The New Partnership: The Role of the Public Library in Extended Campus Services Programs

COLLEEN POWER and LORI KEENAN

ABSTRACT
 Traditionally, the provision of library services to academic off-campus students assumes that most students will not be able to obtain necessary materials needed to complete their assignments at local public libraries. Yet several recent studies indicate that from 40 percent to 70 percent of these students do depend primarily upon local public libraries and secondly upon the more distant parent institution for their academic needs. The interactions, including accreditation, evaluation, and negotiation among the academic libraries and the public libraries which provide both formal and informal service to extended campus students are discussed.

INTRODUCTION
 In 1976, the Pittsburg Conference on Resource Sharing in Libraries stressed the need to move from a resource-based orientation to a client-based orientation. The concept of accessibility rather than ownership was a major component of this movement (Hamann, 1978, p. 534). With the development of full-text online technologies, high speed telefacsimile, and improved online catalogs, many academic libraries have begun to recognize that the concept of access is both feasible and necessary. The movement away from the Alexandrian Library has turned into a stampede. Nowhere can that movement toward access be seen to have a greater effect than in the library services offered to the extended campus community.

Colleen Power, Regional Services, Meriam Library, California State University, Chico, CA 95929
Lori Keenan, Moscow Latah County Library System, Moscow, ID 83843
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While some universities are establishing branch or extension libraries, reflecting the traditional criteria of ownership, others are exploring the more revolutionary concept of access through community libraries. Conflicts often arise between extended campus programs which rely on the concept of access and the university accreditation associations which traditionally espouse the concept of ownership. Frequently in the middle of this conflict is the local public library.

Unquestionably, most community-based libraries are unable to provide college students with adequate academic library resources, yet feel the pressure of the questions and demands made by these students. Particularly concerned with the maintenance of community goodwill, as well as being the traditional resource for informal adult education, public libraries may become reluctant partners in providing informal service to extended campus programs. On the other hand, some highly successful partnerships have been developed between the academic and public library. The motivating force behind these arrangements has generally come from the public library (Soules, 1979, p. 568).

Survey of the Literature

A search of the literature provides numerous examples of formal and informal cooperation between local public libraries and off-campus programs. Emmer (1987) has speculated that the American Library Association recognized the role of public libraries in serving colleges and universities as early as 1931, while Hewitt notes that public libraries may function more as holding areas for the community of independent learners rather than as active participating partners in the educational process (Sayles, 1989, p. 387).

A 1985 survey of parent institutions engaged in providing library services to off-campus students demonstrated that more than 50 percent of the responding libraries provide contact with a nonaffiliated library, with approximately two-thirds of that number relying on off-site libraries to provide interlibrary loan (Sheridan & Martin, 1987, p. 170). MacDougall’s (1973) study of university extension libraries reports that 34 percent of the institutions arranged for temporary housing of books in the field at public libraries. Surprisingly, despite the body of evidence of use of other libraries, only 16 percent of 119 academic libraries connected with extended campus programs surveyed in 1988 had any agreement or contract with other libraries (Power, in press).

Recent studies indicate from 40 percent to 70 percent of extended campus students depend primarily upon local public libraries and second upon the more distant parent institution for their academic
needs. The extended campus library resources requirements are admitted by all authors to be far beyond the capacity of most public libraries, yet public libraries are often what the user is most familiar with and are often the most accessible. Johnson and Keith conducted a 1983 survey of off-campus students in Wyoming which revealed that in those communities which had reserve collections at a cooperating academic library, students tended to use public libraries as much as community college libraries even when collections were on reserve in the academic libraries (Johnson, 1987, p. 88). Similarly, Ruddy (1987) details a 1986 study of the Cardinal Stritch College off-campus students which indicated that 60.3 percent of extended-campus students use public libraries to complete assignments (Ruddy, 1986, p. 157). Studies in Canada reveal that in some major communities, public libraries are used by 73.5 percent of the students despite the existence of local academic collections (Appavoo & Hansen, 1988, p. 19). Many institutions are both puzzled and alarmed when their students indicate that they are using public libraries as major sources of research, and these institutions are often at a loss to know what best to do about it (Ruddy, 1987, p. 157). Other institutions are exploring these existing informal networks by actively soliciting the assistance of local public libraries in meeting the needs of extended campus programs, and by entering into formal contracts or, more often, informal agreements of service (Sayles, 1989, p. 387).

The library services offered to off-campus students are extremely variable, ranging from permanent reading collections at host libraries to a library user's card, good only at the parent institution. The public library can, at its simplest, offer itself as an information clearinghouse, referring the student to more appropriate collections (Nolan, 1975, p. 29) or, at a more sophisticated level, it can enter into formal contracts and agreements to provide certain services in exchange for reimbursement in the form of staff, materials, and actual funds. The involvement of the public library is often an intermediate step between the initial start up of an off-campus program and the establishment of a satellite campus library (Soules, 1979, p. 568).

Academic Library Perspective and Philosophy

The 1989 Association of College and Research Libraries "Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services" assigns clear responsibility for extended campus library services to the parent institution (ACRL, 1989, p. 405). These standards, by their careful wording, do not require site collections but instead clearly reflect the philosophy of access as espoused by accredited academic libraries. Yet the academic library perspective may not reflect the standards
delineated by state and regional accrediting associations. Examination of regional and state accreditation standards for extended-campus library service indicates that some associations specifically require the establishment of core collections, reserve reading collections, and professional library staff (Kascus & Aguilar, 1988, pp. 31-32). The philosophy of access, expanded and interpreted broadly by the academic library, has not made inroads with some accreditation associations. Establishment of contracts with local public libraries which have agreed to house college level materials and are staffed with trained library staff should meet the stringent requirements of most associations.

In 1988, a survey of 119 extended-campus library programs across the United States and Canada revealed that, of institutions offering degrees at the bachelor or master's level, 23 percent had established off-campus library resources centers to provide services to their students. The remaining institutions offered alternative access to their students through mailed materials, contact librarians in the parent institutions, and through new technologies such as online catalogs. Some offered no library services at all (Power, in press). This study compares with the 1973 MacDougall survey which indicated that 53 percent of the libraries surveyed provided materials at the learning site (MacDougall, 1973, p. 2). MacDougall's study also noted that 34 percent of the nonuniversity libraries housing temporary collections were public libraries. This reduction in the number of learning site collections from 53 percent in 1973 to 23 percent in 1988 reflects a clear espousal of the academic library philosophy of access.

Yet despite this significant change, less than 16 percent of the 119 institutions had entered into agreements, either written or verbal, with other institutions to provide services to their students (Power, in press). Obviously the academic library philosophy of access does not generally recognize the actual use being made of public libraries by their students. As a result, the requests for formal agreements are often generated by the public library (Soules, 1979, p. 568).

PUBLIC LIBRARY PERSPECTIVE AND PHILOSOPHY

Since their earliest beginning, public libraries have recognized, as a primary part of their mission, the need to serve those individuals who seek to learn outside the realm of the organized educational process. The majority of public libraries in the United States came into existence as a response to a nation of self-motivated learners who believed in the perfectability of mankind through education. In the late 1880s, the concept of the public library as a people's
university began to emerge. It was a vision that was to see its fullest realization during the Depression era when the public library provided for many the only place where educational needs could be fulfilled.

With the growing emphasis on formal education after World War II, the public library may have experienced a diminishing of its role as one of the primary arenas of learning. However, the recent reemergence of the concept of education as a lifelong process and the growing number of adult learners in our society are forcing many public libraries to reassess their service programs.

Support, in terms of provision of materials and auxiliary services to community organizations involved in adult education, has always been fundamental to public libraries. Yet the concept of coordinating services and programs with traditional education providers, particularly on the post-secondary level, is relatively new to public libraries (Birge, 1981, p. 74). It is only since the expansion of academic institutions into off-campus locations within the last fifteen years that some public libraries have been forced to deal with the unique demands upon their services generated by patrons with genuine academic needs. And while there may be a philosophical imperative at work to serve all who enter the library, the realities of collection and staff limitations often dictate the level of service given.

The vast majority of public library collections do not readily support an academic curriculum. Often geared to the reading interests of local residents, collections might have great depth in a few specific areas, yet lack basic materials required for advanced academic courses. Many extended campus programs have met this limitation by placing "core" collections in appropriate public libraries. These have generally proven to be of great value to students using them and may be, depending upon their nature and restrictions of access placed upon them, of use to public library patrons as well.

The general question of the suitability of public libraries to serve anyone other than public library patrons has recently been addressed (Robinson, 1989). Robinson perceives a danger in the attempt of public libraries to extend themselves into areas that traditionally are the sole responsibility of academic libraries. "The public library is an educational institution in the broadest possible meaning of that term, but it is not an academic institution. Trying to make it academic will endanger the existence of the public library" (Robinson, 1989, p. 147). There is a real danger that public libraries will attempt to meet the very specific needs of students in academic programs without being adequately prepared to do so, thereby further diluting precious resources. However, there is also the reality of having to satisfy a
A growing number of patrons whose needs have grown beyond the demands for traditional public library fare and who find themselves using their local library in new ways.

A profile of the average student enrolled in an extended-learning program describes the student as an adult, female, twenty-nine years or older, with full-time employment, who is taking continuing education courses on a part-time basis (Orton & Wiseman, 1977, p. 25). A recent study demonstrates that this student tends to go to the public library for study materials even when other options are present, possibly because it is more convenient (Appavoo & Hansen, 1988, p. 20). Although as yet no research has been done in this area, it is likely that this adult learner is already a public library user who feels comfortable in that environment and is relatively familiar with the organization of the library's materials. Thus a situation exists which can be of great benefit to the student and which should be taken into account by academic library service providers.

Since the majority of public libraries in North America already exist within some form of "network" environment, opportunities for cooperative efforts between libraries are greatly facilitated. Cooperative resource sharing in the form of common databases, interlibrary loan activities, and shared document delivery systems has laid the groundwork for more focused programs. It is important to remember that any program involving a public library must be seen by that library's governing agency, usually a board of trustees, and by the community as being beneficial to the taxpayer. Expanding the library's mission to include service to university extension students will be successful only if it can be proven that such a step will strengthen the library's overall program. It is here that cooperative collection development efforts can be invaluable, particularly in areas such as business, health and human services, and education. Other endeavors, such as providing access to on-campus holdings, including the public library's clientele in preferential document delivery services, training of public library staff, and funding for additional staff if needed, should all ensure that a high level of service is maintained and that the public library can realize some measurable benefit from the venture.

In order to effect a workable, trouble-free relationship between the parent institution and the public library, it is essential that a formal agreement process take place. This is an area that deserves careful exploration since restrictions may exist at either end that could place limits on the parties' common goals. Despite the limitations frequently placed upon institutions in terms of the ability to enter into legally binding contracts, written agreements which delineate, in detail, all aspects of the cooperative venture are imperative.
ACADEMIC PLANNING

The first step in planning library services to the extended campus is assessing the need for resources, services, and facilities. The off-campus student is often enrolled in short, compressed courses that do not allow time for writing term papers, or indeed even include such a requirement. Others are involved in independent learning projects that require solid foundations in information literacy. Some may be enrolled in technical classes that make minimal use of library materials beyond computer manuals or similar technical tools, usually purchased by students in lieu of a textbook (Nolan, 1975, p. 17). This step in planning should include an assessment of the nature of the curriculum and the distribution of the student population. The course syllabi and projected enrollment figures are usually sufficient to determine at the outset whether partnerships with other libraries will be a necessary element of library services. If the student population is quite scattered, as is typical of televised classes, or if a variety of advanced classes are offered, then establishment of satellite libraries will probably not be cost efficient, and cooperative arrangements with community libraries should be investigated. All documents regarding accreditation requirements should be carefully examined to determine library resource requirements and facilities that might negate or support local arrangements.

The second step should be an evaluation of the most practical and effective methods of delivering the needed library services in cooperation with local libraries. Since most public libraries will have ample experience in the use of their collections by higher education students, their involvement in planning at this point becomes a necessary element for successful local cooperation (Soules, 1979, p. 569). Evaluation of local public libraries’ reference collections, existing interlibrary loan networks, and staffing impacts are necessary elements in any effective study. Yet Sheridan and Martin (1987) found that less than half of the libraries surveyed had prepared a written profile of needs, goals, and objectives, or had involved community representatives in their planning. At this stage of planning, it is highly desirable to appoint a coordinating professional librarian to open the channels of communication and provide continuity for the developing community contacts.

The third step is the preparation and negotiation of contracts between the consenting parties. These agreements are generally informal. The 1988 Power study indicated that fewer than 8 percent of these agreements are actually written, and even fewer are legally binding contracts (Power, in press). Such contracts should take into
consideration changes in technology and funding levels. The university's contracting and/or legal offices may be helpful or even required in drafting the agreement.

Evaluation of the agreement after a given period of time, with renegotiating and redrafting of the document as required, is a necessary consideration. This should be written into the agreement and serves to enhance regular communication between the collaborating libraries at the administrative and operational levels (Keenan & Kendall, 1989, pp. 266-67).

**Services to be Negotiated**

In 1970, Mathilda Gocek, writing on library services to commuting students, developed a basic shopping list of services that should be negotiated from the perspective of the academic institution. Designated libraries in specific geographic areas, with trained staff members and college level materials, were highest on the list. Telephone reference referrals and financial reimbursement for libraries used by off-campus students were highly desirable elements. Also important were seminars in library use skills taught by a librarian, either during site visits or available on video for home viewing (Gocek, 1970, p. 21). To this list, Kaser added reimbursement through the possible use of a credit card or voucher presented at member libraries (Kaser, 1974, p. 282). Sayles, in a major report prepared in 1988 on the Georgia College service area, adds two more important elements—a borrower's reciprocal card and a directory of libraries that provide services to extension students (Sayles, 1988, pp. 393-95).

Information on appropriate library services, such as distributing university-generated guides and bibliographies and referring students to the available university services, are perhaps the least expensive and most basic needs to be negotiated between the university and the public library. Both agencies recognize that students will go to the public library for help. If the public library staff is uninformed, they cannot respond effectively to the patron's request; in fact they often may not realize the question is generated by an assignment unless forewarned (Monroe, 1975, p. 56). The parent library thus has a responsibility to keep the public library informed of all assignments that may lead extended campus students to make use of the public library's resources. This may be accomplished by regular distribution of reading lists and course syllabi to public libraries in those areas adjacent to learning sites. Providing the public library staff with this information may actually help the public library to
anticipate work loads, since the library will know in advance what the assignments are likely to be and when the students will need referral (Beckerman, 1975, p. 41).

At the next level of support, the parent institution and the public library most often are in the same consortium that provides interlibrary loan services and can utilize those existing networks to provide materials to extended campus students. Agreements can be negotiated to forward any student or staff requests directly to the parent library without any local processing and with a minimum of public library staff involvement in delivery. Sheridan and Martin report that 50 percent of their survey group provide contact with a nonaffiliated library in order to offer a medium level of support, including interlibrary loans (Sheridan & Martin, 1987, p. 170).

The most sophisticated level of support is providing reimbursement for services rendered. An academic library can negotiate with the local public library to provide orientation sessions to students and staff, space for reserved readings or collections of college level material. This level of support may provide enhanced levels of communication through the presence on site of a staff member from the academic library (Soules, 1979, pp. 568-69). The parent institution may negotiate the provision of reference resources to the public library as a method of reimbursement for recognized services rendered, for example, temporarily loaning the local library expensive reference tools and journals that the local library would like to have but would normally not be able to afford (Travis & Watson, 1982, p. 88). The parent institution may be required to maintain technical ownership of the titles in order to satisfy either the institution's purchasing requirements or those of an accrediting agency.

**Public Library Planning**

Any expansion of public library service must be viewed in terms of its impact upon the operation as a whole and the level of support it receives from the community it serves, its governing agency, and its staff. Careful planning is therefore essential to ensure success and should include involvement of all three entities. Depending upon the level of service rendered to the extended campus community, the extent of the planning may vary. A reworking of the library's mission statement—the document by which a public library defines itself to its community of users—may be involved if the new service is to become a major and permanent part of the organization's offerings. On the other hand, only minor adjustments to the workings of the operation may be required.

One of the areas impacted most heavily by any change in service levels is staffing, and careful assessment of the new program's effects
upon personnel is crucial. Staff of small- and medium-sized public libraries are not always prepared to meet the support needs of university students and may well require some enhancement of their reference skills. The management of supplemental materials, such as "core" collections, will demand extra staffing, as will the technical services area if program-specific materials are acquired. Since smaller public libraries do not usually offer extensive bibliographic instruction, additional staffing might be required in this area as well. A successful program demands a careful evaluation of staffing needs as well as a realistic approach to meeting those needs. It is essential that both the parent institution and the public library be fully involved in this process.

In cooperative arrangements between a university and a public library, the advantages can be sizable, particularly if the program is viewed favorably by the community and the governing body. Pointing out that the extended university students who require this new service are also, in all likelihood, patrons of the library and support it with their tax dollars, might bring about a welcome shift in perceptions. Widening the availability of materials by making the holdings of the parent institution's library accessible to the public library's clientele will also be viewed as a major benefit. Any additional materials that can directly benefit the community, such as an improved reference collection or an enhanced business collection, will also bring obvious advantages. Resource sharing opportunities are an excellent means of convincing governing agencies, particularly in the public library world, to enter into cooperative arrangements.

**PARTNERSHIP PLANNING**

Although the 1989 ACRL guidelines put the burden for extended campus library services squarely upon the parent institution, public libraries cannot escape bearing some of this responsibility, particularly since the demarcation between extended university student and traditional public library patron is frequently blurred. In order for a mutually beneficial program to become established, it is important that the planning process involve all affected parties. The planning committee for such an endeavor should include the extended campus librarian, public library staff, faculty, and students. The latter are particularly invaluable for identifying needs that are not readily evident to service providers. Faculty also play an essential role, in that much of the success of a library service program depends upon their commitment and sensitivity to the needs of their students and to the reality of the situation in which these students function.

In exploring the possibilities for cooperative arrangements between universities and public libraries, it is not necessarily the
role of the parent institution to initiate the process. Public libraries, too, are called upon to be proactive in their response to perceived needs of library users who are enrolled in academic programs yet may have limited access to appropriate library services. In seeking to identify ways of serving these students, an attitude of openness and a willingness to seek creative solutions to problems is essential. These qualities may ultimately be the only prerequisites for the establishment of an effective service program.

All cooperative efforts between the parent institution and the public library ought to be formalized. The option of whether to function within the parameters of a written agreement or a formal contract depends largely upon the requirements of the participating institutions and the legal constraints placed upon them. While universities will need to work with their legal departments for guidance in this area, public libraries can make use of the excellent resources made available to them through most state libraries. It is important to remember, however, that both parties need to feel at ease with the agreement reached and be able to justify it fully to their constituents.

CONCLUSIONS

Academic libraries are faced with the prohibitive setup costs of hiring staff and supervising collections at remote sites. Entering into a partnership with local libraries for the service of extended campus clientele can provide desperately needed funds to the local library, while helping to solve the personnel and materials problems of the parent library inexpensively. Such arrangements do not mean that the parent institution can evade making financial commitments, but can help bridge the gap between the establishment of an extended campus program and the development of a library.

However, both academic and public libraries need to be cautious, when entering into such negotiations, about relying too heavily upon other libraries, as such reliance can result in accreditation problems. Financial support can be withdrawn following a change of administration. Communication networks between faculty, students, and staff can readily break down if services are not readily and easily obtainable (Keenan & Kendall, 1989, p. 267). Emmer notes the importance of good public relations and stresses that no matter what services are offered, they will be ignored if inadequately publicized (Emmer, 1987, p. 82).

Public libraries are being used by students whether they have been sent directly from a learning site or they have wandered into the most convenient library. Many public libraries are set up to handle reference questions, carry basic reference tools, and are members of
interlibrary networks with delivery vans. Although some off-campus programs have seized the opportunity to consciously utilize the public library, the literature indicates that their potential as agents for enhancing library access is vastly underutilized and undervalued by many academic libraries.

In spite of the studies indicating that the public library is being utilized by off-campus students, academic libraries are generally not exploring the opportunities created. Extension programs are generating significant demand upon local resources, and it is time that academic libraries give attention to alleviating the problems in a creative and systematic fashion (Keenan & Kendall, 1989, p. 264).

Recognizing their often parallel educational missions, the academic and public libraries each have an interest in the education and development of the adult learner. Cooperative approaches offer both parties the opportunity to stretch the concept of continuing education to incorporate both the formal and informal adult learner. The cross-pollenization resulting from this fusion can benefit all the participating libraries by providing greater human and material resources. As the concept of access to resources becomes reality, the practical and vital role of the public library in the higher education process can continue to expand.

REFERENCES


