks disgusted. It is great to see that CTK is consistent. The ESLMS is correct.

OC: This is CTK complaining again. CTK is the same teacher that the ESLMS told me created time complaints. She drives the ESLMS crazy about specific library times. She seems to be a rather pompous individual. I can tell by the other teacher's body language that she was not pleased with CTK

The first, kindergarten, and special education classes are in the same wing of the building. This wing is the one that faces the main entrance to the school from the main street

OC: Even with the age of the school, the grounds are beautiful.

I proceed to my car and decide to wait for a few moments. I observe students from the school raising the flag.

I then weigh my options and decided to go to the Middle School because the Middle School Library Media Specialist (MSLMS) is teaching today. I told MSLMS that I would be later. I know that MSLMS can use the extra body if she is teaching.

OC: I could have gone to the High School but the Middle School is closer to my home. I really need some time watching MSLMS teach.

I will try to contact the ESLMS again on via email.

OC: I am at the point of driving up to the school and checking the parking spot. If she is not there, I alter my plans for the day.

The ESLMS could be sick or she could be on an errand for the Elementary School Principal. Well, all is not lost. The CT does have a personality problem.

I am off to the Middle School and MSLMS' lesson.

Effective School Library Media Specialists  
Field Notes for February 6, 2001  
Middle School Library Media Specialist Meeting  
1:00-3:00  
L. Underwood

Key: Library Supervisor, Supervisor of Libraries for the parish  
Librarian  
Middle School Library Media Specialist (MSLMS)  
Website Developer for the parish  
OC: Observer's Comments

MSLMS suggested that I attend the meeting. It is at the central office in the parish. The meeting is being held in one of the computer rooms.

OC: I look forward to the meeting because a friend of mine is the librarian at another middle school in the parish. We were in classes at LSU together. This is her first year as a librarian.

I arrive and enter the room. I decide to go to the rear of the room so that I can observe the situation better than sitting in the front of the room.

I speak to two librarians that are sitting in the rear of the room, too.

MSLMS enters the room and greets me. She sits in the front near a librarian that she knows from another school.

The Library Supervisor notices me and I explain that MSLMS suggested that I attend the meeting. She beams and tells me that she is glad that I could attend.

The Library Supervisor takes the time to make introductions. She introduces a substitute librarian. She told everyone that this lady is retired but is always able to help in a pinch. The librarian at the school moved to another position in the system and they needed someone fast.

OC: There is a critical shortage of school library media specialists in the parish.

She introduces me, too. She tells them that I was observing in some of the schools in the parish and that I am impressed with things that were going on in Louisiana.

OC: Again, she uses positives to motivate. She did not reveal what schools that I was observing.

A friend of mine that I graduated from LSU with is on the front row. She proceeds to stand up and wave boisterously to me.

OC: It is great to see my friend again. We had several classes at LSU together. We were often grouped together for those insane group projects.

The Web Developer from the technology department is one of the speakers today. She maintains the website for the parish.

The Web Developer begins talking about the databases and the website for the parish.

She explains that when one goes to the website, one has access to any of the databases at home and school. Even special education can use some of the resources. World Book Online is located here, too.

With the student edition of the databases, one can find more resources.

She mentions Gale, the Junior Reference Collection and the Student Resource Center Gold.

Currently, students must have two URLs to access the databases, but soon this will be linked to the web site. The schools have an icon and they do not have to know the URL address. One only needs the URLs when accessing from home.

Gale incorporates all of the other databases.

She warns the librarians to be judicious in the way you think about the database levels. Students could be overwhelmed.

Many of the librarians voice concerns about the databases and the web site being maintained. Currently the state board of education pays for the databases for the entire state of Louisiana. The school librarians are afraid that they will soon be forced to pay for the databases.

The Library Supervisor interjects that it will be maintained. This is the importance of statistics. They can get the usage from Infotrac and Gale.

Many school librarians in other parts of the state were not aware of the databases. Technology directors were to get the information out from the state. However, some of the small areas did not get the information out to these people.

The Web Developer and the Library Supervisor suggest that these librarians share with these people as much as possible.

The Web Developer asks where do the librarians think would be the best choice to place the links on the website to the databases? The librarians tell her to make certain that it is

in the same place as the other sites.

Newest interactive tools are the calendar. The calendar is just for the district now, but they want to have each school use the calendar on the website, too.

The Web Developer suggests adding a media center link to each of the school's websites.

They want teachers to use the whiteboard to post lesson plans and agendas. The Web Developer will be presenting the concept to the administrators next week, because they need their support. Without administrative support, there is not a great deal done. However, she reminds them of how important their role is in getting new things enacted.

Every teacher can have a whiteboard.

Will be presenting this to the principals next week and because without them there is not a lot of support. However, she stresses the importance of the school librarian.

Without a password you cannot log into and all of your communications remain private.

Consider how far you as librarians have come in one year.

It is exciting. It is hard to believe that technology is so common. Eventually this will be important to everyone. Frustrations grow for something new. This is important.

In order to assess the collections, use the Library Power Standards. A new assessment draft will have indicators under the standards. What you are looking for is to see if the librarian is meeting the standards. The standards are becoming more specific but there are some generalities. The standards are trying to define the exemplar, advanced and poor collections. Books are not going away and the e-book is not going to cease to exist. Even with technology, printed material must be maintained.

Look at the elementary and high school standards. You can tell where the middle school fits in between the other two levels.

Do you see gaps? You need to pull from many ideas and sources. What is a balanced collection?

You take it for granted that you work in a large system and have colleagues. You have subscriptions for things. You have a periodical budget and it is not real common in other parishes.

The Library Supervisor is writing the standards for the parishes that have no help. They have no library supervisor and have no help. They need guidelines that tell them what makes a good standard collection so they can go to the policymakers and show them these standards. They can then present the information with knowledge.



The Library Supervisor was appalled at some of the collections so she was just trying to get help. She got money to upgrade the collections. She was able to then present a report.

We must lobby for ourselves and must make it happen and we need the ammunition. Librarians can use it as self evaluation.

The Library Supervisor calls for volunteers to revise the middle school reading list. Using that list, t for students they are to recommend summer reading. Some schools pursue summer reading lists. The current list is almost five years old and that is the reason for the revision. The Library Supervisor gives them a draft list of the new books.

We do not want to put on the middle school list if the book is lousy. Try to get boys books. I am trying to get a sports list. Too many are high school books such as Safe at Second.

If you have some great books that are not on here please tell me. I want it to be a useful list. Please mark those for summer reading. There are many books, like Wringer, that are not recommended for summer reading because they need to be read with a teacher.

OC: Wringer is by Jerry Spinelli and would be better read by a mature student or as a class.

Teachers will know that you have such a list and they can give students your information about the books.

We need to include reading with parents. Middle school is a tricky time in children's lives. Parents get upset and do not want them to make the transition to adults. Literature can help them to understand themselves and people.

OC: This is why the reading lists are often censored by parents. They forget that the child is growing.

The LSU Center for Career Development has a brochure for the teachers. They are having a special project this month.

OC: Schools to work is a big deal in this area.

The Library Supervisor asks the librarians to share some of the things that they are doing in their schools. One librarian says that two 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are coming into the library to do a research project. They need some materials that she does not have in the library. She went to the public library and borrowed the materials for the duration of the project.

OC: This is an example of an effective librarian.

Another school librarian offered to teach the online versions as well as the older printed versions. Some of the building teachers took her up on her teaching offer. She pulls her

lesson questions from the old Louisiana Educational Assessment Program LEAP questions.

Another librarian teaches the reading classes the LEAP skills. She laminates the Readers' Guide example so that each child has a copy. She then pulls them to the Readers' Guide and gets specific names and titles.

She makes all those extra cards as a class sheet so each child has one for the dictionary, index and bibliography. She is still not on the Internet. She lost her account when the technicians hooked up the principal.

OC: Is this not typical. The principal has the Internet and the students have no access. Do not want them to take the cards off until they are sure every school is online.

Another librarian opens the library on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturdays for students after school because they are preparing for the LEAP tests.

OC: There is actually a librarian that has the Tina Turner look. Would not Joan Rivers be shocked after her remark about Laura Bush looking like an old maid librarian?

Another librarian created game on project library questions. She made the game like Hollywood Squares and makes cards for Black History, etc.

The Library Supervisor tells them to make certain that all reference books they ordered are at their libraries.

She asks if the ordering books online from Baker and Taylor directly vial the Collection Connection help them.

The librarians really enjoyed ordering books directly.

The Library Supervisor says that the biggest problem is the encumbering of money, because these are individual schools billing the parish.

After the meeting I talked with my friend for a few minutes. She told me that the Library Supervisor was wonderful because she fought for the librarians. She told me that her library training did not prepare her for the situation that she found herself in at the middle school. She said that her teacher training and the fact that she had been a teacher gives her a better perspective. She cannot imagine never teaching and taking a library job.

OC: On a personal bias this is true. I stepped from college to the library as did many of my friends. I believe that I was a better librarian after teaching for a few years and then returning. It gives you a different perspective.

Another observation was the fact that there are two male school librarians in the system. I talked with a male school library media specialist after the meeting. I ask him what

attracted him to the profession. He told me that he was an Algebra teacher in a magnet school that closed. He then was transferred to a high school, but he began to want to kill students. He was losing total perspective as to how 16 year old students really acted.

He had duty in the library and began to notice that he really could work with more students in another manner. Although he was still in constant contact with students, he did not have the same responsibility of grades and discipline. He actually feels more effective teaching from the library than from the classroom.

OC: This is a realistic view of the reason to be a librarian.

### Effective School Library Media Specialists

Field Notes

Elementary

February 14, 2001

8:30-2:30

L. Underwood

Key: Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS)

School Custodian

Guidance Counselor

Volunteer

Students at all levels

OC: Observer's Comments

I arrive around 8:30 and enter the main hallway. I sign into the school. I look to my left and see that some students are still at breakfast. The custodian greets me. I speak to the custodian and proceed down the hallway.

OC: No matter whom you meet at the Elementary, they always greet you.

It is Valentine Day and the hallways are decorated for the occasion. I look into the classrooms and I see the decorations around the room. I see some of the children have Valentine boxes decorated.

OC: I guess some of the religious groups do not consider Valentine Day as a satanically mind altering holiday.

Even with the undercurrent of the holiday, the hallways are subdued, quiet and respectful.

OC: This school never seems to have a great deal of confusion. This is a sign of an effective school.

When I arrive in the library the ESLMS greets me warmly. She waves to me because she is talking on the telephone.

OC: The ESLMS is one of the most polished individuals that I have ever met. She knows how to make people feel at ease.

I can tell that the person that she is conversing with is ill because the ESLMS tells the person not worry about anything. The ESLMS tells the individual to just take care of herself and not worry about anything. She tells the person that she can tell how ill she is at this moment.

OC: The ESLMS has the ability to demonstrate a great deal of empathy for people, students and teachers. This is one of the reasons for her success as a school library media specialist. Personality is very important.

Evidently, the person has a tremendous problem talking because the ESLMS refers to the person's voice being strained. The ESLMS advises the individual to just stop straining her voice and she will check on the person later. "Don't worry about anything! Just relax and get well!"

The ESLMS has been sick, too. She tells the woman that she suffers from an ear infection that leaves her deaf to some extent.

OC: You can tell that she is still very congested. However, the ESLMS is smiling and her attitude is contagious.

When she gets puts down the telephone, we discuss the horrors of ear infections. She laughs and says teachers that cannot hear are handicapped.

OC: Librarians like the ESLMS that are so involved that cannot hear are handicapped.

I tell her that there is nothing like an elementary school on Valentine Day. The ESLMS agrees. She has heart shaped mints on a table for children when they arrive in the library.

OC: Maybe the description for the ESLMS is a gracious hostess.

She tells me that today was her breakfast duty. She does this every Wednesday. The ESLMS says that she really should be in the library every morning. If she were open every morning, there would be consistency for the children. They are never certain that she is open.

I ask her why she has the duty. The ESLMS tells me that there are not enough bodies to cover. She tells me that this is one of her compromises to the Elementary School Principal. She has tried to explain, but he insists on the duty.

OC: Often administrators will tag the librarian for duty in order to have equity among the staff. This is due to a misconception by other staff members about the role of the school library media specialist.

Students start arriving from the upper grades to check books in and return others. One of the students brings in a box of chocolates for the ESLMS and she hugs the child. The child is really pleased. She then asks her if it is okay to put out the chocolates for everyone to share. The girl agrees with her.

OC: This is an example of how much these children love the ESLMS. It also demonstrates the ESLMS' tact.

The ESLMS tells me that she would eat the entire box if she let it stay near her for many minutes. I laugh and tell her that I, too, am a chocolate addict.

One boy gets a chocolate and the ESLMS remarks that he talked too much in the morning at breakfast. She tells him that he is lucky because her ears are still stopped up and she cannot hear. They both laugh.

OC: The ESLMS makes the children feel that she notices them. They are more than a face in a crowd.

The Guidance Counselor enters the library. She is upset. I can tell from the grim expression on her face. She tells the ESLMS that there is a problem with her laptop computer. She cannot open the school improvement plan template on her desktop computer.

She gives the ESLMS the offending disk. The Guidance Counselor leaves because she needs to get back to the front of the building. The ESLMS tells me that the problem is in the laptop computers. The office staff uses the laptops and then they move the offending disk to the main system. She suspects a virus because she knows that there is a virus on every laptop in the school. The ESLMS told me that she warns them, but the office staff continues to infect everything. "Is there no virus protection through the main system," I say to her. The ESLMS tells me that she is the only person in the entire school with any type of virus protection and it is not updated. I tell her that I am surprised that he parish does not provide a virus protection system.

OC: No wonder the system crashes and they lose the email! This just creates more work for the school library media specialist at the building level. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

The ESLMS takes the disk to her computer, which has a virus detector installed. The giant bug appears as a warning. She sighs with disgust.

There is a virus on the template for the state school improvement file. She picks up the telephone and tells Elementary School Principal that they must stop using the laptops. She tells me he has agreed to confiscate the offending machines.

After trying several things, the ESLMS calls tech support at the central office and they

tell her to download Norton for a free trial. The free trial is only for one computer at time. Thus, the ESLMS needs to run to the counselor's office and begin the download.

I remained in the library so that she could go. The children seem to adjust easily to me being in the library.

OC: The reason for the adjustment is the fact that the ESLMS and I seem to be on friendly terms. They love her and love her friends.

The ESLMS returns quickly in a hustle. She is carrying a laptop computer that she confiscated from the guidance counselor's office. She tells me that she will download the virus protection program for it, too. She plugs in the computer near a telephone line because the computer has a modem installed. She goes to the Norton site and begins the download.

The ESLMS is the "white rabbit" today. The principal's luncheon is today so ESLMS needs to order pizza. She tells the man to make certain that he gets the pizza to the library by 12:00 and that he bring the drinks cold.

She then calls the Secretary and tells her that she needs a check for the pizza.

OC: This is the reward luncheon for the students in each grade that have the most points scored in the Accelerated Reading program.

The ESLMS shows me the awards that she has made for the students. She takes a picture of each student next to the red elephant. She then hangs the pictures in the section where the students sit while she reads. She ordered bumper stickers that say, "*I attended the principal's luncheon at Elementary!*" Instead of creating the certificates, she ordered them. Everything is ready to go, including getting the Elementary School Principal to sign the awards.

The secretary arrives with the check for the pizza. She tells the ESLMS that she will send the pizza man back to the library if he stops at the office.

Currently, there are no students in the library and she asks me to go with her to the counselor's office to see the offending computer. The ESLMS is upset because she has a great deal to do for the luncheon. This is just another interruption in her day. I go with her to look at the counselor's computer.

She and I cross the courtyard and enter the primary wing of the building. The counselor's office faces the street and entry. ESLMS enters and asks politely if she can get behind the counselor's desk and start the download. The counselor is happy to see her and moves. The ESLMS starts the download and asks her to call her in the library when the deed is complete. She has a class arriving in a moment. We leave again and return to the library.

OC: This really gives me an idea about the ESLMS' day. She must walk a million miles.

The million-mile march would not even compete. The ESLMS is always available and flexible. This creates stress and often causes her to be in a state of panic. However, I think that she thrives on the excitement.

The kindergarten comes around 10:00 and the ESLMS has to stop troubleshooting the laptop computer to read books. Her throat hurts so she uses the recorded books. She turns the pages and the children listen intently. The telephone rings and I answer the call because she is reading. It is the counselor and the download is complete. The counselor is afraid to touch anything. I tell her that the ESLMS will return as soon as the class leaves.

The CTK tells the ESLMS that they need to leave a little early today because of the Valentine excitement. The ESLMS has them to leave a little early. They stay until 9:55. They line up to leave, but the ESLMS makes certain that each student has a sticker to wear to class.

The ESLMS is anxious to fix the computer so that she can prepare for the luncheon. I go with her to check on the computer. Again, we walk to the front of the building via the courtyard. The counselor is not in the office, but we trudge on into the office.

OC: My leg is killing me, but I carry on. If the ESLMS is deaf and cheery, I can deal with my stupid knee.

The ESLMS starts the installation of the program. She realizes that this will take some time to complete. At this time, the counselor arrives. The ESLMS tells her that we need to leave and prepare for the luncheon. Just let the program install. She tells the counselor not to use the computer. The counselor agrees to call when the installation says complete. The counselor says that she is afraid of doing more damage. We all laugh.

OC: The ESLMS must reboot the system when the installation is complete before she can use it to scan for viruses.

We leave again and begin our hike back to the library again.

OC: I am really getting a feel for the ESLMS' day. I am glad that I wore my New Balance walking shoes.

When we achieve our return voyage to the library, the clock is ticking towards lunch. It is now nearly 11:35 and the pizza has not arrived. The ESLMS begins to panic. She calls the pizza place again and the manger assures her that the pizza will be on time.

The ESLMS asks me to help her cover the tables for the luncheon. She has plastic table clothes that we use. She likes things to look nice for the parents.

Some students enter from the fifth grade and want to check out books. She tells them that she needs their help. She gets them to hang the pictures of the new Principal's Luncheon winners on the wall. The students are elated.

The ESLMS gets paper plates and cups from the rear cabinet. I can tell from the tone of her voice that she is upset with the pizza people.

The counselor calls and says that the computer has installed. The ESLMS runs over to reboot the system. She asks me to return with her to the counselor's office. She reboots the system and starts the program. She tells the counselor to let the program scan for the infection and call her when it is complete.

We return to the library. The ESLMS is anxious about the pizza luncheon.

Parents begin to arrive. She sends one of the students in the fifth grade to get a student that needs to be at the principal's luncheon. The child leaves with the note that the ESLMS has written.

One of the parents has a small child. The child grabs a book and sits down at the table. The children start to arrive and they seem glad to see the parents. One of the girls in the third grade is excited because her grandfather came today.

The ESLMS is in a panic and calls the pizza place again. We both wonder if the delivery was made to Elementary High School. The manager assures the ESLMS that the pizza is on its way. The person making the deliveries was late returning from his prior delivery.

OC: The natives and the ESLMS are restless. Everyone is hungry. The ESLMS is the perfect hostess and this is the Mad Hatter's tea party.

The ESLMS calls the main office to see if the pizza was delivered there by mistake. The secretary tells her that she is watching and will call her when the man delivers. The secretary then comes to the library and assures the ESLMS that everything will be okay.

It is now 12:15 and the pizza man arrives. The ESLMS is less than happy with the poor man. Then she realizes that he did not bring the drinks cold. Now the white rabbit is upset. She runs to the cafeteria in search of ice.

She returns in a few moments with a small steel bowl full of ice. It is not enough. She tells everyone that the secretary has gone to the Stop-and-Go for ice. However, they can start to eat. We limit the ice for the moment as we begin to serve.

The students and the parents are starved. The ESLMS calls the office in request that Elementary School Principal come to the luncheon. She tells everyone that he will be here in a few moments. He needs only to complete a conference with a parent.

The ESLMS takes some pizza and puts on a separate plate for the Elementary School Principal. She tells me that it will not be here in a few moments.

The secretary arrives with the ice around 12:30. The ESLMS is relieved. The Secretary



tells her not to get so upset. Everyone is enjoying the food.

The ESLMS begins to mingle and talk with parents. She manages to greet everyone and hug each child. She tells the parents how proud of the students she is for reading so many books.

OC: The ESLMS is a great hostess. She wants things to be perfect. This is a trait that I observe in the other school library media specialist that I am observing. There is a drive for perfectionism.

The Elementary School Principal arrives and begins talking with the parents. He moves around the tables and greets everyone. We get the Elementary School Principal his plate of pizza. He tells me that these are the students that will succeed. He believes that the involvement of the parents is very important. He tells me that these students have a great deal of support from home. It really bothers him that many of the rest of the students at the Elementary do not have the parental guidance at home.

A parent approaches the area where we are standing. He tells the Elementary School Principal how pleased that he has been with Elementary. However, he is concerned about his older daughter that went to a middle school this year. She has had to adjust to the teachers screaming at the top of their lungs at students. She really had a time because the teachers had more respect for the students at the elementary school.

OC: This is the reason that the Library Supervisor did not want me to observe at the Middle School.

The Elementary School Principal tells him that working in the middle school is much different ballgame. There are so many students, who do not want to be educated by this time. Parents begin to lose interest and think that they no longer need to help. Disruptions are at a minimum at the elementary school because parents are still concerned and his staff works as a team

The parent tells him that they continue to guide the girl and support her efforts in school. The parent states that it is a shame that the students are not controlled. He still believes in the public school system. He believes that students miss a great deal in private schools. They are often unreal.

The Elementary School Principal thanks him. The man walks away. The Elementary School Principal tells me that he wished more parents were like this man.

I tell the Elementary School Principal that one of the things that I observed was the lack of screaming at Elementary. Further, for the age of the building the place is clean. I tell him years ago a mentor teacher told me to observe cleanliness and a lack teacher screaming. Those two components were necessary for a great school. He tells me that she is correct.

OC: The Elementary School Principal is pleased with the feedback from the parent. These conversations are important when evaluating your program.

We tell everyone to make certain that they get enough pizza. Everyone is full and there are only three slices of the pizza left.

Parents begin to leave and thank everyone for the pizza. The ESLMS stands at the door and begins to tell each person as they leave good-bye and to come to Elementary at any time. The Elementary School Principal leaves because of another appointment in the office.

OC: The Elementary School Principal showed that he respected and supported the ESLMS' program by coming to the luncheon. It did not matter how busy. He took the time. The Secretary showed her support, too. This is important for the children, parents, and the ESLMS. It is an intrinsic reward.

The little girl that had a book does not want to return it to the shelf. She starts crying when her mother puts it back on the shelf. The ESLMS tells the parent to take the book and then just send it back by her brother tomorrow. The little girl stops crying and everyone is pleased. The ESLMS says that she will lose interest.

OC: This is the type of behavior that tells me that the ESLMS thinks children are more important than the books in the library. She certainly does not glue the books to the shelf.

I help the ESLMS clean the mess. The trash can outside is now full of empty pizza boxes.

The ESLMS has duty on the playground after lunch. Two students from the fifth grade enter and the ESLMS puts them to work shelving books for her. She tells them to check in as many as they can, too. I decide to wait in the library until after her duty time.

OC: The reason that the older students are in the library is the duty. This allows other students to continue to come to the library for books.

Students arrive while I am waiting for the ESLMS to return. The older students begin helping them to find books. They are shelving books too.

OC: The ESLMS has them well trained. They seem enthused. This type of reward often means that these students will carry a life long love of the school library.

The telephone rings and I answer the call. It is the Guidance Counselor and the Norton scanning is complete. I tell her that the ESLMS is on duty and I will have her come over when she returns. Now the ESLMS will be able to see what is infected. The laptop that the ESLMS brought back to the library has not completed the download.

OC: It is more difficult to download from the Internet via a modem.

Around 1:34 p.m. a Volunteer arrives in the library. She introduces herself as Volunteer 2. I explain what I am doing this semester. We talk for a few moments as she is shelving books and we realize that our husbands work for the same engineering company. She tells me that she remembers the year they spent in Pennsylvania. She nearly froze to death. After that year, they returned to Baton Rouge. He continued different assignments but she remained in Baton Rouge. Eventually, he got a permanent job in the Baton Rouge office. He is retiring this year.

OC: This is typical of many people in many different parts of the country. They do not like moving away from home and family. Louisiana is still fighting the War of Northern Aggression. I can imagine her in Yankee land.

The ESLMS returns and greets Volunteer 2 warmly. I tell her that the computer program has completed its scan. We begin our journey to the office again.

OC: This task should have taken no more than 30 minutes, but other responsibilities create an all day task.

We arrive in the counselor's office again. The ESLMS is astounded by the number of virus problems on the desktop computer. When she clears one, another bug appears.

OC: It looks like the computer should be sent to Atlanta to the Disease Control Department.

I can tell that she is upset. She then downloads the school improvement template from the state department of education site to the computer. She then takes a disk that she has with her and makes a copy. She tells me that it is best to be safe.

OC: The teachers depend upon the ESLMS to eliminate computer problems.

It is now nearly 2:30 and we make our way back to the library again. I notice that the buses are arriving. The ESLMS suggests that I leave before I get stuck on the parking lot forever.

As I leave, I note that the counselor is leaving. The teachers will not be able to leave until the students clear the building.

I decide to sit in my car and see what happens. As soon as the buses and the parents clear the area around 3:15, there is a rush to the automobiles by teachers.

OC: It has been a long but interesting day.

Effective School Library Media Specialists  
Field Notes February 22, 2001  
Elementary  
8:00-2:45  
L. Underwood

Key: Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS)  
Classroom Teacher 1<sup>st</sup> Grade 1 (CT1<sup>st</sup>1)  
Classroom Teacher 1<sup>st</sup> Grade 2 (CT1<sup>st</sup>2)  
Maintenance Men from parish  
OC: Observer's Comments

Today I arrive at the school around 8:00 and sign into the visitor's book. I have scheduled interviews with teachers throughout the day. However, I am using the school library as my point of reference. The ESLMS has been extremely helpful in getting the interviews arranged. She is even covering for CT1<sup>st</sup>1 today so that I can conduct the interview.

OC: CT1<sup>st</sup>1 is the very pregnant first grade teacher.

I arrive in the library and the ESLMS greets me. She is still having trouble with her voice. She is expecting CT1<sup>st</sup>2s first grade class today. She decides to use audio books for part of her presentation. She also has the television set up in the reading area, too. She says that if her voice gives, she will use one of the Ms. Frizzle tapes.

OC: Teaching and having no voice is not funny.

The morning announcements come across the intercom. They are reminding students that the LEAP tests are getting closer.

OC: There is no Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag or a moment of silence. This must be a school by school call.

There are several students in the library looking for books. The Maintenance Men are working in the back of the library. The ESLMS tells me that she thinks that her shelves were damaged due to water.

The men begin to remove the books from the shelf. These are in the nonfiction section so the books are tall and thin. They are attempting to take them off of the shelf and keep them in order. She tells them to just put them on the table.

I decide to help her shelf books that are piled to the sky behind the desk. I scan as many as I find in the floor where the students return the books. I decide to shelve books only to the point that the men are working.

The ESLMS is trying to shelve books on the other side of the room.

The door opens and the first grade classroom enters the library. It is now nearly 9:00. They go directly to the reading area and sit down. Their teacher reminds them that they are not to push or run.

A student volunteer enters the library and the ESLMS tells the girl to shelve books, but not to go near the men that are working.

The men are now pulling the shelves from the wall. I see saws and drills.

OC: It is going to be a little noisy.

The ESLMS shows the students the book When the Fly Flew In! She asks how many students cleaned their rooms yesterday. Every child raises their hand.

Well, you need to pay attention and see what happens to this room.

The book continues through different animals cleaning up their room. She asks, "How did the cat clean up the room?" A student answers that the cat just moved its body to dust. The child gets a sticker.

How did the hamster clean up the room? A student answers that the hamster just took things from the bedroom. The child gets a sticker.

What is the bird's business? No one can answer the question. The ESLMS tells them that the book never told you. You have to think and learn about some things. Not everything is in the book.

What did the bird clean? One of the children said that the bird cleaned all of the small pieces of thread and put them in the nest. She gives the child a sticker.

The ESLMS tells them that they need to think about what is real and not real for the next book. The book is called when the Cows Come Home. This book is an audio book and she turns the pages as the tape plays.

OC: The music is really catchy. I am amazed that the children are watching the book intently.

The ESLMS awards students for being able to tell what is real and not real in the story with stickers. Cows cannot watch television, play ball, and talk. However, they can eat and sleep.

OC: This is a real difficult concept for young children. They take things so literally.

The children are getting ready for a third book. She says that so many of the students in

the school have Chicken Pox that she is going to read Arthur Gets the Chicken Pox.

The entire story deals with Arthur having the chicken pox and not being able to go to school. His sister is jealous and paints spots on her face. However, she keeps bragging to Arthur that she will still get to go to the fair on Saturday because she is not sick. Arthur gets better and his sister gets sick.

The ESLMS talks to the students about making fun of other students. She talks about plans that might not always work out the way that you want them to work.

OC: The librarian fulfills a developmental guidance role for these small children.

I leave the ESLMS for my first interview. I will return later in the afternoon.

It is now after lunch and I have returned. It is around 1:00. I am to meet CT1<sup>st</sup>1 in the library around 2:00 for an interview so I decide that the library is a safe haven. The ESLMS is not in the library. I decide to shelve books and make myself useful.

The maintenance men are pounding in the rear. They tell me that the damage is due to termites, not water. They are replacing the entire shelving unit.

The ESLMS enters and I tell her about the termites. She goes to the back and talks with the men. They tell her that they put some termite poison in the area. However, the EPA keeps them from using too much poison. She will have to call the person that the parish uses for extermination. They give her the name and number.

The ESLMS calls the number and schedules the exterminator. She suggests that he come after school.

Some students come from CT 5<sup>th</sup> grade's class. They are repeating the lesson that The ESLMS gave the other students. She tells them not to write on her paper because she is using it with all of the groups.

OC: These are students preparing for the LEAP exam. She works with small groups.

This lesson is the same and it is on biography. She explains the difference between individual biographies and a collective biography. There is another part concerning the thesaurus. She asks them what is meant by a thesaurus.

She tells them to work in low voices. They are to work together. If they have a question, they are to come to her.

The students begin working together to complete the assignment. They are working better than the other group. They are looking for synonyms and antonyms. Some of them are having trouble alphabetizing. One of the girls begins to help some of the others that are having trouble.

The ESLMS is helping some other students look books. She tells them not to go near the men that are working. The boys would like to get books on sports, but that is too close to the men that are working.

As the students begin to finish the assignment, the ESLMS goes to them and goes over the paper with them. They check their work with her.

OC: This is a repeat of another assignment with other classes. She will do this assignment several more times.

The ESLMS tells me that she really works hard with the intermediate grades on skills that will be tested.

It is now time for my interview with CT1<sup>st</sup>. She comes into the library and the ESLMS decides to entertain them with Ms. Frizzle while we talk.

After the interview, I decide to leave. I will return tomorrow.

Effective School Library Media Specialists  
Field Notes for February 23, 2001  
Elementary  
8:30-11:30  
L. Underwood

Key: Elementary School Library Media Specialist (ESLMS)  
Elementary School Principal  
Classroom Teacher 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade (CT 2<sup>nd</sup>)  
Guidance Counselor  
Maintenance Men from parish  
Various Teachers in the School

I have several things to do this morning. I arrive around 8:30 and sign into the school. I speak to the Elementary School Principal about setting a time for an interview. He tells me to come back around 10:00.

I proceed to the library and ESLMS greets me warmly. There is female student leaning on the circulation desk. I tell her that I have an interview with CT 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:15 when her students went to physical education. I told her that I stopped and would see the Elementary School Principal before I left this morning.

She says that she needs to run quickly to a CT's room. There is a problem with the

computer. She is going to make a mad before she gets the store set up for the Accelerated Reader.

The ESLMS is setting up her store for this morning. The students have earned points on the Accelerated Reading program. They can use the points to then purchase items from the store. The student is to go to the rooms and tell students to remember to put their points on a sheet of paper before coming to the library. The paper will serve as money for their purchases.

The ESLMS also wants her to get two more students to help set up her store. The young lady is concerned that she will not be helping. The ESLMS tells her that she will still be helping but she needs two more to work for her this morning.

She chastises the girl in a good natured way about the fact that she does not have many points. What is wrong with my 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls this year? The girl tells the ESLMS that they are concerned with girl things. The ESLMS and the girl laugh.

The girl leaves and the ESLMS continues to talk with the maintenance men that are repairing her damaged bookshelves. She tells them to be certain to get some candy. She has purchased chocolate bunnies and Milky Way bunnies for the student store.

OC: The ESLMS told me earlier that she always makes certain that maintenance people are rewarded. This is the way to get them to help. She does not believe in putting on airs.

The men are painting the shelves that were repaired yesterday. They have termite damage. There are books stacked on the tables that were moved from the shelves.

She decides to leave and help a CT with a computer, but a new student enters. He does not have any points and wants to be able to buy something today. Even though he is not supposed to take a test, the ESLMS sets up the computer so that he can earn points. He has two points and would like to earn a few more.

She remains with him and helps him through the process. He then begins to leave.

She decides to try to leave again.

Just as she starts to leave, the students return to help her with the store. She can't leave to help Ms. Bradley.

Two boys enter with the girl. They are really excited. One of the boys keeps bragging about the number of points that he has this month. They are from CT 5<sup>th</sup> grade's class.

When the three students return, the ESLMS gives them numbers on pieces of post-it-note papers. She directs the students to put numbers on the tables. The numbers are to correspond with the points for each gift. She has one point, three points, five points, and 10 point gifts.



She decides not to put the numbers on the table near the men that are working. She says that she does not want them to interfere with the work. The children place the numbers on the tables.

The more you read the more points that you acquire. The boy that was bragging tells her that he has 51 points. She hugs him and tells him how proud she is of his achievement.

She goes to the black cabinet in the back room and begins to get rewards. The students help her to carry the rewards to the tables. She puts out the candy. They children are really excited to see the chocolate.

The ESLMS decides to change the tables again. She is afraid that the children will be confused with the numbers. She has altered the table because of the maintenance men, but decides that the children will really not be in the way. They are creatures of habit and would go to the wrong table.

The children proceed to help the ESLMS get the rewards out from the back of the room. They are excited and begin putting them on the tables marked with the correct post-it-note: 1, 3, 5, or 10.

I remark to the ESLMS that some of the prizes are familiar. She tells me that she orders in bulk from Oriental Trading Company.

OC: Oriental Trading Company has the neatest gifts for things such as reading reward. I used the company when I was working at a laboratory school in Louisiana. The kids love the junk.

The young lady with no points would like an eyeball ring. However, she has only three points and cannot purchase the ring. The ESLMS tells her to put the ring in her office and if she reads enough books she can have the ring in the next cycle. The girl tells her that she is reading Harry Potter. ESLMS tells her that Harry is not one of the books in the system.

OC: The ESLMS hates Harry Potter. Her body language tells the entire story.

The ESLMS has headbands that are arrows. They look as if you have an arrow through your head. She has a small Furby and a Pokemon Toy. She puts all of these and the candy on the 10 table. There are bracelets and rings here, too. The candy consists of Palmer chocolate bunnies and Milky Way bunnies. She purchased Russell Stover solid bunnies, too.

She decides that while they are working on the store she will leave and check on the computer. However, the telephone rings and she answers quickly.

When she gets off the telephone she decides to try to leave again.

The ESLMS has attempted to leave more than once to help a CT 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher. Now, the Counselor comes in looking for the summer school policy binders. The ESLMS takes her into the rear storage area of the library where the material is stored. The one she needs is missing. The ESLMS suggests that CT 2<sup>nd</sup> grade has the binder since she taught it last summer. The Counselor leaves.

OC: The ESLMS is in demand and is spread very thin across the school. She really needs a clerk.

Then the students come in and she begins letting them make purchases. The boy with the 51 points wants to purchase most of the candy. She tells one student that he cannot buy all of the candy with his 51 points. She says will it not be fair for those that come later. He says it will not matter and then laughs.

The ESLMS tells me that it is very important to make certain that the children that come later have an opportunity to purchase nice things. She has to watch the children closely.

She has the students make a purchase and then she takes their slip of paper and marks them off of the list. Some of the students decide not to make a purchase and return to their room.

The ESLMS helps the new student get into his points. She then shows him how to purchase things from the store.

OC: This is amazing because these children love the store.

She told me that they really liked tablets, pencils and wallets. The wallets had Elementary.

OC: Personally, I liked the arrows through the head.

She told me that the sunglasses were not popular and that the bracelets were hot.

OC: This was true at the laboratory school. I could not keep bracelets.

She uses Oriental Trading because you can order in bulk. There is economy in bulk buying.

The ESLMS is helping with the masses in her store when I leave for my interviews.

I see her later running up and down in the hall from room to room like Paul Revere with the news.

Today is the Friday before the Mardi Gras Holiday and the staff has food for the teachers in the hallway. They tell me that this is something that they try to do every Friday. They

ask me to join them. Food will always entice me.

OC: These teachers work together and you never feel unwelcome.

I leave after having lunch in the hall with the teachers. Everyone is having a great time.

## Appendix C: Coding Samples

1. Setting/Context Codes  
Descriptions of Schools; School Improvement Plans; Parish Standards; State Standards; Demographics
2. Definition of Situation Codes  
Teachers' view of their work; School library media specialists' view of their work; Principals' view of their work; library supervisors' view of her work
3. Perspectives Held by Subjects  
"She is just everywhere"; "She helps us to be better teachers"; She is the curriculum generalist"
4. Subjects' Ways of Thinking about People and Objects  
School library media specialists' view of teachers; teachers' view of the school library media specialist's leadership; principals' view of the school library media specialist
5. Process Codes  
"Length of time on the job"; length of school day; becoming school library media specialist; background information
6. Activity Codes  
Reading; poetry readings in the library; technology help; reading guidance; media center maintenance
7. Event Codes  
Teacher sick-out; school multi-culture assembly; multi-culture poster contest; guest readers; Modisette Award
8. Strategy Codes  
Public relations; awards; volunteer coordinator; covering classes; collaborative planning; volunteer for duties
9. Relationship and Social Structure Codes  
Power issues; stereotypes; views of personality; enablers; constraints
10. Methods Codes  
Observers' comments about interruptions; Observers comments about duties

## Appendix D: Interviewer's Guides

### *Interviewer's Guide for Administrators (Superintendent, Principals, and Library Supervisor)*

#### **1. Background information.**

##### **Prompts:**

What is your highest degree?

What are your certifications?

What grade levels or subjects have you taught?

Have you ever been a school library media specialist?

Where have you been employed besides this school?

#### **2. How much influence do teachers and school library media specialists have on school policy?**

##### **Prompts:**

How much influence do school library media specialists have on the schedule?

How much influence do school library media specialists have on determining teaching techniques and setting standards for student achievement?

How much influence do school library media specialists have on determining resources to be added to the school library media center?

How much trust and respect do teachers and school library media specialists have for each other about teaching and learning?

How do school library media specialists gain trust and respect?

#### **3. How should teachers plan for instruction for students to learn effectively?**

##### **Prompts:**

What policies are established for collaborative planning with the school library media specialist?

When do teachers and school library media specialists get an opportunity to plan collaboratively?

What is your view on how the school library media specialist and teachers should deliver instruction?

What is the importance of technology integration and the school library media specialist?

#### **4. How does the school library media specialist participate in curriculum development?**

##### **Prompts:**

How has the curricular role of the school library media specialist changed?

Should the school library media specialist provide staff development for curriculum changes?

Do you see the school library media specialist as a leader?

What makes a great school library media specialist?  
Do you think the school library media specialist should serve on the school improvement committees?

**5. How would you define collaborative planning between a school library media specialist and a teacher?**

**Prompts:**

How has your school staff been involved with collaborative planning?  
What parish initiatives are in place to provide for collaborative planning?  
Do you believe in flexible scheduling for school library media specialists?  
Do you believe the school climate could affect the view of a school library media specialist as a leader?  
What do you do to encourage collaborative planning between teachers and a school library media specialist?  
How does technology integration encourage into collaborative planning?  
How do you encourage collaboration?

**6. What are barriers to school library media specialist leadership?**

**Prompts:**

What problems do you see as creating problems for the school library media specialist serving in a leadership role?  
Do you believe perceived stereotypes created by society are a problem for school library media specialist leadership?  
How do you encourage professional development?

**7. Would you recommend collaborative planning, cross-curricular projects, and flexible scheduling to schools?**

**Prompts:**

Are there any other comments or observations that you would like to make that could illuminate the subject of school library media specialists and leadership?

*Interviewer's Guide for School Library Media Specialists*

**1. Background information.**

**Prompts:**

How many years have you been a school library media specialist?  
What grade levels and subjects have you taught?  
What are your certifications?  
Where you ever a grade level chair, team leader or lead teacher?  
What professional organizations are you an active member?  
What leadership courses have you taken?

**2. How do you define collaborative planning with teachers for instruction?**

**Prompts:**

What do you consider the ideal setting for the development of collaborative instructional planning?

How does technology integration influence collaborative planning?  
Who initiates collaborative planning projects?  
What is your role in collaborative planning and the delivery of instruction?  
What do you believe is the effect of collaboration and student achievement?  
How do you take the leadership role in suggesting ways to move students toward meeting district and national standard?  
What are the advantages of collaborative planning?  
What are the disadvantages of collaborative planning?  
How does flexible scheduling help you in collaborative planning?  
How important is administrative support for collaborative planning and the school library media program?

**3. How do you make certain that school library media center resources support the needs of instruction?**

**Prompts:**

What is your role in supporting curriculum needs?  
What types of software does your center provide?  
How do you meet the increased demands for materials for research projects that reach beyond the textbook?  
How do you communicate with teachers about instructional priorities?  
How do you communicate with the principal about instructional priorities?  
How do you make certain there is adequate funding to provide information resources?  
How did your education help you meet the needs of instruction?

**4. Barriers to school library media programs.**

**Prompts:**

Do you see yourself as a leader in the school?  
How does the school inhibit your leadership within the school?  
Do you see stereotypes affecting your leadership?

**5. Why would you recommend collaborative planning, flexible scheduling, and technology integration to other schools?**

**Prompts:**

Are there any other comments or observations that you would like to make about the subject of school library media leadership, collaborative planning, flexible scheduling and technology integration?

*Interviewer's Guide for College Professor*

**1. Background information.**

**Prompts:**

What is your current position at the university?  
What are your certifications?  
What experiences did you have as a school library media specialist?  
What made you decide to become a school library media specialist?

Do you belong to any professional organizations?

**2. What do you see as the role of the school library media specialist in instruction within the school?**

**Prompts:**

What types of instruction should the school library media specialist provide?

How does the school library media specialist meet the needs of teachers in meeting state testing requirements?

How does the school library media specialist know what materials to provide for the curriculum?

What is the importance of professional organizations to instruction?

**3. How does the school library media specialist learn to communicate within the school?**

**Prompts:**

How does the school library media specialist communicate with the school principal?

How does the school library media specialist communicate with teachers?

How does the school library media specialist take the leadership role in communicating the daily activities of the program?

**4. How does the school library media specialist build respect for the program?**

**Prompts:**

What is the importance of professional organizations?

How does the school library media specialist get teachers to use the center?

How does the school library media specialist show teachers how the school library media program can improve academic achievement?

What is the importance of technology and respect?

How does the school library media specialist avoid stereotypes?

**5. What is the importance of a school library supervisor?**

**Prompts:**

How does the school library supervisor provide leadership for effective school library media centers?

What is the importance of the school library supervisor to staff development for school library media specialists?

**6. Do you have any other observations about school library media specialists and leadership?**

*Interviewer's Guide for Classroom Teachers*

**1. Background information.**

**Prompts:**

What is your degree?

How long have you taught and where besides this school?



What grade level do you teach?  
Have you ever been a grade level chairperson, team leader, or lead teacher?  
Have you worked on the school improvement plan?  
Where did you gain your knowledge of the duties of the school library media specialist?  
Would you want to be a school library media specialist?

**2. How would you define collaborative planning between a school library media specialist and a classroom teacher?**

**Prompts:**

How does flexible scheduling help you to collaborate?  
What would be some favorable conditions within this school for the development of more collaborative planning opportunities?  
How do you gain school library media specialist support for your program?  
How much does collaboration with the school library media specialist effect student achievement?  
What role does technology play in collaborative planning?  
What is your most recent collaborative effort?  
Who usually initiates a collaborative project?  
What effect has collaboration had overall on the school?

**3. What do you see as the school library media specialist's role within the school?**

**Prompts:**

What things does the school library media specialist do for you to help you in the classroom?  
What kind of resources does the school library media specialist provide to support student research and your instructional units?  
How does the school library media specialist gain your support?  
How does the school library media specialist gain the principal's support?  
Do you see or not see the school library media specialist as a leader in the school?

**4. Barriers to effective school library media specialist leadership.**

**Prompts:**

How much influence to teachers have over the school library media center schedule?  
How much free time do you have for planning collaboratively with teams?  
Do you see any perceived stereotypes of the school library media specialist barring the success of the school library media center?

**5. Do you have anything you would like to add about collaborative planning, the role of the school library media specialist or the school library media center?**

**Prompts:**

Would you recommend or not recommend the collaborative planning and flexible scheduling?