

Current Research: The Instructional Consultant Role of the School Library Media Specialist

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The role of the school library media specialist has progressed from that of librarian, or keeper of books, to master teacher, instructional design consultant, or teacher-librarian, which is the term used in Canada. In 1988, *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* defined the role of the school library media specialist as information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant. Previous standards published by AASL in 1960 and 1969 had contributed to the growth of the instructional role. The 1975 standards, *Media Programs: District and School*, elevated the instructional role and described the requirements for that role as design and consultation. "Design" meant that the library media specialist was to initiate and participate in curriculum development, while "consultation" meant that the library media specialist was to recommend media applications for instructional settings. By the late 1970s, many articles and books focused on the concept of instructional design and the librarian's role in it. In the early 1980s, several models for instructional development or design and curriculum involvement by the library media specialist appeared in the literature.

Nickel listed twelve steps for the library media specialist to follow in order to play a key role in curriculum planning and development, including being aware of the total instructional program of the school; visiting classes as often as possible; knowing the current methods of teaching; becoming involved in the actual planning of the curriculum; conducting in-service for teachers; knowing bibliographies in the textbooks and adding books cited in them to the media center collection; and participating as a member of the instructional team.(1)

Baker went even further to describe teachers' perception of the role of the library media specialist. "Teachers expect that the library media specialist will be capable of serving as a member of the teaching team, willing and able to participate as a professional equal." He continued:

Administrators expect that library media specialists will be master teachers who display through technique, methodology, and discipline that they are excellent teachers of students with regular and special learning needs, and of their fellow teachers as well. The administrators expect the specialist to assume a leadership role, to influence the quality of instruction and the course of teaching and learning, not just in the library media center, but throughout the building.(2)

Wehmeyer defined the instructional role of the library media specialist as *consigliere*-someone who is identified by and works closely with the principal and is an instructional leader on the basis of expertise. "The *consigliere* is an indirect instructional leader who interacts as a colleague with classroom teachers. Such change facilitators do not issue directives; rather, they ask, inform, model, suggest, and support."(3)

In an Arizona study of perceptions of the role of the library media specialist,(4) however, only 6.5 percent of the principals surveyed and 3.4 percent of the media specialists indicated a belief that the library media specialist should exercise a leadership role in the educational and local communities. The competency stated "encourage and practice a professional school library media philosophy that supports the principles and practices of the education" was ranked first in importance by 55.6 percent of the principals and 44.4 percent of the library media specialists. The study did not specifically address the instructional role. The competency stated "assist faculty in selection of appropriate library materials" ranked 5.0 in importance with principals and 4.5 with library media specialists (on a scale of 0B5).

Even though the instructional role of the library media specialist has evolved to one of prominence in the literature, research studies indicate discrepancies between theory and practice. Studies have shown a ten-year lag between the introduction of the concept and its actualization in the profession. Craver states: "Instructional design, while introduced as an officially sanctioned activity by the 1975 standards, was far from a practiced reality as late as 1984."(5) Stripling points out that most of the instructional development research, theories, and models published through 1984 were written by those in higher education, not by practicing library media specialists.(6) In a Texas study, school library media specialists ranked competencies associated with consultation, instruction, and utilization (instructional development) very low in importance to effective job performance and skill development as compared with the more traditional roles of organization, management, acquisition, and dissemination.(7)

Williams studied the teacher/media specialist cooperation and services within middle schools in Cobb County, Georgia.(8) She found that 83 percent of the responding library media specialists had worked in a team-teaching situation in which ideas and responsibilities were shared to plan, develop, and implement student instruction, while only 11 percent of responding teachers had participated in such a unit. Descriptions of the units revealed that most were reactive-the library media specialist reacted to the teacher's request. Williams concludes that interest in teacher/media specialist cooperation is high, but actual involvement is low.

Recognizing how difficult it is for the library media specialist to try to fit instructional development activities into an already full schedule, Turner suggests that all levels of involvement (including informal advice) between the teacher and the library media specialist are part of instructional development.(9) In a recent discussion of the evolution of information skills and instructional consulting as a synergy,(10) he states that the "levels" approach to instructional consultation provides the method by which the library media specialist can build a relationship of mutual trust with the classroom teacher. This approach is necessary for the library media specialist to gain access to the classroom and the planning process of a unit that focuses on resources other than the textbook. In the instructional consultant role, the library media specialist then integrates the necessary skills instruction into the unit.

By 1989, the term “resource-based instruction,” the opposite of textbook-based instruction, appears established in the literature. Toor and Weisburg, two practicing library media specialists, further define the term by explaining its worth as a teaching strategy and describing ways to convince administrators and gain their support as well as gain the confidence and cooperation of classroom teachers.(11) Their model provides a six-step framework for teacher/library media specialist planning sessions. To illustrate their model, they present twenty-two resource-based instructional units for elementary and secondary schools to be used by library media specialists in a hands-on seminar approach to implementing resource-based instruction. Toor and Weisberg continue to provide samples of these resource-based units in their monthly *School Librarian’s Workshop*.

Linda Waddle’s personal reaction to resource-based teaching was “a fancy name for something I’ve been doing all along”;(12) however, her further reading revealed the difference. The concept originated in Canada with *Partners in Action: The Library Resource Center in the School Curriculum*, published by the Ontario Department of Education in 1981. The American version was described in Loertscher’s *Taxonomy of the School Library Media Program*.(13) The terms “reactive” and “proactive” explain the difference. What the library media specialist has been doing is *reacting* to someone else’s unit plans; but with levels nine and ten of the taxonomy, the library media specialist participates from the initial planning of the unit as an equal partner and *proactive* participant in instructional design.

Eisenberg states that “. . . the activities associated with curriculum support and instructional design have not been fully realized, exemplifying the gap between literature and practice.” He concludes: “. . . the primary challenge is to narrow the gap between theory and practice and between internal and external perceptions and expectations.”(14)

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if a lag existed between the theoretical instructional role of design and consultation as described in the literature, and the instructional role as practiced by school library media specialists in the DeKalb County Public Schools in Georgia. To make this determination, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How important do the library media specialists perceive the instructional role of design and consultation to be?
2. To what extent are the library media specialists practicing the instructional role of design and consultation?
3. What demographic variables relate to the library media specialists’ perceived importance and practice of the instructional role?

This study was significant in that results helped in assessing the success and justification of the DeKalb Department of Educational Media’s direct emphasis on the role of “helping teachers teach,” the term used by Turner (15,16) and chosen by the department to encompass the instructional role of the library media specialist.

This study assumed that these library media specialists were familiar with Turner's levels and Loertscher's taxonomy of the instructional role of the school library media specialist and were practicing the role at some level. The study was limited to the 126 library media specialists (seventy-nine elementary; forty-seven secondary) of the DeKalb County Public Schools, which serve more than seventy-three thousand students in seventy-seven elementary and twenty-four secondary schools. (DeKalb County is one of five counties in the metropolitan Atlanta area, and this school system is the largest in Georgia.)

Research Design

To gather data, a three-page questionnaire, arranged in three parts, was designed and sent to all library media specialists in the DeKalb County Schools. The first part contained the following eighteen statements relating to the instructional role:

Provide access to materials through organization and classification that integrate materials in all formats into a unified collection.

1. Provide reference services and materials to individual students and teachers.
2. Gather materials for a teacher with no advance notice.
3. Plan informally and briefly with a teacher for library involvement in a unit.
4. Gather materials requested by a teacher in advance of a class project or assignment.
5. Promote the instructional philosophy of the library media center program.
6. Plan formally with teachers to supply materials or activities in response to a teacher-planned unit.
7. Help teachers plan, implement, and evaluate instructional units in which library media center materials are supplementary or used for enrichment.
8. Help teachers plan, implement, and evaluate instructional units where the *entire* content is based on resources and activities of the library media center program.
9. Participate as an equal partner with the teacher in assessing students' achievements (grading) in a resource-based unit.
10. Participate as a member of the school curriculum committee.
11. Design and produce instructional materials to meet student and teacher needs.
12. Analyze and interpret content of instructional materials in relation to the curriculum.
13. Design and conduct in-service education programs for teachers, aides, and other school-related groups.
14. Explain various styles of learning that account for individual differences among students.
15. Use information, communication, and learning theories and models in relation to learning styles and individual differences among students.
16. Identify appropriate usage of various communication media in the learning environment.
17. Assist and guide teachers and students in the design, development, and evaluation of instructional programs in relation to learner needs, teacher strategies, and learning environments.

These statements are based on Loertscher's "The Library Media Specialist's Taxonomy"(17) and a list of competencies for consultation, utilization, instruction, and learning resources development found in the literature.(18) The first eight statements address the levels of the

taxonomy, beginning at level two (Self-Help Warehouse) and proceeding in order through level nine (Instructional Design, Level I). Statements 9 through 18 address levels ten (Instructional Design, Level II) and eleven (Curriculum Development).

Using a Likert scale, respondents rated the statements in order of importance to their job performance (rankings are shown in table 1 under “Results”). In the second part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate the same statements according to their own practice of the instructional role. The third part contained demographic questions and a section for optional, open-ended comments.

Responses were scored according to three philosophical categories-Reactive, Proactive, or Interactive-in perception and practice of the instructional role. These three sub-areas correspond to Turner’s second, third, and fourth levels of passive participation, reaction, and action/education. They are also based on Callison’s grouping of the eleven levels of Loertscher’s taxonomy into the three philosophical categories. Levels one through five are *reactive* levels; the library media specialist simply supplies what is requested. Levels six through eight are *proactive* levels; the library media specialist aggressively promotes media services and the instructional use of a variety of media. The third category, *interactive*, encompasses levels nine through eleven:

The media specialist acts, not only as a leader, but also begins to examine the educational system in terms of evaluating its successes and failures. . . . The media specialist becomes an important force for curriculum development. This impact involves not only integrating information skills into all areas of the curriculum, but working to revise the lessons and activities to the degree that such lessons require the use of the resource center.(19)

Results

Usable responses were received from eighty-three of the 128 library media specialists for a 65 percent return. Of these, 59 percent were in elementary schools and 41 percent were in secondary schools (junior highs, senior highs, and the centers).

[Table 1](#) shows the frequency of their responses to statements about the importance of the instructional role to their position. The first two statements (“provide access to materials through organization and classification that integrate materials in all formats into a unified collection” and “provide reference services and materials to individual students and teachers”) were considered by the largest number of respondents as very important. Statements 10 and 15 (“participate as an equal partner with the teacher in assessing students’ achievements in a resource-based unit” and “explain various styles of learning that account for individual differences among students”) were considered very important by the least number of respondents. These two statements and statements 12 and 18, taken from the literature, specifically define the various aspects of the instructional design and consultation role. The ratings for these were noticeably lower than ratings for statements dealing with the traditional roles of warehousing and making materials accessible. Production of materials, an emphasis in the 1970s and now considered part of the instructional design process, was rated “of some importance” by twenty-five respondents.

Table 1. Frequency of Importance (N = 83)

Abbreviated Taxonomy and Taxonomy Related Statements	Ratings*						N/A
	5	4	3	2	1	0	
1. Provide access	73 (88)	9 (11)	0	1 (1)	0	0	0
2. Reference services	78 (94)	5 (6)	0	0	0	0	0
3. Gather materials with no notice	11 (13)	31 (37)	32 (39)	6 (7)	3 (4)	0	0
4. Plan informally	47 (57)	32 (39)	2 (2)	2 (2)	0	0	0
5. Gather materials in advance	66 (80)	15 (18)	1 (1)	0	0	1 (1)	0
6. Promote philosophy	57 (69)	14 (17)	10 (12)	1 (1)	0	1 (1)	0
7. Plan formally a teacher- planned unit	54 (65)	24 (29)	4 (5)	1 (1)	0	0	0
8. Help teachers teach as supplemental	41 (49)	24 (29)	12 (14)	6 (7)	0	0	0
9. Health teachers teach in resource-based unit	56 (67)	19 (23)	8 (10)	0	0	0	0
10. Equal partner in resource- based unit	7 (8)	15 (18)	35 (42)	21 (25)	5 (6)	0	0
11. School curriculum committee member	39 (47)	25 (30)	15 (18)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0	2 (2)
12. Production of instructional materials	13 (16)	18 (22)	25 (30)	21 (25)	5 (6)	1 (1)	0
13. Analyze materials to curriculum	26 (31)	33 (40)	18 (22)	4 (5)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0
14. Conduct inservices	22 (27)	38 (46)	19 (23)	3 (4)	1 (1)	0	0
15. Know learning styles	4 (5)	16 (19)	33 (40)	21 (25)	9 (11)	0	0
16. Use information, communication, and learning theories	14 (17)	21 (25)	33 (40)	9 (11)	5 (6)	1 (1)	0
17. Identify usage of communication media	23 (28)	35 (42)	17 (20)	6 (7)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0
18. Assist in design of instructional program	20 (24)	28 (34)	24 (29)	9 (11)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0

*Scale: 5 = very important, 4 = important, 3 = of some importance, 2 = of little importance, 1 = of no importance, 0 = no response, NA = not applicable

To determine if the library media specialists were practicing the instructional role as defined in the literature, respondents were asked to rate the same statements according to their own frequency of practice, and table 2 shows the frequency of their responses. Again, the first two statements were practiced to a very great extent by the largest number of respondents. Statements 10 and 15 were practiced to a very great extent by only seven and four respondents, respectively. As in table 1, there was an even greater drop in the ratings of statements that define more specifically the instructional design and consultation role (statements 12 through 18).

Table 2. Frequency of Practice (N = 83)

Abbreviated Taxonomy and Taxonomy Related Statements	Ratings*						
	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
1. Provide access	73 (88)	6 (7)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0	2 (2)	0
2. Reference services	65 (78)	14 (17)	3 (4)	0	0	1 (1)	0
3. Gather materials with no notice	17 (20)	25 (30)	31 (37)	9 (11)	1 (1)	0	0
4. Plan informally	30 (36)	36 (43)	16 (19)	1 (1)	0	0	0
5. Gather materials in advance	38 (46)	37 (45)	8 (10)	0	0	0	0
6. Promote philosophy	44 (53)	16 (19)	15 (18)	7 (8)	0	1 (1)	0
7. Plan formally a teacher- planned unit	21 (25)	20 (24)	28 (34)	12 (14)	2 (2)	0	0
8. Help teachers teach as supplemental	12 (14)	19 (23)	31 (37)	17 (20)	4 (5)	0	0
9. Health teachers teach in resource-based unit	18 (22)	22 (27)	19 (23)	16 (19)	8 (10)	0	0
10. Equal partner in resource- based unit	1 (1)	6 (7)	13 (16)	23 (28)	40 (48)	0	0
11. School curriculum committee member	6 (7)	6 (7)	6 (7)	4 (5)	58 (70)	0	3 (4)
12. Production of instructional materials	5 (6)	6 (7)	18 (22)	30 (36)	24 (29)	0	0
13. Analyze materials to curriculum	9 (11)	17 (20)	30 (36)	14 (17)	11 (13)	2 (2)	0
14. Conduct inservices	8 (10)	17 (20)	31 (37)	21 (25)	6 (7)	0	0
15. Know learning styles	4 (5)	1 (1)	10 (12)	32 (41)	34 (41)	0	0
16. Use information, communication, and learning theories	6 (7)	10 (12)	22 (27)	27 (32)	18 (22)	0	0
17. Identify usage of communication media	10 (12)	28 (34)	26 (31)	14 (17)	4 (5)	1 (1)	0
18. Assist in design of instructional program	6 (7)	13 (16)	26 (31)	24 (29)	12 (14)	2 (2)	0

*Scale: 5 = to a very great extent, 4 = to a great extent, 3 = to a moderate extent, 2 = to a small extent, 1 = none at all, 0 = no response, NA = not applicable

Table 3 shows the percentage of respondents who rated the statements as either very important or important, the percentage who rated their own practice of the statements as to either a very great extent or a great extent, and the discrepancy between these two ratings. The percentage of respondents who rated these statements with either a 5 or 4 was lower in every case than the rating of the statement's importance, except for statement 3 ("gather materials with no advance notice"), which showed no discrepancy.

Table 3. Frequency Percentages of Combined 5 and 4 Ratings for Importance and practice with Discrepancy Scores

Abbreviated Taxonomy and Taxonomy Related Statements	Ratings*		Discrepancy Scores
	Importance	Practice	
1. Provide access	82 (99)	79 (95)	3 (4)
2. Reference services	83 (100)	79 (95)	4 (5)
3. Gather materials with no notice	42 (51)	42 (51)	0 (0)
4. Plan informally	79 (95)	66 (80)	13 (16)
5. Gather materials in advance	81 (98)	75 (90)	6 (7)
6. Promote philosophy	71 (86)	60 (72)	11 (13)
7. Plan formally a teacher-planned unit	78 (94)	41 (49)	37 (45)
8. Help teachers teach as supplemental	65 (78)	31 (37)	34 (41)
9. Health teachers teach in resource-based unit	75 (90)	40 (48)	35 (42)
10. Equal partner in resource-based unit	22 (27)	7 (8)	15 (18)
11. School curriculum committee member	64 (77)	12 (14)	52 (63)
12. Production of instructional materials	31 (37)	11 (13)	20 (24)
13. Analyze materials to curriculum	59 (71)	26 (31)	33 (40)
14. Conduct inservices	60 (72)	25 (30)	35 (42)
15. Know learning styles	20 (24)	5 (6)	15 (18)
16. Use information, communication, and learning theories	35 (42)	16 (19)	19 (23)
17. Identify usage of communication media	58 (70)	38 (46)	20 (24)
18. Assist in design of instructional program	48 (58)	19 (23)	29 (35)

The most notable score discrepancies in the taxonomy statements (1B9, and 11) appeared in statements 7 (45 percent), 8 (41 percent), 9 (42 percent), and 11 (63 percent), which represent the heart of the instructional consultant role. Even though 77 percent rated statement 11, “serves on school curriculum committee,” important or very important, only 14 percent practiced this statement to a great or very great extent, thus providing the largest discrepancy. This was the only statement with “not applicable” (NA) responses, because sixteen respondents indicated that their school had no curriculum committee.

Labels of Reactive, Proactive, and/or Interactive were given to respondents who gave the corresponding taxonomy statements either a 4 or 5 rating. Labels were given for both perception of the importance and practice of the statements. A respondent could receive as many as six labels depending on the responses to both parts of the questionnaire. If a respondent gave no response or NA to a statement, no score or label was given in that category. Respondents who rated statements 1, 2, and 4 with either a 4 or 5 received the Reactive label. Statement 3 was not used for label determination after the author perceived a difference in meaning in the wording of the statement and that conveyed by Loertscher in level four of the taxonomy. For perceived importance, 94 percent received the Reactive label, while 74 percent received the Reactive label for practice.

Proactive respondents rated statements 5 through 7 with a 4 or 5, and Interactives rated statements 8, 9, and 11 with either a 4 or 5. The Proactive label described 82 percent of the respondents for importance ratings but only 41 percent for practice ratings. Interactive labels applied to 61 percent for importance and only 10 percent for practice. Table 4 shows the frequency of the labels and the breakdown by media center position (elementary or secondary) of the respondents.

Table 4. Frequency of Labels for 83 Respondents

Label	Importance no. (%)	Practice no. (%)
Reactive	78 (94)	61 (74)
Elementary	45 (92)	32 (68)
Secondary	33 (97)	29 (88)
Proactive	68 (82)	34 (41)
Elementary	38 (78)	17 (35)
Secondary	30 (88)	17 (50)
Interactive	51 (61)	8 (10)
Elementary	25 (53)	5 (11)
Secondary	26 (77)	3 (9)

Conclusions

Although the DeKalb County library media specialists perceived their instructional role to be important, they seemed to view this role as supportive; only one-fourth of the respondents felt it was important to be an equal partner with a teacher in evaluating student work in a resource-based unit. The drop in importance ratings for the statements that imply an instructional leadership and innovator role (such as “explain various styles of learning that account for individual differences among students” and “use information, communication, and learning theories and models in relation to learning styles”) also support this conclusion. Several commented that these areas belong to the instructional lead teacher and the assistant principal for instruction.

The library media specialists were not practicing the instructional role to a great extent. In fact, fewer than half reported that they were practicing to a great or very great extent the actual instructional design levels of Loertscher’s taxonomy. Only eight (10 percent) library media specialists can be labeled Interactive according to their combined responses to statements 8, 9, and 11 (“the media specialist begins to consider unique instructional approaches and accepts the role of instructional innovator”).(20) It is important to note, however, that only 5 percent of the eighty-three respondents reported that they were not practicing level nine at all, and only 10 percent indicated no practice of level ten.

An assumption can be made that the library media specialists had a clear understanding of the importance of the instructional role, because in the year prior to the study, Frank Winstead,

director of educational media, stressed the planning, implementation, and evaluation of one or more resource-based units with a classroom teacher. The library media specialists were encouraged to include this teamwork in their annual personal goals. During the year of the study, they were instructed to progress to levels nine and ten of Loertscher's taxonomy and were required to show evidence that at least one resource-based teaching unit was developed and implemented with a new or master teacher.

This emphasis on implementing resource-based instructional units could account for the percentage differences in both importance and practice for statements 8 and 9. It would appear from table 3 that statement 9, "help teachers plan, implement, and evaluate instructional units where the *entire* content is based on resources and activities of the library media center program," was more important and practiced by more library media specialists than statement 8, which focused on units where media center materials are supplemental or used as enrichment.

Of the library media specialists who were labeled Interactive, no demographic variable contributed to the perceived importance and practice of the instructional role. School levels and years of library media experience may have had some influence. Based on perceived importance, only half the elementary library media specialists could be labeled Interactive, while more than three-fourths of the secondary respondents could. Of the eight library media specialists who were designated Interactive in practice, six had more than eleven years of experience. Of the fifty-one respondents labeled Interactive in perceived importance, thirty-two (63 percent) had at least eleven years of experience.

Limitations

The data show that only eight of the eighty-three library media specialists who responded appeared to be practicing the instructional role to a great extent. One explanation might be that at the time of this study, the DeKalb media specialists had been required to plan, implement, and evaluate only one resource-based unit. The results might have been higher if the library media specialists had implemented the plan over an entire school year when they answered the questionnaire.

Another factor that may have affected results was the statement concerning membership on the school curriculum committee, one of three statements whose ratings determined the Interactive label. Even though 77 percent of the respondents considered membership important, 70 percent indicated they did not serve on the committee. Of these, it is not possible to know how many are in schools with no curriculum committee. Only three respondents rated this statement with NA for practice; however, at least thirteen other respondents actually stated that their school did not have a curriculum committee. One stated that she was a member of her school's "leadership" committee but did not indicate its function. Another stated that the second media specialist in the school served on the committee, and two stated that the principal selected the committee, but they would serve if asked. Even if these twenty respondents had been labeled Interactive in practice, the results (34 percent) would have been greater but not impressive.

Implications

Craver, in examining research studies from 1950 to 1984, revealed that the instructional role of the school library media specialist had changed but not to a great degree. The literature indicates a lag of at least ten years between the instructional role espoused and that being practiced.(21) The literature from 1984 revealed little change, and the results of this study appear to support the earlier findings.

The responses in both importance and practice to statement 10 and statements 12 through 18 indicate that many of the library media specialists may not be in agreement with the instructional leadership and innovator aspects of the role. Although a case can be made for library media specialists serving as curriculum coordinators because they work with all teachers designing instruction and making effective use of materials, they possess neither the line authority nor the accepted academic credentials of the curriculum coordinator.(22) “The evaluation of papers adds extra responsibility for the media specialist, but the role is important for an integrated library media classroom instructional project”(23) is a rewording of statement 10. The low ratings for statements 10 and 16, reworded from the literature as “school library media specialists understand how knowledge is most effectively communicated by teachers and most effectively received by students,”(24) indicate that the role of the “master teacher” or “teacher-librarian” is not the norm in the DeKalb schools.

Although this study did not attempt to determine the cause, the most obvious question raised is the reason for the discrepancy between the Interactive labels for importance and practice. The literature offers several reasons, including lack of interest, knowledge, and/or training of the library media specialist; a lack of administrative support, including clerical, budgetary, and scheduling factors; and a lack of interest, a resistance to cooperation, or a lack of information about the instructional design process on the part of teachers. Montgomery, who expanded this list in her study, corroborates the importance of cognitive style (the manner in which an individual’s perception is influenced by sensory data) to cooperation between the teacher and library media specialist.(25) Further studies are still needed to determine why more library media specialists who believe in its importance are not practicing the instructional role to its fullest extent.

Administrative support of the instructional role of the library media program must be emphasized. Ellen and Hilda Jay assert:

Wherever library media programs have been especially successful, there have been strong, informed, and active partnerships forged among the principal, the classroom teachers, and the library media personnel. . . . It is this third role, the curricular role [*Information Power*], that has the most immediate implication for both principals and library media professionals.(26) It is worth noting that the May 1991 issue of the *NASSP Bulletin* was devoted to the importance of the school library media program and resource-based instruction. Ken Haycock warns: “There is relatively little danger to the continued existence of school libraries. The issue is the continued existence of the school librarian.”(27)

Information Power defines the school library media specialist as information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant-giving equal importance to each role. The roles of teacher and instructional consultant go hand-in-hand. An instructional consultant must have the knowledge, expertise, and experience of a teacher combined with knowledge of the total library media collection and other resources outside the center that relate to and enhance the curriculum. Library media specialists “should bring their knowledge of research, teaching methodology, curriculum development, learning theory, and instructional development to the process of teaching.”(28) Thus, the library media specialist must be a master teacher. The literature goes further in applying the terms *instructional leader* and *instructional innovator* to the library media specialist. Do the DeKalb library media specialists meet the standards? Perhaps not yet, but they certainly appear to be moving in the right direction.

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