

Ann C. Kadala. Communication Techniques between Principals and School Library Media Specialists in One North Carolina County. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. November, 2008. 31 pages. Advisor: Sandra Hughes-Hassell.

Numerous factors affect the level of support a principal gives to the School Library Media Program(s) (SLMP). This study researched how communication techniques affect the relationship between the School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) and their principals. The paper describes the data from a questionnaire sent to 39 SLMS and 37 principals in one county in North Carolina. The study found that SLMS and principals were satisfied with the state of their communication habits. Informal face to face meetings and email were the most used and most valued forms of communication. However, the data also showed that there are many forms of communication which are relatively unused. Further, this study reiterates previous findings that principals have very little access to information on school library media in general.

Headings:

School libraries/Relations with principals and superintendents

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COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL  
LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS IN ONE NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY.

by  
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## Introduction

What makes one principal more supportive than another? Obviously, there are numerous factors which affect the level of support a principal gives to the School Library Media Program(s) (SLMP) (Hartzell 2002, 2007, Oberg 1996, 2006). Every School Library Media Specialist(s) (SLMS) can tell you the same truth about their job: half of their time is spent marketing themselves to administration and staff and the other half of their time is spent actually doing the job. Numerous articles have been written emphasizing the need for School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) to communicate with their instructional partners (Hartzell 2002, Oberg 1996, 2006, Snyder 2004, Wilson & Blake 1993). Further articles have been written giving SLMS tips for how to best communicate with administrators, teachers, and parents (Hartzell 2007). One fact that stands out in the literature is that SLMS must have a supportive principal in order to have a strong School Library Media Program(s) (SLMP) (Edwards 1989). Dianne Oberg and colleagues have done extensive research on what principal support means to the SLMP, and their findings support the fact that a supportive principal is required in order to have an effective SLMP (1996).

In this study, I hope to discover the connection between a principal's access to information on best practices in the school library media field and how supportive the

principal is of the SLMP. The hypothesis of this study is that school principals who receive information on best practices in SLMP from their SLMS are more supportive of the SLMP than are principals who receive information on best practices in SLMP from other sources or not at all. Anecdotal accounts applaud direct communication with the principal as an important part of garnering support of the SLMP. However, there is little research directly supporting the fact that direct communication with the principal actually makes a marked difference in support for the SLMP. Further, this study hopes to discover how SLMS and principals are currently communicating regarding the SLMP. Is the communication satisfactory? How might this communication be improved? The goal is to assess the current state of communication between principals and SLMS, and determine whether certain communication techniques contribute to a supportive relationship.

### **Literature Review**

The first few sentences of Gary Hartzell's (2002) article on principal perceptions of the school library are an apt starting point for this research study:

There is no question that principal support is vital to the establishment and maintenance of a quality library media program. The problem is that support flows from trust, and trust flows from understanding. Many principals do not understand what teacher-librarians really do, nor do they appreciate the potential the library media program has for contributing to student and faculty achievement. (92)

Through a review of available literature, Hartzell discusses four forces which work to shape the principal's perception of the school media program. According to Hartzell these forces are: the principal's own childhood experience in libraries, the principal's professional training (which usually doesn't include information on school library

media), the relative invisibility of the school librarian in a system which focuses on the classroom and classroom teaching, and the absence of information on school media in the professional literature read by principals and teachers.

Hartzell discusses psychological and social psychological research throughout his article. Information from these fields supports the hypothesis that before a principal can be supportive of the SLMP s/he must understand and trust the job of the SLMS. Of importance to this study are Hartzell's comments on how SLMS disseminate information about their job and the general availability of information on SLMP for principals. Essentially, Hartzell points out that while SLMS write and present for others in their field, these efforts are rarely seen by principals. Further, he found little to no information on SLMP in a sampling of journals used by school administrators.

Finally, Hartzell discusses the fact that school principals receive little to no instruction in school media during their university training. Hartzell's conclusions directly relate to this research project. He says that if principals do not have information on school media, they will not understand or trust the SLMS and will not be supportive of the SLMP.

Interestingly, of all the research Hartzell cites nothing directly studies the relationship between the source of the principal's information on school media and the corresponding level of principal support.

An important survey used in Hartzell's article, is the 1989 study by Karlene K. Edwards on principal's perceptions of librarians. The survey used in the study had principal's rate

ten skills performed by librarians from unimportant to essential. Further, respondents gave information on: the level of communication between the principal and the librarian, the evaluation instruments used to assess the librarians, professional development opportunities in which the librarian is encouraged to participate, the principals' perceptions of how librarians spend their time, the principals' expectations of how librarians should preferably spend time on certain job functions, and, finally, the sufficiency of budgets for SLMP. The information gathered by the survey on principal librarian communication supports my hypothesis. Edwards states that "Librarians who compile and issue *Periodic Reports* or who write both *Periodic Reports* and *Newsletters to Teachers* rated the highest by principals" (29). This type of direct communication with the principal improves the principal's support of the SLMS and, thus, the SLMP.

Wilson and Blake (1993) conducted a national survey of principals and librarians seeking to further understand principals' perceptions and knowledge of practices in school library media. Two of the questions asked on the survey were: "Are principals adequately trained regarding the management and function of school libraries?" and "Should the management and function of school libraries be a part of the principal's training?" From the information provided by responses to these questions, Wilson and Blake propose a "plan for partnership" between principals and librarians which focuses on principals knowing more about the function of SLMP, what, specifically, principals need to know about SLMP, and how principals can learn more about SLMP. Wilson and Blake's survey made clear the need for principals to have more information about best practices in school media. Their findings support the need for my research because, while they

suggest different avenues for principals to get information, we do not yet know the most effective way for principals to receive information on the SLMP.

## **Methodology**

### *Study Site*

As the site for this study, I chose a small county in North Carolina which has thirty-seven schools: twenty-four elementary schools, nine middle schools, and four high schools. Each elementary and middle school has one SLMS and one principal. The high schools each have two SLMS and one principal. I chose this county because it was convenient. I know the Media Support Specialist for the county and was able to easily obtain permission to administer the survey.

### *Procedure*

Two different surveys were created: one for the SLMS and one for the principals (See Appendix A). SLMS were asked how they receive information on best practices in school library media, how they convey this information to their principals, and what types of communication techniques their principal initiates. They were then asked to rate how supportive they feel their principal is of their SLMP and to give themselves a grade on how well they communicate with their principal.

For comparison, the principals were asked the same questions on the types of communication techniques which they initiate and the types of communication techniques their SLMS is currently using. Further, the principals were asked if and how



they received information on school media in their administrative preparatory program. They were also asked to provide information on journals they read and conferences they attend and asked if any of these sources contain information about school library media best practice. Finally, they were asked to state which communication techniques they use with their SLMS the most, which they find most valuable, and how they would prefer to receive information from their SLMS. Like the SLMS, the principals were asked to give themselves a grade on their supportiveness of the SLMP and the SLMS a grade on their communication.

The survey was administered electronically using Qualtrics™, an electronic survey tool ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)). An invitation to participate in the survey with the link to the surveys was sent to the media support specialist of the county who then distributed the surveys by listserv to the SLMS and principals. The data was compiled by the survey software and was analyzed by me, the principal investigator.

#### *Limitations of this study*

First, the sample size of the study was small to begin with, and few SLMS or principals chose to participate. Only thirteen of the thirty-nine SLMS responded and only seven of the thirty-seven principals responded. Because there was no way to guarantee that both the principal and SLMS from each school would respond very few of the surveys completed could be matched with their counterpart. There were only four schools from which both the SLMS and principal responded. Factors which might have resulted in a

higher response rate include: making the survey available to participants for a longer period of time, and administering the survey in more than one format (i.e. online and in paper).

Second, due to my schedule the surveys were sent out at the beginning of the school year. Thus, respondents had trouble filling out the survey if staff changes had been made effective that school year. A number of respondents, for example, noted in the open ended question at the end of the survey that they were either basing their responses on a previous SLMS or principal or that their responses were only based on a few weeks of working together. For this reason some of the comparative results may not be accurate. The principal may be responding in reference to their last SLMS while the SLMS is responding based on interactions with the current principal, and while some explicitly stated who they were referring to, not everyone did. The survey would have been more effective if it had been given at the end of the school year when it would be more certain that a principal and SLMS had worked together for a longer period of time.

Third, I did not take into account that the principals at the high schools would be basing their responses on two media specialists. There is no way to tell from the principal's survey whether they are responding based on one, possibly senior, SLMS or if they are responding based on the actions of both SLMS. If this study were to be replicated, it would be useful to survey high schools separately from elementary and middle schools. The staffing differences could be addressed in the survey and other differences in the services provided by the SLMS could be taken into account.

Fourth, there was a problem with the data from four of the SLMS surveys on two questions. Two questions on the online survey asked for a “Check All that Apply” response, but the survey was only set up to receive one response. I was made aware of the problem after four people had completed the survey and was able to fix the mistake. However, on two questions those four responses are invalid. Unfortunately, one of the questions in which the mistake occurred was a point of comparison with the principal surveys and two of the respondents affected were two of those whose principals responded. Thus, on one of the points of comparison only two schools were able to be compared limiting the usefulness of that data.

## **Results**

Below I will discuss the results of the surveys. First I will present the data from the SLMS surveys followed by results of the principal surveys. In the discussion section of the paper, I will compare the two groups.

### *School Library Media Specialist Survey*

As stated above, only thirteen media specialists chose to participate in the survey. Nine work in elementary schools and four work in high schools. There were no responses from middle school SLMS.

The first question asked the SLMS: Where do you receive most of your information on best practices in school library media? As discussed in the limitations section above, the

directions asked participants to check all that apply, but the first four participants were not able to do so because of an error. Out of the nine valid responses, eight of the SLMS said they receive information on best practice in school library media from the district's school media supervisor; six marked professional literatures; five said they get information from other SLMS; and three said they get information at professional conferences. One person filled in the other field with "internet."

The SLMS were then asked specifically about the professional journals they read, and conferences they attend. Nearly half or six of the thirteen respondents regularly read one journal. Three respondents listed two journals and another three listed three journals read. Only one person listed more than three types of professional publications read on a regular basis. *School Library Journal* was read by eleven of the thirteen respondents and by all grade levels. *Booklist* and *Library Media Connection* were only listed by high school SLMS. Three elementary SLMS listed *School Library Media Activities Monthly* and two elementary SLMS listed *Library Sparks*. Also listed were: YALSA and ALA websites, *American Libraries*, *Education Digest*, Info Track, VOYA, *BookLinks*, and *Library Journal*.

In regards to conferences, two of the thirteen did not respond at all and one responded that they did not attend conferences. Eight of the thirteen noted that they attend the annual North Carolina School Library Media Association (NCSLMA) conference. For six, this is the only conference attended. Two SLMS list attending more than one conference on a regular basis. Both normally attend NCSLMA, and one said s/he also

attends ALA every three years. The other said s/he also attends the annual North Carolina Educational Technology Conference (NCETC). One SLMS listed NCETC as the only conference s/he attends regularly.

When asked to indicate the ways in which they communicate with their principal, as shown in Table 1, more than fifty percent of the thirteen SLMS respondents said that they meet one on one with the principal as needed, meet with the principal informally (via phone, chat, or in person), make presentations at faculty meetings, sit on committees with the principal, ask the principal to visit the library, discuss new research in school library media with the principal, and update the library webpage. Communication techniques used less often were: write a newsletter about library events, email principal about what is happening in library, make principal aware of articles on school library media, conduct professional development which involves principal, write an annual report, write budget, write collection development policy, and ask principal to observe teaching. Notably, there were communication techniques that no one said that they used including: meeting one on one with principal weekly or monthly, asking the principal to observe collaborative planning, asking the principal to attend school library media conferences, attending educational conferences with the principal, or keeping a SLMP blog.

<b>Communication Techniques</b>	<b>Percent % n=13</b>
Meet with principal informally (via phone, chat, or person)	85
Sit on committees with principal	77
Meet one-on-one with principal as needed	69
Make presentations at faculty meetings	62
Discuss new research in school media with principal	62
Ask principal to visit library	54
Update library webpage	54
Email principal about what is happening in library	38
Write collection development policy	38
Conduct professional development which involves principal	31
Make principal aware of articles on school library media	23
Write newsletter about library events	15
Write an annual report	15
Write budget	15
Ask principal to observe teaching	15
Meet one-on-one with principal weekly	0
Meet one-on-one with principal monthly	0
Ask principal to observe collaborative planning	0
Ask principal to attend school library media conferences	0
Attend educational conferences with principal	0
Keep blog	0
Other	0

Table 1. Communication Techniques Used by SLMS

The SLMS were then asked: "Which forms of communication does your principal initiate?" Again, as discussed in the limitations section, the responses of four participants are invalid due to a survey error. The most often selected choice was "Regular observations of library," which fifty-five percent of the respondents said their principal initiates (see Table 2). Twenty-two percent said their principals initiate regular meetings between SLMS and principal, attendance at MTAC, and regular observations of collaborative planning. Eleven percent reported that their principals initiate both requests for log of activities and requests for documents such as annual reports, budgets, and

collection development policies. No one indicated that their principal attends school media conferences.

<b>Communication Initiated by Principal</b>	<b>Percent % n=9</b>
Regular observations of library	55
Regular meetings between SLMS and principal	22
Attendance to MTAC or other committees which involve the media center	22
Regular observation of collaborative planning	22
Request for log of activities performed by SLMS	11
Request for documents such as annual reports, budgets, collection development policies	11
Attendance at School Media Conferences	0
Other	0

Table 2. Communication Techniques Initiated by Principal reported by SLMS

Finally, the SLMS were asked to give themselves a grade on how well they communicate with their principal. As shown in Table 3, fifty-four percent gave themselves an A for their communication efforts, thirty-one percent gave themselves a B, and fifteen percent gave themselves a C. When asked how supportive their principal is of the SLMP, As shown in Table 4, sixty-nine percent of them gave their principals an A on his/her support of the SLMP, fifteen percent gave their principals a B, and eight percent gave their principal either a C or an F.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percent % n=13</b>
A	54
B	31
C	15
D	0
F	0

Table 3. Grade given to self by SLMS on communication effectiveness

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percent % n=13</b>
A	69
B	15
C	8
D	0
F	8

Table 4. Grade given to Principal by SLMS on support for SLMP

### *Principal Surveys*

As stated above, only seven principals chose to participate in the survey. Four worked in elementary schools, one in a middle school, and two in high schools. None of the principals reported that they had sufficient instruction in school library media in their administrative licensure program. Five out of seven, seventy-one percent, said they received no instruction on school library media in their licensure program and two, twenty-nine percent, said they received minimal instruction on school library media. One stated s/he received information in a lecture in a course and another said s/he received information from a textbook.

All seven principals listed at least two kinds of professional literature that they read on a regular basis. Four said they found research-based articles on school library media in this literature. Two said they found practice-based articles and one respondent found both research and practice based articles on school library media in the literature s/he reads. Four participants listed *Educational Leadership*, two *Phi Delta Kappan*, two *NASSP Journal*, and two ASCD publications. Other journals included were: *NAESP Journal*, *Education Week*, and *Edutopia*. Only a few respondents listed specific conferences



attended; two principals listed ASCD conferences. The NC Middle School Conference, Closing the Gap Conference (NC), and North Carolina High School Network were each listed once. A few respondents simply described the types of conferences they might attend: one said “District based,” another said “Reading and administrator conferences,” and another said “I attend specific conferences based on the needs of my school. I don't attend specific conferences on a regular basis.” Only one participant did not respond at all. Four out of seven said they had never attended a presentation on school library media at one of their conferences. One had attended research-based presentations, one had attended practice-based presentations, and one of the two respondents who listed ASCD said s/he had attended both research and practice based presentations on school library media at his/her educational conferences.

When asked where they receive most of their information on school library media eighty-six percent, six out of seven, said they receive this information from their SLMS. (See Table 5) Three out of seven, forty-two percent marked each of the following: from the district's media supervisor and from other principals. Twenty-nine percent, two out of seven, said they received information from professional journals, and one, said s/he received no information on school library media. No one marked from professional conferences.

<b>Sources of Information</b>	<b>Percent % n=7</b>
From my media specialist	86
From the district's media supervisor	42
From other principals	42
From professional journals	29
Receive none	14
From professional conferences	0

Table 5. Where principals receive most of their information school media

When asked to indicate the forms of communication used by their SLMS, the principals chose: meet one on one with principal as needed, meet with principal informally (via, phone, chat, or in person), email principal about what is happening in library, make presentations at faculty meetings, and sit on committees with principal as the most frequently utilized techniques. As shown in Table 6, less than fifty percent of respondents selected: write newsletter about library events, make principal aware of articles in school library media, conduct professional development that involves the principal, write an annual report, write budget, write collection development policy, ask principal to visit library, ask principal to observe teaching, ask principal to observe collaborative planning, ask principal to attend school library media conferences, discuss new research in school media with principal, and update library webpage. No principal marked: meet one on one with the principal weekly or monthly, attend educational conferences with principal, or keep blog.

<b>Communication Techniques</b>	<b>Percent (%) n=7</b>
Meet one-on-one with principal as needed	86
Sit on committees with principal	86
Email principal about what is happening in library	71
Meet with principal informally (via phone, chat, or person)	57
Make presentations at faculty meetings	57
Write an annual report	43
Write budget	29
Ask principal to visit library	29
Ask principal to observe teaching	29
Ask principal to observe collaborative planning	29
Discuss new research in school media with principal	29
Update library webpage	29
Write newsletter about library events	14
Make principal aware of articles on school library media	14
Conduct professional development which involves principal	14
Write collection development policy	14
Ask principal to attend school library media conferences	14

Meet one-on-one with principal weekly	0
Meet one-on-one with principal monthly	0
Attend educational conferences with principal	0
Keep blog	0
Other	0

Table 6: Communication Techniques Principals Report SLMS Using

As shown in Table 7, the principals were then asked: "Which forms of communication do you initiate?" Seventy-one percent of the principals responded that they initiate requests for documents such as annual reports, budgets, and collection development policies. Forty-three percent said they initiate: regular observations of the library, regular observation of collaborative planning, and attendance to MTAC or other committees which involve the media center. Fourteen percent marked: regular meetings between SLMS and principal and requests for log of activities performed by SLMS. None of the principals said they attend school media conferences.

<b>Communication initiated by principal</b>	<b>Percent % n=7</b>
Request for documents such as annual reports, budgets, collection development policies	71
Regular observations of library	43
Regular observation of collaborative planning	43
Attendance to MTAC or other committees which involve the media center	43
Request for log of activities performed by SLMS	14
Regular meetings between SLMS and principal	14
Other	14
Attendance at School Media Conferences	0

Table 7. Communication initiated by principal reported by principal

As a follow-up to these two questions, the principals were asked: "What form of communication do you find most valuable," and "How would you prefer to receive

information about the school media program?” For both, which is most common and which they find most valuable, over half of the principals said informal face to face meetings. A few also included email on both of these responses. In response to how they would prefer to receive information forty-three percent said informal face to face meetings and email.

Finally, principals were asked to give themselves a grade on how well they understand the SLMP. Table 8 shows that fourteen percent of the principals each gave themselves an A on their support of the SLMP, fifty-seven percent gave themselves a B, and fourteen percent gave themselves a C or a D. When asked to give their SLMS a grade on how well s/he communicates with the principal, as shown in Table 9, eighty-six percent gave their SLMS an A on his/her communication efforts, and fourteen percent gave the SLMS a D.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percent % n=7</b>
A	14
B	57
C	14
D	14
F	0

Table 8. Grade given to self by principal on support for SLMP

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percent % n=7</b>
A	86
B	0
C	0
D	14
F	0

Table 9. Grade given to SLMS by principal on communication techniques

## Discussion

As in the results section, here I will first discuss the SLMS data, then the principal data, and then the comparative data.

### *School Library Media Specialists*

This is a small sample, but it seems from this data that more SLMS rely on the district administrator for new information on best practices in school library media rather than being proactive and discovering the information for themselves. This seems to be confirmed by the responses to the questions about journals read and conferences attended as very few read more than one professional publication or attended more than one conference on a regular basis. Perhaps if the SLMS were more proactive in finding new information on best practices in school library media there would be more opportunities for communication with the principals. Further, it is imperative that the SLMS takes an active role in being on top of their field and making the principal aware of developments.

Many of the communication techniques currently used are passive. That is, they are requirements of the position rather than self-motivated communication. For example, sitting on committees with the principal, making presentations at faculty meetings, conducting professional development, having the principal observe the library, and writing reports of any kind fall into this category. While these forms of communication are important, they should not be the sole means of advocating for the SLMP.

On communication effectiveness, it seems that the SLMS graded themselves based on the number of communication techniques they used. The SLMS who gave themselves an A or B and indicated that they used between five to ten forms of communication. The two SLMS who gave themselves a C on communication were also the two who marked the least forms of communication. Perhaps, after taking the survey, the media specialists are now aware that there are many techniques for communication that they are not utilizing that might impact their relationship with the principal and his/her subsequent support of the SLMP.

### *Principals*

This survey, and many others mentioned above, show that principals have little or no access to information on best practices in school library media through their preparatory program, journals, or conferences. And, in this study, the principals confirm that they get most of their information on school library media from the media specialist. In response to the question “If presentations about best practices in school library media were available at the professional conferences you attend regularly, would you attend them?” no principal said “Probably not.” This shows that principals are willing to receive more information on school library media, but we must provide it for them.

The hypothesis of this study was that school principals who receive information on best practices in SLMP from their School Library Media Specialist (SLMS) are more supportive of the SLMP than are principals who receive information on best practices in SLMP from other sources or not at all. I do not believe I was able to prove or disprove

this hypothesis with the data I gathered. The only possible support for the hypothesis can be found in examining the responses of the principal who gave both him/herself and the SLMS a grade of D. This principal did not fill out many of the questions on the survey. Sh/e marked only that the SLMS communicated through informal meetings (via phone, chat, or in person) and also wrote in this response for the communication technique used most often. On the questions about receiving instruction in school media in the preparatory program, this principal marked received none. S/he also marked that s/he does not receive information on best practices in school library media from any source. S/he did not say that s/he initiates any communication activities. It seems from these responses that a principal who receives no or very little information at all in school media at least considers him/herself less supportive of the SLMP due to lack of understanding. However, we do not have the SLMS survey of the same school to compare with, and we cannot see how supportive the SLMS would rate this principal.

Only one principal gave him/herself an A grade in his/her understanding of the school media program and no principal said they had received sufficient training in school media in their preparatory program, so there appears to be room for improvement. One of the research questions was “How might this communication be improved?” I believe the research findings provide some important clues to how communication might be improved. As mentioned above, principals and SLMS alike, agree that they most often use informal face to face meetings for communication. Further, principals note that they prefer face to face meetings and email. None of the respondents said that they tried to meet regularly with their principal. How might regular weekly or monthly, meetings with

the principal improve communication? It seems, if face to face meetings are so effective then making the meetings occur on a regular basis may improve the principal's understanding of the SLMP. Further, no SLMS said that they used a blog. Blogs might be able to serve the same purpose as email in informing the principal (and others) of the activities and happenings of the SLMP. If the principal subscribed to an RSS feed of an SLMS blog, they would receive regular updates on the SLMP.

### *Comparison*

Of the schools in which a comparison could be drawn, the greatest insight to be gained from the data concerns the current communication techniques. (See Table 10 and Table 11 to view how the principals and SLMS graded each other in the four comparison schools. )

<b>Principal/SLMS</b>	<b>Letter Grade Given to the Principal for support of SLMP</b>
P1	B
S1	A
P2	B
S2	B
P3	C
S3	C
P4	B
S4	A

Table 10. Grades given to principals for support of SLMP in comparison school



<b>Principal/SLMS</b>	<b>Letter Grade Given to the SLMS for effectiveness of communication</b>
P1	A
S1	A
P2	A
S2	B
P3	A
S3	A
P4	A
S4	B

Table 11. Grades given to SLMS for effectiveness of communication in comparison schools

For the most part, the grades are fairly comparable and relatively high. The lowest score, given to the Principal at school 3 is a C, and both the principal and SLMS agreed on this score. This slightly low score may be explained in the note written by the SLMS that says “new principal--we have only worked together a few weeks.” The high grades seem to show general satisfaction with the current state of communication. I think the similarity in the grades suggests that communication is really taking place in these schools. They are obviously in contact enough that they both have a comparable picture of the other’s strengths and weaknesses. Notably, the only times the grades are different is when a person grading themselves gave a slightly lower grade which I would blame on modesty.

### **Conclusion and Implications for Practice**

As mentioned above, my goal was to assess the current state of communication between principals and SLMS, and determine whether certain communication techniques develop

a supportive relationship between principal and SLMS. The survey succeeded in assessing what communication techniques are currently used between SLMS and principals. While the current state of communication appears to be satisfactory to most principals and media specialists surveyed, there was also notable room for improvement. SLMS can be more proactive in finding new information on best practices in school library media and should use more proactive communication techniques for advocacy of the SLMP. There was not enough data to determine whether certain communication techniques develop a more supportive relationship between principal and SLMS. If a larger study could be conducted, it would be beneficial to see if changing the communication habits of SLMS had an affect on the supportiveness of the principal. I believe this research also shows, as mentioned in Hartzell's article, that members of the school library community need to present new research and information to other educational communities. Principals and teachers need to know more about best practices in school media in order to be more supportive. Finally, if we assume that our practice can always be improved then we should use this research to find ways to improve communication between principals and SLMS. We should explore options previously untried to see if we can develop more support for the SLMP.

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## Appendix A

### School Library Media Specialist Survey

Please provide your school name to be matched with your principal's survey. Once the surveys have been matched all identifying information will be deleted.

Where do you receive most of your information on best practices in school library media?  
(Check all that apply)

- ◇ From the district's school media supervisor
- ◇ From other media specialists
- ◇ From professional literature
- ◇ From professional conferences
- ◇ Other

What professional conferences do you attend on a regular basis?

What professional literature (journals, blogs, etc.) do you read on a regular basis?

Listed below are various ways to inform a principal about best practices in school library media and the day-to-day activities in a library. Please check all those that you do on a regular basis:

- ◇ Meet one on one with principal weekly
- ◇ Meet one on one with principal monthly
- ◇ Meet one on one with principal as needed.
- ◇ Meet with principal informally (via phone, chat, or in person).
- ◇ Write newsletter with library events.
- ◇ Email principal about what is happening in the library
- ◇ Make principal aware of professional articles about best practices in school library media.
- ◇ Make presentations at faculty meetings
- ◇ Sit on committees with principal
- ◇ Conduct professional development which involves the principal
- ◇ Write an annual report
- ◇ Write a budget
- ◇ Write a collection development policy
- ◇ Ask principal to visit library
- ◇ Ask principal to observe teaching
- ◇ Ask principal to observe collaborative planning
- ◇ Ask principal to attend School Library Media conferences
- ◇ Attend educational conferences with principal
- ◇ Discuss new research in school media with principal
- ◇ Keep a blog
- ◇ Update the library webpage

- ◇ Other

Of the choices above please state below which method you use most often for communicating with your principal (please describe other methods not listed here)

Which of the following does your principal initiate? Check all that apply.

- ◇ Regular meetings between SLMS and principal
- ◇ Regular observations of library
- ◇ Attendance to MTAC or other committees which involve the media center
- ◇ Attendance at School Media Conferences
- ◇ Regular observation of collaborative planning
- ◇ Request for log of activities performed by SLMS
- ◇ Request for documents such as annual reports, budgets, collection development policies
- ◇ Other

What letter grade would you give your principal on his/her support of the library media program?

- ◇ A
- ◇ B
- ◇ C
- ◇ D
- ◇ F

What letter grade would you give yourself on your communication with your principal about the school library media program?

- ◇ A
- ◇ B
- ◇ C
- ◇ D
- ◇ F

Now it's your turn. Please add additional comments here.

## Principal Survey

Please provide your school name to be matched with you School Library Media Specialist's survey. Once the surveys have been matched all identifying information will be deleted.

How would you describe the amount of instruction on best practices in school library media you received in your administrative licensure program?

- ◇ Sufficient
- ◇ Minimal
- ◇ Received none

How did you receive instruction on best practices in school library media in your administrative licensure program?

- ◇ Course
- ◇ Lecture in a course
- ◇ Textbook
- ◇ Other

What professional literature (journals, blogs, etc.) do you read on a regular basis?

What kind of articles about best practices in school library media do you find in the professional literature you read? Check all that apply.

- ◇ None
- ◇ Research-based articles
- ◇ Practice-based articles

What professional conferences do you attend on a regular basis?

What kind of presentations have you attended at these conferences about best practices in school library media? Check all that apply.

- ◇ None
- ◇ Research-based
- ◇ Practice-based

If presentations about best practices in school library media were available at the professional conferences you attend regularly, would you attend them?

- ◇ Definitely
- ◇ Maybe, depending on topic
- ◇ Maybe, depending on schedule
- ◇ Probably not

Where do you receive most of your information on school library media?

- ◇ From my media specialist
- ◇ From the district's media supervisor

- ◇ From other principals
- ◇ From professional journals
- ◇ From professional conferences
- ◇ Receive none
- ◇ Other

Which of the following does your school media coordinator do? Check all that apply.

- ◇ Meet one on one with principal weekly
- ◇ Meet one on one with principal monthly
- ◇ Meet one on one with principal as needed.
- ◇ Meet with principal informally (via phone, chat, or in person).
- ◇ Write newsletter with library events.
- ◇ Email principal about what is happening in the library
- ◇ Make principal aware of professional articles about best practices in school library media.
- ◇ Make presentations at faculty meetings
- ◇ Sit on committees with principal
- ◇ Conduct professional development which involves the principal
- ◇ Write an annual report
- ◇ Write a budget
- ◇ Write a collection development policy
- ◇ Ask principal to visit library
- ◇ Ask principal to observe teaching
- ◇ Ask principal to observe collaborative planning
- ◇ Ask principal to attend School Library Media conferences
- ◇ Attend educational conferences with principal
- ◇ Discuss new research in school media with principal
- ◇ Keep a blog
- ◇ Update the library webpage
- ◇ Other

Of the above choices which would you say is the most common form of communication between yourself and your school media coordinator (please describe any communication not included above).

What form of communication do you find most valuable?

How would you prefer to receive information about the school media program?

Which of the following activities do you initiate? Check all that apply.

- ◇ Regular meetings between SLMS and principal
- ◇ Regular observations of library
- ◇ Attendance to MTAC or other committees which involve the media center



- ◇ Attendance at School Media Conferences
- ◇ Regular observation of collaborative planning
- ◇ Request for log of activities performed by SLMS
- ◇ Request for documents such as annual reports, budgets, collection development policies
- ◇ Other

What letter grade would you give your media specialist on his/her communication with you about the school library media program?

- ◇ A
- ◇ B
- ◇ C
- ◇ D
- ◇ F

What letter grade would you give yourself on your understanding of the school library media program?

- ◇ A
- ◇ B
- ◇ C
- ◇ D
- ◇ F

Now it's your turn. Add additional comments here.