
Editorial Resources and Services for Special Groups

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The theme for this issue of *School Libraries Worldwide* is "Services and Resources for Special Groups." The topic is both vital and broad, and the call for papers tried to make clear just how widely we were opening the door to reports of research in this area:

School libraries daily face the challenges of providing services and resources for diverse clientele. The global village means that there are international communities within our school libraries: multicultural and multilingual school library services have been developed to meet the needs of students from ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious minorities and who may be refugees or displaced persons. Within our school libraries also are many students with special needs: the gifted and talented; the physically challenged; students who are blind/visually impaired or deaf/hearing impaired; and students with learning difficulties or disabilities. Services have been developed to meet the needs also of students not able to be served in regular school settings: young people in detention facilities; students in hospital or long-term care; geographically isolated students; and students being home-schooled. Some of our users have medical conditions such as asthma, HIV/AIDS, epilepsy or diabetes, while others must cope with autism or psychological disorders. Students living in non-traditional family settings and students who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual youth have special needs as do adopted children and latchkey kids. Programs such as school library programs support community courses (like the Saturday community language courses), homework help for students after school, library services for school teachers, library services for the school principal, library resources and services for parents, school library support for school clubs, providing access for the disabled (legal obligations, experience of building alterations).

Given the hospitality of this invitation, the responses were remarkably few. Apparently, very little research is being done on these aspects of school librarianship. One may speculate why this is the case. Are other topics more interesting, more publishable, more fundable? Is this work as marginalized as its clientele?


Most of the papers that we did receive reported actual practice rather than research. Five of them are published in this issue as "Notes from the Field." Taken together they give some idea of the enormous range of needs and opportunities to which school libraries may be expected to respond. In-

dividually, they offer solutions to problems of special services that might help or inspire librarians in other places.

The authors in this issue write from Australia, Botswana, Iceland, Namibia, and the United States. Services and resources for special groups are indeed a concern for school libraries worldwide.

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