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School media specialists need strategies to help them implement Information Power's directive to become instructional partners with teachers. This study investigated whether concepts of "opinion leadership" might inform the suggested strategy of "starting with one teacher" to initiate collaboration. Focused interviews and analysis of relevant scheduling books were conducted with five elementary school media specialists to explore whether, and how, they identified and worked with opinion leader teachers to increase collaboration. To varying degrees, all interview participants reported experiences with opinion leader teachers and considered them an important link in influencing other teachers and encouraging teacher/librarian collaboration. Excluding age and experience level, the following characteristics of opinion leader teachers were identified: a willingness to seek help to meet student's needs, an interest in trying new ideas, enthusiasm for media and technology related materials, a high degree of involvement in the school, involvement in skill building classes and workshops, and strong teaching skills. Recommendations for identifying and working with opinion leader teachers are included.

Headings:

School libraries – relations with teachers and curriculum

School libraries/elementary schools

School libraries/North Carolina

Schools – change agents

Schools – opinion leader teachers

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: IDENTIFYING AND ENGAGING  
TEACHERS FOR COLLABORATION IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING

by  
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## **Collaborative Partnerships: Identifying and Engaging Teachers for Collaboration in an Elementary School Setting**

### **Introduction**

Collaborative instructional partnerships between classroom teachers and school library media specialists are considered “best practice” for integrating information literacy instruction and reading encouragement into the school curriculum. Indeed, creating a fully collaborative media center program, facilitated by flexible scheduling, is central to Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning, the vision statement guiding current design and implementation of school media center programs. However, many school library media specialists, especially at the elementary school level, struggle to implement this vision.

Research describes elements which support creation of a collaborative media center program. To date, however, that research has focused less on fully exploring practical suggestions which may inform a school librarian’s efforts to build collaborative partnerships with classroom teachers. Building upon the existing literature suggesting that school library media specialists “start with one teacher” to develop a collaborative program, this qualitative study explores whether, and how, successful elementary school library media specialists identify and build collaborative relationships with “opinion leader” teachers as they

initiate, expand and maintain collaborative partnerships within a flexibly accessed media center program.

School library media specialists (SLMS) understand their role within a school as dramatically different from their predecessors of several decades ago. This vision, articulated in Information Power, published in 1988 and revised in 1998, conceives of the SLMS as much more than merely a provider of resources and “library skills” instruction. Instead, the role of a SLMS was *reconceived* to encompass the functions of teacher, information specialist, program administrator and instructional partner (4-5). Information Power’s vision of “instructional partnership” challenges the SLMS to work “closely with individual teachers in the critical areas of designing authentic learning tasks and assessments and integrating the information and communication abilities required to meet subject matter standards” (5)

From research in the field, we have some understanding of factors that support collaborative partnerships between the media specialists and classroom teachers. Much of this research characterizes and describes factors which facilitate integration of the media center program into the school curriculum, such as a collaborative culture, a supportive principal, and a passionate, persistent SLMS. Understanding the factors which support collaborative partnerships, including flexible scheduling, is helpful to a SLMS seeking to develop collaborative partnerships with teachers and to integrate the school’s media

center program. However, understanding these factors may not be enough for a SLMS to develop collaborative partnerships

Additional support can be drawn from research that analyzes how change occurs. Research in the fields of business, agriculture and education has sought to understand how change is implemented and sustained. Through the years, our understanding of the “process of change” has developed; within the past 30 years our understanding of that process has increased (Fullan 49).

Researchers have used this new understanding in analyzing how to best move a SLMS into the fully integrated role of teacher and instructional partner envisioned by Information Power. Drawing on research in the “change process,” some authorities in the field suggest the SLMS may function as a “change agent” to facilitate development of collaborative relationships within a flexibly scheduled program (Hughes-Hassell 12; McGregor; IMPACT 109).

The practicing media specialist seeking advice on *how* to foster SLMS/teacher collaboration and how to transform the media center into a program integrated into the life of the school may find practical advice somewhat lacking. Instructing the school media specialist to adopt the role of “change agent” identifies her position as a facilitator of change within the change process. However, it is imperative that school library media specialists are given the tools necessary to facilitate and implement change; well developed strategies are needed so that the SLMS can succeed as a change agent.

## Literature Review

During the 1980s and 1990s, Information Power was revised to established a radically new understanding of the ideal relationship between SLMS and classroom teachers – as co-creators and “instructional partners” (5). The ideal of SLMS as a partner is so pervasive across the Information Power vision that “partnership” is included in the title to the work: Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning. Similarly, the concept of the SLMS as a partner in teaching and learning is interwoven throughout the themes (collaboration, leadership and technology) which underpin Information Power's revised vision (47-58).

Although SLMSs embrace the concept of partnership through teacher/SLMS collaboration, the professional literature often seeks to characterize and understand the nature of collaboration instead of focusing on strategies for implementation. Indeed, Montiel-Overall points to “a lack of consensus as to [collaboration's] definition and *a limited understanding of the process...*” (emphasis added). Despite differing language, definitions and descriptions of collaboration focus on the joint roles and shared vision of the teacher/SLMS in creating a relationship characterized by partnership, for example, descriptive terms include “shared goals,” “a shared vision,” “work[ing] together,” “working closely”.

Muronaga and Harada suggest that collaboration is based on shared goals, a shared vision, and a climate of trust and respect (9). Russell summarizes research to explore the meaning of “collaboration” as follows:

Each partner fulfills a carefully defined role; comprehensive planning is required; leadership, resources, risk, and control are shared; and the working relationship extends over a relatively long period of time (Callison, 1999). The teacher brings to the partnership knowledge of the strengths, weaknesses, attitudes and interests of the students, and of the content to be taught. The media specialist adds a thorough understanding of information skills and methods to integrate them, helping the teacher to develop resource-based units that broaden the use of resources and promote information literacy (Doiron & Davies, 1998)(2).

Seeking to distinguish collaboration from coordination or cooperation, Monitel-Overall draws upon the literature in the field to develop a definition of collaboration and models for behavior which lead to collaboration. The suggested definition for collaboration is “a process in which two or more individuals work together to integrate information in order to enhance student learning.” Finally, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, in its 2005 guide for media specialists, defines collaboration as “the school library media coordinator and technology facilitator work[ing] closely with teachers to plan, implement, and evaluate classroom lessons, units, and the overall instructional program” (IMPACT 31).

A flexible schedule for media center use is considered one of the primary factors supporting teacher/librarian collaboration (Bishop and Larimer 19). In fact, Information Power essentially treats flexible media center scheduling as a prerequisite for successful collaboration. Similarly, Library Power, the largest study of school libraries funded by a private organization, made flexible

scheduling of classes a prerequisite for participation in the study (Zweizig 36-40). Significantly, more collaborative planning and teaching occurs in schools where the media center operates on a flexible or semi-flexible schedule (McGregor). At this time, however, a causal relationship can not be implied. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that, at the elementary level, almost 50% of public schools continue to use a fixed schedule for their media center. According to 2004 figures released by the US Department of Education, 50.9% of public elementary school libraries are still using fixed schedules as opposed to flexible/semi-flexible scheduling in their media centers (McGregor).

Often looking beyond the realm of the teacher/SLMS relationship to the broader school environment, research in the field has identified numerous factors which encourage and support collaboration. In addition to flexible scheduling, factors have influence the successful development of collaborative relationships include administrator expectations (Bishop and Larimer 20; Haycock “Collaborative Cultures”), a culture of collaboration (Small, “Developing”), teacher’s attitudes and expectations of library media specialist. (Wolcott 10). Additionally, relevant research suggests pre-service educational changes that may increase teacher/librarian collaboration. Hartzell suggests that teacher training programs should provide instruction in collaborative planning and teaching (25). Similarly, Logan would have school library media specialists work with student teachers to provide experience in collaborative instructions (15-18). Small would have faculty who are charged with training future school librarians

and future teachers model collaborative instruction through joint training projects (“Collaboration” 10-11).

Despite the research on collaboration, implementation of Information Power’s vision remains incomplete. In whatever way collaboration is defined or described, the goal of classroom teachers and SLMS working collaboratively as instructional partners, especially at the elementary school level, does not match the current reality in many school media center programs (Haycock 1999). This finding was echoed by O’Neal, who, in summarizing existing studies, notes that school media center programs exhibit low levels of actual teacher/SLMS collaboration. In addition, the studies reviewed by O’Neal suggest that teachers exhibit a lack of full acceptance of SLMS in the instructional role (292). Small, discussing the work of Wolcott, 1996; Miller and Shontz, 1993; and Williams, 1996, also documents this finding (“Collaboration” 10).

Conceptually, research supports the idea of beginning collaborative partnerships with targeted individual teachers. Michael Fullan has written extensively about how change occurs in a K-12 educational environment. Fullan points out that change is a *process*, not an *event* (52). In considering the initial stages in the change process, when a change is introduced, Fullan notes “there is no evidence that widespread involvement . . . is either feasible or effective. It is more likely the case that small groups of people begin and, if successful, build momentum” (Fullan 91).

Building upon the understanding of the process of change (e.g., how change occurs) in education developed by Fullan, as well as others in the field, Hughes-Hassell uses the change process framework to explore the role of the SLMS as “change agent” in facilitating the introduction and spread of collaboration in a school environment (12-15). Hughes-Hassell notes that “theorists, researchers, and practitioners generally recognize that change agents play a critical role in the successful initiation, implementation, and continuation of planned educational change (12).

Hughes-Hassell suggests a series of strategies for the SLMS to pursue as, stepping into the leadership role envisioned by Information Power, he/she acts as a “change agent” in building collaborative relationships with teachers. Included among the strategies are two related suggestions which are echoed in other sources: (1) *“Identify the opinion leaders in your school and engage them in the decision-making process. Work with this group to create a shared vision of the school library media program, develop an implementation plan, and establish a timetable for activities. This group should become the continuing core support for all library activities”* (14) and (2) *“Be patient and expect resistance. Change takes time. Teachers will need time to learn about IP2 and how it will benefit their students, to adjust to new organizational structures such as flexible scheduling, and to negotiate new roles and relationships. Don't expect everyone to change at once. Instead, implement IP2 one teacher or grade level at a time”* (Emphasis added) (15).

The strategy of seeking out one teacher for collaboration is often suggested. For example, this strategy is suggested in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction instructional video entitled “Flexible Access, Part 2: Collaborating for Success.” In the video, Gail Dickinson, former Professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, suggests that “new media specialists need to pick out the four or five teachers in their schools that collaboration will work with and start with them.” In terms of identifying which teachers the media specialists should pick, Dickinson suggests (with some humor) that the media specialist pick “people who owe you something, who are nice people, who are just very good people and, with those people, you will be able to choose one of them and go collaborate with them” (1:35:41). Identifying a teacher with whom to begin a collaborative relationship was also reported by Shannon as one strategy used by a SLMS in initiating collaboration: the SLMS “made a special point of “targeting” teachers he/she identified as vocal and having influence on others.” Likewise, the same strategy is identified by Small who reported a list of strategies used by practicing SLMSs. “Begin by establishing a relationship with just one teacher and developing effective collaborative projects. Successful examples of librarian-teacher collaboration can become contagious, creating a demand for other such experiences throughout the school. Success breeds success” (“Developing”).

SLMSs need practical strategies for developing collaborative partnerships with teachers. Hughes-Hassell’s work provides context for this strategy by developing the concept of “change agent” as it applies to the SLMS implementing

the vision of Information Power. But SLMS need more complete strategies than those provided by researchers such as Hughes-Hassell. As many questions are generated by the strategy as answers: How does the SLMS go about identifying and building relationships with teachers? Which teachers should be selected? Is the only useful criteria “very good people” as Gail Dickinson suggests?

To explore these questions, this study draws on the theoretical work of Everett Rogers, one of the most widely accepted researchers and theorists in this field. Rogers’ analysis of change theory, highlighted in Diffusion of Innovation, informs our discussion of the SLMS role as “change agent,” as suggested by Hughes-Hassell, and the possible relationship between the SLMS and targeted “opinion leader” teachers. In discussing the relationship between change agents and opinion leaders, Rogers notes that “change agents often use opinion leaders in a social system as their lieutenants in diffusion activities” (27). In this view, opinion leader teachers serve as vehicles for spreading the practice of teacher/librarian collaboration. Rogers’ conclusion, upon reviewing ten health studies looking at the impact of using opinion leaders in implementing and spreading health improvement initiatives, is noteworthy: “No matter how opinion leaders are identified or trained, or precisely how they influence the behavior of others, the opinion leadership strategy generally” resulted in a strong impact on the change that was being implemented (325).

Rogers’s extensive analysis regarding opinion leaders, and their impact on the network within which they operate, is outside the scope of the present study. However, his theoretical framework regarding opinion leadership, including

definitions, identification, and characteristics, may be useful in informing how a SLMS (operating as a change agent) might “find one teacher” as a strategy for developing collaborative instructional partnerships. Rogers defines “opinion leader” as an individual who “is able to influence other individuals’ attitudes or overt behavior informally in a desired way with relative frequency” (27). Under this principle, the SLMS would seek to collaborate with teachers who can influence the attitudes and behaviors of other teachers. Opinion leaders can influence others to either adopt or block an innovation (in this case, collaboration). Needless to say, the SLMS would seek out opinion leader teachers who are disposed to have a positive opinion toward collaborating with them. “The most influential opinion leaders are key targets for the efforts of change agents in diffusion campaigns,” (that is, in efforts to spread the idea and practice of teacher/SLMS partnerships throughout the school) (Rogers 325).

Rogers notes that there are four methods for identifying opinion leaders. In applying these methods to the SLMS/teacher relationship, they can be interpreted as: asking teachers who they seek out for advice or information, asking an individual who is knowledgeable about the social network (such as a knowledgeable SLMS) to identify the teacher leaders, asking individual teachers to indicate whether other teachers seek their advice, and observing communication patterns within a school (Rogers 308-11). Significantly, “the choice of any one of the four methods can be based upon convenience, as all four are about equally valid” (Rogers 312). However, with the second method,

asking a knowledgeable SLMS to identify the opinion leader teachers, the SLMS must be thoroughly familiar with the systems within the school (Rogers 309).

Analyzing various studies of opinion leadership, Rogers proposes seven general factors to characterize opinion leaders:

1. Opinion leaders have greater exposure to mass media than their followers.
2. Opinion leaders are more cosmopolite than their followers.
3. Opinion leaders have greater contact with change agents than their followers.
4. Opinion leaders have greater social participation than their followers.
5. Opinion leaders have higher socioeconomic status than their followers.
6. Opinion leaders are more innovative than their followers.
7. When a social system's norms favor change, opinion leaders are more innovative, but when the system's norms do not favor change, opinion leaders are not especially innovative (316-18).

Information Power directs elementary SLMS to form collaborative partnerships with teachers 5. Well developed strategies are needed to help the SLMS understand how to implement this vision. Research has characterized and described what a collaborative media center program looks like. Research on the process of implementing change provides a theoretical basis to help the SLMS understand her role as facilitator of change conceptually. The concept of opinion leader teachers, grounded in Everett Rogers' analysis of opinion

leadership during the change process, might inform the often suggested strategy which directs the SLMS to initiate collaboration by targeting one teacher for partnership. The goal of this study is to explore the practices of successful SLMS in identifying teachers for collaborative partnerships and consider the implications of their experiences practices in light of Rogers' analysis of opinion leadership

### **Methodology**

There are two facets to the study. The first component involved identifying and interviewing SLMS who successfully collaborate with classroom teachers while operating their public elementary school media center programs using a flexible scheduling system. The second component involved analyzing media center scheduling books for media center programs involved in the study. The design and methodology used in the study, including the appended communications and consent forms 9 (see appended A-D), were approved by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Behavioral Institutional Review Board, number LIBS 2005-088, on February 1, 2006.

Five SLMS, representing four public elementary school media centers, were involved in this exploratory study. The personal interview was chosen as the appropriate methodological approach in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the role opinion leader teachers may play in the experiences of selected SLMS who have successfully initiated expanded or maintained

collaborative partnerships with teachers. Although the study focuses on the collaborative relationships between SLMS and classroom teachers, SLMS operating within a flexibly scheduled program were targeted for identification because, as McGregor reports, collaborative teacher/librarian planning and teaching are more likely to occur when flexible scheduling of classes is used.

In analyzing the scheduling books, only three of the four elementary school books were available. In total, seven years of scheduling books were analyzed to identify patterns of use and to augment and corroborate the SLMS perceptions of teacher interactions from the preceding years.

## **Interviews**

A profile for potential interview candidates was developed with the intent of capturing the experiences of school librarians who had actively developed and established successful collaborative relationships with classroom teachers. The goal was to explore whether, and how, the selected SLMS targeted, identified and worked with opinion leader teachers. The candidates selected should:

1. Be a teacher in a public elementary school which uses a flexible scheduling system in the media center;
2. Have successfully initiated, converted or expanded a media center program to a flexible scheduling system with collaborative co-teaching, ideally in more than one school;

3. Is recommended by others in the field and/or is held in high regard as a SLMS;
4. Have been at their current school for two to five years; and,
5. Have access to, and will make available for analysis, their media center scheduling books for the preceding one to three years (Note: this last criterion was relaxed for one of the selected subjects).

Using the profile as a guide, recommendations for potential interview candidates were sought from other members of the school library profession. From those recommendations, interview candidates were contacted by email (see Appendix A). After agreeing to participate, a number of documenters were emailed to the librarians including: (1) a letter accompanying the consent form (see Appendix B), (2) guide questions for the interview (see Appendix C) and (3) consent forms (see Appendix D). Interviews were conducted on-site at the four schools; consent forms were reviewed and signed prior to the interviews or transfer of scheduling books.

Five SLMS, representing four public elementary schools, were interviewed. Two of the five SLMSs work at the same year round school; the other three work at different schools operating on a traditional 10-month schedule. Except for one media center which operates with a semi-flexible schedule (fixed for kindergarten and first grade and flexible for second through fifth grades), all SLMSs operate in media centers that use flexible access to schedule classes at all grade levels. However, media center programs at the

schools diverge as to their current status in implementing a fully flexible and collaborative media center program: two of the schools have mature collaborative media center programs where flexible scheduling has been in place a minimum of seven years; the remaining two school have used flexible scheduling for two and three years, respectively, and are still developing collaborative working relationships with teachers.

During the interviews, and for purpose of analysis, selected terms were defined. "Collaboration" was defined as *the SLMS working with classroom teachers in a range of activities, beyond retrieving materials, including coordinating lessons as well as co-teaching*. An open ended definition of collaboration was chosen to bypass the on-going discussion, reflected in the literature, regarding what actions, in fact, constitute collaboration and to focus the interview on interactions, if any, between the SLMS and opinion leader teachers. Throughout the study, and explicitly during each interview, "opinion leader teachers" were defined, based on Rogers' definition, as *teachers who influence the attitudes and behaviors of other teachers, especially classroom teachers*. Additionally, throughout the study, the influence exerted by opinion leader teachers is understood to connote a positive influence and attitude toward collaboratively working with the SLMS. Opinion leaders who had negative attitudes toward collaborating with the SLMS are discussed separately.

During the interviews, open ended questions were tailored to capture the SLMS' unique experiences. Topics explored included:

- The role of opinion leader teachers in encouraging or inhibiting collaborations between the SLMS and classroom teachers;
- Whether the SLMS actively targeted opinion leader teachers;
- How opinion leader teachers were identified;
- Characteristics of opinion leader teachers;
- Experiences with opinion leader teachers;
- Other elements at the school that supported collaboration between the SLMS and classroom teachers.

Each interview was tape recorded and notes were made. The taped interviews, supplemented by handwritten notes, were transcribed. A content analysis of the session notes and tapes was performed. Responses and commentary were contrasted and compared across the interviews; themes, as well as similarity and variety of experiences with opinion leader teachers, are noted. The interview participants, as well as their schools, are identified by pseudonym.

Greenwood Elementary School opened as a new school nine years ago and operates on a year round calendar. The school employs Ms. Hilles and Ms. Smith as full time SLMSs; both were interviewed, jointly, for this study. Ms. Hilles, as well as the school principal, have worked at the school since it opened in 1997. Ms. Hilles and the principal worked together prior to opening Greenwood at a school which received a Library Power grant. In opening Greenwood, Ms. Hilles and the principal built upon their Library Power experience, hiring teachers with a “teamwork” profile and establishing a flexible

media center schedule with the explicit expectation that grade level teachers and the SLMS would plan collaboratively. Replacing another SLMS, Ms. Smith joined Greenwood as a first-time SLMS three years ago.

Due to the year round calendar, the school is divided into four teacher/student teams. Three of the four teams are in session at any one time, with one team on break. Both Ms. Smith and Ms. Hilles are on a 12 month contract. Depending on their individual schedules, Ms. Hilles and Ms. Smith may be in the media center together or one of them may be on break. When both are in the media center, they frequently work together teaching a class and assisting students.

In addition to her experience at Greenwood initiating and expanding collaboration within a flexible schedule, Ms. Hilles has experience moving a school from a fixed to a flexible schedule. Prior to opening Greenwood, Ms. Hilles worked for many years as a SLMS in an elementary school media center that operated on a fixed schedule. Wishing to convert to a flexible schedule, she operated one year with 25 teachers on a fixed schedule and eight teachers on a flexible schedule. The following year, a fully flexible schedule, with a focus on collaboration, was introduced as a part of the Library Power grant. When the principal and Ms. Hilles opened Greenwood Elementary nine years ago, the eight teachers who initiated flexible scheduling at the old school came with them.

At Greenwood Elementary, Ms. Hilles and Ms. Smith collaboratively plan with teachers during grade level teacher meetings. They describe the school culture as “family like” and very conducive to collaboration between classroom

teachers and SLMSs. Greenwood Elementary was the only school involved in the study where the media specialists identified the opinion leader teachers as opinion leaders *across* the grade levels instead of *within* a single grade level. The role they describe for opinion leader teachers in expanding and maintaining teacher/librarian partnerships include participation in collaborative projects, sharing those projects with other teachers, and encouraging other teachers, especially those new to teaching or new to Greenwood, to try projects with the media specialists.

Hazelwood Elementary School opened as a new school three years ago and operates on a traditional ten-month calendar. Ms. Able, as well as the principal, have worked at the school since it opened; additionally, they worked together at another school prior to opening Hazelwood. In hiring teachers and opening Hazelwood, Ms. Able and the principal worked together to explain the schools founding principles – including collaboration between the SLMS (and other specialists) and classroom teachers facilitated by a flexibly accessed media center. Several of the teachers hired to open Hazelwood had worked with Ms. Able and the principal at their former school

Ms. Able has 20 years of experience as a SLMS. In addition to her experience at Hazelwood, Ms. Able worked in three elementary schools where she successfully converted the media center schedule from fixed to flexible in order to facilitate teacher/SLMS collaboration.

During all three years at Hazelwood Elementary, Ms. Able has collaborated with individual teachers; often these collaborative projects have

spread to other grade level teachers. During the third, and most recent, year at the school, Ms. Able participated in the grade level collaboration planning sessions at all grade levels; with the number of planning sessions with each grade level ranging from three to six sessions over the course of the year. During these sessions, large units are planned with all grade level teachers, as well as specialists, participating. Other specialists, including technology, art, and science, are present at the grade level collaborative planning sessions when relevant.

In establishing and expanding a flexibly accessed collaborative program, Ms. Able notes the expectations established when teachers were hired and the school was opened. According to Ms. Able, opinion leader teachers at Hazelwood exert influence within their grade level. The roles she describes for opinion leader teachers at Hazelwood includes participating in collaboratively planned projects, encouraging other grade level teachers to undertake a project, and staying with less enthusiastic teachers to help them follow through on large units planned at the grade level. Despite increased opportunities to participate in grade level planning, high teacher turnover during her third year at Hazelwood has negatively impacted her momentum in expanding collaborative projects with classroom teachers.

Northside Elementary School operates on a traditional calendar but in a magnet school format – instruction is based around a school-wide theme and students apply to attend the school. Ms. Peterson has been the SLMS at Northside for two years; this is her first placement after receiving her library

degree and state certification. Prior to her arrival, the school media center operated on a fixed schedule. With strong support from the administration, Ms. Peterson established flexible scheduling in the media center and developed strong collaborative relationships with many classroom teachers.

Grade level planning is very strong at Northside, with all grade level teachers routinely planning large segments of their instructional time as a group. The SLMS and technology specialist meet with each grade level team for one 45 minute planning sessions once a month. During her first year at Northside, the grade level meeting was Ms. Peterson's primary vehicle for trying to plan collaboratively with teachers. During her second year, she began to seek out selected opinion leader teachers at grade levels where she had not experienced strong success in establishing collaborative relationships.

Opinion leader teachers exert their influence at Northside within the grade level. And, unlike the other schools included in the study, the formal role of grade level leader and the informal role of opinion leader teacher are held by the same person at each grade level where an opinion leader can be identified. Mrs. Peterson describes strong administrative support for collaborative planning and, in fact, an expectation on the part of the principal that classroom teachers will collaborate with the media and technology specialists.

Eastside Elementary School opened as a new school five years ago and operates on a traditional 10-month calendar. The initial SLMS had significant experience in flexible scheduling and collaboration. She established the Eastside media center program using flexible scheduling and developed

collaborative relationships with classroom teachers. Ms. Lange became the SLMS at Northside two years ago; this is her first placement after receiving her library degree and state certification.

Ms. Lange stepped into a situation she describes as “perfect.” Flexible scheduling was already in place and collaboration with classroom teachers was firmly established. She sees her role as maintaining the high quality of the teacher/SLMS collaboration which has existed since the school opened. Beginning with her first days at the school, teachers – identified as opinion leader teachers – have sought her out to engage in collaborative planning. Another factor that has impacted her actions is the significant overcrowding which currently exists at the school. Due to the established relationships with opinion leader teachers that she inherited, as well as the high level of media center use caused by overcrowding, she has not used the strategy of actively seeking out opinion leader teachers to explore additional collaborative planning opportunities.

Ms. Lange does not routinely participate in grade level planning sessions. Instead, the principal prefers that she attend only when specifically invited by the teachers; the invitation is extended through the formal grade level chair and Ms. Lange is often unaware which teacher initiated the invitation. Ms. Lange notes that the influence of opinion leader teachers is confined to their grade level. Although she has not actively sought out opinion leader teachers, she has noticed the role opinion leaders play in encouraging other grade level teachers to collaborate with her.

## Themes

SLMSs were asked to draw upon their experience at their present school and, in the case of two media specialists, their experiences at prior schools. Although specific questions were asked, the conversations were free flowing and, depending upon the specific interview, ranged from general comments drawn from years of experience to conversations around very specific interactions with individual teachers and grade levels. Several themes were identified during the interviews, including working with opinion leader teachers, opinion leader teachers as trustworthy sources of information, targeting opinion leader teachers, characteristics of opinion leader teachers, informal role of opinion leaders, and the age or experience level of opinion leader teachers.

Working with Opinion Leader Teachers. To varying degrees, all SLMS indicated that the opinion leaders among classroom teacher have an important role to play in developing opportunities for collaboration as media center programs are converted from fixed to flexible and when expanding/maintaining collaborative relationships with classroom teachers (especially in the face of teacher turnover).

Ms. Hilles related the role opinion leaders played in moving to a flexible schedule and building collaborative partnerships under the Library Power grant at her prior school: “We started out choosing the opinion leaders [to send for training in collaboration].” Most of these opinion leaders moved to Greenwood Elementary with the principal and Ms. Hilles. These teachers took on the role of opinion leaders at Greenwood and were

“absolutely” able to influence the other classroom teachers regarding collaboration with the SLMS. The administration continues to tap opinion leader teachers. For example, “We’ve gotten several grants to have technology training. And one of the things is the Summer Teacher Technology Institute. When we have sat down to think about who might go, the principal has said, you know, we might have one opinion teacher leader and then all the other teachers are fairly new to the staff, brand new or have just been here a year or so. So that opinion leader teacher can sort of ‘shepherd them’ or bring them [the newer teachers] along.”

Ms. Able: “When moving from fixed to flexible, you really need those opinion leader teachers.” Even after flexible scheduling and collaborative planning are established and the SLMS is involved in grade level planning, Ms. Able sees a role for the opinion leader teacher. “There is still going to be somebody in the room who is really going to grab on to it. [They might say,] ‘That’s great, then we can do this and this and this.’ [The opinion leader teacher] takes [the plan and the idea] and runs with it . . . Other teachers will usually listen to her.”

Ms. Peterson: “I think [the role of opinion leaders] can be huge. I don’t know if I’ve fully utilized it but I think I’ve learned a lot about how it works.”

Trustworthy source of information. Several SLMS indicated that opinion leader teachers serve as a reliable source of information for other classroom teachers when they enthusiastically spread the word about successful collaborative projects.

Ms. Able: “[The opinion leader teachers] are the ones who are going to trumpet the success. They are the ones who are going to say, ‘this is wonderful, the kids really learned how to do this, you should see the project we came up with they really learned duh, duh, duh . . . that they are going to be able to use this for project we do next.’ I can’t always say that. I can’t always have the teacher understand ‘Wow, we just really did this great thing with Ms. So and So’s class and you really need to come down and do it because it was really great.’ They are not going to really believe me but they will believe the teacher who comes to them and says “[The SLMS and I] just did this fantastic [project]”. And “[The opinion leader teachers] become your disciples. They become the ones who are out there spreading the word.”

Ms. Hilles: “I would try not to say very much at the [grade level] planning meetings. I let [the opinion leader teachers] talk. And they would say to the other teachers, ‘You know what, we did this and this really works great.’ Let *them* (opinion leader teachers) give the testimony because the new teachers would listen to the teachers who’d been with me -- much better than [the new teachers] would listen to me. Because they didn’t know me but they worked side-by-side with the other teachers.” (Emphasis in original).

Ms. Lange: The opinion leader teachers “are advocating for me.” For example, the third grade opinion leader teacher was the first teacher to approach Ms. Lange about collaborating. They successfully collaborated on a biography unit. After working with the opinion leader teacher, “I had two other 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers who needed to do [a biography] project come up to me. They said, ‘Oh, I saw what you did with Ms. Black (the opinion leader teacher). I’d like to do this biography project as well. Can you work with my class?’ And that was just wonderful. I got this kind of ‘word of mouth’” advertising from the opinion leader teacher. Also, other teachers observed the finished project hanging in the hall. The same type of thing happened when Ms. Peterson collaboratively planned a fairytale unit with the 3<sup>rd</sup> opinion leader teacher.

Targeting opinion leader teachers. Three of the four SLMSs interviewed indicated they have actively targeting opinion leader teachers when working to establish or expand collaboration. The remaining SLMS, Ms. Lange, mentioned that, although she does seek out teachers who are not utilizing her services, she feels that “her plate is full” and does not actively seek out opinion leader teachers as a way to influence their grade level partners.

Three of the four SLMS have used a strategy of targeting teachers they identify as opinion leader teachers to develop collaborative partnerships. As noted above, Ms. Hilles related that opinion leaders were targeted for early training under the Library Power grant; her principal continues this strategy by strategically including opinion leader teachers in recent technology training.

Due to the collaborative culture at Greenwood, Ms. Hilles and Ms. Smith are rarely in a position where they are looking for strategies to increase collaborations. However, Ms. Smith indicates there are times when they look for a specific person to work with: “Sometimes when we have a new idea, when I have something that I *want* to do . . . Different things, we may want to do book clubs. We may target a particular teacher that seems open or wants to try something new. And it is usually one of those [opinion leader teachers] and usually one who is more flexible and open.” (Emphasis in original.) The SLMSs and the participating teacher will share the results of the new effort with other teachers at the next grade level meeting.

During her first year at Northside Elementary, Ms. Peterson worked collaboratively with all grade levels. However, she became frustrated over time. “I felt that I was just one more burden on [the teachers’] time . . . Even though I knew they valued what we were doing . . . they were just so overwhelmed.” At the beginning of her second year, the Instructional Resource Teacher suggested that Ms. Peterson “focus on that one person in each grade level.” Ms. Peterson noticed that the 5<sup>th</sup> grade opinion leader seemed to be the key to working with all teachers on that grade level. For example, in suggesting a project to one of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, the teacher responded “I’ll need to check with” the opinion leader teacher. In the past, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade opinion leader teacher was willing to participate in projects but didn’t seem to really understand the benefits of collaborative planning. the role of planning the collaboratively with the media specialists and the technology specialists. Ms. Peterson identified strategies for increasing collaboration with this teacher including approaching the opinion leader with ideas for collaboration before the monthly grade level meeting. However, before that happened, an opportunity naturally arose for closer collaboration. After her students started a project, the opinion leader teacher noticed they were “cutting and pasting.” She requested that Ms. Peterson teach the students about copyright; the lesson had a noticeable impact on the students’ behavior and how they talked about the issue. The teacher began asking for more projects and the interaction between the media specialists and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade opinion leader teacher grew quickly. All 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers soon began to work more closely with Ms. Peterson. A natural dialog developed between the two which complemented, continued and extended collaborative plans developed during the monthly grade level meetings. (Scheduling book analysis related to these interactions is included below.)

Ms. Able at Hazelwood Elementary describes a specific project where she actively identified and sought out the opinion leader teachers. The media, art and science specialists wanted to do a series of lessons/projects around the Wright Brothers centennial: “We went to the opinion leader

teachers first. At each grade level, we went to the opinion leader first. And when [the opinion leader teachers said], ‘Oh wow! Great! Especially the last two weeks of school.’ So, we went to the opinion leader at each grade level, got them on board; once they were on board, then they spread the word to their other [grade level] teachers. . . . We knew who, at each grade level, we needed to go to to get them on the bandwagon and then they would push for the other people. And then there were the other teachers who weren’t clued in. And then, all of a sudden, they saw these other teachers with a little extra time because their kids were in science and their kids were building airplanes and they were in the media center and they were doing scavenger hunts and this and this. And all of a sudden [these other teachers said,] ‘What do you mean? Where did you get that? What is going on?’ Then they [the remaining teachers who weren’t participating] came on board. “

Characteristics of opinion leader teachers. Each SLMS was asked to discuss whether, and how, they identified or recognized opinion leader teachers. Ms. Able captures the spirit of the various media specialist’s comments when she says “You can’t miss them! Because [the opinion leader teachers] are involved. They are vocal. They may very well be the ones who come to you.” Several characteristics were mentioned frequently during the SLMS interviews.

- Flexible, has an “open door,” seeks new ideas and reaches out to others.
  - “Tends to try new things and are flexible.” (Ms. Hilles)
  - “But not too set in their ways [and want] to try something new.” (Ms. Lange)
  - “The opinion leader is someone who sees the *possibility*. Maybe has done collaboration someplace else. Knows they need some help. And are not the kind who walk in their room and closes their classroom door and comes out again at the [end of the day] and let their kids go. The opinion leader is not somebody who teaches in

isolation. They are the ones who want help because they are the ones who see the possibility that collaboration can bring them.”

(Ms. Able)

- “So, you find the opinion leaders by looking at somebody who comes down to you and says “I’ve been doing this unit on biographies for four years now. And it’s just so dull. I want to do something really different. Really spice it up. Something that makes me really excited about teaching it again. What do you think we could do?” (Mrs. Able)
- Involved
  - “Presenting at staff meetings.” (Ms. Peterson)
  - “Come to voluntary training.” (Ms. Hilles/Ms. Smith)
  - “But these people also tend to be the ones who are always attending the workshops outside of school.” (Ms. Peterson)
  - “They might very well be the teachers who are sitting on a number of important committees at school.” (Ms. Able)
  - “[T]he ones who are usually getting another degree . . . a higher level degree, administration qualifications, National Boards certification.” (Ms. Peterson)
- Excited About Teaching
  - “Enthusiasm and excitement about teaching.” (Ms. Hilles)
  - “They might just be the teacher who seems to go the extra mile for the kid who is struggling. It’s going to be the teacher who becomes

very strident in faculty meetings about something she feels is “not right” for the students! They kind of stand out!” (Ms. Able)

- Excited About Media and Technology
  - “First to come in and look at the new books. Excited about [media things] . . . and technology.” (Ms. Hilles)
  - “And so, because they are just present in all of those different places (staff meetings, workshops). And they tend to be the one in each grade level who has understood the most what we [media specialist and technology specialist] are trying to do.” (Ms. Peterson)
  - “Many of those teachers who came to me right away and said ‘I would like to collaborate.’” (Ms. Lange)
  - “[Opinion leader teachers] are interested in using technology, very interested.” (Ms. Lange)
  - “They may very well be the ones who come to you.” (Ms. Able)
- Strong Teachers
  - “More knowledgeable about the curriculum.” For example, the opinion leader teachers who participated in the summer technology institute would “learn how technology can help [other teachers] implement and integrate the curriculum.” (Ms. Hilles)
  - “Are typically the best teacher on their team.” (Ms. Peterson)
  - “I could tell that they were very strong, they were experienced, they were not first or second year teachers.” (Ms. Lange)

- Mentor new or younger teachers

Ms. Hilles and Ms. Lange mentioned that opinion leader teachers often serve, formally and informally, as mentors for new or younger teachers.

- Informal role of opinion leader teachers.

At three of the four schools, the grade level opinion leader teacher occupied an informal leadership position which was separate from the role of formal grade level chairperson, usually an appointed position held by teachers on a rotating basis. At the fourth school, Northside Elementary, the formal role of grade level chairperson coincided with the informal role of opinion leader: for each grade level at which an opinion leader was identified, that teacher also occupied the formal leadership position as grade level chairperson.

Age or experience level. The SLMS reported a variety of experiences unique to their individual situations. There was no clear agreement as to whether age or level of experience were factors in identifying opinion leader teachers; except in regard to brand new teachers who consistently did not play the role of opinion leader.

In commenting on the opinion leaders she first identified at her prior school, and who subsequently received Library Power training, Ms. Hilles states that “some were older and some were younger. It was a mix! . . . The ‘old school’ and the upper grade teachers, at that school, were more inflexible than flexible.”

Due to the teacher populations at Northside, Ms. Peterson does not have much experience with older teachers or those with significant experience.

She notes that the teachers at Northside are mostly “young and haven’t taught at all . . . And if they are young, and they have taught, they’ve taught here. . . . So people who have been teaching for five or six years, very frequently, this is still their first job. So, they have some experience, but this is the only experience they have.” And, due to prior library scheduling practices at the school, a teacher’s experience at Northside Elementary, prior to Ms. Peterson’s arrival two years ago, would not include working collaboratively with the media specialist.

Ms. Lange was the only SLMS who observed a relationship between age/level of experience and the role of opinion leader. She notes that “really these are teachers who have been teaching eight or more years. Maybe 10 years. Teachers who, say, maybe they are in their mid to late 30s, 40s. This is their career and they have done it for a while. And are comfortable and confident in what they do. But not too set in their ways to try something new.”

In Ms. Able’s experience, “the one who is hardest to get on flexible access and get to collaboration is the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher who has taught about 8 to 12 years. I don’t know why (laughter)! That is a sweeping generalization but it seems they’ve had enough years to kind of settle into the grade level, they feel they know the curriculum, they feel they know what works and what doesn’t work, they are used to teaching on their own . . . And it’s not, interestingly enough, the older teacher, because they have seen so many things come and go in education. That old saying, “what goes around comes around”? They have seen it come and go over the years. . . . The ones who have been around 20 some years, they are not the ones . . . at least, I have found, who are a problem. And the brand new ones “don’t know they don’t know” and they can be a problem until you finally get them to understand you are there to help. The ones that have about 8 to 12 years, right in there, they are the ones who don’t need any help.”

### **Scheduling Book Analysis**

As a qualitative study, any information gleaned from scheduling book analysis, and the accompanying interviews, cannot be used to predict behaviors, or patterns of behavior, at other schools. However, looking at patterns of media center use, gathered through scheduling book analysis, may further inform ideas around targeting opinion leader teachers for collaboration as SLMS consider

whether this strategy may be a useful option to pursue in seeking to initiate, expand or maintain collaborative partnerships with classroom teachers.

Scheduling books were obtained for Northside Elementary (two years), Eastside Elementary (two years) and Hazelwood Elementary (three years). Printed scheduling books are no longer kept or used by Greenwood Elementary. A decision was made to undertake the scheduling book analysis after conducting, transcribing and analyzing the relevant SLMS interview. Under this procedure, the interview was used to inform patterns noted in the scheduling books.

Due to variations in how the scheduling books were kept, books from each media center were analyzed somewhat differently. However, similar guiding principles were used in each analysis. For each group of scheduling books, an effort was made to identify, by individual classroom teacher at each grade level, the total number of media center visits as well as the total time spent in the media center over the course of each school year. As it was not possible to distinguish consistently the size of the group (small group vs. whole class) or the purpose of the visit (traditional story time read-aloud or collaboratively planned research project), a visit was noted each time the teacher's name appeared in the scheduling book regardless of the size of the group or purpose of the visit. Media center visits resulting from set programs that were presented to all classes were not included in the analysis. These programs are specific to each school and are identified separately.

Length of visits was analyzed by noting time in the media center in 15 minute increments for each visit during the year; times were aggregated to identify a total time for each teacher. In all three schools, small groups come to the media center frequently to take advantage of open checkout. These small groups are not noted on the media center schedule and were not included in the scheduling book analysis.

According to the relevant SLMS interviews, opinion teacher leadership occurred within a grade level, as opposed to across different grade levels, for the three schools where media center use was analyzed using the scheduling books. Using the grade level and SLMS identification of specific opinion level teachers, media center use at all three schools was found to exhibit certain common patterns, including:

- Approximately half the time, identified opinion leader teachers visited the media center, over the course of an academic year, more frequently and for more hours than other grade level teachers.
- Research projects in the media center often involved more than one trip to the media center during the same week. At times, additional trips continued to occur during the following week.
- Significantly more grade level collaborative planning sessions were noted in the scheduling books than planning sessions with individual teachers.

### Scheduling Book Analysis for Northside Elementary

Analysis was conducted on scheduling books kept for two academic years at Northside Elementary; the first year involved the scheduling book for the full academic year (2004/2005), the second year analyzed involved the scheduling book for August through mid-February (2005/2006). Scheduling books identified a class visit by teacher name and length of visit; purpose of the visit was rarely noted. Therefore, analysis focused primarily on number, length and pattern of visits. Also, since visits by kindergarten and first grade operate on a fixed schedule, media center visits by these grades were not analyzed. Programs offered to all classes (orientation), or programs which were difficult to identify but which appeared to be offered to all classes (identified in the scheduling books as “Pizza” and “Apple Pie”) were not included in the analysis.

Prior to the scheduling book analysis, Ms. Peterson identified opinion leader teachers for the two years analyzed. Identification patterns varied by grade level, with some grades having no opinion leader, most grades having one opinion leader and, in one grade for one year, all grade level teachers were identified as opinion leaders.

During the interview, Ms. Peterson indicated that grade level teachers at Northside Elementary often closely plan and implement classroom instruction. This observation is consistent with patterns noted in the scheduling book for both years. Frequently, during a series of weeks, most teachers on a grade level had similar patterns of media center use, both in terms of the number and length of the visits (see Appendix E for an example of usage by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers).

With the exception of some teachers who frequently visit the media center for 15 minute book checkout, similar patterns are noted at each grade level over the two year period of analysis. (Another exception, at some points, one teacher rarely participates in the media center program during the course of a year). These patterns suggest the grade level teachers often teach in concert with one another.

In an effort to glean further information, scheduling book analysis was used to explore specific scenes related by the SLMS during the interview. According to the interview with Ms. Peterson, she was unable to collaborate extensively with the 5th grade teachers until the opinion leader teacher (the same individual for both years) asked her to teach a lesson which complemented and extended activities occurring in the classroom. After that interaction with the opinion leader teacher, collaboration with all 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers became more common.

Scheduling book analysis supports Ms. Peterson's perception that collaboration increased significantly with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers after her positive interaction with the opinion leader teacher. To gather information, the copyright lesson taught by Ms. Peterson was identified in the scheduling book. Analysis focused on teacher visits and time in the media center for the eight weeks immediately before and immediately after the copyright lesson. To capture the change in collaboration levels, the number of visits and length of visits for all 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers during the 8 weeks before the copyright lesson and the 8 weeks after the copyright lesson have been combined: visits by all 5<sup>th</sup>

grade teachers in the 8 weeks before totaled 12 visits for a combined visit time of 8 hours and 15 minutes; visits by all 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in the 8 weeks after totaled 31 visits for a combined visit time of 26 hours and 30 minutes (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1: Media Center Use for Individual Teachers**

Media center use (number of visits and aggregated time of visits) for individual Northside Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers (2005/2006) during the eight weeks immediately before and after the copyright lesson.

	Before	After
Teacher 1 (opinion leader)	1 visit	8 visits
	30 minutes	7 hours 30 minutes
Teacher 2	5 visits	8 visits
	5 hours	7 hours;
Teacher 3	3 visits	8 visits
	1 hour 30 minutes	6 hours
Teacher 4	3 visits	7 visits
	1 hour 45 minutes	6 hours.

**Scheduling Book Analysis for Eastside Elementary**

Analysis was conducted on scheduling books kept for two academic years at Eastside Elementary; the first year involved the scheduling book for the full academic year (2004/2005), the second year analyzed involved the scheduling book for August through February (2005/2006). Scheduling books identified a class visit by teacher name and length of visit; the purpose for a visit was noted

sporadically. Therefore, analysis focuses primarily on number, length and pattern of visits. Programs offered to all classes (orientation, North Carolina Book Award) or programs that were outside the collaborative relationship (Battle of the Books, book clubs) were excluded from analysis.

Prior to the scheduling book analysis, Ms. Lange identified opinion leader teachers for the two years analyzed: identification patterns varied by grade level, with some grades having no opinion leader, most grades having one opinion leader and some grades having two opinion leaders. Due to teacher turnover and grade assignment, the make-up of grade level teachers varied over the course of the two year analyzed.

Planning sessions with individual teachers was noted more frequently in the Eastside scheduling books than in the scheduling books for Northside or Hazelwood. This may be related to Ms. Lange's somewhat circumscribed opportunities to participate in grade level planning meetings (she must be invited by the grade level chairperson to participate). No fixed interval for individual teacher planning sessions and grade level planning sessions was identified.

During the interview, Ms. Lange reported that her work with the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade opinion leader teacher on a biography project, as well as a fairytale project, influenced other grade level teachers and led to additional teacher/librarian partnerships. Scheduling book analysis identified several individual planning sessions with the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade opinion leader to plan the biography project. Consistent with Ms. Lange's comments, notations in the scheduling book confirmed that at least one other third grade teacher came to the media center

for a biography project. Due to the annotations, collaborations with other third grade teachers on this topic could not be identified.

#### Scheduling Book Analysis for Hazelwood Elementary

Analysis was conducted on scheduling books kept for three academic years at Hazelwood Elementary (2003/2004, 2004/2005 and 2005/2006); these years represent the initial three years of the school's operation. The purpose of each visit was noted although, at times, it was not possible to tell the size of the group visiting (small group or whole class) or the level of teacher/SLMS collaboration represented by the activity. Additionally, specific projects mentioned in the interview were explored in the scheduling book analysis.

During the interview, Ms. Able discussed a multi-unit project she developed with the art and science teachers during the Wright Brothers centennial. To engage the teachers, she mentions actively targeting the opinion leader teachers at 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. In looking at the scheduling book, it was noted that every teacher, except one third grade teacher who was not an identified opinion leader, in grades three through five participated in the project through media center visits.

Although the scheduling book did indicate a few instances of scheduled time for planning with an individual teacher, most of the scheduled planning time involved meeting with an entire grade level. Ms. Able indicated that during the third year (2005/2006), she "managed to get into the grade level collaborative planning sessions on the coattails of the literacy specialists." Consistent with this

statement, the scheduling book for 2005/2006 reflects from three to six collaborative planning sessions with each grade level during the year; significantly more than in previous years. Working with the 2005/2006 scheduling book, the number of planning sessions, as well as the number of “shared topics” (topics for which all grade level teachers, or all but one teacher, brought their class to the media center), was identified for each grade level (see Appendix F). Although there was no clear pattern, the grade levels holding fewer collaborative planning sessions generally had fewer “shared topics” noted in their media center visits (grade levels having two or three planning sessions had one to two “shared topics”); while grade levels having a higher number of planning sessions had a higher number of “shared topics” noted in the media center scheduling book (grade levels having three to six planning sessions had from five to eleven “shared topics”). Of the five collaborative planning sessions (across all grade levels) for which a topic was identified, three “shared topics” implementing the collaborative planning could be identified.

Following the interview, Ms. Able shared some of the materials developed during grade level collaborative planning sessions. Building on the shared planning time, media center activities were fully integrated into multi-week units taught in the classroom and with other specialists (e.g., art, science) with the media center serving, at times, as a “center” for small group activity.

Patterns of media center use, and the types of activities, varied by grade level, academic year and proclivities of individual teachers. Additionally, the same grade level varied from year to year, often reflecting significant staff

turnover (especially from 2004/2005 to 2005/2006). Due to these factors, it was difficult to ascertain whether specific activities undertaken in the media center reflected leadership of the identified opinion leader teacher. However, it was noted that when activities, especially research orientated activities, were undertaken by most of the teachers at a grade level, the opinion leader teacher was usually involved in the project. Specifically, during the academic year 2005/2006, the identified opinion leaders at each grade level were involved in any media center activity in which all, or all but one, teachers at the grade level participated.

### **Discussion**

Although the SLMSs did not use the term “change agent” to describe their role in building a collaborative media center program, each of the three SLMSs with experience initiating a program, Ms. Hilles, Ms. Able and Ms. Peterson, described activities indicating they “acted as catalysts for educational reform by providing leadership and by being proactive in directing and overseeing the change process” (IMPACT, definition of “change agent,” 294). Stepping into the role of leader, these SLMSs describe activities they undertook to facilitate a transition to a collaborative media center program operating within a flexible schedule. These activities included seeking out volunteer teachers to try flexible access, serving on leadership teams and developing a profile for the hiring of new teachers, generating ideas for collaborative partnerships and seeking

opportunities to plan collaboratively with individual teachers and at the grade level.

All of the SLMSs reported some degree of collaborative experience with classroom teachers they identified as “opinion leaders. Focusing on educational change, Fullan suggests that 30 years of research serves to inform practices and strategies that must be tailored to the specific situation: “There are no hard-and-fast rules, but rather a set of suggestions or implications given the contingencies specific to the local situations. . . . Research findings on the process of change should be used . . . as a means of helping practitioners and planners ‘make sense’ of planning [and] implementation strategies” (49). With this in mind, Rogers’ analysis of opinion leadership was used as a framework for exploring the SLMS interactions with key teachers they identified as opinion leaders.

Using a definition of “opinion leadership” consistent with Rogers, this study sought information about interactions with key teachers by asking the SLMSs to identify opinion leader teachers based upon her observations and teacher interactions. The accuracy of this method for identifying opinion leader teachers was limited by the SLMSs’ knowledge of the system and social networks within their schools. In the case of the five SLMSs interviewed, analysis of the relevant schools’ systems and social networks was outside the scope of the study. However, some interesting, verifying information on the accuracy of opinion leader identification was provided by the scheduling book analyses for Hazelwood, Northside and Eastside. First, specific instances of collaborations identified by Ms. Able, Ms. Peterson and Ms. Lange were confirmed by reviewing

the scheduling books: Ms. Able with the Lewis & Clark project, Ms. Peterson with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade collaboration levels and Ms. Lange with the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade biography projects. Second, the identified opinion leaders frequently, though not always, exhibited high levels of media center use (looking at number of visits and total time involved) when compared to other teachers at their grade level.

Although the usage information does help convey a sense of a teacher's general level of involvement with the media center program, many details are obscured. Most scheduling book information does not indicate the level of collaboration involved in the visit (i.e., whether the visit was a read-aloud or a project co-planned by the teacher and SLMS). At times, an opinion leader teacher's usage information appears to overstate her level of interaction with the media center program: for example, one identified opinion leader at Eastside Elementary had very high usage numbers compared to other grade level teachers but the visits were apparently weekly story time visits (scheduled at the same time and day during most weeks during the academic year) and may reflect almost no level of collaboration. Yet in other cases, such as at Hazelwood Elementary, scheduling book analysis indicates that the opinion leaders' usage numbers may be lower than other grade level teachers (whose numbers may be somewhat artificially inflated by weekly small group visits), but activities apparently reflect higher collaboration levels or the opinion leader may have been central to initiating and encouraging involvement by all grade level teachers in a collaboration project.

Assuming the accuracy of the SLMS identification of opinion leader teachers, it is interesting to explore the characteristics for opinion leader teachers, as identified by the SLMSs, in relation to the generalizations for opinion leaders developed by Rogers after analyzing the research related to opinion leadership in the change process (316-18). To begin, Rogers first and second generalizations may be considered together for the current purpose of analysis: (1) *opinion leaders have greater exposure to mass media than their followers;* (2) *opinion leaders are more cosmopolite than their followers (i.e., they serve as connectors between different groups of people).* These generalizations are similar to characteristics the SLMSs used in identifying opinion leaders if we understand “mass media” as represented, in this situation, by activities such as workshops, outside training and coursework for continued educational development (advanced degrees or national boards). In working between groups, the identified opinion leaders exhibited an “open door” policy, often seeking new ideas from others. Also, the opinion leaders served as a bridge between the media center program and other teachers in grade level collaborative planning sessions or in informing other teachers about completed or planned collaborative projects.

Rogers’ next two generalizations echo characteristics mentioned by the SLMSs. Number (3) provides that *opinion leaders have greater contact with change agents than their followers.* For the identified opinion leader teachers, contact with the media specialist, in her role as change agent promoting and expanding collaborative partnerships, was often mentioned. The opinion leaders

identified by the SLMS often approached the media specialists seeking collaboration. They were enthusiastic about media and technology issues/opportunities and, based on scheduling book analysis, they often had high levels of media center usage when compared with other grade level teachers at their school.

Rogers' generalization number (4) states that *opinion leaders have greater social participation than their followers*. The SLMSs did not analyze the characteristics of opinion leaders in relation to other grade level teachers (their "followers" for purpose of this analysis). However, the SLMSs did suggest that the identified opinion leaders were more likely to be present on committees, speak up at faculty meetings, participate in voluntary functions such as workshops, and serve as mentors for less experienced teachers. While these activities do not necessarily mean that the opinion leader was more involved than other grade level teachers, the descriptions do paint a picture of someone who is actively involved in the life of the school. A final Rogers' generalization is relevant in looking at the opinion leader teachers identified by the SLMS: (6) *opinion leaders are more innovative than their followers*. The characteristic relevant to this generalization is related to the opinion leaders as strong teachers who looked for help in reaching and teaching their students.

Two of Rogers' generalizations regarding opinion leadership can not be analyzed based on the information collected through this study. These generalizations include (5) *opinion leaders have higher socioeconomic status than their followers*, and, (7) *when a social system's norms favor change, opinion*

*leaders are more innovative, but when the system's norms do not favor change, opinion leaders are not especially innovative (316-18).*

The individual SLMSs' experiences were unique to each situation and to each school; however, some interesting parallels were observed. SLMSs in the early stages of developing flexibly accessed collaborative media center programs reported actively targeting opinion leader teachers as a way to encourage and promote collaboration with grade level teachers. Scheduling book analysis for Hazelwood and Northside confirmed patterns that are consistent with the SLMSs actively working with an opinion leader teacher and then having additional collaborative partnerships flow from the initial interaction with the opinion leader teacher: Ms. Able's Lewis & Clark project eventually involved every 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade class except one, and Ms. Peterson's interactions with all 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers increased noticeably after she collaboratively partnered with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade opinion leader teacher.

At media center programs where SLMS/teacher collaborative partnerships were more firmly established, the SLMS rarely, if every, used the strategy of targeting opinion level teachers. At Greenwood, Ms. Smith stated she may seek out a specific teacher, which is usually an opinion leader, to try a project she is developing. At Eastside, Ms. Lange did not actively target opinion leader teachers as an avenue to increase collaboration with other grade level teachers although she did observe that collaborating with an opinion leader teacher, at times, led to related collaborations with other grade level teachers.

A theme reported by all SLMSs was the effectiveness of spreading collaboration through the opinion leader teacher to reach, and increase partnerships with, other grade level teachers. The pathways through which school librarians observed opinion leader teachers apparently influencing other teachers were varied: the opinion leaders “trumpeted” the successes of collaborative projects; they spread enthusiasm for working with the SLMS during grade level collaborative planning sessions; they contacted other teachers when the SLMS suggested a project; they kept other grade level teachers involved and ensured that collaboratively planned projects were completed by all teachers; and, acting as mentors, they suggested collaborative SLMS/teacher projects to less experienced, often younger, teachers. Additionally, SLMSs reported that teachers were more likely to listen to ideas that came from other classroom teachers instead of the librarian. These comments are consistent with Fullan’s observation that “other teachers are often the preferred source for ideas” (59-60).

### **Limitations of the Study**

Insights drawn from this qualitative study are specific to the experiences of the interviewed SLMSs and cannot be generalized to other situations. The methodology chosen to implement the study, focused interviews with selected SLMSs and analysis of associated media center scheduling books, proved both successful and limiting. The interview format allowed for a relatively thorough discussion concerning the SLMSs’ experiences with opinion leader teachers:

general reflections were captured as well as experiences with specific opinion leader teachers. Conducting the scheduling book analysis subsequent to the related interview was helpful in providing some context for understanding usage patterns of the identified opinion leader teachers, especially relative to other grade level teachers. Scheduling book analysis also served to corroborate and extend specific teacher/librarian interactions related by the SLMSs.

The most striking limitation encountered in the study centered on the scheduling book analysis. The scheduling books were created in the course of day-to-day interactions within each media center; as such, they varied greatly in the information which was recorded. Scheduling books for one school provided information about each media center visit (including topic and, sometimes, classification information such as “research” or “story time”). Scheduling books for two other schools identified the teacher by name but failed to identify the topic or the type of activity consistently. Due to the variation in scheduling book annotations, the central method of analysis consisted of tallying the number of visits and the total amount of time in the media center by each individual teacher. While this method of analysis did provide information regarding usage patterns, it is important to note that time in the media center provides no information regarding the degree of teacher/SLMS collaboration occurring during the recorded visits: more time in the media center does not necessarily equate to higher levels of teacher/SLMS collaboration. Therefore, in many instances, scheduling book analysis could not serve to indicate whether the SLMS was, indeed, collaborating with an individual teacher.

An additional study limitation may be found in using the SLMSs to identify opinion leader teachers. Rogers supports the validity of this method provided the SLMSs are “knowledgeable” about the network of relationships at a school. Although the profile for interview candidates was developed to identify SLMSs that knew how to successfully collaborate with teachers, this study did not attempt to confirm whether the SLMS was a “knowledgeable source” as that term is understood in Rogers’ analysis.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Information Power presents an engaging vision of teachers and media specialists working collaboratively as “instructional partners.” To date, such collaboration, however, is not universally in place in public elementary school media centers. Research needs to develop and test strategies which the SLMSs can use to initiate and develop collaborative partnerships with teachers. Understanding their role as “change agent” in leading and facilitating change to initiate teacher/librarian collaboration within a flexibly accessed program, the SLMS is presented with the question: What is the next step?

The oft suggested strategy of “seeking out one teacher” with whom to begin collaborating, and building from that initial relationship, is consistent with Fullan’s suggestion that, when change is initiated, working with small groups and building momentum is a reasonable approach (91). This study explores whether the “one teacher” strategy might be informed by research into opinion leadership

in the change process. Building on Rogers' definition of "opinion leader," the practices and experiences of selected media specialists were explored.

Interviews with five media specialists, supported by scheduling book analysis for three of the four schools employing the SLMSs, identified notable roles for individual, key teachers. In several respects, these individuals, identified as opinion leaders by the SLMS, reflect the generalizations for opinion leadership developed by Rogers: the opinion leader teachers sought out new information in the form of workshops, advanced degrees, and teacher training; they occupied a role and served as a connector between the media center programs and other grade level teachers; they were enthusiastic supporters of the media center program and often sought out the SLMS for collaboration; and, they were often interested in trying new ideas or projects and looked to others for help as needed.

In Rogers' analysis, "change agents often use opinion leaders in a social system as their lieutenants" in spreading change (27). Or, to use the words of the SLMSs interviewed for the study, the opinion leader teachers see "the possibility" offered by teacher/librarian collaboration and trumpet those successes to other grade level teachers. The experiences of the SLMSs interviewed for the study suggest that it may be possible to promote collaboration with multiple teachers by carefully choosing the initial collaborative partner. Instead of merely seeking to identify an individual willing to collaborate, the SLMS may be able to encourage more widespread teacher/librarian collaboration

by identifying and working to develop collaborative partnerships with opinion leader teachers.

Strategies for increasing collaboration may be needed even after collaborative partnerships are established. As Rusty Taylor, Lead Media Coordinator for Wake County (N.C.) Public Schools, observed: “Staff change. As new people come on board, you have to accept that you are continually going to be in a retraining mode. There is never really a completion goal ...those teachers [at the highest level of collaboratively partnering with the media specialist] retire or move away and someone else comes in” (“Flexible Access” 1:33:54). This observation is echoed in the experience of Ms. Able, who, despite increased opportunities to plan collaboratively with grade levels during the third year of Hazelwood Elementary, felt her program did not advance to the next stage of collaboration as she had expected, due to significant teacher turnover, requiring “retraining” between the second and third years.

During the study, opinion leaders were found to have many common characteristics. However, the experiences of each SLMS were different, both in terms of the role played by the opinion leaders as well as other situational characteristics. For example, except for the fact that brand new teachers were explicitly excluded from the opinion leader role, there was no consensus as to the likely age or experience level of an opinion leader teacher. Nor did the scheduling book analysis establish that the opinion leader teacher was necessarily the grade level teacher who was more likely to be in the library. Scheduling book analysis had significant limitations and, very likely, does not

accurately reflect the actual involvement or influence of some opinion leader teachers. Each SLMS reported various elements within their school that influenced and supported the formation of collaborative partnerships with classroom teachers. Consistent with the research literature, the elements identified by the SLMS included flexibly scheduled access to the media center, significant support by the principal for the media center program and teacher/SLMS collaboration, a school-wide culture of collaboration and opportunities for grade level collaborative planning.

Further research along several avenues is suggested to explore the results and the limitations of this study. First, an empirical study is suggested to verify the finding that, approximately half the time, the opinion leader teachers visited the media center more frequently, and for more time, than other grade level teachers. Such a study may further aid in opinion leader identification by confirming the proposition that opinion leader teachers are heavy users of the media center program. (Along similar lines, such a study might explore recent findings looking at public libraries and community leaders. Such individuals were noted to have the following characteristics: active in their community, voted in local elections and contributed to charities (“Long Overdue” 60)).

Building on the methodology used in the current study, further research is needed to more closely understand the collaborative interactions between SLMSs and opinion leader teachers. One interview with each SLMS was conducted for the current study. Additional research might include multiple interviews with selected SLMS in addition to detailed scheduling book analysis.

Such a method may allow the researcher to gain a better understanding of SLMS/opinion teacher interactions for specific projects identified from the initial interview or the scheduling book analysis. Subsequent interviews with the SLMS might focus on the level of SLMS/teacher interaction in developing, teaching and evaluating the projects; the pathways through which the project may have spread to other grade level teachers; and whether the project led, either directly or indirectly, to additional projects with the opinion leader teacher or other grade level teachers. In undertaking such a study, the selection of SLMSs who maintain detailed, carefully annotated scheduling books is suggested. Additionally, researchers might analyze any written lesson plans, especially unit lesson plans generated by collaborative grade level planning sessions, to better understand the details of such SLMS/teacher “instructional partnerships.”

Finally, further research is needed to investigate the opinion leader teachers, the SLMS and the social network in which they function. Investigating the context in which teacher/SLMS collaboration occurs would serve two purposes. First, gathering such information may serve to confirm that the SLMS is a “knowledgeable source” and capable of reliably identifying opinion leader teachers. Second, understanding the social network in which collaborative relationships exists will allow a researcher to more fully draw upon Rogers’ analysis of opinion leadership in the change process.

The underlying goal of this study was to further close the gap between theory and vision: to understand some of the practical steps successful SLMSs take as “change agents” in striving to develop a collaborative media center

program and fulfill Information Power's directive to work as an "instructional partner" with classroom teachers. Drawing on the information provided by successful media specialists, the author provides the following practical recommendations for the SLMS trying to implement the strategy of "starting with one teacher" to initiate or expand collaboration. The suggestions are especially well suited to a media specialist initiating collaboration in a school which has yet to develop a collaborative culture. However, the steps may also benefit the media specialist rebuilding his/her program after significant teacher turnover or expanding collaborative partnerships to additional grade levels.

- Whether you are new to a school or just new to the idea of collaboration, become familiar with the social networks in your school. This step will help you identify the opinion leader teachers. Do teachers plan closely in teams or across grade levels? Which individuals do teachers look to for information or advice?
- Start to identify the opinion leaders, most likely these teachers are found at each grade level. Which teachers attend voluntary workshops? Who volunteers to serve on committees or takes other leadership roles? Who likes to try new ideas and seeks help in meeting students' needs? Who gains expertise and shares new information with other teachers?

- Be mindful of other elements in your school that support collaboration. Are there grade level planning meetings where a teacher expresses enthusiasm for collaborations with the SLMS and shares successful experiences?
- Identify how you can leverage interactions with the opinion leader teacher to encourage further collaboration with other teachers. Is it best to approach the opinion leader teacher with ideas before grade level planning sessions? Can you promote collaboration by first suggesting a project to the opinion leader teacher and having him/her tell other teachers about it?
- Use various avenues to share and promote successful collaborations, such as grade level meetings, displaying projects, using prior collaborations as examples in talking with new teachers.
- Be patient and persistent. Keep trying to work with opinion leaders that you identify. An idea that a teacher rejected during an earlier conversation may, at the right moment, be the perfect project and demonstrate the worth of collaborative partnerships to a skeptical opinion leader who doesn't initially "get it."
- Remember that building and maintaining a collaborative media center program is an on-going process. Remain alert to situations created by teacher turnover; you may need to find and work with new, or developing, opinion leader teachers.

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## **Appendix A: Initial Email Contact with Interviewee**

My name is Janice Bryant. I am a Master's Study at the University of NC-CH currently studying to become a school librarian. \_\_\_\_\_ suggested that I contact you.

I am currently working on my Masters Paper and would like to know if you would consider letting me interview you. I am exploring how a school librarian starts collaborating with teachers when he/she changes his/her program from a fixed schedule to a flexible schedule. Specifically, I want to find out if a librarian identified specific teachers to work with. How such teachers are identified. And how the librarian goes about getting the teacher to work with him/her

If you agree to be interviewed, I would also like to review your scheduling book for the past \_\_\_ years. This would provide some background information before the interview and let me look for patterns in Media Center use. I can copy the scheduling books or review them at your school, whatever would be more convenient.

Your name, the name of your school and the names of the teachers with whom you work will not be used in the final Masters Paper. Instead, pseudonyms will be used to protect your privacy and ensure that identifying information is held in confidence.

Would you be willing to let me interview you?

I anticipate the interview would take about 45 minutes. Also, I would want to make an audio recording of the interview.

If you are interested in participating in this study, I will send you the Consent Form so that you may review it. The letter which accompanies the Consent Form will also encourage you to consult with your school principal regarding your participation in this study.

Please contact me if you would be willing to participate or would like more information. Thank you.

Janice Bryant

**Appendix B: Letter Accompanying Consent Form**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your interest and willingness to participate in my Masters Paper project. I am sending a copy of the Consent Form for your review. The Consent Form explains the study in more detail.

In addition, I encourage you to discuss this project with the Principal of your school. Should she have any questions or concerns regarding your participation, I will be happy to speak with her. If the principal wishes to contact me directly, I can be reached at [bryantj@email.unc.edu](mailto:bryantj@email.unc.edu) or (919) \_\_\_\_\_.

I look forward to meeting with you. At that time we will review the Consent Form. The Consent Form must be reviewed and signed before I review your Media Center interview you. If you have any questions or, after reviewing the Consent Form, decide that you would prefer to forgo participation in the project, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Janice Bryant  
Masters Student  
School of Information and Library Science  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## **Appendix C: Guide Questions for Interviews**

### Opinion Leader Teachers

(1) Do you see “opinion leader teachers” as having a role in supporting collaboration? Why or why not?

(1) If so, how did you go about identifying teachers with whom you wanted to collaborate?

(2) Did you attempt to identify “opinion leader” teachers?

(a) Among various categories (grade level, “specials” teachers, teachers who ate together in the lunch room etc)

What formal leadership roles did you identify?

What informal roles did you look to?

What steps, if any, did you take to identify these leaders?

(3) Where these teachers opinion leaders within their grade level or across grade levels?

### Experiences with Opinion Leader Teachers

Tell me about your initial experiences with these “opinion leaders”

Tell me about your experiences with [the identified teacher] over the next year, two years, three years.

Once you identified specific “opinion leader teachers”, describe the ways you initiated contact, initiated collaboration or otherwise interacted with these teachers?

How did your interactions with [the identified teacher] impact your interactions with other teachers with whom that teacher associates?

How did your identification and interactions/collaborations with [the identified teacher] impact your success in getting other teacher to collaborate with you?

Have you encountered an “opinion leader” teacher who negatively impacted your efforts to work collaboratively?

In your experience, do opinion leaders impact your success in initiating collaboration with teachers who are new to your school (especially teachers who are brand new teachers or new to flexible scheduling and collaboration)?

#### Characteristics/Qualities of Opinion Leader Teachers

Based on your experiences, can you describe characteristics or qualities which these teachers may possess (years of experience, personal qualities etc)

#### Other Issues:

(1) In your experience, what elements (e.g., principal support) have contributed to supporting librarian/teacher collaboration?

(2) Have the new teachers you work with encountered the idea of flexible scheduling and collaboration in their education or training?

(3) Do you have an advisory committee and, if so, what role does it play in your program?

(4) What do you see as the advantages/disadvantages of scheduling books or other methods of tracking teacher and class interactions?

## **Appendix D: Consent Form**

**University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
Consent to Participate in a Research Study  
Adult Participants  
Social Behavioral Form**

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**IRB Study #** \_\_LIBS 05-088 \_\_\_\_ **Consent Form Version Date:** January 31, 2006

**Title of Study: Collaborative Partnerships: Identifying and Engaging Teachers for Collaboration in an Elementary School Setting**

**Principal Investigator:** Janice Bryant  
**UNC-Chapel Hill Department:** School of Information and Library Science  
**UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number:** 919/933-4636  
**Email Address:** *bryantj@email.unc.edu*  
**Faculty Advisor:** Evelyn Daniel  
**Funding Source:** n/a

**Study Contact telephone number:** 919/933-4636  
**Study Contact email:** bryantj@email.unc.edu

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### **What are some general things you should know about research studies?**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary.

You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

### **What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this research study is to learn about *whether*, and *how*, successful School Library Media Specialists identify and build collaborative partnerships with “opinion leader” teachers as they initiate or expand collaborative co-teaching and flexible scheduling.

**How many people will take part in this study?**

If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately three to six people in this research study.

**How long will your part in this study last?**

**Your part in this study should require:**

- (1) Obtaining consent; request for/obtaining scheduling book: 20 minutes.
- (2) Interview: 45 to 75 minutes.
- (3) Clarification Follow-up: 15 minutes (to clarify and follow-up any confusion from audio recording of interview and notes)

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**

1. Janice Bryant (identified as the Principal Investigator at the beginning of the letter) will copy 1 to 3 years of your scheduling books to review patterns of use in the media center. If you prefer, scheduling books can be reviewed by Janice Bryant on site.
2. You will be interviewed, at a location of your choice, by Janice Bryant about your experiences. During the interview, written notes will be made as well as an audio recording (which will be transcribed following the interview).
3. If questions arise after the interview is transcribed, you may be contacted for brief follow-up questions to clarify any confusion.

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may not benefit personally from being in this research study.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

**How will your privacy be protected?**

Your name and the name of the school where you are employed will not be used in the final written report. Although information relating to your experiences, as well as the number of years you have worked as a school media specialist, will be included in the study, pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. Additionally, no personal information, obtained through the interview or examination of the scheduling books, regarding specific teachers will be used (for example, the term “third grade teacher” or a pseudonym will be used instead of a teacher’s name). Trends identified through analysis of the scheduling books

(e.g., length or pattern of visits, grade level or subject area) will reflect aggregated data and will not include individually identifiable information (such as a teacher's name).

All materials relating to the interviews (such as audio tapes of interviews, transcribed interviews, field notes) and all materials relating to scheduling book analysis (any copies of scheduling books and/or data collected from reviewing those books) will be maintained in the personal possession of Janice Bryant and will be kept in a locked cabinet. Audio tapes may be held briefly by a third party for purpose of transcription; however, confidentially of any identifying information will be subject to agreement by the third party. After one year, all materials relating to interviews (audio tapes of interviews, transcribed interviews, and field notes) and all materials relating to scheduling book analysis (any copies of scheduling books and/or data collected from reviewing those books) will be destroyed.

You, your school, and the teachers with whom your work will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**

You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**

There will be no costs for being in the study

**What if you have questions about this study?**

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB\_subjects@unc.edu.

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**Participant's Agreement:**

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Participant

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Research Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

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**Appendix E: Example of similar usage patterns by grade level teachers.**

Media Center use by 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers at Northside Elementary School over eight consecutive weeks during the academic school year 2004-2005.

	Week 26	Week 27	Week 28	Week 29	Week 30	Week 31	Week 32	Week 33
Teacher 1 (opinion leader)	1 visit 45 min.		1 visit 45 min		1 visit 30 min.	1 visit 30 min	1 visit 15 min	
Teacher 2			1 visit 45 min		1 visit 15 min.	1 visit 15 min	1 visit 15 min	
Teacher 3	1 visit 45 min		1 visit 45 min		1 visit 45 min	1 visit 30 min	1 visit 15 min	
Teacher 4	1 visit 45 min		1 visit 45 min			1 visit 45 min	1 visit 15 min	

### **Appendix F: Grade Level Collaborative Planning Sessions**

Number of “Shared Topics” and Collaborative Planning Sessions at each grade level of Hazelwood elementary School, 2005-2006.

<b>Hazelwood Elementary 2005-2006</b>	<b>Number of “Shared Topics”</b> (Topics/activities in the media center in which all teachers, or all but one teacher, participated)	<b>Number of Collaborative Planning Sessions</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b> 5 teachers 1 opinion leader	Involved at least 4 of 5 teachers:  2	3
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b> 4 teachers 2 opinion leaders	Involved at least 3 of 4 teachers:  7	6
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</b> 5 teachers 2 opinion leaders	Involved at least 4 of 5 teachers:  5	6
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b> 4 teachers 2 opinion leaders	Involved at least 3 of 4 teachers:  11	4
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> 4 teachers 2 opinion leaders	Involved at least 3 of 4 teachers:  2	3
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> 3 teachers no opinion leaders	Involved at least 2 of 3 teachers:  1	2