Library Services for Hispanic Young Adults

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Ethnic groups constitute the dynamic fabric of our multiculture in transition. Libraries must play a key synthesizing role by providing resources that mirror their communities and expand the appreciation and understanding of all (Manoogian 1983, p. 11).

SYLVA MANOOGIAN'S POWERFUL STATEMENT highlights the responsibility of community agencies and those who work in them to become "ethnically literate," which calls for a "thorough understanding of the function of ethnicity in our society, and the cultures, experiences and current situations of ethic groups in our nation (Cortés 1976, p. 3)." Ethnic literacy is a familiarity with the body of knowledge necessary to empathize and constructively work with the different ethnic groups in society and with their inherent ramifications (Cortés 1976). An ethnically literate agency serving Hispanics will not consider the Hispanic population as one ethnic group but will recognize that although they may be unified by a common linguistic bond, there are various ethnic groups, each with its own distinctive culture and roots.

The term *Hispanic* is currently used to describe a diverse population including Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Central and South Americans. Many feel comfortable with the term; however, a large group of usually young Mexican Americans prefers to be called Chicanos. Latinos, Latin Americans, Spanish Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Hispanos are terms also used to describe U.S. populations whose heritage stems from a Spanish-speaking country.

According to the Census Bureau, 85 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population lives in nine states: California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado. Hispanics represent 6 percent of the total population of the United States— approximately 15.2 million people (Beilke and Sciara 1986, p. 44). Due to a birth rate which is higher than the national average and the rate of immigration from Mexico and Puerto Rico, it is estimated that by the

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year 2000, Hispanics will be the largest ethnic minority group in the
United States (Cunningham 1982). Schreiner (1983, p. 14) reports that
the U.S. Hispanic population today is younger than blacks or whites
with a median age of twenty-three. Urbanization, acculturation, in-
creased division of labor, and social mobility are processes continually
taking place in the Hispanic population as well as with other ethnic
minorities in the United States (Penalosa and McDonagh 1971, p. 86).
The following is a brief profile of the background of a Hispanic young adult.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The Urban Setting

The Hispanic population is largely urban. Ninety-six percent of
Puerto Rican Americans and 80 percent of Mexican Americans live in
metropolitan areas. Seventy-nine percent of Puerto Rican American
families and 46 percent of Mexican American families live in central
cities (Dyer and Robertson-Kozan 1983, p. 27).

These Mexican American and Puerto Rican American youths can
be the sons/daughters of white collar professionals. One or both parents
are college graduates and are perhaps practicing attorneys, teachers,
lawyers, or middle-management employees in large corporations. They
are college bound and accept the mainstream society as their own.

Children from the blue collar class will have fathers and/or moth-
ers who are working in factories, commercial establishments, small
businesses, as waiters or waitresses in restaurants, or as nurses' aides,
teachers' aides, and the like. These parents generally have an income
placing them in a middle-to-low-income bracket. They have usually
attended at least eight years of school but do not use their literacy skills
in the job market. Their children in turn are usually not ambitious
about finishing school and feel comfortable following in their parents'
footsteps. They cling to their own people for security and feel uncom-
fortable in participating in social institutions which in their minds
represent a separate mainstream society.

A third category of U.S. Hispanics is the disadvantaged. This may
be the largest of the three groups. Nearly 39 percent of Hispanic children
currently live below the poverty level (*Youth Employment Today* 1986).
This socioeconomically disadvantaged population is usually found in
barrios (Spanish-speaking inner-city neighborhoods) with few or no
amenities. The poverty rate of one-in-four for Hispanics in contrast to
one-in-ten for non-Hispanic whites is reported by Schreiner (1983, p.
1A). Many are manual workers earning the minimum wage. Educa-
tional opportunities have been so restricted that this ethnic group is at
least three or four years behind the educational attainment of the gen-
eral society. Their living conditions are minimal, and large families live
in one or two room homes with nothing but the meager necessities for
food and sleep. The youth in these families tend to drop out of high

school at a rate of at least 50 percent and appear to have little or no interest in self-improvement. They feel suppressed and rejected. Hunger, illness, and disillusionment permeate their lives, and they find themselves caught in a self-fulfilling prophecy of defeat.

A fourth group consists of the recent immigrants from Central and South America. This is the group that has made headlines with stories of political persecution in the countries from which they have fled. For the most part, they are refugees with heart-rendering need for protection, help, and support. Their desperate needs include all of our social services, from hospitals to schools, to libraries, to public defenders, to church-supported programs, to mental health services. Many of the families speak no English and a considerable number are barely literate in Spanish. The young adults in this sector are at a loss as to how to initiate new lives for themselves and their families. Without a knowledge of English, support comes in very limited channels.

Rural Areas

In rural areas we find, as an identifiable group, a migrant population composed mainly of Mexican and Puerto Rican families who travel from harvest to harvest and live in labor camps. Living conditions have been reported as humiliating and unfit in most cases. Young adults attend school when they are not helping their parents with the harvest or taking care of the younger children. Continuity of education is a serious problem in this transient lifestyle. These youth feel alienated from the Anglo community and do not participate in any of the established community's activities. Illiteracy, in both English and Spanish, is very prevalent.

A contrasting culture is found in small farming or mining communities composed of Mexican-American people, usually found in the Southwest. These tightly-knit communities have little interest in or commitment to education and tend to remain intact from outside influences. Children and youth feel comfortable with their lot, perhaps because they don't know any other. Their lack of exposure to professional or career alternatives which are made possible through higher education results in apathy or resistance to formal education.

The Common Denominator

Collectively, Hispanics have come to receive more than their fair share of criticism, social disapproval, and stereotyping. Casavantes describes the qualities which have been unfairly attributed to Mexican-Americans by social scientists. Briefly, they are:

1. involvement within the context of the extended family to the exclusion of other social activity;
2. nonparticipation in voluntary associations;
3. preference for the old and familiar;
4. marked anti-intellectualism;

5. "machismo" in the males;
6. affinity for the use of physical force;
7. inability to postpone gratification and a tendency to live on a day-to-day basis; and
8. extreme fatalism in their view of the world (Casavantes 1971, pp. 46-51).

Casavantes points out that these qualities are "basically the qualities or attributes of people from the culture of poverty, not the culture of Mexico. These same qualities have been used to describe blacks, American Indians, and Puerto Ricans." He points out that "the danger lies in assigning these attributes as the unique possession of one ethnic group—as has been done with the Mexican American—instead of viewing them in their proper light, as the products of the 'culture of poverty (Casavantes 1971, pp. 47, 49).'"

Profile Summary
        In summary, what Hispanics have in common is that they descend from a mixture of Spaniards and Indians in the case of Mexican Americans and Latin Americans and from a mixture of Indians and blacks in the case of some of the Caribbean populations. All fall into the category of mestizos. The majority of them are Catholic and speak Spanish with varying degrees of fluency. Customs brought from the Hispanic culture are maintained and adhered to depending on the number of generations residing in this country as well as on the degree to which the family has become acculturated to the Anglo community.
        The majority of them live in the Southwest, the largest group is young, and the average educational level falls far below that of their Anglo peers. Only 40.1 percent of the Hispanic population over the age of twenty-five have completed high school compared to 69 percent of the total population with high school diplomas. (Dyer and Robertson-Kozan, p. 27). More than one-third of this population earns very little and can be said to live in the culture of poverty. The socioeconomic condition of this group has created an image which engenders discrimination in the job market. Stereotyping the group as unambitious and lazy has generated prejudicial, detrimental institutional practices which have had serious historical consequences for this population. Evidence of this prejudice has been recorded in affirmative action reports for the past two decades.
        Casavantes points out that "while the Mexican American cannot erase prejudice overnight, a great deal can be done to diminish the effect and impact of prejudice by helping the Mexican American become well-educated and achieve adequate employment (Casavantes 1971, p. 50)." The same could hold true for other Hispanic groups in this country. It is with this in mind that we turn to the issue of how libraries can assume an important role in helping a sector of society set and attain higher goals, and to eradicate the antiquated concept of American

assimilation that portrays a country in which ethnicity and race are not important.

LIBRARY NEEDS

The purpose of this section is to identify the library needs of Hispanic young adults who represent a significant segment of the population described earlier. Personal needs resulting from the socio-cultural experience of being a Hispanic young adult will be defined. A description of some of the identified needs of the Hispanic young adult and a discussion of the needs-assessment process will be followed by a list of successful attempts at reaching this group in library projects throughout the United States. The delivery/access of library services and materials to Hispanic young adults will be discussed, and selection criteria and the issues involved in adequately serving Hispanic young adults will be considered in detail. The focus will be on the public library, but some of the issues will also apply to school libraries.

Since urban Hispanics tend to live in barrios, the libraries serving those sites will be the most likely to attract this population. Research shows that library services for Hispanic young adults are insignificant. John Cunningham notes that: "Although services to young people have had a higher priority among libraries than have services to the non-English-speaking public, neither has received the attention it deserves. Focusing on such exotica as library services to non-English-speaking youth reveals even larger service gaps (Cunningham 1983, p. 21)." Attempts at improved services come and go, sometimes along with short-term federal funding. Some attempts have been successful and some have not.

The Report of the Task Force on Library and Information Services to Cultural Minorities states that "the library and information service needs of cultural minorities differ from those of the majority population and particularly from those of the middle- and upper-class library user. Furthermore, these needs differ within the cultural minority groups themselves (National Commission on Libraries and Information Science 1983, p. 3)." As the Task Force elaborates, age groups within a cultural minority will vary greatly in their information and library needs (National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, p. 3).

Library literature contains numerous books and articles on the subject of library services for Hispanics. Several excellent theoretical discussions are found in the compilations of papers, *Library Services to Mexican Americans* (Urzúa et al. 1978), *Biblio-política* (García-Ayvens and Chabrán 1984), and in Sophía Nuñez's paper in the *Festshcrift* for Arnulfo D. Trejo (Nuñez 1984, pp. 116-23). Gilda Baeza and Liz Rodríguez Miller discuss library services to Hispanic children in their essays in Allen's book *Library Services for Hispanic Children* (Baeza 1987). Durán's essay "Library Service to Latinos" in his *Latino Materials*

(1979, pp. 19-27) book gives a historical perspective. His book also contains Tarín and Cuesta's (1978) "Guidelines for Library Service to Spanish-speaking Americans," developed with the contributions and assistance of several Hispanic librarians and published also in *Library Journal*. Other important journal articles on the subject are Dyer and Robertson-Kozan's (1983) "Hispanics in the U.S., Implications for Library Service," and Cunningham's (1982) "Library Services for the Spanish Speaking."

Only Haro (1981), in *Developing Library and Information Services for Americans of Hispanic Origin* and Beilke and Sciara (1986), in *Selecting Materials for and about Hispanic and East Asian Children and Young People* have addressed specifically the library needs of the Hispanic young adult. For its currency, thoroughness, and relevance to the issue of library services for Hispanic young adults, Beilke and Sciara's book is extremely valuable.

Given the earlier profile, assumptions can be made about the need for educational support and materials which should be available to Hispanic young adults. Only an individual community analysis will reveal whether the current users as well as the prospective clients will need materials in English, Spanish, or both. The educational levels of the users as well as their language proficiency will dictate the readability and the level of sophistication of the materials which should be available. The following discussion examines the information needs identified by Hispanic young adults around the country.

Tutoring. Those young adults still enrolled in school are in critical need of individual assistance in information-seeking skills and the use of library resources. They need help in preparing and writing term papers and book reports. Schools with large enrollments don't allow time for individual support. Tutoring in math is also in considerable demand. Hispanic young adults occasionally need tutoring in Spanish, their first language, as the learning process is enhanced when explanations are given in the dominant language.

English As A Second Language Classes (ESL). For those young adults still in school, classes offered in the library reinforce the skills being developed in schools. For the dropout, ESL classes become attractive in the less threatening atmosphere of the library. Learning English is essential for success in this country and should be a primary service for young adults.

Literacy Programs. Recent arrivals to the United States who need to work feel they are too old to attend the public school even when classes are offered after work. A number of these young adults are functionally illiterate. Volunteer groups such as Laubach have had very successful

programs in libraries, particularly when the library offers sets of text-books for each participant in the literacy class. Once again, the library seems to be more appropriate for classes than a school setting.

Information and Referral. One of the most successful ways that libraries can attract Hispanic young adults is to make them aware that a library can fulfill their needs for immediate information to solve personal problems that arise in their daily lives. Some of the areas identified are: information related to job opportunities and career options—e.g., how to fill out job applications, obtain a social security number, and prepare for a driver's license exam. In addition, they need information related to sexuality, pregnancy and birth control, general health, free clinical and medical services, venereal disease, AIDS, mental health, substance abuse, and crisis intervention. Other areas are citizenship application and preparation, immigration and amnesty centers, counseling, and consumer buying advice.

This body of information is usually available in pamphlets that can be placed in easily accessible locations. Every attempt should be made to provide this information in Spanish and English. The public service staff should be sufficiently versed in this information to assist and distribute the basic information to patrons when they are unable to locate it themselves.

An appropriate role for the library, beyond providing problem-related information, is to refer the young adult patron to the appropriate agencies which are prepared to offer in-depth assistance. A Spanish/English bulletin board in the young adult area can publicize local social services. Carol Sasaki (speech in Tucson, 16 Jan., 1988) of H.O.M.E. (Helping Ourselves Means Education) suggests that libraries serving disadvantaged teenagers should offer locally-produced video-taped discussions by those who have risen out of poverty and which outline the steps they took and the resources used. These videotapes offer encouragement as well as information.

Discovering Their Heritage. Some Hispanic young adults are attempting to find their roots and identify themselves with the Hispanic experience in this country. This group needs information about their heritage and the history and cultural contributions of their forebears. They want to be recognized as Americans with a rich Hispanic background, and as Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, or Cubans, a contributing group to the multiethnic tapestry of this country. They reject the melting pot model. Nava describes this group of young adults, saying:

> Young Mexican Americans today are changing the group's self-image. They reject the accommodation achieved by their parents. They are asserting their differences as a badge of honor....The *Chicano* generation is not unanimous in wanting to assimilate. The more drastic reformers argue for cultural pluralism or outright separatism. Many want to be both American and Mexican cultur-ally and demand respect for their bicultural identity. Others want to recreate *Aztlán* (the northwest provinces of the Aztec empire). Although not territorial

(like Mormon control of Utah, for example), Aztlán would include all those of Mexican heritage who would identify as such and feel a bond of neighborhood (Nava 1971, p. xxiii).

If this group of young adults is college bound, university libraries can offer a wealth of information, particularly in those institutions where multiethnic libraries and centers have been established. The noncollege bound user will seek this information in the public library. Again, canvassing the needs of the community will uncover whether there is a population of Hispanic young adults in search of political information. Libraries will need to be sensitive to these young adults and provide materials which sometimes may be controversial. Chicano militant uprisings and political protest have made headlines and disturbed some sectors. In fairness to young adults as inquirers, they should be afforded the opportunity to be informed of Hispanics'struggle for recognition and social justice in this country. The library can provide background resources in the form of books and media.

Introducing the U.S. Culture. Newly-arrived immigrants usually do not visit the library. Those who come from underdeveloped countries think of libraries as places for the elite and most likely have never been inside one. When this is the case, the library needs to take the initiative in recruiting this population. Person-to-person contact might be necessary in order to bring people in. They need to become aware that in the library they can find help in coping with everyday problems, information regarding their newly adopted culture, facilitating their incorporation into the new community, and moments of meaningful recreation without charge.

Recreation. Recreational reading may not be a familiar pastime to many Hispanic young adults, but a library with a collection which reflects their tastes and lifestyle will attract some readers. In the absence of other local recreational opportunities, the library can offer entertainment and a place to socialize and participate in activities which develop self-esteem.

It is important to understand some of the institutional barriers which keep Hispanic young adults away from the library. The image of the library is one such barrier. Many urban disadvantaged people have a distrust of any institution and associate the library with the government. In particular, those Hispanics who are in the country illegally will avoid any building which has an "official" appearance. Moreover, this population may not realize that libraries in the United States have open stacks; that they loan books and other materials with little trouble or cost to the user; offer free services such as classes, lectures, workshops, and presentations; and even have rooms for use by special groups including young adults. Libraries are perceived as book places, and nonreaders will avoid them. Here again we have a situation calling for decisive action.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

If a library is to serve its community, it should formally and informally assess its delivery service to its users. In addition, it should assess the reasons why nonusers are not being served. It should determine the cultural and recreational needs as well as the information needs of the community.

In surveying Hispanic young adults, bilingual staff from the community should be used when possible. They should be involved from the beginning in the formulation of questionnaires and survey strategies. Young adults should also be actively involved. Group leaders should be identified and recruited.

In order to develop and maintain rapport with the young adults of the community, an advisory board should be established which includes members from the community—i.e., both young adults and those who work with them. In some libraries, it will be appropriate to establish a youth advisory board made up entirely of young adults (Varlech 1983, pp. 31-47).

Community agencies which have contacts with Hispanic young adults also should be consulted on a regular basis. Efforts should be made to contact teachers, priests, counselors, juvenile probation officers, recreation leaders, and Hispanic student associations in high schools, community colleges, and universities. Gaps in community services should be filled, and duplication of services should be avoided.

The curriculum of the surrounding schools will determine in large part the collection of materials which the students will need for academic support. Information regarding the music that is popular among the local Hispanic young adult population will provide guidelines for the purchase of records and tapes, for circulation, and for use in programming.

Using census information and surveys, community demographic statistics should be compiled and analyzed. Schools can provide enrollment figures and dropout rates. The state's employment agency can contribute information for the local employment picture. However, as a 1984 report on the information needs of Californians points out, in determining everyday information needs, there should be "less emphasis on demography and more emphasis on sense-making patterns in organizing information services [and] ongoing information needs assessment by information providers (Dervin et al. 1984)." Demographics change quickly in a barrio community, and government sources of statistics are not always accurate for this population.

LIBRARY PERSONNEL

In the ideal Hispanic community library, the librarians as well as other library staff will be bicultural and bilingual. They will know the community through experience and will be able to determine needs in a direct manner through personal interviews. A non-Spanish-speaking

librarian will be handicapped and first must develop a rapport and a trust within the community before being able to serve the community.

Nelly Fernández (1978, p. 60), as chairwoman of the Chicano Task-force of ALA asks: "How can anybody determine the needs of a people if they are neither able to communicate with them nor understand their background or cultural heritage?" She believes that a successful librarian must be integrated into the community, "being in constant touch with the people, not only in the formal situation of the library itself but also by sharing their concerns, their hopes and aspirations, by understanding their problems, and by familiarization with their attitude towards life (Fernández 1978, pp. 60-61)."

Robert Haro (1981, p. 95) recounts his experiences with the young adults in East Los Angeles: "Many of these young Chicanos prefer to use English when they read, but unless there are young Chicano or Mexican American staff members in the library, and in visible positions, they tend to shy away from it." He goes on to say that "role models are desperately needed to attract these young people to libraries." He tells of volunteering for three weeks in a small public library:

> I began by taking some of the teenagers around the corner to the sand lot and playing baseball, and by going with some of them to the local public swimming pool after work. I solicited the assistance of a local Mexican American boxer and got several of them interested in books on Mexican and Mexican American boxers and baseball players. Once the initial barriers were removed and their cult of Machismo was not violated, they took great interest in my work at the library and what it might mean for them. With the young Chicanas there were other possibilities, which began with flirtation and overtures of friendship. Speaking almost entirely in Caló or Spanish, I began to discuss women's fashions, and to talk about some of the Chicana poets whom I knew. I invited a young Chicana writer to provide a presentation for the young Mexican Americans and Chicanos in the area. A noticeable thaw in the coolness toward the library had occurred when I left the area a few weeks later (Haro 1981, pp. 95-96).

This demonstrates the amount of involvement it may take in order to attract these young adults to the library. Ross Sotelo, a young Hispanic librarian at the predominantly Hispanic Tucson High School, confirms Haro's observation with his own—that students who had previously stayed away from the library began to come once he began working there. Students have told him that he doesn't seem like a librarian, and through his rapport with them he has been able to arrange for films, a storytelling festival, and other activities of interest to this group (Ross Sotelo to Allen, personal communication).

Unfortunately, the supply of bicultural, bilingual librarians is very small in relation to the population which needs them. Whereas the Hispanic population is around 10 percent of the total U.S. population (Dyer and Robertson-Kozan 1983, p. 27), the percentage of Hispanic librarians in academic and public libraries in 1981 was 1.8 percent (National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, p. 13). This is the case for many reasons including the expense of graduate

education, the fact that librarianship is not a traditional occupation for Hispanics, and the institutional barriers to higher education for minorities.

Universities and library schools must respond to the need for more Hispanic librarians, with special programs such as that of the GLISA (Graduate Library Institute for Spanish-Speaking Americans) at the University of Arizona (*Graduate Library Institute for Spanish-Speaking Americans* 1979). The profession as a whole must support this cause, through support of Reforma proposals and other ALA efforts.

Given this lack of bicultural, bilingual librarians, good service to Hispanic young adults is still possible. Haro gives an example of a non-Hispanic librarian who has been accepted by her patrons, who have said: "'I like Miss M. She may not be Chicana, but she likes us and tries to speak Caló with us (Haro 1981, p. 96)'" Daniel Dávila (1976, p. 6) suggests, "look for a staff that is sensitive, understanding and flexible...staff who would try to understand not only with the mind but also with the heart."

Librarians who serve Hispanics must generally go beyond their library school training in becoming ethnically literate. They must have administrative support and encouragement for inservice training, networking, attendance at conferences, workshops and Spanish language classes, and for all community relations projects. In particular, librarians and other staff in a Hispanic community need to learn outreach techniques in order to best serve the community.

Bilingual/bicultural support staff should be actively recruited whenever possible, especially for positions involving contact with the public. Young adults will relate best to library employees who are also young. Some libraries may need to review the hiring process which may unintentionally discriminate against those whose first language is Spanish.

One guideline in Tarín and Cuesta's "Guidelines for Library Service to Spanish-speaking Americans" states: "Paraprofessional, technical, and other supportive staff with additional skills beyond those basic to the position, such as language, community relations, knowledge of culture and literature, etc., should be acknowledged, compensated with additional pay, and provided with career ladder opportunities (Durán, p. 34)." Furthermore, libraries should consider making it possible for bilingual support staff to pursue the MLS, through paid leaves of absence or tuition compensation.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The community needs assessment is the first step in publicizing the library and building a rapport with the community, but attracting a group which has traditionally been nonusers will require additional effort.

The library should maintain an ongoing publicity campaign, which could include press releases in English and Spanish in all local

press and broadcast media, posters, bookmarks and flyers in all possible locations, especially in teenage hangouts and in the local schools.

The staff should participate in activities of local churches and other neighborhood organizations, speaking formally and informally about library materials and services. Librarians can visit classrooms in local schools to give book talks or put on interesting programs which are designed to introduce the library and the librarian.

In some communities, it will be appropriate and necessary to knock on doors to inform people about the library and its services. Families can best be reached in this way.

If the library staff is not of the community, it is worth considering the use of bilingual community aides as liaisons who would serve as representatives of the library, to communicate what the library is and can do, as well as bringing community feedback to the library. Under a federally subsidized project, the Los Angeles Public Library hired twenty such community aides (Haro 1971, pp. 256-70).

LIBRARY SERVICES TO HISPANIC YOUNG ADULTS

Even if the staff is sincere in its efforts to determine and fill the needs of Hispanic young adults and has publicized the library, even if the atmosphere is informal and welcoming and the materials and programming are relevant, it may be necessary to take the library out of the library building in order to serve the Hispanic teenagers in some communities.

Outreach

Outreach may involve a great deal of cooperation with other agencies to attract young adults. The library can cosponsor cultural events that take place elsewhere. Some libraries have established young adult paperback collections in community centers in unattended racks (Barass, Reitzel and Associates 1972, pp. 243-45). Other libraries have used community volunteers or paid staff to operate satellite libraries in housing developments, churches, and in storefronts (Barass, Reitzel and Associates 1972, pp. 227-29). Albuquerque's storefront approach in the early 1970s was very successful (Haro 1971, pp. 264-65).

Also very successful in reaching Hispanic young adults are bookmobiles, "barriomobiles," "mediamobiles"—anything on wheels, preferably painted with murals, offering spontaneous multimedia programs as well as appropriate materials in Spanish and English. Fresno County Public Library's Biblioteca Ambulante has brought the library to farm labor camps, migrant farm workers' communities, and small isolated areas in four California counties (Barass, Reitzel and Associates 1972, pp. 413-16). Imagination and flexibility will ensure success in taking the library to the young adults. In European inner cities (known there as the "fourth world") the concept of the "street library" has taken hold (Lang 1982, pp. 5-15).

Outreach to young adults can include the organization of activities in the community which can benefit the library as well as the participants. Young adults can play an important role in local cultural documentation, taping oral histories and Spanish storytellers, videotaping community cultural events, collecting and taking photographs for a photographic archive of local history. Participants in these projects can be recruited through other community agencies if necessary.

In the Library

In a Hispanic community library, it is important to create a friendly, casual environment for young adults. The decor should reflect the local culture, and special displays should represent the talent within the community such as local artwork and crafts. Haro suggests that: "An exterior which reflects the architectural norm and style for a particular geographical region, with minor concessions to cultural interests, and an interior design which is tuned to the culture and community's sense of aesthetics and ethos may well make the difference between the success or failure of a library to attract the Hispanic community (Haro 1981, p. 136)." The Hispanic young adult, like his or her Anglo counterpart, will respond best to paperback and magazine racks; lounging areas; colorful, contemporary, popular-culture decor; and access to media.

Ideally, there will be an information and referral center within or adjacent to the young adult area, and a separate room will be available for organized group activities, classes, homework-assistance programs, etc., and young adults will be aware that they also have access to this space for their own uses.

Typewriters and microcomputers should be available to young adults who ordinarily do not have access to them. As computer literacy becomes increasingly essential, economically disadvantaged Hispanics need to have more access to this equipment. Software in Spanish and English should be selected with recreation in mind.

Disadvantaged Hispanic young adults would appreciate access to video equipment in the library for individual or small-group use because they may not have any other access to VCRs or movies. Ideally, a library would have rooms equipped with ½-inch and ¾-inch video players, and young adult patrons would be able to view either library-owned or rented videotapes in the library after reserving the equipment.

The success of organized library programs for this age group will depend on the librarian's knowledge of the local needs and preferences. A committee of young adults, carefully chosen, can be valuable in designing programs. If the objective is to attract teenagers to the library, book and reading-related programs may not be appropriate although this cannot automatically be assumed. In the barrio community the library must be viewed, by the residents and the library staff alike, as a preserver and disseminator of culture and information in a variety of formats.

In discussing ways that the library can reach young adult nonusers, Jane Manthorne's words still apply to the Hispanic library today: "So we restate our objectives: to change the image of the library from an establishment place, a bastion of middle class mannerliness, to a living, changing idea place, a people place. We change our focus on reading to an emphasis on ideas, thinking and communication. We let down rules a little and build up individuality and self-esteem (Manthorne 1971, p. 418)."

One-shot topical programs on subjects of interest—e.g., drugs, AIDS, skateboarding, cars, hairstyling and makeup—will provide a good beginning for young adult programming. If well-publicized and well-planned, they will attract an audience at a later time who may be interested in participatory activities such as workshops and classes. It is useful to seek out trusted and respected panelists and speakers from the community.

The library can also offer performances of local musicians, readings by local writers, and storytelling, which in many Hispanic communities is popular among all ages. Free feature films at the library will attract a large audience if they are selected with the community in mind.

Once a regular group has been attracted to library programs, more options are open in programming. Libraries in Hispanic and other ethnic communities have been successful in establishing theater groups such as the New York Youth Theater Alliance which evolved from a theater workshop in the New York Public Library and went on to give performances in the branches (Chelton 1975, p. 45). Often in large Hispanic communities there will be a bilingual or Chicano theater group which may work with interested young adults in the library.

Other libraries have involved young adults in the publication of magazines and newspapers. For example, the Lincoln Heights Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library published a creative writing magazine, *The Inner Eye*. "The magazine provided an outlet for pent-up emotions among Chicanos of the area. The first issues contained poetry and prose that dealt with such topics as war, peace, love, school, and prejudice. There was difficulty in getting participants until the young adults realized that they really could say anything on any subject within the bounds of decency (Hammond 1979, pp. 80-81)." With word processors, the opportunity for publication should be available to any young adult group with creative inclinations or something to communicate.

Video workshops have been successful in several libraries. A group of young adults at the Valencia Branch of the Tucson Public Library obtained a National Endowment of the Humanities Youth Grant to produce a series of videotapes on local Hispanic culture. Four tapes were produced: "Quinceañeras," an exploration of the traditional religious and social celebration of the fifteenth birthday of a Hispanic young woman; "Low Riders," which examines technical and philosophical aspects of this popular manifestation of Chicano youth culture;

"Imágenes de la Juventud," a discussion of Mexican and Chicano art; and "Idiomas de la Juventud," an analysis of barrio slang. Discussion guides were prepared in conjunction with the videos which have become popular circulating items in the Tucson library system (Amanda Castillo and Geraldine Stephens to Allen, personal communication).

In Bakersfield, California, fifty seventh-graders participated in the "Video Club," a summer program which met in small groups and developed video projects. Many cable television companies provide public access stations and equipment, and the library may be able to provide the connection between the community young adults and thereby provide a low-cost means for producing their own television programs.

Workshops may be tailored to local needs. Job hunting workshops have been successful among this population in several libraries, as have storytelling workshops and craft classes (Hammond 1979, p. 82).

MATERIALS

In selecting materials for Hispanic young adults, it is especially necessary to know the local community. How extensively to collect materials in Spanish will be determined by the community; even if Spanish is the dominant language, young adults who have been educated in U.S. schools may prefer to read in English and at the same time have access to media materials in Spanish. The library should seek out anything which is published locally and addresses this population, including newsletters, newspapers, and "underground" publications.

Spanish Materials for Young Adults

A non-Spanish-speaking librarian will need some advice in selecting materials in Spanish. Several publishers and distributors of Spanish-language materials offer well-annotated catalogs, and professional journals for librarians and teachers, such as *Booklist, Journal of Reading, The Reading Teacher, Top of the News, Library Journal,* and *Wilson Library Bulletin* now review Spanish books. Special review publications for Spanish materials appear and disappear: *Lector, The Review Journal for Spanish Language and Bilingual Materials,* published in English by the Hispanic Information Exchange (Hispanex) is now an irregular publication. *Lectura y Vida,* published in Spanish by the International Reading Association, has reviews of young adult materials. Back issues of *Proyecto y Leer,* no longer being published, give excellent reviews.

A problem in the selection of Spanish materials is that because of the lack of public libraries serving young people in the Spanish-speaking world, most materials being published for children and young adults are curriculum-supporting and didactic. Recently the demand for recreational reading materials has increased the supply, but the distinction is not usually made by the publisher between textbook and

nontextbook (Johnson 1987, p. 41). Spanish language books are often not available in library bindings and do not compare favorably in format with English-language books.

Successful selection in communities of recent immigrants will depend on some knowledge of the reading preferences in their country of origin. Libraries do not usually collect comic books, but in many Spanish-speaking countries the comic format is extremely popular among all age groups. The *fotonovela* does not have an English-language counterpart but is as popular for light reading in Latin America as romance novels are in the United States. *Fotonovelas*, like romance novels, are not as risqué as their covers may suggest. Most of them imitate soap operas with photographs of characters in dramatic situations and dialogue in balloons as it is in comics. Some are in series and all are inexpensive. They are published for adults but young adults enjoy them too.

Spanish-speaking young adults would also appreciate a good selection of magazines. Several U.S. magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Popular Mechanics* are available in Spanish translation, and several Spanish language magazines are appropriate for young adults. Distributors of Spanish materials often offer subscriptions.

Several popular young adult books have been translated into Spanish. Daimon Publishing Company offers Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys in Spanish. Camby Hall books are popular adventure books in Spanish translation as are choose-your-own-adventures.

Annette Trejo of Hispanic Books Distributors in Tucson, Arizona points out that for the young adult age group, the format of the book is very important; that they prefer to read books which look much like those that their English-speaking peers are reading (Annette Trejo to Adela Artola Allen, personal communication, 23 Dec. 1987).

For information relating to survival needs and problem-solving, pamphlets are usually available in Spanish from agencies that serve a Spanish-speaking population.

Hispanic Books: Nonfiction
Every library which serves Hispanic young adults should have a good collection of background material on the history of the local population in the United States and in their country of origin. Young adults are interested in their roots, and Hispanic young adults may also be interested in a political perspective on their background. Because Hispanics are often considered as one group, and because it is sometimes politically beneficial for them to speak as one group, the collection should be strong in background materials on all Hispanic groups. The Hispanic library will want to have a strong multiethnic collection in order to encourage minority solidarity.

The appended list of background readings includes many classics of the Chicano movement. Less has been published on the Puerto Ricans and Cubans in the United States. On the fiction list are several fictionalized autobiographies of Hispanic adolescence including Nicholasa Mohr's excellent accounts of the Puerto Rican experience.

Hispanic Books: Fiction

The list of young adult fiction by Hispanic authors or with Hispanic characters is not long although it is growing. In evaluating fiction which will appeal to this group, librarians must again use ethnic literacy, and keep in mind the following criteria:

1. Relevancy: Is the book relevant to the Hispanic experience?
2. Authenticity: Is the book authentic from the Hispanic perspective?
3. Ethnocentricity: Is the perspective from the point of view of the Hispanic character or from the Anglo observer?
4. Stereotypes: Are the people, relationships, and culture stereotyped in a racist manner?
5. Language: Do the language and dialogue imply a put-down of Spanish?
6. History: Are historical data accurate and in political perspective?

In the adolescent problem novel with Hispanic characters, a common theme has been salvation through homogenization with help from benevolent Anglos (Durán 1981, p. 10). The librarian should look for those novels in which solutions come from within the character or the character's own community. There is disagreement among evaluators such as Isabel Schön and Daniel Durán on instances of subtle stereotyping in Hispanic fiction, but adherance to the earlier criteria will eliminate any blatant racism from the collection.

The appended list of fiction includes acknowledged titles which remain in print. Many of the more recent and more popular titles are out of print so it is important to watch lists of popular young adult fiction such as "Young Adult Choices" in the December issue of the *Journal of Reading*, for Hispanic authors and characters. Frank Bonham and T. Ernesto Bethancourt are authors whose books about Hispanic teenagers come and go in popularity and in print.

The most valuable novels are those with characters whose ethnic background is the same as the young adult reader, but when the supply is limited, the librarian should seek out novels with characters that share the Hispanic experience in their country of origin or in the United States.

Media

Having grown up with television, Hispanic teenagers are no different from other adolescents in their sophistication in processing non-print information. For this age group, media's appeal is in its potential emotional content—i.e., its immediacy. Media can grab attention the

way a book cannot, and information can be transmitted and absorbed instantly.

Media can serve to expand horizons and develop interests—to stimulate the sense of possibility, the imagination, the emotions and the intellects of culturally deprived teenagers. As Katharine Kish puts it:

> There is an immediacy that can add a dynamic dimension either visually or aurally to subjects that cannot be effectively handled with traditional print materials. Ideas as enormous as the dignity of humankind as seen through architectural abstractions or as straight-forward as the honesty of young people in various dilemmas can become real through media. Media makes it all part of a shared human experience (Kish 1979, p. 21).

The highest-impact media for group use is film. The selection and availability may be greater in video format, but large-screen projection diminishes the image which was produced for the smaller screen. Film projection in the 16 mm format adds the intensity of the larger image to the power of the visual format.

In selecting films to rent or purchase for the Hispanic young adult audience, the librarian should consider those with emotional qualities that can enhance the group viewing experience. There are many excellent films which deal with Hispanic cultural traditions, heroes, and history. The *Chicano Film Guide* of the University of Texas at Austin lists eighty-two films appropriate for high school, college, and other adult groups—films which are "intended to inculcate an understanding of and appreciation for Mexican American and Hispanic achievement in the United States." Some of their popular titles are *Yo Soy Chicano, I Am Joaquin, Tapestry, Chulas Fronteras, Requiem 29, Harvest of Shame,* and *Homeboys.*

Duran's book (1979) has an annotated list of films in English and Spanish. The *Video Sourcebook* lists several titles in the subject index under "minorities" which relate to Hispanic culture.

Several feature-length films are available in 16 mm format and others are on videotape. Ross Sotelo recommends two films of special interest to Hispanic young adults: *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* (available on 16 mm) and *El Norte.* Some libraries have been successful with programs of feature-length films in Spanish particularly when a Spanish-speaking community does not have a Spanish-language movie theater.

In selecting films and videos for young adults, the librarian must always keep in mind that this group is critical, sensitive, and sharp. They will not tolerate materials which seem phony in any way or talk down to them. It is important to take note of detail—teenagers will notice and react unfavorably to fashions, music, and vernacular expressions which are outdated. Quality productions will endure and have continuing impact. The key is honesty, simplicity, and respect for the audience.

Individual filmstrip viewers for use in the library might become popular among this group after the group is made aware of the type of

material available in filmstrip format, through programs in and outside the library. The concisely encapsulated information available through this format could be very helpful to those learning about a new culture.

ESL programs should be available on tapes to Spanish speakers, and ideally cassette players could be checked out with them. Stations for listening to records and tapes will help in attracting young adults to the library.

Weeding

The existing collection needs to be periodically reevaluated in terms of currency and relevancy to community needs and also in terms of ethnic awareness. Not to be overlooked is the image of Hispanics which may be portrayed in nonprint materials. The library may unwittingly be harboring racist materials which will alienate potential patrons.

CONCLUSION

Each Hispanic young adult is an individual with his or her own needs, and we must not lose sight of this. Adolescents, more than any other age group, are sensitive to being categorized even though as an age group they are most likely to be group-oriented. Each Hispanic community has its own character, its own heritage, and its own information needs. The identification of those needs is of paramount importance. Hispanic librarians must be recruited, trained, and promoted to decision-making positions if this group is going to be fully served by libraries.

Many of the earlier suggestions are admittedly impractical in today's financially-constricted libraries. Many of the most successful examples of relevant and exciting services to Hispanics were made possible with federal grant money. According to Durán, speaking as the president of Reforma: "Most of these programs were developed with soft moneys through state or federal grants, and that meant that sponsoring institutions did not have a strong commitment to maintaining those services. When the money dried up, the programs themselves disappeared (Layne 1980, p. 27)." Another librarian points out the harm in this: "Personal service that stops after two years destroys trust. The problem is how to establish library service to the Spanish-speaking as a basic service offered continuously (Layne 1980, p. 27)."

Librarians who are attempting to serve the underserved must become political and creative. As a youth advocate, the young adult librarian must do whatever is possible to divert funds to important programs, to find alternative sources of funding, including grants from private corporations and foundations, donations from local businesses, and commitments from state and local governments. The library administration must set high priorities for these services, and administrative librarians must develop lobbying skills.

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Librarians need to apply their resourcefulness toward the implementation of services which are low in cost. Cooperating with other agencies, using volunteers, scrounging materials, and utilizing the resourcefulness of young adults themselves will allow for the expansion of services even in times of dwindling finances. Finally, librarians must work together nationally to improve federal funding of ethnic services.

If we are to fulfill the potential of our multicultural society, we must achieve ethnic literacy; else we will waste precious human resources. Hispanic young adults represent the largest minority of the next decade. It is imperative that we direct funds and skilled efforts to expand the intellectual horizons of this group. An obvious path to achievement of this goal is through our nation's libraries and librarians.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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BACKGROUND READING FOR LIBRARIANS
*Indicates suitable titles for young adults

Hispanics

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SUGGESTED READING FOR HISPANIC YOUNG ADULTS NONFICTION

(See also starred titles in "Background Reading for Librarians")

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