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By

Elizabeth P. Garcia
Information Seeking Behaviors of the School Social Worker: What is the Librarian’s Role in the Practice of Bibliotherapy?

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate School of Library and Information Science of Dominican University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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River Forest, IL

August 2012
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
Dissertation Approval Form

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What is the Librarian's Role in the Practice of Bibliotherapy?

AS PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
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Dean
To my husband, Jason.

*Without your love and support I would never have finished this process.*

*This is as much yours as it is mine.*
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Dominican University

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIORS OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER:
WHAT IS THE LIBRARIAN’S ROLE IN THE PRACTICE OF BIBLIOTHERAPY?

By

Elizabeth P. Garcia, MLIS

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School of Library and Information Science
of Dominican University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

The study examines and contextualizes professional practices of school social workers, their use of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, and the use of school libraries and school librarians as an information resource. This research is also an effort to add to the understanding of school social workers as social scientist information seekers. A survey was used to establish how this sample of school social workers, recruited through the American Council for School Social Work e-newsletter, seek information regarding bibliotherapy materials, to assess these school social workers’ view of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, and to determine the extent of collaboration between school social workers and school librarians. Findings indicate school social workers locate information through informal and readily available channels (similar to other social scientists), hold positive perceptions of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, and have a complex understanding of the role of the librarian and their expertise. This last finding offers a compelling reason for librarians to actively engage school social workers in information-seeking collaborations through outreach and targeted advisory practices.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of significance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of Dissertation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliotherapy: An Evolving Definition</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliotherapy: History and Use</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliotherapy: Modes, Phases, and Principles</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phases</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Efforts of LIS and Mental Health Practitioners</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books on Prescription</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Reading-East Lothian</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliotherapy Education Project</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles and Their Importance</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Social Worker</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Librarian</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The School Library as Collaborative Space</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Librarian and School Social Worker: Common Goals and Collaborative Efforts</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Seeking and Information Use Behaviors</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Brief History of Information Seeking and Information Use Behaviors 37

Information Seeking & Information Use Behaviors in Social Sciences 40
  Social Workers and Mental Health Practitioners 41

THREE
METHODOLOGY 44
  Introduction 44
  Research Questions 44
  Hypotheses 45
  Data Collection 45
  Survey Instrumentation and Survey Design 46
    Survey Instrumentation 46
    Survey Design 47
    Pilot Survey 49
    Survey 51
  Procedure 51
  Analysis 52
    Data Cleaning 52
    Analytic Steps 53

FOUR
RESULTS 57
  Introduction 57
  Demographics 57
  Results by Research Question and Hypotheses 60
    Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 1 Results 60
      Summary of Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 1 64
    Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2 Results 64
      Summary of Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2 71
    Research Question 3 and Hypothesis 3 Results 71
      Summary of Research Question 3 and Hypothesis 3 76

FIVE
DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 78
  Introduction 78
  Information Seeking 78
  Bibliotherapy as a Counseling Technique 80
  Collaboration 81
  Limitations 86
  Implications 86
  Future Research 90
## REFERENCES

93

## APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Five-Step Model of Clinical Bibliotherapy</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Three-Step Model of Developmental Bibliotherapy</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Case’s (2012) 1964-1990 Reports and ARIST reviews</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Dr. Karen Townsend Survey</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Bibliotherapy Survey</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Pilot Bibliotherapy Survey</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Pilot Consent Letter</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>IRB Approval: Pilot Bibliotherapy Survey</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>IRB Approval: Bibliotherapy Survey</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>ACSSW Membership Eligibility</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>ACSSW Special Introductory Paragraph</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>ACSSW Email Reminder</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Categorical Coding by Survey Question: Full Table</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CV of ELIZABETH P. GARCIA

142
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Responsibilities of the Mental Health Practitioner vs. the Librarian</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Evaluation Method</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Scale Item Categories</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Categorical Coding by Survey Question</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Thematic Coding</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Type of School and Student Reading Level</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Where School Social Workers Gain New Information</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sharing Bibliotherapy</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Professional Opportunities and Courses</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Bibliotherapy as a Tool and Bibliotherapy Concern</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Results of Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Library and Librarian as Resources</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Use Books or Reading Materials for Following Topics</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Formats of Reading Materials Used</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The idea for this study developed when my husband Jason was pursuing a Master’s degree in Clinical Psychology. His Couples and Family Therapy class was discussing various therapy techniques used with children, including bibliotherapy, when a classmate mentioned a series of juvenile books that teaches behavior using dinosaur characters. Jason asked if I knew the series his classmate mentioned. At the time I was a children’s librarian in a public library and knew his classmate was referring to a series of titles by well-known author Jane Yolen, such as How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight? (Blue Sky Press, 2000), How Do Dinosaurs Clean Their Rooms? (Blue Sky Press, 2004), and How Do Dinosaurs Get Well Soon? (Blue Sky Press, 2003). I explained that there were many picture books published on a multitude of topics that might be used with children during counseling sessions. The next day I created a list of picture book titles appropriate for young children, ages three through eight years old, that explained or illustrated ways of dealing with difficult topics, including, but not limited to, physical and sexual abuse, same-sex parenting, bullying, emotional challenges, money troubles, and manners. My husband copied the list for his class; his classmates were not only grateful but also surprised that so many books existed on such a wide variety of topics for such a young audience. Since the class members were unaware of available resources, Jason’s professor suggested I turn the list into a research project.

This incident resonated with me for many years. This class of future clinical psychologists were stunned by the amount of information I was able to quickly assemble; I wondered if other mental health practitioners knew what a valuable resource a
knowledgeable librarian could be. The simple act of fulfilling my professional charge led to my discovery of bibliotherapy as an established counseling technique, and to my interest in investigating the possible intersection between the work of librarians and mental health practitioners. When I began pursuing my PhD, I realized the practice of bibliotherapy provided a sensible junction for collaboration between these two professions.

From Caroline Shrodes’s 1950 dissertation titled *Bibliotherapy: A Theoretical and Clinical-Experimental Study*, to Karen Townsend’s dissertation titled *Bibliotherapy: An Examination of School Counselor’s Attitudes and Use* (2009), bibliotherapy has been viewed as a valuable technique in counseling for over 60 years. For this research study, I define bibliotherapy as the use of books or other reading materials (poetry, magazines, comic books, etc.) to assist with the counseling process. I formulated this definition after taking into account the various definitions offered in research- and practice-based literature in the fields of Library and Information Science (LIS) and mental health (Brewster, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Crothers, 1916; Doll & Doll, 1997; Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986; Leasure, 1995; Moody & Limper, 1971; Myracle, 1995; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2008, 2009, 2010; Rubin, 1978b; Townsend, 2009). The definition will be expanded further in Chapter Two.

Readers’ advisory is a recognized skill in LIS that involves connecting a reader to a needed book. The *Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science* (ODLIS) defines readers’ advisory as:

services provided by an experienced public services librarian who specializes in the reading needs of the patrons of a public library. A readers' advisor recommends specific titles and/or authors, based on knowledge of the patron's past reading preferences, and may also compile lists of recommended titles
and serve as liaison to other education agencies in the community (Reitz, 2012).

To clarify, this study looks bibliotherapy, the technique of connecting books and readers in a therapeutic setting overseen by a mental health practitioner, not at reader’s advisory the technique of connecting books and readers for personal reading.

The professional literature in LIS indicates that librarians have recognized bibliotherapy as an important technique for over six decades. For example, the entire Fall 1962 issue of *Library Trends* explores the importance of bibliotherapy from a librarian’s point of view. Twelve articles explore the practice of bibliotherapy in library and clinical settings, including its history, applications, and requirements, as well as “bibliotherapy in action presented by members of the team, including the physician, the psychologist, the librarian, the nurse, and the occupational therapist” (Tews, 1962a, p. 98).

Issue editor Ruth M. Tews explained that this 1962 issue of *Library Trends* “was planned to present the basic issues, facets, and limitations of bibliotherapy and to suggest the current trends, possibilities, and areas to be explored” (Tews, 1962a, p. 97). A hospital librarian, Tews introduces the issue by explaining why the topic of bibliotherapy is important to the library community. Tews (1962a) explains that bibliotherapy is important to the field of Library and Information Science because “the effect of reading upon patients has long been of concern to the Association of Hospital and Institutional Libraries (a division of the American Library Association)” (p. 97). Interest in this topic was expanding beyond the mental health field. Not only did Tews recognize the value of including the mental health field in the discussion of bibliotherapy, but she also states: “correlation of efforts and team cooperation are necessary. Mutual trust and understanding must exist. The medical
profession and members of ancillary branches must work together to achieve the goals agreed upon in providing therapeutic opportunities for the ill” (p. 104). Article titles include: “A Historical Review of Bibliotherapy” by William K. Beatty; “Bibliotherapy and Reading Guidance: A Tentative Approach to Theory” by Evalene P. Jackson; “The Bibliotherapy Program: Requirements for Training” by Margaret M. Kinney; “The Questionnaire on Bibliotherapy” by Ruth M. Tews; “The Librarian in Bibliotherapy: Pharmacist or Bibliotherapist?” by Margaret C. Hannigan; and “Bibliotherapy: Its Use in Nursing Therapy” by Dorothy Mereness.

Both librarians and mental health practitioners contributed to this issue of *Library Trends*, which indicates that librarians at that time recognized the importance of collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners when bibliotherapy was used as a counseling technique.

What Tews said over 60 years ago about collaborative efforts still rings true today. However, according to a recent survey of mental health practitioners, 79% of those responding who use bibliotherapy as a counseling technique only use librarians for book recommendations 3.1% of the time (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2008, 2009, 2010). Even more dismal, only 0.4% of these same mental health practitioners indicate librarian recommendations as a valuable way to choose materials to use during bibliotherapy counseling (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2008, 2009, 2010). Despite the occasional collaborative project (Brewster, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2008, 2009, 2010; Robertson, Wray Maxwell, & Pratt, 2008; Turner, 2008), literature in the fields of both LIS and counseling suggests that mental health practitioners are unaware of how librarians can help connect them to effective resources to benefit the individuals they serve.
Statement of Significance

Collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners when using bibliotherapy appears to be an obvious pairing; however, the professional literature shows that these two fields rarely interact on the topic of bibliotherapy, except in rare circumstances (Brewster, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2008, 2009, 2010; Robertson, Wray Maxwell, & Pratt, 2008; Turner, 2008). My own previous professional experience indicates that mental health practitioners in general may not be aware of how librarians can be a valuable resource for them. My larger intention was to investigate a group of mental health practitioners and their interactions, or lack thereof, with professional librarians. For the purpose of this focused research, the specific group being studied is school social workers in relationship with school librarians.

Professional literature in the fields of education, mental health and LIS (Doll & Doll, 1997; Welch, 2000) recommends positive collaborations in the school setting, but it was not clear what type of collaboration, if any, was occurring between school librarians and school social workers. My previous professional experience indicates that school social workers may not be aware of school librarians’ professional knowledge of available literature or their professional expertise in locating appropriate resources. Collaborative efforts between the two professions, school librarians and school social workers, would benefit both the professionals involved and the children with whom they work. In order to promote this type of collaboration it is important for librarians to understand how and why school social workers seek information.

Within the field of LIS, an inquiry into this question fits into the arena of study surrounding information seeking behaviors. My study is contextualized by theory and
research on the information seeking behaviors of the social scientist in an effort to clarify the available knowledge of the cognate profession of school social workers as a representative of the social sciences field. This study was specifically designed to explore the information seeking behaviors of school social workers when they utilize bibliotherapy as a counseling technique. For this study, school social workers are defined as:

[P]upil services professionals who generally hold a master’s degree in social work and who have unique training and experience specific to working in schools and/or with children. This training includes special education law, school law, and systems theory. They understand the interrelatedness of various systems such as: education, juvenile justice, family/children’s health, mental health, and child protective services (ACSSW, 2012).

The sample for my study was school social workers recruited through a listserv provided by the American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW). The ACSSW electronically distributed my Web-based survey via a weekly electronic newsletter and weekly email reminder. My work provides insight not only into how these school social workers search for and identify materials for bibliotherapy, but also how they regard the importance of this counseling technique, as well as if and how they used a librarian and/or library space during the process. This research study can also be thought to fill a gap in information-seeking behavior literature of social scientist and mental health practitioners who have received little attention in LIS. The few studies that exist tend to classify mental health practitioners as social scientists and focus specifically on researchers rather than practitioners. Moreover, school social workers have not been the specific target of previous LIS studies. My research focuses on practicing school social workers in an effort to connect
theory and practice, because as Case (2012) states, “practitioners make highly variable use of knowledge generated by academic disciplines, with some more tightly linked to formal channels and others making little use of research findings” (p. 295). Library practitioners working with school social workers can certainly benefit from the research conducted by Ellis (1989), Line (1971) and Meho and Tibbo (2003) about the information seeking behavior of social scientists in general.

Through open-ended survey questions my work also investigated possible collaborative opportunities for two professions that are logical philosophical allies. In Mary Niles Maack’s (1997) paper, “Toward a New Model of the Information Professions: Embracing Empowerment,” she speaks to the fact that LIS is an empowering profession, much like social work. Empowering professions are those professions that share a common goal “of enabling their clients to use knowledge for the purpose of taking control of their own lives” (p. 283). For librarians and school social workers, “their common goal is to provide clients with the information and knowledge that will enable them to exert greater control over their own lives; by transferring knowledge to the client, these professionals empower people to meet their own needs more effectively” (pp. 291-292). Professions that share such similar philosophies also have many common goals that should encourage collaboration.

**Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do school social workers seek information about materials to be used for bibliotherapy?

2. How do school social workers view bibliotherapy as a counseling technique?
3. When using bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, are school social workers collaborating with librarians?

Hypotheses

1. School social workers will consult sources they already know.

2. School social workers hold positive perceptions of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique.

3. When using bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, school social workers are not collaborating with librarians.

For the purposes of this study, collaboration is defined as school social workers working with librarians to locate information about materials to use in bibliotherapy counseling.

These research questions and hypotheses guided me to an understanding of how the school social workers surveyed regard bibliotherapy, how school social workers collaborate with or utilize the expertise of librarians, and how school social workers seek information.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter One includes the introduction to the topic of the study and the research questions and hypotheses. Chapter Two reviews the literature pertaining to bibliotherapy in the fields of LIS and mental health. Topics explored include the etymology of the word bibliotherapy, and an explanation of the history and uses of bibliotherapy in mental health counseling. A brief overview of the models, phases, and principles of bibliotherapy follows. Current collaborations between mental health practitioners and librarians are briefly explained, as well as an explanation of the roles of school social workers, school librarians, and the library in relation to bibliotherapy. A section discussing the information-seeking behaviors of social scientists
provides a fitting backdrop to better understand the information-seeking behaviors of school social workers in particular. Chapter Three describes the methodology of this study with a detailed explanation of the survey instrument and the steps taken to analyze the data in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. Chapter Four reports the results of the study. Chapter Five provides a narrative discussion of the results, a discussion of the parameters of the study, and implications for future research.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study draws upon and connects the professional literature related to bibliotherapy within the disciplines of Library and Information Science (LIS) and social science mental health research, specifically in regards to information-seeking behaviors and user populations. Both LIS and mental health research offer an understanding of the characteristics and the importance of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique (Doll & Doll, 1997; Pardeck, 1998; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993; Riordan & Wilson, 1989; Rubin, 1978a, 1978b); however, little research exists of collaboration between librarians and mental health practitioners, specifically in school settings. Although past research (Brewster, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010; Robertson, Wray, Maxwell & Pratt, 2008; Turner, 2008) has focused on librarians and mental health practitioners working together in a public library setting, there is little formal research of school librarians and school social workers working collaboratively when school social workers use bibliotherapy as a counseling technique. To form a foundation for inquiry, this literature review will focus on: the evolving definition of the word bibliotherapy; the history and practical uses of this counseling technique; models, phases, and principles of bibliotherapy; current collaborations between librarians and mental health practitioners; roles of those involved in the bibliotherapy counseling process; and the information-seeking behaviors of mental health practitioners, with an emphasis on school social workers.
Bibliotherapy: An Evolving Definition

To understand the history and use of bibliotherapy, one must first understand how the term and subsequent definitions have evolved over time. The term bibliotherapy is derived from the Greek term *biblion*, which means book, and the word *oepatteid*, which means healing (Rubin, 1978b, p. 1). The word therapy originated from the word *therapeia*, meaning to serve medically (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986; Leasure, 1995). Various definitions of the word bibliotherapy have appeared in professional and scholarly LIS sources, as well as in psychology, health, and education resources in the twentieth century. The term bibliotherapy first appeared in print in 1916 (Cornett & Cornett, 1980; Crothers, 1916; Myracle, 1995; Rubin, 1978b; Wahlstrom, 1982); the first verified medical definition of bibliotherapy appeared in 1941 in *Dorland’s Illustrated Medical Dictionary* (Cornett & Cornett, 1980; Cutforth, 1980). Bibliotherapy was defined as “the employment of books and the reading of them in the treatment of nervous disease” (as cited in Rubin, 1978b, p. 1). The definition of bibliotherapy has continued to evolve to the current day.

As interest in bibliotherapy expanded, so did definitions proposed by professionals in the medical, educational, and library fields (Cutforth, 1980; Leasure, 1995). During the 1960s, popular dictionaries included various definitions of bibliotherapy (Rubin, 1978b), including the *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* (1961), which defines bibliotherapy as “the use of selected reading materials as therapeutic adjuvants in medicine and psychiatry; also, guidance in the solution of personal problems through directed reading” (p. 212). This definition was later recognized and accepted by the American Library Association (ALA) in 1966.
Within the LIS field, many authors carefully define bibliotherapy in academic and professional writing (Allen et al., 2012; Brewster, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Bryan, 1939; Doll & Doll, 1997; Gubert, 1993; Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986; Jones, 2006; Lu, 2008; Moody & Limper, 1971; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010; Rubin, 1978b; Tews, 1962a, 1962b). For example, librarian Ruth M. Tews (1962a) defined bibliotherapy as “a program of selected activity involving reading materials, planned, conducted, and controlled as treatment under the guidance of the physician for emotional and other problems” (p. 99). While definitions have ranged from formal to informal, one common denominator is the use of books and reading in the progress of achieving psychological health. Over time, many researchers have altered definitions to fit their specific research needs. Researchers in the fields of LIS, psychology, and education cite already established definitions of bibliotherapy, but also modify those definitions to suit their research agenda (Allen et al., 2012; Brewster, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Bryan, 1939; Doll & Doll, 1997; Gubert, 1993; Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986; Jones, 2006; Lu, 2008; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010; Rubin, 1978b; Tews, 1962a, 1962b). Psychology professor Beth Doll and library professor Carol Doll (1997) define bibliotherapy as “sharing a book or books with the intent of helping the reader deal with a personal problem” (p. 1). Research from both LIS and psychology indicates that bibliotherapy can have various definitions, as long as the central theme remains using books to aid the reader in some way. Professional LIS and psychology literature address bibliotherapy as a practical tool for counseling. In its historical development, the definitions of bibliotherapy have increased in complexity and richness, reflecting the actual practices and uses of this technique. My particular research focuses on the use of bibliotherapy as a
counseling technique and uses a streamlined core definition: bibliotherapy is the use of books or other reading materials (poetry, magazines, comic books, etc.) to assist with the counseling process.

**Bibliotherapy: History and Use**

Bibliotherapy was practiced by physicians during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Kent & Lancour, 1968). In European countries such as England, France, Germany, and Scotland, physicians prescribed reading materials to help patients calm their thoughts. Some physicians believed the Bible would help the mentally insane by making their thoughts more serene (Kent & Lancour, 1968; Lampropoulos & Spengler, 2005). During the nineteenth century, many mental asylums and hospitals had library collections, which often consisted of religious books, available for patients to read. By the mid-nineteenth century, physicians were recommending other types of literature be included in these libraries. The medical profession felt that reading choices should suit the individual patient’s mental capacity. American physicians practicing in asylums later adopted principles that European physicians had instituted (Kent & Lancour, 1968).

Benjamin Rush, who signed of the Declaration of Independence and doctor of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, was the first American doctor known to prescribe books to patients to provide them with both entertainment and instruction (Cornett & Cornett, 1980; Kent & Lancour, 1968). In 1810, Rush wrote that mental hospitals and the physicians working in them should be offering not only workshops, but also reading partners to help redirect patients’ minds through the use of books. These workshops and reading partners were meant to help patients read and write about subjects the physicians recommended. Doctor John Minson Galt II, superintendent of the Eastern State Hospital in
Williamsburg, Virginia, from 1841 through 1862, also encouraged the use of books. Through articles such as “On Reading, Recreation, and Amusements for the Insane,” published in the *Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology* (1853) and his book *The Treatment of Insanity* (1846), Galt emphasized that the mentally ill can benefit from the power of reading (Leasure, 1995; Weimerskirch, 1965).

Mental asylums and other institutional settings for patients suffering from acute and/or chronic psychological conditions used bibliotherapy as a treatment method in the beginning of the twentieth century (Beatty, 1962; Kent & Lancour, 1968). Researcher Vickey A. H. Leasure (1995) states, “this led to strong development of the [bibliotherapy] process in America’s hospitals and correctional facilities” (p. 16). In 1904, E. Kathleen Jones became the first hospital librarian trained in bibliotherapy. Later, as administrator of libraries at Harvard’s McLean Hospital, she formulated a program to train librarians in the practice of bibliotherapy (Grumbach, 1957; Leasure, 1995).

In 1924, the use of literature as a therapeutic tool became integrated into the psychological and physical treatment of African American veterans at the U.S. Veterans Administration Hospital. Here Chief Librarian Sadie Peterson Delaney implemented the formal process of bibliotherapy with African American war veterans. These patients were encouraged to read a spectrum of books to connect with a broader community of ideas in order to distract them from their current concerns (Jack & Ronan, 2008; Jones, 2006). According to Jones (2006), “Delaney’s holistic practice of bibliotherapy transcended typical literary events such as book groups and story hours to include hobby clubs and activities such as stamp and coin collecting and debating to awaken a patient’s mind” (p. 24). Delaney stressed the importance of keeping accurate records of patients’ reading materials. By having
the time to read due to being hospitalized, the veterans were able to concentrate on healing both physically and mentally (Jack & Ronan, 2008). This groundbreaking work brought Delaney international recognition, which led to a 34-year career lecturing at numerous notable events on the benefits of bibliotherapy (Gubert, 1993; Jones, 2006). Her work and methods became a model for veteran hospital libraries and other medical and library professionals, such as Dr. Josephine Jackson and Librarian Elizabeth Pomeroy (Cutforth, 1980; Jack & Ronan, 2008; Leasure, 1995). Dr. Josephine Jackson wrote “The Therapeutic Value of Books” in 1925 and Elizabeth Pomeroy wrote “Book Therapy in Veterans’ Hospitals” in 1927, which expanded on the idea of using books with veterans.

Not only did LIS publications in the 1930s see an increasing number of articles about bibliotherapy (Beatty, 1962; Bryan, 1939; Delaney, 1938), but Librarian Rhea Joyce Rubin (1978b) states, “of the sixty articles published about bibliotherapy in the 1930s, 63 percent were published in fields other than library science” (p. 14). Other fields, particularly education, were investigating and writing about the topic of bibliotherapy. In 1938, literature professor Louise Rosenblatt, sponsored by the Human Relations Commission of the Progressive Education Association, wrote a volume entitled Literature as Exploration which encouraged “the use of literature for developing a sense of humanity in human relations” (Rubin, 1978b, pp. 14-15).

Two of the most noted medical professionals to use reading as a tool to help patients deal with mental health problems were psychiatrists and brothers Dr. William Menninger and Dr. Karl Menninger of the Menninger Clinic. Beginning in 1925, Doctors Menninger began to investigate the potential uses of popular fiction titles with patients being treated for psychological disorders; as a result William and Karl Menninger became advocates of
bibliotherapy as a therapeutic process (Menninger, 2011). In 1930, Dr. Karl Menninger wrote the first edition of *The Human Mind*, which was used as a guidebook to mental health care for laymen (Rubin, 1978b). Dr. Karl Menninger (1930) states, “our intuition and our experience tell us that books may indeed minister to a mind diseased and come to the aid of the doctor and even precede him” (p. ix). In 1937, the brothers wrote extensively about bibliotherapy in several publications, including a chapter in the book *A Psychiatrist for a Troubled World*. This work included the purposes of bibliotherapy, how it fit into a patient’s treatment plan, and who would prescribe it (Jones, 2006; Menninger, 1937). This is the first written material that outlined the responsibilities of the mental health practitioner versus those of the librarian. Table 1 illustrates the sharp contrast in respective responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Responsibilities of the Mental Health Practitioner vs. the Librarian</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Health Practitioner</strong></td>
<td><strong>Librarians</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contents of the library, including approving purchases,</td>
<td>• The mechanics of purchasing, maintaining, and distributing of the reading materials,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Approving weekly lists of patron assigned readings,</td>
<td>• Having personal knowledge of assigned reading materials,</td>
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<td>• Prescribing the first reading materials after interviewing the patients,</td>
<td>• Interviewing patients about their reactions to the assigned reading materials,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Holding weekly meetings with librarians to discuss any problems and/or results,</td>
<td>• Writing reports on patients’ reactions for the mental health practitioners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Communicating historical data, psychological status, reading habits and interests of each patient,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Having discussions with patients about the assigned readings.</td>
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In 1939, the Hospital Division of the American Library Association (ALA) established the first committee on bibliotherapy. Alice I. Bryan, a pioneer librarian, bibliotherapist, and psychologist published several articles about bibliotherapy as a coping mechanism (Bryan, 1939). Her most referenced article is “Can There Be a Science of Bibliotherapy?” (Bryan, 1939). Bryan’s publications had great impact on subsequent research and practice in both the LIS and mental health fields. She evaluated the historical literature on the practice and assembled six objectives of bibliotherapy based on developments through 1939:

(1) to show the reader they are not the first to have the problem,
(2) to permit the reader to see that more than one solution is possible,
(3) to help the reader see the basic motivations of people (including themselves) involved in a particular situation,
(4) to help the reader see the values involved in experience in human terms,
(5) to provide facts needed for the solution of a problem,
(6) to encourage the reader to face their situation realistically.

(Bryan, 1939; Jack & Ronan, 2008; Rubin, 1978b).

The 1940s marked the beginning of the examination of the theoretical premises upon which bibliotherapy rested (Bry, 1942; Davie, 1940; Gagnon, 1942; Jones, 1944; Mascarino & Goode, 1940; Tews, 1944). Psychologists, psychiatrists, and librarians were beginning to collaborate when either researching or using bibliotherapy and were also starting to examine bibliotherapy and its effectiveness as a counseling technique. Several publications (Beatty, 1962; Bry, 1942; Mascarino & Goode, 1940) were written explaining this process, such as “Reading as a Psychological Aid in the Hypoglycemic Treatment of Schizophrenia” in 1940 and “Medical Aspects of Literature: A Bibliographical Outline” in 1942.
During 1945, Dr. Karl Menninger published the third edition of *The Human Mind*, which other mental health professionals consulted as a tool for counseling individuals dealing with mental health problems. Mental health practitioners used bibliotherapy at the Menninger Clinic to treat mental illnesses, such as mild neuroses and alcoholism. This counseling technique was also used to help inform the relatives of patients and parents who needed help with child guidance (Pardeck, 1998).

Psychologist Caroline Shrodes’ 1950 dissertation *Bibliotherapy: A Theoretical and Clinical-Experimental Study* focused on the psychological impact of bibliotherapy (Jones, 2006; Shrodes, 1950). Shrodes’ research was groundbreaking in that it explained how the process of bibliotherapy reflects the major developmental sequences of Freudian psychotherapy. Jones (2006) summarized Shrodes’ developments as:

First, identification and projection occur when the reader shares a problem, circumstances, or issues with the book’s character. Second, abreaction and catharsis occur for the reader when the character resolves a problem, circumstance, or issue. Third, insight occurs when the reader reflects on his or her situation and internalizes the character’s solution (p.25).

Shrodes described bibliotherapy as the interaction between the reader and a piece of literature under the supervision of a helping professional (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993; Rubin, 1978b; Shrodes, 1950). This major work examining bibliotherapy continues to impact modern psychological professionals’ thoughts toward this topic (Townsend, 2009).

In the 1960s, librarian Margaret C. Hannigan and researcher William T. Henderson led an extensive study, “Narcotic Addicts Take Up Reading,” involving the therapeutic benefits of bibliotherapy when used with youth substance abusers nearing their parole dates.
(Hannigan and Henderson, 1963; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993; Townsend, 2009). Pardeck and Pardeck (1993) emphasize that the study by Hannigan and Henderson is among the earliest research to focus on bibliotherapy’s usefulness as an intervention in helping individuals struggling with mental illness.

During the 1960s, the LIS profession began to take more notice of bibliotherapeutic practices. In 1960, the Association of Hospital and Institutional Libraries produced a Bibliotherapy Clearinghouse to ensure that all bibliotherapy research could be catalogued for future LIS experimenters (Yasin, 1978). Two additional important works published in the 1960s are the 1962 issue of Library Trends, which contained 12 articles on bibliotherapy and librarianship, and the 1968 book by Joseph S. Zaccaria and Harold Alton Moses, Facilitating Human Development through Reading: The Use of Bibliotherapy in Teaching and Counseling. Both publications explained the history and development of bibliotherapy as well as how to use bibliotherapy with diverse populations.

Tews (1962a) described the status of reading and bibliotherapy in the hospital and institutional setting in her introduction to the 1962 issue of Library Trends; however, it is important to note that, according to LIS literature (Beatty, 1962; Tews, 1962a), bibliotherapy was also being practiced in clinical settings. Tews (1962a) identified four trends:

1. Illness, hospital, and institution experiences have an emotional impact upon the individual. Reading has a salutary and sustaining effect upon many of these persons and provides opportunities for them to communicate with others, and through the written works to search for and find answers to their present needs.

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1 I am referring to clinical setting as a setting that is a hospital.
2. Hospital library service is a specialized, highly personalized service, often involving consultation service. As part of a vital community center, all segments can be reached through this means of library extension; the responsibility should be apparent not only to the librarians but also to the administrators and their staff.

3. Bibliotherapy or “pharmacy of the intellect” is an extremely important adjunct in the treatment of the patient. The science and art of bibliotherapy will be the matching of the therapist, the patient, the moment, and the contents of the book; at times a book is likely to be more valuable than anything else.

4. Correlation of efforts and team cooperation are necessary. Mutual trust and understanding must exist. The medical profession and members of ancillary branches must work together to achieve the goals agreed upon in providing therapeutic opportunities for the ill (p. 104).

Tews (1962a) is also careful to explain the librarian is an influential and important member of any team conducting bibliotherapy treatment. Even though this sentiment appears in earlier documentation, this 1962 Library Trends volume began to establish the importance of partnerships between librarians and mental health practitioners (Hannigan, 1962; Kinney, 1962). This issue of an authoritative academic publication serves as evidence that more professionals in the LIS field were validating the use of the bibliotherapy as a library service connected to counseling techniques.

During the 1970s, librarian Rhea Joyce Rubin edited the Bibliotherapy Sourcebook and wrote Using Bibliotherapy: A Guide to Theory and Practice (Jones, 2006; Rubin, 1978a,
Within these volumes, Rubin tried to answer a question first posed in 1939 by librarian and psychologist Alice I. Bryan: Can there be a science of bibliotherapy? (Jones, 2006). These two volumes added to librarians’ understanding of bibliotherapy by presenting scientific evidence of its effectiveness (Rubin, 1978a, 1978b, Townsend, 2009). Rubin (1978b) explains the perspectives, dynamics, and mechanics of bibliotherapy, as well as the education and training necessary to practice the technique. She also defines the role of the librarian within the bibliotherapy process and shows how the LIS and mental health fields have been working with and without one another throughout the twentieth century.

Since the mid-twentieth century many mental health professionals, including counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and educators have utilized clinical and/or developmental bibliotherapy (Pardeck, 1998). Not until the late 1970s, however, did social workers begin to incorporate bibliotherapy practices into clinical settings (Pardeck, 1998).

Before the 1970s, bibliotherapy had been classified as either the art of bibliotherapy, which included the implicit, developmental and non-medical approach used by librarians and unlicensed mental health practitioners, or the science of bibliotherapy, which included an explicit, diagnostic, clinical, or institutional model implemented by qualified mental health professionals (Jones, 2006). Rubin attempted to present scientific evidence to support claims that bibliotherapy had merit as both art and science (Jones, 2006; Rubin, 1978a; Townsend, 2009). Rubin indicated that from 1950 until 1978 when she published her book, The Bibliotherapy Sourcebook, more than 400 journal articles had been published in the area of bibliotherapy not in only LIS resources, but in education and psychology sources as well (Lampropoulos & Spengler, 2005); these articles dealt with related procedures, preparations, objectives, theories, and components of bibliotherapy, as well as specific uses with clients.
Over the course of the 1980s, professional interest in bibliotherapy faded with the rise of the use of self-help books to change negative behaviors and to help children with various developmental problems (Pardeck, 1998). Teachers’ and librarians’ interest in the concept of collaborative bibliotherapy was dwindling (Lu, 2008). The lack of dynamic partnerships between the LIS and mental health fields may have contributed to this waning interest. In the early 1990s, the ALA’s Bibliotherapy Committee disbanded, and fewer articles about bibliotherapy have been published in library literature since (Lu, 2008).

While articles on bibliotherapy appeared less frequently in the library professional literature, the concept was gaining ground among social workers. In 1995, the social work community established a comprehensive definition for bibliotherapy (Pardeck, 1998). *The Dictionary of Social Work* defines bibliotherapy as:

> The use of literature and poetry in the treatment of people with emotional problems or mental illness. Bibliotherapy is often used in social group work and group therapy and is reported to be effective with people of all ages, with people in institutions as well as outpatients, and with healthy people who wish to share literature as a means of personal growth and development (Barker, 1995, p. 35).

When this definition was accepted into *The Dictionary of Social Work* in 1995, bibliotherapy became more prevalent among social workers as a treatment option (Pardeck, 1998).

Despite the ALA Bibliotherapy Committee’s disbandment a consensus exists in LIS, as well as the mental health field, that bibliotherapy is a powerful tool through which books can be used clinically and/or developmentally (Doll & Doll, 1997; Jones, 2006). Jones (2006) states, “as a population, we are much more aware of mental health challenges and
recognize the value of self-help efforts” (p. 26). Roles exist for librarians in the art of
developmental bibliotherapy, as well as in clinical therapies. Jones (2006) suggests,
“perhaps one role for librarians in the science of bibliotherapy is to partner with mental
health specialists to provide the names of books as well as specific passages that could be
useful in therapy” (p. 26). This concept has led to partnerships between mental health
practitioners and librarians in recent years (Brewster, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; McMillen &

**Bibliotherapy: Models, Phases, and Principles**

**Models.** According to LIS and mental health literature, there are two specific types
of bibliotherapy: clinical and developmental (Doll & Doll, 1997; Pardeck, 1998; Pehrsson &
McMillen, 2007; Rubin, 1978a, 1978b). Clinical bibliotherapy is a five-step model of
therapy that includes the use of books as an intervention in helping people who are
dangerously troubled with either emotional or behavioral problems or both (Doll & Doll,
1997; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007). Clinical bibliotherapy is “implemented by trained
professionals dealing with significant emotional or behavioral problems” (Pehrsson &
McMillen, 2007, Welcome section, para. 1). Mental health practitioners, such as school
social workers, commonly integrate clinical bibliotherapy into their treatment practices
(Pardeck, 1998). The five-step model includes readiness, material selection, presentation of
material, comprehension building, and follow up and evaluation (Doll & Doll, 1997).²

Developmental bibliotherapy is a three-step model of therapy in which literature is
used to aid in relieving normal life’s daily problems, such as stress or anxiety. The
Bibliotherapy Education Project (BEP)³ suggests that developmental bibliotherapy can be

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² See Appendix A for further explanation.
³ See Bibliotherapy Education Project, p. 30 for immediate explanation.
used by teachers, librarians, or lay persons to help facilitate normal development in a conventional population (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007). The three-step model includes material selection, presentation of materials, and comprehension building (Doll & Doll, 1997). If the mental health practitioner uses the clinical model of bibliotherapy, the end goal is for the client to experience three phases of bibliotherapy.

**Phases.** The mental health practitioner using bibliotherapy wants the client to experience three phases: identification and projection, abreaction and catharsis, and insight and integration (Pardeck, 1998). Most of the time, clients experience these three phases when the mental health practitioner uses fiction books to aid in the psychodynamic counseling technique. When using fiction in a psychodynamic approach to treatment, the book must portray problems similar to what the client is encountering (Pardeck, 1998).

Identification and projection is the first phase of the bibliotherapeutic process. During this stage, the mental health provider helps the client identify with a book character experiencing a problem similar to the client’s. The mental health provider’s role is to assist the client in interpreting the motives of the characters in the story and to gain insight about the various relationships among the book’s characters. The client should be able to identify which character he or she most closely relates to and what problems are most similar to the client’s own (Nickerson, 1975; Pardeck, 1998).

Once identification and projection have occurred, the mental health provider leads the client to the second stage, abreaction and catharsis. In this stage, the client must experience a catharsis or emotional release, possibly through reliving an experience (abreaction). This emotional release may be expressed verbally or non-verbally, but it must occur in order to progress to the third phase.

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4 See Appendix B for further explanation.
The third and final phase of the bibliotherapy process is insight and integration. During this stage, the mental health practitioner directs the client to recognize various solutions to the problems that appear in the book. The client gains insight, that is, becomes aware of his or her own needs and feelings (Nickerson, 1975). The mental health provider then uses this stage to help the client identify strategies for dealing with these needs, feelings, and problems (integration).

In order for bibliotherapy to be successful, both the client and the mental health practitioner must understand the principles of the bibliotherapeutic process.

**Principles.** Pardeck (1998) provides a checklist of the principles of bibliotherapy that mental health practitioners should consult before introducing a client to this counseling technique. This checklist is especially important for school social workers to follow when working with children. School librarians can assist school social workers during this counseling process even though they do not hold the same types of certifications. According to Pardeck, the major principles of bibliotherapy are:

1. The practitioner should use books with which he or she is familiar.

2. The therapist should be conscious of the length of the book. Complex books with extraneous details and situations should be avoided.

3. The client’s problem must be considered; the book should be applicable to the problem facing the client.

4. The client’s reading ability must be known and must guide the choice of books used. If the client cannot read or has reading deficiencies, the therapist may have to read the book aloud or record it on tape.
5. The client’s emotional and chronological age must be considered and reflected in the level of sophistication of the book selected.

6. Reading preferences, both individual and general, act as guidelines for book selection.

7. Books expressing the same feeling or mood as the client’s are often good choices. This principle is called the isoprinciple, which stems from the technique of music therapy and is commonly used in poetry therapy as well.

8. Audiovisual materials should be considered in treatment if books are not available on a given clinical problem (pp. 8-9).

These principles should be considered when the mental health practitioner is finding and selecting books to incorporate into bibliotherapy treatment. These principles, along with collaborations with school librarians, should allow mental health practitioners to achieve a high level of success through bibliotherapy counseling. The LIS professional brings general knowledge of the available literature for youth, as well as techniques for locating additional relevant information.

**Current Collaborative Efforts of LIS and Mental Health Practitioners**

**Books on Prescription.** Bibliotherapy is a technique practiced worldwide. For example, “[i]n 2003, a Cardiff doctor, Doctor Neil Frude, developed a partnership model working with Cardiff Libraries whereby a general practitioner or mental health professional could prescribe a book and the client could get the book from their local library” (Turner, 2008, p. 56). This model became known as the Books on Prescription program. The Books on Prescription program is a collaborative partnership between health professionals and
The typical model of a Books on Prescription scheme is that the health authority and library will agree on a list of self-help books, usually based on a cognitive behavioral therapy approach, which the library will then stock” (p. 118). The Books on Prescription program began in Cardiff, Wales, in 2003 and then expanded to other library systems in Great Britain in the following years. Turner (2008) examines how this particular program was utilized in a library in Essex and launched in 2006 in collaboration with a primary care trust. The National Health Service initiated the development of the partnership with the libraries of Essex. The components of the book prescription scheme for Essex were:

Mental health professionals select a number of titles, the library service stocks the agreed titles, and finally, doctors and mental health professionals then issue a book prescription for a specific book, with the patient going to the library with the prescription rather than to the chemist (Turner, 2008, p. 56).

The Essex Public Library put strong emphasis on good publicity in order to make this program a success. The branding used on all publicity was “Get your life back-books can help” (Turner, 2008, p. 57). Emphasis was also placed on offering two choices within the Books on Prescription plan: individuals could talk to their doctor or mental health professional and be given a prescription that they could take to the library or participants could choose from the selection in the library, knowing that all of the titles were recommended (Turner, 2008). Not only did the Essex Public Library promote the program with the specific branding, but the library also made sure that the books were easy to find within the library through attractive displays and prominent placement of the books.
The Books on Prescription program is one example of the beneficial partnerships that can be built between mental health practitioners and librarians. Turner (2008) states, What worked really well with this partnership was that library staff brought their particular skills of promoting reading and knowledge of books to developing the activity, and then the mental health professionals delivered it on an ongoing basis (p. 57).

Brewster (2008b) adds, “libraries already have locations at the heart of the community, providing literature, information and support to their users. It makes perfect sense to join up the dots between healthcare provision[s] and libraries to promote self-help bibliotherapy” (p. 173). The Books on Prescription program is an example of a successful collaboration between mental health practitioners and librarians. The Books on Prescription program led to the development of another successful program, Healthy Reading-East Lothian (HR-EL) that spread across the United Kingdom (Brewster, 2008a, 2008b).

**Healthy Reading-East Lothian (HR-EL).** Prescribing books became a growing practice across the United Kingdom (Brewster, 2008b). After the success of the Books on Prescription program, other libraries and mental health practitioners began to follow similar models. East Lothian piloted the Healthy Reading program in March 2007 between four libraries and five medical practices. The remaining eight libraries and medical practices entered Healthy Reading East Lothian (HR-EL) between October and December 2007 (Robertson, Wray, Maxwell, & Pratt, 2008). HR-EL was modeled on the successful work done in Cardiff with the Books on Prescription program. The HR-EL program provided informational and self-help bibliotherapy through:
Books, CDs, DVDs, and internet sites (accessible free from the libraries) and covered the following mental health problems: addiction, anger, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, grief, head injury, mood swings, obsessive-compulsive (OCD), self-esteem, suicide issues, trauma and childhood sexual abuse (Robertson, et al., 2008, p. 220).

The libraries developed a membership category that allowed non-library members to access library resources from a recommended list if they received a prescription from the practitioners in the participating medical practices. The resources, mainly books, were then checked out to the borrower for an extended amount of time (12 weeks) and overdue charges were often overlooked.

HR-EL was successful due to the training that both the library and medical staff received prior to the launching of the program. The scheme was explained to the library staff by the local health authority improvement officer. A short, informal session was organized to check that staff was familiar with the procedures for HR-EL and to “provide an opportunity to discuss any barriers that a person with psychological problems might have to overcome to successfully use the library” (Robertson, et al., 2008, p. 220). Not only did the library staff receive training, but the potential prescribers, which included general practice and community mental health team staff, psychologists and counselors, acquired a packet that included a list of the recommended resources, a prescription pad, and a guidance statement on using HR-EL.

As did the Books on Prescription program, HR-EL focused heavily on the promotion and marketing of the program. HR-EL was promoted by hosting events at participating libraries and by creating leaflets that were available in both the libraries
and in health centers. All of the created literature about HR-EL made it clear that the recommended books were available to borrow directly from the library and were suitable self-help materials.

**Bibliotherapy Education Project (BEP).** A final example of a successful collaboration and partnership that combines librarians’ and mental health providers’ knowledge is the Bibliotherapy Education Project (BEP). This project was started by Dr. Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson and Dr. Paula McMillen (2007) as a way to inform education students about the importance of bibliotherapy. This project has evolved into a website: [http://www.library.unlv.edu/faculty/research/bibliotherapy/](http://www.library.unlv.edu/faculty/research/bibliotherapy/), that is used to evaluate and suggest book titles used for bibliotherapy counseling purposes. Pehrsson and McMillen (2007) have presented at numerous professional conferences to “educate participants about the benefits of Bibliotherapy and the importance of informed use” (About the Research section, para. 3). McMillen (2008) conducted a usability study of the BEP website to better structure it for future use. After conducting this study, McMillen and Pehrsson began to present their work to various education and psychology-based organizations. Results indicated that conference attendees, as well as education students, were interested in learning about the effective and ethical uses of developmental bibliotherapy (McMillen, 2008). Pehrsson and McMillen began to see patterns in attendees’ interest, not only in the topic of bibliotherapy, but also in collaborations between mental health providers and librarians: “librarians can also use the database to help mental health practitioners in their community locate potential titles for clinical bibliotherapy with their clients” (McMillen, 2008, p. 43).

Pehrsson and McMillen (2008, 2009, 2010) surveyed the American Counseling Association (ACA) regarding their use of bibliotherapy. They found that psychologists are
utilizing librarians only 3.1% of the time when choosing books for clients (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2008, 2009, 2010). The authors also found that psychologists feel the most valuable way to choose materials is by reading the materials themselves (74.4%) and the least valuable was through librarian recommendations (0.4%) (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2008, 2009, 2010). Pehrsson and McMillen (2008, 2009, 2010) were surprised to learn that few psychologists rely on librarians as a source of recommendations. During Pehrsson and McMillen’s presentation to the ACA (March 2009), they revealed these findings and made the recommendation that bibliotherapy education units be included in curricula, especially in terms of how to find therapeutically-relevant resources including calling on the expertise of local librarians. This, they argue, will lead to more effective collaborations and partnerships between mental health providers and librarians.

All of the previous examples have dealt with collaborations in either a public library or higher educational setting. While the examples noted are a step in the right direction toward dynamic collaboration in the fields of LIS and mental health, more collaborations need to be formed in order to promote better relationships across these two fields.

One collaborative opportunity ripe for exploration is that between school librarians and school social workers. There is little research that looks closely at collaborations occurring in the K-12 school setting between these two professions. Despite the strong emphasis placed on the need for collaboration in both LIS and social work, the professional literature shows that, historically, school librarians and school social workers often collaborate with various members of school teams, just not necessarily with each other (Constable, 2009). If this type of collaboration can be firmly established, more comprehensive services can be offered to children in the K-12 school setting. An
understanding of the roles of the school social worker, the school librarian, and the school library setting is essential to promoting effective collaboration.

Roles and Their Importance

The School Social Worker. Social work is a profession entered by those with a strong desire to help improve people’s lives (Constable, 2009; ACSSW, 2011). School social workers provide a vital link between the school, home and community (SSWAA, 2012). One role of the school social worker in the educational setting is to work directly with the teachers and the rest of the school team to make sure students are supported when dealing with family and personal issues (Constable, 2009). The many professional skills of the school social worker include assessment, defined by Constable (2009) as a “systematic way of understanding what is taking place in relationships in the classroom, within the family, and between the family and the school” (p. 25). Assessment provides the school social worker an opportunity to collaborate with the rest of the school team, including the school librarian.

The profession of school social work began at the turn of the twentieth century, as a response to rising immigration and child poverty, fostered by “the growing notion that every child has the right to an education” (Agresta, 2004, p. 151). Social workers were at first identified as “visiting teachers,” and the term “school social workers” did not emerge until the 1940s and 1950s, when the profession embraced a more clinical orientation (Agresta, 2004). The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1975 specified that school social workers were to complete children’s social histories and mobilize community resources in order to counsel children and their families using group and individual methods. This act, along with the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990 and the growing emphasis on a more clinical orientation, led to the inclusion of the school social worker on schools’
multidisciplinary teams. These multidisciplinary teams are made up of teachers, administrators, the school social worker, and, occasionally, the school librarian.

The School Librarian. The American Association of School Librarians states, “the position of school librarian, teacher-librarian, or library media specialist, regardless of the moniker, is synonymous with literacy” (2011, para. 4). At present, the meaning of literacy extends beyond reading books and encompasses all information. The school librarian is the center of the school, and his or her main purpose is to support the educational aims and curriculum needs of the school (Herring, 1982; Wallace & Husid, 2012). Technology has changed the landscape of education, and schools are attempting to keep up with these changes. School librarians are expected to be technologically current and to instruct both teachers and students in the use of the latest technology.

This dual role of school librarian and teacher acknowledges that the school librarian is involved in educating students and teachers. Librarian and researcher Keith Curry Lance (1994) has been charting the effect of the presence of a certified school librarian on student achievement since 1993. Based on his research, he identifies the following activities requiring the expertise of a certified school librarian:

1. Identifying useful materials and information for teachers,
2. Planning instruction cooperatively with teachers,
3. Providing in-service training to teachers,
4. Teaching students both with their classroom teachers and independently (Lance, 2002, p. 20).

Doll and Doll (1997) state there are three elements of a professional librarian’s work that are especially applicable to bibliotherapy: “knowledge of youth materials, reference skills, and
experience in reading guidance” (p. 40). The role of the school librarian can often be undervalued in the school setting. While it can be assumed that there is much collaboration between the school librarian and the rest of the teaching faculty, this can be incorrect. Achieving dynamic collaboration can be difficult, especially if the teaching faculty has trouble establishing a connection with the school librarian (Lance, 1994).

Formal policies regarding collaboration vary widely. Some local school districts may have policies that stipulate collaborative arrangements between the school librarian and the teaching faculty, or individual schools or districts may have written statements regarding such cooperation. However, “most partnerships take root and grow not because of formal policy documents but rather, through the initiative and hard work of individual library media specialists” (Cleaver & Taylor, 1989, p. 11). The absence of formalized information policies has not kept school librarians from creating these partnerships, but motivated them to actively seek them out (Cooper & Bray, 2011).

The School Library as Collaborative Space. When one thinks of the physical space of the library a variety of images can come to mind: books, tables, chairs, a reference and circulation desk, and book displays on various topics. In recent years, computers have become an integral part of this image as well. School libraries were first formed in the early twentieth-century. Weigand (2007) states, “for the past century public school libraries have provided service for tens of thousands of schoolteachers and administrators and millions of K-12 users of both sexes and of all creeds, races, ethnicities, and classes” (p. 57). The American school library is largely a twentieth-century phenomenon, although its origins can be found in the school district libraries of the mid-nineteenth century. By 1900, many newly established elementary and secondary schools had entered into agreements with local public
libraries to supply books for the extracurricular and independent reading needs of their students (Weigand, 2007).

At the end of World War I, the National Education Association (NEA) wanted more direct control over school library collections. NEA advocated for the creation of separate libraries to be acquired, staffed, and organized by the school system specifically for teachers and students, in order to directly support the school curriculum. During the 1920s, the NEA developed standards for elementary and secondary school libraries. Weigand (2007) explains that “shortly thereafter some state and local governments began funding school library supervisors, issuing school library handbooks, and publishing recommended reading lists” (p. 58). After World War II, school libraries began to include non-print media as part of the essential collection and school libraries became the instructional media centers of the school.

The Great Society legislation introduced by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 included the Library Services and Construction Act, the Higher Education Act, and, particularly important to school libraries, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Energized by this funding, the number of public schools with libraries increased from 50% in 1958 to 93% in 1985. In 2005, nearly half of the nation’s library professionals worked in the more than 82,000 public school libraries (Weigand, 2007).

In the ideal situation, the physical space of the school library media center is the hub of the school. Carletti, Girard, and Willing (1991) state that “since the library is an extension of the classroom, it has a variety of activity and interest centers” (p. 78), and Champlin and Loertscher (2003) state, “a 21st century library media center can be the heart of the school. . .” (p. 67). The school library is a space where students can further their educational
experiences or just hang out and have fun. The school library can genuinely be considered the collaborative space of the school for both students and educators.

**School Librarian and School Social Worker: Common Goals and Collaborative Efforts**

While the positions of school librarian and school social worker have different responsibilities and roles within the school setting, these professions have similar beliefs and goals regarding students’ well-being. Maack (1997) states

> Although there have often been competing visions of service in fields such as librarianship and social work, broadly speaking, their shared goal is to enable their clients or students to gain knowledge that will allow them to exert more control over their own lives and over their own environment (p. 291).

Professionals in both LIS and social work want students to succeed, and collaboration, especially when school social workers use bibliotherapy as the counseling technique, can contribute to the attainment of shared goals. Doll and Doll (1997) state, “. . . youth librarians can work with mental health professions, using their knowledge of children’s and young adult literature to identify appropriate material” (p. 4).

Collaboration is a process highly promoted in school settings. However, after reading much of the professional literature, it is evident that even while they are collaborating with other members of the school team, I found no research that school librarians and school social workers were collaborating with one another. Like bibliotherapy, collaboration can be defined many different ways. Welch (2000) explains, however, that all definitions about collaboration have one aspect in common: “they all reflect the notion of working together” (p. 73). In order to achieve commonly shared goals, collaboration is essential (Welch, 2000). Doll and Doll (1997) state, “by pairing the skills of the library professional with those of the
mental health professional, the resulting partnership exploits the skills of both to enhance services to youth” (p. 45).

In order to achieve commonly shared goals and create positive collaborative efforts between school librarians and school social workers, school librarians must first understand how school social workers seek and use information. This understanding will lead to better collaborative efforts when school social workers use bibliotherapy as a counseling technique.

**Information Seeking and Information Use Behaviors**

Information behavior can refer to information seeking as well as information use (Fisher, Erdelez, & McKechnie, 2005). LIS researchers often utilize Wilson’s definition of information behavior: “the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use” (Fisher, Erdelez, & McKechnie, 2005, p. xix). Though this definition seems to encompass all aspects of information behaviors, researchers often divide information behavior into either information seeking or information use.

Information seeking is a term used by many LIS researchers and practitioners to refer to a way to look for information to answer questions. Information seeking is a behavior “that occurs when an individual senses a problematic situation or information gap, in which his or her internal knowledge and beliefs, and model of the environment, fail to suggest a path towards satisfaction of his or her goals” (Case, 2012, p. 386).

**A Brief History of Information Seeking and Information Use Behaviors**

The research history in LIS on information use is strong (Case, 2012), with one of the first documented studies of information use dating back to the President of Harvard University Charles Eliot’s 1902 publication, “The Divisions of a Library into Books in Use,
and Books not in Use” in *Library Journal*. Eliot evaluated the used and unused portions of the Harvard library’s collection (Case, 2012). Eliot (1902) advocated separating the library’s collection into materials that were used and storing materials that were unused. Most studies in the professional LIS literature of the early twentieth century focused on material use, rather than on users and how they searched for information. An example is the 1916 study, *The Public Library and the Public Schools* by Leonard Porter Ayres and Adele McKinnie. Within this volume, they examined user needs in the Cleveland Public Library and public schools, in one of the earliest studies to explore this issue. The purpose of this study was to “consider whether or not Cleveland can bring about even more effective forms of cooperation between the public library and public schools” (Ayres & McKinnie, 1916, p. 16). Case (2012) states that between the 1920s and 1950s there was a “trickle of studies” (p. 272).

During the 1950s and 1960s, the LIS literature reflects the research being conducted on information needs and uses (Case, 2012). Case (2012) notes that after these decades, many literature reviews (Auerbach, 1965; Davis & Bailey, 1964; DeWeese, 1967; Menzel, 1960; North American Aviation, 1966; Paisley, 1965; Tornudd, 1959) focused on these specific topics. For example, Menzel’s 1960s *Review of Studies in the Flow of Information Among Scientists*, was a review of American and Canadian mathematicians and their information needs and uses.

In 1966, the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* (ARIST) began to include comprehensive reviews on research of information seeking behaviors and use in its publication. According to Case (2012), ARIST became the main source by which LIS scholars stayed abreast of this research.
In 1967, librarian Maurice Line launched a major study of the information uses and needs of social scientists. He referred to this study as the Information Requirements of the Social Sciences or INFROSS (Francis, 2005; Line, 1971). Characteristics of social scientists’ information seeking behaviors observed by Line included the use of informal channels for information exchange. He explains, “. . . informal channels were quite commonly used for locating relevant references, for keeping abreast of new publications, and for keeping up with current research” (Line, 1971, p. 427). Unfortunately, Line also discovered that social scientist information-seeking did not include much use of available librarians (Line, 1971).


The number of research articles and reports that were published in the 1980s and beyond continued to investigate information-seeking behaviors (as cited in Case, 2012). For example, N. F. Rohde (1986) reviewed various definitions of information users and needs in the article, “Information Needs,” which she concluded that improvements needed to be made to adequately study any user’s real needs.

Unfortunately, research in this area indicates that social scientists continued to be unaware of the value of the librarian as resource. Social scientists’ lack of awareness regarding the information expertise of professional librarians was discussed by librarian
Hannah Francis in her 2005 article, “The Information-Seeking Behaviors of Social Science Faculty at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus.” She explains that the social scientists made very little use of the librarian and the sources provided by the library. She states, “. . . they [the social scientists] depended on recommendations from colleagues, journal browsing, and citations found in other publications” (p. 68).

In Donald O. Case’s 2012 publication, *Looking for Information: A Survey of Research on Information Seeking, Needs, and Behavior*, he reflects on the number of articles written on the subject. Case provides one of the most extensive explanations of studies done on information-seeking behavior and information use. He illustrates the number of documents in a table. For example, Case (2012) shares that in 1964, 438 documents were cited and in 1986, 136 documents were cited. Case (2012) posits that the body of literature surrounding general information seeking behavior and information use is too vast for generalizations to be valid. Researchers such as Auster and Choo (1993), Choo and Auster (1993), Choo (1998), and Talja (1997) have narrowed their focus to examine how various types of people search for information and how they use it (Case, 2012). Auster and Choo (1993), in “Environmental Scanning by CEOs in Two Canadian Industries,” studied 207 CEOs to learn how this specific group searched for information in times of uncertainty. Observing and evaluating information seeking behaviors and information use by people of specific occupations provides more manageable research parameters.

**Information Seeking and Information Use Behaviors in the Social Sciences**

Case (2012) states, “occupations have provided the most common structure for the investigation of information seeking” (p. 285). A comprehensive review of the information seeking behavior of social scientists was conducted by Dutch writer H. P. Hogeweg de Haart.

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5 See Appendix C for full table.
in his *Characteristics of Social Science Information* (1981). According to Case, Hogeweg de Haart’s review summarizes a majority of the studies conducted up to 1980, and that other studies that have taken place since 1980 are equally important to the contemporary researcher (Case, 2012). These include Ellis’ “A Behavioural Approach to Information Retrieval System Design,” (1989) and Meho and Tibbo’s (2003) “Modeling the Information-Seeking Behavior of Social Scientists: Ellis’s Study Revisited,” who further researched the information behaviors of social scientists.

In 1989, researcher David Ellis investigated social scientists and the stages of their information seeking. He conducted interviews with 75 social scientists and psychologists and transcribed 250 pages of interviews that revealed six characteristics of information seeking patterns in these specific disciplines. These six characteristics were: starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, and extracting.\(^6\)

In 2003, Meho and Tibbo furthered Ellis’ model of social science information seeking by conducting their own study on 65 faculty members spread over 14 countries. They found that the Ellis model held true and added four additional features. These four features were: accessing, networking, verifying, and information managing. Meho and Tibbo (2003) stated that these additional features are “not all information searching or gathering activities, they are tasks that have significant roles” (p. 583) and are important among the information seeking behaviors of social scientists.

**Social Workers and Mental Health Practitioners.** While varied information seeking studies have been conducted in the social sciences field, little has been done with mental health practitioners, particularly school social workers. A search of multiple databases (the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses databases, Academic Search Premier, and

\(^{6}\) To find more information on these six characteristics, see Ellis, 1989, p. 174-175.
Wilson Web, among others) as well as a review of the print literature did not reveal any recent substantive studies examining the information seeking behaviors of school social workers. Two articles that do mention the study of information seeking behaviors of social workers in general are Mary B. Folster’s (1995) “Information Seeking Patterns: Social Sciences,” and Lines’ (1971) “The Information Uses and Needs of Social Scientists: An Overview of INFROSS.”

Research librarian Mary B. Folster explains that the information seeking behaviors of social workers were examined in the context of the Information Needs in Social Services Project (INISS) conducted by David R. Streatfield and Thomas D. Wilson for the British Library Research and Development Department. This project used “structured observations and interviews with social service staff members at all levels, the researchers assessed how information was looked for, obtained and utilized” (p. 87).

Line’s (1971) study, “The Information Uses and Needs of Social Scientists: An Overview of INFROSS,” not only sent a questionnaire to a sample “of all the social science researchers we could find” (p. 413) and conducted interviews with a sample of those who did not answer the questionnaire, those who answered the questionnaire and those “who were worth following up and some who had deliberately been left out of the questionnaire sample” (p. 413). Lines discovered that “practitioners . . . have in common a shortage of time, and a general unawareness of information tools” (p. 429), of which a good research librarian is one.

Studies examining the information-seeking behaviors of social workers and mental health practitioners have focused on practitioners’ awareness of information sources and the importance of the information in those sources (Palmer, 1999). Although some research has been conducted to identify the information needs and practices of mental health practitioners
(Blackburn, 2001), little to no research has focused specifically on school social workers’ information seeking behaviors. My research study fills a gap in the information seeking literature regarding this specialized professional population of school social workers and provides insight into how practitioners are using theoretical knowledge in practice.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study draws on the responses of school social workers recruited through the American Council for School Social Work’s (ACSSW) online newsletter School Social Work, Now! A survey was the preferred data collection tool. Because this study is modeled on earlier studies, it was important to utilize a tool similar to that used in earlier studies (Leasure, 1995; Townsend, 2009) in order to build upon established knowledge and contribute new knowledge to the field of Library and Information Science (LIS). As noted in Chapter One, my study was influenced by the work of Dr. Karen Townsend (2009), who examined school counselor’s attitudes toward and uses of bibliotherapy. Townsend’s original survey instrument was re-designed to more accurately reflect the nature of this research study, which seeks insight into the information seeking behavior of school social workers as well as their attitudes toward bibliotherapy from a LIS perspective. Changes included the addition of demographic questions and open-ended questions, which allowed richer support for the data. My research is an exploratory study focusing on the information seeking behaviors of school social workers when they utilize bibliotherapy as a counseling technique.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do school social workers seek information about materials to be used for bibliotherapy?
2. How do school social workers view bibliotherapy as a counseling technique?

3. When using bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, are school social workers partnering with librarians?

**Hypotheses**

1. School social workers will consult sources they already know.

2. School social workers hold positive perceptions of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique.

3. When using bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, school social workers are not collaborating with librarians.

**Data Collection**

I used purposive sampling to access a group of people who have traits appropriate for my study (Nardi, 2003). The mission of the recently established American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW) is ideally suited to my research aims. Founded in 2009, the ACSSW is a national association that “supports school social workers in their services to students, schools, and families to overcome social, systemic, economic and mental barriers to student learning” (ACSSW, 2011). This association is devoted to the profession of school social work and is interested in sharing practical and research-based resources for school social work practitioners. Because of the ACSSW’s emphasis on making research accessible to practitioners, this organization was hospitable to my research aims. Moreover, the ACSSW is embracing technology to provide research and research results to members, as well as to other individuals who sign up to receive their electronic publications. Those electronic publications come in the form of either a weekly electronic newsletter or a weekly electronic informational reminder.
After communicating with the president of the ACSSW, it was clear that the ACSSW emphasizes practitioner-based research and that the organization is a great supporter of student research. The ACSSW provides a point of access for students and others doing research in their weekly electronic newsletter, *School Social Work Now!*, as well as sending out weekly email reminders about said research to individuals on their listserv. The ACSSW organization was chosen specifically for this study because of the organization’s desire to merge theory and practice by bringing research to school social work practitioners.

**Survey Instrumentation and Survey Design**

A survey was used to (a) establish how this sample of school social workers seek information regarding bibliotherapy materials, (b) assess how these school social workers view bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, and (c) determine the extent of collaboration between these school social workers and school librarians.

**Survey Instrumentation.** As stated in the introduction to this chapter, survey research was the preferred type of data collection because of its similarity to the data collection instruments used in two prior studies (Leasure 1995; Townsend 2009). In addition, replication of this research with a different practitioner sample, school social workers as opposed to school counselors, was important for extending already existing knowledge. Leasure’s (1995) study surveyed high school counselors’ perceptions and uses of bibliotherapy, while Townsend (2009) surveyed Alabama school counselors on their attitudes and use of bibliotherapy. While Leasure (1995) and Townsend (2009) both used a

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7 According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (2012), school counselors are “School counselors are certified or licensed professionals who possess a master’s degree or higher in school counseling, or a substantial equivalent, meet the state certification/licensure standards and abide by the laws of the states in which they are employed.” They also “help all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development, ensuring today’s students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow.”
survey as their research method, it was distributed via the U.S. mail while mine was distributed electronically. Self-administered surveys consist of questions that individual respondents can answer on their own, without the researcher present (Fink, 2003). My survey was a self-administered, web-based survey used via Survey Monkey. A web-based survey tool has the advantage of convenience for participants, which is believed to encourage responses. Also, when dealing with a larger sample size, a web-based questionnaire is also more cost-effective than a mail questionnaire (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

**Survey Design.** I secured permission from Karen Townsend (2009) to use and revise her instrument, created for her 2009 dissertation, *Bibliotherapy, An Examination of School Counselor’s Attitudes and Use* (see Appendix D) as the basis for my instrument, the Bibliotherapy Survey (see Appendix E). Dr. Townsend’s research “proposed to determine if school counselors differed in their usage of or attitudes toward bibliotherapy” (Townsend, 2009, p. ii).

In LIS, researchers have clearly established a body of knowledge addressing the different information seeking behaviors of various practitioner groups (Case, 2012). LIS researchers have begun to look at professions individually to show distinctions for specific fields. Leckie (2005) states,

> Within LIS, early studies of information practices concentrated on scientists and other scholarly researchers, but with the early studies done by Wilson and Streatfield (1977) on the information-related practices of social workers in a government agency, the door was opened for studies of other, nonacademic professionals (p. 159).
Each piece of research that looks at a distinct professional group adds to the bigger picture of information seeking behaviors for LIS literature.

The present study extends both Townsend’s (2009) and Leasure’s (1995) work by examining both attitudes about bibliotherapy and information seeking behavior in a new group of individuals: school social workers. This research went a step further than both Townsend’s (2009) and Leasure’s (1995) investigations by including: (a) how school social workers sought information about materials used for bibliotherapy, (b) whether or not school social workers collaborated with librarians in the process, (c) school social workers’ perceptions of librarians, and (d) school social workers view of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique.

For the purpose of my inquiry, Townsend’s (2009) instrument was changed to help answer my particular research questions. Important changes included: (a) adding questions designed to understand information seeking behaviors of school social workers, (b) adding specific demographic questions and (c) deleting irrelevant Likert scale statements. For example, I asked participants if they were certified as a school social worker, how many years they had been practicing, and to what grade/grades they provided counseling. Other questions were added to find out with what types of topics the participants might use bibliotherapy and what type of reading materials they use during a bibliotherapy counseling session. Deleted Likert scale statements included: *I am interested in learning more about supplemental activities (e. g., art, diaries) to be used in conjunction with bibliotherapy; I find that many children appreciate the inclusion of children’s stories in their sessions; and I see using children’s literature in counseling as promoting children’s well being.* I decided not to use these scale items because I felt they would not add to my specific research questions.
Townsend (2009) used a five-point Likert Scale with designations of *strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree*. I changed my Likert scale to a four-point (*strongly disagree; disagree; agree; strongly agree*) because I wanted participants to really think about each statement and make a choice. This is supported by Fink (2009) who states, “forced-choice questions are often useful when you want to divert the respondent from taking the path of least resistance by choosing a middle category (somewhere between agree and disagree-neutral) or claiming uncertainty (not sure, don’t know)” (p. 26). The final survey was sent to participants after a pilot study was conducted.

**Pilot Survey.** The initial survey instrument was distributed to school social workers who attended the School Social Work Association of America’s (SSWAA) annual conference.\(^8\) This pilot sample was chosen because it was a convenience sample. I knew one of my committee members would be traveling to this conference, and could distribute and collect the pilot study surveys. This conference was a perfect opportunity to gain feedback about the survey from my targeted audience of school social workers. Feedback was gained by distributing a paper copy of the survey (see Appendix F), which allowed participants to write on them regarding unclear or confusing questions. I also hoped that by using a convenience sample that I would get a good response and return rate from the pilot study. The pilot study’s response rate was 62 percent; 31 out of 50 were returned. I revised several of the demographic questions as well as the open-ended questions based upon the feedback from the pilot study.

For example, question numbers 13 and 34 were altered based on feedback. Originally question 13 stated: *Does your school have an employed librarian?* A few participants did not answer this question, but wrote in response “media specialist.” This led me to speculate

\(^8\) Conference took place March 30, 2011-April 2, 2011 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.
that the school social workers were unaware that a media specialist can also be a librarian.

The question, therefore, was changed to the following:

Which does the school have?

□ A librarian with a degree

□ A media specialist

□ Other, please specify:

Question 34 was also changed based on feedback. Originally the question was an open-ended one asking, *How do you gain new information about newly published literature, various genres, or age appropriate materials?* Because I received many similar responses to this question that included “catalogs,” “websites,” “coworkers/colleagues,” “magazines/periodicals from different publishers,” and “word of mouth,” I changed the question to the following format:

Which of the following do you use to gain new information about newly published literature, various genres, and/or age appropriate materials?

□ Catalogs

□ Co-workers/colleagues

□ Magazines

□ Publisher’s reviews (print or electronic)

□ Websites

□ Word of mouth

□ Other (please specify) ___________________
I then added a follow-up, open-ended question that related to this newly worded question.  

*Based on your answers to question 34, please provide a short specific list of resources that you use to find materials for bibliotherapy. (For example, book titles, websites, URLs, etc.)*

The pilot study survey (see Appendix F) and pilot consent letter (see Appendix G) accompanied the survey in accordance with directives (see Appendix H) from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Dominican University.

**Survey.** The final Bibliotherapy Survey consists of 42 questions divided into three sections: multiple choice, a 4-point Likert scale, and open-ended queries. The survey was finalized after the pilot study. The revised survey (see Appendix E) was also approved (see Appendix I) by the IRB at Dominican University.

The Bibliotherapy Survey consisted of three sections. The first section involves demographic questions, as well as questions pertaining to the school social workers’ use of the library, librarians, and bibliotherapy. The second section is a four-point Likert Scale, which was used to measure how school social workers view bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, as well as how they view interactions they have had with librarians and/or physical library space. The third and final section consists of open-ended questions asking how the library is used in conjunction with bibliotherapy, asking the school social worker to explain where they find materials used for bibliotherapy counseling, as well as asking the school social worker their perceptions of school librarians.

**Procedure**

The ACSSW provided access, via electronic listserv, to their approximately 100 paid members (see Appendix J for table explaining ACSSW membership eligibility), as well as an additional 3,800 individuals who receive a weekly electronic newsletter and/or weekly email
reminders. Because of crossover between the electronic newsletter list and the weekly email reminder list, the survey link reached approximately 3,500 individuals. The members of the ACSSW, as well as individuals who receive either the electronic newsletter and/or the weekly email reminders are spread throughout the United States.9

The Bibliotherapy Survey was available online from mid October 2011 to January 31, 2012 via Survey Monkey. Initially, the online survey was sent out to approximately 800 individuals via the ACSSW’s electronic newsletter. Due to lack of response, on December 7, 2011, a special introductory paragraph (see Appendix K) appeared at the beginning of the electronic newsletter, urging individuals to answer the survey. It was also at this time (December 14, 2011) that the decision was made to send out weekly email reminders to individuals that might not have signed up to receive the electronic newsletter (see Appendix L).

Analysis

Project data included answers from survey questions, as well as responses to open-ended questions. Survey questions and Likert-scaled responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), student version 18. Open-ended responses were hand-coded thematically. Once the data were cleaned, the survey response totaled 125 school social workers.

Data Cleaning. Data cleaning involved sorting through all the surveys and determining which surveys and questions should be removed from analysis. I removed incomplete surveys and problematic questions. These included Question 1, which determined if participants wished to participate in the survey or not (see Appendix E, p. 112).

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16 asked the participants to rank in order the racial/ethnic breakdown of children served and asked respondents to rank answers, which seemed to cause confusion (see Appendix E, p. 116). Question 42 asked participants who wanted to be contacted with the results or speak to me about the research to leave their name and contact information (see Appendix E, p. 125). Questions 1, 16, and 42 were separated from the data set and were not analyzed.

The Likert scale was assigned to Question 31 only. Individual statements were given letter designations a-u for identification purposes (see Appendix E, pp. 121-122) when put into SPSS. Likert-scaled responses were originally coded for each statement as *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Agree, and Agree*. They were later collapsed and recoded as *Disagree* and *Agree* for concise analysis and reporting.

**Analytic Steps.** Responses from Questions 2-14, 16-30, 31a-31u, 34, and 37 were first explored through descriptive statistical analysis, which provided a basic understanding of distribution and frequency of responses. Questions 15, 32-33, 35-41 were hand-coded and thematically analyzed (see Appendix E, p. 116 & pp. 123-124 for specific survey questions). An independent *t*-test was run on survey Questions 19, and 31k, l, m, p, and s (see Appendix E, p. 117 & pp. 121-122 for specific scale statements). A bivariate correlation (Pearson product-Correlation Coefficient) test was run on survey Questions 25, 28, and 37 (see Appendix E, pp. 118, 119 and 124). Table 2 explains the breakdown of the survey question and which evaluation method was used for each.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Evaluation Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-14; 16-30; 31a-31u; 34; 37</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics-Frequencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15; 32-33; 35-41</td>
<td>Thematic Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19; 31k; 31l; 31m; 31p; 31s</td>
<td>Independent t-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25; 28; 37</td>
<td>Bivariate Correlation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 (see below) illustrates the Likert scale statements grouped into themes based on concrete applications of components of bibliotherapy. Themes identified are practical applications and attitudes of theoretical concepts espoused by bibliotherapy. Organizing Likert scale statements a-u by theme allowed me to identify similar items and determine response patterns. Cross correlations on items grouped by themes were run on each theme to check for statistical significance and to ensure items were capturing the same construct. I grouped scale items into themes relevant to specific research questions. For example, scale items that were themed Books as Tools were used to answer Research Question 2.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Statement</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31a, 31b, 31k, 31l, 31m, 31p, 31q, 31r, 31s</td>
<td>Books as Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31c, 31d</td>
<td>Concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31e, 31f, 31g, 31j</td>
<td>Sharing Bibliotherapy resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31i, 31o</td>
<td>Librarian Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31h, 31n, 31t, 31u</td>
<td>Information seeking using Library/Librarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because questions 15, 32-33, 35-41 were open-ended questions, I extracted present themes by using open coding to deconstruct participants’ responses and examine these responses for similarities and differences (Pickard, 2007). I first looked at each open-ended
survey question and created categories for each question. My categories were based on the language of the participants (Creswell, 2009) that reflected terms of the research questions and hypotheses. For an example of the hand coded categories, please see Table 4.

Table 4  
*Categorical Coding by Survey Question*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Number of Categories</th>
<th>Coding of Categories</th>
<th>Participant Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32. Do you go to the school/public library to locate materials for bibliotherapy? If so how do you locate such materials?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No or do not go to the school/public library</td>
<td>“I use the librarian’s expertise to help me find the appropriate materials I need.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Searching via electronic resource</td>
<td>“I ask the librarian/tech to suggest children’s books that might apply to topics I want covered.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask or use a Librarian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Own or buy books that are used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I began to extrapolate overall themes, I carefully and consciously referred back to both the supporting literature and the theoretical framework to verify that the themes were relevant to each of my research questions and hypotheses. Themes revealed to be in concert with the theoretical framework included: library use, materials seeking, collaboration, perceptions of librarians and librarians’ expertise. My analysis followed Padgett’s (1998) method of moving from coding to thematic representation. See Table 5 for example of thematic coding.

---

10 See Appendix M for full table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of responses associated with each category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of the Library</td>
<td>Library not used</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User of electronic resources</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User of library/librarian</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non collaborator</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborator with others</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Materials</td>
<td>Fast, easy, known</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From informal channels (coworkers/colleagues)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Librarians</td>
<td>Professional Colleague</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-professional Colleague</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive perceptions</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative perceptions</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Librarians’ Expertise</td>
<td>Books/literature</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information Access &amp; Organization</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure/NA</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My methodology is firmly based in previous studies and specifically designed to explore school social worker’s attitudes toward bibliotherapy and librarians as an information source. The larger goal of this study is to create new knowledge about information seeking among school social workers as outlined by my research questions. The survey responses present an opportunity for school librarians to gain new knowledge about school social workers’ information seeking behaviors. Chapter Four presents the results of this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents findings as related to each research question and hypothesis. Demographic details revealed by descriptive analysis precede results, which are explained in order of research question and hypothesis. Each research question and hypothesis is briefly summarized for clarity and transparency.

Demographics

Of the 125 respondents, 81.6% were female, 17.6% male and 0.8% preferred not to answer. The predominant racial/ethnic group represented was White (78.4%); African-Americans and Hispanics/Latinas/Latinos were equally represented at 8.0%. Thirty-two percent of the total number of respondents reported that they were in the 40-49 years old age category.

A majority of respondents (93.5%) indicated they held a master’s degree; they were not asked to specify in what field. The two highest percentages (27.5% and 22.6%) were concentrated in either their early career (4-7 years as a school social worker) or established in their career (20 or more years as a school social worker). A majority (80.8%) of the respondents identified as being endorsed with a certification of some type, which ranged from state to national. Some (71.2%) responded they belonged to some type of professional social work association, which included the American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW), School Social Work Association of American (SSWAA), and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). See Table 6.
Notably, the profile of respondents for this study matches the demographics compiled in the 2010 National School Social Work Survey by Kelly et. al. (2010). Kelly et al. surveyed school social workers via both the School Social Work Association of American (SSWAA) and the school social worker division of the National Association of School Work (NASW) as well as state level organizations. According to Kelly et al. (2010), their study sample (n=1,639) provided a “portrayal of the population of school social workers who belong[ed] to national and state associations” (p. 134). Kelly et al.’s (2010) survey sought to compile data to address a gap in up-to-date information and provide current data on “school social work practice to help assemble the core knowledge of this practice field and to create an agenda for future research, practice, and policy directions” (p. 132).
Table 6  
**Demographics**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>(n)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Frequency</strong></th>
<th><strong>Percentage</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer Not to Answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latina/Latino</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer Not to Answer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years old</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years old</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years old</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years old</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69 years old</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+ years old</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as a School Social Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-3 years</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-15 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
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<td>16-19 years</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>20+ years</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Affiliation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACSSW</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSWAA</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other(^{11})</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACSSW &amp; SSWAA</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACSSW &amp; Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSWAA &amp; Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACSSW, SSWAA &amp; Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer Not to Respond</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{11}\) Includes the NASW and various state level organizations.
School social worker respondents (38.4%) stated their primary work setting is an elementary (K-8) school. The majority of respondents (95.2%) reported working in a public school setting. Seventy-four percent reported that the reading levels of the children served are below grade level. These demographics provide a snapshot of where the respondents work and the reading levels of the children they serve. See Table 7.

Table 7
Type of School and Student Reading Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Setting</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Only (K-8)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Only (grades 6-8)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Only</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12 or P-12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary &amp; Middle School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other&lt;sup&gt;12&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parochial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other&lt;sup&gt;13&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Level of Students</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Below Grade Level</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading at Grade Level</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Above Grade Level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results by Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: How do school social workers seek information about materials to be used for bibliotherapy?

Hypothesis 1: School social workers will consult sources they already know.

<sup>12</sup> Other included, but not limited to: PreK-5<sup>th</sup>; K-6; Grade 4-8; and K-21yrs. old.

<sup>13</sup> Other included alternative and charter schools.
The open-ended responses provided insight into the reasons for information seeking patterns among school social workers. Question 36 asked why do you seek bibliotherapy materials the way you do? I identified two themes from the responses: information sources had to be fast, easy, and known, and the respondents seek information consultations with others (which includes, but is not limited to, other school social workers, co-workers, and/or librarians. Responses that reflected these themes included:

“I know what I have and how to access it if I don’t.”

“I find talking with those familiar with the books and authors helps make sure the book is appropriate. In consulting with the reading specialist I also make sure it is at a student’s reading level.”

To understand how school social workers seek information about materials for bibliotherapy, I needed to understand what types of sources they consulted. Table 8 illustrates where respondents reported gaining information about newly published literature, various genres, and/or age appropriate materials. Respondents were given a list and asked to check all sources they used. According to the respondents, 64.6% ask their co-workers/colleagues for suggestions while 75.2% look to already known websites for new information.
Table 8
Where School Social Workers Gain New Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catalogs</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-workers/Colleagues</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher’s Review (print or electronic)</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of Mouth</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to better understand what specific resources school social workers used, I coded the responses to Question 35, *Based on your answers to question 34, please provide a short specific list of resources that you use to find materials for bibliotherapy (For example, book titles, websites, URLs, etc.) to reflect the choices of Question 34, Which of the following do you use to gain new information about newly published literature, various genres, and/or age appropriate materials? (Check all that apply) (see Table 8 above).* I found school social workers identified very specific sources and also just gave general responses. Here is a sample of responses.

“I browse publisher's websites and websites that feature information and resources related to autism, emotional impairment, and sensory differences.”
“Safe and Caring School curriculum has several books for lessons. I also tend to look at counseling catalogs such as Free Spirit Publishing, Boys Town Press, and YouthLight, Inc. for ideas. I also have lists of books that my social work supervisor used during my internship. I sometimes consult with my sister-in-law who is a children's librarian.”

“goodreads.com, social work magazine, popular magazines”

The majority of respondents (91.6%) agreed with scale item 31e: *Literature on the topic of bibliotherapy is of interest to me*. I did not ask what type of literature, as I just wanted to know if they agreed with the basic understanding of this statement. This result leads into my specific research interest in that I want to know not only if the sample agreed that the topic of bibliotherapy was of interest to them (Likert 31e), but also if they agreed or disagreed with the items, *I am interested in sharing bibliotherapy techniques with other social workers* (Likert 31g) and *I am interested in sharing resources about bibliotherapy with other interested social workers* (Likert 31j). I also wanted to know if they were interested in not only sharing information about bibliotherapy with other school social workers, but also if they were interested in learning about book titles that would be appropriate for specific problems children presented (see Table 9 below to see complete Likert statements). Most school social workers (97.5%) agreed that they were interested in this type of list. See Table 8 for responses from all statements about sharing information on bibliotherapy.
Table 9
Sharing Bibliotherapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement #</th>
<th>Disagree % (no.)</th>
<th>Agree % (no.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31e: Literature on the topic of bibliotherapy is of interest to me. (n=119)</td>
<td>8.4% (10)</td>
<td>191.6% (109)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31f: I am interested in lists of book titles appropriate for specific problems that children may present in therapy. (n=119)</td>
<td>2.5% (3)</td>
<td>97.5% (116)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31g: I am interested in sharing bibliotherapy techniques with other social workers. (n=118)</td>
<td>16.9% (20)</td>
<td>83.1% (98)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31j: I am interested in sharing resources about bibliotherapy with other interested social workers. (n=117)</td>
<td>16.2% (19)</td>
<td>83.8% (98)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 1.** The hypothesis, school social workers consult what they know, is supported by the data presented. School social workers in this sample are more likely to seek information from sources with which they are familiar, such as consulting a website or co-workers/coworkers to gain information about newly published literature that can be used in bibliotherapy counseling.

**Research Question 2: How do school social workers view bibliotherapy as a counseling technique?**

**Hypothesis 2: School social workers hold positive perceptions of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique.**

To answer this research question and address this hypothesis, background information about school social workers’ exposure to the topic of bibliotherapy was collected. A large
percentage of respondents (98.4%) stated their school district provided them with professional development opportunities and 86.7% stated that they had attended between zero and 10 events during the past 12 months. However, 75.4% reported that zero of those professional development opportunities (which includes workshops, conferences, and/or continuing education opportunities) involved topics related to bibliotherapy. Also, 88% of the respondents stated they were exposed to bibliotherapy in two or fewer courses during their education. See Table 10.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Opportunities and Courses</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>98.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Professional Opportunities involving Bibliotherapy</td>
<td>122</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Courses involving Bibliotherapy</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most surveyed school social workers (72.8%) stated they did use bibliotherapy and 70.4% stated they had used books and/or reading materials at least six or more times during the past 12 months when working with children at school. When asked what specific topics they used bibliotherapy for, school social workers reported using books or other reading
School social workers were asked: *Which of the following topics do you use books or other reading materials in conjunction with therapy?* Respondents were asked to check all topics that applied. The five topics reported most were: feelings (84%), bullying (82.4%), character building/self esteem (76.5%), friends (73.1%), and death and dying (60.5%). Figure 1 displays the complete percentage breakdowns of all topics that were included as choices which school social workers could choose.

*Figure 1: Use Books or Reading Materials for Following Topics*

School social workers also reported using certain formats of reading materials more than others. Respondents were asked to check all that applied for the Question 30: *If you are likely to use reading materials for therapy sessions, which of the following types do you use?* The responses indicate that the surveyed school social workers are more likely to
67

use picture books (60%) and vocabulary controlled easy readers or leveled readers\(^\text{14}\) (52.5%) in therapy sessions over other formats. Figure 2 displays the complete reported list and percentages of formats of which school social workers choose.

*Figure 2: Formats of Reading Materials Used*

When asked if bibliotherapy is an effective intervention with children, 97.5% of the sample, regardless if they reported they use the technique or not, agreed that it was effective; however, only 75% of the sample agreed they often use children’s books in their work with children. This indicates that while most of the surveyed school social workers agree bibliotherapy is an effective technique, not as many agree that they use children’s books. Although there was some indication in the open-ended questions that some school social workers use specific curriculums, there are other variables that may affect this; additional research would have to be conducted to discover the reason for this divergence.

\(^{14}\) These are books that typically consist of short chapters and have a combination of short sentences and pictures on each page.
The respondents in this sample agreed (98.3%) that children can learn meaningful problem-solving techniques from children’s literature. Not only did 95.8% of respondents agree that children can often identify with fictional characters facing similar problems, but 97.5% also agreed that children could gain insight from these fictional characters. Also, 97.5% of the school social workers surveyed agreed children can learn alternate solutions to problems from fictional book characters. While 89.1% of the respondents agree they own children’s books they can use as a resource in their work and 77.1% agreed they are familiar with children’s literature appropriate for topics that may be addressed in counseling, only 62.5% agreed children’s literature is a favorite tool to use in their work with children. Even though only 62.5% of the sample agreed that using children’s literature was a favorite tool, 98.3% agreed bibliotherapy can address therapeutic concerns and 86.6% agreed it can address academic concerns. This sample of school social workers recognizes the potential for bibliotherapy as an effective and useful counseling technique. This data will help school librarians recognize the importance of bibliotherapy and this has implications regarding input from the school social worker in school library collection development and outreach. See Table 11.
Table 11
Bibliotherapy as a Tool and Bibliotherapy Concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement #</th>
<th>Disagree % (no.)</th>
<th>Agree % (no.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31a: Bibliotherapy is an effective intervention with children. (n=118)</td>
<td>2.5% (3)</td>
<td>97.5% (115)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31b: Children can learn meaningful problem solving techniques from children’s literature. (n=119)</td>
<td>1.7% (2)</td>
<td>98.3% (117)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31c: Bibliotherapy can address academic concerns. (n=119)</td>
<td>13.4% (16)</td>
<td>86.6% (103)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31d: Bibliotherapy can address therapeutic concerns. (n=119)</td>
<td>1.7% (2)</td>
<td>98.3% (117)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31k: I often use children’s books in my work with children. (n=120)</td>
<td>25.0% (30)</td>
<td>75.0% (90)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31l: Children’s literature is a favorite tool in my work with children. (n=120)</td>
<td>37.5% (45)</td>
<td>62.5% (75)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31m: I own children’s book that I can use as a resource in my work. (n=119)</td>
<td>10.9% (13)</td>
<td>89.1% (106)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31p: I believe that children can often identify with fictional characters that are facing similar problems. (n=118)</td>
<td>4.2% (5)</td>
<td>95.8% (113)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31q: I believe that children can gain insight from fictional characters. (n=119)</td>
<td>2.5% (3)</td>
<td>97.5% (116)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31r: I believe that children can learn alternative solutions to their own problems from fictional book characters. (n=119)</td>
<td>2.5% (3)</td>
<td>97.5% (116)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31s: I am familiar with children’s literature appropriate for topics that may be addressed in counseling. (n=118)</td>
<td>22.9% (27)</td>
<td>77.1% (91)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I used an independent t-test to understand differences in attitudes and beliefs about bibliotherapy between respondents who use bibliotherapy as a technique and those who do not. I determined those respondents who use bibliotherapy are more likely to have positive views of bibliotherapy and have a collection of resources or knowledge that can be used for bibliotherapy. Results showed the following:
• School social workers who use bibliotherapy (M=1.84) as a technique are more likely to agree with scale item 31k, *I often use children’s books in my work with children* (*t* (df=118) = 4.038; *p* < .01) compared to those who did not use bibliotherapy as a technique (M=1.48).

• School social workers who use bibliotherapy (M=1.73) as a technique are more likely to agree with scale item 31l, *Children’s literature is a favorite tool in my work with children* (*t* (df=118) = 4.283; *p* < .01) compared to those who did not use bibliotherapy as a technique (M=1.31).

• School social workers who use bibliotherapy (M=1.93) as a technique are more likely to agree with scale item 31m, *I own children’s books that I can use as a resource in my work* (*t* (df=117)=2.679; *p* < .01) compared to those who did not use bibliotherapy as a technique (M=1.76).

• School social workers who use bibliotherapy (M=1.99) as a technique are more likely to agree with scale item 31p, *I believe that children can often identify with fictional characters that are facing similar problems* (*t* (df=116) = 3.120; *p* < .01) compared to those who did not use bibliotherapy as a technique (M=1.86).

• School social workers who use bibliotherapy (M=1.82) as a technique are more likely to agree with scale item 31s, *I am familiar with children’s literature appropriate for topics that may be addressed in counseling* (*t* (df=116) =2.404; *p* < .05) compared to those who did not use bibliotherapy as a technique (M=1.61).

The results of the *t*-test suggest that school social workers who agreed they use bibliotherapy as a counseling technique also agreed they use children’s books and literature in their work with children. Those who agreed they use bibliotherapy also agreed: they *own* children’s
books to use in their work with children and they are familiar with children’s literature for use in counseling. All of the findings above support the hypothesis that school social workers hold positive perceptions of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique.

**Summary of Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2.** The hypothesis that school social workers hold positive perceptions of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique is supported by the data. Over 70% of school social workers responding stated that they used bibliotherapy and books and/or other reading materials at least six times or more within the past 12 months. Additionally, the data show school social worker respondents are likely to use bibliotherapy to address topics such as feelings, bullying, and character building/self-esteem. School social workers also reported using certain formats (picture and easy readers) more than others. Over 60% of school social workers surveyed agreed bibliotherapy can address concerns and that it was a tool with which children could learn and gain insight. Respondents also agreed that they use and own books, as well as know of literature, appropriate for topics or issues revealed in counseling. School social workers who reported using bibliotherapy were more likely to agree that books are a useful tool for this counseling technique.

**Research Question 3: When using bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, are school social workers collaborating with librarians?**

**Hypothesis 3: When using bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, school social workers are not collaborating with librarians.**

As stated in Chapter One, for the purposes of this study, I am defining collaboration as working with librarians to locate information about materials to be used in bibliotherapy counseling.
To answer this research question, it was necessary to discover whether or not the surveyed sample had a library in their school (Question 12, *Does your school setting include a library?*) and who was in charge of that space (Question 13, *Which does the school have? A librarian with a degree, A media specialist, or Other-please specify*). Ninety-four percent of the school social workers surveyed stated that there was a library space within their school setting. Over 55% reported there was a librarian with a degree working at the school, 29.8% reported there was a media specialist and 13.2% stated the library was staffed by “other.” School social workers were asked if the librarian and/or media specialist had an accredited library degree because I felt it was important to see if school social workers knew that librarians/media specialists have a specialized degree. Many (55.6%) stated they did not know.

School social workers were asked if they view librarians as professional colleagues (Question 37, *Do you consider librarians your professional colleagues?*). When asked to respond yes or no, a majority (91.1%) responded yes. Respondents were asked to elaborate, in an open-ended question, on why they responded yes or no. Those who answered yes responded with strong statements such as:

“Yes, they are important partners in providing information and knowledge.”

“We collaborate, I get information from them to better my work with the children, I consult with them on managing behavior, I consult with them on symptoms or issues they see with the children as they know every child in the building.”

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**Note:** To be accredited, the librarian and/or media specialist needs to have their degree from a school sanctioned by the American Library Association (ALA). According to ALA “ALA accreditation indicates that the program has undergone an external review and meets the ALA Committee on Accreditation’s Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies” (ALA, 2012, para. 3).
However, for those who did not see librarians as professional colleagues, responses were just as emphatic. Examples included:

“It’s not to disparage librarians, I just don’t consider them knowledgeable with respect to counseling and therapy that I would interface with them about these topics”

“I do not think they have enough continuing education either for how to advise us on what books to use [sic].”

School social workers were then asked in an open ended question: What are your perceptions of librarians? (Question 38) School social workers’ responses ranged from positive to negative, including such responses as:

“Librarians are extremely helpful and as professionals in their field, can share their expertise with others.”

“One at our school just doesn’t happen to be professional and or up-to-date with her skills.”

School social workers’ perceptions of librarians may have an impact on their behaviors toward using the school library and the school librarian as an information source. Respondents were asked how many times they used the library as well how many times they spoke to a librarian. When asked, “approximately how many times have you visited the school library to gather materials to use with interventions with your students during the past 12 months”, a majority of school social workers (71%) selected the choice zero to five times. Similarly, school social workers (79.8%) reported they have only spoken to a librarian
(school or public) about materials to be used for bibliotherapy zero to five times during the last 12 months.

A Pearson correlation was used to test whether there was a relationship between whether school social workers viewed librarians as professional colleagues (Question 37) and the number of times they visited the school library during the past 12 months to gather material to use with interventions with students (Question 25), or the number of times spoken to the librarian during the past 12 months about materials to be used for bibliotherapy (Question 28). The data showed a positive relationship ($r=.67$, $p < .01$) between Question 25, the number of times the school social worker visited the school library, and Question 28, the number of times spoken to the librarian. The results showed no significant relationship between viewing librarians as a professional colleague and times spoken to the librarian. Also, the results showed no significant relationship between viewing librarian as a professional colleague and times the school social worker visited the library. See Table 12.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is Librarian Professional Colleague</th>
<th>Spoken To Librarian</th>
<th>Visited School Library to Gather Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is Librarian Professional Colleague</strong></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>-.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spoken To Librarian</strong></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.676**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visited School Library to Gather Materials</strong></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>.676**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to open-ended Question 32: Do you go to the school and/or public library to locate materials for bibliotherapy? If so, how do you locate such materials? added contextual information that school social workers are sometimes using a librarians help when trying to locate materials. School social workers replied they often search via a computer or
ask librarians. Often these responses would go hand in hand, which indicates that some of the school social workers would use both resources when locating materials at the school library. Sample responses include:

“Computer [sic] or reference librarians,”

“Via computer, inquire with librarian, research on internet,”

“The on-line[sic] catalog at both the school and public library; When our school had a professional librarian, I also consulted with her.”

While 72.5% of school social workers agreed they were familiar with the school library and how to search for children’s literature, only 58% agreed the school library is a good resource to find children’s books for counseling. Interestingly, while 66.7% of school social workers agree the librarian is a good resource to find children’s books for counseling, only 45.8% agreed they consult the school librarian for ideas about various titles of children’s books, while 58% stated they agreed they use the school library to find books to use during counseling sessions. This indicates that while some school social workers agree the school librarian and the school library are valuable resources; this still does not lead to collaboration with the school librarian. See Table13.
Table 13
*Library and Librarian as Resources*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement #</th>
<th>Disagree % (no.)</th>
<th>Agree % (no.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31i: I consult the school librarian for ideas about various titles of children’s books. (n=120)</td>
<td>54.2% (65)</td>
<td>45.8% (55)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31n: The school library is a good resource to find children’s books for counseling. (n=119)</td>
<td>42.0% (50)</td>
<td>58.0% (69)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31o: A librarian is a good resource to find children’s books for counseling. (n=120)</td>
<td>33.3% (40)</td>
<td>66.7% (80)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31t: I am familiar with the school library and how to search for children’s literature. (n=120)</td>
<td>27.5% (33)</td>
<td>72.5% (87)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School social workers were asked an open-ended question to describe if and how they have consulted a librarian about bibliotherapy for counseling purposes and, if not, to explain why (Question 33). Of the school social workers surveyed 66.7% agree that school librarians are a good resource to find children’s books; this reinforces the results displayed in Table 13 (see above). Responses included:

“I have given the librarian the topic or she has approached me with a book she thinks I can use.”

“I have asked for book titles or for suggestions on book titles.”

“I simply tell them what concept I am working on & they give me suggestions.”

**Summary of Research Question 3 and Hypothesis 3.** Even though school social workers responded favorably that they view librarians as their professional colleagues,
actually using the library or speaking to the librarian is not significantly related to views of librarians as professional colleagues. However, school social workers (66.7%) agreed the librarian is a good resource to find children’s books. Data analysis revealed a relationship between visiting the library and speaking to the librarian. Although using only quantitative methods related to gauging statistical significance would indicate the hypothesis inconclusive, practical significance, taken from the open-ended responses, strongly demonstrates otherwise.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

My study was designed to examine the information seeking behaviors of school social workers when using bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, the extent to which they collaborate with librarians in doing so, and their perceptions of the bibliotherapy counseling technique. In addition to learning how school social workers view the technique and find materials, this study peripherally investigated school social workers’ opinions of school libraries and librarians. Through the use of an electronic survey distributed through the American Council for School Social Work’s (ACSSW) electronic newsletter, School Social Work, Now! and weekly email reminders, I was able to gather evidence to support the following: (a) school social workers seek information from sources they know, such as coworkers, known websites, and other informal channels; (b) school social workers hold positive perceptions of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique; and (c) school social workers occasionally collaborate with school librarians. The accumulated impact of these findings suggests fortuitous opportunities for school librarians to engage in outreach to bolster relationships with school social workers, especially when school social workers are using bibliotherapy.

Information Seeking

In his treatise on human information seeking and use, Case (2012) legitimizes viewing school social workers as social scientists by placing them in this category within the LIS professional literature. Following this line of thought, my findings are in line with Ellis’
(1989) statements on social scientists’ information seeking habits; social scientists “seek out people who know something about the area and ask them for references to introductory works, key references, and key authors” (p. 180). Evidence from my data supports the conclusion that school social workers go to sources they know, including informal channels, to find materials for bibliotherapy. I found that in this sample, school social workers’ information-seeking for materials to be used in bibliotherapy counseling had three possible outcomes: first, a tendency toward fast, easy searches among familiar resources; second, an unfamiliarity with the multiple ways available to find information; third, a habitual consultation with co-workers and/or colleagues. These outcomes are supported by this study’s school social workers’ responses to the open-ended question that asked them to describe how and why they seek for new information. Of 97 responses to my open-ended question about how they find materials, 78 school social workers clearly stated they use familiar channels. The following are typical of these responses:

“I find talking with those familiar with the book and authors helps make sure the book is appropriate.”

“Least time consuming. Someone else has already used the material. I have a co-worker who does a LOT of bibliotherapy.”

“I have found it most helpful to seek out other counselors or social workers for suggestions.”

“It is convenient and enables me to include other colleagues in my work.”
“The resources used outline and organize the books by the topics or problems it addresses. This saves a lot of time in reviewing and searching for appropriate books for specific topics.”

“I ask my fellow social workers of book they like or specific topics. I have used websites recommended readings related to topics I need.”

Moreover, approximately half of these respondents emphasized they want information that is fast, easy and familiar.

My results agree with and further support the findings of research conducted by Pehrsson and McMillen (2008, 2009, 2010) who found that counselors seek information from known others. These authors surveyed the American Counseling Association (ACA) in 2008 and found that 73.2% of mental health practitioners relied on peer recommendations for finding books to use with clients. My study’s findings corroborate Pehrsson and McMillen’s work and enhance LIS information seeking literature by looking at a specific area of mental health professionals and at school social workers as a practitioner group.

**Bibliotherapy as a Counseling Technique**

In addition to discovering how this study’s respondents sought information about materials to be used with bibliotherapy counseling, I posited that their positive perceptions of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique might be connected to their motivation for using it. I found that over 70% of school social workers surveyed are using this technique. These findings contradict those of Pardeck and Pardeck (1987) who claimed school social workers are a group of mental health practitioners least likely to use bibliotherapy as a counseling technique. My findings are more in line with Pehrsson and McMillen (2009) who found that 79% of their surveyed counselors used bibliotherapy with their clients.
Additionally, I found not only do school social workers hold positive perceptions of this technique; they use it in specific ways. School social workers that identified as using bibliotherapy not only agreed they use children’s books in their work and it was a favorite tool, but also that children could often identify with fictional characters facing similar problems. My survey also found that school social workers reported using bibliotherapy more often with certain themes than others. The top three themes for which bibliotherapy is used identified by this study are: bullying, character building/self-esteem, and feelings. This result raised questions for me regarding why school social workers use bibliotherapy for some issues more than others. For example, school social workers in this sample reported lower use of bibliotherapy for issues such as eating disorders and gang issues compared to bullying, character building/self-esteem, and feelings. If respondent school social workers are using bibliotherapy to address certain themes over others, it might be because these themes are more prominent in school social worker practitioner literature. For example, the American Council for School Social Work’s (ACSSW) 3rd Annual Research to Practice Summit 2012 and the School Social Work Association of American’s (SSWAA) 15th National School Social Work Conference 2012 both included presentations during break-out sessions about bullying prevention. The ACSSW’s presentation was entitled Bullying Prevention at the Universal/Tier 1 Level (Dibble, 2012) and SSWAA’s was entitled Not Another Bullying Workshop! (Spring & Young, 2012).

**Collaboration**

While Pehrsson and McMillen (2008, 2009, 2010) found only 3.1% of mental health practitioners used a librarian for book recommendations, the school social workers who responded to my survey overwhelmingly stated that they considered the school librarian a
professional colleague. Even so, my respondents indicated that only sometimes did they collaborate with the school librarian when finding materials to be used in bibliotherapy counseling. A little over 65% surveyed agreed the school librarian is a good resource for locating children’s books for counseling but only 45.8% of those school social workers agreed they consult their school librarians for ideas about specific children’s book titles. These findings differ from the results Pehrsson and McMillen (2009) discovered in their survey of counselors. They found that only 0.4% of counselors relied on librarian recommendations for book titles (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2009). This difference could be due to my surveying a different group of mental health practitioners, school social workers, of which 94% reported having a physical library in their school building. In addition, school social workers might be more apt to consult with the school librarian as they are more aware of the physical library space in their school building.

According to the literature, there is evidence that certain mental health professionals will engage with librarians in various ways. Placing my results against this backdrop, I can state with confidence there is evidence that the school social worker segment of this population is poised to work with school librarians. Responses from school social workers I surveyed ranged across a spectrum. There are those who may be considered as viewing the librarian as a known informal information source, for example:

“I sometimes consult with my sister-in-law who is a children’s librarian.”

“I also have friends who are librarians who will offer ideas.”

Others view the librarian as a professional colleague:

“I trust the school librarian. She keeps an eye open for social-emotional issues for me.”
“Our main librarian will help us in any way she can. She goes above and beyond to find materials requested or even to help us hone in on what we need.”

“Yes, they are important partners in providing information and knowledge.”

“They provide us valuable materials to help address specific issues with students.”

“I have spoken to the librarian about what issues I will be dealing with in counseling and they will assist me in locating materials for my therapy.”

“Describe the topic or problems area and ask for suggestions re: characters in books who might be good for parallel usage during therapy sessions.”

“I simply tell them what concept I [sic] working on & they give me suggestions.”

“We have discussed numerous [sic] issues with each other. I actually do my therapy sessions around many of the topics that they have in the library. We discuss books they may have on certain topics that can be useful to teach the children and often I coteach [sic] with the librarian on certain subjects, such as internet safety or cyberbullying.”

“I have consulted the school librarian about general well known topics such as bullying.”

Finally, there are those respondents who do not recognize the librarian as information source:
“I guess I never really thought a librarian would have expertise in bibliotherapy.”

“Also, I have never actually considered that a librarian would know specifics about what I might be interested in regarding therapeutic issues.”

“I don’t use the school library much for this type of thing.”

“I generally ask about specific titles; our school librarian is not a social worker so I wouldn’t expect her to know titles that would be useful for my work.”

These specific quotes were typical of overall responses, and mirror Line’s (1971) research regarding social scientists which found that while social scientists were most likely to seek information from informal channels; these informal channels did not include the use of a librarian. While the responses above indicate some apprehension on the part of school social workers about seeking assistance from their school librarians, many display a strong collaborative inclination between school social workers and school librarians. Regarding school social workers as information seeking practitioners, I believe my work could inspire and reinforce robust collaboration between the two groups.

Additionally, potential for stimulating collaboration can be seen when pursuing the view of the school librarian as a professional colleague. It is apparent that some school social workers understood the school librarian’s area of expertise and some did not. When asked the question, “What do you think a librarian’s area of expertise is?” responses included:

“Organizing and locating books.”
“Knowledge of books, of topic areas, of best way to organize material for presentations, of how to ensure that books and computer resources are accessible to all, of how to access information for the benefit of the person asking.”

“She has a vast knowledge of children’s books. She knows the titles and contents of the books. She understands the development levels of students and has materials that appeal to wide range of students. She is valuable resource for SSW, psychologist and parents.”

“Knowledge of all contents in the library. I also consider their personal experiences and opinions a key factor when looking into certain books.”

“I don’t really know a lot about how librarians are trained or what they could help me with.”

“At certain libraries I am uncertain what they consider to be their scope of duties and expertise.”

The majority of responses show some understanding of the knowledge-base of the school librarian; however, those who are not aware of how the school librarian can help when bibliotherapy is used as a counseling technique indicate a need for further education about respective professional roles in service of collaboration. Such further education is in line with Maack’s (1997) ideas about the school social worker and school librarian having similar goals regarding student well-being.
Limitations

As with any research study there are limitations that are realized after the fact. For example, in future research I will address specific concerns with the survey instrument, including:

1. wording survey questions more carefully to avoid confusion among respondents (this was a particular issue with Question 16);

2. adding zero as a distinct option where questions call for participants to respond in the range of 0 – 2 (question 24) or 0 – 5 (questions 20, 25, and 28). This would provide more easily quantifiable data; and

3. revising the Likert scale so participants can have the option of a neutral choice. Not doing so caused participants to agree or disagree, which may not accurately reflect their feelings about the statements.

Lastly, while I took extraordinary care in coding and categorizing open-ended responses as themes associated with my theoretical framework, in future I would draw on further expert corroboration of their precision.

Implications

My findings indicate that the school social workers in this study are motivated to use bibliotherapy. This technique clearly intersects with school librarians’ professional area of expertise. While 91.1% of the respondent school social workers view school librarians as professional colleagues, the qualitative data indicates some do not recognize the ability of the school librarian to assist them in locating resources when using bibliotherapy in counseling. There seems to be a disassociation between viewing school librarians as professional colleagues and actually utilizing the school librarians’ expertise. Less than half of the
surveyed school social workers agreed that the school librarian was consulted when they needed to locate appropriate children’s books for use in counseling. While some school social workers’ responses indicate knowledge of the scope of librarians’ expertise, other responses indicate some confusion about the information professional librarians can actually supply. This raises the question as to whether that confusion is because school social workers are uninformed about school librarians or because the school librarians being referred to in the study responses are themselves not fully cognizant of the depth and breadth of the available literature for youth, and are therefore are unable to effectively assist. An important question for future research is whether or not professional, well-informed school librarians are effectively promoting their skills to their communities.

Established research in LIS has shown that school librarians need to be proactive in promoting how they can collaborate with other members of the educational team. Lance (2010) states “teacher-librarians are ultimately responsible for whether or not their educator colleagues understand and embrace the role of teacher-librarian” (p. 82). The need for librarians and school social workers to work together has been reinforced throughout the literature, from the 1930s (Rubin, 1978a, 1978b) – when responsibilities of mental health practitioners and librarians using bibliotherapy together, to a 1960s Library Trends issue focusing on bibliotherapy, to a 2012 article “The Power of Story: The Role of Bibliotherapy for the Library.” This most recent article focused on the role of using bibliotherapy in the public library and, when discussing collaboration, assumes the school librarian has a working knowledge of literature for youth. Leasure (1995) emphasizes how imperative it is for mental health practitioners to rely “upon librarian’s recommendations and book reviews to better match appropriate book titles with student’s concerns” (pp. 105-106). Doll and Doll
(1997) also make the recommendation that “youth librarians can work with mental health professionals, using their knowledge of children’s and young adult literature to identify appropriate materials” (p. 4). This is an issue that needs to be addressed in future research because there is an apparent assumption that the school librarian has the professional expertise necessary to assist the school social worker; additional research is necessary to confirm this.

To help inform school social workers of school librarians’ professional expertise I recommend that librarians present theme-focused literature sessions at school social work conferences, or offer workshops in the school social work curriculum about how to locate resources for bibliotherapy counseling. Pehrsson and McMillen (2007) have already established the Bibliotherapy Education Project which offers one place for school social workers to seek information about books to use for bibliotherapy. School social workers and school librarians need to be made aware of and actively encouraged participate in this site. One school social worker stated:

“I think that the use of bibliotherapy is an under-used area within school social work and the field of social work in general. Schools of social work would do well to include a course on bibliotherapy during graduate study. I would like to see the idea of a MSW/MLA as a combined degree. People could mix their love of counseling and literature together to help children and adolescents.”

Librarians need to actively offer resources for integration in the school social worker curriculum in order for school social workers to gain a stronger awareness of librarians as an information source.
Qualitative responses from this study indicate that a small percentage of the school social workers responding to my 2012 survey are unaware of how school librarians can assist in locating materials for bibliotherapy counseling. It is heartening that many school social workers surveyed are already aware of the positive outcome that can be achieved when school social workers and school librarians collaborate. Responses from my survey stated:

“[T]aking this survey makes me realize i [sic] have a pool of untapped resources in librarians.”

“It would be wonderful if school social workers and librarians could work closer together to identify and access books that can assist children with understanding and dealing with emotional struggles. I’ve found my biggest struggle is that our school library does not carry many of these books. It may help the process if the school social worker can meet with the school librarian to discuss books and topics what would be helpful to the counseling program before the librarian orders books for the next school year.”

While systemic change in the education of both school librarians and social workers is clearly indicated, there are incremental changes that can begin at the practical level. School librarians need can to make every effort to make school social workers more aware of the expertise and resources the school library can offer. The school librarian is the professional that can help facilitate positive change in the recurring scenario of non-collaboration. Suggestions for action include the following:

1. The school librarian can make the scope of their professional skill set known not only to other teachers, but also to the school social worker,

2. The school librarian can be proactive in building collaborative practices,
especially when doing collection development. For example, asking school social workers what books they might want or need for bibliotherapy and then making follow-up suggestions of additional alternative titles that could be useful.

3. The school librarian can hold in-service continuing education sessions or develop an on-line e-newsletter to make school social workers and other faculty aware of available resources.

**Future Research**

The results of this research study generated several thoughts about future projects that I would like to conduct in the area of collaboration among school social workers and school librarians engaged in the use of bibliotherapy as a counseling tool. The use of a survey tool provided some quantitative data but left me asking “why” much of the time. I would like to conduct semi-structured interviews with school social workers to understand why they are using bibliotherapy and what school librarians can do to assist in the search for materials.

I would extend my original survey to the other national association of school social workers, the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA), and to state level associations such as the Illinois Association of School Social Worker (IASSW) in order to collect data from a wider respondent pool. I also intend to extend this study through presentations to school social workers.

Not only would I like to conduct future research with school social workers, but I feel that it would be beneficial to conduct research with school librarians. I would like to create a survey for school librarians that ask them what they think their specific role is in the bibliotherapy counseling process. In addition, I would also like to conduct semi-structured
interviews with school librarians to ask them what they believe their role is within the school team as well as how they can see themselves assisting school social workers when the school social workers is using the bibliotherapy counseling process. Another way I hope to extend this idea is to share my work with programs at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University and the School of Information at the University of Michigan, both of which currently offer combined masters degrees in conjunction with their respective graduate schools of social work.

**Conclusion**

The findings of this research study fill a gap in the literature regarding the information seeking behavior of a specific population, namely the school social worker. This research addressed the application of LIS theory in a practitioner setting. The results indicate that school social workers seek information from informal and readily available channels, hold positive perceptions of bibliotherapy as a counseling technique, and have a complex understanding of the role of the school librarian and their expertise. In addition, this study adds new knowledge to the research on collaborative practices in a school setting, specifically between school social workers and school librarians. Finally, my study helped shape the beginnings of concrete recommendations to anchor collaboration between the school librarians and school social workers.

I feel it is equally important to inform not only school social workers about this research but school librarians as well. I plan to present to school librarian groups, such as the Illinois School Library Media Association (ISLMA) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL). I can design and conduct workshops about the school library’s role in the bibliography process for school social workers and school librarians in order to
encourage collaboration between the professions. In accordance with what I have learned from this study, sharing my results will help both practitioner groups further understand how librarianship and social work are empowering professions that have a shared goal, as Maack (1997) states will “enable their clients… to gain knowledge that will allow them to exert more control over their lives and over their environment” (p. 291).
REFERENCES


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http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aboutaasl/aaslcommunity/quicklinks/el/elwho.cfm


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### APPENDIX A

#### Five-Step Model of Clinical Bibliotherapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Readiness             | • Establish rapport with client  
                        | • Identify the problem                                                       |
| Material Selection    | • Select books (or other reading materials) that meet client’s reading level  |
|                       | • Select books (or other reading materials) that client can identify with (usually through characters) |
|                       | • Select books (or other reading materials) that can offer potential solutions |
| Presentation of Materials | • Present book (or other reading materials) to interest the client           |
|                       | • Read aloud or silently                                                    |
|                       | • Build in interruptions to make sure client recognizes similarities between themselves and characters |
|                       | • Recognize how client is responding to said book (or other reading materials) |
| Comprehension-Building | • Provide opportunities for client to reflect upon book (or other reading materials) |
|                       | • Point out how characters in book (or other reading materials) solve problems and/or create solutions |
|                       | • Point out similarities between characters and client themselves or someone they know |
| Follow-Up and Evaluation | • Assist the client in developing a plan of action                            |
|                       | • Monitor that action plan over time and evaluate how that plan of action is doing |

*Note. Adapted from *Bibliotherapy with Young People* (pp.10-11), by B. Doll and C. Doll, 1997, Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.*
# APPENDIX B

## Three-Step Model of Developmental Bibliotherapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material Selection</td>
<td>• Select books (or other reading materials) that meet reader’s reading ability&lt;br&gt;• Select books (or other reading materials) that build upon reader’s understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Materials</td>
<td>• Present book (or other reading materials) to interest the reader&lt;br&gt;• Build in activities to help enhance understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension-Building</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for reader to reflect upon book (or other reading materials)&lt;br&gt;• Point out how characters in book (or other reading materials) solve problems and/or create solutions&lt;br&gt;• Point out similarities between characters and reader themselves or someone they know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from *Bibliotherapy with Young People* (pp. 10-11), by B. Doll and C. Doll, 1997, Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
APPENDIX C

Case’s (2012) 1964-1990 Reports and ARIST reviews (p. 275)

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<th>Number of documents cited</th>
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<td>Auerbach (1965)</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herner and Herner (1967, ARIST)</td>
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<td>Paisley (1968, ARIST)</td>
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<td>Crane (1971, ARIST)</td>
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<td>Lin and Gravy (1972, ARIST)</td>
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</table>

APPENDIX D

Dr. Karen Townsend’s Survey

Bibliotherapy Survey

My gender is  Female   Male

The racial/ethnic group that best represents me is

☐ African American
☐ Hispanic/Latina/Latino
☐ White
☐ Other, please specify:

My age is_________ years

I have been a school counselor for_________ years

My highest level of education is

☐ Master’s
☐ Ed. S.
☐ Doctoral
☐ Other, please specify:

The school setting in which I work is primarily a/an:

☐ Elementary school only
☐ Middle school only
☐ High school only
☐ K-12 or P-12
☐ Other combination, please describe________

My school setting can best be described as

☐ Public
☐ Private
☐ Parochial
☐ Other? Alternative setting?

Which racial/ethnic group represents the majority (over 50%) of the children you serve as a school counselor?

☐ African American
☐ Hispanic/Latina/Latino
☐ White

Do over 50% of the children you serve qualify for free or reduced lunches?

☐ Yes
☐ No

What would you consider to be the typical reading ability of the children you serve?

☐ Reading below grade level
☐ Reading on grade level
☐ Reading above grade level

Which gender represents the majority (over 50%) of the children you serve as a school counselor?

☐ Male
☐ Female

During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you used bibliotherapy in working with children in your school?

Please indicate number:________

How many workshops, conferences, and other continuing education opportunities have you attended within the past year that involved topics related to bibliotherapy?

Please indicate number:________

How many children have you served in the past 12 months for whom English is not the primary language spoken in the homes?

Please indicate number:________

In how many courses were you exposed to bibliotherapy in your graduate studies?

Please indicate number:________

How many children with disabilities (e.g., physical, learning) have you served in the last 12 months?

Please indicate number:________

What is the average age of the children you serve?

Please indicate number:________
Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale

Directions: Please respond to the items below using the following scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree  2 = Disagree  3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree  4 = Agree  5 = Strongly Agree

1. Bibliotherapy is an effective intervention with children.  
2. Children can learn meaningful problem-solving techniques from children's literature.  
3. Bibliotherapy can address academic concerns.  
4. Bibliotherapy can address therapeutic concerns.  
5. Literature on the topic of bibliotherapy is of interest to me.  
6. I am interested in learning more about supplemental activities (e.g., art, diaries) to be used in conjunction with bibliotherapy.  
7. I am interested in lists of book titles appropriate for specific problems that children may present in therapy.  
8. I am interested in sharing bibliotherapy techniques with other counselors.  
9. I am interested in sharing resources about bibliotherapy with other interested counselors.  
10. I often use children's books in my work with children.  
11. I own children's books that I can use a resource in my work.  
12. Children's literature is a favorite tool in my work with children.  
13. I find that many children appreciate the inclusion of children's stories in their sessions.  
14. I have used supplementary activities related to books in my work with children.  
15. I believe that children can often identify with fictional children who are facing similar problems.  
16. I believe that children can gain insight from fictional characters.  
17. I believe that children can learn alternate solutions to their own problems from fictional children.  
18. I find that many children enjoy stories.  
19. I see using children's literature in counseling as promoting children's well being.  
20. I am familiar with children's literature appropriate for topics that may be addressed in counseling.
APPENDIX E

Bibliotherapy Survey

Consent

October 2011

Dear Participant,

I am currently a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science program at Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois. My area of research focuses on the relationship that exists between school social workers and librarians when bibliotherapy is used as a counseling technique in the K-12 school setting. For the purpose of this research project, bibliotherapy will be defined as the use of books or other reading materials (poetry, magazines, comic books, etc) to assist with the counseling process.

I am asking for your help in completing the following survey about bibliotherapy, your relationship with librarians and/or a physical library and how you search for bibliotherapy materials.

This survey has three parts. The first part involves demographic questions as well as questions pertaining to the use of the library and bibliotherapy. The second part is a 4 point Likert Scale which will measure Attitudes toward Bibliotherapy. The third and final part consists of open ended questions about how the library is used in conjunction with bibliotherapy. This survey should take about 30 minutes to complete.

Results from the survey will be completely anonymous. Providing contact information is entirely optional, if contact information is provided it will be kept confidential and separated from the completed survey.

Completion of this survey is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, please do not click on the “I agree” link at the end of this letter.

**If you have any questions, you may contact Dominican University’s Institutional Review Board Chair, Diane Velasquez, at 708-524-6594 or via email at dvelasquez@dom.edu. You may reach me, the survey administrator, by emailing garceliz@my.dom.edu or elizabethsgarcia@gmail.com. In addition, if you have any questions you can contact this project’s supervisor Tonyia Titline at 708-524-6604 or via email at titline@dom.edu.

Your participation will help me immensely and will provide new knowledge to the field of Library and Information Science. Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Garcia

garceliz@my.dom.edu
elizabethsgarcia@gmail.com

*1. Do you wish to participate in this survey?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
2. My gender is:
   - Female
   - Male
   - Prefer not to answer

3. The racial/ethnic group that best represents me is:
   - African American
   - Asian American
   - Hispanic/Latina/Latino
   - Native American
   - Pacific Islander
   - White
   - Prefer not to answer
   - Other (please specify)

4. My age is best represented by:
   - 20-29 years
   - 30-39 years
   - 40-49 years
   - 50-59 years
   - 60-69 years
   - 70+ years
   - Prefer not to answer

5. If you belong to a professional organization, which do you belong to?
   - ACSSW
   - SSWAA
   - Other (please specify)
6. My highest level of education is:
- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctoral
- Other (please specify)

7. I have been a school social worker for:
- 0-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-11 years
- 12-15 years
- 16-19 years
- 20+ years

8. Are you currently endorsed with any type of certification?
- Yes
- No
- If Yes, please state what type

9. The school setting in which I work is primarily a/an:
- Elementary School only (grades K-8)
- Middle School only (grades 6-8)
- High School only
- K-12 or P-12
- Elementary and Middle School
- Junior High School
- Other combination, please describe:
10. My school setting can best be described as:

- [ ] Public
- [ ] Private
- [ ] Parochial
- [ ] Therapeutic
- [ ] Other? Alternative setting? Please describe:  

11. Please check all grades that you provide counseling for:

- [ ] Headstart
- [ ] Pre-K
- [ ] Kindergarten
- [ ] Grade 1
- [ ] Grade 2
- [ ] Grade 3
- [ ] Grade 4
- [ ] Grade 5
- [ ] Grade 6
- [ ] Grade 7
- [ ] Grade 8
- [ ] Grade 9
- [ ] Grade 10
- [ ] Grade 11
- [ ] Grade 12
12. Does the school setting include a library?
   - Yes
   - No

13. Which does the school have?
   - A librarian with a degree
   - A media specialist
   - Other (please specify)

14. If the school does employ a librarian or a media specialist, do they have an accredited library (MLS) degree?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure I do not know.

15. If the school does not employ a librarian, how is the school library staffed?

16. What is the racial/ethnic group breakdown of the children you serve as a school social worker? (please rank from 1-7; 1 being highest and 7 being lowest)
   - African American
   - Asian American
   - Hispanic/Latina/Latino
   - Native American
   - Pacific Islander
   - White
   - Other

17. What is the gender breakdown of the children you serve as a school social worker?
   - Male %
   - Female %
18. What would you consider to be the typical reading ability of the children you serve?
   - Reading below grade level
   - Reading at grade level
   - Reading above grade level

19. Do you use bibliotherapy?
   - Yes
   - No

20. During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you used books and/or reading materials in working with children in your school?
   - 0-5 times
   - 6-11 times
   - 12-17 times
   - 18-23 times
   - 24-29 times
   - 30+ times

21. Does your school district provide professional development opportunities?
   - Yes
   - No

22. If you answered yes (to question 21), approximately how many professional development opportunities have you attended in the past 12 months? Please indicate number:
23. Approximately how many workshops, conferences and/or other continuing educational opportunities have you attended within the past year that involved topics related to bibliotherapy? Please indicate number:

24. In approximately how many courses were you exposed to bibliotherapy during your education?
- 0-2 courses
- 3-5 courses
- 6-8 courses
- 9-11 courses
- 12+ courses

25. During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you visited the school library to gather materials to use with interventions with your students?
- 0-5 times
- 6-10 times
- 11-17 times
- 18-23 times
- 24-29 times
- 30+ times

26. Do you ever visit the public library to gather resources to use with your students?
- Yes
- No

27. If you answered yes (to question 26), approximately how many times have you visited the public library? Please indicate number:
28. During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you spoken with a librarian (school or public) about materials to be used for bibliotherapy?

- 0-5 times
- 6-11 times
- 12-17 times
- 18-23 times
- 24-29 times
- 30+ times
29. Which of the following topics do you use books or other reading materials in conjunction with the therapy?

- [ ] Abuse
- [ ] Adoption and Foster Care
- [ ] Bullying
- [ ] Character building/Self Esteem
- [ ] Death and Dying
- [ ] Divorce
- [ ] Doctor visits
- [ ] Eating Disorders
- [ ] Family Issues
- [ ] Feelings
- [ ] Friends
- [ ] Gang Issues
- [ ] Substance Abuse
- Other (please specify)

30. If you are likely to use reading materials for therapy sessions, which of the following types do you use?

- [ ] Adult Fiction
- [ ] Chapter Books
- [ ] Comics
- [ ] Easy Readers (leveled readers)
- [ ] Fiction Books
- [ ] Graphic Novels
- [ ] Nonfiction Books
- [ ] Picture Books
- [ ] Poetry Books
- [ ] Series Books
- [ ] Short Stories
- [ ] Young Adult Books
- Other (please specify)
## Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale

### 31. Please respond to the items below using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibliotherapy is an effective intervention with children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children can learn meaningful problem-solving techniques from children’s literature.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliotherapy can address academic concerns.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliotherapy can address therapeutic concerns.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature on the topic of bibliotherapy is of interest to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in lists of book titles appropriate for specific problems that children may present in therapy.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in sharing bibliotherapy techniques with other social workers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the school library to find books to use during counseling sessions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consult the school librarian for ideas about various titles of children’s books.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am interested in sharing resources about bibliotherapy with other interested social workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I often use children’s books in my work with children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children's literature is a favorite tool in my work with children.</td>
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<td>I own children’s books that I can use as a resource in my work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school library is a good resource to find children’s books for counseling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A librarian is a good resource to find children’s books for counseling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I believe that children can</td>
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<td>Column 1</td>
<td>Column 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>I often identify with fictional characters that are facing similar problems.</td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>I believe that children can gain insight from fictional characters.</td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that children can learn alternate solutions to their own problems from fictional book characters.</td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am familiar with children's literature appropriate for topics that may be addressed in counselling.</td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am familiar with the school library and how to search for children's literature.</td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am familiar with a public library and how to search for children's literature.</td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td><img src="122" alt="Circle" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please respond to the following:

32. Do you go to the school and/or public library to locate materials for bibliotherapy? If so, how do you locate such materials?

33. Please describe how you have consulted a librarian about bibliotherapy for counseling purposes. If not, please explain why.

34. Which of the following do you use to gain new information about newly published literature, various genres, and/or age appropriate materials? (Check all that apply)

- Catalogs
- Co-workers/Colleagues
- Magazines
- Publisher's reviews (print or electronic)
- Websites
- Word of mouth

Other (please specify)

35. Based on your answers to question 34, please provide a short specific list of resources that you use to find materials for bibliotherapy. (For example, book titles, website URLs, etc.)
36. Why do you seek bibliotherapy materials the way you do?

37. Do you consider librarians your professional colleagues?
   O Yes
   O No
   If so, how? If not, why?

38. What are your perceptions of librarians?

39. What do you consider a librarian’s area of expertise?

40. Please make any additional comments.

41. Please indicate how you found out about this survey.
42. If you would like to be contacted with the results of this project or would like to speak to the researcher about this project, please provide contact information below. This section will be separated to ensure anonymity.
Thank You

Thank you for considering the Bibliotherapy Survey. Have a great day.

Elizabeth Garcia
APPENDIX F

Pilot Bibliotherapy Survey

Pilot Bibliotherapy Survey

*Please provide feedback about specific questions in the column to the right.

1. My gender is:
   □ Female
   □ Male

2. The racial/ethnic group that best represents me is:
   □ African American
   □ Asian American
   □ Hispanic/Latina/Latino
   □ White
   □ Other, please specify: __________________________

3. My age is best represented by:
   □ 20-29 years
   □ 30-39 years
   □ 40-49 years
   □ 50-59 years
   □ 60-69 years
   □ 70+ years

4. I have been a school social worker for ____________________ years.

5. My highest level of education is:
   □ Bachelor’s
   □ Master’s (Please specify in what field: __________________)
   □ Doctoral (Please specify in what field: __________________)
   □ Other, please specify: _____________________________

6. Are you currently endorsed with any type of certification?
   □ Yes    □ No

   If Yes, please state what type: ____________________________
7. The school setting in which I work is primarily a/an:
   □ Elementary School only
   □ Middle School only
   □ High School only
   □ K-12 or P-12
   □ Other combination, please describe:

8. My school setting can best be described as:
   □ Public
   □ Private
   □ Parochial
   □ Therapeutic
   □ Other? Alternative setting? Please describe:

9. Does the school setting include a library?
   □ Yes □ No

10. Does the school have an employed librarian?
    □ Yes □ No

11. If the school does employ a librarian, do they have a library degree?
    □ Yes □ No

12. If the school does not employ a librarian, how is the school library staffed?

13. Which racial/ethnic group represents the majority (over 50%) of the children you serve as a school social worker?
    □ African American
    □ Asian American
    □ Hispanic/Latina/Latino
    □ White
    □ Other, please describe:

14. What would you consider to be the typical reading ability of the children you serve?
    □ Reading below grade level
    □ Reading at grade level
    □ Reading above grade level
15. Which gender represents the majority (over 50%) of the children you serve as a school social worker?
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female

16. During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you used books and/or reading materials in working with children in your school? Please indicate number: _______________________

17. Approximately how many workshops, conferences and other continuing educational opportunities have you attended within the past year that involved topics related to reading (specifically bibliography)? Please indicate number: _______________________

18. Does your school district provide professional development opportunities?
   ☐ Yes  ☐ No

19. If yes, approximately how many have you attended in the past 12 months? Please indicate number: _______________________

20. In how many courses were you exposed to bibliography in your graduate studies? Please indicate number: _______________________

21. Please check all grades that you work with:
   ☐ Pre-K  ☐ Kindergarten
   ☐ Grade 1  ☐ Grade 2
   ☐ Grade 3  ☐ Grade 4
   ☐ Grade 5  ☐ Grade 6
   ☐ Grade 7  ☐ Grade 8
   ☐ Grade 9  ☐ Grade 10
   ☐ Grade 11  ☐ Grade 12

22. During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you visited the school library? Please indicate number: _______________________

23. Do you ever visit the public library to gather resources to use with your students?
   ☐ Yes  ☐ No
24. If you answered yes, approximately how many times have you visited the public library?
   Please indicate number: 

25. During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you spoken with a school or public librarian about bibliotherapy? Please indicate number: 

Please check all that apply

26. Which of the following topics do you use books or other reading materials in conjunction with the therapy?
   □ Abuse
   □ Adoption and Foster Care
   □ Character building/Self Esteem
   □ Bullying
   □ Death and Dying
   □ Divorce
   □ Doctor Visits
   □ Eating Disorders
   □ Family Issues
   □ Feelings
   □ Friends
   □ Gang Issues
   □ Substance abuse
   □ Other: 

27. If you are likely to use reading materials for therapy sessions which of the following types do you use?
   □ Adult fiction
   □ Chapter books
   □ Easy Readers (leveled readers)
   □ Fiction books
   □ Graphic Novels
   □ Nonfiction books
   □ Picture books
   □ Poetry books
   □ Series books
   □ Short stories
   □ Young Adult books
   □ Other (Please specify: )
Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy Scale

Directions: Please respond to the items below using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree  2 = Disagree  3 = Agree  4 = Strongly Agree

28. Bibliotherapy is an effective intervention with children.
   1 2 3 4

29. Children can learn meaningful problem-solving techniques from children’s literature.
   1 2 3 4

30. Bibliotherapy can address academic concerns.
    1 2 3 4

31. Bibliotherapy can address therapeutic concerns.
    1 2 3 4

32. Literature on the topic of bibliotherapy is of interest to me.
    1 2 3 4

33. I am interested in lists of book titles appropriate for specific problems that children may present in therapy.
    1 2 3 4

34. I am interested in sharing bibliotherapy techniques with other social workers.
    1 2 3 4

35. I use the school library to find books to use during counseling sessions.
    1 2 3 4

36. I consult the school librarian for ideas about various titles of children’s books.
    1 2 3 4

37. I am interested in sharing resources about bibliotherapy with other interested Social workers.
    1 2 3 4
38. I often use children’s books in my work with children.
   1 2 3 4

39. Children’s literature is a favorite tool in my work with children.
   1 2 3 4

40. I own children's books that I can use as a resource in my work.
   1 2 3 4

41. The school library is a good resource to find children's books for counseling.
   1 2 3 4

42. A librarian is a good resource to help find books to use for counseling.
   1 2 3 4

43. I believe that children can often identify with fictional characters that are facing similar problems.
   1 2 3 4

44. I believe that children can gain insight from fictional characters.
   1 2 3 4

45. I believe that children can learn alternate solutions to their own problems from fictional book characters.
   1 2 3 4

46. I am familiar with children’s literature appropriate for topics that may be addressed in counseling.
   1 2 3 4

47. I am familiar with the school library and how to search for children’s literature.
   1 2 3 4

48. I am familiar with a public library and how to search for children’s literature.
   1 2 3 4
Please respond to the following:

49. Please describe how you have consulted the school librarian about bibliotherapy for counseling purposes.

50. How do you use the library for bibliotherapy?

51. How do you gain new information about newly published literature, various genres, or age appropriate materials?

52. Please make any additional comments:

If you would like to be contacted with the results of this project, please provide contact information below:

---

1 This section will cut off to ensure anonymity.
March 15, 2011

Dear Participant,

I am currently a doctoral student in the Library and Information Science program at Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois. My area of research focuses on the use of bibliotherapy by school social workers in the K-12 school setting. The attached survey is a pilot to receive feedback on what questions work and which do not work and why. All feedback will be greatly appreciated.

I am asking for your help in completing the attached pilot survey about bibliotherapy and your relationship with librarians and/or a library. For the purposes of this research project bibliotherapy will be define as the use of books or other reading materials to assist with therapy.

This survey has three parts. The first part involves demographic questions as well as questions pertaining to the use of the library and bibliotherapy. The second part is a 4 point Likert scale which will measure Attitudes Toward Bibliotherapy. The third final part consists of open ended questions about how the library is used in conjunction to bibliotherapy. This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete.

Results from the pilot survey will be completely anonymous. For anyone who wishes to provide their contact information, it will be kept confidential and separated from the completed pilot survey.

Completion of this survey is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, do not return the survey to Leticia Villarreal Sosa, whom will be serving as the proctor of the pilot survey.

**If you have any questions, you may contact Dominican University’s Institutional Review Board Chair, Diane Velasquez at 708-524-6594 or via email at dvelasquez@dom.edu. You may reach me, the survey administrator, by emailing garceliz@my.dom.edu. In addition, if you have any questions you can contact this project’s supervisor, Diane Velasquez at 708-524-6594 or via email at dvelasquez@dom.edu.

Your participation will help me immensely. Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Garcia
garceliz@my.dom.edu
APPENDIX H

IRB Approval: Pilot Bibliotherapy Survey

March 31, 2011

Ms. Elizabeth P. Garcia
Dr. Diane L. Velasquez

Re: IRB #11-13: Pilot Survey Clarification

Dear Ms. Garcia and Dr. Velasquez:

The IRB has exempted your IRB application named above. Based on this review, you are granted Approval.

You may begin your research as of the date of this letter and this approval is valid until March 30, 2012. You must notify the IRB in writing and get approval for any changes to your research protocol prior to initiating any changes.

Once your research is completed, please notify the IRB. If you have any questions, you may contact me at chagar@dom.edu

Sincerely,

Christine Hagar, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
GSLIS IRB Representative
APPENDIX I

IRB Approval: Bibliotherapy Survey

October 7, 2011

Ms. Elizabeth Garcia
Dr. Tonyia Tidline

Re: IRB #11-33: Information Seeking Behaviors of the School Social Worker: What is the Librarian’s Role in the Practice of Bibliotherapy?

Dear Ms. Garcia and Dr. Tidline,

Your IRB application has been reviewed and is exempt from a full review. Based on this review, you are granted Approval.

You may begin your research as of the date of this letter. This approval is valid until October 6, 2012. You must notify the IRB in writing and get approval for any changes to your research protocol prior to initiating any changes.

Once your research is completed, please notify the IRB. If you have any questions, you may contact me at chagar@dom.edu

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Chris Hagar, Ph.D.
GSLIS IRB Representative
## APPENDIX J

**ACSSW Membership Eligibility**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Level</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Active**       | • Hold a MSW or MSSW from an accredited program and  
                   • Trained in school social work or  
                   • Hold a credential by a state. |
| **Early Career** | • Professionals in their first three years of practice  
                   • Meet the Active Member criteria |
| **Retired/Inactive** | • Open to professionals who have been Active Members but are no longer employed in a school social work capacity |
| **Student**      | • For students actively enrolled in a social work graduate program (with an emphasis in school social work)  
                   • Are not employed full-time in the profession |
| **Associate**    | • Do not meet the requirements of other membership categories and who may be:  
                   • Functioning as a school social workers with a school social work credential  
                   • Undergraduate student  
                   • Support the work of the profession and wish to convey their affiliation through membership  
                   • Employed in an allied profession |

APPENDIX K

ACSSW Special Introductory Paragraph

Doctoral student researcher, Elizabeth Garcia, is seeking input from school social workers on bibliotherapy. Please assist her by completing the survey, Bibliotherapy Survey Link. You will be helping to provide information on yet another tool for school social work practice. As you know, we are expected more and more to provide evidence of effectiveness in our work. This research can help inform that process. Please take the time to support this research project.
Dear School Social Work Colleague and Friends –

Research Request

Liz Garcia is a doctoral student at Dominican University’s Graduate School of Library and Information Science, River Forest, Illinois. She is seeking school social workers to complete an online survey about bibliotherapy for use towards research for a doctoral dissertation. For the purposes of this research bibliotherapy is defined as the use of books or other reading materials (poetry, magazines, comic books, etc) to assist with the counseling process. Participation is voluntary, confidential and anonymous. **Even if you do not currently use the bibliotherapy counseling technique, any feedback on this topic will help with this study.** Completion of the survey should take approximately 30 minutes and can be done from any computer with internet access. If you are an interested school social worker, or know of a school social worker who would be interested, the survey link is below. For more information, contact: Elizabeth Garcia, Doctoral Student, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Dominican University, at garceliz@my.dom.edu. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Bibliotherapy Survey link: [http://tinyurl.com/3tdnx1m](http://tinyurl.com/3tdnx1m)
### APPENDIX M

**Categorical Coding by Survey Question: Full Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Number of Themes</th>
<th>Coding of Themes</th>
<th>Participant Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32. Do you go to the school/public library to locate materials for bibliotherapy? If so, how do you locate such materials?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- No or do not go to the school/public library</td>
<td>“No.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Searching via electronic resources</td>
<td>“Computer catalog.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Ask or use a librarian</td>
<td>“I use the librarian’s expertise to help me find the appropriate materials I need.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Own or buy books that are used</td>
<td>“I do have my own collection of books that I use mostly…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Please describe how you have consulted a librarian about bibliotherapy for counseling purposes. If not, please explain why.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Consult librarian or go to the library</td>
<td>“I have spoken to the librarian about what issues I will be dealing with in counseling and they will assist me in locating materials for my therapy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Librarian not helpful or do not go at all</td>
<td>“Our school librarian isn’t [sic] helpful in this manner.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Search on my own</td>
<td>“I found it easier to do my own research.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Consult with others (non librarians)</td>
<td>“Consult with other social workers or psychologists.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Based on your answers to question 34, please provide a short specific list of resources that you use to find materials for bibliotherapy. (For example, book titles, website URLs, etc.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Amazon or Barnes &amp; Noble</td>
<td>“Amazon, Barnes and noble.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Other school social workers</td>
<td>“Consultation with colleagues.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Catalogs</td>
<td>“Catalogs that are mailed to me by publishers and companies that sell them, such as Research Press, Children’s Work Children’s Play, Marco, Boys Town Press, Youth Light, et.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Websites (other than Amazon or Barnes &amp; Noble)</td>
<td>“NASW websites and links. Self-esteem shop website.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Library/Librarian</td>
<td>“I sometimes consult with my sister-in-law who is a children’s librarian.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Question</td>
<td>Number of Themes</td>
<td>Coding of Themes</td>
<td>Participant Responses</td>
</tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 36. Why do you seek bibliotherapy materials the way you do? | 2                | -Fast, easy, and known -Seek information from others (school social workers, co-workers, and/or librarians) | “I know what I have and how to access it if I don’t.”  
“I find talking with those familiar with the books and authors helps make sure the book is appropriate. In consulting with the reading specialist I also make sure it is at the student’s reading level.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 37. If so, how? If not, why?                            | 2                | -Professional colleague -Not a professional colleague                           | “Yes, they are important partners in providing information and knowledge.”  
“It’s not to disparage librarians; I just don’t consider them knowledgeable with respect to counseling and therapy that I would interface with them about these topics.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 38. What are your perceptions of librarians?             | 2                | -Positive -Negative                                                            | “Librarians are extremely helpful and as professional in their field, can share their expertise with others.”  
“One at our school just doesn’t happen to be professional and or up-to-date with her skills.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 39. What do you consider a librarian’s area of expertise? | 5                | -Books/Literature -Technology -Not sure/NA -Organization -Information Access     | “She knows the titles and contents of the books”  
“Integrating media and technology to engage students in reading.”  
“not sure”  
“Organizing and cataloguing a library.”  
“How to access information for the benefit of the person asking.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
ELIZABETH P. GARCIA
6012 S. Mason Ave, Chicago, IL 60638 | 773-835-6938 | elizabethpgarcia@gmail.com

EDUCATION
Dominican University
Doctor of Philosophy, Library and Information Science 2012
Dissertation: Information Seeking Behaviors of the School Social Worker: What is the Librarian’s Role in the Practice of Bibliotherapy?

Dominican University
Master’s Library and Information Science 2005

University of Illinois at Chicago
B.A. Communications 2003
Minor: History

EXPERIENCE
Chicago Public Library, West Lawn Branch
Branch Manager March 2011 – present
- Direct overall library operations of the West Lawn Branch in compliance with Chicago Public Library.
- Supervise library personnel, carrying out policies and services by evaluating performances for quality and accuracy.
- Be the primary representative of the library in the community, including partnering with other community organizations to ensure quality service to patrons.

Moraine Valley Community College
Adjunct Librarian, Public Services August 2007 – present
- Provide reference services at reference desk.
- Teach bibliographic instruction sessions to various classes, including College 101, Psychology 101 and 104, and Composition 101 and 102.

Chicago Public Library, Garfield Ridge Branch
Librarian I August 2007-Feb. 2011
- Maintain monthly schedule for all employees.
- Person-in-charge when Branch Manager and First Assistant absent.
- Supervisor of clerks and pages.
- In charge of ordering books for entire Adult Collection.
- In charge of Adult programming.
- Member and elected Co-Chair of Women’s Service Committee.

Chicago Public Library, Jeffery Manor Branch

**Librarian I, First Assistant**  
*July 2006-Aug. 2007*

- Acting Branch Manager October 2006-June 2007.
- Ordered books for entire children’s, young adult, and urban collection.
- Maintained monthly schedule for all employees.
- Lead story times and after school programs for children ages 2-13.
- Visited schools to promote the library to both teachers and students.
- Member of LIFERS and Children and Young Adult Services (CYAS) South District Cluster.
- CYAS South District Cluster Secretary.

Chicago Public Library, Lincoln Park Branch & Garfield Ridge Branch

**Library Associate**  
*2004-June 2006*

- Perfected reference skills by using Carl software at the reference desk.
- Lead story time for children ages 19-36 months and 3-5 years old.
- Assisted on many displays for both children and adults.
- Lead library orientation for school children.
- Assisted Children’s Librarian in the Summer Reading Program.
- Maintained statistics for Summer Reading Program.
- Maintained and ordered collection for the Young Adult collection.

University of Illinois at Chicago

**Research Assistant in the Communication Department**  
*2002-May 2003*

- Used the Internet and Lexis/Nexis to research Public Intellect persons and celebrities.
- Co-headed team of 6 students compiling data.
Complied data in Excel spreadsheets.


PRESENTATIONS

*Information Seeking Behaviors of the School Social Worker: What is the Librarian’s Role in the Practice of Bibliotherapy?*
Poster presentation at the annual meeting of the Association of Library and Information Science Educators (ALISE), Dallas, TX 2012

*Concept Mapping as a Knowledge Management Tool to Facilitate Scholarly Writing*
Panel discussion at the annual meeting of the Association of Library and Information Science Educators (ALISE), Dallas, TX 2012

*School Librarians and School Social Workers: What Relationship Exists When Using Bibliotherapy*
Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Library and Information Science Educators (ALISE), San Diego, CA 2011

MEMBERSHIPS

American Library Association (ALA)
Association of Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)