

Transfer, Lead, Look Inward: Further Study of Preservice School Librarians' Development

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School librarianship is affected by the widespread challenges affecting schools and changing notions of school libraries' relevancy. The purpose of this study was to ascertain how these societal trends influenced educators' decisions to be school librarians. In this second phase of a longitudinal qualitative study, five school library program graduates were re-engaged four years after the conclusion of the first phase. Critical event narrative analyses of interview transcripts suggested that while their preservice education experiences prepared them to embrace school library and technology leadership, some participants chose not to pursue or stay in school librarianship and applied their preparation to roles as classroom teachers and school administrators. Many participants' choices reflected themes found in literature pertaining to situated learning, transfer of training, transfer of skills, and leadership development. In addition, the powerful presence of teacher acculturation factors and phases of career development affected the experiences of these school library preparation program graduates.

Keywords: school librarianship, leadership, preservice education, training transfer, skills transfer, critical event narrative analysis

School librarianship is a beleaguered profession. Despite the American Library Association's 2009 report that school library staffing had been increasing or stable for the at least a decade, of 875 school administrators surveyed in 49 states, 89% reported considering cuts to school libraries (Ellerson, 2010). In addition, 58% reported that they were unable to save school librarian positions in 2010 (Ellerson, 2009) and about 31% more of the same group reported that they intended to cut school librarians in their districts by the end of the 2012 (Ellerson, 2010). Key policy battles over school librarian retention have been fought and won in Washington, lost in Arizona, and continue in numerous other states. With only about a quarter of the growing number of charter schools including school libraries and few of those libraries staffed with certified school librarians (Keigher & Gruber, 2009), the professional outlook for many

school librarians is grim at a time when their fostering of information and communications technology (ICT) processes and skills and multiple literacies is increasingly viewed as an essential aspect of quality education (Johnson, Smith, Willis, Levine, & Haywood, 2011).

Still, 62% of public school officials reported that they had at least one certified school librarian in their district (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). In many instances, these school librarians received their education and certification at a Master's degree-granting library and information studies (MLIS) program. Forty-eight ALA-accredited LIS programs surveyed by the ALA offered specializations or certificates in school library media. According to reports compiled by the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), enrolment in these programs is not yet changing significantly (Wallace & Nai-

doo, 2010a, 2010b), but the professional atmosphere of school librarians is changing dramatically (American Association of School Librarians [AASL], 2011; Davis, 2009; Farmer, 2011).

The purpose of this study is to ascertain how societal trends influence educators' involvement with school librarianship by exploring the role that formal preparation played in helping school librarians prepare for this new employment environment. Five teachers who had become school librarians participated in an earlier study of their internship experiences (Mardis, 2007a) and four years after the participants had completed their MLIS degrees with school librarianship emphases, the researcher met with them again to discern the extent to which they gained the skills, knowledge, and desire they needed to be effective school librarians in the current climate of vital need and diminishing support.

Literature Review

Many of the issues relating to entering school librarianship echo themes found in literature pertaining to situated learning, transfer of training, transfer of skills, and leadership development. In addition, the powerful presence of acculturation into teaching and the phases of career development inherent in classroom practice underlie the experiences of school library preparation program graduates.

Situated Learning

Very often, school librarians are former classroom teachers (Mardis, 2007a). Researchers have conducted few studies into the components of an effective transition from classroom to school library. Extant studies touch on transition mainly through examinations of the role of the practicum (also known as an internship or field experience) in preparation. In these studies, researchers concluded that practicums tended to be brief and unstructured (Vansickle, 2000); focused on unchallenging tasks at

the expense of leadership preparation (Callison, 1995); and scorned by students as pointless repetitions of their student teaching experiences (Mardis, 2007b; Shannon, 2004). Mardis (2007a) conducted a study of the practicum experiences of teachers who had recently received their school-library-focused MLIS degrees. An outcome of that study was evidence that the immediate impact of the practicum was not that it allowed students to master the role of a school librarian but that it allowed these former teachers to have experiences that helped them to redefine themselves as school librarians. Often, vocational, technical, or clerical skills made the biggest difference to practicum students: they appreciated the opportunity to perform basic activities unique to the school librarian (e.g., weeding, cataloguing) and unlike the tasks of a classroom teacher. Students who did not engage in these entry-level school librarian activities encountered difficulty describing the differences between their roles as teachers and their roles and school librarians.

This finding is important because it called into question the purpose of the practicum for teachers who are becoming school librarians. For this population, the practicum was not about learning to teach aspects of information seeking and use. These students were very confident in their teaching abilities. Rather, their field experience was about transforming their perspectives as educators focused on leading a classroom with a defined curriculum and fixed set of students to educators focused on leading a school library that served the entire school's students and learning goals. From this point of view, the practicum functioned as an essential instance of "situated learning." Lave and Wenger (1990) argued that powerful learning is embedded within activity, context, and culture of an educational role. This learning can be unintentional or deliberate, but is usually both. In their practicum experiences, learners are situated in a community of practice in which they

become engaged within the school librarian culture and move toward gaining deep understanding of its expertise and leadership components. An additional benefit of situated learning is that it allows learners to see the core principles of an activity and transfer those experiences to a range of contexts.

Transfer of Training

In addition to learning how to *act* like a school librarian, preservice education can also allow students to learn how to *think* like a school librarian. Coursework allows students to gain conceptual knowledge and the practicum often gives students their first chances to apply, or transfer, the training they have received to a school library environment. Preservice education ostensibly includes both kinds of activities to ensure that educators are prepared to transfer their preservice training to the classroom.

Grounded in human resources and organizational studies, the terms “transfer of learning” or “transfer of training” are interchangeably used to describe the extent to which education gained in a particular preparation or professional development program can be applied to its target workplace role (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010). In the instance of this study, transfer of training describes preservice program graduates’ abilities to apply the knowledge gained in their practicum experiences to the work of a school librarian. A team of researchers led by Gegenfurtner (2009) synthesized researchers’ main findings and identified seven dimensions that influence the transfer of training:

1. Motivation to transfer training is established prior to experiencing training. This dimension suggests that the person who gained the skills has to want to use them for their intended purposes. In the situation examined in this study, this relationship describes the connection between participant attitudes toward their preservice education and their desire and/or abilities to apply it to the work of a school librarian. Jayasuriya and Caputi (2008) indicated that the training must also link to personal goals of the trainees; that is, trainees must want to perform the task for which they are being prepared.
2. Prior to training, the clarity of the training goal influences transfer motivation. A bulk of research evidence (e.g., Bell & Ford, 2007; Scaduto, Lindsay, & Chiaburu, 2008) has suggested that the relationship between pretraining motivation and posttraining performance is strong, particularly when the outcome of the training supports a pre-existing professional goal prior. Trainees must desire the role for which they are being prepared.
3. Pretraining perceptions of the organizational context in which the training will be utilized promotes or hinders transfer. Transfer motivation is driven by the time, money, and resources an organization devotes to creating an environment in which a worker’s role is appreciated and utilized (Latham, 2007). Prior to or during the training, the trainee must perceive that he/she will be supported in their new role.
4. The quality and effectiveness of the training affects trainee’s desire and ability to transfer. Mardis (2007a) found that, in the prior study, the participants were not able fully to grasp many of the concepts of school librarianship until they experienced their practicums, suggesting that effective training must include both conceptual and practical components. Gagné and Deci (2005) also emphasized that training must affectively support trainees through team building, positive feedback from peers and instructors, and evidence of accomplishment.
5. Post-training, individual characteristics such as self-efficacy, commitment to the profession, and attitudes toward the quality of the training experience

relate to transfer. This dimension is largely shaped by post-training concepts of efficacy related to positive self-perceptions of technology competence, training mastery, and performance competence influence training transfer (Bates & Holton, 2004). Researchers found that affective, content, and utility needs motivate trainees to adapt skills to their particular work environments (Holton, Bates, & Ruona, 2000; Kirwan & Birchall, 2006).

6. Post-training, perceptions of workplace barriers and enablers to use new skills influence transfer. Because time, energy, and mental energy are needed to help transfer (Russ-Eft, 2002), job characteristics such as workload, autonomy, and opportunity to perform have important effects on transfer (Bates & Holton, 2004). Researchers such as Latham (2007) have noted that the extent to which personological factors influence perceptions of workplace conditions can be challenging to disentangle, although indirect supervisor and peer support seem to stand out as important aspects (Deelstra, et al., 2003).
7. Motivation to transfer is essential for the transfer of training. In the six dimensions described above, motivation to transfer training mediates between learning, environmental favorability, and behavior change during pretraining, training, and posttraining (Noe, 1986). In keeping with Victor H. Vroom's expectancy theory, the motivation that results from a combination of the trainee's perceptions of reward, confidence, and usefulness of new skill implementation is the single biggest influence on whether new skills are voluntarily used subsequent to educational experiences (Vroom & Deci, 1983).

Transfer of Skills

Related to transfer of training, "transfer of skills" is another concept grounded

in human resources and organizational studies that describes the ability of an employee to apply skills gained in or for one workplace to a different workplace or role. Recently, this concept has spurred new interest and research as workers in technology and knowledge industries have seen their fields expand (Kwon, 2005). In the context of this study, transfer of skills pertains to participants' abilities to apply experiences in and preparation for school librarianship to positions outside the school library, such as classroom teaching, school administration, or jobs outside of education. Likewise, teachers' abilities to use the skills they gained in the classroom in another environment like the school library are examples of skills transfer.

Transferrable skills are commonly characterized as generalizable to a range of situations: critical thinking skills, information and technology skills, communication and presentation skills, and project management (Paris, 1994). Unfortunately, not just beneficial skills transfer; workers can bring counterproductive practices and attitudes to new environments, too (Dokko, Wilk, & Rothbard, 2009).

Teacher Development

The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) of teacher development illustrates the ways teachers progress personally and professionally through their careers. Fuller (1969), Hall and Hord (1987, 2006), Fuller and Bown (1975), and Rutherford and Hall (1990) described a concerns-based model for teachers' careers in which three stages occur. In their views, the three stages can be described as:

1. Concern for self-image and perceptions of competency. This stage usually occurs in the first few years of an educator's career;
2. Concern for instructional tasks and situations. This stage takes hold around the fifth year of teaching practice, once the

educator has established classroom routines and controls; and

3. Concern with instructional impact on students. This stage, most often beginning between the seventh and the tenth year of teaching, reflects a mastery of instructional practice and classroom management in which the educator is comfortable differentiating instruction and routinely reflects on student learning in an effort to enhance outcomes.

These stages develop along an outward trajectory from self to impact. Mardis (2007a) found that school librarians' careers developed along much the same trajectory and that these phases could even be observed in the course of the school librarian preparation.

However, CBAM is deceptively uncomplicated. Teacher development is influenced by a range of personal and environmental factors that influence not only the pace at which educators develop, but also their decisions to stay in the profession and their local schools.

Teachers' job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Job satisfaction is an aspect of teachers' career development that should not be overlooked. Very often, workers seek additional training and education to increase their opportunities to change careers or change job locations; however, some workers seek additional education to enhance their abilities to do jobs or stay in places they like. Hoppock (1935, p. 47) defined job satisfaction as "any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that causes a person truthfully to say, 'I am satisfied with my job'."

Job satisfaction is an intersection of personal and environmental factors and is a large component of job performance (Crede, Chernyshenko, Stark, Dalal, & Bashur, 2007). Environmental factors like economic conditions affecting the industry and objective characteristics of the job (e.g., task repetition, task importance, schedule) are as important as

individual reactions to workplace events and attitude toward the job in resulting in organizational participation, counterproductive workplace behavior, and/or job withdrawal.

Many of these factors can be seen in teacher job satisfaction. Researchers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011) concluded that external factors like value consonance, supervisory support, relations with colleagues, relations with parents, and educational policy influenced job satisfaction and that the perceptions of these external characteristics tended to vary with teachers' gender, career phase, and career status (Liu & Ramsey, 2008). Just as powerful are personal factors such as self-efficacy, autonomy, satisfaction with building leadership and school climate, time pressure, and student discipline problems (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Dissatisfaction results in three outcomes: teachers either leave the profession, transfer to a new area of teaching, or transfer to a new school (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009).

Leadership Development

Beyond honing their practice, some educators aspire to leadership roles. Whether in formal or informal contexts, potential leaders must feel invested in their school community (Leithwood, Riedlinger, Bauer, & Jantzi, 2003), confident in their abilities to lead (Caffarella, 2002; Hall & Hord, 2001), clear about the activities they will be performing as leaders (Barnett, 2005), and that they will be given the opportunity to exercise leadership (Barnett & O'Mahony, 2002). Leadership at all levels in schools has been described as an essential condition of innovation and change (Adams & Jean-Marie, 2011; Rogers, 2003).

The route to the principalship usually involves progress from classroom teacher, school librarian, or other peer (e.g., guidance counselor) to recognition as teacher leader to formal promotion

to assistant principal culminating in appointment as principal. District administrators rarely lack experience at all of these levels (Petersen & Barnett, 2005). Teacher leaders tend to assert their positions based on their commitment to and understanding of school and district goals as well as challenges faced by those tasked with implementing the goals. Assistant principals tend to be appointed to their roles based their familiarity with the school environment and demonstrated local effectiveness (Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, & Donaldson, 2002). Progress to the principalship and district leadership typically involves additional education and training, though not necessarily in school administration (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005).

While leadership development is often sited in formal education programs, the transfer of leadership training to actual leadership effectiveness is unclear (Barnett, 2005), largely for the dimensions illustrated in the Transfer of Training section of this paper. School librarian leadership is a particularly under-studied area (Everhart & Mardis, 2011; Johnston, in press) with most of the studies relating to school librarians' inability to be perceived as leaders despite their preparation to exercise these roles (McCracken, 2001; Shannon, 2004, 2008).

Method

This study was the second phase of a longitudinal study initiated by Mardis (2007a). Longitudinal qualitative approaches are used to explore individuals' changing life experiences and life course patterns (Coupland & Nussbaum, 1993). Of the famous British documentary series *Seven Up*, Berthoud (2000) pointed out that qualitative "longitudinal data . . . offers a movie rather than a snapshot" (p. 15); since the continuing development of the participants was at the center of the study's purpose, a longitudinal approach was justified.

Research Questions

In this study, the researcher examined two questions:

RQ1: How do graduates of a school library preparation program feel their LIS education has affected their professional practice?

RQ2: What are the personological, professional, and external factors that have exerted influence on their career decisions since they began working as school librarians?

Participants

The five participants participated in an earlier study of education for school librarianship (Mardis, 2007a) and completed their preservice education in 2006. The researcher contacted them in summer 2010 and engaged five out of the six original participants. The participants were all white, female, between 30 and 40 years old, and working in suburban or fringe urban schools in the same metropolitan area.

Data Collection

In July 2010, the researcher conducted interviews with participants separately via Skype internet telephony software. The interviews were recorded using the WireTap Studio application and the recordings were later transcribed by a research assistant and reviewed by the researcher.

Because the goal of the study was to gain insight into how each participant had changed since graduation, the researcher gathered data using questions based on Dervin's sense-making (2003). The resulting semi-structured interview used the following questions, asked in order, were:

1. What are your strongest memories of your practicum experience and coursework?
2. What has happened in your career since you graduated?

3. What led up to your decision to follow this path?
4. How do these developments connect with your coursework or your practicum?
5. What emotions or feelings do you have about these developments?
6. What do you see as helps to these developments? What do you see as hindrances?
7. What do you see as your future career steps?
8. Is there anything else you'd like me to know?
9. If you had a magic wand, what would you change?

Data Analysis

Once interview transcripts were generated from recordings, the researcher used narrative analysis methods to highlight critical events in the participants' accounts of their post-graduation experiences (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray-Orr, 2007). Critical event narrative was an appropriate choice for the method in this study because it has been successfully employed in educational contexts to better understand the effect of temporal conditions, social interactions, and spatial influences on participants' thoughts, feelings, and behavior (Mardis, Rich, & Hoffman, in press; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Independently, the researcher and an assistant read through each transcript looking for critical events that led to participants' reactions and actions taken in their own career. A critical event is a point at which the storyteller experiences a "change of understanding or worldview . . . in a professional or work-related role" (Webster & Mertova, 2007, pp. 73–74). Critical events can be extrinsic or intrinsic; for educators, intrinsic events tend to coincide with entry, mid-level, and late career transition points (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Impressions of events and their corresponding themes were compared and

key passages of the participants' stories were identified.

Limitations

The limitations of this study relate mainly to the limits of its interpretation. Because the number of participants was small, homogenous, and located in a defined geographic area, one must use care in applying the findings of this study. While comparisons with prior published research may provide some confirmation on interpretation, the conclusions of this study are not necessarily representative of the activities of all school librarian preparation program graduates.

The research questions were derived and the data were analyzed in a theoretically neutral atmosphere. However, the results of the analyses suggest that the identified themes explain the study's findings in a frameworked context and guide further exploration.

Results

This section includes selections from interviews with five participants: Anna and Haley, now elementary school librarians; Gillian, now a middle and high school librarian; Erin, a high school business teacher in training to become an assistant principal; and Christy, a high school English teacher.

Haley: Leading From Experience

After her young children started school, Haley, a former elementary school teacher, pursued her MLIS. Upon completing her degree, Haley was hired as a part time school librarian in her son's suburban elementary school because that school librarian had taken on district responsibilities and could only work part time. This situation was ideal for Haley since, as she pointed out:

It couldn't have worked out better . . . I didn't feel overwhelmed with starting my

career off again. And I was stepping into something that was her [the school librarian's] set up . . . but she also was open to things that I wanted to do. She ended up mentoring me and she was fantastic.

However, at the end of the school year, Haley was laid off and found a position in a nearby district. Haley went from working in a suburban elementary school in one of the state's best-funded districts to working in an urban district in one of the state's most disadvantaged areas. She experienced a radical departure from what she had been used to:

I got hired at the end of August and I literally started that next week and went into a disaster zone. It was just crazy and I absolutely loved it. Loved the staff, loved the principal, because he was a kind of like take charge person for teachers. And since I was coming in and he was new, it was like the two of us together kind of teamed up a little bit. He was willing to give me more money for more computers and more books. There was nothing. It was so bad, it was so dirty, it was hard to even find port to hook up to the Internet. I mean it was a bad situation.

Despite these victories and a clear sense of need to improve the school library, Haley felt the pressure of working in an under-resourced environment:

It's amazing. I thought about how close this community is to our community and how it is a different world. Most of those kids have never been outside of the city, have probably not even much been off of their street block. It was terribly upsetting, upsetting. It would take a special person to be able to work in that environment and not get just totally burnt out.

After three weeks of immersing herself in getting the school's library in serviceable condition, a principal from Haley's former school district asked her to take a technology and computer teaching position in a middle school near her home.

Haley worked in this new position for the remainder of the school year.

At the beginning of the next school year, Haley became a full time school librarian in an elementary school in the same suburban district. She felt that this position allowed her to apply her education and work experiences to her job and that both sets of experiences have made her effective:

Sometimes there can be an attitude 'I'm just fresh out of school I know so much' but experience is just as valuable as coming out of school, you know. It's amazing how much experience plays a role and I think that is the same with being a classroom teacher as well . . . I love going to work everyday, I enjoy the work that I do. . . . The feedback that I get from students and teachers, and my administrator makes me even happier and more excited to keep plugging away and try new things. I am very loyal to this district. I have more confidence and feel more comfortable in who I am and what I do in my district than I ever have in my entire life. When the young teachers come in I just remember being so insecure. . . . It's great to settle and be like, 'Whoo this is what I am doing and it's awesome!'

Of her brief experience in the urban district, Haley uses it in the ways she interacts with her students in her well-resourced suburban school library, "I just try to get kids to understand how lucky they are all the time."

Gillian: Finding Her Place and Voice

Gillian had been a middle school social studies teacher in a rural district for about five years when she graduated with her MLIS. The school year after graduation, Gillian became the school librarian in her school. However, the school librarian position was cut to part time and Gillian was assigned to also teach two social studies classes and a computer class. The next school year, Gillian was full time school librarian, but split between the high school and the middle school.

Although she had always been compliant with district policies, Gillian's school librarian preparation gave her an advocacy mission. First, she took her concerns about splitting her time between the classroom and school library to the school board. Her concerns resulted in her being returned to a full time school librarian role. Then, when her time was split between two schools, Gillian took her concerns to the middle school principal and defended her position when he indifferently suggested that the high school would be fine with a library paraprofessional:

He said, 'Oh well, middle school is not going to really see any changes because the high school is hiring a parapro.' And I had to explain to him, 'You know, I am offended by that remark that you're saying that this parapro can do my job when I have a Master's degree. I may actually need to be over there [the high school] more because there isn't even a good inventory of the collection or the AV equipment.' Before, I had actually been more worried about the high school principal because he hadn't been working with the school librarian and now he's going to have a parapro. But it was my [middle school] principal who was like 'Oh well, what's the big deal!'

Having found her voice and purpose through school librarianship, Gillian found her place as an educator. Her job satisfaction was a mainstay in light on the external factors affecting her district:

There were times when I was teaching subjects that I didn't care for and age groups that I didn't really click with. When I was in the media center, it was almost immediate: I finally found exactly what it was that I was supposed to be doing. It got so that hour or two when I was off in my classroom, my brain would still be ticking away at all these other things that I needed to get done in the media center and I couldn't do them because I was kind of trapped in my classroom.

Gillian was careful to credit the excel-

lent structures she inherited in the middle school library in making her transition to school librarianship positive despite the sizable legacy she inherited:

The lady who retired was a real dynamo. She made it [the school library] into the real hub of the building and was just so involved and did so much stuff for the staff and for the building. When she retired, people knew me but they didn't really know whether I was going to be able to step into that role. And I think some people really expected me to fail at that expected it to kind of be a downturn when I went in there. And shortly after school started and I'm still doing all these other things and I was just getting tons of compliments about how well I was doing the job and people were saying you know, it was like seamless. I just took over for her and luckily she had a system set up already that was really easy for me to step right into was successful. I didn't have to recreate anything and I just enjoyed what I was doing and getting the compliments and reinforcement from the administrators and teachers that 'Wow you're really doing a great job in here.'

Anna: Keeping Her Options Open

Anna was a mid-career second grade teacher who had been teaching for about eight years on the fringe of a city. Her positive attitude, teaching and technology capabilities, and high regard from her colleagues made a teacher leader. Her intent had always been to be a school librarian only if she could stay in her district. After graduation, she achieved this goal:

You are trying to stay in because you're building equity you're moving up the steps. You know how the districts run even down to how the library circulation desk works. I would have to learn that all again if I had to go to another district . . . [T]hat is just another layer of having to re-learn something else on top of being in a new position.

Still, Anna initially greeted her move to the school library with reluctance:

I was at the same school for the last six years so I was a huge part of the community at my old school. I ran a bunch of programs and I was part of everything like after school programs. When you move to a new school, other teachers already have their fingers in all the clubs and everything they want to do so you are feeling like the new kid on the block—like a brand new teacher again. . . . I think I was getting comfortable staying in the 2nd grade classroom . . . I think had I even been offered a media position, I might not have taken it.

However, due to school district budget cuts, Anna had to make a choice between taking a school library position in a different school or being laid off:

I got a phone call the day before school started saying that I was being involuntarily transferred into the media center in another building. I had to pack up my whole classroom over Labor Day weekend and start school the next day. It was very crazy. The way it happened was not my choice just because I had no time to go in and assess the library and almost no time to pack my stuff. But at the same time part of me feels no that having been through a year of it, I needed to be pushed into that position.

Once in the position, Anna was mainly concerned about being accepted by her new school community and making a good professional impression upon them.

I was going to miss the relationships with the kids and families that I already had. . . . The school I was being sent to was known for not being a very friendly school. Ironically, it was the school I went to for elementary school and the media specialist [school librarian] that retired was my media specialist so I knew a lot hadn't changed. I knew it was going to be a huge undertaking. In one way, it was good he didn't really do a whole lot because no

matter what I did they were going to be happy. At the same time, you want to go into something and do it right. It's easier if somebody has already established something and you can go in and kind of tweak it to the way you want it. I had to revamp everything. So, I put a lot of pressure on myself for that.

With the process of making the school library her own underway, Anna considered the extent to which she was able to feel ownership over her improved environment.

I would probably go back there [her previous school] if she [the current school librarian] does retire after this year because to me, that is my home. But if she doesn't retire for another year, then I would consider this kind of my new home and I would stick it out because I definitely, absolutely, one hundred percent feel like the media center is mine. I've completely rearranged everything . . . even down to the way it looks and the way I run it, it is mine. I have a completely flexible schedule with students coming down to check out books whenever they want and they definitely didn't have that before.

Anna also credits her ability to transfer skills from the classroom to the school library to her successful transition:

I was able to implement something I had used to teaching reading and kind of tweak it. My other experience helped me jump right into the teaching aspect . . . now having met several media specialists in any district who didn't come from the classroom, they are much more scared of teaching K-5 than I am . . . they've been doing this for several years and they still don't teach as much as they could be or should be. And they say they are just not used to teaching that many kids and that many different grade levels and for me I felt like I was able to jump in because I had the teaching experience. I was able to jump in, adapt any lesson, change anything, work

with it even just down to classroom management. Nothing really shook me.

Anna credits the support she had from her practicum mentor to mastering the library administration aspects of her new role. As peers now, Anna and this school librarian were able to trade advice and provide professional support.

During my practicum, she allowed me complete carte blanche to make a list what I thought would be good for her library and then she sat and talked to me about it before she put in the order. That was huge because I actually got to do that three times this year because my library was so deficient. Our average collection age was 1979! She helped me get extra money from the district and since she had already taught me the ordering process, it helped a lot. It's good collaborating, you know, partnership.

Anna also worked closely with another new school librarian, also a graduate of her MLIS program. In her fellow school librarians, Anna found a community inaccessible to her when she was in the classroom and one that sustained her through her transition to a new school.

Confident in both her ability to call upon her classroom teaching skills and ability to run a school library, Anna felt empowered to choose the right educator circumstances for her:

I can definitely see me wanting to go back into the classroom but once again it's a tough thing because you don't want to just jump ship when things get tough. In the school library, more things like budget cuts and tech support just get piled on top of you and so part of my irritation and frustration with the district could make me want to go back to the classroom. I feel like within the classroom being in charge of 24 students I felt like that was more of my own. The freedom to do what I wanted within that classroom and having just those kids to build that relationship with in a way was easier and I'm not one

to look for easy. The workload was different absolutely. I would have to say in certain respects being in the classroom is a lot more work but just the ease of knowing that it was mine, there is not the input from the outside sources. You're not being dragged in 40 million directions to try to fix everyone's needs. I'd say it's a little bit enticing to go back into the classroom.

Anna credits her MLIS coursework in making her a better teacher:

I could I can go online now and look at some of the databases we learned about and pull out articles to back up why I'm teaching what I'm teaching and I don't think I could have done that as easily before . . . I feel like I have a wider knowledge of where to look for things where to find things. Also the whole collaboration with the teachers . . . I've always known that collaboration is key is important, but learning how to have it with teachers even though I was a classroom teacher is wow, it's pretty hard. It's pretty hard to do because you get so many teachers that are set in their ways of how to do things and you come in with a new idea can be really tough . . . to work with different personalities and how basically you're working relationships and how you work with your administrator too. I don't know it just feels like the dynamics are just so much different when you are in the media center . . . I felt prepared for that.

Christy: Becoming a Teacher Leader and Collaborator

Christy pursued her MLIS in order to move to a higher level on the salary scale. During her school library preparation, Christy was the head of the English department at her high school. As a result of what she was learning in her school librarianship classes, Christy began to include the school's librarian in more of the English department's planning and instruction and saw the benefits of that close collaboration. Because her intention had never

been to become a school librarian, Christy looked on her preparation experience as a way to improve her own teaching and have a better understanding of how she could work with her school librarian.

Although she gained appreciation for the work of the school librarian, Christy's preparation and positive experiences did not make her want to become a school librarian:

At this point feel like I don't really feel qualified. I don't really feel like I got enough experience to really make me know what I am doing. That was true for me when I went into the classroom, you know you don't really get enough experience and you get thrown into the classroom initially. But I guess a big part of me doesn't really want to do that again and I think I would really have to learn more about technology if I was going to do that right.

However, her lack of hands-on experience as a school librarian began during her preparation:

I think partly it was just my experience and I think my mentor realized that I wasn't really that interested into going into school librarianship so she kind of just let me do a bunch of things on my own. So I didn't really feel like I had this experience with that like a lot of it. I created units for her English teachers and she wanted me to create units to show them how they could teach information literacy with the books they give out so a lot of that is what I did and that helped me as a teacher but I don't think it helped me a whole lot as a media specialist.

However, Christy admits that had she been willing to do her practicum in a different school, she may have been more inspired to become a school librarian:

I think it was George. He was the media specialist and he taught classes. He was the one person that really inspired me when I took his classes and we actually talked about what he did that made me think well

now this could be a replacement for what I feel as a teacher so I suppose if I had had someone like that as my mentor then I may have been more inspired to becoming a specialist.

Regardless of whether she sees herself as a school librarian, Christy is likely to stay in her position due to the uncertainty related to moving and her security in her current position:

I have been here 7 years and am pretty established. I would not leave the district because then I'd start over again and most likely I would get cut and we just laid off 50 employees. It's not a good time for the job. Now if I looked into media specialist positions in my district, I still think are a bit of a problem because we have talked about cutting and so I'm always looking a the possibility of taking a media specialist position and then the next year lose it and I would be stuck in whatever classroom was open.

Erin: On the Path to the Principalship

Erin was late in her first decade of teaching technical and career skills in a high school on the fringe of the city. A sponsor of student clubs and extracurricular activities, Erin is teacher leader. She was initially attracted to school librarianship for the marketing and management aspects of this job. Erin saw school library preparation as a place to apply the program administration skills she taught in her classes to new contexts:

I've definitely documenting all that stuff now based on their [school administration] request and that reminds me of working in the [school library] practicum a lot and how...we have to show where our money is going and just really advertise our stuff [career and technical education]. We definitely get our program out there by advertisement and that reminds me a lot how school librarians basically cater to the kids now however they need us. We try to

accommodate them so that they have nothing but good things to say about us, know, if anyone should ask!

Her school librarian preparation also affected her teaching. Erin also was able to encourage her students to be more ethical information consumers and produce higher quality writing assignments:

There is no plagiarizing going on in my classroom basically. They have to use authoritative sources. They have to document all of their sources; that's very important to me now...And I don't think I would ever have done that before. I would have taken that stuff I would have just been like 'As long as you are using technology kids, whatever!' But I am definitely pickier now about the sources that I want them to use because in college they'll need to know how.

Even her planning process has been transformed by what she learned in her school library preparation:

When I put my lesson plans together, I'm basically working backwards like this is what I want the kids to learn and then this is how they are going to basically get it, which, in turn, is probably going to be easier for them. I think their projects are coming out better and their papers are coming out better. Everything is more or less how I want it to be now instead of them trying to incorporate what they have learned in English classes. I hope what they take from my class and use it in their English classes.

In addition to improving her teaching, Erin's school librarian preparation heightened her awareness of how a school librarian should be supporting her teacher. She also used what she learned in her coursework to attempt to improve the library in her school:

Our media specialist is just there passing time. He really isn't advertising the media center or getting new ideas out there to us. He was letting his students use Wikipedia

to find information for one of the projects that he was doing and I said to him, 'You can use [periodical databases],' and I showed him how they are so much more reliable than Wikipedia. He just lets it be a free for all. He's just sitting there when someone else could be doing a much better job. He does a copy service for us but that's really about it, doesn't tell us what new books are in the media center or what like videos he has for us to use.

Moving into school administration was always a goal of Erin's and she saw school librarian preparation as an important aspect of learning about every part of the school:

I did the school library degree because I wanted to learn about the library because I knew nothing about it. Then, the opportunity presented itself for this Ed.S. certification and be an assistant principal. I'm glad I took the road that I did. I'm glad I did the Master's in library media because I definitely know what the school library should be. If I ever become a principal I know how I want the media center to look and what that person should be doing.

Discussion

Analysis of the interviews resulted in the emergence of three themes that reflect transfer of teaching, transfer of skill, situated learning, and teacher career development. These themes provide insight on the study's research questions and suggest a framework that can be used for further exploration of school librarian development.

Theme 1. Transferring Teaching: Becoming a School Librarian

All of the participants mentioned that the situated learning they received in their education influenced their views of school librarianship. For Anna, her mentor provided her not only with an excellent practicum, but also with community as she

transitioned to a new school. Both Gillian and Haley experienced situated learning in less formal fashions by inheriting functional school libraries with policies and procedures in place that they needed only to continue and adjust to their personal styles. Still, they credited their coursework with helping them make the most of their opportunities in the school library. Although Christy never intended to become a school librarian, she did recognize how coursework complemented with a dynamic practicum experience could have changed her mind.

Theme 2. Transferring Skills: Using School Librarian Preparation for Teaching and Leadership

Each of the participants remarked that their school librarian preparation improved their teaching. For Anna and Haley, school librarianship provided a comfortable blend of their past experiences as teachers and their newly-gained skills as school librarians. Both of them credited their classroom experiences with helping them take more risks and spend more time applying their preparation to mastering the unique aspects of the school librarian role.

Christy and Erin both used their school librarian preparation as ways to gain insight into the contributions school librarians can be making to the school community. As a department head and a part-time assistant principal, respectively, these two leaders considered it important to understand how school librarians could contribute to learning and support for teachers.

Theme 3. Looking Inward: Local Factors Influence Career Development

Gillian and Haley sought school librarianship as a natural evolution of their teaching careers and a role in which they could derive greater personal satisfaction and reach larger numbers of students with content they valued. For Erin, her deep-

ened knowledge of school librarianship and desire to improve her students' abilities to have information and technology skills empowered her to become an assistant principal: the role which she felt was best suited to bettering the integration between classroom and library.

Conclusion

In the process of articulating their thoughts and actions, the participants detailed experiences and decisions that matched closely with the existing research on transfer of skills, transfer of training, situated learning, and teacher development. This mirroring was profound and not the product of careful editing of interview transcripts; each of the themes suggests possible answers to the research questions posed in this study.

Research Question 1: How do graduates of a school library preparation program feel that their LIS education has affected their professional practice?

The first two themes give insight in response to the first research question about how graduates of a school library preparation program feel that education affected their work as educators. Research has suggested that effective practical education and positive professional experiences arm workers with knowledge and skills that they can apply to a number of situations. Likewise, both transfer of training and transfer of skills seem to be necessary for a successful transition to the school librarianship. Even when teachers choose not to apply their school library education to the library, these participants clearly expressed the ways in which learning more about technology and information seeking made them better educators and in Erin's case, develop a greater sense of the role of an effective school library in a strong school community.

Many researchers have expressed that job satisfaction is a powerful mediator to

change and that high job satisfaction inhibits change; certainly for Haley and Gillian this seemed to be the case. Both of these school librarians experienced numerous struggles in attaining positions as school librarians and during these transition periods, they relied on the inspiration they gained during their practicums in addition their abilities to transfer their training and skills to sustain them and affirm their commitments to move from the classroom to the school library. As a result, both Haley and Gillian had high degrees of job satisfaction and were actively involved in promoting an appreciation of the school library to former classroom colleagues, administrators, and school community

Research Question 2: What are the personological, professional, and external factors that have exerted influence on their career decisions since they began working as school librarians?

Research in various areas of organizational communication and human resources suggests that the ability for workers to apply education and skills is interlinked with factors relating to the work environment and personal issues. The participants in this study reflected this complexity in both their desires to leave and stay in the classroom.

Participants' reluctance to leave the classroom is not necessarily bad or unusual; neither are participants' desires to pursue administrative and leadership roles within the school. Teacher transfer, or teacher relocation to other building-based or teaching roles, is an issue related to teacher turnover. The National Center for Education Statistics estimated annual teacher relocation at about 10% each year and that level has remained constant across years and across curriculum areas (NCES, 2010) and this fact suggests that the study participants who decided to stay in the classroom or apply their school library-related knowledge to other roles in

the same school building were not remarkable. Teachers, especially mid- to late-career teachers, are much more likely to stay in the same role in the same school rather than change schools to take on a new role and begin the phases of development anew (Boe, *et al.*, 2008).

The theme of looking inward to assess personal career and leadership desires suggests a conceptual framework that can be applied to further research. One explanation for the desire of some participants in this study to pursue school librarianship while others chose not to make the change can be found in social exchange theory (SET). Unless the person faced with a voluntary change perceives that the professional realignment has strategic benefit, the change will be resisted. Christy and Anna, for example, preferred their evident success and the social capital they have gained in their classrooms to re-establishing themselves in the school library (Muthusamy & White, 2005); for them, the move to the school library was not strategic. Even Anna, who experienced quick success in the school library, made the move because she was forced out of the classroom; she still may return to the classroom if enough incentives are in place. SET and questions of social capital may be useful in guiding future research into the conditions, such as job security and job location, that facilitate successful transition from preservice education to practice.

Regardless of the paths they chose, this study's participants applied their school library experiences to leadership in the classroom, school, and library. The next phase of this study, due to occur in about one year, will continue to document participants' career trajectories and the roles their education for school librarianship plays.

It is in these challenging times for school libraries that LIS educators have an opportunity to examine, and perhaps re-evaluate, preparation programs for school librarians. As an increasing number of fac-

ulty edge toward retirement and few faculty are being prepared to replace them (Haycock, 2010), reinventing the education of professionals to lead a profession that is reinventing itself is crucial. However, this reinvention cannot occur without a fresh look at the larger forces that drive recruitment and retention of school librarians, the skills and dispositions of effective school librarians, and the purpose of preservice school librarian education.

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