

Research from the ERIC Files [minor93]  
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A search of the ERIC database for research on school library media programs for the 12-month period beginning July 1, 1991, retrieved 39 reports of research on the status of school library media programs, library media resources, the use of technology, the role of the school library media specialist in cooperative planning and instructional development, and professional training. Both the 10 ERIC documents and the annotations for the 29 journal articles were entered in the ERIC files during that time period; some had been originally published somewhat earlier.

## LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAMS

### Current Status

Two reports describe the current status of school library media programs for two special populations, immigrants and Native Americans. Five additional reports address the status of programs in two states, South Carolina and Wisconsin, and three foreign countries, Greece, Israel, and Sweden.

Craver begins her review of school and public library responses to the special needs of immigrant populations with a discussion of the student immigrant experience, the acculturation process, and the librarian's role in this process.<sup>1</sup> She then reports the findings of two studies of the library and information needs of minority and ethnic groups. A study conducted by the Denver Public Library found that all of the populations shared two concerns—they wanted programs for children to make them aware of their cultural heritage and collection materials in their native language or culture. A survey of 240 urban public libraries by Chang and Har-Nicolescu that focused on Asian-Americans identified seven needs: (1) health services information, (2) career counseling, (3) citizenship study, (4) assistance with continuing education, (5) English-language instruction, (6) promotion of cultural community groups, and (7) news of events celebrating their culture. Examples of successful programs and services currently in operation are also given, including the Queens Borough Public Library's New American Project and database of agencies that provide assistance or information to immigrants; the Akron-Summit County Library's collection of audiocassette tapes in 18 languages to assist immigrants in learning English; and the Houston Public Library's collection of recordings of folktales, nursery rhymes, and poetry in Spanish; bilingual storytelling for children; and kits for teaching folkdances and traditional games for children in Spanish. Public library services in Australia and Canada are also briefly described.<sup>2</sup>

McCauley reports on a survey of library and information services in elementary and secondary Native-American schools that was conducted in 1990 to determine the extent to which these schools had met the standards for resources and personnel mandated by federal legislation in 1985.<sup>3</sup> School profile questionnaires were sent to 182 schools; usable profiles were received from 122 day and boarding schools in 19 states. Eight of the 13 questions dealt with library resources, personnel, and services; the remaining questions were concerned with respondents' attitudes toward a wider role for the school libraries on the reservations. Analyses of the responses showed that 83.6 percent of the schools had a school library; 45 percent had a full-time or two-thirds-time certified librarian; 93 percent had book collections that met or exceeded the 1985 school library standard; 40.9 percent had audiovisual materials equal to the required standard; 70 percent met or exceeded the 1975 standard for periodicals; 85 percent had a reference collection; 73 percent had a professional collection for school staff use; and 87.7 percent had a collection of Native-American materials including books, periodicals, tapes, cassettes, and locally produced oral history materials. It is concluded that the most pressing needs of these libraries are for library professionals to manage information resources for teaching and learning and trained paraprofessionals to handle the day-to-day operations of the library.

A statewide survey conducted to determine the status of library media programs in South Carolina's public schools is reported by Townsend, who collected data from the state's Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) for the years 1986-1990 and from a survey of a stratified random sampling of school library media centers using a questionnaire adapted from appendix A of Information Power.<sup>4</sup> Five survey items received 24 percent or more "never offered" responses: interlibrary loan services to students and faculty, coordination of in-house production of materials and video for teachers, assistance to teachers in producing instructional materials, textbook selection, and radio station operation. High positive responses were received on items dealing with instructional materials production by students and instructional television broadcasts. Five items that received 99 percent or better positive responses involved dealings directly with students and faculty: informally instructing students in use of materials; helping coordinate media center activities with subject areas, units, or texts; providing reference services to teachers; assisting students in locating information and resources; and giving listening, viewing, or reading guidance to students. Statistics on library media program budgets, collection size, and seating space are compared with statistics from Information Power and national surveys by Miller and Moran.

Some of the more significant results of a 1988 survey of all Wisconsin public schools that received 1,790 (90%) responses are reported by the State Department of Public Instruction, Division of Library Services.<sup>6</sup> The 12-page survey asked for more than 450 pieces of information about the library media center and its staffing, services, operations, and future goals. A brief report presents data in 14 tables: (1-3) number of schools with a central library media center (LMC), an LMC that is open four hours or less per school day, and an LMC staffed by a professional library media specialist; (4) the ratio of professional staff to students; (5) the number of schools where library media staff perform 11 separate functions ranging from coordinating library skills instruction with classroom curriculum to helping students use

computers; (6) types of materials accessible to students; and (7-14) the numbers of LMCs that have automated circulation and/or on-line catalog systems and audiovisual equipment and offer database searching for students. All of the tables are broken down by educational level, and it is noted that the complete survey results are available to persons needing the data for research. Basing her study on national and UNESCO statistics and visits to 12 secondary schools in and near Thessaloniki, Skepastianu describes a typical school library in Greece as one or two locked bookcases that are opened to users twice a week for several hours. The collection is literature-oriented rather than general-curriculum or general-interest oriented.<sup>7</sup> She then examines the provisions of recent (1985) legislation designed to promote and support school libraries as they relate to the function and users of the school library, staff, funding, book additions, book selection, the teachers' library, the functioning of the law, the role of the school librarian, standardization of technical aspects, and funding. She concludes by offering 14 specific recommendations for the improvement of libraries in Greek secondary schools. Yitzhaki and Shoham used data from a national study of Israeli school libraries that was conducted in 1983-1984 and additional data from the Ministry of Education and Culture to determine school characteristics and compute use measures, and then to analyze the libraries and their use of statistical methods.<sup>8</sup> The relationships of school library size, hours open, number of seats, staff working hours, and professional education of the school librarians were analyzed by type of community, type of school, size of school, and school library use. They found that school libraries in the rural sector were better off than those in the other communities, followed by the libraries in the three large cities. Regular schools were found to have more books per student. Vocational schools had more seats, open hours, and staff working hours per student. There was a significant correlation between the size of the school (number of students) and collection size, open hours, number of seats, and overall staff working hours, and more of the library staff in the larger schools had professional training. However, data on library use indicate that although students are aware of their school libraries, they do not use them intensively.

In her American Library Association Book Fellow report on her observations of schools and libraries in Sweden's Vasterbotten County, Downes includes a report on a survey of 40 school libraries and 150 classrooms over a five-month period in 1988.<sup>9</sup> The survey collected both qualitative and quantitative data on school library facilities, budgets, collections, staffing, and services. Analyses of these data indicate that (1) the purpose of the school library programs studied is to provide information and reading guidance and materials to their patrons; (2) no effort is made to develop the audiovisual aspects of a media program unless it is directly related to helping the patron find information or enjoy books (e.g., genealogical information on microfilm and talking books for the visually handicapped); (3) children listen to stories in the library and learn how to find materials, but little attempt is made to integrate library skills into the curriculum in a systematic manner; and (4) most school library programs do a good job in dealing with reading and books.

Information Seeking

Two studies approach the information-seeking process (ISP) from different perspectives. The first focuses on the affective aspects delineated in the six-stage model developed by Kuhlthau. The second is concerned with using the school library media program to develop students' problem-solving and cognitive skills.

In discussing the ISP from the user's perspective, Kuhlthau reviews the theoretical foundation of the ISP and proposes a model that incorporates both affective and cognitive aspects exhibited by users in six stages: initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation.<sup>10</sup> Based on the findings of five studies with users of school, college, and public libraries, this model posits feelings of uncertainty and anxiety in the first stage that gradually diminish as a focus is formed from the information encountered in the stage of formulation, resulting in a return of feelings of confidence and a sense of clarity. Kuhlthau suggests that this model offers a way to articulate the common experiences of users that can be shared by the user, the intermediary, and the system to provide a basis for interaction. She argues that intermediaries, who are currently oriented toward answering well-defined questions, need to become proficient at responding to the user's articulation of the problem at all of the stages of the ISP, for example, offering preliminary, exploratory, comprehensive, or summary searches as appropriate to the stage the user has reached in solving a problem.

Moore and St. George describe a study of 23 sixth-grade children in New Zealand that focused on the students' information retrieval strategies and the cognitive difficulties they encountered in searching for materials in a comprehensive card catalog.<sup>11</sup> Intensive think-aloud and retrospective interviews on video and audiotapes were recorded and analyzed to determine the children's perceptions of the nature of the library system and books. It was found that the children were hindered in finding appropriate materials by such factors as their lack of understanding of the Dewey decimal system and how books are shelved. Other cognitive difficulties identified included difficulty in judging the relevancy of the materials they found and lack of awareness of alternative strategies for searching. The researchers suggest that teachers and librarians need to be aware of students' perceptions of the task and the information retrieval process and use the library media program to foster their problem-solving and metacognitive skills.

### Use of Technology

Five reports on technology use in school library media centers include two surveys, one on microcomputer use and the other on automated systems; a study of the impact of an on-line catalog on student achievement and information retrieval skills; a report on the retrospective conversion of school library media catalogs and the creation of an on-line union catalog in Hawaii; and a review of the research literature on how children and young adults use information retrieval systems.

Schlessinger compares the preliminary results of a 1990 survey of microcomputers and their uses in public schools and school libraries in Texas with the results of surveys conducted in 1982 and 1986.<sup>12</sup> The same methodology was used for all three surveys—a random selection

of 50 schools at each of three levels, elementary, junior high, and high school—and the distribution of a simple questionnaire. Analyses of the data indicate that 90 percent of the schools in Texas have microcomputers, and that the number located in school libraries increased from 19 percent in 1982 and 42 percent in 1986 to 76 percent in 1990. Increased use of microcomputers for library management is also indicated, as well as continued use for instructional support. Uses in the school library are identified as circulation, cataloging, acquisitions, desktop publishing, and support for CD-ROMs. Apple microcomputers continue to be the most numerous, with IBM in second place. The percentages of schools using microcomputers for administration and in each of various subject areas are also reported. Lighthall reports that the second annual survey of automated systems in Canadian school libraries shows increased numbers of vendors and systems being marketed as well as more upgrades, enhancements, and special features.<sup>13</sup> Seventeen of the vendors of 18 systems responded to the survey; of these, 14 systems are microcomputer-based, and all except Utlas' M/Series 10 are integrated, modular systems that combine at least three of the usual six library functions in a single database. This report includes information on large-system use in school libraries as well as microcomputer-based systems. System features are described, including the capability to handle MARC records and the library functions available for each system. The survey methodology is also described, and the current status of the Canadian marketplace is discussed. It is suggested that new product development will focus on union catalog and multilingual capabilities for these systems.

Nakamura points out that there are three major methods for retrospective conversion of library holdings—in-house, full data entry; in-house, partial data entry; and full vendor contract—and describes the use of a combination of these methods in the Hawaii School Library Network Project.<sup>14</sup> This project was designed to develop a statewide union catalog of the holdings of the school library media centers in the state to serve as the foundation for resource sharing among the 200 public schools and for automation in individual schools. Four points that were considered in deciding on the method to be used included budget and staff size, collection size, special features of the collection, and acceptable quality of catalog records. Two major factors influenced the choice of a combination of methods. One, the shelflists of the project schools included a large number of consistently cataloged records produced by a centralized processing center that had served the school library media centers since the mid-1960s; and two, federal funding was for a three-year period for a limited number of schools. Phase 1 of the project used a compact disk system with full data entry by carefully trained high school and college students, followed by matching records of the different schools and downloading them in MARC format. Editing of records already in the database required a contract with a vendor for a program and processing that provided global revision of the database. Phase 2 addressed the problem of obtaining records that could not be found through the Library of Congress database by submitting these titles to a commercial vendor. The vendor produced a master set of floppy disks for uploading into the union catalog and a separate individualized set for each participating school. Costs for these two phases are analyzed. Phase 3 provides for the creation of MARC records for items that cannot be matched through original in-house cataloging. It was planned to provide access to the database of more than 90,000 unique titles by adding it to Hawaii's videotex network during the 1991-1992 school year.

In fall 1990, the Computer Services Section of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction began a study of how the use of an on-line catalog in the media center would influence student academic achievement and provide a way for students to gain information retrieval skills.<sup>15</sup> Data were gathered by media professionals in two high schools who worked with an on-line catalog to collect student information and evaluate its impact on instruction. It was found that although individual components of the study provide only limited evidence of the benefits of on-line catalog use to student achievement, examination of the study as a whole shows that use of the on-line catalog has had a significant and positive effect on the ability of students to access information and become more independent in retrieving information. Teachers reported that the on-line catalog was a viable tool for students to locate resources and that their students were able to use the keyword function, make use of computer printouts, and find information efficiently.

In a review of the recent literature on information retrieval systems in youth services, Jacobson focuses on studies that have paid special attention to the typical search patterns and strategies of young people and to the cognitive processes that must be understood to design age-appropriate system interfaces.<sup>16</sup> Studies of children's experiences in using card catalogs and on-line systems identify several problems: (1) difficulty in matching their natural-information keywords with search terms of the catalog and terminology used in the information source; (2) inability to follow an alphabetical sequence, master general filing rules, and follow a series of ordered steps; (3) difficulty in mastering the conceptual basis of either type of catalog; and (4) difficulty in executing the required logical processes. Several experiments with the design of interfaces appropriate for the stage of development and skills of younger students are also reviewed, including both on-line catalog systems and full-text materials on CD-ROM. Jacobson concludes by advocating the adaptation and development of electronic systems to make them appropriate for use by children and young adults.

## LIBRARY MEDIA RESOURCES

### Censorship

Two reports on censorship provide a status report on challenges to library media center materials at the secondary level and a summary of the findings of doctoral dissertations. Both reports focus on the relationship of formal school-board-approved selection policies to the outcome of censorship attempts. A third report discusses what the research literature has to say about issues involved in attempts to censor children's literature—motivations, the reasons given, and the effects of successful challenges—and suggests ways in which educators can deal with such attempts.

A status report on challenges to library media center materials during 1986-1989 at the middle, junior high, and high school levels is provided by Hopkins.<sup>17</sup> Based on phase 1 of a national survey, this report also compares the secondary-level schools that received one or more challenges during that time period with schools for which no challenges were received. A one-page questionnaire was sent to library media specialists in a proportionate, stratified random

sample of schools representing seven community sizes in each of the states. Most of the respondents indicated that the school had a library media center, at least one full- or part-time library media specialist, and a school-board-approved materials selection or collection development policy. One or more complaints during the three-year period were reported by approximately one in three schools, and most of these respondents reported one or two complaints. Only a small percentage of library media specialists reported feeling under pressure when selecting materials, but media specialists in schools where materials had been challenged were twice as likely to feel pressure as those in schools that had received no complaints. Hopkins notes that a second, more detailed questionnaire has been sent to the schools that reported challenges as part of phase 2 of the national study.

Support for the research finding that schools with a written policy on the selection and reconsideration of library materials are more successful in retaining questioned materials is provided in brief statements of relevant findings from eight doctoral dissertations.<sup>18</sup> Different facets of the issue are addressed: Schools with a written selection policy receive more challenges than those without, but materials are more likely to be retained; more comprehensive selection policies result in more success in the retention of materials, and the most prevalent component of such policies is a statement of the philosophy for material selection; sex, language, morals, and religion are the basis of most materials challenges, with most attempts at the high school level; censorship attempts by members of the community are more frequent in large schools, but fewer complaints are made by teachers and librarians; principals are frequently responsible for the resolution of censorship conflicts; litigation will probably increase in the future, especially in the treatment of evolution and minorities and to clarify differences between classroom and library contexts and between selection and removal of materials; and, although courts have upheld the rights of boards of education, the rights of parents, teachers, and students must not be unnecessarily infringed upon.

Jalongo and Creany approach the question of censorship in children's literature from the educator's point of view in their review of the issues involved, recent research trends, and the effects of censorship on schools and libraries, the books themselves, and their authors.<sup>19</sup> They begin by arguing that a varied-selection policy respects the intellectual freedom of users and that censorship is essentially negative in seeking to restrict access to materials that present what are considered to be objectionable ideas or information. Noting that censorship of children's books was not at issue until the 1960s, when topics previously thought unsuitable for children began to appear in books, they briefly review trends in the kinds of research on censorship that have been conducted and summarize some of the trends: The percentages of libraries receiving complaints has risen sharply since 1980; 65 percent of the objections come from parents, 21 percent from school personnel or schools, and 9 percent from organized groups; and books may be objectionable to these groups because the content is considered to be too mature, the language profane or obscene, or the sexual content inappropriate. Effects of censorship reported by research include some librarians censoring themselves rather than facing confrontations; removal of books from the library collection or restricting access to them; and publishers requesting authors to make changes in their books. Jalongo and Creany suggest that educators should keep current in the field, obtain selection criteria from professional

organizations, communicate with parents, evaluate books with children, prepare a school policy statement, and adopt a formal complaint procedure.

### School Library Media Collections

Eleven reports having to do with school library media collections fall into four categories: (1) two studies of holdings in specific areas; (2) two studies involving the use of circulation data for evaluating the collection, including interlibrary loan data for participation in a multitype library network and a review of research on collection evaluation; (3) three studies on funding, one focusing on cost analyses of alternative systems for processing materials, one reporting on sources of funding for South Carolina schools, and the last one the most recent in a series of national surveys of funding and expenditures; and (4) two studies exploring the use of periodicals in library media centers at the secondary and elementary levels and a study that assessed the usefulness of a thematic display in encouraging reading.

### Holdings of Specific Types of Materials

A survey of schools in small, medium, and large communities in 29 states was conducted by VanMeter in 1988-1989 to determine the quantities of materials on sensitive social issues—AIDS, child abuse, family violence, homosexuality, and incest—in their school library media collections; whether access to such materials is restricted; whether these topics are included in the school curriculum; and, if they are, whether library media specialists have sought such materials and whether they have been successful in finding appropriate materials.<sup>20</sup> Fiction, nonfiction, vertical files, and professional titles were covered separately. Coverage of these topics was found to be minimal on all of the topics in the elementary schools and on some of the topics in secondary schools. Child abuse and family violence were the best represented at both levels, and the fewest holdings were reported for homosexuality and incest. The three topics frequently covered in the curriculum at both levels—AIDS, child abuse, and family violence—had the best coverage in the library media center holdings. Incest was the only topic for which more than 10 percent of the respondents reported having difficulty finding appropriate materials. However, elementary school media specialists who had not looked for materials indicated their feeling that the school counselor and school psychologist would handle these topics and that they would have the pertinent materials. The professional collections in the surveyed schools had only minimal holdings on these topics, and access by subject heading was not available for some items. The size of the community had no apparent effect on the collection or provision of student access to these materials.

In an effort to account for the dearth of good Spanish-language book collections in U.S. schools, Schon and Li surveyed teachers, principals, school librarians, and bilingual education coordinators in North San Diego (California) County to determine their attitudes toward having and using books in Spanish in their schools.<sup>21</sup> Almost all of the bilingual teachers and a majority of the monolingual teachers agreed that books in Spanish serve an important educational purpose, and they generally felt that funds should be used to acquire Spanish-language books; school librarians were more likely to worry about spending their funds for such



materials. The researchers concluded that the percentage of Hispanic students in classes is closely associated with and may be a major reason for teachers' positive attitudes toward having and using Spanish-language materials in public schools.

### Collection Development

Dalrymple, Cole, Allen, and Johnson report on the development and testing of data collection methods and forms for use by all types of libraries in Illinois, including school libraries, to report on interlibrary loan (ILL) transactions.<sup>22</sup> They suggest that these data would be particularly useful to individual libraries in planning for collection development and resource-sharing activities. Copies of the forms are included.

A study by Bertland describes the use of a computerized circulation system to gather quantitative data about the composition, age, and use of the collection in a middle school library media center to provide a basis for purchasing, weeding, and other collection management decisions.<sup>23</sup> This paper extends preliminary analyses of the data, which were reported in 1988,<sup>24</sup> to the use of materials by subject matter and age, the high level of usage of paperback books, and the effects of changes in collection management on patterns of paperback use. The study showed that the collection was beginning to show its age and needed weeding and replacement of older materials. It also helped to identify the areas that needed weeding based on the circulation history and age of the books. The study showed that students prefer fiction books in paperback and that these books are the ones that are the most frequently checked out. Bertland warns that although circulation analysis is one way of establishing priorities for purchasing library materials, examination of curricular needs, surveys of user opinions, and other collection evaluation methods should also be used.

Studies of school library media collections that are reviewed by Callison address issues related to collection evaluation, networking, collection mapping, student preferences, and special collections.<sup>25</sup> He found that the collection evaluation measures used were both quantitative and qualitative and that the use studies described collected data using bibliometric methods, citation analysis, and circulation analysis. Callison also reviews studies that investigated the effects of schools joining resource-sharing networks, using interlibrary loans and on-line searching, and using collection mapping to enable communication with other local resources. Studies of student preferences at both the elementary and secondary levels are also discussed, as well as research on the development of collections to meet the special information needs of various minority groups. A summary of practical implications of research findings for collection development in school library media centers and a suggested research agenda are appended to this article.

### Funding for School Library Media

### Collection Development

Ekhaml, Carr, and Watson discuss the use of cost analysis or accounting procedures and cost-benefit analyses to evaluate school library media services and give examples of their use in assessing three alternative methods for processing books for the library media collection in an elementary school.<sup>26</sup> The first alternative consisted of purchasing commercially prepared processing kits containing “peel and stick” book pockets, circulation cards, spine labels, and catalog sets; alternative 2 involved original cataloging/in-house processing; and 3 was purchasing fully pro-cessed shelf-ready books complete with accession numbers and presorted catalog cards. This study found that alternative 3 would be the most efficient in this situation because it would provide the greatest savings in both dollars and time for personnel to spend on professional services.

Townsend reports the results of a survey of the budgets and funding sources of South Carolina school library media center programs in the school year 1989-90.<sup>27</sup> She found that the major sources of funds were federal block grants, state revenues, local county funds, and local school fees; outside funding reported by 64 percent of the schools amounted to less than 5 percent of the total budget for 53 percent of these schools. Such funds came from PTOs, PTAs, and school projects such as book fairs for the elementary schools and from school projects, clubs, and EIA (Education Improvement Act) grants for the secondary schools. At both levels, local dollars were spent primarily for periodicals, books, and supplies; federal monies for books and audiovisual instructional materials; and outside funding for books, equipment, and audiovisual materials. A copy of the survey questionnaire is included.

The results of the fifth in a series of surveys of expenditures for public and private school library resources in the United States are reported by Miller and Shontz.<sup>28</sup> (It is noted that reports on earlier surveys were published in 1983, 1985, 1987, and 1989 and that references to library media centers and staff in this report refer only to schools that subscribe to *School Library Journal*.) Data reported in 24 tables include use of federal funds, collection size and local expenditures, budgets, microcomputer resources, library media center staffing, the use of technology, network participation, and instructional planning. A brief overview of the development of library media centers over the 10-year period reflected by these surveys points out that school library resource collections are continuing to erode, library media specialists do not do serious planning with teachers, and few of them are networking outside of their buildings. Progress of pioneers who are engaging in networking is viewed as encouraging, and media specialists are urged to be more assertive in promoting their programs to their administrators and communities and in advocating instructional programs that will result in students acquiring the information skills they will need to become lifelong learners.

## Use Studies

Kenney conducted a periodicals use study in a public high school library media center to determine whether the periodicals collection supported the curriculum needs of the students.<sup>29</sup> For this study, she collected and analyzed 3,924 magazine requests turned in by students over an eight-month period. The analysis revealed that 96 percent of the magazine requests were met by titles whose dates were within the previous five years; 90 percent of the requests were

met by 45 different magazines dating back 17 years; and teachers' decisions appeared to be a notable factor in the students' use of the periodicals collection. It was concluded that the periodicals collection met the needs of the major departments. A suggestion is made that eliminating selected years of given periodicals might be a more viable basis for weeding than removing all of the issues of certain periodicals.

Whereas the study of high school media centers was primarily concerned with instructional uses of the periodicals collection, a study by Swisher, Pye, Estes-Rickner, and Merriam, which investigated student use of magazines in elementary school library media centers, had a different focus.<sup>30</sup> Their survey of Oklahoma schools focused on the titles most and least frequently used by the children, how the titles were used, whether the magazines in these collections were used for reference, and the relative budgetary allocation for magazines. The 110 responses to their questionnaire indicated that the younger students use magazines primarily for pleasure reading and browsing rather than for instructional purposes; only half of the libraries had periodical indexes for student use; the magazine titles in these collections were not seen as having much reference value; and students were acquiring the skills necessary to use magazines as a source of information. The researchers concluded that more attention needs to be paid to the fostering of library skills by both the teachers and the library media specialists in these schools.

Rather than measuring the use of library media center resources, Dalton studied the effectiveness of creating book displays in a school media center to promote resource use.<sup>31</sup> She divided a sample of 100 selected books into two equal groups of 17 fiction and 33 nonfiction books, each group fitting into a specific theme. Circulation of the tagged books was recorded during the preexperimental period of four weeks, two successive experimental periods of four weeks each (the two displays alternated as the experimental group and the control group), and a postexperimental period of three weeks. Circulation data for the entire collection were also recorded. A questionnaire inserted in the display books and returned with them was used to determine if the books were read by the user, if they were liked, if they were different from the kind usually read, and why they were selected. There was no indication that a display brought students into the library or increased total reading, but there was evidence that a display can encourage students to choose books that have not circulated well but are still good books and to choose different types of books from what they usually read.

## SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PERSONNEL

### Role of the Library Media Specialist

Eight reports concerned with the role of the school library media specialist focus on their involvement in cooperative planning and curriculum development and the competencies and skills necessary to run a successful library media program. Principals' attitudes toward the role of the media specialist and characteristics of the library media specialist that influence the level of cooperation with teachers are also addressed in several studies.

In order to assess the extent to which teacher librarians in Australian primary schools are actively involved in curriculum development, Hallein and Phillips sent questionnaires to 80 primary schools in Victoria and New South Wales that invited teacher librarians to fill in the tasks they performed each day over a two-week period.<sup>32</sup> They also interviewed selected teacher librarians and principals to gauge their attitudes about the role of teacher librarians within education and to identify some of the difficulties they face in implementing the role as recommended in the literature. They concluded that teacher librarians are generally underutilized and undervalued as a resource for excellence but that recent significant changes in the education system of New South Wales may affect the role of teacher librarians in that state.

Hallein and Phillips take another look at the involvement of teacher librarians in Australian primary schools in CPPT (cooperative planning and teaching) and find that teacher librarians in some states, such as Victoria, spend most of their working week providing relief for classroom teachers.<sup>33</sup> They cite research indicating that 97 percent of teacher librarians perceive their major role to be developing a love of literature in children and that they work in comparative isolation in the library media center, resulting in no connection between library-based and classroom-based literature activities. It also showed that the teacher librarians spend 36 percent of their working time in "isolated" instructional activities, that is, not cooperatively taught or planned, with only 7.8 percent of their time spent on CPPT. The researchers attribute part of the problem to the class teachers' perceptions of the role of the teacher librarian and part to the teacher librarians, who perceive CPPT as a relatively unimportant function.

Mills reports on a series of brief interviews with approximately 16 elementary and junior high school principals in the Halifax (Nova Scotia) City School District. The interviews were conducted to determine the principals' professional opinions about various factors involved in library scheduling as mandated in a Halifax District School Board plan for elementary and junior high schools.<sup>34</sup> This plan specifies that library schedules must be cooperatively determined between teachers and library personnel as part of the instructional program. The principals were asked their opinions on scheduling classes in the library, the concept of cooperative program planning, the adjustment to flexible scheduling and its inherent difficulties, and the type of staff that would best respond to these changes. Based on the principals' responses, Mills concludes that they lack the level of understanding necessary to make implementation of such a plan successful. She also identifies some of the difficulties the principals expect to encounter in changing to flexible scheduling and suggests some approaches for implementation of the plan. A study of 39 Texas public elementary schools was conducted by Bell and Totten to investigate the effects of school climate and teacher characteristics on cooperation between classroom teachers and school library media specialists.<sup>35</sup> The school climate and faculty-related characteristics examined were the general academic effectiveness of the school, the overall cohesion (cooperativeness) of the faculty on instructional matters, and the propensity of the group and of individual faculty to seek cooperation on instructional problems. Various individual personality factors of the school library media specialists were also studied in relation to their instructional status. The researchers found that academically effective schools were significantly more instructionally cohesive than ineffective schools and that classroom teachers in these

schools were more inclined to choose the library media specialist to cooperate with them on instructional problems. They found no significant relationships between the instructional-choice status of the school media specialists and the personality characteristics studied.

A study conducted by Montgomery investigated the effects of the match or mismatch of the cognitive styles of field dependence and independence on cooperation between school library media specialists and classroom teachers when planning and teaching library media skills.<sup>36</sup> Specific questions addressed included the relationship between the field dependence or independence of the library media specialist and the teacher to their perceptions of (1) who provides more direct library media skills instruction, (2) the amount of time spent planning for library media skills instruction, (3) the level of cooperation in teaching library media skills, and (4) the chosen method for teaching library media skills cooperatively. Based on the findings, she concluded that the cognitive style of the library media specialist may be more important than the style match or mismatch of library media specialists and teachers working together to provide instruction and that field-dependent media specialists (who may be characterized as being more social than field-independent subjects) perceived that they planned more units cooperatively and that they had a higher level of cooperation than did field-independent media specialists. Schon, Helmstadter, and Robinson sent 41-item questionnaires to a sample of Arizona library media specialists and school principals and asked them to rank the competencies or skills in six major professional areas that they felt were the most important for library media specialists to have.<sup>37</sup> Library media specialists as a group and principals as a group strongly agreed on the items that they considered most important in five of the six areas: professional matters, library materials, management, planning and evaluation, and learning. A moderately strong agreement was found between the two groups on the remaining area, human behavior.

A study by Christensen investigated the characteristics of library media specialists in the state of Washington who were recognized as having exemplary high school library media programs, the degree to which six key elements previously identified in the literature were present in these schools, and the factors from both the library media specialist characteristics and the key elements that were present in the profile of a model high school library media specialist.<sup>38</sup> Data were collected through an evaluative checklist that asked the respondents to rank individual factors under each of the key elements and through on-site interviews with the library media specialists. The resulting profile indicates that these library media specialists have a liberal arts undergraduate education; hold advanced degrees from accredited library schools or in education with a specialization in library science; are on an average 47.7 years old with 14 years of experience in the library media field, 3.5 years in the classroom, and 7.7 years in the same school; are trained in administration, the relation of media to instructional systems, and the necessary technical skills; have service as a major goal and make teaching a part of the library media program; read for entertainment; participate in school activities; are intelligent thinkers who grasp ideas quickly; hold a position of respect and responsibility among the faculty; evaluate the library media program and develop short- and long-range plans; are involved in instruction and curriculum development; spend extra time working on library media projects; participate in professional organizations and activities; read professional journals and write for publication; and make it a point to stay up-to-date with new technology.

## Professional Training

Three reports address two specific facets of professional training field experience or internships, and mentoring of beginning teachers and school librarians.

Lyders and Wilson conducted a national survey to determine the status of internship (field experience under the supervision of a professional) in graduate-level programs leading to the master's degree and/or state certification for school librarianship.<sup>39</sup> They found that 68 of the 88 respondents to the survey who offer graduate-level programs (75%) require an internship. A majority of the respondents requiring an internship use a syllabus for the program and another 15 percent use other guidelines, including some that are mandated by state certification regulations. The most important factors in decisions on placement were identified as the professional stature of the field supervisor and the quality of the school library; other factors considered included convenience and location. On-site hours required range from 50 to 200 hours; many respondents noted that the time span is mandated by state certification requirements. A formal paper is required by over one-third of the respondents, a daily log by most of them, and more than one-fourth require both. For the majority of the respondents, finding and arranging for the appropriate site and supervisor are the responsibility of the faculty supervisor, who also holds an orientation seminar before internship; some hold additional seminars during the field experience.

Contact with students during the internship may include visits on campus, messages, phone discussions, and site visits. Students are required to have completed at least some coursework before the field experience, and half of the respondents report that this experience is a factor in the student's job placement. Most of the respondents report that the field supervisor must be a certified school librarian. The field supervisor may be consulted or briefed on the objectives of the program before the internship begins, and faculty supervisors maintain contact with them by telephone, letters, and visits. Students in most of the programs receive either letter grades or a pass-fail mark, and most on-site supervisors provide an evaluation to be used in assigning grades by the university faculty. Students in most programs are also given an opportunity to evaluate their field experiences. Over half of the respondents reported that their university seeks additional feedback about the level of satisfaction with the field experience from graduates who are working as school librarians. The researchers conclude that field experience is a substantial component of graduate education for school librarians and suggest that because these programs share common structural components, a model for administering internship programs for school librarians might be developed based on the results of this survey.

In the first of two papers on a state-mandated mentoring program, Ganser reports the results of interviews with beginning teachers and school librarians, mentor teachers, and a beginning counselor. Ganser explored their perceptions of the personal and general educational benefits of such a program.<sup>40</sup> Three benefits for the beginners were identified: (1) encouragement and support, particularly emotional support; (2) help with the logistics of working in a rule-oriented school setting; and (3) help with curriculum and teaching. Four benefits for the mentor were

identified: (1) personal enjoyment; (2) contributing to the profession; (3) rejuvenation and reflection; and (4) learning about new ideas, theories, and techniques from the beginner. Financial rewards for the mentors were not favored by that group; most of the beginners felt that the mentors should receive some kind of external reward. Benefits of mentoring for schools, districts, and children were also explored.

In a second paper on the same study, Ganser reports that, in general, participants supported the provision of assistance to beginning teachers, school librarians, and counselors in the form of a mentoring program that paired beginners with experienced colleagues.<sup>41</sup> However, they noted that they had received little information about what mentoring involved, and they consistently emphasized the need for more guidance in the form of written guidelines, orientations, or brief training sessions for mentors. The primary roles of the mentors were identified by most of the participants as providers of emotional support and assistance with logistical matters.

## CONCLUSIONS

The topic that received the most attention in this compilation of research reports and reviews was school library media center collections. Ten reports included two studies of holdings on specific topics, two on use of circulation data for collection evaluation and decision making for collection development, three on funding, and three on studies of collection use by students. The role of the school library media specialist was next in popularity. Eight reports focused primarily on cooperative planning and curriculum development and library media specialist characteristics. Two studies addressed specific factors that affect the level of cooperative planning, school climate, and the cognitive style of the library media specialist. Several studies reported principals' attitudes toward school library media programs and their perceptions of desirable skills and competencies for library media specialists.

Seven reports on the current status of school library media programs provided examples of programs in a variety of situations—programs for two specific populations as well as overviews of programs in two states and three foreign countries.

Use of technology was described by five studies, which focused on the number and uses of microcomputers in Texas school library media centers, the installation of automated systems in Canadian library media centers, on-line systems and vendor services in retrospective conversion of school library media collections, and two less common approaches to technology studies—a study of the impact of on-line catalog use on student achievement and a review of the research literature that emphasizes the potential for the use of data on how children and teenagers use information retrieval systems in designing appropriate interfaces for these age groups.

The effects of written policies on the disposition of challenged materials were addressed by two of three studies on censorship. The third, a literature review, was more concerned with issues involved in censorship that educators (as well as librarians) should be aware of.

The information-seeking process was analyzed from different perspectives in two reports. The first discusses the formal model developed by Kuhlthau; the second analyzes difficulties experienced by sixth-grade students in using information retrieval systems. Both argue that library media specialists (or search intermediaries) should be aware of the students' needs and provide them with assistance that is appropriate to the stage of the process and their perceptions of the process.

Two topics represented in previous years that are notable by their absence this year are library and information skills instruction (except as implied in the information-seeking process) and educational equity.

The most numerous studies were found in the periodical literature, which included 29 reports in 12 journals. Of these reports, 9 appeared in *School Library Media Quarterly*, 4 each in *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* and *School Library Journal*, 3 in *Emergency Librarian*, 2 in *International Library Review*, and 1 each in the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, *Canadian Library Journal*, *Childhood Education*, *Journal of Reading*, *RQ*, *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, and *Library Quarterly*. Ten documents were produced. Two were issued by state departments of education, three were conference papers, and two were master's degree studies.

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources is interested in acquiring reports on action research at the local level to address problems in a particular setting, papers presented at conferences, and materials for library and information skills instruction, as well as official reports on funded research and the results of national or statewide surveys. School library media specialists are encouraged to submit any reports on research projects undertaken in their schools so that others may benefit from their experiences and to share locally developed instructional materials with their peers.

## NOTES

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18. "What Works: A Written Policy Statement on the Selection of Learning Resources," *Emergency Librarian* 10 (May-June 1991): 33, EJ 428 864.
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