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ACCOMMODATING LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS  
IN NEW JERSEY MIDDLE SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS

by  
Dawn Duelly

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
May 2, 2000

Approved by

Assistant Professor

Date Approved May 13, 2000

## **Abstract**

Dawn Duelly. Accommodating Learning Disabled Students in New Jersey Middle School Media Centers. 2000. (Under the direction of Dr. Holly G. Willett), Program in School and Public Librarianship).

Learning disabled students are being placed in regular education classrooms because of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act '97 (IDEA '97). A questionnaire was sent to library media specialists in New Jersey middle schools asking how they accommodated learning disabled students. It questioned the library media specialists' training, programs, feelings and how they service this population. It also asked about the accommodations made for the learning disabled student in the library media center. The results of the survey indicated that more staff training is needed. School library media specialists are concerned about finding materials that are low level reading, but high interest to accommodate learning disabled students. Most collaboration between library media specialists and classroom teachers takes place on a daily basis. It is recommended that more programs need to be established for the learning disabled student in most school districts in New Jersey.

### **Mini Abstract**

Dawn Duelly. Accommodating Learning Disabled Students in New Jersey Middle School Media Centers. 2000. (Under the direction of Holly G. Willett), Program in School and Public Librarianship).

This inquiry looked at the training and programs of library media specialists in New Jersey middle schools serving learning disabled students. It also looked into accommodations made for these students. Results indicated that library media specialists would like more training in dealing with learning disabled students.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my husband Frank for his support throughout all the years of completing my Masters' program. A special thanks also to my mother, Carmel, who watched my son Donovan. I couldn't have done it without you two.

I would also like to thank all of the library media specialists who took the time to complete the questionnaire. The thesis could never have been completed without their help.

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## **Chapter One**

### **The Problem**

#### **Introduction and Background**

The purpose of this study was to find out if the needs of New Jersey's special education students were being met in the library media center. With the mainstreaming of special education students into regular education classes, these students were appearing in the library with the regular education students. The question arose whether the library media specialist received special training to teach these students. The study shows the relationship between the special education student and the library media specialist.

Previous studies have indicated that librarians provided useful resources and services for exceptional students and their teachers. Blankenship, Lokerson, and Verbeke (1989) said that many learning disabled students today are being mainstreamed into regular education classes. This means that when students went into the library for instruction, special education students attended with their graded classes. As a result, library media specialists had to broaden their focus for supplying materials to these students and plan substantive activities in the library media center for them. This can be difficult for media specialists to do if they have not had formal training dealing with learning disabilities.

Wesson and Keefe (1989) reported that the role of the school library media specialist has been redefined over the last several years. The roles listed for library media specialists in *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* (American Association of School Librarians [and] Association for Educational



Communications and Technology, 1998) require that the school library media specialist be three things: information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant. This means that the library media specialist must work toward providing intellectual and physical access to information for the total school population. This school population includes special education students that must, by Public Law 94-142, be instructed in the least restrictive environment. When appropriate, these students should be taught along with their peers rather than in isolation.

Media specialists possess the potential to assist teachers, administrators, parents, and the students themselves in improving school-related outcomes (Swartz & Levine, 1999). The school media specialist and the special education teacher should work together to plan for these students in the library. The special education teacher will bring her knowledge of the individual students, their individualized education plan and the teaching accommodations for them. The school media specialist will bring the knowledge about library skills in selecting, preparing, and organizing library activities for the special education students. Together the library media specialist and the special education teacher make the library skills meaningful and useful to the students within the context of the curricular study.

Media specialists are but one of a handful of educators who touch the lives of all teachers and students in the school setting. Library media specialists can play at least four important roles in helping students with learning disabilities experience more success in school. First, they assist classroom teachers by culling current information about students with learning disabilities from electronic and other sources. Second, they help classroom teachers review and select curricula that will enhance the educational and social well being of these students. Third, they help students organize, store, and access available information. Finally, they have the chance to observe students with learning disabilities outside the classroom, where they gain insight into the student's individual

strengths and weaknesses. Because of their unique perspective, media specialists should be well equipped to help students with learning differences (Swartz & Levine, 1999).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Special education students who are learning disabled learn differently. At least 15 percent of the population of the United States have learning disabilities. Learning disabilities are neurological difficulties, or differences, in processing incoming or outgoing messages between the senses and the brain (Gorman, 1999). There are four factors that have emerged as common to learning disabled people: (1) discrepancy between intelligence and achievement; (2) presumption of central nervous system dysfunction; (3) problems in processing information; and (4) learning difficulties that are not due to environmental disadvantage, mental retardation, or emotional disturbance (Blankenship, Lokerson, and Verbeke, 1989).

Learning disabilities can affect a student's reading, writing, thinking, and organization of ideas, despite average or above average intelligence. Methods of teaching used for regular education students may not work with this learning disabled population. The special education students might not receive or understand the valuable information that the media specialist provides.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) identifies a learning disability accompanied by a severe discrepancy in specific learning areas as a condition that requires special education. Learning disabilities include disabling conditions that range from mild to severe, making necessary a full spectrum of service arrangements for students with learning disabilities. The service or placement options for students with learning disabilities include a regular class with a consultant teacher, resource room, a special class, a special day school, and a residential school (Haring, McCormick, & Haring, 1994).

## **Objectives of the Research**

The researcher sent a self-administered questionnaire to middle school librarians. This method was chosen because the area that was surveyed was too large to observe directly. Questions on the survey asked about the relationship between the library media specialist and the special education teacher, any training that the library media specialist had in teaching learning disabled students, and programs that were available for learning disabled students in the library media center.

The sample was taken from middle schools throughout New Jersey. New Jersey was chosen because the researcher was familiar with the special education laws affecting students in the state. Seven surveys were randomly sent to each of the 21 counties in New Jersey. By sending out 147 surveys, an adequate number of responses was expected to be received, thus providing a good idea of the various types of programs that are available in our state.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Especially since P.L. 94-142, in 1975, the placement of special education students into regular classrooms has become an important issue in education. This and subsequent laws have required states to provide a free and appropriate education to children with disabilities. Appropriateness has to do with the individual needs of the child, with preference going to the least restrictive environment. Placement decisions should consider social and emotional factors as well as purely educational ones (Hansen & Boody, 1998).

Library media specialists who have the ability to recognize and skillfully manage learning disabled students will: (1) possess an enhanced understanding of learning disabled student's profile of strengths and weaknesses; (2) become a key contributor to the development of an educational-management plan; (3) monitor their progress and collaborate with their teachers to modify the educational-management plan so that it

better meets their individual needs; and (4) respect the diversity of variation patterns that their students exhibit each day in the classroom and the library media center (Swartz & Levine, 1999).

### **Definitions of Terms**

Inclusion refers to the return and maintenance of students with special needs in the general education classroom (Wesson & Keefe, 1995).

Individualized Education Program (IEP) is an educational plan mandated by federal legislation in Public Law 94-142 for children with disabilities, which is designed and signed by parents, teachers, and sometimes the child, along with any additional professionals needed to implement the plan. The plan reflects short and long term goals for the child for a year. The process is designed to ensure confidentiality, placement in the least restrictive environment, and appropriate, individualized education (Haring, McCormick, & Haring, 1994).

Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) changed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act's name, broadened scope of eligible disabilities, placed emphasis on preparing students for life after special education, enhanced services to younger children and minorities, and changed the overall focus from a handicapping condition to the individual (Haring, McCormick, & Haring, 1994).

Learning Disability is a generic term referring to a heterogeneous group of disorders that are most evident as problems with the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. They are presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction (Haring, McCormick, & Haring, 1994).

Least Restrictive Environment is the educational setting that is closest to full participation in the regular classroom that still meets the exceptional student's special needs (Haring, McCormick, & Haring, 1994).

Mainstreaming is the system for integrating students with disabilities into regular classes, providing for their special needs through individualized instruction, tutoring, or their spending a portion of their day with a resource or special education teacher (Haring, McCormick, & Haring, 1994).

Middle school is a transitional institution between elementary and high school generally including grades 6, 7, and 8, ages 11-13 (Ornstein & Levine, 1997).

Public Law (P.L.) 94-142 is the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, originally passed in 1975, requiring that all children with disabilities receive "a free, appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs." Its name was later changed to the Education for the Handicapped Act (Haring, McCormick, & Haring, 1994).

### **Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Chapter two of the study consists of a literature review. Chapter three describes the survey and how it was administered and analyzed. The analysis of the data and the findings are summarized in chapter four. Chapter five is a summary of the entire study along with recommendations.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was signed into law by President Clinton on June 4, 1997. It is the multi-purpose law which guarantees children with disabilities the right to a free, appropriate public education. The term disability can refer to a broad range of physical conditions, and consequently, the IDEA identifies several characteristics contributing to students being labeled learning disabled. In the definition section of the act, learning disabled students were identified as those students “(1) with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (hereafter referred to as ‘emotional disturbance’), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and (2) who, by reason thereof, need special education and related services” (as quoted in US Department of Education, 1997).

Learning disabilities are found in about 39 million Americans of all ages. Learning disabilities are neurological difficulties, or differences, in processing incoming or outgoing messages between the senses and the brain (Gorman, 1999). The IDEA identifies a learning disability accompanied by a severe discrepancy in specific learning areas as a condition that requires special education services. Learning disabilities include disabling conditions that range from mild to severe, making necessary a full spectrum of service arrangements for students with learning disabilities (Haring, McCormick, & Haring, 1994).

The Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities proposed the following definition of learning disabilities: “learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities.” These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions or with extrinsic influences (Haring McCormick, & Haring, 1994).

The IDEA required school districts to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The LRE is a legal principle requiring students with disabilities to be educated as much as possible with students without disabilities.

According to IDEA, school districts are obligated to ensure: (1) that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (2) that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occur only when the nature or severity of the disabled is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (Yell, 1997).

The first part of the least restrictive environment mandate required that students with disabilities be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with students who were not disabled. Students with disabilities have a presumptive right, therefore, to be educated into integrated settings. The second part of the least restrictive environment principle stated that schools can overcome this presumptive right and that students may be educated in more restrictive settings when students cannot be educated satisfactorily in the general education classroom (Yell, 1997).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ended public schools giving students inadequate educational services in isolated settings. This law was an effort to end the isolation of students with disabilities by requiring that they be educated with their nondisabled peers (Yell, 1998). These learning disabled students are now appearing in the school library media center. School media specialists need to be prepared to teach these students.

IDEA's main purpose was to ensure that every child received an education that yielded successful educational results. It also makes clear that the educator of disabled students should produce results similar to those expected for students in general and that students with disabilities should be educated with their nondisabled peers (Lipsky & Gartner, 1998).

The school library is an excellent example of a place where students with learning disabilities can be integrated easily, although mainstreaming these students into the library physically is not enough. One task of special education teachers and school library media specialists is to teach special needs students how to use and enjoy the library. As special needs students become more comfortable in the library setting, they will become more frequent visitors (Wesson & Keefe, 1989).

*Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (American Association of School Librarians [and] Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1998) says that library media specialists must have a program that will ensure that students become effective users of ideas and information. This mission is accomplished in three ways. First, the librarian media specialist must provide intellectual and physical access to materials in all formats. Secondly, library media specialists must provide instruction to foster competence and stimulate interest in reading, viewing, and using information and ideas. The third idea is that library media specialists must work with other educators to design learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students.



The school library media specialist can do all of this for the regular education student as well as the learning disabled student.

### **Historical Context**

The term learning disability was proposed in 1963 in an attempt to describe children who, in spite of normal or near normal intelligence, have a puzzling array of learning and/or behavior problems (Blankenship, Lokerson, & Verbeke, 1989). Numerous definitions of learning disabilities have been suggested by different organizations. The term has changed along with the changing laws.

Prior to 1970, more than one million children with disabilities were excluded from public schools. Many students with disabilities who did attend public schools received inadequate educational services in isolated settings. In 1970, Congress authorized the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) as title VI of P.L. 91-230. With the enactment of P.L. 91-230, the state grant program established in 1966 was redesignated as part B of the EHA.

In 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142. It amended part B, the state grant program, in the EHA. P.L. 94-142 refined and expanded requirements for state participation in the state grant program. In accepting state grant funds, the state was required to provide a free, appropriate public education to all children with disabilities in the state according to specific procedures and civil rights protections.

From 1979 through 1994, a series of amendments to the EHA refined and increased in number discretionary programs in personnel preparation, research, demonstration, and technical assistance. In 1986, the Handicapped Children's Protection Act, P.L. 99-372, was enacted. In amending part B of the EHA, P.L. 99-372 authorized attorney's fees for parents who prevail in due process proceedings and judicial actions

against school districts. Also in 1986, P.L. 99-457 was enacted, creating a new part H in the EHA. Part H provides funds for state programs in early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth through two years of age. The EHA amendments of 1990, P.L. 101-476, renamed the statute as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (taken from Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997).

### **Previous Studies**

In 1994, Jane M. Poulson wrote a thesis for Kent State University titled *Library Programs for Children with Disabilities: A Survey of Missouri Public Libraries*. Her thesis was an exploratory survey to present an overall description of library programs for children with disabilities in Missouri. Her findings indicated that many of the librarians lacked practical knowledge about library services for children with disabilities and lacked the practical know-how to include disabled children in existing programs. There was also a lack of funding to provide special materials or special equipment. Poulson concluded that many librarians lacked practical knowledge about library services for children with disabilities and the practical know how to include disabled children in existing programs.

In 1998, Janet Lani wrote a master's thesis titled "The Role of the Library Media Specialist in the Education of Learning Disabled Students in Southern New Jersey." Lani's thesis looked at the training of media specialists in southern New Jersey for working with elementary level learning disabled students. She also examined accommodations they made in their programs for these students.

Janet Lani's results indicated that more training needed to be implemented in the elementary schools in her surveyed area. Teaching strategies that work best for learning disabled students change as more research is completed. Her recommendation was to keep all members of the staff informed of the changes in laws and procedures.

The results also indicated that the media specialist and the regular education teacher need to collaborate more. The library media specialists needed more information about the students to plan accordingly for their needs. Often the library media specialists would have to request the necessary information rather than the information being made readily available to them.

## **Methodology**

The method selected was a self-administered questionnaire. A survey was chosen as the best methodology for describing a population too large to observe directly. A questionnaire was also advantageous due to its economy, speed, lack of interviewer bias, and the possibility of anonymity and privacy to encourage candid responses (Babbie, 1998). For this thesis, seven surveys were sent randomly to middle school library media specialists in each of the 21 counties in New Jersey for a total of 147 surveys sent out.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Most disabled students' educational needs can be fulfilled best through some degree of mainstreaming into the regular school setting and routine. Mainstreaming involves "the interaction and togetherness of the children who otherwise would have learned and lived apart." This interaction can be a positive experience for the teachers, disabled students and non-disabled students. "Disabled students are resources in ways they can contribute to other students, to their teachers, and to their school and their society. They are resources for which time energy, and money need to be invested to bring them to their full potential" (Petrie, 1982 p. 6).

In 1986, Madeline Will, assistant secretary of education in charge of special education at the federal level, wrote an article "Educating Children with Learning Problems: A Shared Responsibility," in which she called for a major change in special education. Several studies showed that special education students in general education

settings had higher self-concept and social skills than those students who remained in self-contained classes. Will was concerned that special education students were not learning how to survive in real world settings because they were isolated in a setting with only other students like themselves without a broad continuum of abilities and personalities to observe. This also disadvantaged the regular education students who did not have the opportunity to learn about and from their special needs peers (Wesson & Keefe, 1995).

Numerous studies have examined various aspects of attitudes and relationships resulting from inclusion. For the most part, these studies document that efforts to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom have resulted in positive experiences and improved attitudes on the part of students, both with and without disabilities, and their teachers. Studies have also found that nondisabled students develop positive attitudes towards students with disabilities based on the experience of having these students in their classroom (Moore, Gilbreath, & Maiuri, 1998).

It is important for the library media specialist to be part of a learning disabled student's school experience. Given their unique qualifications and the importance of improving the process of teaching and learning for students with learning disabilities, library media specialists possess the potential to assist teachers, administrators, parents, and the students themselves in improving school related outcomes (Swartz & Levine, 1999).

As information and technology become more important, students need to learn how to access information and analyze data. As resource-based learning becomes the norm, the teaching role of the librarian will also become more important. As the role of the school library media specialist becomes more teaching oriented, it is imperative that school library media specialists become aware of the implications of the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA) as well as the law that preceded it (PL 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act). This act mandated that students with special needs be

instructed in the least restricted environment (Wesson & Keefe, 1995). This includes educating learning disabled students in the school library media center.

A library media specialist must know about the cognitive underpinnings of learning and development, the patterns of cognitive variation associated with poor school related outcomes, and the process of managing the education of students with learning differences. Media specialists may then combine this new understanding with their unique knowledge and skills to assume the following four key roles to enhance the education of students with learning differences: (1) search for and disseminate information from a variety of resources to classroom teachers and parents about diagnosing and managing students with learning differences; (2) collaborate with their colleagues to select the best hardware and software and provide high quality instruction and technical assistance; (3) use the same curricula and strategies to collaborate one-on-one with a student or small groups of students to heighten their understanding of themselves, improve their ability to manage their learning differences, and enhance their attainment of educational outcomes; (4) share their observations and insights with classroom teachers to become better partners in the daily management of students with learning differences (Swartz & Levine, 1999).

Both public and school libraries are excellent examples of places where students with special needs can be integrated easily. For this to happen, special education teachers and school library media specialists need to work together to teach special needs students how to use and enjoy the library. As students with special needs acquire library skills, they will become more comfortable in the library, participate more fully in group activities, and visit the library more often (Wesson & Keefe, 1989).

A team approach, with joint planning involving both the school library media specialist and the special education teacher, is important for many reasons. First, each of these professionals has essential information. Secondly, the school library media specialist knows the regular education library skills sequence and the traditional teaching

techniques. The special education teachers know the individual students and which teaching accommodations can facilitate learning. Working as a team can also provide instruction in skill generalization. Specific library skills provide a narrow domain in which to practice skill transference (Wesson & Keefe, 1989).

### **Summary and Conclusion**

IDEA makes it possible for learning disabled students to go to the school library media center with their mainstreamed class. The media specialist needs to present a variety of teaching techniques to reach all students' learning styles. When all students learn to use and value library skills, they can open a door to the enjoyable and wonderful world of learning.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

Two primary changes in schools have magnified the importance of the relationship between the school librarian and special needs students. First, school library media specialists' roles have changed; they are not just keepers of the library and the collection but part of the teaching staff. They are responsible for teaching the library and information skills curriculum along with integrating the classroom curriculum. The second change is that more special needs students are taking classes with regular education students, making it inevitable that the school library media specialist will teach these students. The increase in this population is the result of more children being identified as special needs and the trend of inclusion moving special needs students into regular education programs. It is the school library media specialist who sets the tone for the acceptance of individual students (Wesson & Keefe, 1995).

The purpose of this study was to examine the accommodations, strategies, and techniques that the school library media specialist uses with special needs students in the middle school library. The study also looked at the training and attitudes of New Jersey media specialists for working with learning disabled students.

#### **Description of Methodology**

The method chosen for this study was a self-administered questionnaire. This method was chosen as the most advantageous due to its economy, speed, lack of interviewer bias, and the possibility of anonymity and privacy to encourage candid responses (Babbie, 1998). The questions were chosen in an attempt to discover how school library media specialists were meeting the needs of special needs students in their

libraries. It also attempted to find out about various programs offered in school libraries for special needs students. The questionnaire was randomly sent to seven school library media specialists in middle schools in each of twenty-one counties of New Jersey.

The study was limited to school library media specialists because they are the ones who were in charge of the school media center. They were primarily in charge of ordering for their libraries, designing the curriculum, and designing the library programs. The survey included questions about types of training that the school library media specialist may have had to work with special needs' students. It also contained open-ended questions for details about programs for special needs students.

### **Design of the Study**

This study was designed to collect enough information from schools all over New Jersey to represent a general picture depicting how the school library media centers were meeting the needs of special needs students. It was the responsibility of the school library media specialist to meet the library and information skills needs of these students; this was the reason they were chosen for the questionnaire.

### **Sample and Population**

This questionnaire was sent to middle schools in all twenty-one counties of New Jersey. The state was divided into three regions using the *Department of Personnel Job Vacancy Announcements*, 2000, breakdown. The northern region included Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties. The central region included Burlington, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean, and Somerset counties. The southern region included Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem counties.

The researcher used the *New Jersey Library Network: The Information Connection*, 1999, to get current school addresses. Schools that were not middle schools



were eliminated. The remaining schools were randomly selected using Appendix E: Random Numbers taken from Earl Babbie's book, *The Practice of Social Research*, 1998.

### **Instrumentation**

The researcher designed the questionnaire to be easy to read and answer. The majority of the questions required the media specialist to select a response from choices given and to give a brief written reply if they desired. There were also three open-ended questions. Adequate spacing was left between the questions for comments and ease of reading (see Appendix).

The questionnaire was constructed and revised after pretesting. The questionnaire was pretested by a school library media specialist and two teachers. The researcher took their comments and suggestions and revised the questionnaire. It was printed and sent along with a cover letter explaining its purpose. A pre-addressed, stamped envelope was included for the return to the researcher.

The cover letter explained the purpose of the study. It explained that the respondent did not have to answer every question. It also stated that all responses would be kept confidential and gave a deadline for the questionnaire to be returned. The researcher's phone number and e-mail address were given to answer any questions that the respondent may have (see Appendix).

The survey consisted of fifteen questions. The first question asked if the school served learning disabled students and if so, how did they come to the library. The respondents were asked to please send back the questionnaire for my records if they answered "no". Questions two through four asked the respondent about any training they have had in working with learning disabled students and how they felt about that training. Question five inquired about the frequency of contact that the library media specialist had with the special education teachers. Question six asked about supports and techniques

that the library media specialist used with the learning disabled students. Question seven asked the respondent about their feelings in working with learning disabled students. Questions eight through eleven inquired about programs offered to learning disabled students in the library; this included three open-ended questions. Question twelve was also an open-ended question that asked the respondents if they had any additional comments about special education students in the library. Questions thirteen through fifteen asked statistical questions regarding school population, the approximate number of learning disabled students in the school and the number of years of experience the media specialist had. The final question asked the respondents if they would like to receive a copy of the results of the survey. It also gave instructions to fill out the form, cut it off and mail it back to assure confidentiality.

### **Data Collection**

The data was collected from the returned responses. A coding chart was made for each individual response as the surveys were received. A spreadsheet was then used to tabulate the answers.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The data was analyzed from the findings of the questionnaire. The results were compared by regions concerning questions on: (a) training, (b) professional contact, (c) how the learning disabled students attend the library, (d) accommodations made by the library media specialist, and (e) programs for learning disabled students. Other questions were reviewed in the final chapter. Tables reporting frequencies of answers were used to make comparisons in the same chapter. Answers for the open-ended questions appear in the Appendix.

## **Summary**

In summary, a survey was sent out to 147 middle school librarians discussing the role of the library media specialist in the education of the learning disabled student in the state of New Jersey. Chapter four will show the analysis of the collected data. This chapter will include information tables and answers to the open-ended questions. The last chapter of the thesis will show recommendations for the library media specialists who work with learning disabled students in the library media center.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Analysis of the Data**

#### **Introduction**

A questionnaire asking middle school library media specialists' how they provided services for the education of learning disabled students was sent to 147 middle school librarians across the state of New Jersey. There were 97 responses to the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 66%. Of these responses, one was unusable because the librarian retired in October of 1999, and the secretary wrote that she has yet to be replaced. Therefore, the number of usable responses was 96 and the usable response rate was 65%.

Seven questionnaires were sent to each of the twenty-one counties in the state of New Jersey. The counties were broken down into three regions using the divisions of New Jersey's Department of Personnel Job Vacancy Announcements (2000). This can be seen in Table 1.

The media specialists who responded listed school populations ranging from 160 students at one school in the central region to 2,400 students in a school in the northern region. Average school populations ranged from 626 in the southern region to 785 in the central region. The average school population of all responding schools was 706 students.

Table 1

Regions in New Jersey

Regions	Counties	
Northern	Bergen	Passaic
	Essex	Sussex
	Hudson	Union
	Morris	Warren
Central	Burlington	Monmouth
	Hunterdon	Ocean
	Middlesex	Somerset
	Mercer	
Southern	Atlantic	Cumberland
	Camden	Gloucester
	Cape May	Salem

The media specialists were asked to estimate the number of learning disabled students in their school. These ranged from a low of 2% in a school in the northern region, to a high of 40% in a school in the southern region. The average percent for all schools who responded to the survey was 13.7%.

The library media specialists were also asked a question regarding the number of years they had been librarians. Answers ranged from two months to 35 years, with a mean of 16.7. The median was 16.1 years and the mode was 20 years with ten librarians reporting this figure.

As can be seen in Table 2, the central region's response rate was 71%, and it was the best represented groups of counties, while the southern region's response rate of 55%, making it the least represented region.

Table 2

Percentages of Responses by Region (n=147)

Region	#Sent	# Returned	% Returned
North Jersey	56	39	70
Central Jersey	49	35	71
South Jersey	42	23	55
Totals	147	97	66

All of the learning disabled students attend library, either with a self-contained class, a mainstreamed class, or they attend on their own. These results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

How Learning Disabled Students Attend Library (n=96 )

Region	Mainstreamed	Self-contained	On Own
North Jersey	38	31	33
Central Jersey	31	27	25
South Jersey	22	18	16
Totals	91	76	74

The results do not equal 100% because several media specialists checked off that students come to the library in several ways. Some respondents checked that students come to the library with their self-contained class, their mainstreamed class, and on their own time.

The second question on the survey asked whether the librarians believed they have had enough training to work with the learning disabled population. Less than 50%

believed they had received enough training. The results of this question are found in Table 4.

Table 4

Training Received (n=96)

Region	Yes	No
North Jersey	19	20
Central Jersey	15	20
South Jersey	11	13
Totals	45	53

The respondents who indicated they had received training to work with the learning disabled population were then asked to tell about the type of training they received. The results are found in Table 5, and they total more than 45 because the respondents could check off more than one type of training.

Table 5

Types of Training Received (n=45)

Region	In-Services	Workshops	Reading Materials	Classes	Other
North Jersey	12	9	12	10	4
Central Jersey	10	6	9	5	2
South Jersey	5	3	3	3	1
Totals	17	18	24	18	7

Of the seven media specialists who answered “Other”, the responses included, “31 years of on the job experience is appropriate training”; “I am the parent of a dyslexic

child”; “I often meet with the Child Study team”; “I was a supplemental instructor for four years working with classified students”; “I was a special education teacher”; “experience working with one of my own children, who had some learning differences but was not classified”; “I team teach with a special education teacher when the need arises. This is of great assistance to me”; and “I have on the job training”.

The next question asked the respondents if they felt the training that received was sufficient. It was also meant to be answered by those who had responded yes to the question about training. There were 45 “Yes” responses to Question 4. Some of the comments from the responses were, “ I am a certified special education teacher”; “I have not had professional training, experience is the best training”; “continued training would greatly improve my skills but I feel I have a rudimentary understanding”; “I have read many books on the learning disabled student, plus I always talk to their teachers to find out what their needs are so I can adjust my lessons”; and “I can always learn more”.

There were 53 “No” responses to Question 4. Some of the responses included: “I feel that we need more training”; “their disabilities are numerous and I deal with almost 600 students”; “if special education teachers need special training than so do I”; “training should be ongoing and updated”; “training is not as important as patience and repetitive instruction and interaction”; “learning disabled students are so varied in types and severity that the same methods don’t always work”; “ it is difficult during a mainstream class to have the time for the special needs student”; “need more inservice workshops”; and “each child is different and continuous training is helpful with each individual situation.”



Question 5 asked the library media specialist how much professional contact they had with the teachers of learning disabled students. For those who answered “Other”, some of the responses included: “only when they choose to come to the library media center”; “as need arises-so it varies”; “no contact except when teacher is checking out material for classroom use”; and “as needed, when planning for activities, book selection or research.” Librarians in all of the regions reported that they mostly meet with the teachers of learning disabled students on a daily basis. The results are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Contact with Teachers of Learning Disabled Students (n=96)

Regions	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than Monthly	Other
North Jersey	26	9	2	2	2
Central Jersey	20	9	0	3	4
South Jersey	11	6	1	0	3
Totals	57	24	3	5	9

Question 6 asked the respondents about the additional supports that they use in the library for learning disabled students. The number exceeds 96 because each library media specialist could check all supports used. The media specialists in the north region reported using the most additional supports in their media centers with a total of 81 supports. The media specialists in the south reported using the fewest--32 additional supports.

Table 7

Additional Supports (n=96)

Region	None	Visual Aids	Computer Programs	Aide	Recorded Books	Assistive Devices	Other
North Jersey	3	19	20	29	6	2	5
Central Jersey	2	16	19	28	9	5	1
South Jersey	1	9	7	14	5	2	5
Totals	6	44	46	71	20	9	11

The respondents who answered “Other” explained their answers as follows: “lower level books”; “additional help from me completing parts of assignments they can handle, often pair with other students”; “hi lo interest/ability books”; individual assistance given on an as needed basis”; “Interlibrary loan to primary schools to fill specific requests, if not available in our middle school library”; “reading materials offered at varied ability levels including large print books”; “the classroom teacher comes in with the class, any lesson or book selection is reviewed with her first”; “next school year we will have recorded books and assistive devices for a blind student”; “one-on-one when possible, many times their teacher may bring them in for a project and I will assist or pull materials”; “discussions with teachers”; “teacher also attends”; “individual attention”; and “I present material and language on their level.”

Question 7 asked librarians to tell how they felt working with learning disabled students. Table 8 gives the results of this question. The numbers do not equal 96 because some librarians checked off more than one answer.

Table 8

Feelings About Working with Learning Disabled Students (n=96)

Region	Enjoy It	Frustrated	Difficult	Other
North Jersey	20	11	13	3
Central Jersey	16	14	15	4
South Jersey	12	6	7	3
Totals	48	31	35	10

Some of the librarians' comments were: "I prefer them alone in small groups. They are less inhibited"; "I enjoy working with them"; "I work with them as I would any student"; "I wing it and hope for the best"; and "The different levels of abilities are frustrating when you don't know the students personally. Most of the time the behavior is not conducive for libraries."

Question 8 asked library media specialists if they offered programs geared toward the learning disabled population in their libraries. The library media specialists in the north region had the highest number of programs for learning disabled students with a total of ten programs out of 39 responses. The library media specialists in the south region only had three programs out of 23 responses. Table 9 shows those results.

Table 9

Programs n=(96)

Regions	Yes	No
North Jersey	10	25
Central Jersey	7	26
South Jersey	3	25
Totals	20	76

The library media specialists had many comments for this question. They included:

Teaching chess, research time, recreational reading time  
Battle of the Books using lower level books  
Introduction to the Internet  
Special reading, reference, electronic sources are chosen for them  
Special education students have always been considered for library service which tends to increase self-esteem and social acceptability with the school as a whole  
Accelerated Reader program  
Accelerated Reader, a computerized reading management program, is used widely by our special education students. (see [www.advlearn.com](http://www.advlearn.com) )  
A lot of what we do in the library does not pertain to “library” instruction. Students come to relax and read, do projects and contests. We have an after school free time for computer use and games  
They are invited to participate in any of the reading programs I sponsor, but I do not have any special programs set up for them  
Many of our special education students participate in the Accelerated Reader program along with our other students  
Computer lab  
We run a chess club and a Battle of the Book club in the library. All children in the school are welcome  
Special collection of books, various levels and curriculum  
Read aloud sessions, special fun projects that they can do  
Educational games and puzzles

The results of the open-ended questions are listed exactly as they were written in the Appendix. Three answers to question nine, about the greatest challenge in providing programs for learning disabled students, were given more than once. They were: finding high interest reading materials with low level text, meeting the needs of students who learn differently, and behavior. The results are listed in Table 10.

Table 10

Greatest Challenges in Providing Programs

Comment	# of times
Finding suitable materials	8
Behavior	2
Accommodating learning styles	6

Question 10 asked about successful strategies, techniques and approaches used in providing programs for learning disabled students. Similar themes the respondents had were one-on-one instruction, having smaller groups, and hands-on activities. The results are listed in Table 11.

Table 11

Successful Strategies, Techniques, and Approaches

Comments	# of times
One-on-one instruction	4
Hands on activities	4
Break down tasks	4
Keep lessons simple	2
Small group instruction	5

Question 11 asked the respondent if they have any short term goals to make changes within their library to better serve learning disabled students. The most frequent answer was to find materials appropriate for their needs.

Table 12

Short Term Goals

Comments	# of times
Find appropriate materials	8
Buy books on tape	2
Buy additional computers	2
Label books	2

The library media specialists were asked if they would like to receive a copy of the results of the inquiry. There were 55 who responded that they would like to receive a copy.

**Summary and Conclusions**

Overall, librarians are aware that learning disabled students are in their library along with regular education students. They are making accommodations for these students in their library media centers. Recommendations for further study are found in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary and Conclusions**

#### **Summary**

“Education contributes to an individual’s journey toward self reliance and independence. Schools and instruction must be designed and organized to meet the varying needs of individual learners...” (Dr. Shirley Hollaway, Commissioner of Education for Alaska, in a speech given to the Special Education Directors’ Conference, Anchorage, AK, September 1996).

The National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (NCREI) said that several factors need to be in place to make inclusion successful. Collaboration between all those involved in the learning disabled child’s education was an important part of this process. This involved on-going training for the staff who work with these students. Many needed services should be in place for these students including, but not limited to, individualized instruction geared to the students’ learning styles that are adapted to a student’s individual needs (Lipsky & Gartner, 1998).

There are many reasons for the school library media specialist to be involved in the learning disabled students’ education. Media specialists know the skills being taught to the school population. They also teach the students to generalize and apply a learned skill to situations other than the one being taught (Wesson & Keefe, 1995).

## **Conclusions**

There are several conclusions that could be drawn from the results of the survey. The first question on the questionnaire discussed how students came to the library. The data suggested that students were coming to the library with their mainstreamed class as well as with their self-contained class. Some librarians were still teaching lessons in the media center, while others had an open schedule where teachers signed up to use the library. It seemed that the librarians who had a more welcoming approach in their library commented that the special education students spent more time there. One librarian commented, "My library is interactive--not a tip toey kind of place. Students are allowed to express enthusiasm within certain decibel levels. I think they feel comfortable coming to the library and students know that their questions are not dumb."

Forty-six percent of library media specialists said they had received training to work with the learning disabled population. Of the responding media specialists in the northern region, 49% reported that they had received training. Forty-three percent of the media specialists in the central region reported training. This clearly showed that the school districts are not doing their job in training librarians to work with the learning disabled population. As one respondent so aptly said, "If special education teachers need special training, then so do I."

The 46% of media specialists that did receive training received most of it through inservice. Media specialists in the north and south regions felt that this training was sufficient. Only the central region media specialists felt that their training was not sufficient.



In all three regions, the reported contact between librarians and teachers mostly took place daily. This could show that the librarians were going out of their way to work with the teachers for the benefit of the students, or it could possibly mean that the librarians reported casual conversations with learning disabled teachers.

Library media specialists were asked about the supports they used in the library. In the southern region, an aide coming to the library with the students seemed to be a common measure. They also said they set up the library with visual clues for the learning disabled students. In the northern and central region, the aide was also the most used support. The librarians also reported using the computer as a support for these students. A technique mentioned by each region was to work one-on-one with the students if possible. Media specialists found this to be a successful way to give the learning disabled students extra attention.

The majority in all three regions said that they enjoyed working with the learning disabled student, but 69% of the respondents said that they were both frustrated and found it difficult to work with this population. There were six respondents that said they were frustrated, found it difficult, but also enjoyed it. One respondent said, "I wing it and hope for the best." Another respondent had a valid point when he or she stated that; "The different levels of abilities are frustrating when you don't know the students personally."

In the southern region, 87% of respondents do not have programs for learning disabled students. Those that did have programs such as teaching chess, recreational reading time, and computer basics. In the central region, 79% of respondents did not have programs. Those that did included library aids and the Accelerated Reader program. In the northern region, 71% of the respondents did not have programs. Those

that did had programs that include reading programs, the Accelerated Reader program, chess club, and read aloud sessions.

A possible reason for a lack of programs for learning disabled students in New Jersey is that the library media specialist may not recognize the need to have separate programs just for this population. Library media specialists may feel that offering programs for all students is sufficient and the learning disabled can join in if they choose.

The first open-ended question asked those respondents who did have programs, what was the greatest challenge in providing programs for these students? Nine respondents replied that their greatest challenge was finding materials suitable for learning disabled students' needs. The common finding seems to be that it is difficult to find interesting materials at a lower reading level. Only two respondents mentioned behavior as a challenge.

Question 10 asked about successful strategies, techniques or approaches that the library media specialist found successful in providing programs for learning disabled students. Four respondents said that one-on-one instruction worked well with this population. Four respondents said that hands on activities were successful. Other techniques that were mentioned more than once were breaking down tasks and keeping lessons simple.

Question 11 asked respondents about short-term goals to better serve learning disabled students. Looking for appropriate materials was a short-term goal for eight library media specialists. One librarian wanted to get more books on tape. Another wanted more computers added to help the learning disabled population. One librarian

said she just accomplished her goal of putting dots on the spine of books with a grade four reading level. Another said she wanted to put on dots for easy classification.

The last open-ended question asked the respondents if they had any additional comments about special education students in the library. There were ten very positive remarks about learning disabled students in the library. Some of the comments were: “they are my favorite students”; “I love having them”; “often they are the most eager and hard working students”; “In general, working with special needs students is more rewarding than working with the general student population. Most of these students want to learn, are willing to try, and appreciate the help that is offered”; “Those who I see seem to perform as well or better than the so-called “normal” students”; “often times they are more highly motivated to be much more successful and to work that much harder”; and “ I love having them in the library. They are most times better behaved and more appreciative than the regular students.”

There was one negative comment about learning disabled students in the library, “inappropriate behavior (running, shoving, swearing)--such behavior may be permitted in a self contained situation (according to their IEP’s) but not when regular ed students are trying to do their work.”

## **Recommendations**

From the responses compiled through the survey, several recommendations can be made. First, more training must be given. This could be accomplished during the 100 hours of continuing education the state requires educators to complete for every five

years of active service. Learning disabled students learn differently, and librarians should be taught ways to effectively teach them. Current research is still being done to find new and better ways to teach learning disabled students, and librarians should seek out this new information. Special education laws are constantly changing, and it would be a benefit for librarians to know the current legislation. The librarians who said they did receive training also said they could benefit from additional training. Colleges and universities need to become aware of the need to teach library science students about learning disabled students. The overall sense from the returned surveys seemed to be that the librarians would welcome any additional help to better serve the learning disabled population.

A second recommendation would be more collaboration between the library media specialist and the special education teacher. The special education teacher knows her/his students and knows the best way to deal with them. By giving hints and suggestions to the librarian, the media specialist and the learning disabled students would benefit.

A third recommendation would be that the administration should help in any way possible to support programs for learning disabled students in the library. There were very few librarians who said they have programs just for learning disabled students. A suggestion would be for them to alter or supplement an existing program for regular education students to a program for the learning disabled population. The Accelerated Reader program seemed to be used by several of the librarians for the learning disabled students.

One of the biggest challenges, according to the survey, was finding materials of high interest for lower levels. One suggestion is asking a special education teacher for catalogs of high interest materials for low levels. Another suggestion is to buy more books on tape. One respondent told about parents reading books aloud and taping themselves for students who have difficulty reading the books themselves. Another mentioned getting grant money to help with the cost of purchasing these books and cassettes.

In conclusion, New Jersey school media specialists are doing a lot to accommodate the needs of learning disabled students. This is a relatively new and important topic for library media specialists. More studies need to be completed to identify effective ways to help the learning disabled population in the school library media center. Studies are also needed to study the specific training needs of media specialists.

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## Appendix



(This letter was sent on Rowan University letterhead)

February 2000

Dear Library Media Specialist;

I am currently a graduate student at Rowan University. I am working on my master's thesis in the School and Public Librarian Program.

For my thesis, I am conducting an inquiry on learning disabled students and their needs in the library. I am randomly sending my questionnaire to seven middle school librarians in every county in the state of New Jersey.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you do not have to answer every question. The answers you provide me with will help to reflect the current situation accurately. Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Please sign this letter below and return it and the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope by March 15<sup>th</sup>. If you choose not to complete the survey, please send it back for my records.

If you have any questions please contact me at the phone number or e-mail address listed below. You can also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Holly Willett, at (856) 256-4759. If you would like to receive a copy of my results please cut off your address on the last page of the survey and mail it along with the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dawn Duelly  
(609) 812-0695  
[fduely@aol.com](mailto:fduely@aol.com)

**Please check appropriate responses. You may use another sheet of paper if needed.**

1. How do learning disabled students come to the library? Check all that apply.
  - They come to the library with their mainstreamed class
  - They attend the library with their special education self-contained class
  - They come to the library on their own
  - Learning disabled students do not attend the library (please return this questionnaire for my records)
  
2. Have you ever received any training to work with learning disabled students?
  - Yes, please go on to question # 3
  - No, please go on to question # 5
  
3. What type of training have you received to work with learning disabled students? Check all that apply.
  - Inservice
  - Workshops
  - Reading materials
  - College or university classes
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Do you feel you have had sufficient training to work with learning disabled students?
  - Yes
  - No

Please explain \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. How much contact do you have with any of the teachers of learning disabled students?
  - Daily
  - Weekly
  - Monthly
  - Less than once per month
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. What supports or techniques do you use to accommodate learning disabled students?

- None
- Visual aids
- Computer programs
- Classroom aide attending with students
- Recorded books
- Assistive devices
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your feeling about working with learning disabled students?

- I enjoy the challenges of working with them
- I enjoy working with learning disabled students but I sometimes get frustrated
- Planning instruction is difficult for mixed classes
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you have any programs, other than library instruction, in your library set up for special education students?

- Yes, please go on to question # 9
- No, please go on to question # 12

Please explain \_\_\_\_\_

9. What do you consider to be the greatest challenge in providing programs for learning disabled students?

10. What strategies, techniques or approaches have you used successfully in providing programs for learning disabled students?

11. Do you have any short term goals to make changes within your library in order to better serve learning disabled students? If yes, can you briefly describe these changes?

12. Do you have any other comments about special education students in the library?

13. What is the approximate population of your school?

\_\_\_\_\_ Students

14. Approximately what percentage of students are identified as learning disabled?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

15. How many years have you been a school library media specialist?

\_\_\_\_\_ Years

---

**Thank you very much for your participation in the survey. If you would like to receive a copy of my results please fill out this form and mail it in along with your survey.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Open Ended Questions

All of the answers are written in the format that the respondents wrote their answers.

Question # 9- What do you consider to be the greatest challenge in providing programs for learning disabled students?

-that they learn

-The greatest challenge is the "special needs" teacher- "the students simply must do this" or "I have so much to do." We teach our students only what we know. This is unfortunate. There is an underlying "label" for them and the students recognize this. "I am dumb" is what they say how they feel. We say that "every child can succeed" But do we actually believe it??

-keeping their interest and attention

-Finding material that has a low enough reading level, but sophisticated content. Also, motivating the students to analyze and synthesize the resources. Most special ed. students prefer to copy verbatim.

-Providing reading material and databases from which to work

-material on their level

-jockeying reading levels high interest low level lit titles

-It's difficult to find material of interest to them that they can read.

-Programs adapted to their particular needs

-They rely upon 1-1 instruction. I am the only media specialist (no help) in a very large school which makes it nearly impossible to reach all the different levels of instruction.

-I love to help them find the answers. They do well.

-Accommodating the various learning diversions

-At this time, most of the students are mainstreamed so they receive the same programs as the "regular ed" students.

-teaching them skills they will use in the real world.

-Budget-to have enough materials; Time-there's never enough

- Do some distant learning, classroom interaction with county special services school
- coming up with lessons that the students can succeed in. Their reading levels are so low and attention span too short.
- Variety of needs.
- To find programs that meet their learning needs, but not to the point of being “babyish” or too immature for their interest level (middle school).
- Making info relevant
- The students need much help with printed materials. Too many in a class.
- The number of learning disabled students along with ESL students are extraordinarily high. In a class of twenty-eight, for example, I have 9 student that are learning disabled or ESL. And , there is no aide. There is no limit on the number of students I may have in the regular classroom. Yet, if I were teaching a special ed. Class/ Self-contained or otherwise, the limit is 9.
- Various of levels for reading materials- not having time or access to knowledge of students ability
- I find selection of material to be very difficult. I also find it difficult to keep the children focused on the task when the library is crowded. But perhaps the greatest challenge is helping the children to believe in themselves and their special talent.
- meeting their needs, knowing what they know and how they learn.
- Providing appropriate materials
- Addressing behavior and discipline during class time
- There is no advance information scheduling given. We have to play.
- I see each class on a monthly basis so I do not know students at all well. I find those who are emotionally disturbed to be most difficult.
- Varied needs for a limited population
- These students are neurologically impaired, dyslexic, emotionally disturbed, but not physically disabled. I can adjust levels of teaching, but would need significantly more training to deal with the physically challenged.
- appropriate software that doesn't frustrate them.

-Time for planning- so many different needs

-Other teachers!

-To provide reading materials that are motivating/high-interest to middle schoolers reading at a low level.

Question # 10- What strategies, techniques or approaches have you used successfully in providing programs for learning disabled students?

-Hands on always! Food

-I always try to integrate my lessons with work they are doing in their classroom. I work very closely with special education teachers in the planning of any library activity. I have found that the less talking I do and the more hands-on activities the children do is what works best.

-Work with them on a one to one basis.

-Indian tales, Aesop fables- we list characteristics of tale and as a class create our own tale. We then type it on Power Point and they choose creative elements-pictures, motion, sound.

-Keep it simple, interaction activities

-Our special ed students cover pretty much the same curriculum as regular students. All are mainstreamed for Health. When Health classes do research reports special ed students come to the library with their Health class. They come extra with their special ed Language Arts teacher and together we give them special help. "Extra small group and individual help" is probably a good description.

-outlining lessons

-Breakdown lessons into smaller pieces; Provide more (variety) activities on the same skill; One-on-one; Read aloud passages they don't understand

-Discovery activities

-patience, keep items simple, be cheerful

-Using easier materials; Working on one-to-one basis

-small group discussion; hands on activities (scavenger hunts); computer-assisted instruction (games on library skills)

-1. graphic organizers; 2. "hands on" 3. Large print books

-I provide material and instruction based on teachers assignments so I don't have any programs per se.

-Use variety of presentation methods just like reg. Ed. to accomodate varied learning styles.



-In the middle school (6-8) I have purchased Hi-interest Lo reading materials. I subscribe to easier mags. I also subscribe to SIRS Discover (user friendly for these students) and Electric Lib. Meeting with special ed teachers to create a project is very imp't.

-books on cassette

-Work with teachers to provide realistic projects for student success, pair a reg. ed and a spec. ed student, find resources with visuals (like CD ROM), help to read and interpret with the student when taking notes.

-short instruction periods, followed by much repetition.

-These students come to the library voluntarily during period 9- our activity, and free floating period.

-breaking down tasks to simplest form

-Some computer programs/CD ROM programs, cooperative learning lessons

-Teaching very small units. Using low level reading materials. Using motivational subjects – animals, disasters, sports, ect.

-When we teach, we always use visuals, small groups, print and computer materials as well as one on one assistance. I instituted the purchase of books on tape about 8 years ago so children who had difficulty reading would have an opportunity to be exposed to the same books as their peers.

-Small group instruction and one on one when possible

-pairing with older students to work on team projects and learn new software

-Because I have teaching background of grades 4-9 prior to library experience, I was able to change gears rapidly to adjust to the individual student. Sensitivity and empathy are vital to dealing with these students.-or any other students. Immaturity and teacher-oriented rather than child-oriented classes would be devastating to special ed. students.

-Individual attention -less busy material –review/summary

-Working with the teachers to plan lessons/readings geared to what is going on in the classroom seems to be the best approach.

-Most hands-on activities (i.e., drawing, cut-outs, Internet searches, software exploration, ect.) seem to keep their attention longer than any lecture

-Always confer w/ their teacher for planning to develop the most appropriate strategies.

-Cooperative learning groups/partners with higher ability students

-Seeking materials at easy reading level that do not specifically mention age of main characters.

-I like a lot of hands on projects. We do “crafty” projects, make posters, act out stories, play games, have contests. I use a lot of visuals and play CD’s and use the internet.

Question # 11- Do you have any short term goals to make changes within your library in order to better serve learning disabled students? If yes, can you briefly describe these changes?

(Fourteen respondents answered “no” or “none” to this question)

-No-none, other than to keep searching for lower reading levels on resources

-Work harder to inservice the teachers of these kids. I find that computer assisted instruction works very nicely with them. Also, more read aloud sessions for reading pleasure.

-Physically dis. need elevator. Library is on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

-Just to keep working to integrate more classroom lessons, and to keep on top of what is being done in a classroom so I show teachers how I can help their students in the library.

-Pursue other distant learning programs with other schools and electronic field trips.

-I'd like to find titles that are suitable to their interests. Purchase more books.

-Not really- Right now I let the learning disabled students come into the library and use the computers. I do special lessons with them on how to use materials in the library.

-To buy some books on tape

-Acquire more materials with a basic reading level

-One change being made is having an aid or special ed teacher come to the library with the student.

-I am new at this job and will discuss

-The special education students have a difficult time with research materials. Most of the research library books are too difficult and easier texts are not published. Hopefully, I can find material.

-I'm always looking for appropriate material on their level.

-Expand the availability fiction selection. I am planning to do more book talks to stimulate interest in reading.

-Add additional computers

-The only way I can help now is basically through my lessons and individual help. Low and frozen budgets don't help

-Only to increase collections of materials to meet their needs

-Not at the moment

-Yes, I plan to label the books that are on a lower reading level with a colored dot for easy identification. The easier to read books are interfiled so students do not have to feel embarrassed about checking out an easy book. I also want to improve my lessons and gear them more to these students. I do see self-contained students and would like to make it easier for them.

-These students often require more one on one service. Certain times of the day are more appropriate. I need to discuss scheduling with their teachers.

-I try to provide as many materials as possible per teacher requests.

-More materials integrated into the general collection. This entails additional cataloging time.

-We have three schools in the same complex sharing one library. When special education students use the media center (library) due to their special needs we have to cut back on the number of students on passes. These students need a one-on-one situation.

-We have recently accomplished our goals. We put an orange dot on the spine (on the backs) of books with grade 4 reading level or below, and ordered hundreds of books at these reading levels. In our Athena automated system, we cataloged these books as a "visual search"- a series of icons. It's great!

-We did receive a grant this past year to order some high interest/low level reading books for special ed students. I would like to order additional materials suited to their needs.

-Not at this time

-I plan on getting additional "reluctant reader" types of materials and more audio/video materials.

-Continue to build our print collection of easy reading, as special needs increase. We are currently recording books on tape with the help of volunteer parents and teachers.

Question # 12- Do you have any other comments about special education students in the library?

(Nine respondents answered “no” or “none” to this question)

-They are my favorite students. Their favorite program is my “How to...” introduction. They are required to read a book and demonstrate How to... to the class- How to fold paper airplanes, How to color eggs. Recipes are the best because they need to follow directions (read) measure (math) communicate, assembling... then of course eating it.

-For the most part, they behave like mainstream students. I try to treat them all the same.

-In order to accommodate students with varying reading levels, let alone interests, a Middle School library collection will overlap with an elementary collection. Our special education students are no different from other students using the library.

-We find serving them in small group more effective than getting lost in a class of regular ed

-It's difficult to hold their attention for a 1 hr. period

-It is good for the students to be exposed to the skills taught by the media specialist

-Sometimes there is additional help/aids like photocopying, ect.

-Teaching them when they come with a regular class but without an aide is very difficult!

-During library, the special education students are mainstreamed.

-I love having them

-I find that special education students use the computers (Internet) a lot. They are also some of my best magazine readers. Special education students come to the library unassisted, during their studies. They are quiet and well behaved.

-The only negative comment- Inappropriate behavior (running, shoving, swearing) –such behavior may be permitted in a self contained situation (according to their IEP'S) but not when regular ed students are trying to do their work.

-I try to include materials for appropriate levels for all students in school.

-The library can sometimes be a “safe haven” for those that are scrutinized and teased.

-They should be apart of the library just like “regular ed.”

- Often they are the most eager and hard working students
- Often times they are more highly motivated to be much more successful and to work that much harder.
- Even though we are middle school- I have to have a wider array of materials of lower reading levels
- Those who I see seem to perform as well or better than the so-called “normal” students- especially when using the computer.
- I love having them in the library. They are most times better behaved and more appreciative than the regular students.
- We have high expectations for our special ed students so there is always a level of frustration and discomfort as we ask them to reach and stretch beyond their learning comfort zone.
- Teachers or aides be with them at all times!!
- I find that if I keep an open mind and my teaching strategies flexible I have a good deal of success with learning disabled students.
- Reading levels are taken into account when ordering materials. We try to include lower level books to align with curriculum.
- Enjoy computer access
- They need to relearn that the library is fun. Order pizza, play games. Don't be boring.
- The computer has been a boon to spec ed students-really allows self-pacing
- They seem eager to be involved, but not always able
- They are never a problem. There is always something for them. The collection is integrated and not separated (nor the instruction). They are made to feel successful in the library. They love coming and I love having them.
- They present a distinct challenge when mainstreamed into large classes of 25+. There is not enough of me to get around in a 42 min. period, and give the needed attention to all special education students and the regular ed. Students who also need help.
- Generally, they are treated no differently except to make physical arrangements of the environment.

-I do not recall any training for or discussion of special ed students using the library when I went to library school. Hopefully, there is some now!

-Many of the special ed kids come to the library and persue mainly one interest such as pro-wrestling, motorcycles, dirt bikes, hunting, ect.

-Better service can be done with individual and small group settings. Having high numbers in my regularly taught library classes does not help anyone.

-The students I see cover quite a range of abilities – as a group they enjoy working in the library

-All of our special education students have full access to all of the faculties of our library media and our library computers, mini-lab in internet access. They are avid users of both books and on-line materials.

-As a reference librarian, I don't find it difficult to work with special ed. Students. However, as a teacher of library skills, I have difficulty in meeting the needs of special ed. Students as well as the other students because of the size (25+) of the classes.

-Special ed. Students receive many services and support in our school. Whether they are accompanied by a teacher, aide, or use of the library independently, these students seem able to locate and use information to the best of their ability.

-This is my first year at this school. In the past, all the classified students (in my previous job) were mainstreamed. In my present job the district is large enough to separate them. I would like to be able to service them better – through lessons geared to them. This will take time as I question their teachers for help and through observations

-Many of our special education students have taken to the Accelerated Reader program and are doing very well selecting books that they are interested in and are successful with.

-They love to use the computers-as do all others too! Some of my best library helpers are classified.

-Our special ed students have the same library orientation as everyone else- but we do take a few more days with them

-This year there are special ed/resource teachers on each academic team. Those teachers are in-class support for students with learning problems, as well as for classified students in the main stream, and for any other students on their team. This seems to be working well.

-In general, working with special needs students is more rewarding than working with the general student population. Most of these students want to learn, are willing to try, and appreciate the help that is offered.

-Most special education students visit the library at least twice a month. In most cases, their classroom teacher plays a big role in the way they use library resources.

-Many of them feel very comfortable coming in and taking out magazines on a regular basis.

-They have the same wants and needs as other students, but it takes more time and attention to satisfy their goals.

-Like non-classified students, some are much better behaved than others. Some have better skills than others- some (those who "can't read") might be better served in a different block (ex: music, art, p.e.)

-Our special education students are frequent independent users of the library. A big attraction is Accelerated Reader. Contests and special activities to promote reading interest are geared to recognize the achievements of all, regardless of ability level. Our "class winners" in frequent contests celebrate together, not distinguishing the top readers in the school from the special ed. Classroom winners.

-My library is an interactive, non-tip-toey kind of place. Students are allowed to express enthusiasm within certain decibel levels. I think they feel comfortable coming to the library and students know that their questions are not "dumb".

-Print material selection with the LD and Spec. Ed. students in mind is critical to their being enthusiastic about using the facility.