

Assignment Three:
Library Impact Study

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This report is based on determining how effective library media specialists are in relation to student achievement and motivation. The report goes in-depth to demonstrate different ways which school libraries and librarians influence schools as well as the student learning. Overall, the author is theorizing that librarians have a strong influence over the quality of learning that goes on within a school and wants to uncover it to demonstrate the value school libraries and librarians have in the education system.

The questions are clearly stated at the beginning of the report in their own section under a heading. This sets the tone for the reader and what will be reported on throughout the report.

- Do school library programs, services, and resources have an impact on the learning achievement of New York State public school students?
 - Do school library services and programs affect New York State public school students' motivation for learning?
 - Do SLMSs in New York State public schools perceive their school administrators as autonomy supportive?
 - Do school libraries and SLMSs in New York State provide adequate services and resources to students with disabilities?
 - In what ways do SLMSs influence the use of technology by both students and teachers?
- (Small, R. V., & Snyder, J., 2009).

The approach the researchers took is appropriate since they used three groups to determine their findings. They surveyed librarians, classroom teachers, and students about the value they find in library lessons and time spent in the library. This gives three perspectives since one is the main source, one is in the classroom trying to increase students' reading skills full time, and one is the target audience of which is being taught. This gives different perspectives since all three groups are stakeholders in what value a library has to students within a school system (Small, R. V., & Snyder, J., 2009).

The literature review from this study was within the last 20 years. Research ranged from 1993 to 2003, and most recently 2009. This study was released under 2 years afterward. Therefore, the research is current. What makes the research comprehensive is that each study was based on different states such as Alaska and Delaware. The range of dates allowed these authors to see an overview of how librarians have been perceived in the past by other states. This one takes place in New York which is one of the largest and most diverse states and therefore builds onto the previous research from the past (Small, R. V., & Snyder, J., 2009).

The study population was librarians, classroom teachers, and students in New York public schools. They are clearly defined and broken down by including the relevance as to why they were selected for the study. The sample population was 47 librarians which were selected from demographics ranging from “factors including school district student poverty, the financial resources available to the district, enrollment, and land area are all considered when the state assigns a district to one of six N/RC categories. (A seventh category is reserved for charter schools, a group not represented in this study.)” (Small, R. V., & Snyder, J., 2009) 134 classroom teachers in grades fourth, eighth, and eleventh. 1,153 students from grades fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade. These populations were chosen because students were able to think practically how what they have learned can help them as they transition into the next grades (middle school, high school, college.)

Researchers based their first data table on a standard deviation table, then followed up with an analyses of variance (ANOVA) scale to mean across the three groups based on their results. Third, there is a table that combines both scores to find the norm of the results between the two tables. They also ran a sample t-value test to calculate the difference between the secondary school librarians against the elementary school librarians. All the tables put the data in

a method which helped them interpret librarians, teachers, and students' attitudes toward library media significance (Small, R. V., & Snyder, J., 2009).

The data was collected through surveys. The surveys included multiple choice aspects such as Likert Scale questions. There were also rating questions on everyday tasks of librarians to which students, teachers, and librarians were to rate them in order of importance.

Data was also collected through survey questions in which librarians gave longer, more in-depth questions. Librarians gave thorough answers on skills they teach students and how it aligns with what is learned in the classroom, finding relevant information on the web, conducting classes on various subjects, and how they collaborate with teachers for lesson planning.

Teachers also gave responses which validated the importance of librarians in the school setting, stating how librarians help students find relevant information that pertains to classwork students are doing, how librarians use print resources to assist the students in their classwork, and how librarians collaborate with teachers to determine what to teach.

Students also gave answers which related to how librarians help collaborate with them in their schoolwork through research skill building, computer skill building, and how the librarian got to know the students to give them suggestions on what they might be interested in.

69% of students claimed they visit the library at least once a week. Fifth and eighth graders had a higher perception of a library's importance than the eleventh graders. 72% of students claimed they use the library to do research. All three groups rated librarians as the highest level of importance (5 out of 5) (Small, R. V., & Snyder, J., 2009).

Librarians, classroom teachers, and students generally respond that librarians have a strong impact on the teaching of information literacy skills to students, such as the skill of finding useful information to complete assignments or out of being curious. The important skills

of using information and evaluating the quality of information may require more attention in the future for librarians. Students also seem unaware of the collaboration aspects between teachers and librarians which might be something librarians address to help students see the value in going to the library. A vast majority of librarians answered to offering no differentiated instruction to students with IEP's. This presented a worrisome interpretation from the researchers as it is appropriate to provide instruction to all students (Small, R. V., & Snyder, J., 2009).

The limitations of this study build off the last talking point from the researchers' interpretations. The librarians were found to have little to no training in working with students with disabilities. This leads to librarians having a limited view of what makes their job so important since they are unaware of a major part of their audience. Students with IEP's are the most vulnerable groups within a classroom, and the majority of librarians were admitting to making no accommodations for them in their schoolwork (Small, R. V., & Snyder, J., 2009).

Lois D. Wine ran a study to determine if full-time certified librarians had an impact on fourth and fifth grade test scores in comparison to schools without a full-time librarian. The results showed that there was a higher significance in test scores in schools with full-time librarians. The results may have been small, but the author makes note that this could be a much larger deal to schools who are on the brink between below average and trending toward proficient. In addition, schools who lost their full-time librarian noticed a drop in their test scores. "The data show that loss of a full-time certified school librarian for only two years provided evidence of a statistically significant drop in reading achievement scores" (Wine, 2020)

The New York Comprehensive Center released an article which highlights a multitude of case studies on the impact a library can have on a school and the students. Each section

highlights a different issue in which school libraries assist schools for the better. For example, as my main case study suggests, librarians help teachers in their development through access to resources and professional learning. This article highlights four studies which teachers and librarians collaborating led to higher state test scores by a significant margin. Results also included higher test scores when principals joined in on the collaboration to make the collaboration a higher priority among the school. The article goes on to reference other studies where librarians helped students achieve higher test scores through efforts of early child development by engaging readers at a young age and through providing students access to high quality resources to assist the students' studies (New York Comprehensive Center, 2011b).

Bikos et al, used a survey to determine students and teachers' attitudes toward librarians in relation to student test scores. About half the students believe librarians contribute to student learning achievement, however, 80% of teachers believed that librarians contribute a significant role in student learning achievement. Teachers also reported to taking students to the library more systematically. This lines up with my main case study which highlights how teachers and librarians have a close collaboration, but just like the case study mentions, they need to share with students how close they collaborate with others (Bikos et al., 2014).

This study helps me realize not just how important my job is, but how important others view my job to be. Teachers rely on me to support them in their classroom through collaboration, students rely on me to assist them in their studies and research, and the entire school community leans on me to help grow students into independent thinkers who possess information literacy skills.

I always knew that librarians were valuable to the school. I now see how many areas we hold value in. Students who realize our value will continue to come into the library and thus

leading to becoming more engaged with learning and research. This can help foster a community of learners and help a school's test scores increase over time. The more positive the librarian's relationship with the teachers, students, and staff, the more likely the school is to being a place that fosters a community of learners at the highest level.

Our school has an overall goal in the action plan for students to achieve "life readiness." The two foundations building up to this are listed as "career readiness" and "community readiness" (*School Improvement Plan | Waterloo Elementary School*, n.d.)

Both these mention being able to read and being engaged in the school community. This will certainly be useful in my action plan. I can use this survey and discussion among students and staff to start to look at how teachers perceive the school library at Waterloo Elementary. I can continue to collaborate with teachers to build that community and share with students how the teachers and I collaborate. The research suggested that librarians discuss with students how they are collaborating with teachers to help build around what students are doing in school. This will foster trust among students and help them see the relevance in what we are teaching them in library class.

References

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