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## A study of culturally diverse materials in elementary school media centers

Marie E. Mawson  
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A STUDY OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE  
MATERIALS IN ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS

by  
Marie E. Mawson

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
May 13, 2005

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Professor

Date Approved May 13, 2005

c 2005

## ABSTRACT

Marie E. Mawson  
A STUDY OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE  
MATERIALS IN ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS

2004/2005

Dr. Marilyn Shontz  
Master of Arts in School and Public Librarianship

Our country is more culturally diverse today than at any other time in its history, therefore there is a need for greater understanding among people and awareness of other cultures. A prime time to develop this understanding and awareness is during the elementary school years. School library media specialists can be foremost in providing materials that facilitate learning about all cultures. This study examined the multicultural collections of four elementary school media centers within the Pleasantville School District. The study was conducted by examining the Online Public Access Catalog for the identified variables and then by conducting a visual search of the corresponding shelves. The results of this study indicated that these elementary school media collections did not provide an adequate amount of current materials representing cultures, other than the predominate culture of the neighborhood, to be of value in educating children about diverse cultures. The results also indicated that these media centers pursued collection development in accordance with the current trends of providing an abundance of materials related to the predominate neighborhood culture or ethnicity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I consider myself fortunate to have received the support and encouragement of so many friends and colleagues. I wish to express my appreciation to Mr. G., not only for his technical support, but also for his encouragement. In addition I want to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. M. Shontz for her guidance and her ever encouraging words. I am grateful to my mother and my family for their faith in me. Finally there are not enough words to adequately thank my husband Lew for his patience and support throughout this experience as well as in every part of my life. I never could have made it without him.

*If man is to survive, he will have learned to take a delight in the essential differences between men and between cultures. He will learn that differences in ideas and attitudes are a delight, part of life's exciting variety, not something to fear.*

Gene Roddenberry

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of two special people, my father, W. Ralph Atwell Sr. and my grandfather, Edward Murphy, both of whom left this world a better place.

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## CHAPTER I

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### Significance of the Topic

In the past, the selection of school library and curriculum materials in the United States was driven by the ethnicity of the nation, which was predominately European. More recently, the selection of these materials has been driven by the ethnicity of the local community and this, to some extent, may still be the case. However, today libraries must consider the fact that every community is a part of an evolving global community due to the growth in technology and the ease with which immigration and relocation can take place. Thus the need to help students develop an awareness of cultural diversity, their own and that of others, is more crucial today than at any other time in the past. This cultural awareness allows students to develop an understanding of the ways of other cultures as the students move on to become more actively involved in the global community that has been created. Cultural awareness can help to alleviate deficiencies our students may have in the knowledge of their own cultures. More importantly, knowledge about other cultures helps to dispel the fears that can lead to prejudice and intolerance. As with education in general, the integration of cultural diversity into the curriculum needs to be started when students are young and to that end it is imperative that all schools provide materials that reflect our global society. Early childhood is an ideal period for children to begin to develop a cultural awareness about the world and teachers of young children can find creative ways to integrate multicultural perspectives



into the curriculum (Lo and Cantrell, 2002). Therefore it is the obligation and responsibility of school library media specialists to be foremost in providing materials that facilitate learning about all cultures. Materials representing the diverse populations represented in this country should be available to elementary school students and teachers through their school media centers.

According to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, "books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation" (American Library Association, 2004). To this end, school library collections should include materials that broaden the knowledge of students in all respects including cultural awareness. Access to materials that provide information on all cultures should be readily available to all students and teachers.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to survey the library collections of four pre-kindergarten to fourth grade library media centers in the Pleasantville School District with respect to the amount, variety and currency of culturally diverse materials contained in their library holdings.

#### Research Questions

This study answered the following questions concerning multicultural materials:

1. How culturally diverse were the collections?
2. How large were the collections?
3. How many cultures were represented?

#### 4. How current were the resources?

##### Definition of Terms

**Cultural awareness:** For the purpose of this study, the phrase cultural awareness is used to describe an appreciation of the similarities and differences among the peoples of the world.

**Elementary school:** For the purpose of this study, the term elementary school is used to describe public schools that serve pre-kindergarten four year old children to fourth grade students.

**Ethnic diversity:** For the purpose of this study, the phrase ethnic diversity is used to describe the similarities and differences among the cultures of the world.

**Fiction:** For the purpose of this study, the term fiction is used to describe works of imagination including novels and stories for children.

**Folklore:** For the purpose of this study, works that are classified as folklore fall into the category of nonfiction.

**Library collection:** Materials (in a variety of formats) located in a library media center (McCain, & Merrill, 2001).

**Multicultural literature:** A type of literature about racial or ethnic majority groups that are different both culturally and socially from the Anglo-Saxon, white majority in the United States (McCain, & Merrill, 2001).

**Multicultural holdings:** For the purpose of this study, the phrase multicultural holdings pertains to library resources that contain information about various cultures.

**Nonfiction:** For the purpose of this study, works of nonfiction are described as those works that offer factual information and are not novels or stories for young children.

**Cultural diversity, culturally diverse:** For the purpose of this study, the terms cultural diversity and culturally diverse are used to describe the similarities and differences among the cultures of the world. These terms may be used interchangeably with the term multicultural.

#### **Assumptions**

The assumption was made that elementary school library holdings classified as Fiction included those classified as Easy.

#### **Limitations**

This study was limited to the four elementary schools serving pre-kindergarten (four year old children) through fourth grade students in the Pleasantville New Jersey School District. The study was limited to materials housed in the four respective school library media centers. Not included in the study were materials available in classrooms, through interlibrary loan or any electronic resources.

The formats examined in this study were limited to fiction and nonfiction literature and videos.

Collections examined in each media center may or may not have been previously weeded.

Nonfiction holdings examined were limited to those holdings classified under the Dewey Decimal System Classification 300s, customs, etiquette, folklore; 700s, the arts; 800s, literature; and 900s, geography, history and biographical holdings.

The study was conducted to include cultures represented by Africa, Asia, Mexico, Central America, South America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the Russian Federation.

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## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

#### Introduction

A review of the relevant literature revealed a scarcity of research in collection development of multicultural holdings encompassing all cultures for school library media centers. There were a limited number of studies that had been done with the purpose of examining selection patterns of public libraries and determining what selection procedures were appropriate for multicultural materials for children (Brown, 1999). However, much has been written pertaining to the need for acquisition of multicultural holdings based on the cultures of the students represented in the school. Within the last decade, an increasing number of articles have been written concerning the need for multicultural education in the United States, but again, that was in relation to the cultural makeup of the school. Additionally, selection criteria guidelines have been developed by several experts for selection and evaluation of multicultural literature. These guidelines include criteria for examining cultural accuracy in respect to the selection of multicultural materials, the addressing of stereotypes, and the integration of multicultural materials into the curriculum. Stressed in these guidelines is the need to choose books that are representative of the community, not necessarily the need to address cultural diversity in general.

## Historical Perspective of Multicultural Education

In order to discuss the role of the school media center in providing multicultural materials that reflect our global society, this discussion must begin with the history of multicultural education. Initially, immigrants to this country were apt to live among people of their same nationality, as time passed the tendency of immigrants was to assimilate with the existing population. For the most part, immigrants worked hard learning to speak the English language and attempting to lose any accent that would provide an indication of their country of origin. Early immigrants accomplished this so well that, in schools and work places, it was difficult to tell the nationality of a person (Nauman, 1987). This caused education to reflect a European, Christian, Caucasian perspective. Up to that period, it could be said that there was no real multiculturalism in education. As our nation passed the half way point of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, people began to realize that ethnic differences would not be eliminated, and that the country was no closer to achieving a single national culture than it had been in the 1920s (Nauman, 1987).

Subsequently, the real beginning of multicultural education, many believe, could be traced back to the social action of African Americans and other people of color who challenged discriminatory practices in public institutions during the civil rights struggles of the 1960s. This movement was further fueled in the early 1970s by other groups who had been historically oppressed, including the women of the feminist movement. Together, the separate actions of these various groups who were dissatisfied with the inequities of the education system, along with the resulting reactions of educational institutions during the late 1960s and early 1970s, defined the earliest conceptualization of multicultural education (Gorski, 1999). In 1972, cultural pluralism was endorsed by the

American Association of Teachers of Education as an understanding and appreciation of the differences that exist among the nation's citizens. Differences among cultures was seen as a positive force on which our society as a whole would be made stronger by embracing the unique strengths of each part.

As America moved farther into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the country moved farther away from the white, European, middle class, Christian population that has defined public education in the past. Schools were assigned the challenge of preparing students for the future, and needed to do so while recognizing the diversity found in schools today (Skeele & Schall, 1994). Banks (1991-1992) noted the established trend toward multicultural education in schools when he stated that multicultural education and representation were an integral part of many curriculums. He went on to state that the challenge to school leaders was to find ways to ensure that the rich contributions that diverse groups can make to our nation and the public schools becomes a reality.

Although existing literature reflected the fact that cultural diversity, is now and will continue to become an even greater part of the make up of our nation, the majority of literature tended to deal solely with multicultural education being applied to the demographics of a particular school population within the local community. Houff (1994) stated that, the demographics of the school play an important role in the program assessment, the decisions for program design, and the acquisition of materials when developing a multicultural library media program.

According to the statistics on immigration provided by the U. S. Census Bureau in 2000, the cultures represented in our nation increased over the past 50 years to represent people from no less than 47 of the 192 regions then recognized as countries. The change

in this cultural portrait is greatly illustrated within our schools. Statistics also indicated that the cultural diversity in this country will continue to grow as the number of foreign-born people in America continues to climb. The foreign-born population in the U.S. rose to 31 million people in 2000. This represents only a small percentage of the total population in the United States but it does represent an increase of 57% from the 1990 census (Yin, 2004).

Another analysis on immigration information was provided by the *2002 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. It stated that 1,063,732 immigrants from all other countries were admitted to this country in 2002. A study of the information going back to 1989 revealed an average of 989,000 immigrants legally entering the United States yearly (Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2002).

#### The Role of School Libraries in Multicultural Education

Clearly the function of school library media specialists is to provide access to information that encourages the learning of all students. According to Van Orden, this is accomplished by evaluating, acquiring and promoting resources including resources that provide knowledge about the diverse ethnic cultures present in our world. As global interactions shrink our world, the responsibility to help children recognize the similarities and appreciate the differences among people becomes more crucial (Van Orden, 2000, p. 27).

The American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights (2004) affirmed that all libraries were forums for information and ideas, and that books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all people



of the community the library serves. It further stated that libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view (Library Bill of Rights, 2004).

In the American Library Association's (2004) interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights dealing with diversity in collection development, it was asserted that librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive and not exclusive, and fair, just and equitable in their collection development policies (Diversity in Collection Development, 2004).

Noted author in the area of collection development for school libraries, Phyllis Van Orden (2000), in her book, *Selecting Books for the Elementary School Library Media Center*, stated that collections should contain materials that were representative of diverse cultures, and representative of subdivisions within a group, such as individual tribes of Native Americans. She went on to assert that these materials should portray individuals in a variety of settings, involved in various occupations, and with different educational backgrounds, various living conditions and lifestyles. Van Orden (2000) also stated that multicultural books should show traditional activities and dress, as well as modern day occupations and clothing.

Although not addressing ethnic diversity specifically, *Information Power* (AASL & AECT, 1998) did address the library media program's position regarding intellectual freedom. While discussing information access and delivery, *Information Power* (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 91) affirmed that the school library media program must continue to promote an atmosphere of free inquiry when faced with today's challenges to educational resources. Freedom of access to information and ideas is essential for students and others to become critical thinkers, competent problem solvers and life long learners who

contribute productively and ethically to society. *Information Power* (AASL & AECT, 1998, p. 92) went on to state that the school library media specialist was a leader in meeting the school's responsibility to provide resources and service that represent diverse points of view and that support and extend the curriculum with current, wide-ranging information.

Joyce Mosely (1997) conducted a study to analyze the collection in the Robert Fulton Elementary School Library. The primary purpose for this study was to determine if the collection reflected the ethnic culture of the community and met the criteria for good multicultural materials. Additionally, Mosely wanted to ensure that her library was offering the students books that reflected a diversity of cultures. Mosely stated that in the mixing and sharing of cultures, comes respect for all cultures. She further stated that multiculturalism means everyone, not just minorities. Therefore as a secondary objective, Mosely wanted to determine the cultural diversity of the holdings. Mosely limited her study to picture books for young children, because as she stated many psychologists believe that children perceive racial differences and form racial attitudes at an early age. The method for this study was content analysis, with the sample being determined, as Mosely indicated, according to the Table for Determining Sample Size from a given population. Each book in the sample was evaluated for the ethnic representation of characters, central and incidental; ethnicity in terms of roles and genders; the importance of family to the characters and the story; the authenticity and realism of the races portrayed; and whether the children would be positively or negatively affected by the content of the book. A coding form with this specific information was then completed for each book evaluated. The results of Mosely's study in respect to overall cultural

diversity showed that her library's cultural holdings fell into five categories: African American, Hispanic American, Native American, Asian American and White. She concluded that the diversity of the picture book collection at the Robert Fulton Elementary School was not what it should be to meet the needs of the student body (Mosely, 1997).

It is the assertion of this researcher that the results experienced by Mosely in her study of the Robert Fulton Elementary School may be that of most elementary school libraries. It is the responsibility of media specialists to provide materials that expose students to information about the diverse cultures that are represented not only in this country but throughout the world.

Literature not only illustrates and reflects the culture from which it comes, but it also gives us insights into the reasoning and belief systems of people whose outlook and life experiences may be far different from our own. Literature can also illustrate the commonalities of human experience regardless of geography or language (Lo, 2001). Mosley (1997) restated Pilger's belief that in order to live in peace together, people must know something about each other. One way to do this is to read and understand something of the culture and customs which make up these similarities and differences.

#### Summary

Experts in the area of library collection development and multicultural education have noted the need to provide materials about diverse ethnic cultures.

The research study done by Mosely at the Robert Fulton Elementary School Library was to determine if the picture book collection was representative of the cultural diversity of the student population and to appraise the collection to ensure that it had

materials representing a diversity of cultures. The method utilized by Mosely was a content analysis of a sampling of the picture books. The results showed that the library picture book collection did not offer sufficient diversity in the cultures covered.

In order to help students become well informed, critical thinkers, library media specialists need to follow the guidance put forth in both American Library Association's Bill of Rights (2004) and in *Information Power* (AASL & AECT, 1998). It is important to ensure that school library media collections reflect the ever increasing cultural diversity evident in this global society. This can be accomplished through careful collection development in both nonfiction as well as fiction holdings.

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## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Overall Design and Justification

The design used for this study of culturally diverse materials in public elementary school libraries was applied research which, according to Powell, tends to be more pragmatic and emphasizes providing information that is immediately usable in the resolution of actual problems (1997, p. 44). The methodology was evaluative because as Powell stated, it is generally practical or utilitarian (1997, p. 45). The technique applied to this research was quantitative. Powell maintained that quantitative research methods involve a problem solving approach that is highly structured in nature and that relies on the quantification of concepts, where possible, for purposes of measurement and evaluation (1997, p. 3).

The results of this study provided the librarians and district administrators with information regarding their holdings in respect to providing their students with materials that were representative of the cultures present in our global society. Additionally the results provided information that could be utilized for collection development in the areas studied.

The study was a descriptive study in view of the fact that it used contemporary data where the meaning will be extracted through analyzing of the statistical information gathered (Powell, 1997).

## Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to survey the library collections of four pre-kindergarten to fourth grade library media centers in the Pleasantville School District with respect to the amount, diversity and currency of multicultural materials contained in their library holdings.

This study sought to answer the following questions concerning multicultural materials:

1. How culturally diverse were the collections?
2. How large were the collections?
3. How many cultures were represented?
4. How current were the resources?

## Population and Sample

The sample and population for this study were the same. The sample and population were the collections of four elementary school library media centers. These four library media centers were part of the Pleasantville School District, which was located in southern Atlantic County in New Jersey. The Pleasantville School District served students from pre-kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade within 4 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 high school. These 4 elementary schools served approximately 1786 students with 149 teachers.

## Variables

The factors studied in this research were the cultures represented in each library's holdings, materials found under the Dewey numbers that were searched, and the copyright date of the materials.

The discrete variables in this study were the amount and diversity of the cultural materials available in each library within the Dewey numbers 300, 700, 800, 900, 92, Fiction and Easy, and how current these materials were.

The intervening variables for this study were the reliability of the information found in the Online Public Access Catalog of each library and how up to date this information was.

#### Instrument Used

The holdings of each library media center were surveyed by the researcher using a checklist (see Appendix A). The checklist was designed for the purpose of making sure that each library was surveyed for the same countries found in each geographic region. The information obtained from surveying the library collection for cultural materials represented in Africa, Asia, Mexico, Central America, South America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation and classified under the Dewey numbers 300, 700, 800, 900, 92, Fiction and Easy was then organized in a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet also allowed for recording either a Pre-1995 or Post-1995 copyright date. An age of 10 years was decided upon after consulting *The CREW Method: Expanded Guidelines for Collection Evaluation and Weeding for Small and Medium-Sized Public Libraries* (1995). An additional factor taken into consideration in deciding the 10 year age of multicultural materials was the geographic changes that have taken place worldwide in the past 20 years.

#### Method of Data Collection

This survey was conducted first by checking the Online Public Access Catalog for the identified variables and then by conducting a visual search of the corresponding shelf



areas. The data were collected over a period of three visits to each media center during late January and early February. Each visit was conducted after school and ranged approximately 3 hours in length. The information was then organized in a spreadsheet under Call Number, Copyright Date and Title/Author (see Appendix B).

#### Reliability and Validity

This method of data collection was deemed reliable after a pretest was applied to the Online Public Access Catalog of the Ocean City New Jersey Public Library. The pretest revealed the need for some revisions to the data collection method. This research could be replicated under similar conditions with reliable results.

## References

- Boon, Belinda (1995). *The CREW Method: Expanded guidelines for collection evaluation and weeding for small and medium-sized public libraries*. Texas State Library, Austin TX.
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- Powell, R. R. (1997). *Basic research methods for librarians*. Greenwich, CT: Ablex Publishing.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Procedure

The information for this study of culturally diverse materials in school media centers was acquired by examining the online public access catalogs and corresponding book shelves for the relevant subject areas of four elementary school library media centers within one school district. The online public access catalog was consulted to determine if materials that could not be located on the shelves were checked out or lost. Lost materials were removed from the study.

#### Variables Studied

The variables studied in this research were numbers of materials in each library related to the cultures represented in Africa, Asia, Middle East, Eastern Europe, Russian Federation and Mexico, Central and South America and found within the Dewey numbers 300, 700, 800, 900, 92, Fiction, Easy and Video; and the copyright date of the materials.

#### Statistical Analysis

The information was organized in separate spreadsheets for each elementary school according to Dewey number, copyright date, title, and author for each geographical area examined. The information was then analyzed using Microsoft Excel and displayed in separate graphs and charts for each media center and in graphs that

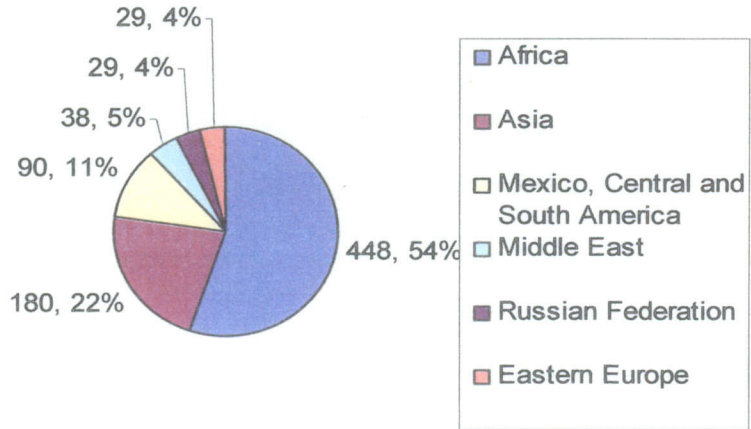
compared the four school media centers. Descriptive statistics consisting of counts and percentages were reported.

## Results

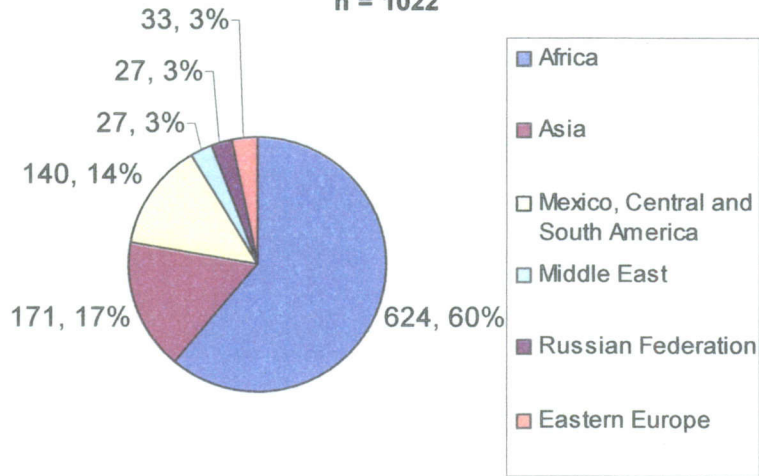
### *Research Question 1 and 2*

The information obtained from examining the collection and the online public access catalog of each media center provided data to determine the cultural diversity of each collection and the cultures represented in each collection. This information was obtained by searching the online public access catalog subject headings for the countries located within the geographical areas studied; Africa, Asia, Middle East, Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, and Mexico, Central and South America. These results are shown in Figures 1 through 4. The culture most represented in each collection was African, with percentages ranging from 37% to 60% of materials examined pertaining to African cultures. Asian cultures were the second most represented in each collection with percentages of materials ranging from 17% to 28%. Materials representing the cultures of Mexico, Central and South America were the third most represented with percentages ranging from 11% to 19%. Each collection contained substantially fewer materials representing the remaining cultures. Percentages of materials for the Middle East ranged from 3% to 10%, Eastern European materials ranged from 3% to 6%, and materials representing cultures in the Russian Federation ranged from 2% to 4%.

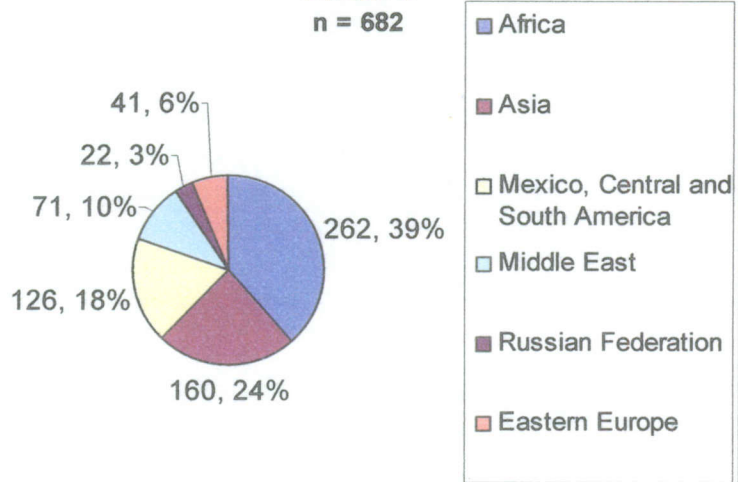
**Figure 1: Percent of Culturally Diverse Materials by Geographic Region  
School A  
n = 814**



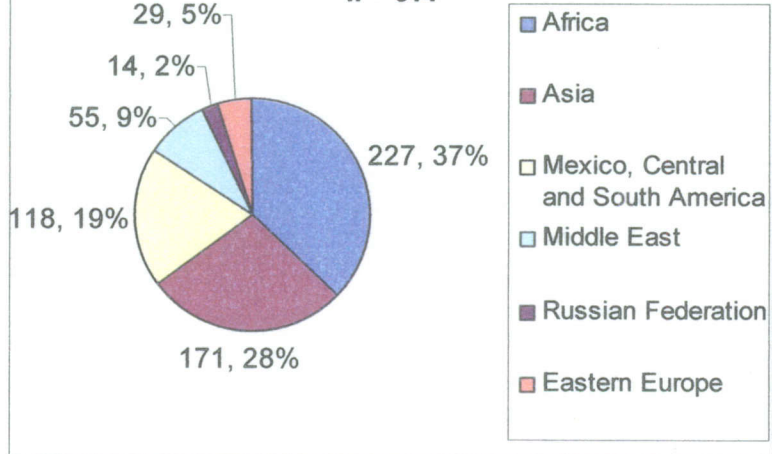
**Figure 2: Percent of Culturally Diverse Materials by Geographic Region  
School B  
n = 1022**



**Figure 3: Percent of Culturally Diverse Materials by Geographic Region  
School C  
n = 682**



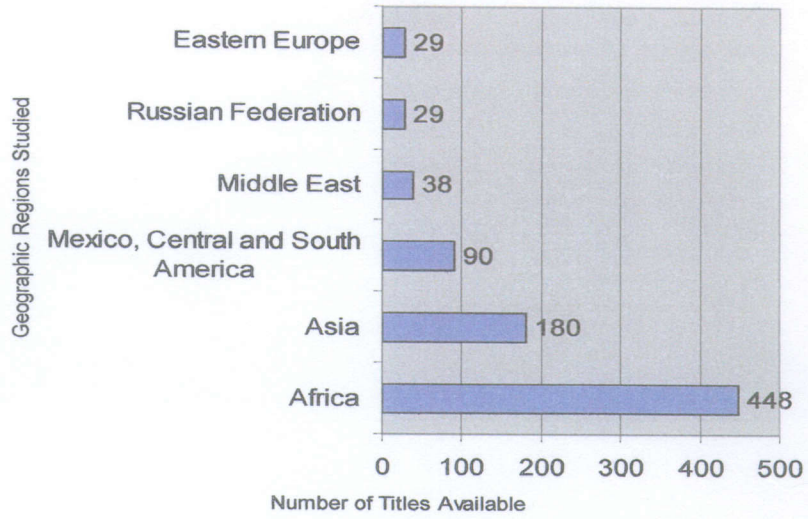
**Figure 4: Percent of Culturally Diverse Materials by Geographic Region  
School D  
n = 614**



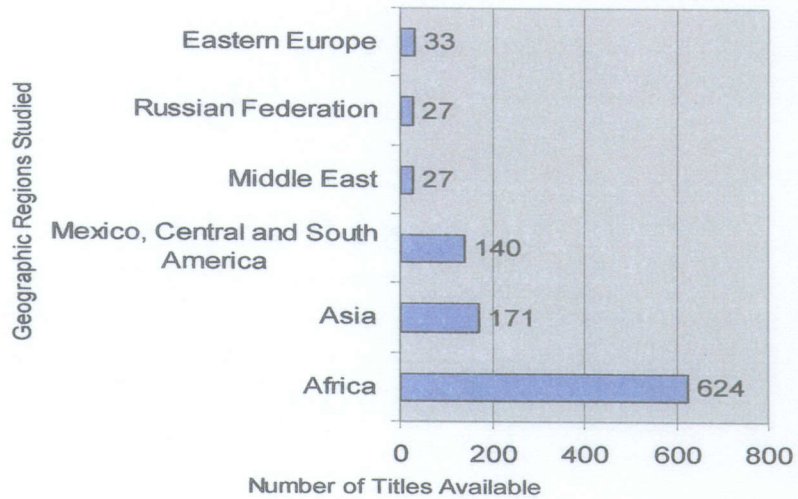
### *Research Question 3*

The data obtained provided adequate information for determining how large each of the media centers' cultural material collections was. Figures 5 through 8 show the number of multicultural titles examined in each media center collection. School A had a total of 814 multicultural titles of which 448 were African titles, 180 were Asian titles, 90 represented Mexico, Central and South America, 38 Middle Eastern titles, and 29 each represented Eastern Europe and the Russian Federation as shown in Figure 5. School B, shown in Figure 6, indicated an availability of 1022 cultural titles with a distribution of 624 African titles, 171 Asian titles, 140 Mexico, Central and South America titles, the Middle East and Russian Federation had 27 titles each, and 33 Eastern European titles. Figure 7 shows the distribution of cultural materials for School C. Of the 682 multicultural materials held by School C there were 262 African titles, 160 Asian titles, 126 Mexican, Central and South American titles, 71 Middle Eastern titles, 22 Russian Federation titles, and 41 Eastern Europe titles. The total number of 614 multicultural materials found in School D is shown in Figure 8. Of the 614 materials there were 227 African titles, 171 Asian titles, 118 Mexico, Central and South American titles, 55 Middle Eastern titles, 14 Russian Federation titles, and 29 Eastern European titles.

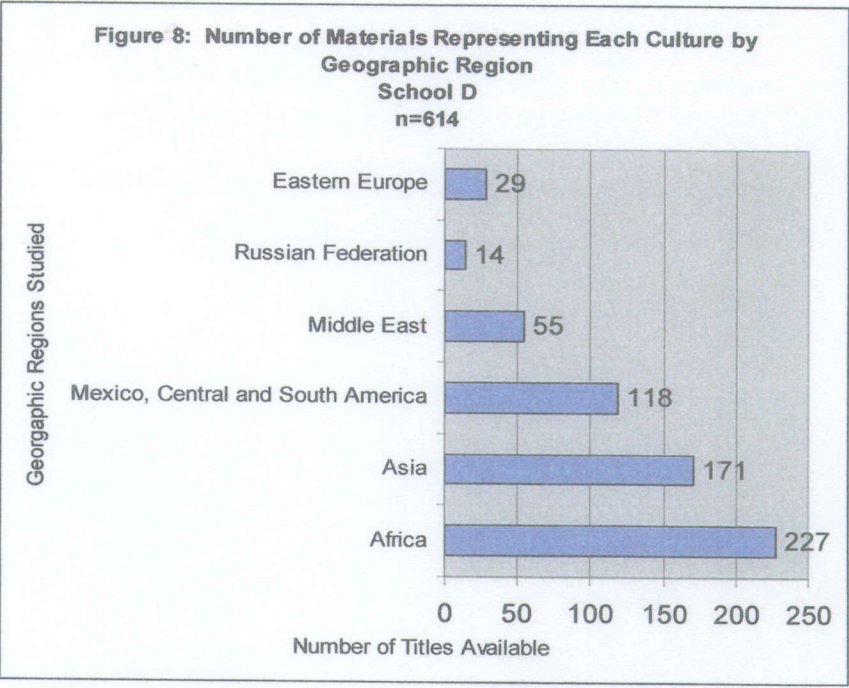
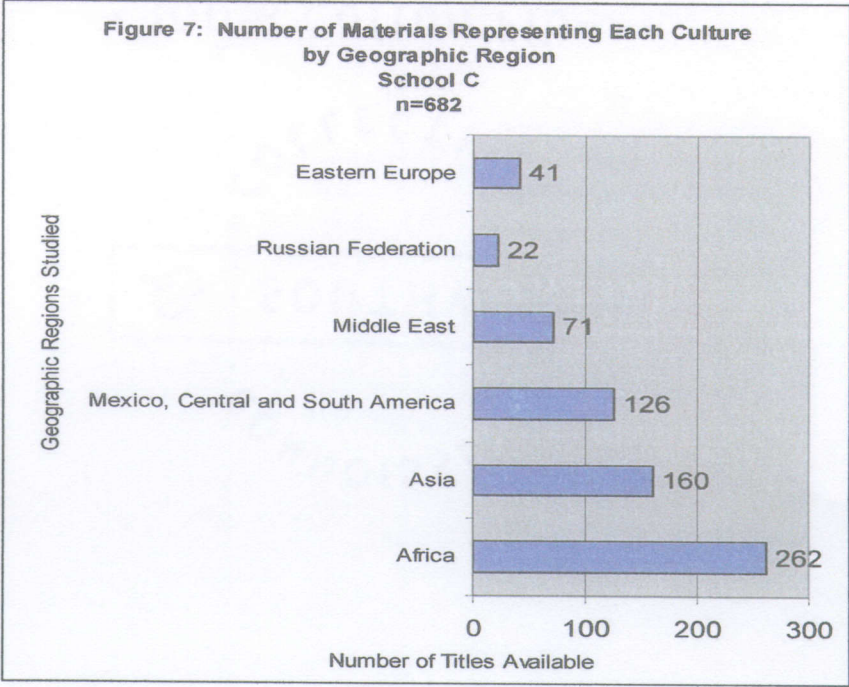
**Figure 5: Number of Materials Representing Each Culture by Geographic Region  
School A  
n=814**



**Figure 6: Number of Materials Representing Each Culture by Geographic Region  
School B  
n=1022**



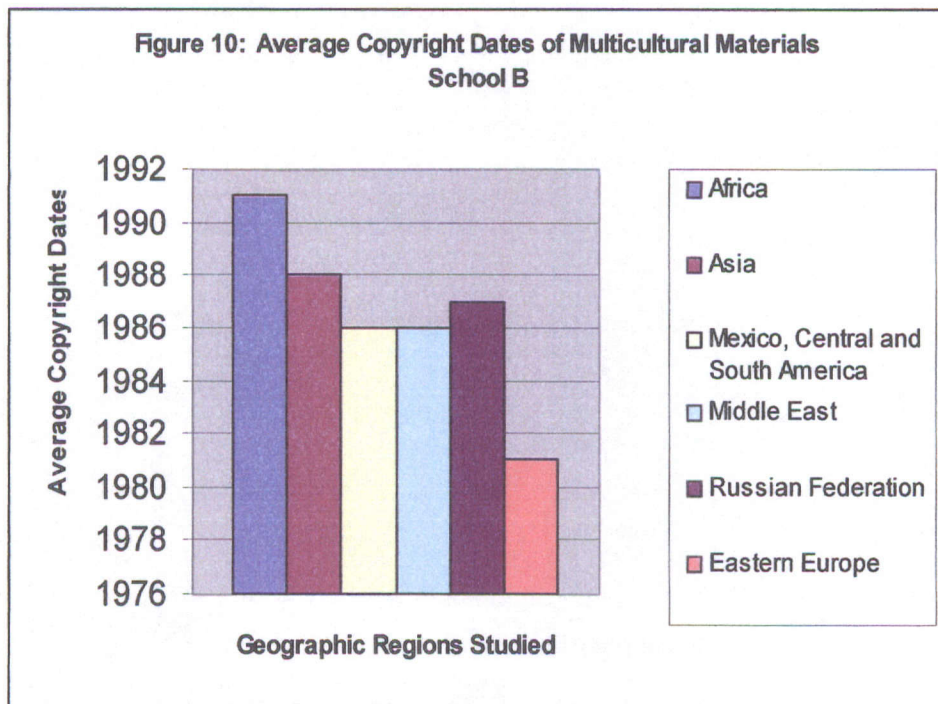
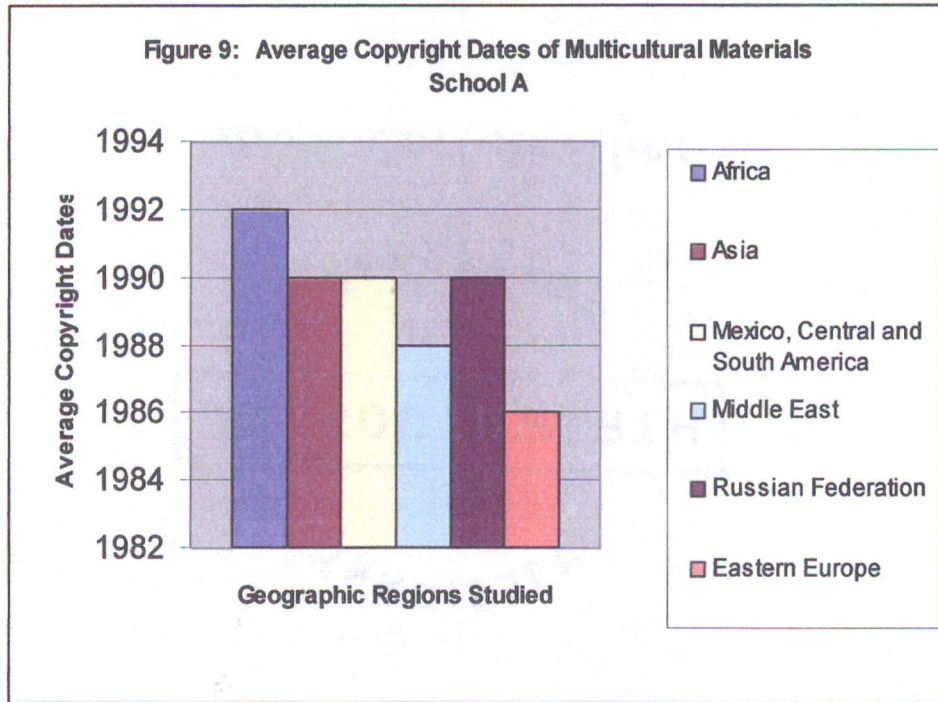




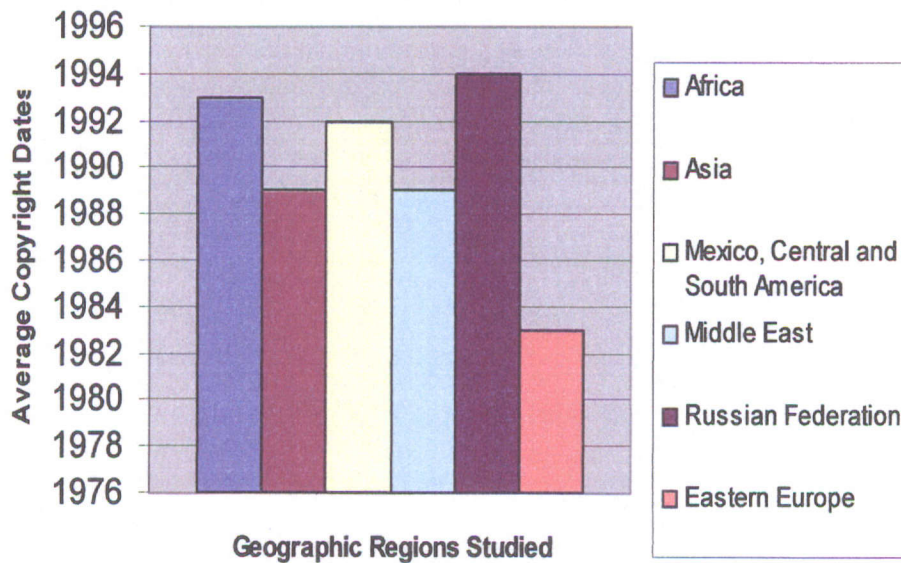
#### *Research Question 4*

The data obtained from the examination of the collections conducted at each media center provided information for determining the age of each collection. This information is displayed in Figures 9 through 12. Figure 9 shows the average copyright dates of the cultural collection for School A. The overall average copyright dates of School A's cultural collection was 1989, with an average copyright date for African materials being 1992; 1990 for Asian materials; 1990 for Mexican, Central and South American materials; 1988 for Middle Eastern materials; 1990 for Russian Federation materials; and 1986 for Eastern European materials. Figure 10 shows the average copyright dates of the cultural collection of School B. The overall average copyright date of School B's cultural collection was 1987, with average copyright date for African materials being 1991; 1988 for Asian materials; 1986 for Mexican, Central and South American materials; 1986 Middle Eastern materials; 1987 Russian Federation materials; and 1981 Eastern European materials. Figure 11 shows the average copyright dates of the cultural collection for School C. The overall average copyright date of School C's cultural collection was 1990, with average copyright date for African materials being 1993; 1989 for Asian materials; 1992 for Mexican, Central and South American materials; 1989 for Middle Eastern materials; 1994 for Russian Federation materials; and 1983 for Eastern European materials. Figure 12 shows the average copyright dates of the cultural collection for School D. The overall average copyright date of School D's cultural collection was 1992, with average copyright date for African materials being 1996; 1994 for Asian materials; 1995 for Mexican, Central and South American

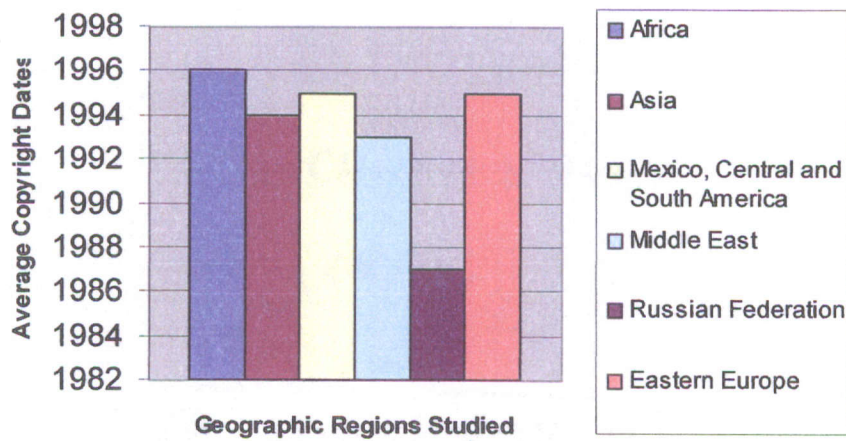
materials; 1993 for Middle Eastern materials; 1987 for Russian Federation materials; and 1987 for Eastern European materials.



**Figure 11: Average Copyright Dates of Multicultural Materials  
School C**



**Figure 12: Average Copyright Dates of Multicultural Materials  
School D**



## Summary

The cultural diversity and representation of the collections of all four media centers, as indicated in Figures 1 through 4, was generally the same. Similarly, as shown in Figures 5 through 8, the size of each collection with the counts and distribution of multicultural materials held within each geographic region, was generally within the same range with only two significant exceptions. These exceptions were evident in the substantially greater number of materials found in the African collections of Schools A and B.

## CHAPTER V

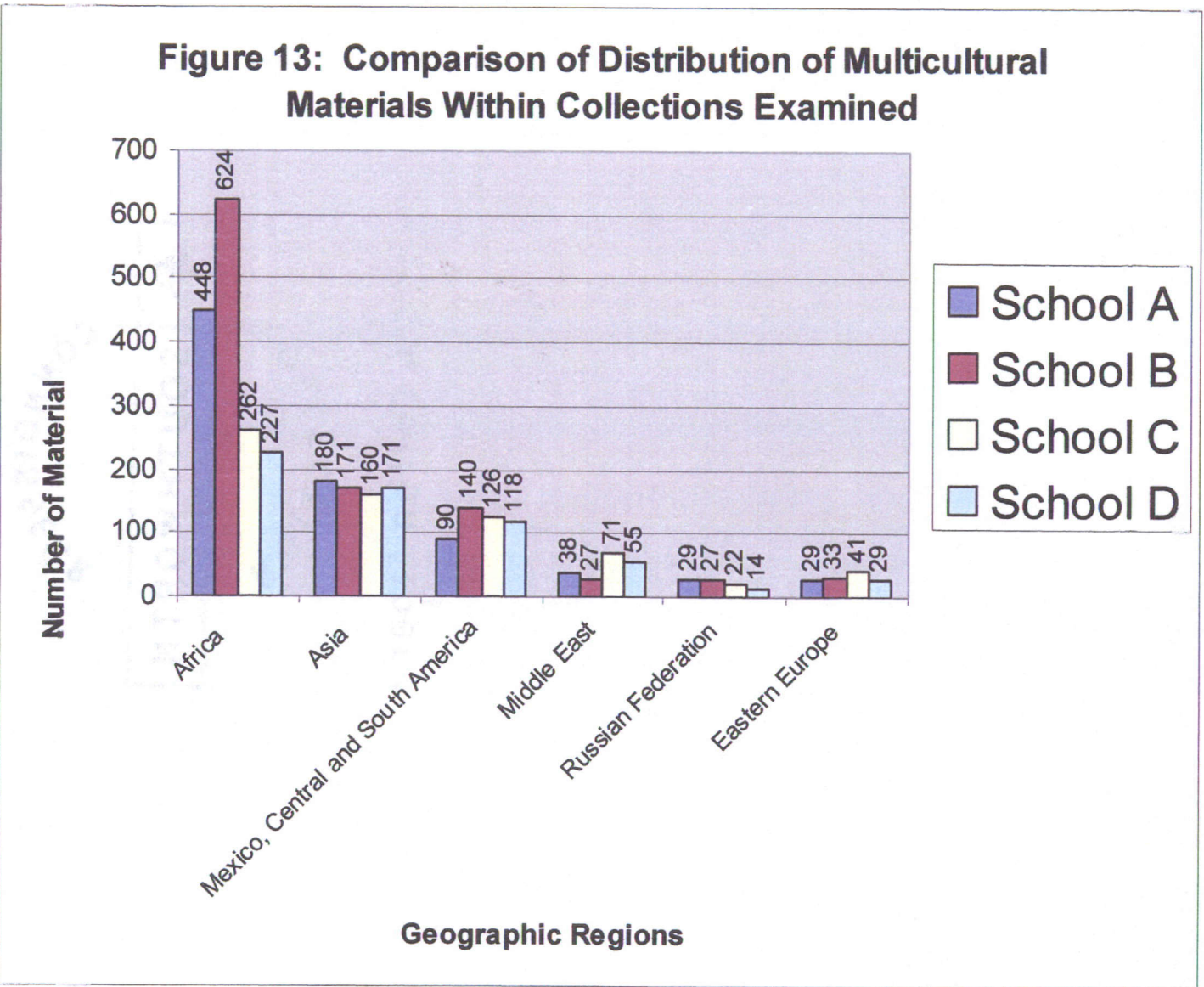
### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

Our country is more culturally diverse today than at any other time in its history, therefore there is a need for greater understanding among people and awareness of other cultures. A prime time to develop this understanding and awareness is during the elementary school years. School library media specialists can be foremost in providing materials that facilitate learning about all cultures. This study examined the multicultural collections of four elementary school media centers within the Pleasantville School District. The results of this study indicated that these school media collections did not provide an adequate amount of current materials representing cultures other than the predominate culture of the neighborhood to be of value in educating children about diverse cultures. The results also indicated that these media centers pursued collection development in accordance with the current trends of providing an abundance of materials related to the predominate neighborhood culture or ethnicity.

#### Interpretation of Results

An examination of these results as reported in Figure 13 reveals that each school media center collection did offer a similar diversity of materials spread across the

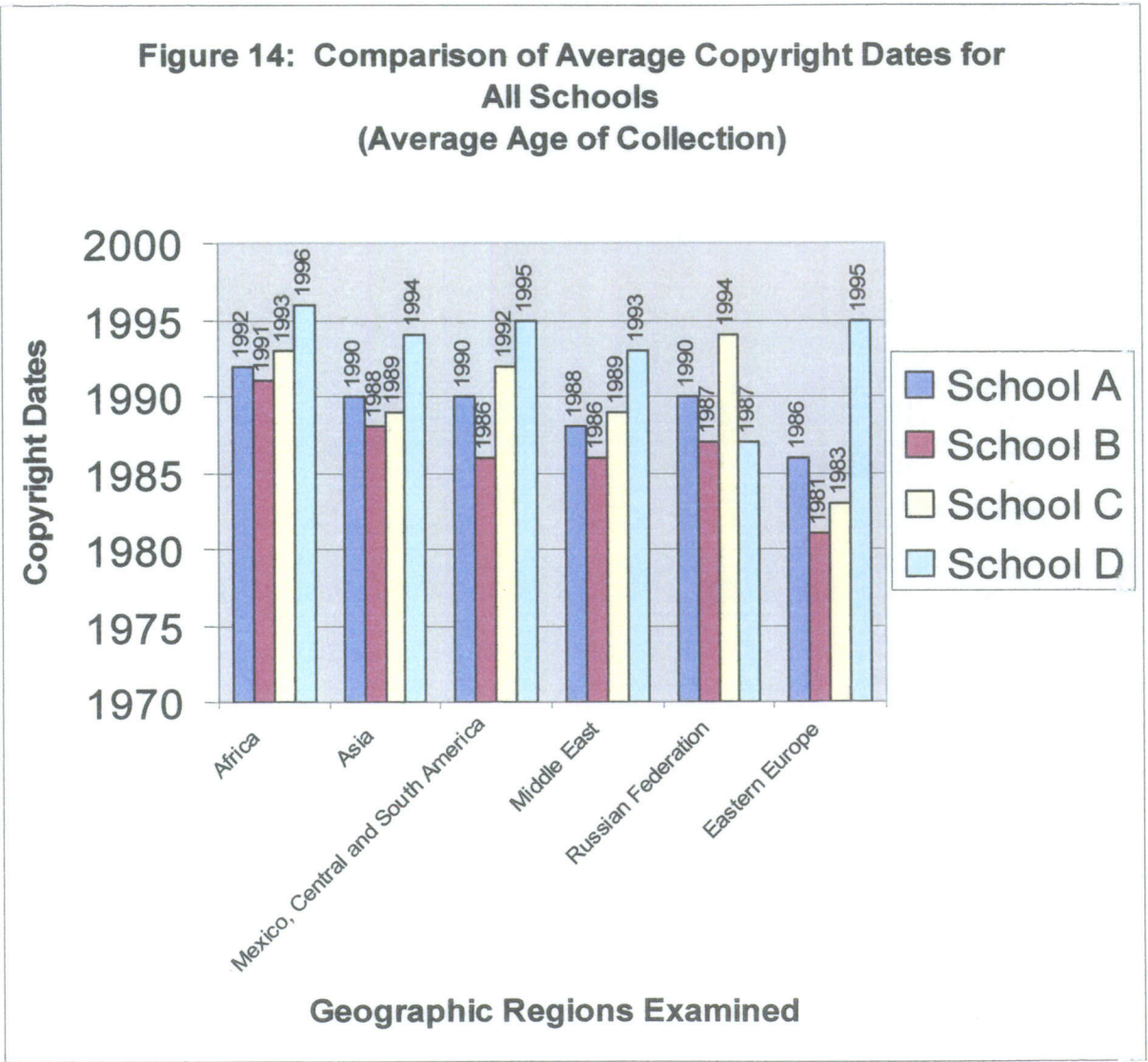


cultures found in Asia, Africa, Mexico, Central and South America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and The Russian Federation. Similarly, Figure 13 shows that the number of cultural materials held by each media center, within each geographic region, was generally within the same range with only two significant exceptions. However, as

indicated in Figure 13 there was a great disparity in the amount of materials provided for the cultures in each geographic region. All four collections held a significantly greater number of African titles than those of any other culture, this coincided with the existing populations of the 4 schools. The considerably greater number of African titles held by School A, 448, and School B, 624, may be due to a lack of weeding in those areas. Schools C and D held 262 and 227 African titles respectively. All other cultural materials held by each media center were within a similar range, with the number of titles held by each school as follows; Asian titles ranging from 160 to 180, Mexican, Central and Southern American titles ranging from 90 to 140, Middle Eastern titles ranging from 27 to 71, Russian Federation titles ranging from 14 to 29, Eastern European titles ranging from 29 to 41.

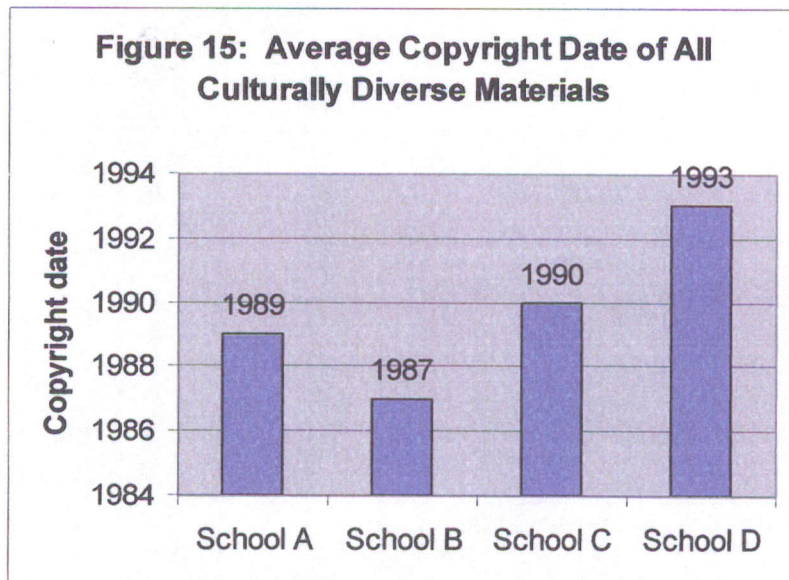
Of greater significance were the results indicated in Figure 14 concerning the average age of each collection. For the purpose of this study as previously stated, the optimum age of the multicultural materials in a collection was defined as 10 years. The average copyright dates of the collections of all four schools as indicated in Figure 14 was generally within a few years of each other with a few exceptions. Although no collection fell completely within the range considered optimal, School D held the most current collection. Its African, Eastern European, and Mexico, Central and South American titles were the most current with an average copyright date of 1995. Falling only slightly below the optimal age, School D's Asian and Middle Eastern titles had average copyright dates of 1994 and 1993, respectively. School D's Russian Federation titles fell somewhat below the optimum age with an average copyright date of 1987. The collection held by School C fell below the desired age with its Mexican, Central and





South American, African and Russian Federation collections being the most current. The average copyright dates were 1992, 1993 and 1994 respectively. The remainder of School C's collection fell somewhat below, with its Asian and Middle Eastern holdings having an average copyright date of 1989 each and its Eastern European holdings having an average copyright date of 1983. The most current multicultural collection held by School B was their African collection with an average copyright date of 1991. Falling far

below was their collection of Asian, Russian Federation, Middle Eastern and Mexican, Central and South American materials with average copyright dates of 1988, 1987, 1986 and 1986, respectively. The Eastern European materials found in School B had an average copyright date of 1981. The most current area of the multicultural collection held by School A was their African materials with an average copyright date of 1992. Falling below that was their Asian, Russian Federation, and Mexican, Central and South American holdings with an average copyright date of 1990. School A's Middle Eastern and Eastern European holdings had copyright dates of 1988 and 1986 respectively. Again, as with the disproportionate amount of African materials held by Schools A and B, a lack of weeding may also account for the significantly older multicultural collection held by Schools A and B (Figure 15).



#### Conclusion

Although these results indicated that each school media center does offer materials that cover the diversity of cultures represented in the geographic areas studied,

the amount of materials representing cultures other than the predominate community culture, African, were disproportionately low. Additionally, the results also indicated that, other than the collection held by School D, the age of the collections held by Schools A, B, and C were substantially older than recommended.

### Significance of Results

The results of this study were significant because they indicated the disparity of current information available to students concerning the diverse cultures of the global society within which we live. These results can be used by the respective school media specialists as a tool for collection development in providing a more balanced approach to acquiring culturally diverse materials for their own school library media centers. Additionally, these results indicated the necessity of developing a deselection policy and schedule, along with continually weeding in order to maintaining a current collection. This study may also serve to make librarians aware of the need to maintain a balance in all collection development.

### Recommendations for Future Study

A consideration for future study may be an examination of the availability of quality multicultural titles. Also of value may be a study of how the culturally diverse materials within each library media center are distributed across the Dewey classifications to determine the number of fiction and non-fiction multicultural holdings available. Another possible approach for a study of culturally diverse materials would be to limit the study to nonfiction curricular resource materials or materials used in the Social Studies curriculum. An additional focus for future study would be a study of the online public access catalog to determine poorly catalogued or mis-catalogued materials.

It would be interesting to replicate this study of culturally diverse materials in other school districts throughout the state or country to see if other collections offer a more proportionate number of materials across diverse cultures or tend to be focused towards the predominate neighborhood culture.

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## APPENDIX A

Appendix A  
Subject Heading List

<b>Countries within geographic region</b>	<b>O.C. Public Library</b>	<b>School A</b>	<b>School B</b>	<b>School C</b>	<b>School D</b>
<b>Africa</b>					
Algeria					
Angola					
Benin					
Botswana					
Cameroon					
Chad					
Congo					
Egypt					
Ethiopia					
Gabon					
Ghana					
Guinea					
Kenya					
Liberia					
Libya					
Mali					
Mauritania					
Morocco					
Mozambique					
Nigeria					
Sahara					
Senegal					
Sierra Leone					
Somalia					
South Africa					
Sudan					
Tanzania					
Togo					
Tunisia					
Uganda					
Zambia					
Zimbabwe					
<b>Russian Federation</b>					
Armenia					



Azerbaijan					
Estonia					
Georgia					
Kyrgyzstan					
Latvia					
Leningrad					
Lithuania					
Moscow					
Rep of Moldova					
Siberia					
Stalingrad					
Tajikistan					
<b>Asia</b>					
Bangladesh					
Bhutan					
Brunei					
Burma					
Cambodia					
China					
India					
Indonesia					
Japan					
Kazakhstan					
Laos					
Mongolia					
Nepal					
North Korea					
Philippines					
South Korea					
Southeast Asia					
Sri Lanka					
Sumatra					
Thailand					
Vietnam					
<b>Middle East</b>					
Afghanistan					
Bahrain					
Iran					
Iraq					
Isreal					

Jordan					
Kuwait					
Lebanon					
Oman					
Qatar					
Saudi Arabia					
Syria					
Turkey					
Turkmenistan					
United Arab Emirates					
Yemen					
<b>Eastern Europe</b>					
Albania					
Belarus					
Bosnia Herzegovinia					
Bulgaria					
Croatia					
Cyprus					
Czech Republic					
Estonia					
Greece					
Hungary					
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Macedonia					
Moldova					
Poland					
Romania					
Serbia & Montenegro					
Slovakia					
Slovenia					
Turkey					
Ukraine					
<b>South America</b>					
Argentina					
Bolivia					
Brazil					
Chile					
Columbia					
Ecuador					
Grench Guiana					

Guyana					
Honduras					
Managua					
Paraguay					
Peru					
Surinam					
Uruguay					
Venezuela					
<b>Mexico</b>					
<b>Central America</b>					
Belize					
Costa Rica					
Cuba					
El Salvador					
Guatemala					
Honduras					
Nicaragua					
Panama					

## APPENDIX B

**Appendix B**  
**Collection Analysis Spreadsheet**

<b>Collection Analysis</b>		
School C		
Asia		
<b>Call Number</b>	<b>Copyright Date</b>	<b>Title/Author</b>
305.8 Osb	1990	The peoples of the Arctic. Osborn, Kevin.