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School library media specialists who provide in-service training for teachers

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SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS WHO PROVIDE
IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

by
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ABSTRACT

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By taking a leadership role in the development and implementation of in-service training for teachers, school library media specialists increase their influence, strengthen their school library media programs, and in turn help increase student achievement. The purpose of this study was to determine how school library media specialists perceived the role of designing and implementing in-service training for teachers in an effort to determine why some school library media specialists did in fact practice this important role. Research was conducted to determine the characteristics of school library media specialists who provided in-service training opportunities for teachers. A link to an online survey was distributed via e-mail to graduates of Rowan University's School and Public Librarianship Program and through a posting on the Educational Media Association of New Jersey (EMAnj) listserv. A total of 75 completed surveys provided the results. The survey results indicated that 59% of the school library media specialists perceived the provision of in-service training for teachers greatly improved or improved student instructional outcomes and/or teaching outcomes; however, 60% of the school library media specialists indicated that their school or district did not provide financial incentive for the provision of in-service training.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The undying support, compassion, and understanding of my family and colleagues combined with Rob's love and encouragement have provided the strength and motivation I needed to complete this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Shontz for her wisdom, guidance, and most of all her patience. This thesis would not have been possible without the help of everyone who has challenged me to be a better person. I am forever grateful.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Topic

Few can argue that increasing student achievement is the underlying goal of the

education of young people and therefore the goal of everyone involved in the process,

including the school library media specialist. The American Association of School

Librarians' *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* outlined a number of

roles and responsibilities that a school library media specialist should assume in order to

have a positive effect on the academic achievement of students in his or her school. The

fourth goal listed in the section "Missions and Goals for School Library Media

Programs" stated that school library media specialists should seize the opportunity "to

provide leadership, collaboration, and assistance to teachers and others in applying

principles of instructional design to the use of instructional and information technology

for learning" (AASL, 1998, p. 7). By taking a leadership role in the development and

implementation of professional development or in-service training opportunities for

teachers, school library media specialists increase their influence, strengthening their

school library media programs, and in turn, increase student achievement.

Purpose of the Study

Despite the fact that recent studies have shown that the involvement school library

media specialists in providing in-service training to teachers is one of the school library

media specialist activities that is directly linked to higher academic achievement (Lance,

2002), there was little research on how school library media specialists perceived the role of providing in-service training for teachers. There was an abundance of non-research literature that stated that the providing of in-service training for teachers was one of the school library media specialists' many roles in addition to literature that explained why school library media specialists may be best suited for this role and how important principal support was to successfully fulfilling it. Research conducted to determine how many school library media specialists have actually provided in-service training for teachers including studies by Pickard (1993) and Putnam (1996) demonstrated that there was a lag between what school library media specialists felt was important and what was actually being practiced by school library media specialists.

In an effort to determine why some school library media specialists were able to practice this important role, research was needed to determine how school library media specialists perceive the role of designing and implementing in-service training for teachers. Areas of concern for this study included the following research questions:

1. What were the characteristics of school library media specialists who have provided in-service training opportunities for teachers?

2. What priority did school library media specialists place on designing and conducting in-service training opportunities for teachers?

3. How did school library media specialists perceive the support provided by their district or school for the designing and conducting of in-service training opportunities for teachers?

4. How did school library media specialists perceive the teachers' response to in-service training that has been conducted by school library media specialists?

5. How did school library media specialists perceive the in-service training they have provided for teachers had improved instructional outcomes or teaching at their school?

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined to clarify their meanings in the context of this study.

Compensation:

For the purpose of this study, compensation is anything awarded to the school media specialists for preparing and conducting professional development activities such as extra pay or additional days off.

Information literacy skills:

"The capability to access, understand, and use information" (McCain & Merrill, 2001, p. 95).

In-service training:

"Programs designed to improve instructional practices" (McCain & Merrill, 2001, p. 96).

Instructional technology:

"The theory and practice of design, development, utilization, management, and evaluation of processes and resources for learning" (American Library Association, 1998, p. 54).

<u>Priority:</u>

        For the purpose of this study, priority is the degree of importance a school library media specialist places on developing and conducting professional development activities.

<u>Professional development:</u>

        For the purpose of this study, professional development is any personal activity that the media specialist actively participates in to build her/his knowledge and skills of the profession including reading professional journals, attending seminars, and active membership in professional organizations.

<u>School library media specialist:</u>

        "The professional administrator of a library media center" (McCain & Merrill, 2001, p. 114). This term is used interchangeably with the term media specialist.

<u>Technology:</u>

        "The use of a wide variety of equipment and resources to facilitate instruction and the learning process in an educational setting" (McCain & Merrill, 2001, p. 193).

<div align="center">Assumptions and Limitations</div>

One assumption of this study was that the respondents responded truthfully and accurately to the questionnaire. It was also assumed that respondents were typical of other school library media specialists who offered in-service training for teachers.

This study was limited to only the school library media specialists who conducted professional development activities for teachers and who responded to the questionnaire. The study was also limited to those who used e-mail or had access to the Educational Media Association of New Jersey's listserv. All participation was voluntary.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In-service training for teachers, like all other aspects of education, is intended to

increase the academic achievement of students by helping teachers stay abreast of the

latest innovations in instructional practices, materials, and technologies available. In

1985, Miller and Spanjer summarized a study that was conducted by the Rand

Corporation for the United States Office of Education from 1973-1977 on in-service

training. "A basic assumption of the Rand report was that improvement of student

performance depends on changing teachers' styles either in their classroom behavior or in

their use of materials" (p. 334). If this is the case, Miller and Spanjer deduced that

"providing them [teachers] with resources and materials, the skills to effectively utilize

them, and the support and encouragement to sustain these changes is a key role in

education" (p. 334). Miller and Spanjer were among numerous authors who stated that

the school library media specialist is in a prime position to take an active role in the

designing and conducting of in-service training opportunities for teachers for a variety of

reasons.

In order to conduct this study, first general literature on why school library media

specialists should provide in-service training for teachers was gathered, including studies

that link in-service training for teachers conducted by school library media specialists to

student achievement. Research that determined whether school library media specialists

were providing in-service training for teachers and to what extent was also gathered.

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In-service Training Role of School Library Media Specialists

The providing of in-service training for teachers has been identified as a role and responsibility for school library media specialists since at least the late 1980s when the American Association of School Librarians' *Information Power* (1988) suggested that "leadership is the crucial factor in creating a quality library media program that is an integral part of the school curriculum" (p. 42). In 1987, Callison predicted that as the use of computers increased so would the importance of school library media specialists' role as "not only a teacher of students, a team teacher with peers, but also…the role of teacher of teachers" (p. 26).

Teaching in-service workshops to teachers is included in Level 7 of David Loertscher's *Taxonomies of the School Library Media Program* (1988) which described direct services to students and teachers that promote use of the media center. Loertscher suggested that school library media specialists should promote the use of audio visual materials, various reading selections, and the use of interdisciplinary materials in order to accomplish this level (1988, p. 63-4).

The recognition of the importance of the instruction of information literacy skills to students in grades K-12 increased the call for school library media specialists to serve in a leadership role in the designing and implementing of in-service training for teachers even further. The American Library Association (ALA) and Association of College and Research Libraries'(ACRL) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy (1989) called on school library media specialists to utilize their information expertise as they "view the instructional goals of their schools as an integral part of their own concern and

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responsibilities and... actively contribute toward the ongoing professional development of teachers and principals" (ACRL, "Committee Recommendations").

Philip Turner wrote in *Helping Teachers Teach* (1993) that providing in-service training for teachers is the most direct approach school library media specialists can use to promote faculty growth and includes the role in his In-Depth Level (p. 63-64). Crowley (1995), Pappas and Tepe (1995), and Simpson (1996) also believed that the constant changes in technology and instructional designs, including information literacy, increased the importance of the role of providing in-service training for teachers for school library media specialists.

Paul Christensen conducted research to determine "Characteristics of Library Media Specialists Who Have Exemplary High School Library Media Programs" (1991) through a series of interviews and checklists administered to school library media specialists in the state of Washington. Among the characteristics of the school library media specialists were, they "hold a position of respect and responsibility among the rest of the faculty. They command both an informal and formal level of building leadership. They actively promote the library media center through outreach activities for faculty, administrators, and students" (p. 250). Christensen concluded that a "model high school library media specialist exhibits a responsibility to students, faculty, and administration in promoting of lifelong learning" (p. 250).

In 1993, Pickard conducted survey research of school library media specialists in DeKalb County Schools in Georgia where respondents were asked to rate 18 statements relating to the instructional role in an attempt to determine the "order of importance to their job performance" and "their own practice" (Pickard, "Research Design," ¶ 4). The

results relating to the statement regarding conducting in-service training showed that 72% of school library media specialists felt it was important, yet it was only practiced by 30% of the school library media specialists. The 42% discrepancy score led Pickard to conclude that "library media specialists may not be in agreement with the instructional leadership and innovator aspects of the role" (Pickard, "Implications," ¶ 2).

Putnam (1996) replicated Pickard's research design with a random sample of elementary school library media specialists who were members of the American Library Association, and received similar conclusions. The average mean difference in responses between the school library media specialists who felt conducting in-service training for teachers was important and those that actually conducted in-services was .807 as reported in her Table 3. Putnam also concluded that the practicing of the role lagged behind how important the school library media specialists felt conducting in-service training for teachers was to their profession.

<div align="center">

Why School Library Media Specialists Should

Provide In-service Training for Teachers

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There has also been a lot of discussion about why school library media specialists are best suited to provide in-service training for teachers. Miller and Spanjer (1985), Turner (1988), Craver (1995), Crowley (1995), Simpson (1996), and Johnson (2000) all agreed that school library media specialists' technological training combined with their ability to access and utilize information make them prime candidates for instructing the teaching staff in these areas. Johnson (2000) also pointed out that school library media specialists have a whole school view and can provide much needed in building support.

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Miller and Spanjer (1985) wrote that "teachers have indicated that they prefer fellow teachers and / or related school personnel in this role" (p. 329) for similar reasons.

Crowley (1995) felt that schools should "employ as many resources as possible toward improving student outcomes" (p. 61) and that more school library media specialists needed to take a leadership role in the direction of becoming one of these resources. She feared "it is a simple but painful fact that those who are not seen as valuable will increasingly be seen as expendable" (Crowley, 1995, p. 63). Simpson (1996) positively agreed that "when faculty members look to the librarian as the information expert, students learn to rely on that person for guidance in information matters, as well" (Simpson, 1996, "Always a Teacher").

Perhaps the most convincing evidence to support why school library media specialists should provide in-service training for teachers was the research conducted by Keith Curry Lance (2002) on library media programs and student achievement in Alaska, Pennsylvania, Colorado and Oregon. Lance wrote in the 2002 article "Impact of School Library Media Programs on Academic Achievement" that studies in all four states showed an increase in test scores in schools where the school library media specialist spent more time providing in-service training for teachers. He felt it was important that "the library media specialist is not only the manager of the library media center, but also...the library media specialist is a trainer who provides in-service programs for teachers on resource-based learning, integrating information literacy into the curriculum, and getting the most out of technology" (Lance, "Program Administration").

School Library Media Specialists Provision

In-service Training for Teachers

In an attempt to determine whether school library media specialists were actually practicing the vital role of providing in-service training for teachers, literature that studied services practiced by school library media specialists was gathered. Despite the abundance of literature that described the providing of in-service training for teachers as an important role for school library media specialists, there was very little research available on how many school library media specialists actually do so.

Gaver (1971) conducted a study that intended to investigate the variety of services being offered in school library media centers. The participants were given a checklist of 274 services that respondents were asked to check if the service was provided regularly in their media center. Of the services that were considered in-service training for teachers only "orientation is provided for new faculty" was chosen by more than 60% or more in both the national and New Jersey sample (Gaver, 1971, p. 68). The service "media center staff conducts and/ or participates actively in in-service educational programs for teachers" ranked last, out of 17 (p. 71-72).

Information gathered by a series of interviews that were also conducted as part of Gaver's (1971) study appeared to be contrary to the results gathered via the checklist. One interviewee commented: "I spend a major part of my time now in in-service education…This must come from the media staff, which has to be the one to initiate faculty into new areas of education" (Gaver, 1971, p. 70). In-service education for teachers was chosen by the 19 interviewees nine times as the most distinctive/ important service (p. 78).

More recent survey research conducted by Miller and Shontz (2003) demonstrated that school library media specialists were still not practicing the providing of in-service training for teachers to a large extent. The results of a national random sample of school library media specialists showed that "...just one third plan or conduct workshops to help teachers evaluate, select, and use resources, a decrease of 11 percent" (Miller & Shontz, 2003, p. 53).

Summary

The providing of in-service training for teachers has been included as a role of school library media specialists in a great deal of the literature available including the 1988 and 1998 publications of the American Association of School Librarians' *Information Power*. Providing in-service training for teachers has grown in significance as technology and the importance of proficiency in information literacy skills for students has changed education in today's schools. Many believe that school library media specialists are best prepared to design and implement in-service training for teachers because of their training in current technology and their expertise in the acquiring and utilization of information. Studies have shown that student achievement increases when school library media specialists provide in-service training for teachers, yet the role continues to be overlooked by many school library media specialists.

This study determined how school library media specialists who were designing and implementing in-service training for teachers perceived this role.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overall Design and Justification

The overall purpose of this applied research study was to determine how school

library media specialists perceived the role of designing and conducting in-service

training for teachers.

The study was conducted through the distribution of a descriptive survey to

school library media specialists who had provided in-service training for teachers in New

Jersey. It was appropriate to use a descriptive survey based on Powell's definition which

states that "the basic purposes of descriptive surveys usually are to describe

characteristics of the population being studied, estimate proportions in the population,

make specific predictions, and test associational relationships" (Powell, p. 61). It was also

selected because survey research is best suited for studying cases that are "geographically

dispersed" (Powell, p. 58) and it "can be quite effective at measuring attitudes" (Powell,

91).

A link to the online survey that was created using SurveyMonkey.com, was

distributed via e-mail to graduates of Rowan University's School and Public

Librarianship program and through a posting on the Educational Media Association of

New Jersey (EMAnj) listserv. Only school library media specialists who had provided in-

service training for teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire. Respondents were

tracked by asking for the postal zip code of the school where the school library media

specialist was employed.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

In an effort to determine why some school library media specialists were able to practice the important role of providing in-service training for teachers. This research was designed to determine how school library media specialists perceive this role. Areas of concern for this study included the following research questions:

1. What were the characteristics of school library media specialists who have provided in-service training opportunities for teachers?

2. What priority did school library media specialists place on designing and conducting in-service training opportunities for teachers?

3. How did school library media specialists perceive the support provided by their district or school for the designing and conducting of in-service training opportunities for teachers?

4. How did school library media specialists perceive the teachers' response to in-service training that has been conducted by school library media specialists?

5. How did school library media specialists perceive the in-service training they have provided for teachers had improved instructional outcomes or teaching at their school?

Population and Sample

The population selected for this study was school library media specialists who have provided in-service training for teachers in New Jersey and volunteered to complete the questionnaire. This population was selected based on the parameters of the survey purpose and the accessibility to the researcher. The utilization of e-mail and a listserv

accessible to school library media specialists in New Jersey to seek volunteers was determined to be the most efficient manner of reaching such a dispersed population.

Since the population was restricted to only school library media specialists who volunteered to complete the questionnaire, the sample was the same as the population. The results do not represent the attitudes of all school library media specialists.

Variables

The variables that were considered important in determining how school library media specialists perceive the importance of providing in-service training for teachers were:

- number of years employed as a school library media specialist, in the field of education, and in the current position,

- highest earned degree of the respondent,

- number of people working in the school media center including school library media specialists, clerks or aides, and volunteers,

- school library media specialist's personal participation in professional development activities,

- school library media specialist's priority on designing and conducting in-service training opportunities for teachers,

- school library media specialist's perception of support provided by the school district, and

- school library media specialist's perception of teacher feedback and effect on instructional outcomes.

Instruments Used

An online survey (see Appendix A) was created using SurveyMonkey.com to obtain information regarding the perceptions of participating school library media specialists. A cover letter (see Appendix B) was sent via e-mail to a list of alumni of the School and Public Librarianship Program at Rowan University and posted on the Educational Media Association of New Jersey listserv. It asked school library media specialists who had provided in-service training for teachers to complete the online survey. The participants were told that participation was strictly voluntary, that they did not need to respond to all questions in the survey, and that responses would be kept anonymous and confidential.

The survey consisted of two sections (see Appendix A). The first section asked for background information about the school library media specialist and the media center in which they worked, and the second asked questions pertaining to their provision of in-service training for teachers. The first section contained eight open-ended questions that could be answered with a number or one word answer. The ninth question in the first section asked the participant to rate their level of participation in professional development activities on a scale of 1-5, where 1=Not involved and 5=Very involved. The second section asked eleven closed-ended questions that the participants answered by clicking on their answer choice. This section included questions about when, how often, and on what topics the school library media specialist provided in-service training for teachers. Questions regarding administration and school support in addition to teacher participation and feedback were also included. Finally, school library media specialists

were asked to rate how important they perceived conducting in-service training for teachers was to their professional role.

Method of Data Collection

The initial e-mail (see Appendix B) was sent and posted to both the listserv and the distribution list on February 11, 2005. The e-mail included the purpose of the study and asked only school library media specialists who had provided in-service training for teachers to complete the online survey that could be accessed by an included URL that led to SurveyMonkey.com. Completed surveys were stored on SurveyMonkey.com until the survey was closed on February 25, 2005.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability of the survey was a concern of the researcher, so a pre-test was conducted among a group of colleagues in the Graduate Thesis in Library Studies course, and with a retired school library media specialist from Washington Township High School. Revisions were then made based on recommendations from the thesis advisor and those colleagues.

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CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Procedure/Methods

A descriptive survey (quantitative data) regarding the attitudes of school library media specialists who provide in-service training to teachers was posted on the Internet using SurveyMonkey.com. The survey was sent to the Educational Media Association of New Jersey listserv and e-mailed to alumni and current students in Rowan University's School and Public Librarianship program. The survey consisted of a combination of nine open-ended questions and fourteen closed-ended questions. The questions were placed in two sections according to the study's research questions. Data were summarized from the returned surveys.

Response Rate

Of the 78 surveys that were completed using Survey Monkey, three surveys were deleted from the sample because the respondents stated that they had never provided in-service training for teachers. All data analysis was based on the 75 remaining surveys that were collected via SurveyMonkey.com. Since the purposive sample was limited to school library media specialists who conducted in-service training for teachers and volunteered to complete the questionnaire, the 75 surveys returned were considered a 100% response rate. Figures were then developed using Microsoft Excel, to report the results in a clear and understandable format. Narrative descriptions were provided to further explain the results.

Presentation of Results

The first section of the survey labeled, "Background Information," was designed to determine the characteristics of the school library media specialists who completed the survey and the schools in which they work. There were 12 questions in this section. In Question #1 (open-ended), the school library media specialists were asked how many years they had been employed as a school library media specialist. Responses were organized into five categories based on five year increments. Nineteen percent had been employed as a school library media specialist for less than five years, 30% had been employed between five and nine years, 15% between 10 and 14 years, 13% between 15 and 19 years, and 23% had been employed as a school library media specialist for 20 or more years. Figure 1 provides the results to Question # 1.

Figure 1

Percentage of Years Employed as School Library Media Specialists

Question #1: How many years have you been employed as a school library media specialist?

n=75
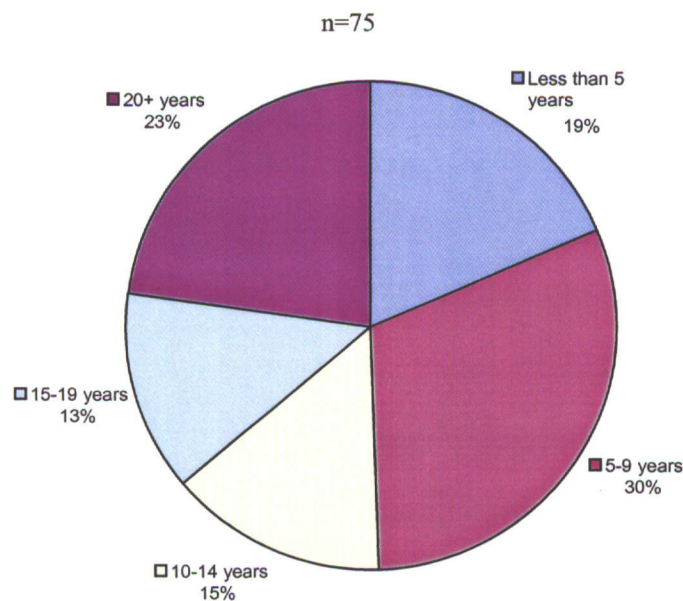
In question #2 (open-ended), respondents provided the total number of years the school library media specialists were employed in the educational field. Forty-two (56%) of the respondents have been employed in the educational field for over 20 years. Thirteen (17%) had been employed in the educational field for 15-19 years, eleven (15%) for 10-14 years, six (8%) for 5-9 years, and three (4%) had been employed in the educational field for under 5 years. Figure 2 shows the results of Question #2.

Figure 2

Percentage of Total Number of Years Employed in Educational Field

Question #2: How many years have you been employed in the educational field?

n=75
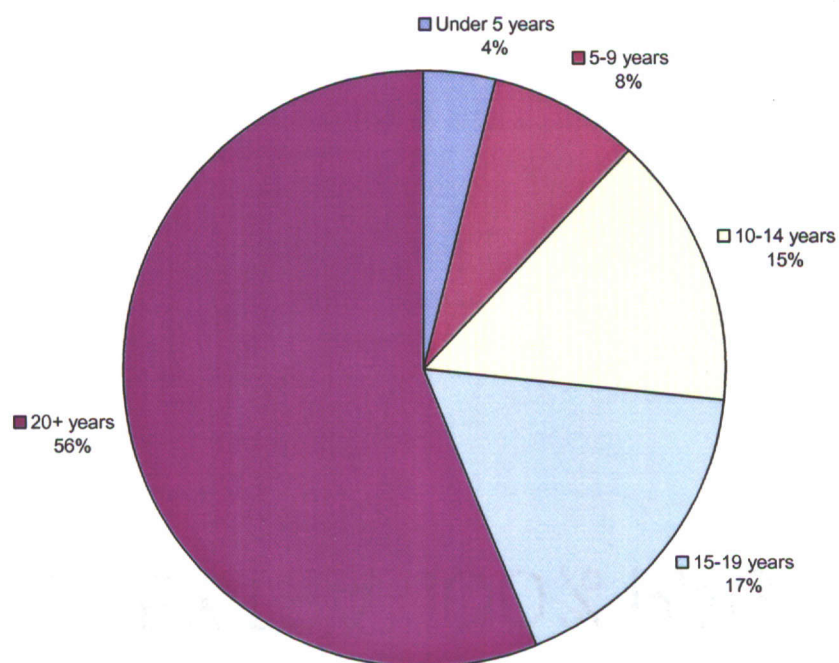
For Question #3 (open-ended), the respondents were asked how many years they had been employed at their current position. Thirty –five percent of the school library media specialists who responded had been employed at their current position for under five years, 29% had been employed between five and nine years, 11% between 10 and 14 years, 17 % between 15 and 19 years, and 8% of the school library media specialists had been employed at their current positions for 20 or more years. The results for Question #3 are found in Figure 3.

Figure 3

<u>Percentage of Years Employed at Current Position</u>

Question #3: How many years have you been employed at your current position?

n=75
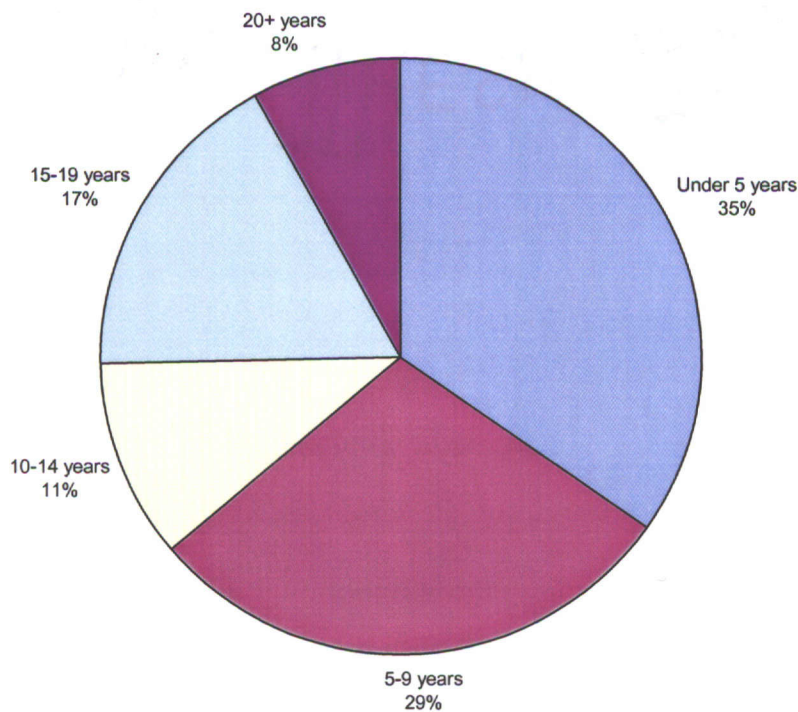
Question #4 asked the respondents to enter their highest earned degree. Responses were then reorganized into three categories: Bachelor's, Master's, and Two or more Master's Degrees earned. Eleven (15%) of the school library media specialists' highest degree earned was Bachelor's degree, fifty-eight (77%) had earned a Master's Degree, and six (8%) had earned two or more Master's Degrees. Results for Question # 4 are found in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Percentage of the Highest Degree Earned

Question #4: What is your highest earned degree?

n=75
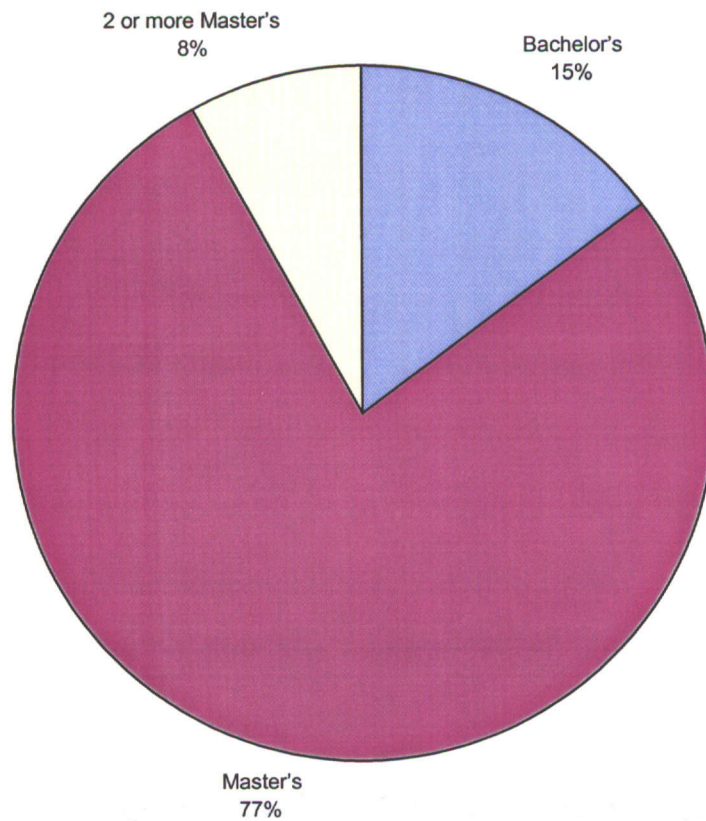
Respondents were then asked in an open-ended question to specify the year in which they earned their degree in Question #5. The responses were then categorized into the following decades: 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000-present. Three percent of the school library media specialists had earned their degree in the 1960s, 24% had earned their degree in the 1970s, 23% in the 1980s, 19% in the 1990s, and 31% had earned their degree between the year 2000 and the present.

Figure 5

Decade in Which Respondents Earned Their Degree by Percentage

Question # 5: What year did you earn the degree?

n=75
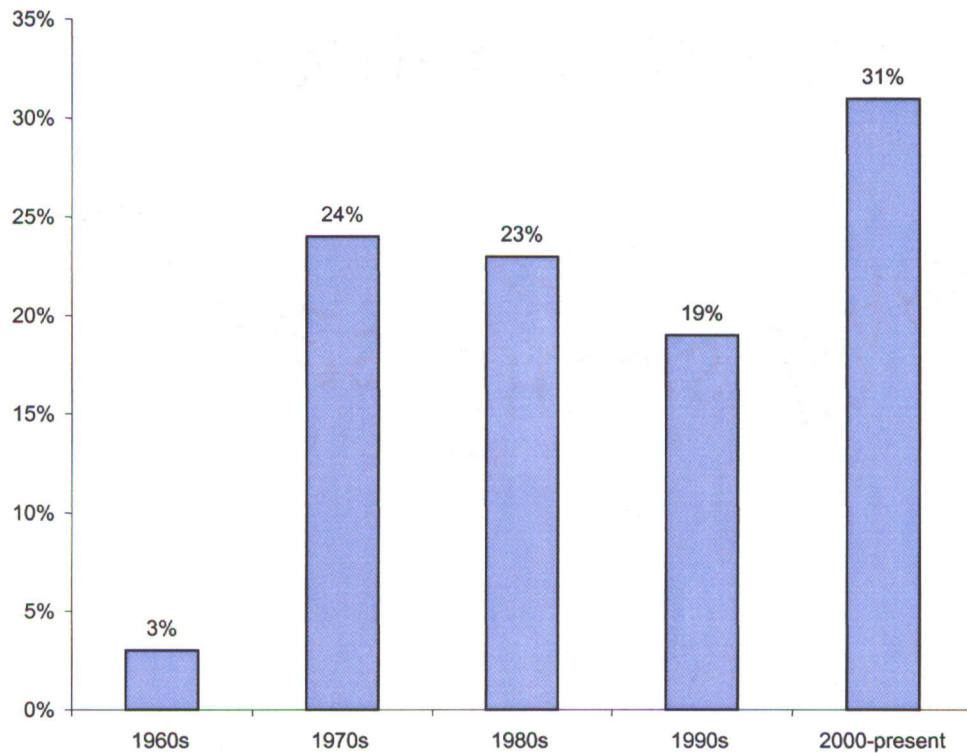
For Question # 6, the respondents were asked for the certification that they currently hold. They had the following four options to choose from: "Associate Educational Media Specialist," "Educational Media Specialist," "Emergency/ Provisional," and "Other." Those that chose "Other" were also given the option to specify their certification. Four of the responses that were initially in the "Other" category also held one of the three certificates in addition to another, so they were moved into the appropriate category. Seventy percent of the respondents held an Educational Media Specialist certificate, 23% held an Associates Educational Media Specialist certificate, and 4% held an Emergency/ Provisional certificate. Three percent held either a New Jersey Professional Librarian certificate or a teacher certificate, so they were categorized as "Other." Results for Question #6 are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Certifications Currently Held by Percentage

Question # 6: Please check the certification that you currently hold.

n=75
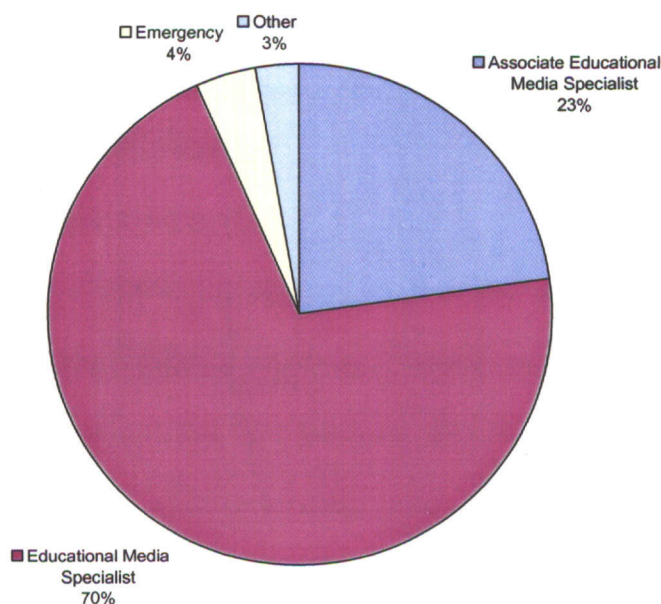
Question # 7 (open-ended) asked the respondents to indicate what grade levels were serviced by their media center. The responses were then placed into the following categories: "Elementary" for any combination of grades from kindergarten to 6th grade, "Middle" for any combination of grades from 5-9, "High School" for grades 9-12, and an "Other" category for grade level combinations that did not fit any of the categories. "Other" responses included grades 7-12, grades 9-12, and K-8. Thirty-seven percent of the school library media specialists worked in a media center that serviced Elementary level students, 19% serviced Middle School students, 29% serviced High School Students, and 15% serviced other combinations of grade levels. Results for Question #7 are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Percentage of Grade Levels Serviced by Media Center

Question #7: What grade levels are serviced by your media center?

n=75

Other
15%

Elementary School
(any K-6)
37%

High School (9-12)
29%

Middle School (any 5-9)
19%

28
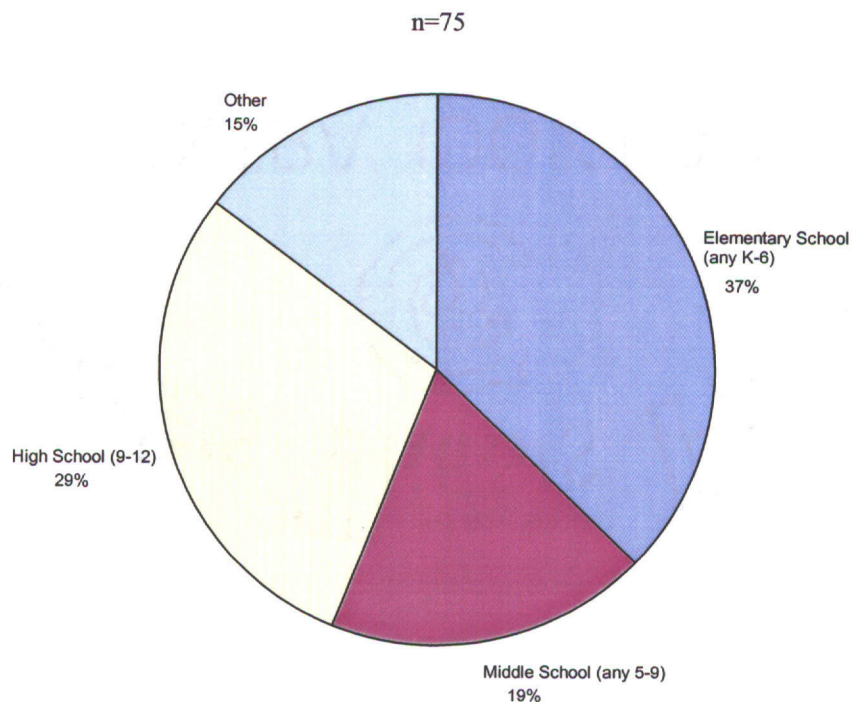
The next three questions of the survey, questions 8, 9, and 10 were used to determine how many certified school library media specialists and non-certified support staff worked in each school library media center. Open-ended questions were used to ask the school library media specialists how many certified school library media specialists and how many full and part-time support staff worked in their school library media center. For these three questions the number of respondents was 74 since one of the school library media specialists worked as a supervisor and not in a media center.

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of certified school library media specialists including themselves that worked in their school media center for Question #8 (open-ended). Sixty-two (84%) of the school library media specialists indicated that they were the only certified school library media specialist working in their library, nine (12%) indicated that there were two certified school library media specialists, and three (4%) indicated that there were three certified school library media specialists working in their school library media center.

In Question #9 (open-ended) the respondents were asked how many paid clerks and/or aides worked full-time in their school library media center, and in Question #10 they were asked how many worked part-time. After collecting the data it became evident that a number of respondents had skipped one or both of these questions. In order to illustrate the number of support staff that worked in each media center, the researcher combined the answers for questions 9 and 10 then categorized the answers into the following categories: "0", "0.5", "1", "1.5", "2", and "Over 2". The researcher counted each part-time support staff as "0.5" and each full- time support staff as "1". Twenty-three (31%) of the school library media specialists indicated that they did not have any

support staff working in their school library media center. Fifteen (20%) had .5 support

staff working in their SLMC, twenty-four (33%) had 1, three (4%) had 1.5, five (7%) had

2, and four (5%) indicated that they had over 2 support staff working in the school library

media center. Percentages of the total number of support staff working in each school

library media center are included in Figure 8.

Figure 8

Percentage of Support Staff Employed by Each Media Center

Questions 9 & 10: How many paid clerks and/or aides work full-time in the SLMC? Part-Time?

n=74
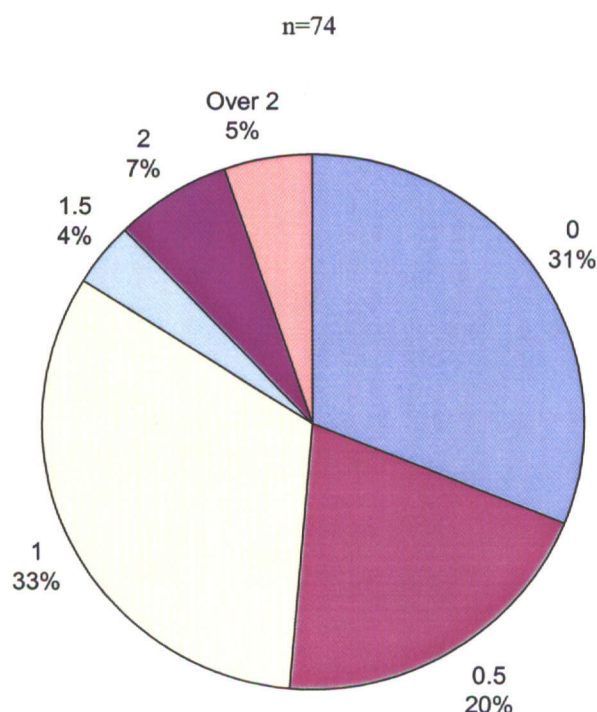
For Question #11 the school library media specialists were asked to rate their

level of memberships in various library or education professional organizations on a scale

of five to one where 5 equaled very involved and 1 equaled not involved. Thirteen (17%)

rated their level of membership in professional organizations as a 5, twenty-eight (37%)

rated their level at a 4, eighteen (24%) at a 3, fourteen (19%) at a 2, and two (3%) rated

30

their level of membership in professional organizations at a 1. The results for Question #11 are found in Figure 9.

Figure 9

<u>Self-Rated Level of Membership in Library or Education Professional Organizations</u>

Question #11: How do you rate your own level of memberships in various library or education professional

organizations? (5=Very Involved...1=Not Involved)

n=75
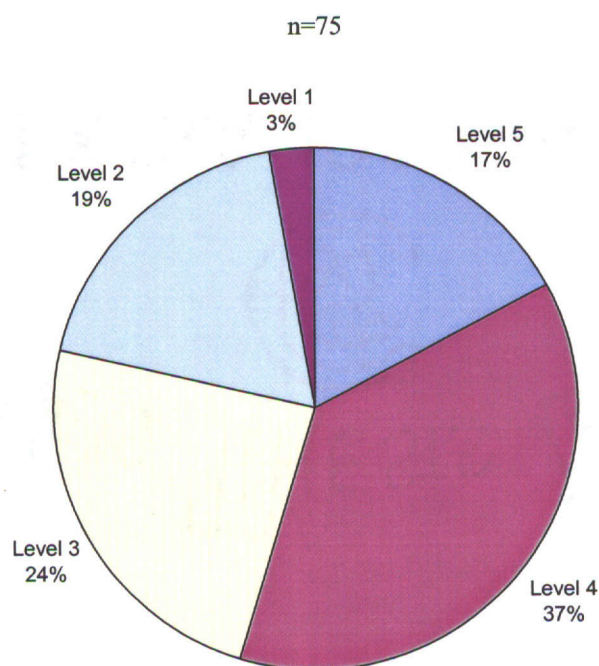
Respondents were asked how often they attended library or professional development opportunities in a year for Question #12. The school library media specialists selected from one of five categories: "More than 8 times a year", "6-8 times a year", "4-5 times a year", "2-3 times a year", and "Once a year". Twenty-one percent of the school library media specialists responded that they had attended professional development opportunities more than 8 times a year, 11% responded that the attended 6-8 times a year, 28% 4-5 times a year, 37% 2-3 times a years, and 3% responded that they

attend professional development opportunities once a year. Results for Question #12 are found in Figure 10.

Figure 10

<u>Yearly Attendance of Library or Education Professional Development Opportunities</u>

Question # 12: On average, how often do you attend library or education professional development opportunities in a year? (Conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.)

n=75
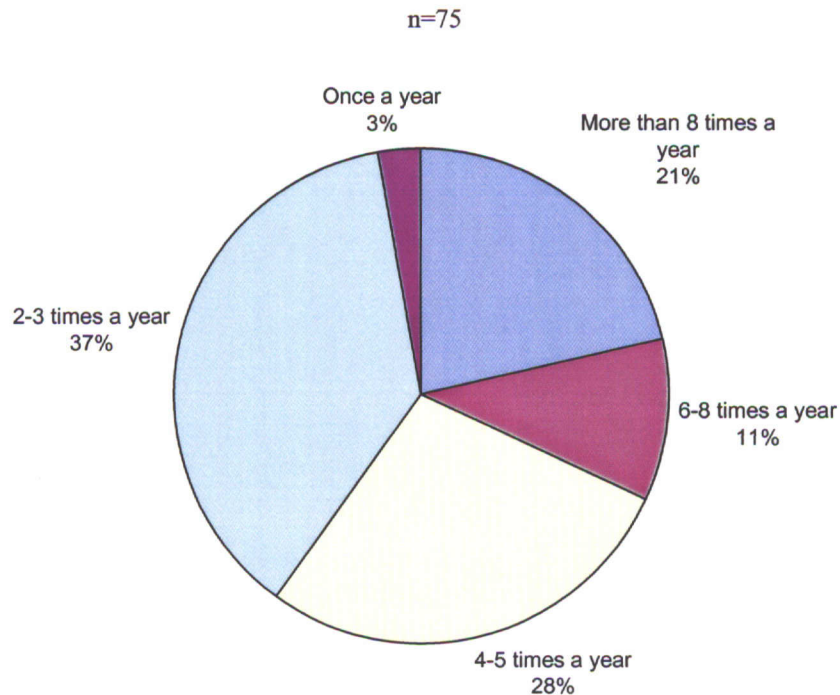
The second section of the survey titled "Provision of In-Service Training for Teachers," was designed to determine to what extent the respondents were providing in-service training to teachers, what priority they placed on the designing and conducting of in-service training for teachers, how the school library media specialists perceived the support provided by their district or school for the designing and conducting of in-services, how they perceived the teachers' response to in-service training that they have conducted, and how the school library media specialists perceived the in-service training

they have provided for teachers had improved instructional outcomes or teaching at their school.

For Question #13 the school library media specialists were asked to indicate when they had last provided an in-service training activity for teachers. Respondents selected from one of the following categories: "During this school year", "During the last school year", "Within the last 3 years", or "Over 3 years ago". Fifty-three (73%) responded that they have provided an in-service training activity for teachers during this school year. Twelve (16%) had provided in-service training during the last school year, six (8%) within the last three years, and two (3%) indicated that the in-service training activity that they provided for teachers was over three years ago. Two respondents did not answer this question. Results for Question #13 are found in Figure 11.

Figure 11

Last Provision of In-service Training Activity for Teachers

Question #13: When did you last provide an in-service training activity for teachers?

n=73
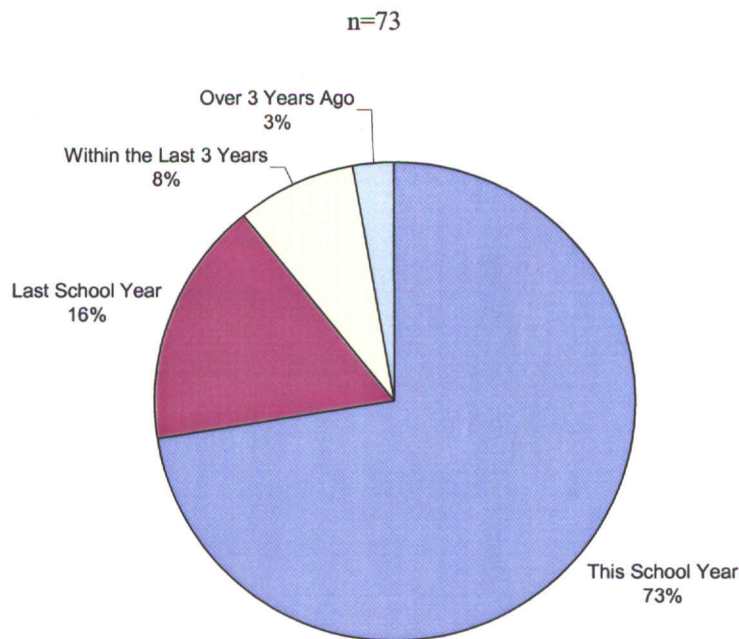
In Question #14, respondents were asked how many times they had provided in-service training for teachers in the last three years. The school library media specialists could select either "Once", "2-3 times", "4-5 times" or "6 or more times". Four (6%) of the school library media specialists indicated that they had provided in-service training for teachers once in the last three years. Twenty-four (34%) had provided in-service training 2-3 times in the last three years, eighteen (25%) 4-5 times, and twenty-five (35%) provided in-service training for teachers 6 or more times in the last three years. Since the question limited the time to the last three years there were two school library media specialists who did not respond in addition to the two that did not respond to the previous question leaving 71 total respondents for this question. Results for Question #14 are found in Figure 12.

Figure 12

Number of Times Provided In-Service Training in Last Three Years

Question #14: How many times have you provided in-service training for teachers in the last 3 years?

n=71
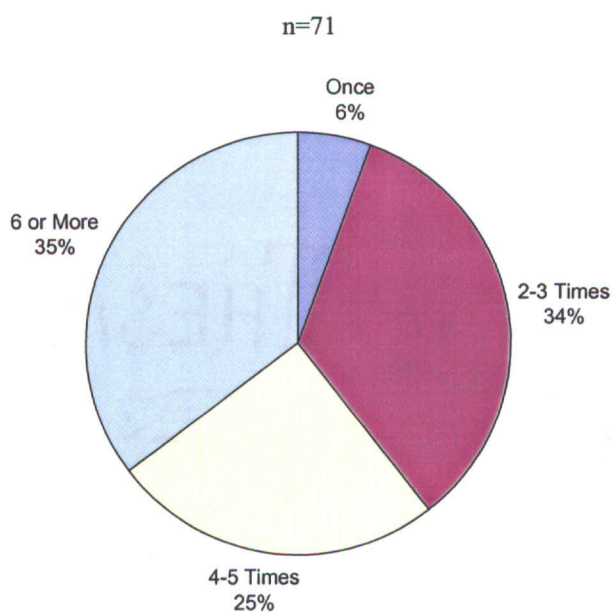
For Question #15 the 71 respondents were asked to indicate which topics they had covered in their in-service training in the last three years. They were given a list of ten possible topics and were instructed to select all that applied. The ten topics were "Orientation for new faculty", "Introduction of new materials", "Computer skills instruction (Word, Excel, etc.)", "Use of the online computer catalog (OPAC)", "Curriculum integration of information literacy", "Internet searching", "Online databases", "Copyright laws", "Webpage design", and "Power Point". The respondents were also given the option of typing in additional topics that they had covered in the "Other" category. These additional topics were then reorganized into one of the original ten categories, placed into a new category, or left in the "Other" category. The four new categories that were created based on the responses from the "Other" category were: "Anti-plagiarism", "Reading incentive programs", "Smartboard", and "Collaboration".

"Orientation for new faculty" was selected by 43 respondents as a topic that they had covered in an in-service for teachers in the past three years. "Introduction of new material" was selected 51 times, "Computer skills instruction" 36 times, "Use of the OPAC" 41 times, "Curriculum integration of information literacy" 40 times, "Internet searching" 35 times, "Online databases" 54 times, "Copyright laws" 16 times, "Webpage design" 14 times, "Power point" 23 times, "Anti-plagiarism" 6 times, "Reading incentive programs" 5 times, "Smartboard" 4 times, "Collaboration" 3 times and "Other" was selected 7 times. There were 71 total respondents for this question and each respondent was asked to select all topics that they had covered during an in-service in the last 3 years. Results for Question #15 are found in Figure 13.

Figure 13

Topics Covered in In-service Training for Teachers in the Last 3 Years

Question #15: Please select each of the following topics that you have covered in your in-service training

for teachers in the last 3 years.

n=71
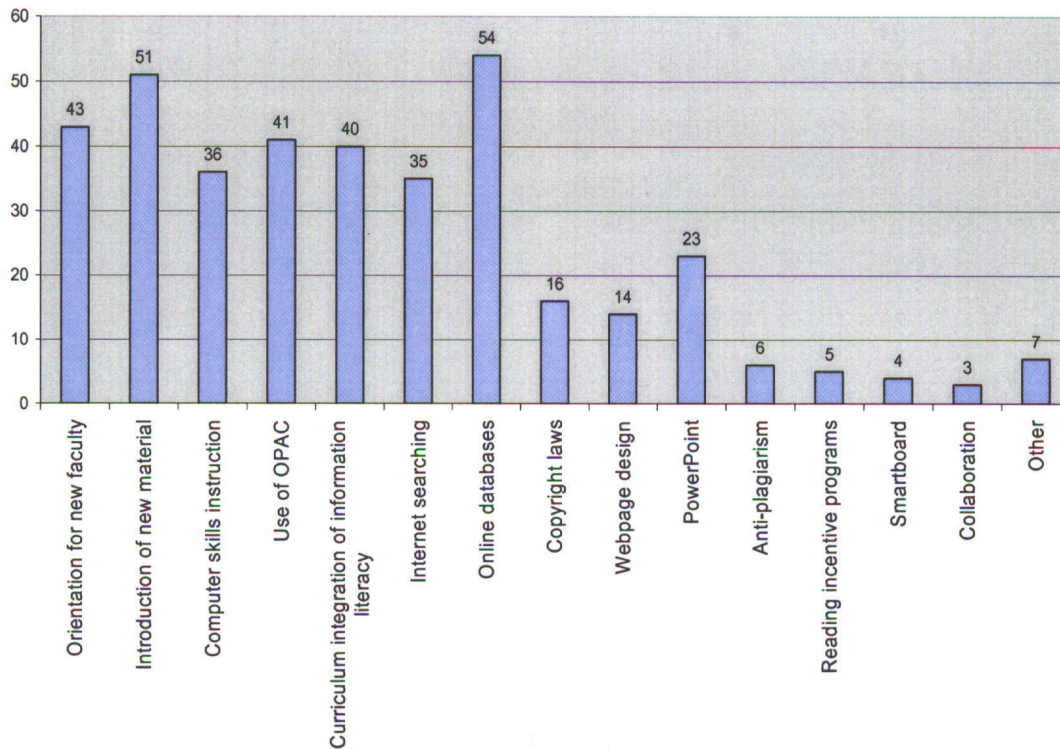
Question #16 asked the school library media specialists whether they typically

volunteered to provide in-service training for teachers. Sixty-five (87%) answered yes,

they did typically volunteer to provide in-service training for teachers. Ten (13%)

indicated that they did not typically volunteer to provide in-service training for teachers.

For Question #17, the respondents were asked if their principal or administration

encouraged them to provide in-service training for teachers. Fifty-seven (77%) of the

respondents answered yes, their principal or administration encouraged them to provide

in-service training for teachers, and seventeen (23%) replied that their principal or administration did not encourage them to provide in-service training for teachers. There was also one also one non-response.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not their school or district offered financial incentives for the provision of in-service training for teachers in Question #18. Thirty (40%) of the school library media specialists reported that their school or district did provide financial incentives and forty-five (60%) indicated that their school or district did not.

Question # 19 asked the school library media specialists if teacher participation in their in-service training had been primarily required by administration or if it was voluntary. The respondents could have selected "Required", "Voluntary", or "Both". Eighteen percent of the respondents (n=73) reported that teacher participation in their in-service training had been primarily required, 47% stated it was voluntary, and 37% indicated that teacher participation in their in-service training was both voluntary and required.

For question #20, the respondents were asked to rate the formal or informal feedback that they had received from the participants of their in-service training. The categories that the respondents could have chosen were "All positive", "Mostly positive", "Mixed", and "Little or no feedback". Forty-seven percent of the respondents (n=73) indicated that the informal or formal feedback was all positive, 49% indicated that it was mostly positive, 1% received mixed feedback, and 3% received little or no feedback regarding their in-service training.

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Question #21 asked the school library media specialists to what extent they perceived the in-service training they provided for teachers had improved student instructional outcomes and/or teaching activities at their school on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 equaled little improvement seen and 5 equaled greatly improved. One (1%) of the school library media specialists perceived there to be little improvement seen, six (8%) rated the improvement at a 2, twenty-three (32%) rated it at a 3, thirty-five (48%) rated it a 4, and eight (11%) rated the improvement of instructional outcomes and/or teaching activities due to their in-service training a 5. Results for Question #21 are found in Figure 14.

Figure 14

Perceived Improvement of Student Instructional Outcomes and/or Teaching Activities

Question #21: To what extent do you perceive the in-service training that you have provided for teachers has improved student instructional outcomes and/or teaching activities at your school? (5=Greatly improved...1=Little improvement seen)

n=73
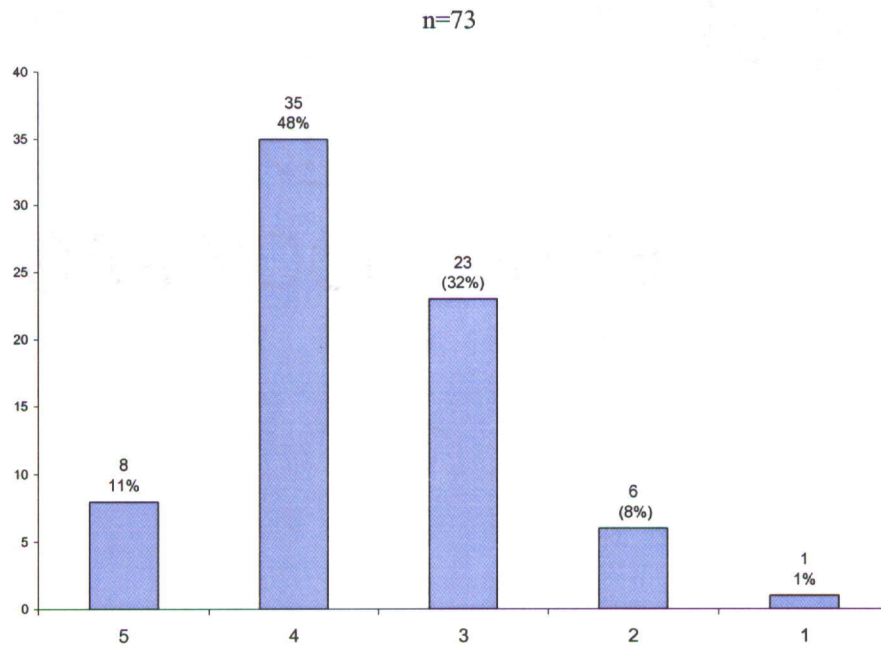
For Question #22, the respondents were asked how they perceived the support that was provided by their school or district for their provision of in-service training for teachers. They were asked to choose one of the following categories: "Very supportive", "Supportive", "Neutral", "Unsupportive" and "Very unsupportive". Twenty-one (29%) of the school library media specialists felt that their school or district was very supportive, thirty-eight (53%) felt their school or district was supportive, ten (14%) indicated that the support was neutral, and three (4%) felt their district was unsupportive. None of the respondents indicated that their school or district was very unsupportive. There were three non-responses. The results for Question #22 are shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Perception of Support Given by School/ District for Provision of In-service Training

Question #22: How do you perceive the support provided by your school/ district for your provision of in-service training for teachers?

n=72

39
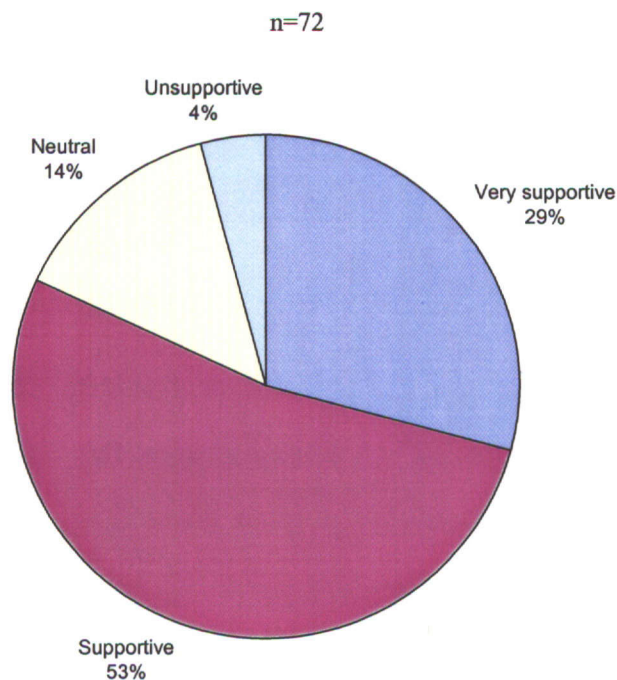
Question #23 asked the respondents how important they perceived the conducting of in-service training for teachers was to their professional role. They were asked to choose either "Very important", "Somewhat important", "Undecided", "Somewhat undecided" or "Very undecided". Fifty-two (72%) of the respondents felt that conducting in-service training activities was very important to their professional role, nineteen (26%) felt that it was somewhat important, and one (1%) indicated that they were somewhat undecided about how important providing in-service training is to their professional role. None of the respondents indicated that they felt undecided or very undecided about the importance to their professional role. Results for Question #23 are found in Figure 16.

Figure 16

Perceived Importance of Provision of In-service to Professional Role

Question #23: How important do you perceive conducting in-service training for teachers is to your professional

role?

n=72

40
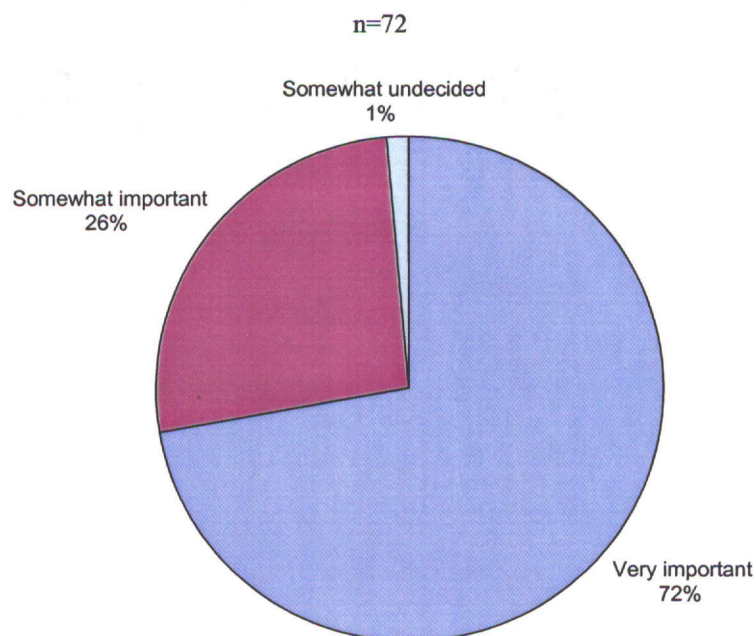
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

By taking a leadership role in the development and implementation of in-service training for teachers, school library media specialists increase their influence, strengthen their school library media programs, and in turn help increase student achievement. The purpose of this study was to determine how school library media specialists perceived the role of designing and implementing in-service training for teachers in an effort to determine why some school library media specialists did in fact practice this important role. Research was conducted to determine the characteristics of school library media specialists who provided in-service training opportunities for teachers. Important factors of the study included how the school library media specialists perceived the teachers' response to the in-service training they had provided, the effect the in-service training had on instructional outcomes and/or teaching at their school, the support provided by their school or district, and how important they felt the provision of in-service training was to their professional role.

Characteristics of School Library Media Specialists

Based on the data collected and presented in Chapter IV, the researcher was able to draw a number of conclusions about the characteristics of school library media specialists who provided in-service training for teachers. The percentage of years the respondents were employed as a school library media specialist was split nearly in half

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between those who had been employed over 10 years and those who had been employed under 10 years. Two-thirds of the school library media specialists had been employed at their current position for less than 10 years. However, there was a clear majority, over 80%, of respondents who had been employed in the educational field for over ten years. Clearly, the school library media specialists had been employed in another area of the educational field before working as a school library media specialist, particularly at their current position.

A majority of the school library media specialists held at least one Master's degree as their highest earned degree, and half of the respondents earned that degree between 1990 and the present. A majority of the respondents also held an Educational Media Specialist Certificate. It was not surprising to the researcher that a majority of the school library media specialists that provided in-service training for teachers had earned their Master's and the highest possible certificate for school library media specialists.

The grade levels that were serviced by the media centers in which the school library media specialists worked were fairly evenly dispersed. A slight majority worked in elementary school media centers, which was expected since there are more elementary schools than any other level. A majority of the respondents were the only certified school library media specialist working in their media center, and over half had less than a full-time support staff assisting them. It was positive to discover that school library media specialists who work in all levels of schools were providing in-service training for teachers, but disconcerting to see that most were doing so with little or no assistance. These school library media specialists must have placed a high priority on providing in-service training to teachers.

It was also expected that the researcher would discover that the school library media specialists who provided in-service training for teachers were active in library or education professional organizations and regularly attended professional development activities. Over half of the respondents rated themselves as either very involved or somewhat involved in professional organizations. In fact, only five of the school library media specialists rated themselves as either hardly involved or not involved. Similarly, one-third of the school library media specialists indicated that they attended library or education professional development opportunities more than six times a year. About one-third also indicated that they had attended professional development opportunities four or five times a year. School library media specialists who provided in-service training for teachers were actively continuing their own professional education.

Provision of In-Service Training for Teachers

A number of conclusions regarding the provision of in-service training for teachers by school library media specialists were also drawn based on the data presented in Chapter IV. For instance, those who responded to the survey were actively involved in practicing the role since a majority of the school library media specialists who provided in-service training for teachers had done so during the current school year. Only two respondents indicated that the last time they had provided in-service training was over three years ago.

The number of times that the school library media specialists had provided in-service training for teachers during the last three years also shows how committed they were to the role. One-third of the respondents had provided six or more in-services in the last three years and another third had provided four or five. Only four respondents

indicated that they had only provided in-service training for teachers once in the last three years. Of particular interest to the researcher were the types of topics that had been covered in these in-services. Among the topics that were chosen most often were the orientation of new faculty and new materials and use of the OPAC and online databases. All of the topics that were chosen by at least half of the respondents dealt with information literacy skills, technology, and orientation. It was concluded that these were the areas that the school library media specialists felt were most important training areas for teachers in their schools.

Other areas of interest for the researcher were whether school library media specialists had volunteered to provide in-service training, whether they were encouraged by their administration, and whether or not they received financial incentives for conducting the in-services. An overwhelming majority (87%) of the school library media specialists indicated that they had typically volunteered to provide in-service training for teachers. A majority also stated that their principal or administration encouraged them to provide in-services. However, less than half of the respondents indicated that their school or district offered financial incentive. A later question asked respondents to rate the support that was given by their school/district for the provision of in-service training, and surprisingly, 82% of the respondents felt their school/ district was either very supportive or supportive. The researcher concluded that the school library media specialist respondents believed that the provision of in-service training for teachers was a vital aspect of their profession since most volunteered to provide them and felt their district was supportive despite not receiving any financial incentive.

As with any other educational practice, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness or impact the in-service training that school library media specialists provided for teachers had on instructional outcomes or teaching strategies in their school. Respondents were asked for their perception of the formal and informal feedback that teachers had given them as well as the extent they perceived the in-services they had provided improved teaching at their school. Nearly all of the respondents indicated that they had received all positive or mostly positive feedback from the teachers. A majority of the school library media specialists also rated the extent they perceived in-service training improved educational outcomes as either a 4 or 3 on a scale of 1-5. Based on these data, the researcher concluded that the school library media specialists were not sure of the impact their in-service training had on teaching, and that there was most likely no formal evaluation method used by the school library media specialists.

Finally, the school library media specialists were asked to indicate how important they perceived the provision of in-service training for teachers was to their professional role, and nearly all of the respondents felt it was either somewhat or very important. Based on the percentages of school library media specialists who provided in-services in the current school year, the number of in-services that had been conducted in the past three years, and how many media specialists had volunteered regardless of receiving financial incentive these results were not surprising to the researcher. Respondents to this study were school library media specialists who were active in professional organizations and in their own professional development who felt that the provision of in-service training for teachers was a priority.

Recommendations for Uses of the Results

Providing in-service training is an important aspect of the professional role, but improvements need to be made in the evaluation methods used and the support given to those who volunteer their time to conduct them. Since the evaluation process could directly affect the support given, perhaps this should be addressed first. School library media specialists need to devise a method of formally evaluating teachers' direct feedback of in-service training, and how the in-services conducted affect teaching strategies in the school. This evaluation will provide school library media specialists with the necessary data they may need to justify this aspect of their professional role.

Once a formal evaluation method is in place, the researcher suggests that school library media specialists share their findings with their principals and/or administration. It is possible that administration had been overlooking the valuable service that school library media specialists can offer by designing and implementing training for teachers. If it is documented that student instructional outcomes and/or teaching strategies are improved because of them, support in the form of financial incentives or an increased number of support staff may be increased.

Recommendations for Further Study

The provision of in-service training for teachers is an aspect of the school library media specialist profession that seems to be overlooked by researchers, administration, and many practicing school library media specialists. This study focused on those school library media specialists who had provided in-service training in the past therefore it was not possible to determine why there are school library media specialists who provide in-services and those who do not. More research needs to be done with a larger sample to

determine what factors may be keeping some school library media specialists from practicing this important leadership role.

Further research is also recommended to determine the affect the provision of in-service training by school library media specialists has on teacher and administration's perceptions of school library media specialists. If more school library media specialists are going to increase their influence, strengthen their school library media program, and in turn, increase student achievement by taking a leadership role in the development and implementation of in-service training for teachers, more research is needed.

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APPENDIX A

ONLINE SURVEY

Provision of In-service Training for Teachers   **Exit this survey >>**

Please complete this survey only if you have provided in-service training for teachers. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

1. How many years have you been employed as a school library media specialist?

[   ]

2. How many years have you been employed in the educational field?

[   ]

3. How many years have you been employed at your current position?

[   ]

4. What is your highest earned degree?   **5. What year did you earn the degree?**

[   ]   [   ]

6. Please check the certification that you currently hold:

☐ Associate Educational Media Specialist
☐ Educational Media Specialist
☐ Emergency/ Provisional
☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

Next >>

Provision of In-service Training for Teachers   **Exit this survey >>**

7. What grade levels are serviced by your media center?

[   ]

8. How many certified school library media specialists (including yourself) work in your school library media center?

[   ]

9. How many paid clerks and/or aides work full-time in   10. Part-Time?
the SLMC?

[   ]   [   ]

11. How do you rate your own level of memberships in various library or education professional organizations? (5=Very Involved...1=Not Involved)

5	4	3	2	1
▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

12. On average, how often do you attend library or education professional development opportunities in a year? (conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.)

▪ More than 8 times a year
▪ 6-8 times a year
▪ 4-5 times a year
▪ 2-3 times a year
▪ Once a year

<< Prev   Next >>

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13. When did you last provide an in-service training activity for teachers? (Check One)

☐ During this school year

☐ During the last school year

☐ Within the last 3 years

☐ Over 3 years ago

14. How many times have you provided in-service training for teachers in the last 3 years? (Check One)

☐ Once

☐ 2-3 times

☐ 4-5 times

☐ 6 or more times

15. Please select each of the following topics that you have covered in your in-service training for teachers in the last 3 years. (Select all that apply)

☐ Orientation for new faculty

☐ Introduction of new materials

☐ Computer skills instruction (Word, Excel, etc.)

☐ Use of on-line computer catalog (OPAC)

☐ Curriculum integration of information literacy

☐ Internet searching

☐ Online databases

☐ Copyright laws

☐ Webpage design

☐ Power Point

☐ Other (please specify)

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16. Do you typically volunteer to provide in-service training for teachers?

Yes   No

17. Has your principal/administration encouraged you to provide in-service training for teachers?

Yes   No

18. Does your school/ district offer financial incentives to you for the provision of in-service training for teachers?

Yes   No

19. Has teacher participation in your in-service training been primarily required by administration or voluntary? (Select One)

Required   Voluntary   Both

20. What kind of formal or informal feedback regarding your in-service training have you received from the participants? (Check one)

All positive

Mostly positive

Mixed

Little or no feedback

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21. To what extent do you perceive the in-service training that you have provided for teachers has improved student instructional outcomes and/ or teaching activities at your school?
(5=Greatly improved...1=Little improvement seen)

5	4	3	2	1
▨	▨	▨	▨	▨

22. How do you perceive the support provided by your school/ district for your provision of in-service training for teachers? (Choose one)

▨ Very supportive

▨ Supportive

▨ Neutral

▨ Unsupportive

▨ Very Unsupportive

23. How important do you perceive conducting in-service training for teachers is to your professional role?

▨ Very Important

▨ Somewhat important

▨ Undecided

▨ Somewhat undecided

▨ Very undecided

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
Stephanie Gaughan
Rowan University
Glassboro, NJ
gaughanss@hotmail.com

24. Please type your e-mail address here if you would like to receive a copy of the results.

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APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER

Dear School Library Media Specialist:

I am a graduate student in the School Librarianship Program at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. I am researching school library media specialists who provide in-service training for teachers for my master's thesis. If you provide in-service training for teachers, please help me by completing an online survey. You can access the survey by going to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=72736851489

Your responses will be completely anonymous; however, if you would like to receive a copy of the results, please type your e-mail address into the space provided at the end of the survey. Also, please forward this e-mail to any other school library media specialists who you believe provide in-service training for teachers.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Gaughan
Rowan University
Glassboro, NJ
gaughanss@hotmail.com