

1994

Evaluation of Library Media Specialists in Iowa Schools

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the criteria and procedures used in the evaluation of library media specialists in Iowa. Of particular concern was the inclusion of the roles and responsibilities of library media specialists as established in "Information Power" in evaluation instruments. The sample of 100 library media specialists was asked to fill in a questionnaire and return a blank copy of their evaluation instrument. The return rate was 70%.

Seventy-seven percent of library media specialists in the sample are evaluated as teachers. Sixty-nine percent of the 13 library media specialist evaluation instruments contained 50% or more of the indicators for library media specialists as established in "Information Power." Building principals do the evaluations at least once a year for the majority of library media specialists in the sample. Data for the evaluation are gathered mainly through media center observation. Job descriptions are present for 50% of the library media specialists in the sample.

This study implies that most library media specialists in Iowa are evaluated as teachers and the roles and responsibilities as established in "Information Power" are included in evaluation instruments designed specifically for library media specialists.

Evaluation of Library Media Specialists in Iowa Schools

A Graduate Research Paper

Submitted to the

Division of Library Science

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Bonnie Rawding

July 6, 1994

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This Research Paper by: Bonnie Rawding

Titled: Evaluation of Library Media Specialists in Iowa Schools

**has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for
the Degree of Master of Arts.**

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

As the information age progresses at a staggering pace, the library media center becomes ever more important in the educational process. Students entering the job market in the years ahead will need to be prepared to access and use vast amounts of information. Library media specialists are trying to meet the challenge of educating students who will be productive members of society.

The changing roles of the school library media specialist were described in 1988 in Information Power (American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology). This set of professional recommendations is intended to provide guidelines for a quality school library media program. In these guidelines the school library media specialist is responsible for providing the leadership and having the knowledge necessary to make the library media program an integral part of the instructional program of the school. This responsibility means that the library media specialist should perform the roles of information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant. The library media specialist should no longer be simply a storehouse manager but should be a vital part of the total school program.

Development of student skills, such as critical thinking, effective communication, and technology use, is one task of the library media specialist. These skills will be essential to students entering the work force. Students will need to be able to learn new skills quickly because they may change jobs four

or five times during their working years (Jacobs, 1989). Critical thinking will be an important skill for students when they are expected to learn new tasks.

Communicating information in a variety of formats and through different media will also be an essential job skill. The use of developing technologies will play a big part in the education and job skills of students. They will need to be taught how to use a wide range of technologies which will enhance their employability.

Evaluation of professional staff in schools is a policy or contractual matter intended to maintain or change the school operations in ways that directly influence the teaching processes employed to promote pupil learning. Since library media specialists have such a vital role in the educational programs of schools and their roles are important to the successful future employment of students, the personnel evaluation processes used should encourage personal and professional growth. For the library media specialists to succeed in the roles established in Information Power, evaluation processes and instruments should address these roles and the improvement of the library media program. The library media specialist should be evaluated on the unique responsibilities which he/she has.

Teacher evaluations are based on such behaviors as classroom management, lesson planning, student evaluation, and professional growth. The library media specialist should exhibit these behaviors as well as behaviors related to collection management, integration of information skills in the curriculum, use of facilities, budget management, and teacher inservices. These behaviors should be included in the job description for the media specialist and in the instrument used for evaluation.

Many types of personnel evaluation are being used in education. Some of them include rating, management by objectives, and portfolio assessment.

Variations of these types of evaluation have been developed and used in schools.

In many schools professional evaluation is a process of rating personnel using the same instrument and criteria for all licensed staff. This type of evaluation is usually used for continuation or termination of employment decisions, and teacher improvement purposes. The building principal uses the instrument to rate all teachers following one or more classroom observations. The results of the evaluation are reported to the teacher in a post-observations conference. The evaluation instrument may then be placed in the teacher's personnel file and may be used as the basis for continued improvement.

Management by objectives is a process which has as the primary concern the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organization. The administrator and teacher discuss the goals and objectives of the program as they relate to the organization goals and objectives. With these as the basis, measures of performance are discussed and an annual performance evaluation is completed. This form of evaluation sets up communication between the teacher and the administrator for program improvement. The various job responsibilities of the teacher are evaluated with effective performance of these responsibilities as the criteria.

The third type of evaluation used for educators is portfolio assessment. This type of evaluation uses a collection of documents that show a person's effort, progress, and accomplishments. These documents could be surveys, lesson plans, students' products, and other products of activities performed by the teacher. This form of evaluation allows the teacher to gather relevant documentation regularly and show a wide ranging view of the work completed.

The portfolio may be divided into sections which are related to area-specific goals and related strategies.

These three methods of evaluation are a few of the types currently used in schools. Since there are no national standards for evaluation of educators, each state, and in some cases each school district, can develop its own evaluation procedures and instruments.

Evaluation of library media specialists in Iowa is a concern as media specialists try to follow the guidelines in Information Power. The type of evaluation and the criteria used affects the development of the library media program and the professional development of the library media specialist. The purpose of this study was to find out what criteria and procedures are used for evaluating library media specialists in Iowa. The major question addressed was whether the indicators of the library media specialist roles and responsibilities established in Information Power are included in evaluation instruments. Other related questions which were addressed were who evaluates the library media specialist, how often does formal evaluation take place, what criteria are used to evaluate the library media specialist's performance, how are the data collected, and does the library media specialist have a written job description.

In Iowa, no standard process exists for the evaluation of library media specialists. The guidelines presented in the Plan for Progress in the Library Media Center (Iowa Department of Education, 1992) suggest that library media specialists be evaluated by building principals in cooperation with the district library media director. The instruments and procedures should recognize the unique responsibilities of the library media specialist using basic criteria and

performance indicators developed jointly and agreed upon by library media specialists, principals, and district administrators (p. 12).

Hypotheses for this study were:

1. Fifty percent or more of Iowa school districts use the same evaluation instrument and procedures for classroom teachers and library media specialists.
2. If an instrument which was designed specifically for evaluation of library media specialists is used, in a majority of districts 50% or more of the criteria included in the instrument will pertain to indicators of the roles and responsibilities of library media specialists as established in Information Power.
3. Specific evaluation procedures used in 50% or more school districts in Iowa indicate that :
 - a. The principal does the evaluation.
 - b. Formal evaluation occurs at least once a year.
 - c. Data collection is done by the principal only through observation of teaching.
4. Written job descriptions which include major responsibilities of the library media specialist exist in 50% or more of the districts.

For the purposes of this study, it was assumed that the library media specialists surveyed were qualified professionals. They must have earned at least a bachelor's degree with a teaching license and have a library media specialist endorsement. It was also assumed that the schools surveyed have a library media program which has a mission statement, goals, and objectives. It was further assumed that some type of professional evaluation is completed by a school administrator.

This study provides data which will help determine the status of the evaluation of library media specialists in the state of Iowa. Knowing what kinds of evaluation are used will give media specialists, media directors, and state department personnel, data to be used for advocating any necessary changes in evaluation procedures. State guidelines could be established to encourage effective evaluation of library media specialists throughout the state.

Limitations of this study are related to the use of a questionnaire for data collection. The return rate limited the data collected. Another limitation was the accuracy of answers provided by the selected library media specialists. Some school districts did not have evaluation instruments available due to revisions in progress.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Current practice in personnel evaluation in elementary and secondary education is controlled by teacher contracts or school board policies. These documents establish the procedures and criteria used in the district to determine how well teachers perform their jobs. The procedures may include such things as evaluator assignments, frequency of evaluation, data gathering methods, instruments for reporting results, timelines for completion, and teacher appeal reporting.

Most teachers today are evaluated at least once a year by the building principal on a generalized rating instrument. They are typically rated on a five point scale on personal or job related characteristics. The evaluator simply checks the applicable term or phrase after each characteristic (Webb, 1989).

The traditional methods of evaluation are slowly being replaced by performance appraisal based on Peter Drucker's Management by Objectives method. This type of personnel evaluation begins with the employee writing his/her own job description with input from the supervisor concerning goals and objectives of the district. The employee then writes his/her objectives for the performance period. The employee and supervisor reach agreement on these objectives and the standards to measure progress toward each objective. An evaluation conference is held at the end of the performance period (Mancall & Barber, 1978).

Kenneth D. Peterson and Tom Chenowith (1992) considered the involvement of school teachers in their own evaluation. Their purposes were to

address the limits to increased teacher participation in the evaluation process and to suggest next steps for implementation of evaluation that changes from an activity done “to” teachers to an activity done “by” professionals. They suggest five ways educators can be more involved in their own evaluations. These ways include personal data gathering, storage, and use; peer data gathering; teacher panels to judge data; participation in district evaluation policy making; and use of aggregate teacher data for public information (p. 177-180).

Peterson and Chenowith suggest that teachers need to progress through several stages of involvement regarding performance appraisal. In the traditional stage, teachers are minimally involved and have no control over the evaluation process. In the transitional stage, teachers have little control of the evaluation but respond to initiatives created by others. Instructional improvement and cooperation are emphasized. Evaluation instruments are more anecdotal. In the emergent stage, teachers participate in decisions about their own evaluation. The emphasis is on professional development. Teachers are actively involved and are in control of the teacher evaluation process (p. 180-182).

There are many benefits to reaching the emergent stage. The technical benefits are increases in quality of assessment data and decisions made using the data, increased accuracy of information from a variety of sources, accommodation of a greater variety of teaching styles, and increased professional judgment. The personal psychological benefits are an increased sense of efficacy, authorship, and responsibility. The political benefit is more realistic and comprehensive data for public decision making. The client benefits are improved teacher performance, improved school climate, and

increased information to parents, legislatures, and teacher education universities (p. 184-188).

According to the guidelines established in Information Power (American Association of School Librarians . . . , 1988), library media specialist evaluation should be based on a job description. The evaluation instrument should include specific descriptions of tasks performed by library media specialists. The library media specialist and the administrator should jointly develop the basic criteria for evaluation. Individual priority performance indicators may be included in the evaluation. District library media directors and building administrators should evaluate the performance of the library media specialist cooperatively.

Gisela Webb (1989) suggests that library media specialists should be evaluated using the performance management approach. This approach consists of five phases. The first phase is preparation which lasts the entire evaluation year. During this phase an "incident file" is established and descriptions of all work performance are put in the file. The supervisor informs the employee when these incidents are put in the file and the employee has an opportunity to discuss the incident. The next phase is the rating phase. At this time the employee's job description is reviewed, the incident file examined, and other factual materials presented. The supervisor completes the evaluation forms. The third phase is administrative review of the completed evaluation form. This is done by the supervisor's superior. Next an appraisal interview is held between the supervisor and the employee. The supervisor's main task is to discuss the coaching, counseling, and training activities which will help the library media specialist develop new skills and improve job performance. The summary of this interview should include specific timetables and an outline of

the objectives to be achieved. The final phase is the follow-up in which the supervisor makes sure that the agreed upon action plans are carried out (p. 56-57).

This approach follows the guidelines in Information Power (American Association of School Librarians . . . , 1988). It is based on the job description of the library media specialist. The supervisor and media specialist jointly develop individual performance indicators.

Several studies have been done which impact school library media programs and the evaluation of school library media specialists. The first study addressed the appropriate evaluation process to be used for school library media specialists. The second study was designed to relate the evaluation process of the library media specialist to the district's mission and goal statements. The third study addressed the principal's knowledge of assessment criteria for school library media specialists and how principals gather data about these criteria. The fourth study was designed to validate the constructs of an evaluation instrument for school library media programs and media specialists based on Information Power. The final study was a follow-up study on the validation of Information Power and examined the progress of school library media programs using the assessment instrument.

The first study (Pfister and Towle, 1983) concerns a model performance evaluation for school library media specialists. One of the questions asked was what performance items and evidences of performance are appropriate for evaluating media specialists in schools of different levels and different sizes. The second question asked was what procedure should be followed to involve media specialists, principals, and district-level personnel successfully in the evaluation process.

Sarasota County, Florida, School District initiated the study and three other counties participated in the field test. After a needs survey, a committee of school media specialists and administrators developed job descriptions for media personnel and established the responsibilities of media personnel in the schools and at the district level. These job descriptions were used as the basis for evaluating media specialists. The evaluations were conducted in all thirty schools in Sarasota County and some schools in three other Florida counties. After the evaluations were completed, end-of-project interviews were held to obtain reactions to the new evaluation procedures and suggestions for implementation in other school districts (p. 116-117).

The outcomes of the study were improved communication between media specialists and principals, more realistic expectations of the media specialist by principals, improved planning activities for the media program, and usefulness of the job descriptions for interviewing prospective media specialists. The conclusions were that procedures for evaluating media specialists in Florida were inadequate and that performance appraisal using job descriptions used in this study improve communication and thus the media program (p. 117-118).

Another study (Pfister, Vincelette, & Sprimont, 1986) about the evaluation of school library media specialists was done in the Pasco County, Florida, School District. This was a case study of the evaluation process as it related to the district's mission and goal statements. The Pasco County School District media specialists, district media personnel, and a university consultant drafted district objectives for the media program. This draft was distributed to building administrators and media specialists for comments. The first draft was revised and used as the basis for developing a performance appraisal instrument for library media specialists and a media program evaluation instrument. The two

instruments were used for two years to evaluate library media specialists and the programs in twenty-two out of twenty-four of the district's buildings (p. 61-62).

The evaluations were used to identify outstanding programs and reveal areas of needed improvement. The committee who designed the evaluations implied that common agreement of missions and goals clarified general expectations for programs. They also implied that program improvement can be made when exemplary goals are set and made visible to staff. The researchers implied from the study that evaluations of the library media specialists and library media programs are related to one another and to the goals of the organization. The media specialists in Pasco County no longer needed to guess which aspects of their jobs were important. Media specialists and the evaluators who used the evaluation instruments thought the evaluation process was a positive experience (p. 63 & 65). This study was completed in one school district with full participation by media personnel and administrators. For this medium-sized district the process worked well. In much smaller or larger districts the results may not be the same. The need to have missions and goals of media programs in line with district missions and goals is important in evaluation of media specialists and in developing exemplary programs.

The third study (Naylor & Jenkins, 1988) took place in North Carolina. At the time of the study, school evaluation procedures were being changed. These new procedures and the role of the library media specialist brought about several concerns on the part of the library media specialists. The study was done to address these concerns.

This study sought to find what levels of meaning principals ascribe to the assessment criteria for library media specialists and how principals secure

information to support the application of these definitions. Data were collected from a sample of thirty school principals out of a possible 1,990 in North Carolina. The sample included individuals from all eight educational regions, rural and urban schools, and both elementary and secondary schools. Of the thirty principals, data were collected from twenty-two by interview (p. 235).

The researchers concluded that principals were generally unaware of the full range of services provided by library media specialists. They also concluded that the most important data gathering source on the job performance of library media specialists were what the media specialist said and did. The researchers suggested that since principals have little knowledge of the tasks performed by library media specialists and their main sources of information are the media specialists, the sharing of information between the principal and media specialist is important in the evaluation process (p. 235-239).

The study used a very small but random sample of principals. The interview questions covered all five categories of competencies in the North Carolina evaluation guidelines. The researcher's conclusion about the importance of information sharing between administrators and library media specialists should be used when devising evaluation procedures and instruments for library media specialists.

The fourth study (Latrobe & Swisher, 1990) used the five major topics of Information Power to construct a library media program evaluation instrument. The five topics were library media specialists' roles and responsibilities, leadership management and planning of the program, personnel, resources and equipment, and facilities. The purposes of the study were to confirm these five major topics and to indicate that the instrument was valid and reliable. The evaluation instrument was distributed to 187 participants of the 1988

Information Power Teleconference held at 16 Oklahoma sites. Each participant filled out a questionnaire about the instrument as it would apply to his/her program. A factor analysis was done to cluster the assessment instrument items. Four of the five major topics in Information Power were found to be represented in the instrument. The strongest construct was the media specialist. One hundred percent of the items in the library media specialist section of the assessment related to that factor. The facilities construct was strong with 10 out of 13 items related to that factor. The management/leadership construct had 7 out of 8 items related to that factor. The collection construct had 50% of the items related to that factor. The fifth topic was found to be technology instead of personnel. The personnel items related to other constructs. Evaluation of personnel at the building level related to the management/leadership construct (p. 373-387).

The researchers concluded that the assessment instrument was reliable and valid and was in direct confirmation of the validity of the guidelines in Information Power. The guidelines in Information Power can be applied to school library media program evaluation. The personnel topic was the weakest area of the instrument. This may have been because the guidelines were not interpreted well in this section or confusion between the tasks that are performed and the personnel themselves. The study sample was composed of participants in the teleconference in Oklahoma who were media specialists, and all participants had a strong interest in school library media programs. This may have caused a conservative estimate as compared to a larger population sample. This study shows strong support for developing evaluation instruments using the guidelines in Information Power.

Kathy Latrobe (1992) did a follow-up study to examine the progress of school library media programs in Oklahoma since the introduction of Information Power. The original participants (Latrobe & Swisher, 1990) were asked to evaluate their library media programs using "The Assessment of the Building-level Library Media Program" instrument. The instrument's primary purpose was to provide an avenue by which library media specialists could plan, monitor, and evaluate their programs in accord with the guidelines presented in Information Power. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the goals of their programs as well as their perceived practical benefits. Eighty-four percent of the library media specialists returned the questionnaires.

The mean responses for each assessment item showed two trends. There was change in a positive direction when the guidelines of Information Power were implemented but the statistically significant gains were small. There were no statistically significant losses. The main factors accounting for success toward the program goals were listed as positive public relations, funding, and personal qualities of the library media specialist. Major hindrances to achieving the goals of the library media program were identified as lack of funding, lack of time, no relationship with teachers and administrators, and inflexible scheduling (p. 38-42).

The researcher concluded that the goals of library media specialists are compatible with the guidelines in Information Power. She also concluded that successful management of the school library media program relies on effective evaluation that is integrated into all aspects of library media program development. She suggested that the revision of the guidelines and the assessment instrument should occur simultaneously. This action would blend

the theoretical content of Information Power with the practical application suggestions of library media specialists. Library media professionals should become involved in the development of valid and reliable evaluation instruments for library media programs (p.42-43).

These studies about the evaluation of school library media specialists and programs give suggestions for the components which should be considered when developing evaluation tools and procedures. The evaluation should be based on the guidelines in Information Power (American Association of School Librarians & Association of Educational Communications and Technology, 1988). The evaluation process should be a sharing of information by principals and media specialists. The evaluation should be aligned with the school district's mission and goals as well as media program goals. The evaluation should be agreed upon by media specialists and administrators.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The data for this study were collected using a questionnaire which was sent to 100 school library media specialists in Iowa. Using the Iowa Educational Directory, 1993-94 School Year, the public school districts in Iowa were divided into two strata so that both large and small districts would be represented equally. This directory reports 1992 enrollments for Iowa public school districts. One strata contained public school districts with official enrollments under 600 and the other strata contained public school districts with official enrollments of 600 or more. Each strata contained approximately the same number of districts. From each strata a sample of 50 districts was selected. The sample was established by organizing each strata in order from highest enrollment to lowest enrollment. Every fifth district was selected for the sample until 50 districts were selected from each strata.

The Iowa Department of Education Basic Education Data List (1993) for all library media specialists for 1993-1994 was used to select a library media specialist for each selected district. Even though the list is intended to be comprehensive, some media specialist's names were not included because school districts have failed to update the basic educational data sheet for faculty members. Another reason for the omission of media specialist's names is that the list is computer generated by endorsement numbers and a wrong media specialist endorsement number was supplied or the endorsement number was omitted from the original basic education data sheet. One media specialist from each district was selected for the sample, by choosing the media specialist

within the district who had a library service assignment and whose last name came first in alphabetical order. If a district had no media specialist or no library media specialist with a library service endorsement listed in the Basic Education Data List, the next district on the sorted list was chosen.

It was assumed that all districts evaluate personnel in all schools. Evaluation in this study was defined as the formal evaluation of the library media specialist by an administrator using some type of evaluation instrument. The completed evaluation instrument is usually put in the library media specialist's permanent personnel folder. Informal feedback on the performance of the library media specialist was not considered for the purposes of this study.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) for this study sought answers to several questions. The participants were asked if the evaluation instrument used for their formal evaluation was designed for library media specialists. The participants were then asked to list the provisions for personnel evaluation which are included in the teacher contract and board policies. These provisions were who does the evaluation, how often formal evaluation is done, and how the data for evaluation are collected. The participants were asked if they have a written job description and if their evaluator collects evidence of what they are doing beyond what is required in the evaluation instrument. The participants were also asked to return with the questionnaire a blank copy of the evaluation instrument used for media specialists in formal evaluations in their district.

An item analysis of the evaluation instruments was done. A list of library media specialist indicators (see Appendix B) was developed using the basic constructs of Information Power and the instrument presented in "From Model to Assessment: Validating Information Power" by Kathy Latrobe and Robert Swisher (1990). The list of indicators was then applied to each evaluation

instrument to determine if the indicators were present. It was then determined what percentage of the indicators were present in the evaluation instrument. If at least 50% of the indicators related to Information Power, the instrument was considered to be designed specifically for library media specialists.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Seventy (70%) library media specialists returned the questionnaire. Forty were from districts with student populations of 600 or more and thirty were from districts with student populations of fewer than 600. Forty-nine (49%) library media specialists returned blank copies of the evaluation instrument used in their formal evaluation. Four of the library media specialists did not return the evaluation instrument because it was not available. Three of the library media specialists could not return the evaluation instrument because it was being revised or rewritten and a current copy was not available. One library media specialist did not return the evaluation instrument because there wasn't one. The remainder of the library media specialists (13) who did not return the evaluation instrument gave no explanation.

Sixteen of 70 library media specialists consider their district's evaluation instrument to be specifically for library media specialists. Fifty-four library media specialists consider their district's evaluation instrument to be a teacher evaluation form. Table 1 shows the type of evaluation instrument used by district enrollment size.

The first hypothesis for this study was that 50% or more of Iowa school districts use the same evaluation instrument and procedures for classroom teachers and library media specialists. This hypothesis was accepted.

Forty-nine (70%) library media specialists returned blank copies of the formal evaluation instrument used in their district. Thirty-six (73.5%) of the returned forms were teacher evaluation instruments and 13 (26.5%) were library media

TABLE 1

Number and Percent of Districts by Type of Evaluation Instrument

District student enrollment	Evaluation instrument for library media specialist		Evaluation instrument for teacher	
	No.	%	No.	%
under 600 N=30	5	16.7	25	83.3
600 or more N=48	11	27.5	29	72.5
Total N=78	16	22.9	54	77.1

specialist instruments. An item analysis was done using the evaluation indicators for library media specialists based on Information Power. Nine (69.2%) of the thirteen library media specialist instruments contained at least 50% of the indicators. The second hypothesis was that if an instrument which was designed specifically for evaluation of library media specialists is used, in a majority of districts 50% or more of the criteria included in the instrument will pertain to indicators of the roles and responsibilities of library media specialists as established in Information Power. This hypothesis was accepted.

Sixty-three (90%) of the seventy library media specialists are formally evaluated by the building principal. Three (4.3%) are evaluated by the building principal or vice principal. Two (2.9%) are evaluated by the building principal and the curriculum director. One (1.4%) is evaluated by the associate principal.

One (1.4%) is evaluated by the superintendent. The hypothesis which stated that specific evaluation procedures used in 50% or more school districts in Iowa indicate that the principal does the evaluation was accepted.

Using information from district and contract evaluation policies, library media specialists are formally evaluated at least once a year by 35 (50%) of the respondents. Table 2 shows how often the library media specialists are evaluated by size of district student enrollment.

The hypothesis that specific evaluation procedures used in 50% or more school districts in Iowa indicate that formal evaluation is done at least once a year was accepted.

Data used in formal evaluation of library media specialists are collected by several methods and combinations of these methods. Table 3 shows data collection procedures used for evaluation of library media specialists by district student enrollment.

Thirty-three (47.1%) of the respondents answered that media center observation was the data collection method used for their formal evaluation. The hypothesis that specific evaluation procedures used in 50% or more school districts in Iowa indicate that data collection is done by the principal only through observation of teaching was rejected.

Thirty-five (50%) of the library media specialists surveyed have a job description which includes tasks and responsibilities specifically for library media specialists. The hypothesis that written job descriptions which include major responsibilities of the library media specialist exist in 50% or more of the districts was accepted.

TABLE 2

Frequency of Library Media Specialist Evaluation

HOW OFTEN EVALUATED	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	
	- 600 No.	600 + No.
Once a semester	3	2
Once a year	15	13
Twice a year (not by semester)	0	1
Formative once a semester/ summative once a year	1	0
Once every two years	3	8
Once every three years	3	14
Once in 17 years	1	0
No pattern	1	0
Never	3	1
Total	30	39

Note: One library media specialist in a 600+ enrollment district has the elementary evaluation once every two years and the high school evaluation done once a year.

TABLE 3
Data Collection Procedures for Evaluation of Library Media Specialists

Data Collection Procedure	District Student Enrollment	
	- 600 No.	600 + No.
Media center observation	14	19
Media center observation and goal/objective setting	8	10
Media center observation and portfolio assessment	1	0
Media center observation and end-of-year reports	1	0
Media center observation, end-of-year reports, and goal/objective setting	1	2
Media center observation, portfolio assessment, and goal/objective setting	1	0
Media center observation, portfolio assessment, end-of-year reports, and goal/objective setting	0	1
Portfolio assessment	0	1
General observation	0	5
"Hear say"	0	1
Interactions between library media specialist, teachers, and administrators	0	1
No response	4	0
Total	30	40

Eight (11.4%) library media specialists have evaluators who collect evidence of their job performance beyond what is required in the evaluation instrument. The evidence collected includes lesson plans, reports sent out, copies of units, participation on committees, classes taken, curriculum reports, and special activities. Three of these library media specialists reported additional ways of gathering data not what evidence was collected. Fifty-two (74.3%) library media specialists have evaluators who collect only evidence of job performance required in the evaluation instrument. Ten (14.3%) library media specialists did not respond to this question.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Summary

The majority of library media specialists in the sample are evaluated as teachers. The roles and responsibilities described in Information Power are not used as criteria for their formal evaluation. Even though 50% of the districts have a written job description for library media specialists, it is not used for job performance evaluation in most cases. Very little evidence is collected by administrators beyond what is required by the evaluation instrument. Since most library media specialists are evaluated using a teacher evaluation instrument, the roles and responsibilities of library media specialists are not addressed.

Building principals are the main evaluators for library media specialists. Using evaluation instruments designed for teachers, they use library media center observations of media skill instruction as the main data collection method. The teaching role of library media specialists is an important part of the library media specialists job but other important roles and responsibilities are omitted. Without an evaluation instrument which includes all the roles and responsibilities, principals will probably evaluate only the teaching component.

Library media specialists who are evaluated using media center observation as the data collection method have little input in the evaluation process. They are not able to show what they do and how well they do it beyond the teaching role. The evaluation process should include joint evaluation by building principals and district media personnel. The library media specialist should be given the opportunity to develop written job descriptions and goals and objectives for personal job performance.

The 13 library media specialist evaluation instruments which were analyzed showed that the roles and responsibilities described in Information Power are present. Nineteen of the 20 indicators were included in at least 3 of the instruments. One indicator was not present in any instruments. It was to support and promote intellectual freedom.

Evaluation of library media specialists in Iowa needs to be improved. This results of this study imply that evaluation instruments need to be developed which include the roles and responsibilities of library media specialists. Data collection for evaluation should include input from library media specialists. District media personnel should jointly evaluate library media specialists with building principals. All districts should develop written job descriptions for library media specialists which could be used to develop effective evaluation instruments. Formal evaluation should be done at least once a year. Library media specialists, district media personnel, and administrators should work together to improve the evaluation instruments and procedures.

Further study could include several topics which need further clarification. One question would be if the written job descriptions are based on Information Power. Another question which could be addressed is whether districts which have district library media directors include this person in the evaluation of library media specialists. The third question which could be studied is what percent of the evaluation instrument for library media specialists is completed using the data collected from media center observation and what percent uses goal /objective setting and other data gathering methods.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to find out what criteria and procedures are used for evaluating library media specialists in Iowa. The major question addressed was whether the indicators of the library media specialist roles and responsibilities established in Information Power are included in evaluation instruments. Other related questions which were addressed were who evaluates the library media specialist, how often does formal evaluation take place, what criteria are used to evaluate the library media specialist's performance, how are the data collected, and does the library media specialist have a written job description.

The data for this study were collected using a questionnaire and blank evaluation instruments returned by the respondents. The sample of 100 media specialists in Iowa was selected using the Iowa Educational Directory, 1993-94 School Year to establish districts with student enrollments of fewer than 600 and those of 600 or more. Fifty of each strata were selected by organizing the districts from highest student enrollment to lowest student enrollment and selecting every fifth district. The media specialist for each of the selected districts was selected using the Basic Education Data List (1993). Library media specialists with a library service endorsement and whose last name came first in alphabetical order were selected for the sample.

A questionnaire was sent to the selected sample of library media specialists. They were also asked to return a blank copy of the evaluation instrument used in their formal performance evaluation.

Seventy (70%) library media specialists returned the completed questionnaire. Forty were from districts with student enrollments of 600 or more and thirty were from districts with student enrollments of fewer than 600. Forty-

nine library media specialists returned blank copies of the evaluation instrument. The questionnaires and blank evaluation instruments were sent on April 15, 1994 and returned by May 1, 1994.

Sixteen (22.9%) library media specialists consider their district's evaluation instrument to be specifically for library media specialists. Fifty-four (77.1%) library media specialists consider their district's evaluation instrument to be a teacher evaluation form. Thirteen (26.5%) library media specialists who consider their evaluation instruments to be designed specifically for library media specialists returned a blank evaluation instrument. Nine of these instruments contained at least 50% of the indicators of job performance established in Information Power.

Principals evaluate the library media specialist in 63 (90%) of the sample districts. Library media specialists are evaluated at least once a year in 35 (50%) districts. Data are collected by media center observation in 33 (47.1%) districts. Written job descriptions which include major responsibilities of library media specialists exist in 35 (50%) districts.

Most library media specialists in the sample are evaluated using an evaluation instrument designed for teachers. The roles and responsibilities of library media specialists beyond teaching are not included in most of the returned instruments. Most evaluation instruments designed for library media specialists contain indicators for roles and responsibilities as established in Information Power. Library media specialists in this sample have few opportunities to give input into their performance evaluation by gathering and submitting data.

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APPENDIX A



Bonnie Rawding
Library Media Specialist
Harding Elementary School
Mason City, IA 50401

April 15, 1994

«NAME»

«SCHOOL»

«ADDRESS»

«CITY/STATE/ZIP»

Dear _____ ,

The information requested on the enclosed questionnaire will be used in a study of evaluation of library media specialists in Iowa public schools. The study is being done to fulfill the requirements of a master's degree program in Library Science at the University of Northern Iowa. Your help in the study is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this study is to determine the procedures and criteria for evaluation of library media specialists in Iowa. Evaluation is the formal evaluation done by an administrator using an evaluation instrument. The procedures used are those found in your contract or school district policy book.

All information received will be confidential and no school district or individual will be identified in the final report.

Please complete the brief questionnaire and enclose a blank copy of the evaluation instrument used for your formal evaluation. The request for a blank copy of the evaluation instrument used by your district is not intended to solicit any information about your personal job performance. Do not send any completed evaluation instruments, only blank ones.

Return the questionnaire and blank evaluation instrument in the enclosed envelope by May 1, 1994.

Thank you for your professional response and interest in this research study.

Thank you,

**Bonnie Rawding
937 12th N.E.
Mason City, IA 50401**

Library Media Specialist Evaluation Questionnaire

Does your district have a specific library media specialist evaluation instrument? YES___ NO___

From your district or contract evaluation policies:

How often is your job performance formally evaluated?

ONCE A SEMESTER___

ONCE A YEAR___

ONCE EVERY TWO YEARS___

ONCE EVERY THREE YEARS___

OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

What is the job title of the person/s who does your formal evaluation? _____

How is the data gathered for your formal evaluation? (e.g media center observation, portfolio assessment, written end-of-year reports by media specialist, goal/objective setting with performance conference)

Does your evaluator collect evidence of your job performance beyond what is required in the evaluation instrument?

YES___NO___

If yes, what evidence is collected? _____

Do you have a job description which includes tasks and responsibilities specifically for library media specialists?

YES___NO___

INCLUDE A BLANK COPY OF THE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX B

DISTRICT _____

SIZE _____

EVALUATION INDICATORS FOR LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS

1. provides a systematically developed collection using district policy for selection of materials
2. provides access to materials in and outside the building using an accurate and efficient retrieval system
3. instructs and evaluates students in a sequential program of information skills integrated with the school's curriculum
4. instructs and assists students in identifying, accessing, locating, evaluating, and communicating information
5. instructs and evaluates students in the production of media and use of equipment
6. provides and promotes a positive, safe, comfortable environment
7. provides reading/listening/viewing guidance to students and parents
8. plans jointly with teachers using a systematic instructional development process
9. assists teachers in incorporating information skills into the classroom
10. schedules classes flexibly
11. demonstrates the effective use of new technologies and effective use of media
12. informs users of new materials, equipment, and services
13. provides technical assistance in the use of technology and the production of materials
14. participates in district curriculum evaluation, development, and material selection
15. supports and promotes intellectual freedom
16. implements practices guarding user privacy
17. plans, implements, and evaluates the library media center budget
18. collects and reports appropriate library media center data
19. publicizes the library media center
20. trains, supervises, and evaluates library media center staff