

HYPOTHESIS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBRARY RESEARCH SECTION OF MLA

FALL, 1995

Library Research Section Chair's Message

Jocelyn Rankin, Ph.D.

How often have you asked yourself... "Is this service cost effective?" or perhaps "Is this program really responding to the needs a particular client group?" These are the same thoughts and questions that form the background for what, when formalized or placed in a study design framework, becomes applied or action research.

The research perspective, whether conscious or not, is basic to much of the planning, decision-making and evaluation that are part of our responsibilities at all levels in a library organization. That is, whenever you step back from the daily routine of perhaps mundane tasks, just for a moment, and consider where you are, question if you are making a difference, look at the data, identify problems, think about where you'd like to be with your part of the library program, consider alternatives and possible results, set goals, then you have replicated much of the research process. When you work to improve your job, you are evaluating, planning, making decisions in an ongoing cycle that can often readily be transformed into a research initiative. Swisher and McClure described this type of action research as "a self-correcting procedure for explaining and predicting the decision situations which many librarians must face." (1)

And, in today's Information Age, the research problems are certainly there for us in abundance. We are all working through them. What we are not necessarily doing is applying rigorous methodologies and sharing our findings. The problem definition must be clear and focused, the methodology appropriate, and the data analysis directly tied to the problem state-

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MLA Research Policy Statement Stresses the Role of Research in Information Science

Joanne Marshall, Ph.D.

The MLA has produced a research policy statement, *Using Scientific Evidence to Improve Information Practice: The Research Policy Statement of the Medical Library Association*. This statement, produced by the Research Task Force of MLA chaired by Prudence Dalrymple, presents the Association's vision of research as a foundation for excellence in health information practice, for new and expanded roles for health sciences librarians and for drawing talented people into the profession. The document outlines the individual's responsibility for increasing the profession's research contributions, and outlines how librarians can increase their real and perceived value in the health information community by contributing to an expanded knowledge base through research.

The statement specifies that health sciences librarians have the unique opportunity to make positive contributions to health care and information policy, and in order to do so, they must first understand that the knowledge base of their profession applies to health information problems that go beyond bibliographic data and library collections. Secondly, they must increase their ability to analyze and appraise research results

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HYPOTHESIS

The Newsletter of the Library Research Section of MLA

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Hypothesis is the official newsletter of the Library Research Section of MLA. It is published three times a year. Spring (March), Summer (July/August) and Fall (November) by the Section. Items to be included in Hypothesis MUST be received by the editor by the 15th of the preceeding month. Copy format is preferred by e-mail. Send to fang@library.ucsf.edu. If e-mail is unavailable, please send a disk.

Deadlines: February 15 for Spring issue;
June 15 for Summer issue; October 15 for
Fall issue.

Chair:	Jocelyn Rankin, Ph.D.
Chair-Elect:	Zoe Stavri, Ph.D.
Section Council Rep.:	Gary D. Byrd, Ph.D.
Section Council Altern.:	Julia Ann Kelly
Secretary & Treasurer:	Ann McKibbin
Newsletter Editor:	M. Emily Fang

From the Editor:

I would like to apologize for the incorrect uniform resource locator (URL) for the MLANET, mentioned on p.2 of the last issue. The correct URL is <http://www.kumc.edu/mla/>. The MLANET home page provides you with up-to-date information about MLA, including membership services and benefits, the Platform for Change, the code of ethics for health sciences librarianship, and information about the meetings and conferences. It will include information about the 1996 MLA annual meeting schedule, program, registration, conference hotel. Information about Kansas City is currently available. Give it a try and take a virtual tour of Kansas City before you go to the meeting next summer.

—M. Emily Fang



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ment. If you need help in defining your research topic, selecting a methodology, or analyzing data, the Research Section's Mentoring Service is the place to turn. To use the Mentoring Service, send an e-mail message to the following Internet address: mla_mail@biblio.unm.edu. Requests can also be submitted by U.S. mail to:

Gary Byrd, Ph.D.
Director, Health Sciences Library
University at Buffalo
3435 Main St.
Buffalo, NY 14214

Finally, be sure to carry your work through to its completion by presenting and/or publishing your findings. It is not only important to allow your colleagues to benefit from your efforts but also to earn some credit for your own hard work! MLA has plenty of opportunities this year for presenting either through a contributed paper or a poster session. Please note that the deadline of submitting abstracts is November 18. Go for it!

1. Swisher R, McClure CR. *Research for Decision Making: Methods for Librarians*. Chicago, IL, ALA, 1984.

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in their own discipline as well as those of their users. Thirdly, they must use the health information science knowledge base to design, develop, and market new health information systems and services, including those that integrate scientific literature and other types of health related information. Finally, they must apply the health information knowledge base by carrying out research that is broadly relevant to the organization, delivery, use and impact of information on health care, biomedical research, and health professionals' education.

In order to meet the needs of its members, MLA will work to create an environment that assists members to increase the production and use of research. The goals of the Association are to provide educational and training outlets, aid its members in securing adequate funding to conduct research, provide incentives for collaborative research with other health professionals and promote employment opportunities which encourage and support research by employees.

Currently, the Research Policy Implementation Task Force of MLA, chaired by Joanne Marshall, is distributing *The Research Policy Statement* to information professionals and related organizations in an effort to highlight the key relationship between research and the profession of health sciences librarianship.

To obtain a copy of *Using Scientific Evidence to Improve Information Practice: The Research Policy Statement of the Medical Library Association* send a SASE with \$1.00 of postage to Professional Development Department, Medical Library Association, Suite 300, 6 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60602-4805.

Implementing the MLA Research Policy Statement: Putting Research to Work

Joanne G. Marshall, Ph.D. Chair, Implementation Task Force

The word "research" has a new meaning and vibrancy in MLA these days. This is because the new research policy statement of MLA entitled *Using Scientific Evidence to Improve Information Practice* was distributed to attendees at the MLA Annual Meeting and the International Congress on Medical Librarianship in May 1995. President Fred Roper also appointed a Task Force to carry out the action plan described in the policy statement. We are currently embarked upon a promotion plan which involves sending a copy of the research statement and an accompanying letter to various stakeholders both inside and outside MLA. We invite comment on the statement and encourage collaboration in working towards the goal of evidence-based information practice or, in other words, putting research to work.

What is so new and different about MLA's approach to research? Certainly we are not the first professional asso-

ciation in our field to produce a research statement. The American Library Association has produced a "Research and Statistics Policy Statement". The American Association of Law Libraries has a research agenda linked to their strategic plan and the Special Libraries Association has a research agenda which was originally approved in 1989 and which was revisited and renewed at a Research Forum meeting in March 1995. What is new about MLA's approach is that it goes far beyond a statement of need for research as an adjunct to professional practice or a list of research topics to be investigated. The MLA document views research knowledge as the basis for responsible information practice now and in the future. Such evidence-based practice will set library and information science professionals apart from their competitors in the expanding world of information service providers. It will also be a foundation for new and expanded roles for health

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Editor's note:

Kitty Reed, PhD is the Education/Information Services Librarian at the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library in Houston, Texas. She is also a licensed occupational therapist with a doctorate degree in Special Education and has been a faculty member for twenty years. Kitty's research projects began in occupational therapy and include teaching classes on research methods. Her publications include three textbooks and numerous articles in the occupational therapy and library journals.



Kitty's article will walk you through the research process and how she identified problems from her daily responsibilities and transformed them to research initiatives. She shares the results of her hard work with colleagues by presenting and publishing her research findings. The projects she describes are good examples of action research which is more practical and realistic to carry out among practicing librarians.

Kitty said that three topics do have some points in common. They grew out of issues which were difficult for the information services librarians to answer. Her background as a health professional and faculty member provided her with some partial answers. To provide more complete answers she searched for additional information. The topics then became possible subjects for presentation at conferences. All were accepted. From the presentations came the resource material to prepare manuscripts for submission to journals as articles.

You too may also come up with some good ideas for research if you just take a closer look at your daily routines. Kitty, Thanks for your inspiration.

Action Research

Kitty Reed, Ph.D.

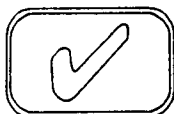
The first project arose from the challenge to locate psychological and educational tests. The project began because nursing and allied health students (mostly occupational and physical therapy students) would approach the information desk wanting copies of various assessment instruments. The Library does not, of course, keep the actual tests, but literature about the tests is available if one knows how to approach it. The problem was the information services librarians were not familiar with psychological and educational tests in general.

The first solution was to prepare a one page summary which included the key question: is the test proprietary (commercial) and therefore protected by copyright and purchased for a fee? Or is the test non-proprietary (non-commercial), with limited copyright protection and distributed by the author? Information about proprietary tests is often available through a book which compiles lists of tests available for purchase such as Sweetwater and Keyser's Tests. The test may also be reviewed in the Mental Measurement Yearbooks or Test Critiques. Information on non-proprietary tests must be gleaned from articles, books, theses/dissertations or from the author(s) directly.

Another aspect of locating test information is that students often come to the library with partial names of tests because many tests become known by a nickname or shorthand. For librarians unfamiliar with the Denver or the Rosenberg test, the names do not mean much. The staff had to learn to ask questions about possible nicknames to get a handle on the information requested. The same nickname or shorthand appears in abstracts in databases. The possibility of a nickname or shorthand label must be considered when searching a database for any test which is not a controlled vocabulary term. The librarians had to learn to ask a lot more questions about tests during

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Membership Update



Julie McGowan, Ph.D.
Membership Committee Chair

In an effort to increase membership in the Section, the Section Brochure has just been updated and is being sent to targeted non-members who are identified as being active in various research activities. While a number of MLA members have been identified, if any members of the section are aware of potential section members, please send names to: Julie.McGowan@vtmednet.org and they will receive a brochure and a letter inviting them to join.

In addition to the personal campaign, Section members involved in the various regions will be soliciting members and updating the Section Database. Any current members who are in the database and have not updated their entries are requested to do so. This database is extremely important for the Section because it is the one place which gives members an idea of who may be working in areas which may be of interest, thus offering potential collaboration. We owe Erika Love an expression of thanks for creating this resource, and we owe ourselves the obligation of keeping it updated.

This Fall, the Mid-Atlantic Chapter will be doing an exhibit on Research, and in addition to supporting research activities, this is a great opportunity to show others how important research and the Section are to furthering the profession. Congratulations to the Chapter. If any other Chapter or professional meeting is interested in doing something similar, please think about its potential for attracting new Section members and furthering research.

I would like to encourage any Section member to contact me with any ideas for increasing our membership and fostering collaboration through an updated Section database.

Acknowledgment



The Section Executive Committee would like to extend its special acknowledgment to the McGoogan Library of Medicine, University of Nebraska Medical Center for supporting Executive Committee teleconferences in 1994/95, to the Medical Center Library, University of New Mexico for the development of the online Section Membership Profile Database and creation of the Section membership brochure, and to the Library and Center for Knowledge Management, University of California at San Francisco for making the research bibliography, research-in-progress database and mentors' directory available through its FTP server, 1994/95.

Membership Dues



Ann McKibbon
Secretary/Treasurer

The Library Research Section has the third lowest dues of all MLA sections behind the Cancer Librarians Section and the Medical Societies Section (\$5/year) and tied with the Relevant Issues Section (\$7/year). A portion of each member's \$7 dues stays with MLA headquarters. The rest goes to the Section. The Library Research Section uses dues to cover costs for our newsletter production and mailing, an election mailing, and annual conference costs. For the past several years we have had little left from these endeavors for special projects or programming. Other expenses, such as the Section brochure and Executive Committee teleconferences, have been supported by member contributions. A major contribution has been made by the Health Sciences Library of the University of New Mexico which has produced and mounted a researchers' database of the members of our Section for anyone who is interested and has access to telnet (telnet.biblio.unm.edu). A conservative estimate of the direct costs for this project is \$2,600. These costs include development time, data input, system design and consultation but not costs for hardware, software, installation, and design.

Most MLA Section annual dues are in the range of \$10 to \$15; the Hospital Libraries Section has annual dues of \$20. Extra dues would allow us to expand our programming at annual and regional meetings and provide more research enabling tools. The Section will be discussing if an increase is needed, how much the increase should be, and how best to implement it.



"Research Spotlight" in the MLA News

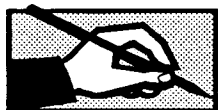
Julia Kelly
Section Council Alternate

The Research Resources Committee is sponsoring a "Research Spotlight" in the *MLA News*. It will be an occasional column listing research projects by MLA members that have not appeared in the *BMLA* or other journals MLA members would likely read. The committee has developed criteria for which projects to include. While they are not horribly stringent, we hope they will let us highlight projects that have been well-planned and executed.

A call will go out in the November/December issue of the *MLA News*. People may request a form that will ask a few questions about the project. The Committee will review the completed form to determine if the project would be included in the column. In addition, we are encouraging people to suggest projects other than their own, and we will then follow up with the authors. We may also search ourselves to recruit additional entries.

The call for entries will be put out periodically in the *MLA News*. For those of you have projects under way or have projects completed recently, please take action to respond to the call.

**Letter to the Editor:
Point to Ponder**



Julie McGowan, Ph.D.
Membership Committee Chair

The NAHSL Chapter just had its Annual Meeting in Rhode Island, and several issues were raised which deserve consideration. With the current health care climate and the downsizing and mergers of both hospitals and academic medical centers, our profession has never faced such an intense challenge for its very existence. Jana Bradley challenged medical librarians to consider new roles as a means to survival.

However, the most sobering presentation came from a library school dean who related that the profession is under attack from within. He cited several reasons. Of major importance to the Section is the fact that librarians and academic library faculty spend far more time in professional association activities than in contributing to new knowledge (the three-legged stool) by embracing the concept of service instead of research and scholarly activities.

While this may appear to be heretical to MLA, it is merely giving credence to MLA's new direction. We are well positioned to further the Association while also supporting the profession. However, we need to look at redefining our roles in the Association and rather than merely volunteering to "serve," first ask how can this service be evaluated, how can our contributions be refocused to contribute to the knowledge of the profession? We are well positioned to meet this challenge, and our time has come.



Conference Announcement:

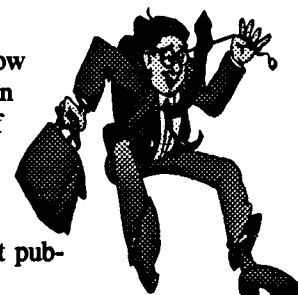
Information for Health Technology Assessment: A conference for librarians and researchers involved in the assessment of drugs, devices and medical procedures.

This conference will be held at the Chateau Laurier Hotel, in Ottawa, Canada, on Friday, December 1, 1995. Registration fees are \$160.50(CDN), until November 24, 1995, and \$214.00(CDN) on site. For more information, please contact the Conference Coordinator, Canadian Coordinating Office for Health Technology Assessment, #110-955 Green Valley Crescent, Ottawa, Ontario Canada K2C 3V4, Phone: (613) 226-2553, Fax: (613)226-5392, e-mail: lorettap@ccohta.ca.

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Call for Professional Position Descriptions

Position descriptions are now being solicited for inclusion in a revision and update of MLA DocKit #1, "Professional Position Descriptions in Health Sciences Libraries", which was first published in 1989.



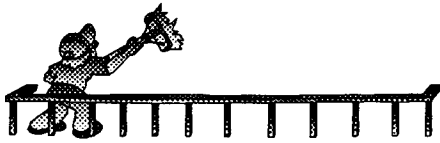
In the last six years, many of the descriptions have become outdated due to changing roles and technological advances in health sciences libraries. Jobs formerly held by librarians are now filled by paraprofessionals, whose positions are covered by DocKit #4, "Paraprofessional/Technician Position Descriptions in Health Sciences Libraries"; and terminal degrees other than (or in addition to) an MLS are now required for many health sciences library positions. The scope of the revised edition is therefore defined as health sciences library positions requiring any professional degree - library and information science, computer science, education, medical informatics, business or public administration, etc. - as well as those for which the duties are defined as professional, e.g., manager of a one-person library, regardless of academic credentials. Paraprofessional position descriptions will not be included.

All interested institutions are invited to submit single copies (originals or very clear photocopies) of their current professional position descriptions for consideration for publication. Descriptions selected for inclusion will represent the broad range of MLA member libraries, from the hospital library with a part-time librarian to the largest academic institution, and will show a diversity of format and content for each type of position. Contributions from corporate, special, and governmental libraries are especially welcomed. Descriptions will be reproduced as submitted except for the deletion of individual names.

Position descriptions should be submitted no later than November 30, 1995 to Carolyn G. Weaver, Associate Director for Administration, Health Sciences Libraries and Information Center, University of Washington, Box 357155, Seattle, WA. 98195-7155. To help categorize the descriptions, please indicate whether your library is an academic, hospital, corporate, or other type of institution; the institution's subject specialty; the FTE professional staff and total FTE library staff; and the name, phone number, and email address of a contact person. For further information, please contact Carolyn Weaver at 206/543-3401 or cweaver@u.washington.edu. Fax: 206/543-8066.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



Editor's note:

Karen Dahlen, Associate Professor & Head of Information Services, Library of the Health Sciences (LHS), University of Illinois at Chicago, is on leave from the LHS. Karen was granted 1995/1996 IAIMS Apprenticeship at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Congratulations, Karen! This apprenticeship was funded by the NLM. Keep this in mind as one of the sources for research support in the area of medical informatics.

We greatly appreciate Karen's sharing her insights with us on her professional goals, background, recruitment and the uniqueness of this apprenticeship, and projects in which she is involved. Thanks, Karen.



*Bill Stead, MD; Karen Dahlen, MLS;
Frances Lynch, MLS, Nunzia Giuse, MD, MLS*

VUMC IAIMS Apprenticeship: Continuing Education for the Librarian in Transition

Karen Hackleman Dahlen, MLS (IAIMS Apprentice)

Background & Recruitment. The Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) IAIMS Apprenticeship is a competitive, six to twelve month experience designed to expose senior managers to real-time experience and educational opportunities within an Integrated Advanced Information Management Systems (IAIMS) environment. At VUMC, the IAIMS project is lead by the Informatics Center, an organization that integrates the Library, the Department of Information Management, and the Division of Biomedical Informatics. This organization is comprised of about 170 people.

The goal of this NLM-funded program is to prepare individuals to play key leadership roles in IAIMS development at new sites. Although health science librarians are natural candidates for this position, the position is apropos for applicants from other professions ranging from organizational development to informatics. The recruitment process includes a screening by a search committee, a statement of expected goals by the candidate, the normal submittal of resume (or CV) with cover letter, a statement of support by the Candidate's home institution, and an interview. Because the IAIMS concept is more comprehensive than one single unit (e.g., the Library), the interview includes management level personnel from each of the departments that make up the Informatics Center.

The Apprenticeship Program. One unique aspect of the Apprenticeship is that it is based on collaboration between two institutions with the expectation that the successful candidate learn as much as possible and return home to facilitate a broad-based approach to information management. The selection process requires time to negotiate a contract equitable to both institutions—and to the candidate. Another unique aspect of the Apprenticeship is the two-pronged approach to stimulate learning: (1) broad involvement with management teams to enlarge vision of how decisions are made within the organization, and (2) improved skill development through exposure to new technology, attendance of lectures, and involvement in research activities.

Professional Goals. Two of my goals in applying for the VUMC IAIMS Apprenticeship were to gain a better understanding of how the Library can support the institution's teaching hospitals and clinics through improved service delivery (or how library systems connect to hospital information systems) and to better understand the knowledge and skill sets librarians will need to survive in the Information Age. Currently, I am spending about 40% of my time at the hospital with information management personnel learning about client pieces of the architecture, e.g., VCARE, EPIC, MARS, and WizOrder.

VCARE, VUMC's patient management system (based on SMS Invision), is used to admit, discharge, and transfer patients; it also records orders and produces physician census and patient lists. EPIC (software produced by Epic Systems Corporation) is a new technology which VUMC is installing to manage patient accounting and the scheduling of VUMC's 500,000 clinic visits per year; it will also have the ability to verify eligibility and authorize services critical in a managed care environment. EPIC's applications support SQL, HL7, ASTM, NSI X.12 and other standards. MARS (Medical Archival System developed at the University of Pittsburgh) creates a unified electronic patient record by taking patient data from disparate sources and storing it as an archive. MARS allows you to view a patient's medical record, including lab results, radiology reports, discharge summaries, notes, and anatomic pathology reports. WizOrder, is a practitioner-oriented order entry interface with integrated decision support that allows physicians and nurses enter and

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WizOrder, is a practitioner-oriented order entry interface with integrated decision support that allows physicians and nurses enter and modify orders—without having to directly interact with VCARE. Significant features of WizOrder include its ability to alert the practitioner to medication interactions and highlight literature relevant to the patient's diagnosis and medications.

Research Objectives. Although research endeavors are tied to Vanderbilt IAIMS evaluation (focusing on ways to measure change in information technology over time), the resulting process should be transferable to any potential IAIMS environment. Aspects of this evaluation include assistance with a methodology to gather census data (what percentage of various types of people have access to computers and where computers are located) and an assessment of VUMC's current information systems compared with those depicted by videotaped futuristic scenarios.

In the second example, each "function" or milestone (such as Order Entry) is outlined in relationship to dates achieved (design, development, and roll out), system support tied to application(s), current process (transition from paper to electronic format), and the magnitude of resources required to achieve the function depicted in the scenario. Evaluation is often identified after the fact instead of being perceived as an inherent portion of the proposed research. The relationship between stage of system development and appropriate evaluation level has been discussed by Stead, et al (1).

I also spend about 20% of my time supporting library activities, serving as a member of the "hiring team" and attending meetings of the Library Management Team. A related project includes the evaluation of skill sets across the organization to gain insight to skill sets required for the next generation of information professionals who will carry out subsequent IAIMS projects. Aspects of this review include the broad categorization of skills with an assigned point value. Using a point-based skills matrix has the potential to support competitive service within the information marketplace, equity for salaries, goal setting, and to predict professional development activities.

For additional information. Excellent papers have been written on the IAIMS development at VUMC. More information related to the Apprenticeship Program or requests for articles about the Vanderbilt experience can be acquired by writing to Ann Olsen, Director, Medical Center Information Management Planning, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, 428 Eskin Biomedical Library, Nashville, Tennessee, 37232-8340 (Ann.Olsen@mcm.vanderbilt.edu). Those interested in viewing the videotapes which forecast care of patients in a more sophisticated technological environment can order these tapes through interlibrary loan.

1. Stead WW et al. Designing medical informatics research and library-resource projects to increase what is learned. *JAMIA* 1994;1(1):28-33.

MLA RESEARCH MENTORING SERVICE



Gary Byrd, Ph.D.
Section Council
Representative

- ◆ Need research advice or help?
- ◆ Need help in designing an appropriate research strategy? (e.g., a survey, questionnaire, focus group, program evaluation, etc.)
- ◆ Unsure of how to best gather or analyze research data? (e.g., effective sampling strategies, etc.)
- ◆ Have a question or research idea, but not sure how to carry out a good research project?

The MLA Research Mentoring Service may be just what you need. Organized by the Library Research Section, this service will draw on the expertise of nearly 25 research mentors who have expressed a willingness to work with individual MLA members to provide guidance and help. The mentors have research experience in a variety of settings, using many different research methodologies.

Requests to use the mentoring service should be submitted, preferably by electronic mail, to the following Internet address: mla_mail@biblio.unm.edu

Requests can also be submitted by U.S. mail to:

Gary Byrd, Ph.D.
Director, Health Sciences Library
University at Buffalo
3435 Main St.
Buffalo, NY 14214

Simply state your question(s) or idea(s)—giving as many details as possible about your circumstances, previous research experience, the type of study you want to conduct, your reason for performing the study, etc. On the subject line of your email message please indicate "MLA Research Mentors" and be sure to include your full name, address, phone, fax, and email address at the end of your message.

MLA Research Section members will then refer your request to an appropriate mentor with the expertise and resources needed to help you solve your research problem. This person will then contact you directly to establish a mentoring relationship.

The Library Research Section is also considering plans to create a MLA library research listserv or Web home page for members to post research ideas or questions for open discussion among all interested members.

Action, from page 3

the search request interview. After preparing the one page hand-out, I did a conference presentation at the South Central Chapter meeting of MLA. It was well received so I began writing the article which appeared in the Fall, 1994 issue of *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*. (1)

The second project was on locating citations to an author's work when the journals and/or subject are not covered well in *Science Citation Index* (SCI) or *Social Science Citation Index* (SSCI). I had worked on this project for years as a faculty member myself. When I started working as a faculty member in occupational therapy in 1967, only the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* was indexed in SSCI. Occupational therapy is considered a social science by the citation indexes. At that time the major occupational therapy journals were the *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *Occupational Therapy* (which became the *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* in 1973) and the *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*. There were no other general journals (not a national organization journal) until 1980 (*Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*). When the new journals did start, they did not meet the requirements for SCI/SSCI. There were eight other occupational therapy journals which were frequent sources of citations to my own works. In addition, many textbooks and dissertations also cited my works. I wanted to keep tract of them on the curriculum vitae so I devised ways of checking on the source materials.

At the library, faculty would ask for searches in SCI and SSCI and then complain the searcher had not found all the citations to the faculty member's work. The librarians began referring the unhappy faculty members to me because I had experience as a faculty member trying to update citations to my publications. I would consult with the faculty member using my experiences as a point of reference and explore how similar approaches might be used to help locate additional citations to the faculty member's work such as screening journals in the subject area of interest to the faculty member which were not covered in SCI or SSCI and screening textbooks for references. Next, the topic was presented at MLA in the Nursing and Allied Health Resources Section meeting. Then the presentation was written and submitted for publication. It will be published in the next issue of the BMLA. (2)

The third topic concerned the process of identifying peer reviewed or referred journals. Students and faculty would come to the Information Desk asking the librarian to identify a peer-reviewed/referred journal as a source of recognized quality reading or as a source to send a manuscript. Once again the librarians were having difficulty understanding what a peer-reviewed/referred journals was and how to identify one in the journal collection. I began by suggesting criteria which would indicate the journal was likely to be peer-reviewed such as the existence of an editorial board of persons who worked elsewhere and thus were volunteering expertise to review articles. Then the published editorial policy statement would be read to determine the review process the journal used.

Sometimes listings could be used such as those in Ulrich's or the CINAHL Guide. The problem was the criteria used to determine the peer-reviewed status. A survey which only required a check mark stating yes or no was not a good criterion because editors disagreed on what peer-reviewing/referring meant.

This study was presented at SCC/MLA last year and is in the process of being written into a manuscript for submission and publication.

1. Reed KL. Locating information on psychological and educational tests. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly* 1994;13(3): 27-36.
2. Reed KL. Citation analysis of faculty publication: beyond Science Citation Index and Social Science Citation Index. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*. 1995;83(4):503-8.



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sciences librarians and for attracting top people to the field. The research policy statement builds on MLA's earlier educational policy statement *Platform for Change* which identified research, analysis and interpretation as one of the seven major categories of skills needed by health sciences librarians.

It is one thing to make a philosophical statement about the importance of research in our field and another to put research to work in our everyday practice. The challenge for the Implementation Task Force and for MLA members at large is to determine what evidence-based practice would look like in our field, to determine what we need to do to get there and to develop a comprehensive action plan. The Task Force has been appointed until May 1997 but it is essential that many of initiatives that are undertaken be integrated into MLA's permanent structure. This is why close collaboration between the Task Force and the Library Research Section is essential. The Section has already shown great initiative through many of its activities including the Research Bibliography, the Research Section Database, the Research Profile Database and, of course, the high-quality newsletter! Jocelyn Rankin, the current Library Research Section chair, is a member of the Task Force and through the efforts of Zoe Stavri, Library Research Section Chair-Elect, the Section and the Task Force are co-sponsoring two research-oriented sessions at the 1996 annual meeting in Kansas City.

So how can you, as a member of the Library Research Section, participate in the realization of our vision of evidence-based information practice? First, go back and read the research statement again, and send us comments, suggestions and ideas. Approach your colleagues and ask them to do the same. If you did not get a copy at the Annual Meeting, additional copies are available from MLA Headquarters. Can you think of effective ways to communicate the message contained in the policy statement to the MLA membership and beyond? Can you think of practical examples of situations in which you or others have used or done research that has made a difference to your professional practice? What activities would be useful to develop under the general action plan headings used in the statement of education, research support, funding, dissemination, recognition of research and measurement? Please communicate these ideas to any member of the Implementation Task Force so that we can work together to develop them over the next two years. We look forward to a dynamic and fruitful collaboration with the Library Research Section in the months ahead.

Members of the MLA Research Policy Implementation Task Force are Alexandra Dimitroff, Rosalind Dudden, Jocelyn Rankin, Ann Weller, Joanne Marshall, Chair.

Cronin, Blaise and Kara Overfelt. E-Journals and Tenure. Journal of the American Society for Information Science. 46(9):700-703, October, 1995.

The authors note an absence of empirical evidence concerning the acceptability of publication in electronic journals by promotion and tenure committees. Letters requesting copies of current promotion and tenure guidelines were mailed to department chairs in mathematics, computer science, sociology, and English at 50 top institutions. Forty-nine documents were received and were content analyzed, using research questions specified in the article.

Only one document made explicit mention of electronic media and one, implicit mention. Free form comments indicated departments either had not considered the question of electronic publication, or the respondent assumed that electronic publication would receive the same consideration as print publication, i.e., publication in a referred, high status journal was given the most weight. The authors recommend "open and prompt debate on the topic".

Payson, Evelyn. The Vertical File: Retain or Discard? College & Research Libraries. 56(5):423-432, September, 1995.

This is an example of a study useful in everyday decision making. The authors review the literature on the vertical file and perform a survey of 171 academic libraries at four-year, non-doctoral campuses in six midwestern states. The 81% response rate indicates interest in the topic.

Although the text of the questionnaire is not included, the nature of each question is implied in the presentation of results. Inclusion of free form comments adds value. The author's conclusion that "the libraries with no vertical files and those with large and active files were significantly more satisfied with their policies than other libraries with infrequently maintained files" should be valid for academic libraries at four-year, non-doctoral institutions.

Radcliff, Carolyn J. Interpersonal Communication with Library Patrons: Physician-Patient Research Models. RQ. 34(4):497-506, Summer, 1995.

Although this is not a research study, the author lays the foundation for research studies based on interpersonal communication theory. Specifically, she reviews studies of interpersonal communication between physicians and patients and reflects on how the theoretical bases could be applied to the librarian-patron interaction. She concludes that librarian-patron communication could be examined in terms of characteristics of the participants; communication behavior, style, and function; satisfaction; compliance; and relational history.

Wiberley, Stephen E., Jr., Robert Allen Daugherty, and James A. Danowski. User Persistence in Displaying Online Catalog Postings: LUIS. Library Resources & Technical Services. 39(3):247-264, July, 1995.

This study is a replication of an earlier study of user persistence done in the same library on a different online catalog. The authors carefully discuss differences in design between the former and present catalog and also compare the present catalog to four other online catalogs. Limits of application of findings vis a vis catalog design features are given.

A sample of user sessions was observed and questionnaires were distributed at terminal locations. Transaction logs for 68.5% of 850 observed sessions were identified. An additional 22.2% of sessions were unrelated to the purposes of the study. Nearly 52% of observed users returned usable questionnaires. The authors do not specify how many returned questionnaires belonged to sessions for which the transaction log was analyzed. Table 3 does break down some of the results by presence or absence of the questionnaire.

Persistence is divided into four categories—totally persistent, overload, partially persistent, and the record displayer. The definition of "partially persistent" needs further explanation and illustration. As it stands, it is not clear that "partial persistence" is indicative of significant user action, because the actions of these users did not necessarily contribute to finding the needed information.

The authors of this article raise many good questions concerning the analysis of user persistence. The validity of their conclusions is harder to assess, due to ambiguity about the definition of "partial persistence" and the significance of "partial persistence" in the information retrieval process.

Wildemuth, Barbara M., Ruth de Bliet, Charles P. Friedman, and Dean D. File. Medical Students' Personal Knowledge, Searching Proficiency, and Database Use in Problem Solving. Journal of the American Society for Information Science. 46(8):590-607, September, 1995.

This study looks at relationships between personal knowledge in a domain and searching proficiency, and between searching proficiency and successful use in problem solving of information found in the database. Results are that there is little relationship between domain knowledge and searching proficiency and that some aspects of search proficiency are related to database-assisted problem solving. An additional conclusion, that "regular, well-motivated use of a database as a curricular intervention is one means to enable students to build searching skills specific to a domain" is also of interest.

The authors point out three ways in which their study improves upon previous designs of studies of search proficiency. They take a broad view of relevance in their literature review and do an extensive review of three bodies of literature. Methods are carefully explained, each variable is defined in detail, and all results are presented in tables. A possible weakness is attrition of 28 of 64 subjects; possibly the remaining 36 had more interest and ability in the tasks required in this experiment. The authors point out that doing the second assessment of pharmacology students before they had been tested on lecture material may have affected the results for that group.