

YOUR LIBRARY AIN'T LIKE MINE: PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY SCHOOL  
LIBRARY PROGRAMMING FROM LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS

by

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## Abstract

TRACY DANEEN CREECH. Your library ain't like mine: Perceptions of quality school library programming from library professionals. (Under the direction of DR. CHANCE W. LEWIS)

There are few instances in which school library professionals are able to give input as to what constitutes a quality school library media program. This study seeks to determine if there are key differences in perceptions of school library programming from school library personnel who are licensed as opposed to those who do not share that distinction. Additionally, this study also seeks to determine if there are statistically significant differences between school library personnel who are employed in Title I eligible schools versus school library personnel who are not employed in such schools.

The data were collected via a cross sectional survey. The target population for the administered survey were the school library media professionals in the state of North Carolina. The sampling frame was the school library media professionals from the Dewey County NC Public School District (pseudonym). School library media professionals in this instance consisted of licensed school library media specialists, non-licensed school library media assistants, technology facilitators or any staff member permanently assigned to work in the school media center. The data were analyzed by determining the frequency of responses and by means of an independent samples *t*-test.

Literature regarding the essential elements of school library services were expounded upon in detail during this study. The elements included were certified school library media specialists, print and electronic resources, school library accessibility and quality school library programming. Moreover, the theoretical perspectives of Michel

Foucault and Paulo Freire and how they can be applied to the field of library and information science was also explored.

This study comprises the major findings discovered in relation to this study as well as recommendations for future research in the area of school libraries. Research in this field is sorely needed as additional studies can effectively add to the body of research. Such research can inform key stakeholders of the importance of school libraries and school librarians. This study concludes with recommendations for all those who have an interest in maintaining school library services to students.

## Dedication

To William Henry and Dianna Hopkins Creech, my loving parents. I love and miss you to infinity. Also, to Johnny and Arzena Creech as well as Roosevelt and Cornelia Hopkins, my grandparents. I pray that I have made all of you proud. My only regret is that none of you are here to see this accomplishment. All that I am is the manifestation of your love and dedication.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better.” -- President (then Senator) Barack Obama

School library media centers are often an overlooked component of student success. According to the Library Research Service [LRS], (n.d.), a school library media center is defined as:

“a dedicated facility located in and administered by the school that provides at least the following: an organized, circulating collection of printed and/or audiovisual and/or computer-based resources, or a combination thereof; paid staff; an established schedule during which services of the staff are available to students and faculty; instruction on using library materials to support classroom standards and improve student research and literacy skills” (para. 3).

There have been a number of studies that suggest that a quality school media library program and student achievement are positively correlated (Burgin, Bracy & Brown, 2003; Gavigan & Lance, 2016; Lance, 2001; Kachel & Lance, 2013; Lance, Schwarz, & Rodney, 2014). An effective school media library program is one that has a certified school librarian as the primary purveyor of information, provides a personalized learning environment, and offers equitable access to resources in order to ensure a well-rounded education for all students (American Association of School Librarians [AASL], 2016). A firm foundation in literacy is needed at an early age for there to be optimal academic success into adulthood. School library media centers aid in the development of lifelong reading skills. Many studies cite third grade reading scores as a gateway to lifelong

literacy and high school graduation (Anne E. Casey Foundation, 2010; Lu, 2013; Sparks, 2011). North Carolina (NC) legislators reviewed data regarding third grade reading scores and attempted to take preventative measures against illiteracy by passing House Bill 950 in 2012 (North Carolina House Bill 950, 2012, §115C-83.1A). NC House Bill 950 is commonly known as Read to Achieve and went into effect beginning with the 2013 – 2014 academic year. The major objectives of Read to Achieve is to increase proficiency in reading and to ensure that all NC students are able to read at or above grade level by the end of their third-grade year. The efforts made by NC legislators should be applauded as this appears to be a concerted effort to tackle the abhorrent problem of illiteracy in the state; however, this law does not make concessions for or even mention school library media centers. School library media centers and school library media specialists and their importance in relation to student academic success and literacy is noticeably absent from the educational equation.

School library media centers that serve students that come from families at a lower socioeconomic level are often plagued with outdated or near obsolete resources and a lack of qualified staff (Adkins, 2014; Everhart, 2002; Glick, 2002). Those who are the most vulnerable often need the most resources in order to be successful (Kachel & Lance, 2013). If student academic success and school library media centers are positively correlated, it would make sense that schools that serve economically challenged and/or intellectually deficient students be staffed with the appropriate resources so that the most marginalized can be equipped with the tools needed to be academically successful. In addition to robust resources in terms of books and technology, adequate staffing is desperately needed in order to execute a quality school library media program. School

library media specialists are much more than instruments of information and glorified clerks for checking materials in and out. School library media specialists provide research instruction to staff and students alike. They also have the added responsibility of ensuring that library collections are up to date with the appropriate resources which enhance curriculum and academic skills. Oftentimes, school library media centers that serve economically challenged students are staffed with media assistants who do not hold the appropriate licensure or credentials (Adkins, 2014; Everhart, 2002; Glick, 2002); which greatly affects the quality of the services provided. The absence of a qualified and licensed school library media specialist severely limits the ability of a high-quality school library media program to flourish. Additionally, the failure of school library media centers to provide up to date and adequate resources can also affect the effectiveness of a quality school media program.

### **Statement of the Problem**

School library media centers and school library media specialist have been on the decline for a number of years (Everhart, 2002a; Everhart, 2002b; Helms, 2015; Rosales, 2011; Sullivan, 2013; Vercelletto, 2015); even though there are a multitude of studies that make a positive correlation between school libraries staffed with certified staff and student achievement (Baumbach, 2003; Burgin, Bracy & Brown, 2003; Lance, Rodney & Hamilton-Pennell, 2000a; Kaplan, 2007; Lance, Rodney & Hamilton-Pennell, 2000b; Lance, Schwartz & Rodney, 2014; Lonsdale, 2003; Schroeder & Fisher, 2015). Academic success is the primary objective for all educational stakeholders. Since previous studies suggest that the presence of school library media centers and media specialists ultimately

aid in the overall academic development of students, reductions in the essential components of library services confounds logic. The series of reductions by many school districts have left school library media programs in peril (Carlton, 2016; Geir, 2011; Johnson, 2005). The current literature is sparse regarding what embodies a quality school library program, although there is an abundance of studies that have been conducted that espouse the positive correlation between library services and student achievement (Gavigan & Lance, 2016; Lance, 2001; Lance & Loertscher, 2005; Lance, Schwarz, & Rodney, 2014; Lonsdale, 2003). Additionally, there is literature regarding libraries and the services they provide to economically disadvantaged students (Adkins, 2014; Neuman & Celano, 2001). For the purposes of this study, an economically disadvantaged student was defined as any student that attends a Title I or Title I eligible school. Title I eligible schools specifically serve the needs of students who come from lower socioeconomic households, so this characterization is appropriate in this context.

The services provided to low income and middle-income patrons in four distinct neighborhood libraries was studied by Neuman and Celano (2001). They found that access to print and electronic materials was perhaps the most significant wedge terms of library usage. The access gap in terms of library services (or programming) is an issue that must be adequately explored. Much work needs to be done to address the paucity in contemporary literature regarding what defines a quality school library program. Moreover, there are few instances where practitioners in the field of school library services are given the opportunity to make concrete distinctions as to what they feel is a quality school library media program or service. The increase in such literature can be

effectively used to shape educational policy as it relates to school library media centers, school library media specialists and the services provided by school libraries.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study was to gauge perceptions from school library media personnel regarding what typifies a quality school library media program. The researcher asserted that a quality school library media program is one that is led by a certified school library media specialist and one that supports the curricula mission of the school through the use of academic programs and services. This assertion is aligned with the position of the AASL (2016). Since there has been diminutive research done to define the role of the school library media center program by a multitude of professionals in the field (Bush, 2009; Haycock, 1999; Loertscher, 2000; Rosenfeld & Loertscher, 2007), this study added to the scarcity of the currently available literature. Oftentimes, the views from professionals who are currently working in the field have not been adequately espoused which made this study significant and apropos.

The educational stakeholders that have the arduous task of making budgetary decisions may find that eliminating school library media specialists and school library services will have a negative impact on academic growth in the long run. In this sense, school library media centers, school library media specialists and school library programming will each take their place in educational discourse. Just as school administrators, teachers and even coaches have an enduring place in the educational arena, school librarians must also be allowed a permanent space as well in the same venue since they aid in student academic progression.

## **Research Questions**

The following descriptive, non-experimental study utilized survey research as the primary method for data collection. The survey instrument (see Appendix A) was designed to measure the perceptions of what characterized a quality school library media program from professionals in the field. The kindergarten through twelfth grade schools from the Dewey County, NC School District (pseudonym) was utilized for this study.

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

RQ1: What are the characteristics of a quality school library media program according to the school library media personnel in the Dewey County, NC School District?

RQ2: In what ways do the characteristics of quality school library media programs differ between licensed school library media specialists and non-licensed school media professionals in the Dewey County, NC School District?

RQ3: In what ways do characteristics of school library media programs differ between Title I eligible schools and non-Title I eligible schools in the Dewey, NC School District?

The survey participants were the school library media personnel from Dewey County Public Schools which is located in North Carolina. Dewey County Public Schools is situated in an urban area and has over 140,000 students attending over 170 schools. School library media personnel includes certified school library media specialists and noncertified school library media staff.

## **Theoretical Perspectives**

The theoretical perspectives of Michel Foucault and his viewpoints on library and information science primarily guided this study. Foucault posits that the library is a site for the possibility of new knowledge as well as a passive storehouse that provides access to immense facts (Radford, 1992). The library is an entity that is able to provide a transformative effect on the individual which then translates into personal empowerment. In a contemporary society, the library experience is grounded in a positivist view of knowledge. As a comparison to positivism, library and information science builds general and priori rules with which to build systems that allow an efficient and precise access to information and knowledge (Radford, 1992).

An additional theoretical concept that guided this research is critical theory of library and information science. The theory of library and information science is actually born out of the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire. Freire (1970) stresses the importance of those who are deemed the oppressed to take back their lives through education. Education can be the one liberating factor for ensuring that the marginalized can overcome the obstacles that prevent their full integration into society. It is only education that allows men and women to essentially redefine themselves.

Critical theory of library and information science is relatively new in the world of academia. It borrows from Foucault's and Freire's concepts because it is the library that seeks to educate those who are often relegated or who are on the fringe of society. Critical theory of library and information science was introduced by Leckie, Given and Buschman (2010) and is based on seventy-five years of theory in relation to literacy and education. Critical theory of library and information science asserts that the main purpose

of libraries is to enable learners to process information better but to also teach one another in a community of learners. Libraries should be viewed as transformative educational sites which seek to reach a cross section of learners. The library is therefore charged with understanding first the learner and then assessing community needs (Leckie, Given & Buschman, 2010). Based on the fundamental foundation of critical theory, library services should be equal and available to all.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

This study utilized survey research via an online platform as the primary method of data collection. Online surveys often mean that some sort of incentive needs to be given so that participants can respond honestly and in a timely manner. According to Ward and Meade (2018), the quality of online survey data is of utmost importance so that comprehensive corollaries can be used in decision making. Social exchange theory asserts that individuals primarily seek reward and avoid punishment as well as calculate, or seek to maximize, profits for themselves (Sabetelli, 2003). Rewards and profits are not necessarily pecuniary but can rather be emotionally defined. In the framework of this study, participants are encouraged to answer honestly, thoughtfully and expeditiously so that they can provide feedback regarding the importance of school library services and programming. An additional benefit is that school library professionals can provide feedback regarding the profession in which they work. In this instance, the cost encompasses the devotion of time necessary to answer the questionnaire. The reward, or incentive, is the satisfaction of advocating for the profession and the services provided by school library media specialists.

Each of the theoretical concepts are expounded upon in subsequent chapters of this study. The theories of Foucault and Freire and how they relate to library services and library patrons are found in chapter two. The concept of social exchange theory and how it can be applied to survey research can be found in chapter three.

### **Overview of Context and Methods**

This descriptive, non-experimental study sought to gauge perceptions from school library media personnel regarding what characterized a quality school library media program. A cross-sectional survey was administered to school library personnel which sufficiently addressed each of the aforementioned research questions. Library personnel included certified school library media specialists and non-certified library media staff from the Dewey County Public Schools District in the state of North Carolina. A list of potential participants was secured by working closely with the district level school media personnel. The questionnaire was sent to identified participants via electronic mail and was available for approximately three weeks. A minimum of three reminder emails were sent in order to maximize participation.

The structure of the questionnaire in relation to the research questions formulated several variables which was utilized during this study. The focus of research question one is inherently illustrative and as such, descriptive statistics with a focus on frequency was applied. In regard to research inquires two and three, the dichotomous independent variables Title I eligibility and certified staffing licensure can in no way be manipulated by the researcher and as such, they were deemed quasi-independent. The statistical method for research inquires two and three was an independent samples *t*-test. The

statistical software SPSS was used for all aspects of statistical analysis for the duration of this study. Final analysis of the results are reported in chapter four. The ways in which the results can be effectively applied to the research inquiries are presented in chapter five. Moreover, the ways in which school library programming ultimately benefits students academically in relation to the theoretical concepts presented is also answered in chapter five.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study may be used to inform key stakeholders (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, school districts, school level administrators and school library media specialists and staff) about the intrinsic value of school library media centers and school library media specialists and how each aide in the development of a quality school library media program. School library media programs in turn, may lead to positive student academic growth.

Additional components of school library media that were reinforced in this work were the quality of resources available, the availability of the school library media center for patron usage and the quality of the programs and services offered to patrons. The relationship between each of the elements are, in effect, reciprocal (see Figure 1). School library media centers and school library media specialists aid in student achievement (Burgin, Bracy & Brown, 2003; Gavigan & Lance, 2016; Lance, 2001; Lance & Kachel, 2013; Lance, Schwarz & Rodney, 2014); however, their role is slowly diminishing in educational discourse. This study can be used as a means to inform school level administrators and school library media specialists regarding how to identify a quality

school library media program. Appropriate resources can then be allocated to ensure equitable distribution to all schools in terms of print and electronic materials, technology, library hours, availability and staffing since each of these are needed to ensure clear and consistent quality.



**Figure 1:** Connection of Student Academics and School Library Media Fundamentals

### Definition of Terms

There are several terms that are associated with this study which may be significant. The terms *school library media specialist*, *media specialist*, *school librarian*, *librarian*, and *media coordinator* are at times used interchangeably. According to the AASL, (n.d.a.),

a “school librarian works with both students and teachers to facilitate access to information in a wide variety of formats, instruct students and teachers how to acquire, evaluate and use information and the technology needed in this process, and introduces children and young adults to literature and other resources to

broaden their horizons. As a collaborator, change agent, and leader, the school librarian develops, promotes and implements a program that will help prepare students to be effective users of ideas and information, a lifelong skill” (para 1).

Other significant terms utilized in this study are as follows:

*Certified School Library Media Specialist* – a school librarian that coordinates and directs the activities of school library media support staff which may include media assistants, technical assistants, student assistants and at times, volunteers. In order to obtain certification (often called licensure) in the state of North Carolina, a candidate for the position must attend an approved Master’s Degree level education program and obtain the minimum score required on the Praxis Exam for Library Media Specialist (North Carolina School Library Media Association [NCSLMA], n.d.).

*Library Automation System* – the computerized system used by libraries that keeps track of resources acquired, patron borrowing records, patron fees owed and information regarding cataloged resources.

*North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)* – the governing body that sets standards for all North Carolina Public Schools. The NCDPI sets the principles for certification, also known as licensure, for all instructional school personnel.

*North Carolina Digital and Learning Media Inventory Report (NC DLMI)* – “The NC DLMI collects data for state and national reporting, to inform state and local budgets, and to assist in planning state and local digital learning efforts. Inventory questions are streamlined and aligned to the North Carolina Digital Learning Progress Rubric” (North Carolina Public Schools, n.d., para. 1). The NC DLMI was formally called the Annual Media Technology Report (AMTR).

*Patron* – a person who utilizes the library or school library media center; client or customer.

*School Media Program* or *Media Center Program* – the services provided to library patrons. Such services may include, but not limited to, research classes, technology classes, battle of the books, reading is fundamental and story time. The terms *school media program*, *school library program*, *library program* or *media program* may be used interchangeably.

*Title I Program* – The Title I program provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards (US Department of Education [USDOE], n.d.b.). The terms *Title I* and *Title I eligible* may be used interchangeably.

*Title I Eligible School* – a school that meets the parameters of a USDOE Title I school; however, said school is not designated as a Title I school by the LEA. All schools designated as Title I by Dewey County Schools are Title I eligible based on guidelines from the USDOE.

### **Statement of Subjectivity**

The need to be completely transparent in regard to this study is needed in order for the concluding results to be taken into full consideration. As such, a statement that provides information about the researcher is contained herein. Although the researcher has previously worked as a school library media specialist, the research and subsequent results of this study were in no way compromised by this fact.

I began my foray into education as a high school English teacher immediately after college. The school in which I was assigned would be considered affluent since it would not have qualified as Title I eligible. After spending many years as a classroom teacher, I obtained a Master of Library Science degree. I then began working as a school library media specialist. I have always worked on the secondary level and as such, I have no experience with the elementary age group. My interest in libraries began at a relatively young age. My parents ensured that I had a home library before I entered preschool. I had wide variety of books from all genres. My interest in reading began as a small child and has endured to the present.

My years as a school library media specialist were primarily at Title I eligible schools. This is in stark contrast during my tenure as a classroom teacher. Although I no longer work as a school library media specialist, I have made the importance of libraries and the correlation to positive academic outcomes a research focus as I concentrated on my doctoral studies in curriculum and instruction. It is my belief that a strong foundation in literacy is often needed in order to progress in all disciplines and as such, libraries and the services provided therein should also be factored into the educational equation.

## **Summary**

This study begins with an overall synopsis of the current issues facing school library media centers and why a strong school library media program is needed. A definition of key terms and the theoretical perspectives of Michel Foucault and Paulo Freire and the correlation to library and information science is briefly introduced. Additionally, a brief overview of social exchange theory and its principles are introduced. Chapter two begins by reviewing scholarly literature regarding the emergence of school

library media centers, quality media programs, school library media specialists and the correlation between print and electronic resources as well as the overall decline of school library media centers over time. Chapter three is a presentation of the methodology that will be utilized for this study. The methodology includes a description of the study, a description of the survey instrument and information regarding the sample participants. Chapter four gives a detailed summation of study results. Chapter five provides the summary and conclusion of the study. Recommendations are also presented to key stakeholders.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

“Cutting libraries during a recession is like cutting hospitals during a plague.” -- Eleanor Crumblehulme

The purpose of this study was to gauge perceptions from school library media personnel regarding what characterizes a quality school library media program. This study utilized input from public school library media personnel in the Dewey County Public School District (pseudonym) in the state of North Carolina using survey research methods. First, this chapter begins with a historical synopsis of the emergence of school libraries. Second, a review of existing literature from noted scholars regarding the essential components of school library media was espoused. These components include school library media staffing, resources, availability and access and the ways in which the school library media program contributes to academic success. Third, the role that school libraries play in regard to student achievement was explored. School libraries succor diverse student populations such as the economically challenged and exceptional educational needs students and as such, appropriate literature to augment that point was reviewed herein.

This chapter concluded with the theoretical perspectives of Foucault and how his theories can be appropriately applied to the field of library and information science. His concepts encompass the bifurcation of knowledge empowerment and the ability of the library to transform users into ephemeral and ethereal states of being (Radford, 1992). Additionally, the theories of Paulo Freire were also examined as they too have a direct impact on library and information science. Freire (1970) posits that knowledge has the ability to empower which in turns leads to individual transformation. Libraries are

passive storehouses for knowledge which makes the theoretical concepts of Freire wholly appropriate in this context.

### **The Emergence of the School Library Media Center and Its Essential Components**

The historical roots of school libraries are sparse at best. Information from the American Library Association [ALA], (n.d.) suggests that early colonial schools from the 1700s, equipped with the *Bible* and Psalm Book, were the early beginnings of what would later become libraries for student use. The evolution of libraries came in the nineteenth century when school districts began including reading rooms for students in schools. The state of New York was first to pass legislation that allowed school districts to use tax funds to purchase library books for students beginning in 1835. By 1839 laws that mirrored New York's were passed in Massachusetts, Michigan, Connecticut and Rhode Island. By the year 1876, nineteen states had developed legislation that instructed school districts to construct school libraries (ALA, n.d.). New York State was also the first to appoint a professionally trained librarian to oversee a school library in the borough of Brooklyn. The early years of the twentieth century is when school libraries began to see exponential growth. The Office of Education (precursor to the United States Department of Education) reported that there were approximately 10,000 public school libraries in the United States. These libraries most often contained fewer than 3,000 titles (ALA, n.d.).

The genesis of the professional role of school librarians is obscure at best. Melville Dewey created the first curriculum for librarians, irrespective of type, at Columbia University (née College) in the year 1887 (Weigand, 2007). This newly created library science curriculum formed the foundation for how all librarians were trained for years to come. During the 1900s, most elementary and secondary school libraries formed

partnerships with public libraries to supply extracurricular reading needs for students (Weigand, 2007). The National Education Association (NEA) created standards for school librarians by the 1920s and as a result, state and local governmental agencies began funding school library supervisors. The funding of school libraries, which affected the number of newly trained librarians, declined dramatically because of the Great Depression and America's participation in World War II. These abhorrent events in America's history had a negative impact on library personnel and the services provided to patrons.

Perhaps the most significant legislation that had a direct impact on America's school libraries was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which was introduced in 1965. ESEA was part of then President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty initiative. Title II, Section 201 of ESEA specifically provided funding in the amount of \$100,000,000 over four fiscal years for the acquisition of library resources, textbooks and a variety of other published instructional materials for use by teachers and students in public and private elementary and secondary schools (United States ESEA, 1965). This funding was allocated to individual states and provided a gateway for school libraries to flourish. The number of public school libraries saw exponential growth because of this infusion of funds. There was an increase from 50 percent in 1958 which accounted for approximately 40,000 school libraries, to 93 percent by 1985 which was approximately 74,000 school libraries. By the year 2005, school libraries numbered roughly 82,000. The number of trained school library media specialists also increased to 136,000 (Weigand, 2007).

Just as the historic origins of school libraries in America in general is sparse, the modest beginnings of school libraries in the state of North Carolina is even more limited. Libraries of any kind were nearly nonexistent in the state so it makes sense that school libraries took longer to emerge and gain acceptance. According to Valentine (2010), North Carolina had only one fully functioning school library in the entire state in the year 1850. This library contained a mere 1,500 volumes. The advent of the Civil War and then the Reconstruction period caused the expansion of all types of libraries in the state of North Carolina to temporarily cease. By the year 1870, the number of libraries specific to schools increased to fourteen with an estimated collection size for all at 77,050 (Valentine, 2010). This illustrates positive growth and a step in the right direction; however, the numbers pertaining to school library venues, resources and services were still dismal. Valentine (2010) posits that the lack of resources and the focus on mostly White, male and upper-class patrons was the culprit for much of the slow growth of North Carolina school library media centers. The ESEA also had a positive effect on the state's school library resources. The added funds provided for school library media centers and the licensed staff to support them. By the 2011 – 2012 school year, North Carolina had a total of 2,550 public schools of which 2,340 (or 91.8%) had a dedicated space for the school library media center (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], n.d.a.). School library media specialists numbered 2,510 for the 2011 – 2012 academic year (NCES, n.d.b.). Although the numbers indicate that a vast majority of schools enjoy the services provided by a school library and school librarian, there are many North Carolina schools that do not offer such services to students. Based on the data from the NCES (n.d.a.), there are 8.2% of North Carolina schools that do not have a

library media center. This indicates that some students in the state are impacted by an access gap in terms of library programming.

The steady growth of the inclusion of libraries in the nation's public schools indicate that the services provided are necessary and therefore are an essential component of the academic process. At present, it is estimated that there are 81,200 libraries in public schools in the United States (NCES, 2015). Among the public schools that have a school library media center, the average number of staff present is 1.8. The average number of certified school library media specialists is 0.9 (NCES, 2015). The aforementioned data indicate that although there is a dedicated space for specific library functions, the staff needed to create a quality school library media program is deficient (especially among certified school library media specialists). In terms of resources, it is estimated that there are 2,188 books and 81 audio visual materials present per 100 students in the nation's public school libraries. The number of computer work stations amounted to approximately 3 per 100 students. Expenditures explicit to public school library media centers indicate that \$16.64 per student was allocated for the 2014 – 2015 academic year on the national level (NCES, 2015).

School library media centers are no longer mere reading rooms for student use. They have evolved into technological hubs as print materials are not the only resources available to students and staff. According to the latest figures by the NCES (2015), 43.2 percent of schools who serve a student population of 1,000 or more had laptops for student use outside of the media center. That figure increases to 60.7 percent for staff usage. School library media centers now integrate technology as a bridge to literacy (Haycock, 1999; Horan, 2015; Jurkowski, 2006; Rosenfeld & Loertscher, 2007; Thomas,

2004; Williams, 2015). Public school library media centers have transformed dramatically from the colonial era to technological centers aimed at advancing student academic growth (Widzinski, 2001).

### **School Library Media Essential Components**

Chapter one gave a brief overview of the essential components of school media centers (see Figure 1). Media center staffing, resources, availability and the academic program are all crucial to ensuring that pupils in all grade levels are provided with the services that are necessary for elevated academic attainment. Moreover, it is imperative that all said essentials are accounted for in all school library media centers. The absence of one jeopardizes all so local school districts should make every attempt at ensuring that each school library media center under their charge has each of the aforementioned essential components. Scholarly literature that focuses upon the importance of each crucial component to school library media is expounded upon below.

#### **School library Media Center Staffing**

School districts across the country have decreased or eliminated school media specialist positions in recent years (Everhart, 2002a; Everhart, 2002b; Helms, 2015; Johnson, 2005). The rationale has always pointed to fiscal concerns. Oftentimes, school districts are forced to cut non-teaching positions so that instructional positions can remain intact. Although it is understood that school districts indeed have tough decisions to make in regards to staffing, reducing or eliminating school media specialists often has a negative effect on student achievement (Kachel & Lance, 2013; Lance, Schwarz & Rodney, 2014; Littman, 2014). Another point of concern is that students are slowly moving away from print resources in favor of electronic ones. The feeling by many is

that the role of the librarian in this new technological age is fast becoming obsolete. It is important for school districts nationwide to realize that school library media specialists are far more valuable than the newest electronic device.

The sharp reduction or elimination of school library media specialists can, in part, be blamed on the Obama administration's consolidation of the of Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program with five other literacy programs. This streamlining meant that all five programs had to share \$187 million dollars to achieve their individual goals. Former President Obama's budget proposal for the 2013 fiscal year eliminated \$28.6 million that was earmarked for literacy programs under the Fund for Improvement of Education (FIE) in the 2012 fiscal year (American Library Association, 2012). These measures severely limited the financial resources that trickle down to states and then local school districts. When faced with a budget crunch, the reduction or elimination of school media specialists seems to be the easiest and most cost-effective route; however, the negative impact on student achievement means that school districts have to reallocate more resources in order to improve achievement deficiencies. School library media specialists are a positive force in relation to student achievement and as such, should be seen as essential personnel in all schools. According to a research study implemented by Kachel and Lance (2013), reading and writer scores were higher for students whose school were staffed by a full-time certified school library media specialist. They also found that minority students, economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities benefit substantially more than general education students when their school is staffed with a full-time school media specialist. Kachel and Lance (2013) argue that staffing school media centers with certified librarians ultimately aids in closing

achievement gaps. This is in part because certified school librarians are specifically trained to provide research services and collection management that will enhance the school curriculum. Non-certified personnel who staff school library media centers are trained to offer rudimentary services such as materials checkout. Although non-certified staff occasionally staff school library media centers, there is no substitute for full-time, certified school library media specialists who are fully immersed in the teaching and learning process (Kachel & Lance, 2013).

Kaplan (2007) further addresses the importance of having a qualified school librarian by providing evidence that they are collaborative partners in education. Kaplan argues that school librarians are information specialists responsible for knowing the sources of information in all formats, both print and electronic. He or she is also knowledgeable and understands the importance of integrating technology into the educational setting. The school librarian can therefore assist students as well as teachers with didactic information. Kaplan (2007) also argues that school librarians should be considered teachers and as such, should be required to meet the same standards as other highly qualified teachers as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

Previously, school librarians did not have to meet the requirements of NCLB which made staffing school libraries with unqualified media personnel acceptable. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced NCLB and signed into law by then President Obama in 2015, essentially reauthorized ESEA of 1965 (United States Department of Education [USDOE], n.d.a). Under this reiteration of educational law, school library media specialists are not specifically mentioned although school library services are. The credentialing (or certification/licensure) for school library media specialists is abstruse as

their role is not adequately defined. For school library media specialists to be seen as true educators who contribute to academic discourse, their role as teacher librarians should be defined by national and state educational boards. Should school librarians obtain the status of highly qualified, then schools would be required to employ certified school librarians who meet the criteria.

A cost-saving measure that many school districts employ is staffing school media centers with personnel that are not qualified or certified. There has also been some debate among educational administrators regarding school library media specialists' credentials. School library media specialists typically must hold a Master of Library Science degree (AASL, n.d.b.; Rathbun-Grubb, 2009). The Master of Library Science degree prepares those seeking school library media specialist's positions with essential skills such as cataloging, acquisitions and research (Solomon & Rathbun-Grubb, 2009). Even if a school has been allotted funding for a school library media specialist, school level administrators have the flexibility to use the position as a swap for another position. School level administrators have often traded school library media specialist's positions for teacher assistants, technology associates and academic facilitators. Although these positions are also needed in the school setting, they cannot and should not take the place of a qualified and certified school library media specialist.

The American Association for School Librarians [AASL] (1994), framed a position statement regarding basic staffing needs for school library media centers. The organization first notes that it is imperative that all students and staff must have access to a school library media program provided by a minimum of one certified full-time school librarian. Depending upon the total school population, it may be advisable to have more

than one certified school library professional to handle the academic needs that a school library provides (AASL, 1994). Another salient point is that all school library media centers should employ a full-time professional and support staff in order to provide school library programming at all grade levels. A judicious ratio of professional school library staff to the student population and staff should be established so that adequate coverage is available at all times (AASL, 1994). An added suggestion that deserves mention is that each school district should employ a full-time district library media director to oversee district-wide school media staffing and programming. The district school media director provides leadership and serves as an intermediary between district level administration and school based administrators and school librarians. It should be the responsibility of the school library media director to develop the criteria, policies and curriculum and communicate the goals and needs of individual schools and district library media programs to the superintendent and board of education if necessary (AASL, 1994). Ideally, the school district media director will be an advocate for school library media specialists and school media programs.

The paucity of school library media specialists has become an educational crisis. Although eliminating school libraries and school library media specialists may seem to be the best course of action when it comes to fiscal constraints, that rationale is far from sensible. School libraries and school librarians contribute to, not detract from, student academic success (Kachel & Lance, 2013; Lance, Schwarz & Rodney, 2014; Littman, 2014). It is imperative that school library media specialists are included in the academic equation.

## **School library Media Center Resources**

### **Collection Development**

The process of building library resources in response to library priorities and user interests is aptly defined as collection development (Johnson, 2014). Proper collection development process and procedures are necessary in school library media centers because the school mission and vision can be met with the appropriate academic materials. School library budgets are often limited so the challenge for school library media specialists is to find the most appropriate materials to support students and teachers within budgetary guidelines. Hoffman and Wood (2007) posit that collection development is one of the most intellectually challenging components of librarianship. The focus becomes building a quality collection of resources that will serve the needs of all those who utilize the school library media space. Each patron is unique regardless of whether they are student or staff so procuring the appropriate materials can become the real trial. Savard (2007) suggests that libraries and librarians are not only tasked with building the library collection to support the curriculum, but also to provide access to information that will be transformative to individual users. When collection development is done well, teachers should be able to create lessons and assignments with the sound assurance that students will benefit academically.

Just as school libraries have evolved because of the advent of technological advances, the collection development process has also made a metamorphosis. Resources are no longer solely print but have increasingly become electronic in nature. Many school library media specialists have reverted to purchasing print materials for popular fiction titles while ensuring that electronic resources and databases are acquired for nonfiction

materials (Stephens, 2014). Nonfiction materials can become easily outdated so it would make sense for librarians to concentrate their often limited budget on electronic resources. Stephens (2014) posits that the move towards fiction print materials and nonfiction electronic materials is not merely because of preference but at times necessity. There are fewer fiction titles in electronic book (e-book) format that are available to libraries as compared to private individuals. Many school library vendors offer many more nonfiction titles in the e-book format. This is preferable because nonfiction print materials are often outdated as soon as they are printed. E-books are easily replaced or updated.

In addition to ensuring that the appropriate books and materials are available for academic use, school librarians also have the added task of ensuring that resources (especially those used for pleasurable reading) are culturally diverse. Totten, Brown and Garner (1996) suggest that all resources should be vetted by the school library media specialist so that all ethnic and religious groups are somehow represented. Making sure that diverse materials are available for all patrons are beneficial to the entire academic community. Church (2017) posits that all school library media specialists are charged with meeting the needs of all patrons and as such, school library media professionals should practice collection development policies that are both purposeful and thoughtful. Students should be able to see themselves in the materials that they read. Church (2017) terms this concept “books as mirrors” (p. 4).

Church (2017) also cites statistics from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) from the year 2015 which highlight the disparities regarding multiculturalism in children’s literature. Of the approximately 3,200 picture books, novels and nonfiction

works received by publishers in the United States in 2015, a total of 243 were about African Americans or contained an African American character whereas 78 were about Latinos or contained a Latino character. A scant 28 were about Native Americans or contained a Native American character. These dismal numbers indicate that much more literature that has multicultural themes is sorely needed. In the interim, school library media specialists are tasked to acquire as many quality multicultural resources as necessary for patron usage.

The task of withdrawing outdated, damaged, low quality materials, and at times activities, is defined as weeding (Muthu, 2013). Weeding is an essential part of collection development. The process of weeding a school library collection is one of the many tasks that school library media specialists must contend with. The efficacy of a school library is often contingent upon how old or relevant the materials are. Oftentimes, the acquisitions process receives the most attention in the realm of collection development; however, weeding ensures that the collection stays relevant and up to date. Weeding also conserves much needed shelf space that will make way for new materials. Additionally, weeding materials out of the automation system assists library patrons to get relevant results when they search for materials.

Acquiring materials that are reflective of not only the school curriculum but also the demographic makeup of library patrons is an important part of the collection development process. Providing academically and culturally relevant materials is an integral task of all trained school library media specialists. Moreover, the ability to know when and what to weed is an additional component of the collection development

process. Certified school library media specialists are trained in all aspects of collection development.

### **Access to Library Media Resources**

According to Pribesh, Gavigan and Dickinson (2011), schools that have a high poverty student population were more likely to have access to fewer school library resources than students who do not live in poverty. Additionally, they found that students who need the most support had fewer new resources and their libraries were closed more than schools with students who come from more affluent backgrounds. Such disparities have a direct correlation to negative academic development. Pribesh, Gavigan and Dickinson (2011) terms this an access gap as opposed to an achievement gap. The differences in access to print and electronic resources has a significant impact for a student's early literacy development. Pribesh, Gavigan and Dickinson (2011) argue that students who have access to resources are more likely to read, thereby improving their reading motivation and achievement. They also make the argument that school library media centers are an important component of learning. Additionally, it has been found that school media centers with a robust and up to date print collection has a significant and positive impact on reading among students who live in poverty (Neuman & Celano, 2001). Manzo (2000) even suggests that school library resources have a significant impact on standardized test scores, more specifically reading scores.

Educational researchers have established that more access to books leads to better literacy skills in general (Edwards, 2011; Dijken, Bus & Jong, 1999; Di Loreto & Tse, 2012; Neuman, 1999; Whitehead, 2004; Williams, 2013). Krashen, Lee and McQuillan (2012) conducted a multivariate study that closely reviewed access to school library

media centers and literacy for grades four through eight for children that live in poverty. They found that the negative effect of poverty on fourth grade reading scores is significant; however, access to books can improve reading regardless of socioeconomic status. Poverty is a strong predictor of reading scores; however, access to books makes an independent contribution to reading achievement. Krashen, Lee and McQuillan (2012) also found that students who read proficiently in grade four also tend to read better by grade eight. In each case, access to quality reading material is essential. Library access, both school library media centers and public libraries for the purposes of the aforementioned study, was a consistent predictor for reading scores. The amount of quality reading materials and school library media center circulation made an important impact on increasing literacy.

Neuman and Celano (2001) also conducted extensive research regarding the effect of poverty in relation to school library media center access. The study compared middle-income and high poverty neighborhoods in the same city. One important discovery from the Neuman and Celano (2001) research study is that children from middle-income neighborhood were deluged with a wide variety of reading materials; however, children from poor neighborhoods had to aggressively seek out such materials. Children of poverty had to be persistent in order to obtain quality books (Neuman & Celano, 2001). Another result of the study was that the data collected showed that children from middle-income communities had roughly thirteen titles for each child to choose from whereas the children from the high poverty community had one book for every three students. In addition to the importance of print and electronic resources in school media centers, they also report that books should be made available in the home as well. The data represented

in this study shows the glaring disparities in regard to access to quality literacy resources for children who live in poverty. Without the appropriate access to print and electronic resources, literacy is nearly impossible.

Another academic resource that is sorely needed in school library media centers is access to the internet and to databases for research purposes. In the year 1996, then President Clinton proclaimed that all schools should be connected to the internet by the year 2000 (Everhart, 1997). At the time it seemed to be a lofty goal; however, 95.3% of public school libraries had computer workstations with access to the internet by the 2011 – 2012 academic year (NCES, n.d.c.). This means that a substantial number of students have the appropriate access, but much work needs to be done to ensure that all students have accessibility. In terms of database usage, a total of 86.4% of school library media centers have access to online and licensed databases for student use (NCES, n.d.c.). The state of North Carolina provides access to database resources for all of its public-school districts through the NC Wise Owl program (North Carolina Public Schools, n.d.b.). Premiering in 1999, NC Wise Owl provides unrestricted access to online resources. This access is provided without regard to economic status students in each individual school system. NC Wise Owl ensures that all public-school students in the state have access to online encyclopedias, magazines, reference services and other sources for the purpose of research. NC Wise Owl is also a service that is available for home use if necessary.

Print resources such as comic books, graphic novels, teen romance novels and magazines are rarely considered academic materials; however, Krashen (2004) intimates that such genres have intrinsic value. The ability of students to choose materials outside of educational reading is a testament that reading is beneficial even when done under the

guise of entertainment. Comic books, which are primarily utilized for personal gratification, contains approximately 2,000 words each. Krashen (2004) cite studies that suggests that students who read approximately one comic book per day will have read about 500,000 words annually. Reading for entertainment often transforms into serious reading over time. Although reading nonacademic materials may at first glance seem counterproductive, it is an important building block to literacy development. School library media centers should therefore provide nonacademic reading materials as a supplement to resources that are primarily educational in nature.

### **School Library Media Center Availability**

The mere presence of a school library media center edifice is negated if there is not sufficient access to its services. It is important that school library media centers are open and available during the school day for classes and for research by students, faculty and staff. Hours before and after established academic hours is also ideal. Krashen (2004) posits that greater access to school library media centers often translate into voluntary reading and academic achievement. Voluntary reading suggests that students establish a love for reading purely for pleasure as opposed to reading to complete an assignment. This lays the foundation for strong literacy skills and has a positive effect on writing skills as well. According to Krashen (2004) writing is not learned initially by writing but rather by reading. Writing skills are acquired because of an exposure to language through reading. It is important that students are exposed to all the services provided by the school library media center so that literacy skills are optimized. The services are only available if there is sufficient access to a fully functioning school library media center.

Despines (2001) intimates the importance of school media centers providing extended hours, or time outside of the normal school day, because many times, students may not have access to the resources provided by libraries in their home environment. Some school districts, such as Silver Consolidated School District in New Mexico and Plano Texas Schools, have taken steps to provide funding to offer library services in the evenings and at times, weekends (Despines, 2001). This is in stark contrast to other districts because such accessibility requires additional funding and staffing. An additional concern is that school libraries that offer extended hours must also provide security. An interest and responsibility in regards to keeping patrons and resources safe becomes paramount when offering services after established academic hours. Legislation was introduced in 2001 by Senators Jack Reed and Thad Cochran in an attempt to mitigate the fiscal concerns faced by many school districts (NCES, 2005). The Reed-Cochran Bill was incorporated into the larger No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 under the moniker of the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries (LSL) program. One essential goal of LSL was to enable school library media centers to stay open longer providing much needed access for the overall school population. The intent of LSL was to provide improvement grants to school districts whose population contained at least twenty percent of students who come from families with incomes below the poverty line (NCES, 2005).

Many schools in the Washington, DC School District have benefitted from the services of a nonprofit group titled Turning the Page that offers funding to launch after school literacy programs at six elementary schools that specifically serve children at the lower socioeconomic stratum (Ishizuka, 2003). The program is beneficial to both students and parents because both groups are targeted. While the parents attend workshops

regarding storytelling tips so that they can read to their children, the students are supervised to by volunteers who assist them with much needed literacy skills. A free book distribution also takes place so that home libraries can be established. All programs take place within the confines of the school library media center which is the perfect backdrop to promote the services provided therein.

### **School Library Media Center Programming**

The resources and services provided to library patrons as a collective is referred to as library programming (Shontz, 1991). It is important that school library programs meet the academic needs of students. School library media specialists have long been an integral part of ensuring that quality school library media programs are available to students, faculty and staff. According to Shontz (1991), school library media specialists provide assistance to educators in all curriculum areas and at times, contribute to the instructional design process. School library media specialists actively work through grade level or departmental groups in order to determine the best resources and services for optimum academic growth.

School library media programs are an integral part of academic achievement (Gavigan & Lance, 2016; Lance, 2001; Kachel & Lance, 2013; Lance, Schwarz & Rodney, 2010; Roberson, Schweinle & Applin, 2003). Researchers from the Library Research Service, a division of Colorado State University and the University of Denver, conducted nationwide studies regarding the impact of school library media programs on academic achievement for public school students. Each of the studies found that staffing levels, staff activities, collection size, circulation statistics and up to date technology were all factors that contributed to school library programs (Lance, 2001; Lance & Kachel,

2013). In terms of quality school library media programs, the studies went further in that they assessed each of the aforementioned characteristics at the microlevel. For instance, library staffing included the numbers of individuals who worked per week in addition to the type of library staff that worked. A distinction between professional and credentialed library staff was measured versus paraprofessional and noncredentialed staff. In terms of technology, the studies measured the types of technology available in addition to where the technology was located within the schools. Not all available technology available to students was housed in the school library media center.

### **School Library Media and the Link to Student Academic Success**

Kachel and Lance (2013) conducted studies which suggests that school library media specialists positively contribute to overall student achievement. They argue that schools who employ full-time certified media specialists often have students who score higher on reading and writing examinations. Additionally, economically disadvantaged students benefit substantially more than other students when their school library is staffed by a certified school library media specialist. Often, there is a shortage of qualified and certified school library media specialists in schools with a high student poverty rate (Kachel & Lance, 2013). This discrepancy has a negative impact on literacy which in turn leads to a negative impact on student achievement in general. Kachel and Lance (2013) further argue that staffing school media centers with certified librarians helps to close achievement gaps. Overall, school library media specialists provide positive contributions to student achievement and as such, should be seen as essential personnel in all schools.

Kaplan (2007) addresses the importance of having a qualified school librarian by providing evidence that they are collaborative partners in education. Kaplan argues that school librarians are information specialists responsible for knowing the sources of information in all formats, both print and electronic. They are also knowledgeable and understands the importance of integrating technology into the educational setting. The school librarian can therefore assist students as well as teachers with didactic information. Kaplan further argues that school librarians should be considered teachers and as such, should be required to meet the same standards as other highly qualified teachers as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Currently, school librarians do not have to meet the requirements for NCLB which makes staffing school libraries acceptable if there are unqualified personnel. If school librarians obtain that status, then the school would be required to employ certified school librarians who meet the criteria. This will be a clear path to showing district and school level administrators that certified and highly qualified school librarians are a requirement for student achievement.

The research of Lance and Hofschire (2012) bolsters the point that there is a positive correlation between high test scores and schools that employ a full-time and certified school library media specialist. After analyzing assessment data from the Colorado State Department of Education, they found that reading scores either remained steady or increased slightly every year from 2005 to 2010 for schools that have an active school media program and school library media specialist. School that did not employ a school library media specialist either remained constant or decreased in terms of test scores. Students from grades three through ten were included in the study which makes it

wide-ranging in terms of results. Another observation from the Lance and Hofschire (2012) study was that there were some schools in which there was not a school library media specialist but rather a school library paraprofessional. When making a comparison between schools who had no school library media specialist and those with a school library assistant, that data indicate that there was no statistically significant difference. This suggests that the absence of a qualified school library media specialist has an impact on student academic success even if the school library media center is staffed with a paraprofessional.

The results of the Lance and Hofschire (2012) strongly echo the study as performed by Lance and Loertscher (2002). They conducted research that found that school media centers should be considered essential and never an optional service to students because they aid in overall student achievement. For instance, while performing research in the state of Alaska, it was discovered that approximately 41% of elementary age students and approximately 49% of secondary students scored below average when their school library media center was staffed with a non-licensed paraprofessional. Conversely, when schools were staffed with a full-time school library media specialist, the percentage of elementary and secondary students that scored below average dropped to approximately 17% and 8% prospectively. The correlation of positive academic growth and staffing with a full-time licensed school library media specialist was evident.

### **Libraries and Special Populations**

Schools are tasked to serve the academic needs of all students. As a general rule, school library media centers must also follow this objective. Just as there are classroom services and accommodations for students with disabilities, there are also school library

services that provide the same provisions. Murray (2000a) conducted a multiyear case study that reviewed school library services and resources for students who were physically and/or mentally challenged. It was revealed that many school library media centers are already adequately equipped to assist students with disabilities. For instance, many of the libraries studied provided physical access for wheelchair entry. Shelving is also adequately spaced for easy maneuverability (Murray, 2000a). Additionally, many school library media centers are furnished with lower shelves so that books and other materials can be easily reached. This is essential since disabled students gain a sense of independence when they can browse titles without assistance. Other services specific to disabled students include alternative format materials. Such materials may include electronic books with voice captioned text, books with large print text and in some instances books with braille text.

Harper (2014) suggests that since students with disabilities are covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it is the responsibility of the school library media specialist to ensure that the appropriate accommodations are made so that their academic success can be maximized. The school library media specialist can aide in providing an academically rigorous environment by collaborating with teachers regardless of the student's academic capacity. One such example is the adaptation of story time. Sensory story time was developed for children who are on the autism spectrum. These events are often much more quiet and contained. They also follow a set pattern by providing a consistent pattern of opening and closing activities. This adaptation makes it possible for all students to be included in the daily activities of library services.

Gorman (1999) suggests that school library media centers do not have to be places of intimidation for students with disabilities. It is entirely up to the school library media specialist to create an environment that is welcoming and comfortable. Oftentimes, students who struggle academically are not necessarily labeled disabled but have difficulty as compared to other students. Students with often unseen disabilities such as dyslexia also need extra attention. School library media specialists can assist such students through the use of audio books or other instructional aides. Students who read below grade level can be accommodated with books or other materials that are suited for optimal academic success. Books that are of high interest but contain lower vocabulary should be provided. Such books are often available in abridged literary classics so that students can understand all the elements of literature such as plot, character development and setting.

The resources and programming provided in school library media centers should reflect the needs of all of those who utilize the space. School library media specialists have the responsibility to make sure that such resources are relevant and contemporary as well as inclusive of everyone that will be served. Resources that reflect diverse populations are a necessary tool of this inclusiveness. Additionally, resources and programs that are respectful of students' disabilities so that they too can use the library (independently if necessary) should also be a requirement for a school library media center to be fully functioning.

### **Theoretical Framework**

As a venue, the library is more than a structure that houses texts and other forms of information, but rather a place where academic connections can be created and at

times, shared. Although there is a strict structure to library organization, there is also a sense that the library is a place devoid of boundaries because of how it has the power to transform individual patrons. Each library experience is unique to the user despite the oftentimes ridged guidelines that may frame library services. In one instance, the library has established rules for organization through the use of highly structured systems. Such systems may include either Dewey Decimal classification, Library of Congress classification, Colon classification or Universal Decimal classification in predominantly English language countries. These rigid rules for cataloging and classification are necessary to maintain an orderly collection. It also aides in refining the user experience since materials can be easily located by utilizing these cataloging methods. In contrast, the library is also a place of boundless opportunities because the user can create a learning environment that is uniquely their own without being limited. There are no rules regarding how patrons utilize the space for their own gratification. The antithesis of library organization versus library user experience and independence is precisely the enigma that shapes the theoretical underpinnings of library and information science.

According to Foucault (1977), there is a conundrum that exists in regard to libraries. Although there are oftentimes strict structural practices necessary for library operation, the library is also a place of infinite possibilities because new worlds emerge through texts. Foucault intimates that “fantasies are carefully deployed in the hushed library, with its columns of books, with its titles aligned on shelves to form a tight enclosure, but within confines that also liberate impossible worlds. The imaginary now resides between the book and the lamp” (Foucault, 1977, p. 90). The library thus becomes a space for ethereal and ephemeral transformation despite the fact that it must maintain

strict management of its resources. For a brief moment, patrons are transported to other worlds through the written words which are housed eloquently in the pages of a book. Radford and Radford (2005) posit that Foucault defines the library as a venue for infinite possibilities rather than a place where possibilities are exhausted. Library users have the ability to immerse themselves within the spaces between texts thereby forming connections and making discoveries more profound than simply collecting facts. The development of new knowledge is the residual effect of the emergence of original worlds. In this instance, the library serves as the catalyst for fantasy and new knowledge.

Although Foucault expressly addresses library services in his discourse, the theoretical perspectives of Freire (1970) and how they can be applied to library services cannot be dismissed and deserves mention. Freire (1970) metaphorically describes the transfer of knowledge to individuals as a bank. "In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those they consider to know nothing" (Freire, 1970, p. 72). In this instance, students are fed information without the true benefit of inquiry. This stifles true education because facts are driven by the educator on a need to know basis. The more that students sit idle and intake information, they are dependent upon educators to take control of their intellectual pursuits. This passive transfer of knowledge in this sense becomes stifling and does not truly empower students to take control of their own development. Elmborg (2010) suggests that Freire equates literacy with the true development of agency. Without literacy, there cannot be a proper development of self. As a storehouse of information, the library provides the vehicle in which patrons can be transported to a bank of knowledge that is their own. They are not reliant on someone to feed them information but rather are

able to actively pursue new knowledge independently. Freire (1970) suggests that the individual pursuit of truth based on inquiry is what lays the foundation for liberation. This liberation then leads to individual empowerment. The services that the library provides is a vessel in which empowerment can be maximized.

### **Summary**

Chapter two first provided an overview of the historical roots of library services to students. Over time, these services evolved from reading rooms with few resources for student usage to the technological hubs that are seen at present. Additionally, legislation that shaped library services for students was expounded upon. Chapter two then provided an overview of each of the essential components of school library media services as deemed by the author of this work. These components included school library media staffing, resources, availability and access and the ways in which the school library media program contributes to academic success. These essential components form the foundation of this study. This chapter concluded with the theoretical perspectives of Foucault and Freire and how their theories can aptly be applied to the field of library and information science. The philosophical concepts of these two scholars create a hybrid theoretical framework in which intellectual metamorphosis and a transformation into an ethereal world can oftentimes form an amalgamation.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

“Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities.” -- R. David Lankes

This descriptive, non-experimental study sought to gauge perceptions from school library media personnel regarding what characterized a quality school library media program. Additionally, an inquiry into whether Title I schools differ from non-Title I eligible schools in terms of school library media programming was also examined. A cross-sectional survey was administered to school library personnel. Library personnel included certified school library media specialists and non-certified library media assistants from the Dewey County Public School District (pseudonym) in the state of North Carolina. Appendix A displays the survey instrument that was utilized. This study also utilized publicly available data from the North Carolina Digital Media and Inventory Report (formally the Annual Media and Technology Report or AMTR). The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1: What are the characteristics of a quality school library media program according to the school library media personnel in the Dewey County, NC School District?

RQ2: In what ways do the characteristics of quality school library media programs differ between licensed school library media specialists and non-licensed school media professionals in the Dewey County, NC School District?

RQ3: In what ways do characteristics of school library media programs differ between Title I eligible schools and non-Title I eligible schools in the Dewey, NC School District?

The proceeding study answered each of the research questions, which in turn hoped to inform academic stakeholders of the importance of school library media centers, school library media specialists and the programming that is provided for students, faculty and staff. The results also show the importance of equitable access and library services for all students.

### **Research Design**

The research design for this study was a cross-sectional survey. The survey instrument is provided in Appendix A. Participants were surveyed at one point in a specific time period in order to gauge their perceptions of what constitutes a quality media center program. The questionnaire was disseminated using social exchange theory principles (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014). The premise of social exchange theory hypothesizes that survey participants are more likely to respond to a request if the reward for responding exceeds the cost. In this way, there is an expectation of a positive benefit (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014). The reward for this particular survey is the ability of school library media personnel to give a previously silent voice to their views on the subject matter. No financial or other gift incentives was used for participation in this survey. The tailor-design method adapts the survey and dissemination based on the chosen population in order to reduce survey error.

Additional assumptions regarding the nature of social exchange theory is that such exchanges are often characterized by inter-dependence. This inter-dependence essentially means that the ability to obtain rewards is contingent upon the ability to provide other persons or entities with rewards (Sabettelli, 2003). The sharing of rewards

for the purposes of this study is the ability to advise key stakeholders of the importance of school library media centers, school library media specialists and school library programming. There have been instances where school library media specialist positions have been severely reduced (Everhart, 2002a; Everhart, 2002b; Helms, 2015; Johnson, 2005). This purpose of this study was to show the significance of school library programming to students and the link of said services to student academic success. State and local stakeholders who have fiduciary responsibilities may be more apt to ensure that school library media specialists and library services are included in all aspects of the educational process based on the outcomes of the data from this study.

### **Sample**

The target population for the administered survey was the school library media professionals in the state of North Carolina. The sampling frame was the school library media professionals from the Dewey County NC Public School District. School library media professionals consisted of licensed school library media specialists, non-licensed school library media assistants, technology facilitators or any staff member permanently assigned to work in the school media center. The researcher worked closely with the aforementioned school district in order to form a sampling frame and to gain appropriate access to the targeted population. The selected population consisted of one hundred and forty-nine ( $N = 149$ ) individuals. By utilizing the formula developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), it was determined that responses from one hundred and eight ( $S = 108$ ) respondents was the minimum necessary in order to be representative of the population.

## **Development of the Survey Instrument**

The researcher appropriated many of the questions from a survey developed by the NCES. Queries were taken from the School Library Media Center Questionnaire (NCES, n.d.c.) in whole or in part. The researcher developed some original content so that responses could be tailored for Dewey County NC Public School District media professionals. The survey instrument was reviewed for content and validity by experts in the field of school library media. Once the questionnaire was finalized, the survey was piloted with three Dewey County North Carolina School System district level media specialists. These district level employees were not included in the final collection of data; however, they gave beneficial feedback regarding the validity of the questionnaire. The validation process ensured that the instructions, inquiries and answer choices were clear for participants. This process also established a time frame for survey completion.

## **Instrumentation**

The survey instrument utilized for this study consisted of twenty-one questions designed to gather information about the availability, staffing, resources, technology and programming available in the school library media center. Demographic information was also collected. Response options consisted of dichotomous, multiple choice, short-answer, Likert and interval measurement scales. A total of four consociating sections were included on the survey instrument.

The foci of section one was in regard to the availability and staffing of the school library media center. The ability of students, faculty and staff to be able to use the services at various points of the day was measured. Additionally, staffing levels which are a necessary component of school media availability, was also quantified. Section two

largely focused on academic and leisure programming and the existing technology available to patrons in the school media center. Section three measured responses regarding how school library media personnel feel about the profession of school librarianship. The fourth and final section was composed of questions regarding demographic information. Inquiries in this section included the number of years worked in school library media and professional credentials held by respondents.

### **Data Collection**

The questionnaire was sent to all eligible participants via electronic mail. An internet link was embedded into the electronic correspondence so that participants could independently contribute. Before participants commenced the questionnaire, an informed consent form [Appendix B] describing the questionnaire and assurance of its confidentiality was presented. The survey was available for approximately three weeks. An initial email describing the purpose of the survey was sent and then three reminder emails were subsequently sent to participants who failed to respond. The reminder emails were sent between five and seven days apart. The reminder emails varied in tone. This tactic conveyed a sense of urgency for optimal participation. It was hoped that this would increase the rate of response.

The survey and its results were stored using an internet based tool entitled Surveyshare. The initial and reminder emails were sent using the mail merge function on the Gmail platform. This method allowed participants to receive personalized electronic correspondence. This process also avoided such correspondence from being marked as spam. Access to the survey required an email address so that respondents can be tracked. It should be noted that tracking does not imply that replies were tied to individual

respondents, but rather whether or not participants completed the survey. This ensured that reminder emails were not sent to participants who previously responded to the questionnaire. The email addresses were in no way linked to the responses of the individual.

### **Analytical Procedures**

After the survey data was procured, data regarding the response rate was calculated. Survey data was then be keyed into the statistical software SPSS for further analysis. The statistical software utilized can inform research of the statistical significance of responses from school library personnel that are certified versus non-certified. This method also provided statistical analysis of the responses from Title I eligible schools versus non-Title I eligible schools. Research question one utilized descriptive statistics with a focus on frequency. Research questions two and three employed the use of an independent samples *t*-test to determine statistical differences.

### **Variables**

There are several variables that were utilized for this study. The variables for each research question are outlined below.

RQ1: The variables used to describe the characteristics of a quality school library include certified staffing, media center accessibility, print and electronic resources, technology and educational applications. The frequency of the selected response options to each item was reported.

RQ2: The quasi-independent variable was the dichotomous license status of the school library media professionals (licensed versus non-licensed) in the Dewey County, NC School District. The dependent variables were the elements of school library services

which included certified staffing, media center accessibility, print and electronic resources, technology and educational applications.

RQ3: The quasi-independent variable was the dichotomous Title I status (Title I eligible schools versus non-Title I eligible schools) in the Dewey County, NC School District. The dependent variables were the elements of school library services which included certified staffing, media center accessibility, print and electronic resources, technology and educational applications.

### **Delimitations**

There were at least two factors that were delimited for the purposes of this study. First, there are a total of five school districts with student populations of over 50,000 in the state of NC. Each of the districts can easily be classified as being situated in an urban area. The researcher chose to limit the scope of this particular study to one of the five districts. Additionally, the researcher chose to exclude any school district in the state of NC that has a student population of less than 80,000 but more than 30,000 even though those districts would be characterized as urban. The focus of this study was squarely on districts with robust student populations.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Although great care was taken by the researcher from implementation through data analysis, this study was not without its limitations. First, a limited number of school library media personnel in one urban school district in the Southeastern part of the United States is studied. According to the most recent data compiled by the National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES] (2015), there are 81,200 school library media centers in the United States. Conversely, there are 170 school library media centers in Dewey

County, NC Schools. This represents less than 1% (or 0.002%) of the total school library media centers currently in operation. For there to be maximum impact, there needs to be a nationwide study that specifically addresses all components of a quality school library program from the perspectives of the professionals in the field.

Second, a study using a qualitative research method in which school library media personnel from urban, suburban and rural school districts nationwide should be utilized. This method will ensure that data are gathered at the micro level. The information gleaned from a quantitative study, which is represented herein, cannot assess minute details or give an accurate assessment of how school library media personnel nationwide define the quality of services provided in school media centers. Such an undertaking would be time and cost prohibitive for the purposes of this study; however, the aforementioned measures provide a framework for future research.

### **Assumptions**

There are several factors in which the researcher assumed to be accurate throughout the implementation and completion of this study. These assumptions were as follows: First, all survey respondents work in a school library media center either full or part time. Second, all survey respondents answered truthfully or to the best of their knowledge and finally, all survey respondents worked for the Dewey County, NC school district.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this research study was to gauge the perceptions of what constitutes a quality school library media program among school library personnel. Said research also differentiated the responses from fully licensed school library media

specialists and non-licensed school media professionals. Additionally, it discerned if there are differences in the responses from school library personnel at Title I eligible school library media centers versus non-Title I eligible school library personnel. Survey questions focused on the fundamental components of school library services which includes the presence of a fully operational school library media center, school library media personnel, school library resources and school library availability. The data from survey respondents is a useful tool to analyze what is perceived to be a quality school library media center program. The information gleaned can add to the limited academic literature regarding this issue.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

“Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.” -- Laura Bush

The preceding was a descriptive, non-experimental study in which the primary goal was to gauge perceptions from school library media personnel regarding what characterizes a quality school library media program. Two additional inquiries from this study included an analysis of whether school library programming differed significantly from schools designated as Title I eligible versus non-Title I eligible schools and whether there was a difference in the perception of school library programming amongst certified library personnel versus their non-certified counterparts. Data were gathered by means of a cross-sectional survey which was administered to school library personnel. School library personnel included certified school library media specialists and non-certified library media assistants and other library staff from the Dewey County Public School District in the state of North Carolina. The major results of the survey are presented herein.

This chapter shall commence with an overview of information regarding the respondents. Such information includes the type of school in which the participants were employed (i.e. Title I eligible school and/or the grade level of students served at the school) and the length of such employment. Information regarding the credentials of the participants is also included (i.e. certified versus non-certified staff). Additional information gleaned includes results from the survey questions. Many of the inquiries and their outcomes are grouped thematically. The survey itself consisted of twenty-one questions which were dissociated into four sections. The sections included inquiries

regarding school library media center accessibility, staffing, resources and programming and finally demographic information regarding the participants (see Appendix A). The penultimate section of this chapter shall answer each of the research questions presented to readers in chapters one and three using data from the questionnaire. This chapter shall conclude with a general summation of the findings.

### **Description of the respondents and schools**

A total of 149 staff members from Dewey County Public Schools were sent the electronic questionnaire pertaining to this study. One participant was excluded from the final analyses as they no longer worked in a school library media center because of a promotion to assistant principal. The questionnaire was available for approximately three weeks for participants to complete at their leisure. A total of 75 participants completed the questionnaire which represents a total response rate of 50.33%. According to the formula for determining appropriate sample size for categorical data developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), one hundred and eight ( $S = 108$ ) respondents was the minimum necessary in order to be representative of the population. This study falls short of that figure; however, the researcher still obtained valuable data based on those participants who chose to partake in the questionnaire. As such, the study was conducted and concluded with the data available.

The proceeding information encompasses the analyses for each of the research questions presented in chapters one and three. To properly analyze research question one, descriptive statistics with a focus on frequency was utilized. Research questions two and three each utilized independent samples *t*-tests to fully gauge the differences between two groups. The quasi-independent variable for question two was certified school library

media specialists. The dependent variables were the elements of school library services. Such services were certified staffing, school library accessibility, print and electronic resources, technology and educational applications. The quasi-independent variable for research question three was Title I eligible schools. The dependent variables were the elements of school library services. Such services were certified staffing, school library accessibility, print and electronic resources, technology and educational applications. Group statistics, which revealed the mean and standard deviation for each element of library service was also employed for research questions two and three.

### **Research Question One Analysis:**

RQ1: What are the characteristics of a quality school library media program according to school library media personnel in the Dewey County, NC School District?

The initial question guiding this research study was answered by utilizing descriptive statistics with a focus on frequency. All queries from the survey instrument that can be analyzed by utilizing that statistical method will be addressed herein. Table 1 represents the data regarding the frequency and percentage of the grade levels in which the respondents work as well as the Title I eligibility of the schools. Over half of the respondents, or 58%, were employed at non-Title I eligible schools whereas 42% of respondents were employed at a Title I eligible school.

In regard to the various school grade levels which served the students, the largest number of respondents were employed in kindergarten through fifth grade schools. They represented 56% of the those surveyed. School media personnel that work with students

from grades sixth through eight represented 17% of responses, whereas 15% of those surveyed work with students from grades nine through twelve. Responses from school library personnel that work with students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade represented approximately 7% of the total responses. School library personnel that work with students in grades six through twelve are representative of approximately 3% of total responses. The least number were employed in schools that served a student population of kindergarten through twelfth grade. They are representative of 1% of respondents.

**Table 1:** *Frequency of grade levels and Title I eligibility*

Grade Level	<i>f</i>	%
Kindergarten through five	42	56
Sixth through eight	13	17.3
Sixth through twelve	2	2.7
Nine through twelve	11	14.7
Kindergarten through eight	5	6.7
Kindergarten through twelve	1	1.3
Title I Eligibility		
Yes	31	41.9
No	43	58.1

The majority of respondents were relatively new in their role as an employee of Dewey County Public Schools. A reported 37% worked for less than a year to five years. Those with six through ten years work experience made up approximately 22% and those with eleven years through fifteen years work experience encompassed 20% of the responses. Those with sixteen through twenty years work experience made up 16% of the total responses. Respondents with twenty or more years of service to Dewey County

Public Schools represented the least number of those surveyed. They are representative of 5.4% of the total respondents (see Table 2).

In regard to the number of years worked in a Dewey County Schools library media center, the largest number of respondents, or 37%, indicated that they were employed less than one year through five years. This figure strongly mirrors the number of school library media personnel that have worked in Dewey County Schools in general. Respondents with six through ten years of experience encompassed 20% of the total responses, whereas 22% of respondents indicated that they had between eleven through fifteen years of service. Respondents with sixteen through twenty years of service made up 14% of responses. The least number of participants, approximately 8%, replied that they have worked in a Dewey County School District library media center for twenty-one years or more (see Table 2).

**Table 2:** *Frequency of years worked in Dewey County Schools and Media Center*

Years Worked in Dewey County Schools	<i>f</i>	%
Less than one year through five years	27	36.5
Six years through ten years	16	21.6
Eleven years through fifteen years	15	20.3
Sixteen years through twenty years	12	16.2
Twenty-one years or more	4	5.4
Years Worked in a Dewey County Schools Library Media Center		
Less than one year through five years	27	36.5
Six years through ten years	15	20.3
Eleven years through fifteen years	16	21.6
Sixteen years through twenty years	10	13.5
Twenty-one years or more	6	8.1

In reference to licensure status, approximately 70% of respondents indicated that they were North Carolina certified in the area of school library media. Approximately

23% of respondents were licensed in a state other than North Carolina in the area of school library media. Well over half of the respondents, or approximately 68%, were certified in a subject area other than school library media (refer to Table 3).

**Table 3:** *Frequency of certification/licensure status of respondents*

Certification Status	<i>f</i>	%
North Carolina Certified School Library Media Specialist	52	70.3
School Library Media Specialist licensed in a state other than North Carolina	17	23
Licensed in a subject area other than School Library Media	50	67.6

In terms of school library media center scheduling, results indicate that regular scheduling, where classes or activities are scheduled at a fixed day and/or time, was more prominent in school library media centers in Dewey County Schools. This response elicited 53% of the total replies. Flexible scheduling, where classes or activities are scheduled as needed, was the second most prominent at 28%. Combination scheduling, which is a hybrid of regular and flexible scheduling, was third in the number of responses which represented 16% of respondents' answers. Roughly 3% of respondents indicated that neither flexible nor regular scheduling is available for classes or activities, an indication that no school library programming is available for students (see Table 4).

**Table 4:** *Frequency of school media scheduling*

Type of Scheduling	<i>f</i>	%
Flexible – classes or activities scheduled as needed	21	28.4
Regular – classes or activities scheduled at a fixed day and/or time	39	52.7
Combination – hybrid of flexible and regular scheduling	12	16.2
Neither flexible or regular scheduling available	2	2.7

Participants were asked if students were allowed to utilize the school library media center before, during and after school independently. According to the results, most respondents – approximately 78% – indicated that students were allowed to use the school library media center during school hours independently. A robust 65% of respondents indicated that students were allowed to use the school library media center independently before classes commence. The only deficit was in regard to school library usage after classes recessed. Respondents indicated that 34% of school libraries were available for independent student use after school hours (see Table 5).

**Table 5:** *Frequency of school library media center availability*

Independent Student School Library Usage	<i>f</i>	%
Independent Student Use Before School Hours	48	64.9
Independent Student Use After School Hours	25	33.8
Independent Student Use During School Hours	58	78.4

Table 6 details an extensive list of library programming and the frequency in which such programming was chosen by respondents. Questionnaire participants were given the opportunity to provide different programming options; however, none of the responses deviated from those originally provided. According to the data, 68% of respondents indicated that book fairs were the most popular of the programs available to students. Television production was the second most popular program as indicated by 51% of respondents. Research classes, which garnered 46% of the responses, were the third most popular program or service in Dewey County Public Schools. Storytime, a program in which books are read to students, received 43% of responses. Visits from authors garnered 35% of responses. Makerspaces, which are collaborative workspace for teachers and students alike, obtained 32% of responses. Programming for book clubs

received 23% of responses, whereas the reading program Fountas and Pennell received approximately 22% of responses. The programs Celebrate Seuss and Raz Kids both received 19% of responses. Book talks and the program Drop Everything and Read both received approximately 16% of response from questionnaire respondents. The reading program Open Court received a rating of 15%. The program Reader’s Theater garnered approximately 11% of responses. The reading program Reading Street captured 7% of total responses. The reading programs Accelerated Reader, Guys Read and Scholastic Phonics each received approximately 5% of responses as did the program story time in a foreign language. Programs that center around anime and manga received a 4% response. Book It by Pizza Hut®, cartooning, poetry slams and the program Reading is Fundamental each received approximately 3% of the responses. The least rated program was book bingo which garnered an approximate 1% of responses.

**Table 6:** *Frequency of School Library Program Offerings*

Program Offering	<i>f</i>	%
Book Fair	50	67.6
Television Production	38	51.4
Research Classes	43	45.9
Storytime	32	43.2
Author Visits	28	35.1
Makerspace	24	32.4
Book Club	17	23
Fountas and Pennell	16	21.6
Celebrate Seuss	14	18.9
Raz Kids	14	18.9
Book Talk	12	16.2
Drop Everything and Read	12	16.2
Open Court Reading	11	14.9
Reader’s Theater	8	10.8
Reading Street	5	6.8
Accelerated Reader	4	5.4
Guys Read	4	5.4
Scholastic Phonics	4	5.4

Storytime in a Foreign Language	4	5.4
Manga / Anime	3	4.1
Book It by Pizza Hut®	2	2.7
Cartooning	2	2.7
Poetry Slam	2	2.7
Reading is Fundamental	2	2.7
Book Bingo	1	1.4

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The data in Table 7 specifically focused on the essential elements of library services. Certified staffing, accessibility, print and electronic resources, technology and educational applications were the fundamentals in which school library personnel could choose. Such services were highlighted in chapter two. Respondents were asked to give feedback regarding which element(s) they felt were important for quality library programming. Based on the data collected from the respondents, 92% asserted that appropriate access to the school library media center ranks as the most important element of school library services. The second most ranked element of library services based on responses was the presence of certified staff. This garnered 91% of the total responses. The presence of technology was the third most rated at 78%. This ranks higher than print and electronic resources which was ranked at 70%. Education applications, which are another form of technology, garnered 51% of responses. Respondents were given the opportunity to write in responses other than the elements listed; however, none deviated from the original selections.

Additional data from Table 7 continues with a focus on the technology available in the school library media center. According to the data gathered, 92% of the school library media centers in Dewey County Schools have access to online, licensed databases for research. Moreover, the majority of students and staff, approximately 89%, also have access to an online public access catalog (OPAC) so that they can independently search

for library resources. Many students – approximately 78% – have access to laptops for use while working inside of the school library media center. This number decreases significantly when it comes to student laptops for use outside of the school library media center. Approximately 35% of respondents indicated that students are able to utilize laptops outside of the school library media center. Respondents indicated that 53% of school library media centers allow staff to use laptops while working in the library, while 41% of respondents indicated that staff can utilize laptops outside of the school library media center. Regarding the inquiry of whether there is technology to assist students and/or staff with disabilities, 14% of respondents indicated that such technology was available.

**Table 7:** *Descriptive Statistics Regarding Elements of Library Services*

Element of Library Service	<i>f</i>	%
Certified Staffing	67	90.5
School Library Accessibility	68	91.9
Technology	58	78.4
Print and Electronic Resources	52	70.3
Educational Applications	38	51.4
Technology Available for Student and Staff Use in School Library		
Online, licensed databases for research	68	91.9
Online public access catalog (OPAC)	68	89.2
Laptops for student use in media center	58	78.4
Laptops for student use outside media center	26	35.1
Laptops for staff use in media center	39	52.7
Laptops for staff use outside media center	30	40.5
Technology for patrons with disabilities	10	13.5

Table 8 references the general perceptions of the school library professionals in Dewey County Public Schools. A five response Likert scale was used to gauge their perceptions of the profession as a whole. After each statement, available responses

included: strongly agree, agree, moderately agree, agree a little and finally, do not agree. In order to analyze this question, descriptive statistics with a focus on frequency was used. Some of the statements did not elicit a response from participants for all of the Likert options and as such, those selections were therefore excluded in the final reporting.

For the statement, “I believe that school library media centers are important,” 95% of respondents indicated that they strongly agree. Approximately 5% indicated that they agree. There were no responses for the moderately agree, agree a little or do not agree categories.

In regard to the statement, “I enjoy my job as a school library professional,” 70% of respondents answered that they strongly agreed, whereas 19% responded that they agreed. Moderately agree received 11% of the total responses. There were no responses for agree a little or do not agree.

Regarding the statement, “I believe that I make a difference as a school library professional,” the majority of respondents – 74.3% – indicated that they strongly agreed with that sentiment. Approximately 18% agreed, 7% moderately agreed and 1% responded that they agree a little. No respondent indicated that they do not agree with the statement.

Responses for the statement, “I believe that my principal respects the job that I do,” were to a certain degree mixed. A little over the majority, or 51%, strongly agreed while 22% responded that they agreed. Approximately 15% of respondents indicated that they moderately agreed whereas 8% indicated that they agreed a little with the statement. This category was the only one in which there were some respondents that indicated that

they did not agree. Approximately 4% replied that they did not agree that their principal respects the job that they do.

The last statement, “I believe that school library media professionals impact student achievement,” garnered approximately 89% of responses. Approximately 11% indicated that they agree with that statement. None of the participants chose moderately agree, agree a little or do not agree.

**Table 8:** *Frequency regarding library professionals’ perceptions about the occupation*

Statement regarding school media professionals’ perceptions	<i>f</i>	%
I believe that school library media centers are important		
Strongly Agree	70	94.6
Agree	4	5.4
I enjoy my job as a school library professional		
Strongly Agree	52	70.3
Agree	14	18.9
Moderately Agree	8	10.8
I believe that I make a difference as a school library professional		
Strongly Agree	55	74.3
Agree	13	17.6
Moderately Agree	5	6.8
Agree a Little	1	1.4
I believe that my principal respects the job that I do		
Strongly Agree	38	51.4
Agree	16	21.6
Moderately Agree	11	14.9
Agree a Little	6	8.1
Do Not Agree	3	4.1
I believe that school library media professionals impact student achievement		
Strongly Agree	66	89.2
Agree	8	10.8

## **Research Question Two Analysis:**

RQ2: In what ways do the characteristics of quality school library media programs differ between licensed school library media specialists and non-licensed school media professionals in the Dewey County, NC School District?

This inquiry sought to determine if there were statistically significant differences between licensed (certified) school library professionals' perceptions of quality library programming elements versus the perceptions of their non-licensed (certified) counterparts. An independent samples *t*-test was utilized to produce the results. The significance level as deemed by the researcher was .01. According to the analysis provided in Table 9, the only statistically significant difference occurred in relation to whether a licensed school library media specialist was a crucial component to quality library programming ( $p < .001$ ). Licensed school library media specialists indicated that a certified school librarian was essential to library programming, whereas non-licensed school library staff did not (licensed school library media specialists  $\bar{x} = 1.02$ ,  $sd = .139$ , non-licensed school library staff  $\bar{x} = 1.27$ ,  $sd = .456$ ). Accessibility to school library services was not a significant factor according to the school library professionals in Dewey County Public Schools ( $p = .137$ ), neither was resources ( $p = .344$ ), technology ( $p = .770$ ) or educational applications ( $p = .911$ ). This indicates that the school library professionals in Dewey County Public Schools were primarily in consensus regarding the aforementioned elements of library services.

**Table 9:** *Independent samples t-test analysis of certified vs non-certified staff*

Library Element	Licensed	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	p*
Certified Staff	Yes	52	1.02	.139	< .001
	No	22	1.27	.456	
Accessibility	Yes	52	1.10	.298	.137
	No	22	.09	.366	
Resources	Yes	52	1.33	.513	.344
	No	22	1.27	.456	
Technology	Yes	52	1.21	.412	.770
	No	22	1.23	.429	
Educational Apps	Yes	52	1.46	.503	.911
	No	22	1.55	.510	

\* p value =  $\leq .01$

### **Research Question Three Analysis:**

RQ3: In what ways do characteristics of school library media programs differ between Title I eligible schools and non-Title I eligible schools in the Dewey, NC School District?

This inquiry sought to determine if there were any statistically significant differences in the perception of quality library programming from the school library staff at Title I eligible versus non-Title I eligible schools. The significance level as deemed by the researcher was .01. According to the data present in Table 10, there were two areas in which statistically significant differences emerged. School library accessibility ( $p = .007$ ) and technology ( $p = .001$ ) were the two elements in which the staff of Title I eligible and non-Title I eligible schools significantly differ in their responses. According to the data, the staff at non-Title I eligible schools indicated that accessibility was not as important whereas the staff members at Title I eligible schools indicated that it was important for

students to have access to school library programming and services (Title I eligible schools  $\bar{x} = 1.03$ ,  $sd = .180$ , non-Title I eligible schools  $\bar{x} = .09$ ,  $sd = .366$ ). In terms of technology, the staff at non-Title I eligible schools indicated that it was an important element; however, the staff at Title I eligible schools indicated that it was not an important element (Title I eligible schools  $\bar{x} = 1.13$ ,  $sd = .341$ , non-Title I eligible schools  $\bar{x} = 1.28$ ,  $sd = .454$ ). The elements of certified staff ( $p = .091$ ), resources ( $p = .320$ ), and educational applications (.570) were not statistically significant. This indicates that the professionals in non-Title I eligible and Title I eligible schools were on one accord in terms of these elements.

The researcher also sought to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the number of computer workstations available in Title I eligible versus non-Title I eligible schools. The computer workstations could be available for student or staff usage. An independent samples *t*-test was used in order to determine said differences (see Table 10). Once again, the significance level as deemed by the researcher was .01. According to the data gathered, there were no statistically significant differences in the number of computer workstations available in the two school types ( $p = .202$ ); however, it should be noted that non-Title I eligible schools had a least ten more work stations than their Title I counterparts (Title I eligible schools  $\bar{x} = 17.58$ ,  $sd = 19.50$ , non-Title I eligible schools  $\bar{x} = 27.81$ ,  $sd = 22.01$ ).

**Table 10:** *Independent samples t-test analysis of Title I eligible vs non-Title I eligible schools*

Library Element	Title I	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	p*
Certified Staff	Yes	31	1.13	.341	.091
	No	43	1.07	.258	
Accessibility	Yes	31	1.03	.180	.007
	No	43	.09	.366	
Resources	Yes	31	1.26	.514	.320
	No	43	1.35	.482	
Technology	Yes	31	1.13	.341	.001
	No	43	1.28	.454	
Educational Apps	Yes	31	1.45	.506	.570
	No	43	1.51	.506	
Number of Computers	Yes	31	17.58	19.497	.202
	No	43	27.81	22.012	

\* p value =  $\leq .01$

An additional inquiry was if there were statistically significant differences in the number of full-time and part-time employees and adult volunteers in Title I eligible versus non-Title I eligible schools (see Table 11). This analysis was done by utilizing an independent samples *t*-test. According to the data, the only statistically significant difference was in regard to volunteers ( $p < .001$ ). Volunteers were more prominent in non-Title I eligible schools (Title I eligible schools  $\bar{x} = .61$ ,  $sd = .955$ , non-Title I eligible schools  $\bar{x} = 1.91$ ,  $sd = 2.860$ ).

**Table 11:** *Staff and volunteer positions in Title I eligible and non-Title I eligible schools*

	Title I	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	p*
Full Time	Yes	31	.97	.547	.224
	No	43	1.28	.504	
Part Time	Yes	31	.10	.301	.980
	No	43	.09	.366	
Volunteers	Yes	31	.61	.955	< .001
	No	43	1.91	2.860	

\* p value =  $\leq .01$

### Summary

Chapter four commenced with a detailed description of survey respondents and information regarding the schools in which they are employed. Descriptive statistics with a focus on frequency was used to analyze the results from the survey instrument.

Research questions two and three were analyzed by using the statistical method independent samples *t*-test. Both inquiries relied on the elements of library services to sufficiently address the focus of this study. The elements of library services were the presence of certified (licensed) staff, school library accessibility, resources, technology and educational applications.

The focus of research question two was in regard to any statistically significant differences between licensed school library personnel versus their non-licensed counterparts. The focus on research question three centered on the statistical differences between Title I eligible schools versus their non-Title I eligible counterparts. Although out of the scope of the research questions, the researcher also desired to ascertain if there were statistically significant differences in staffing levels and non-Title eligible versus Title I eligible schools. A focus on volunteerism at the two types of schools was also

researched. Additionally, the researcher sought to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the number of computer workstations in non-Title I eligible schools versus Title I eligible schools. An independent samples *t*-test was the statistical method used to determine those differences.

## CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION

“With a library you are free, not confined by temporary political climates. It is the most democratic of institutions because no one – but no one at all – can tell you what to read and when and how.” -- Doris Lessing

The purpose of the preceding study was to gauge perceptions from school library media personnel regarding what characterizes a quality school library media program. This study utilized input from public school library media professionals in the Dewey County Public School District. Dewey County Public Schools is the sobriquet for a large urban district in the southeastern state of North Carolina. Survey research was the method by which data was collected (see Appendix A). A combination of descriptive statistics with a focus on frequency and an independent samples *t*-test were the methods by which the data was analyzed.

This chapter shall commence with an overview of the literature pertinent to this study. The foci of the literature are primarily the essential elements of school library programming. Such elements included certified staffing, accessibility, print and electronic resources and technology. A summary of the methods used to collect and analyze the data shall follow. The theoretical concepts presented in chapters two and three and how they appropriate into the realm of this study will then be discussed. This chapter will continue with a summation of the major findings of the study and the implications of such findings. This chapter will conclude with plans for future research in the field of school libraries and recommendations for key stakeholders.

### **Summary of Literature**

The literature relevant to this study focused primarily on the essential elements of school libraries. Each of the elements (certified staffing, accessibility, print and electronic

resources and technology) were appropriately expounded upon in chapter two. There was a consensus among the library professionals in Dewey County Public Schools regarding the importance of each of the elements with the exception of one. There was a significant difference between the responses regarding the necessity of certified staff (see Table 9). Non-certified library staff did not rank that element as important. This difference is understandable since non-certified professionals were also surveyed. This does not negate the fact that the literature suggests that having full-time and certified school library media specialists make a positive impact on student academic success (Kachel & Lance, 2013; Kaplan, 2007; Lance, Schwarz & Rodney, 2014; Littman, 2014). Non-licensed school media assistants or other staff should be a complement to, but not a replacement of, a qualified and licensed school media professional.

In terms of accessibility, the literature is consistent by positing that all aspects of library services should be available to all students (Edwards, 2011; Dijken, Bus & Jong, 1999; Di Loreto & Tse, 2012; Neuman, 1999; Whitehead, 2004; Williams, 2013). The school library professionals from this study concur with the current literature. The majority of the schools in Dewey County Schools (approximately 53%) offered an opportunity for students to partake in school library classes or programming. Only 3% of the schools surveyed did not offer any opportunity for students to utilize the services of the school library media center (see Table 4). Although there are students who do not have the opportunity to participate in school library programming is negligible in Dewey County Public Schools, this fact still raises some concern. There should be a concerted effort by district and school level administrative staff to ensure that all students have access to appropriate school library services.

The literature regarding the resources available in school library media centers intimates that print and electronic resources should be relevant and contemporary (Krashen, Lee & McQuillan, 2012; Hoffman and Wood, 2007; Johnson, 2014; Neuman & Celano, 2001). According to the North Carolina Digital and Learning Media Inventory Report (NC DLMI), 2016, Dewey County Public Schools has approximately twelve books per student. The state average is eighteen books per student. Approximately 70% of the school library professionals in Dewey County are in agreement that resources are an important part of library services (see Table 7). Often, the efficacy of a library is based on the number of resources available to patrons as well as the contemporary age of the collection. The data from the NC DLMI suggests that more resources need to be allocated in the Dewey County Schools to be on par with the state.

Technology is a sub-set of the resources available in school library media centers. The emergence and presence of technology in school library media centers have become standard practice. The library professionals in Dewey County Schools once again achieved consensus regarding the importance of technology in relation to school library services. Approximately 92% of the school library media centers have access to technology specifically for research. Mobile technology in the form of laptop computers were also available for student and staff usage. Resources that specifically focus on technology are prominent in Dewey County Schools. In regard to technology, the only deficit occurred in the area of technology specific to patrons with disabilities. According to the data gathered in this study, 14% of respondents indicated that technology to assist those with disabilities were available (see Table 7). To reiterate, it is important that

school-based and district level administrative staff advocate for all students in regard to school library services.

### **Summary of Methodology**

This study utilized survey research as the primary method for data collection. Approval to conduct research from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Dewey County Public Schools was first sought before a list of suitable survey candidates could be procured. A survey was sent to all school library professionals in the school district via electronic mail. The Internet based site Surveyshare was used to collect the responses. Survey participants were given three weeks to complete the twenty-one question survey at their leisure (see Appendix A). Three reminder emails were sent to participants who failed to complete the survey initially. At the end of the collection period, the data was downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet for data preparation. Such preparation was necessary as the data needed to be uploaded into the statistical software SPSS. Descriptive statistics were utilized for research question one and an independent *t*-test was used for research questions two and three. The data was then reported in this study via the appropriate APA format.

### **Theoretical Context**

The theoretical perspectives of Foucault and Freire were taken into consideration in the context of school libraries as a precursor to this study. Foucault (1977) asserts that library patrons can undergo a transformation of their own making in the library. One is free to explore new worlds and/or new possibilities via the pages of a book. This is in keeping with students who are free to explore books for pleasurable reading instead of reading to complete assigned tasks. Conversely, Freire (1970) asserts that education is a

source of personal liberation. Freire metaphorically equates education as a banking system where information is deposited into the minds of students. This is counterproductive to true education. True education is based on inquiry. Inquiry, which is born of a curious mind, can be accomplished in the library. Patrons are free to explore any subject they please in the space of a library. The participants of this study indicated that there are times when students are free to use the school library media center independently (see Table 5). Independent library usage was available to students before, during and after school hours. The freedom to explore autonomously is in keeping with the theoretical perspectives of Foucault and Freire.

Social exchange theory was another theoretical concept that guided the data collection portion of this study. The foundation of social exchange theory in this context is that survey participants are more likely to participate if there is some reward for doing so. There was no tangible award given for this research; however, the researcher theorized that survey participants would view giving their input regarding the school media profession as a just reward. There are few instances where school library professionals have the opportunity to express their overall feelings towards the profession.

### **Major Findings**

There were several key conclusions that were uncovered during this study. First, there were few differences in the how licensed school library media specialists viewed school library programming versus their non-licensed counterparts. Each group was on par regarding how they viewed the importance of such services. According to the data presented in Table 9, both groups viewed the key elements of library services similarly.

The one key component in which there was a significant difference was whether a licensed school library media specialist had more of an impact. As there were non-licensed school library staff who participated in this study, this conclusion is entirely understandable. The information regarding key differences in licensed and non-licensed school media professionals satisfied the second research inquiry.

Additionally, there were only two differences in how the school library professionals in Title I eligible versus the professionals in non-Title I eligible schools responded. The two significant differences that did emerge was the information regarding school accessibility and technology (Table 10). The school library professionals in Title I eligible schools reported that accessibility is important. The school library professionals in non-Title I eligible schools did not rank that as high. The presence of technology was also a factor in which there was a significant difference between the two groups. The professionals in non-Title I eligible schools ranked the presence of technology higher than their Title I eligible counterparts (Table 10). The information regarding key differences in Title I eligible schools and non-Title I eligible schools satisfied the third research inquiry.

The focus on the types of programming available was an important factor according to the school library professionals in Dewey County Schools. According to the data presented in Table 7, programs that focused primarily on literacy ranked extremely low. Accelerated Reader, Book It by Pizza Hut® and Reading is Fundamental each garnered less than a 10% response. The top literacy program, Fountas and Pennell generated a 22% response. This was surprising given that the mission of many school libraries specifically focuses on literacy. Programs such as Book Fairs, Research Classes,

Television Production and Storytime ranked much higher with more than a 40% response each. Book fairs are understandable since they generate revenue for school library media centers; however, they do not provide a substantive literacy component.

In terms of the perceptions of the profession in general, the responses from the school library professionals in Dewey County Public Schools were generally positive. Approximately 95% reported that they strongly believed that school library media centers are important. A reported 89% indicated that they strongly believe that school library media professionals impact student achievement. This is important as these professionals can advocate for the profession based on these beliefs. Approximately 51% school library media professionals reported that they strongly believed that their principal respected the job that they do whereas a reported 4% indicated that they strongly disagreed that their principal respected the job that they do. This too is significant because school-based administrators often make decisions regarding school library staffing. It is important that key stakeholders such as principals and other administrative personnel understand the intrinsic value of school libraries and school library media specialists.

### **Data Analysis Limitation**

The researcher encountered at least one limitation at the onset of data analysis in regard to this research study. This comes as an addition to the pre-study limitations presented in chapter three. After all data were gathered, it was discovered that the minimum number of responses as developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was not satisfied. There were one hundred forty-nine school personnel surveyed; however, seventy-five eventually completed the entire questionnaire. The minimum number as suggested was one hundred and eight. Although several reminder notices were sent, the

number of respondents did not increase by the end of the survey response period. The overall response rate was calculated at 50.33% which ranks higher than many surveys that are sent electronically (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014). It is theorized that an incentive other than the ability to provide feedback to key stakeholders was needed. The theoretical cogitations of social exchange theory seemingly influenced this study. The introduction of incentives for participation may have had an impact on the response rate.

### **Pathways for Future Research**

The research from this study solely focused on one urban school district using a survey research method. This school district was limited to the state of North Carolina which is located in the Southeastern part of the United States. Research studies that are specific to school libraries are sparse. Additional research in this area can add to academic literature which may influence how school libraries and school library media specialists are perceived. The following are suggestive routes for future research.

Research regarding school libraries can be extended by focusing on local, state, regional and finally national studies regarding school libraries. These studies can build upon one another in a hierarchal fashion. The perceptions of school library media specialists in a variety of locations across the country may have more of an impact. The ability to research school libraries and school library media specialists in rural areas is also advisable. Additionally, there are several research design methods that can be utilized. A qualitative research study is recommended because that research method would gather data at the microlevel. The opportunity for school library personnel to be interviewed or participate in focus groups would be advisable.

Although perceptions of the school library media profession are important, a research study that can correlate school libraries and student achievement is also another avenue for research. A positive outcome will provide much needed data to school administrators who ultimately make decisions regarding the funding of school libraries. A positive correlation could influence how school libraries are staffed and subsidized. The suggestive research concepts presented herein would require appropriate funding and a significant time commitment.

### **Recommendations for Key Stakeholders**

The information gleaned from this study is suggestive of school library personnel that are in consensus that school library programming has a positive impact on student academic success (see Table 8). As such, school libraries should be summarily included in all aspects of school academia. The following are recommendations from the researcher.

First, each school library should provide adequate space for pleasure reading. A reading room or other similar area should be housed within each school library to encourage reading for pleasure. Reading for pleasure enhances literacy skills (especially for students in lower grades). It is hoped that a child who reads for pleasure (as opposed to merely reading to complete an assignment) will become a life-long reader. Several school library programs were present in Dewey County Schools that target independent and pleasurable reading (see Table 6). The school library programs Drop Everything and Read (16 %), Open Court Reading (15%), Guys Read (5%) and Manga/Anime (4%) garnered less than a 20% respond from questionnaire participants. If suitable

accommodations were made in the school library media centers, those programs could thrive and thus have a beneficial impact on student literacy.

School districts should strive to hire only qualified and certified full-time school library staff. The contributions that certified full-time school library media specialists make in regard to student achievement is substantial (Kachel & Lance, 2013). Research suggests that students who attend a school with full-time and certified school librarians do better academically. It is imperative that school libraries that serve low socioeconomic students have access to qualified personnel. The results from this study indicates that 91% of questionnaire respondents assert that certified library staff is an essential element of school library programming (see Table 7). Approximately 70% of respondents were certified in the area of school library media (see Table 3). Media assistants and other paraprofessional staff should be a complement to, not a replacement of, a fully licensed school library media specialist.

Finally, school libraries should attempt to form partnerships with public libraries. School and public libraries should work in concert to ensure that students can access appropriate resources when needed. This partnership becomes essential during school respites such as summer, winter and spring break. Respondents from this study indicated that approximately 3% of the school library media centers in Dewey County Schools do not offer any programming for students (see Table 4). Additionally, less than half of the school media centers in Dewey County Schools or approximately 34%, offer independent student usage after school (see Table 5). A positive partnership among school and public libraries will demonstrate to students that library resources are always available to them no matter the circumstance.

## **Conclusion**

It is imperative that school libraries and the services that are provided therein are easily accessible to all students regardless of socioeconomic circumstances. Libraries often open new pathways for inquiry-based learning and as such, are a key component to student academic success. Based on the data derived from this study, the professionals in Dewey County Schools have come to consensus that school library media centers have a positive impact on student academic outcomes. They reviewed the elements of library services and found that each are a necessary component of the amenities provided by their libraries. The essential elements of library services in essence form a reciprocal relationship (see Figure 1). The essential elements consist of certified school library school media specialists, print and electronic resources, school library accessibility and quality school library programming. The absence of one effect all. Educational stakeholders should therefore seek to include libraries and librarians in the educational equation at all times.

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School Library Media Center Programs  
Survey of Media Center Personnel

The purpose of this survey is to obtain information about school library media centers. Questions include information regarding programming, scheduling, staffing, technology and the overall collection. Please answer each question thoughtfully and to the best of your ability.

Do you currently work in a Dewey County Schools library media center (either full or part time)? (choose one)

- Yes
- No (skip to the end of survey)

**Facilities and Availability**

The following questions are specific to the school library media center in which you currently work. Please answer each question thoughtfully and to the best of your ability.

Which best describes the grade levels of students served at your school? (choose one)

- \_\_\_\_\_ grades K through 5
- \_\_\_\_\_ grades 6 through 8
- \_\_\_\_\_ grades 9 through 12
- \_\_\_\_\_ grades 6 through 12
- \_\_\_\_\_ grades K through 8
- \_\_\_\_\_ grades K through 12
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other or Alternative School

Does your school participate in the Title I program?

The Title I program provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards (US Department of Education). (choose one)

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

How many full-time employees staff your school library media center? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many part-time employees staff your school library media center? \_\_\_\_\_

How many adult volunteers staff your school library media center? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have student helpers who are regularly scheduled to assist in your school library media center? (choose one)

Yes

No

Which of the following best describes the type of scheduling for classes and other activities for the school library media center? (choose one)

Flexible scheduling – classes or activities scheduled as needed

Regular scheduling – classes or activities scheduled at a fixed date and/or time

Combination of flexible and regular scheduling for classes and other activities

Neither flexible or regular scheduling for classes or other activities

May students use the school library media center independently before school begins? (choose one)

Yes

No

May students use the school library media center independently after school? (choose one)

Yes

No

May students use the school library media center independently during the school day? (choose one)

Yes

No

### **School Media Center Programs and Available Technology**

Which of the following programs or services are available at your school library media center? (check all that apply).

Story Time

Book Clubs

Research Classes

Book Fairs

Reading is Fundamental

Book Talks

Guys Read

Accelerated Reader

Raz-Kids

Book It by Pizza Hut

Drop Everything and Read

Fountas and Pennell

Maker Space

Open Court Reading

Reading Street

Scholastic Phonics

Readers

Television Production

Author visits

Story time in a foreign

language

Book bingo

Cartooning

Manga/Anime Club

Poetry slam

Spoken word

Readers Theater

Book-a-la-palooza

Wii

Celebrate Seuss

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What elements of library services are important for quality library programming? (choose all that apply)

- certified staffing
- media center accessibility
- print and electronic resources
- technology
- educational apps
- other\_\_\_\_\_

How many computer workstations does the library media center have for student and/or staff use? \_\_\_\_\_

Does your school library media center provide students access to online, licensed databases for research purposes? (choose one)

- Yes
- No

Does your school library media center provide an online public access catalog (OPAC) so that students and staff can independently search for books and other materials located in the media center? (choose one)

- Yes
- No

Does your school library media center provide laptops for student use inside of the library media center? (choose one)

- Yes
- No

Does your school library media center provide laptops for student use outside of the library media center? (choose one)

- Yes
- No

Does your school library media center provide laptops for staff use inside of the library media center? (choose one)

- Yes
- No

Does your school library media center provide laptops for staff use outside of the library media center? (choose one)

- Yes
- No

Does your school library media center provide technology to assist students and/or staff with disabilities (e.g., TDD, specially-equipped workstations)? (choose one)

- Yes

 No

### School Library Media as a Profession

The following questions are meant to understand how you feel about working in a school library media center and about the profession as a whole. Please answer each question thoughtfully and to the best of your ability. (choose one for each response)

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
I believe that school library media centers are important					
I enjoy my job as a school library professional					
I believe that I make a difference as a school library professional					
I believe that my principal respects the job that I do					
I believe that school library media professionals impact student academic success					

### Demographic Information

How long have you worked for the Dewey County NC School District? (choose one)

 \_\_\_\_\_ less than 1 year to 5 years

 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 to 10 years

 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 to 15 years

 \_\_\_\_\_ 16 to 20 years

 \_\_\_\_\_ 21 years or more

How long have you worked in a Charlotte Mecklenburg School District **school library media center**? (choose one)

 \_\_\_\_\_ less than 1 year to 5 years

 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 to 10 years

 \_\_\_\_\_ 11 to 15 years

 \_\_\_\_\_ 16 to 20 years

 \_\_\_\_\_ 21 years or more

Are you currently a North Carolina licensed or certified school library media specialist?  
(choose one)

 Yes

 No

Do you now or have you ever held licensure in school library media in a state other than North Carolina? (choose one)

 Yes

 No

Do you now or have you ever held licensure in any subject area other than school library media in any state? (choose one)

 Yes

 No

**End of Survey**  
**Thank you so much for your participation!**



**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**  
**“Your Library Ain’t Like Mine:**  
**Perceptions of Quality School Library Programming From Library Professionals”**

Dear <participant name>,

You are invited to participate in a survey research study to investigate the perceptions of school library professionals’ experiences regarding quality school library media programming. You have been contacted about this study because you have been identified as a person currently working as either a school library media specialist, school library media assistant or other school library media professional. You will have the opportunity to provide a voice to school library media professionals in North Carolina.

This survey is being created and disseminated by Tracy D. Creech, a doctoral candidate in the Curriculum and Instruction Program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Ms. Creech is working under the direction of Dr. Chance Lewis. This survey contains 21 questions and will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. **You have until May 25, 2018 to complete this survey.**

The decision to participate in this survey is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw at any time. To ensure confidentiality, your email address will be stored separately from any data collected in the study and no information will be collected that can link you back to your survey. This means that we will not use your name in our report nor will we be able to identify your survey. However, please note that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of internet access. Your participation in this online survey involves the same risks as a person’s everyday use of the internet.

UNC Charlotte wants to make sure that all research participants are treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the Office of Research Compliance at (704) 687-1871 or [uncc-irb@uncc.edu](mailto:uncc-irb@uncc.edu) if you have questions about your rights as a study participant. Thank you in advance for participating in this very important research study.

Sincerely,

Tracy D. Creech ([tcreech1@uncc.edu](mailto:tcreech1@uncc.edu))  
Curriculum and Instruction PhD Candidate