participation in collaborations   for example, thoughtfulness, knowledge, compassion, and leadership. The educational literature suggests reflective consideration of these traits may reveal areas for self-improvement and, in turn, lead to stronger collaborations (Eccleston 2010).

School Librarians and Special Education Teachers
Supplementing an extensive body of research on collaborative practices between general education and special education teachers is the research addressing the dynamics of collaborations between school librarians and general education teachers (Monticel-Overall 2005; Oberg 2009). However, there is limited discussion about how school librarians and special education teachers actually collaborate despite the fact that they have some similar aspects of their roles and responsibilities (Smith Canter et al. 2011). For example, both groups must interact with a diverse network of colleagues to support the learning of all students. Purposeful collaborations with peers will allow them to reach the full potential of their respective roles. The work of both school librarians and special education teachers offers a mix of instructional, administrative, and supervisory responsibilities different from that of general education teachers. For example, it is not unusual for special education teachers to supervise paraprofessionals and serve as a liaison for their staff to administrators (Eccleston 2010). Similarly, school librarians supervise library staff, frequently interface with administrators, and regularly collect and use data to support student learning.

In addition to some similarities in the respective responsibilities of school librarians and special education teachers, it is interesting to note the shared themes in the professional standards and dispositions of their professions (Smith Canter et al. 2011). Anderson Downing (2006) addressed these shared attributes and dispositions when she called for more collaborative relationship between school librarians and special education teachers for the sake of the students. She noted that each group brings specific strengths and expertise to the table that benefits one another, the general education teachers, and most importantly, the students.

Murray (2002), who has studied the relationship between school librarians and special education teachers for several years, also noted that although good practices exists to support the learning of students with disabilities, more could possibly be achieved through enhanced communication and cooperation between school librarians and special education teachers.

services and r
librarians in a study by Small, Snyder, and Parker (2009). In this large-scale study with more than 1,600 respondents, the researchers stated that school librarians report addressing individual student learning abilities, needs and styles; Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); and selecting materials that feature individuals with disabilities when planning, implementing, and modifying library programs and services, they also indicate less attention to adequately physical accessibility and access to assistive technologies for students with disabilities (Small, Snyder, and Parker 2009, 12). mics of

resources that they can integrate into their teaching and learning practices and thereby create authentic learning experiences.

The role of appropriate resources and the importance of access to them are noted extensively

access and the scarcity of resources, is one reported influence on attrition (Ball and Cohen 1999; Clark and Yinger 1979; Moore and Hanley 1982). The recognition of the importance of a range of resources for teaching and learning activities, coupled with the constraints of time, is cited as a potential driver for collaboration between colleagues (Eccleston 2010; Sardo-Brown 1990). Effective collaboration requires sharing resources (Carter et al. 2009; Friend 2011). By sharing

intervent

Participant interviews were conducted either in-person or by phone, and field notes were taken for each encounter. The interviews typically lasted about 30 45 minutes and were digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. A constant comparative method was used, and interview transcripts, field notes, and memos were analyzed as they were completed.

Questions asked of school librarians included the following:

- Would you talk about how you work with students with disabilities in the library media center?
- How familiar are you with the characteristics of the different disabilities of your students? Do you have a need to learn more about the different disabilities?
- What resources do you currently turn to, or might you turn to, if you wanted to learning more about disabilities or inclusion strategies?
- How often, and in what ways, do you partner with special education teachers in your school?
- Are there environmental influences that either enhance or restrict your ability to collaborate with the special education teachers?
- Are assistive or adaptive technologies available to you and your students? How would you rate your comfort level in using assistive and adaptive technologies?
- Do you use resources from the public library in your work with students? Do you refer classroom teachers to the public library?
- Where do you typically turn for professional development?

Questions of special education teachers include the following:

- Do your students go to the library media center? If so, for what purposes?
- Do you or your students use the databases available from the library?
- How often, and in what ways, do you partner with the school librarian?
- Do you feel the library media center is accessible to all users? Why or why not?
- Are there environmental influences that either enhance or restrict your ability to collaborate with the school librarian?
- Do you use resources from the public library in your work with students?
- What resources do you currently turn to, or might you turn to, to learn about teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities?
- What resources might you use if you want to learn more about assistive technology?
- Do you or your students with disabilities use multimodal resources?
- Are assistive or adaptive technologies available to you and your students? How would you rate your comfort level in using assistive and adaptive technologies?
- Where do you typically turn for professional development?

Data Collection and Analysis
Data collection and data analysis are a simultaneous process when performing grounded theory research. Data are analyzed using a constant comparative method for themes or categories to make an interpretation or draw conclusions (Creswell 2009, 203). Open coding, the first step in the process, was first completed with the data. AtlasTi, a qualitative software tool, was used in the data analysis. The twelve interview transcriptions were carefully read and analyzed, and categories of information emerged from this process. Categories are units of information to be

Research Design Limitations

There were several limitations of the research design that should be noted. First, the study examines perceptions and practices as reported by school librarians and special education teachers. As a result there is insufficient evidence to generalize across these two areas of education. Second, findings in a qualitative study may be subject to other interpretations. Future survey work and member checking may serve to triangulate and validate the accuracy of the findings.

Findings

This study of the information-seeking practices of school librarians and special education teachers found evidence of the need for shared information and resources. Both groups cited gaps in knowledge and lack of appropriate resources as detrimental to their work with students with disabilities.

The need for ongoing professional development that focuses on supporting students with disabilities emerged as a point of intersection for these two groups. Both groups repeatedly cited the challenges of keeping current in the best practices to support an ever-increasing diverse group of students as a significant area of concern. They specifically mentioned the challenge of keeping their knowledge base up-to-date and how important professional development is to them. Collaboration with other professionals and access to resources beyond the school walls were additional themes that emerged from this study.

Parallels

Special education teachers and school librarians spoke meaningfully and purposefully about their work with students with disabilities. The professionals were reflective in what they are doing to assist those students, but also were very aware of the challenges and influences they faced from multiple directions. Shared themes emerged in the comments by school librarians

approaches to meet the needs of students with disabilities, and (3) how to access and use

"There is another website that I have used   more in the past, not recently   but it is called
                                          for teachers to use and share their materials. So if I
have *To Kill a Mockingbird* materials and I upload it and you are teaching it and you search you
can share my materials and read them. So I use the Internet a lot in finding resources."

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