Challenges in Multicultural Libraries: An Annotated Bibliography

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Info 522: Information Access & Resources
March 17, 2013
Introduction and Scope

The following annotated bibliography looks at the challenges in multicultural libraries, mainly focusing on public and school libraries. Articles included take a critical look at the Masters of Science in Library and Information Science program and how it is mainly geared to white Anglo-Saxon students, school libraries focusing on children and how reading in a mother tongue is beneficial for literacy, and how a diverse staff in public libraries can help promote understanding among diverse cultures. It is not enough for libraries to just have bilingual books, but equally important, libraries should have a multicultural, welcoming atmosphere. Publication dates are from 1987 to 2010. Articles addressing technological advancement were chosen to show how libraries are changing with the times to benefit multicultural societies. Authors addressing various programs implemented with their successes and failures are mentioned to show various vantage points. An emphasis was placed on providing a broad timeline in terms of library school to the above mentioned types of libraries to show trends, achievements, and goals and future goals of integrating multicultural elements into libraries. Articles were published in the United States, Canada, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, and Australia.

Description

With the surge of immigrants migrating to and different countries, the multicultural library is becoming more popular and very much needed. Often referred to as cross cultural or multilingual libraries, there are challenges in communities that are not aware of the demanding needs of multilingual groups: “integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, as well as an understanding that, beyond their linguistic differences, multilingual groups can be divided into five subcategories: immigrants; refugees; native peoples; ethnic groups; and sojourners, each with their own unique characteristics” (Dali, & Dilevko, 2002, p. 128). A librarian must know the community he or she serves and take into account the cultural norms of those cultures as well as be conscious of the cultural differences so not to offend the multicultural society. A multicultural staff can help the library truly become multicultural, but this is not always easy to do when there are not many multicultural people getting an MLIS. A library does not just need multicultural books, but instead, an open multicultural space for all ethnic groups to come and learn can help better serve society. Oslo, Sweden, with its growing
multicultural population is taking the lead in creating true multicultural libraries, when according to Nielsen, L., 2003, “The Multilingual Library was awarded the "Library of the year" prize by the Norwegian Library Association for its consistent efforts to promote multicultural library services locally and nationally” (Vaagan & Enger, 2004, p. 338).

Summary of Findings

ALA section 1998b stated that “According to the ALA Bill of Rights, two guiding policies in the provision of service should be that "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves" and "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views" (Gandhi, 2000).

In 2007, the American Library Association, Section 6.0 of the Policy on Diversity was revised to include goals for culturally competent library services. “The ultimate goal would be to help librarians learn to appreciate and acknowledge cultural differences, while modifying their own cultural assumptions and expectations to be more sensitive and knowledgeable about other cultures” (Mestre, 2010). This article provided information from a survey finding stating that diversity training in library school was minimal to almost nonexistent. If more emphasis were on multicultural awareness, when librarians with no cultural competency had to plan multicultural events they would feel more qualified.

The library profession “historically has not been particularly successful in attracting people of color to its professional ranks” (Wagner & Willms, 2010, p. 129). To fix this problem, the Urban Library Program was created as a way for multicultural people to become certified librarians. “A major goal of the Urban Library Program was to seek individuals who reflected the community but who were not adequately represented in the workforce” (p. 136). Issues with librarians who are not exposed to different cultures create problems with identification, understanding, and the “political correctness” of different cultures. By putting multicultural people into the workforce of the public library, there would be representation of different ethnicities where it was seriously lacking. “For the development of multicultural library services to be successful, library staff needs to obtain skills in offering such services” (Cloete, Jacobs, &
Rodrigues, 2007, p. 228) such as knowledge of the languages of the community to connect with the patrons.

Once a multicultural approach is established “by ensuring that the services and materials provided also reflect the multicultural nature of these communities” (p. 213), because throughout the articles it has been established that this does not mean having a few multicultural books in the collection, marginalized groups will find it easier to use the library. In South Africa, a profile of the community was drawn up to accurately depict the multicultural society so that the library could better serve its patrons. This is something that every library should follow to bridge the culture gap.

In bilingual households, children may start to view their mother tongue negatively, especially if they view it at less important. “School librarians must be sensitive to this educational barrier for minority students and encourage teachers to incorporate texts that represent minority students' cultures into their lessons to help minority students overcome this obstacle to literacy” (Agosto, 2001, p. 48). It is important for librarians to have a clear understanding of how children view literature, because culturally significant texts are interpreted differently to multicultural children and vice versa. This is why a library setting must embrace culture, thus becoming “bicultural.” “Bilingual-bicultural programs support children's concept acquisition and development in their native language as well as in English and make use of the culture and contributions of the minority language to support the curriculum as well as the learner's self-concept” (p. 50). This can be done through storytelling, interactive activities, and programs to incorporate culture into libraries.

In order to properly incorporate bicultural activities into libraries, librarians must have an understanding of culture. According to Wurzel, he has proposed three dimensions of cultural competence: subjective (understanding), interactive (verbal and non-verbal) and material (interactive) (Barter, 1996 p. 10). In order to incorporate a multicultural environment into a library society, a librarian must have an understanding of culture, know how to communicate, and respect the appearance of the library’s patrons. This is what it means to be culturally competent. With these three principles in mind, it is important to note that a librarian must also accept them with multicultural staff. A multicultural staff would be very beneficial to a multicultural society, but not always to a
librarian who will not accept cultural differences. As Howland mentions in his article, “There are still libraries where there is a relatively low tolerance for diversity, not only of races and cultures but also of viewpoints” (Howland, 2001, p. 112). How could a library bring people together if the workforce is not open and accepting?

In 1994, A World of Information: Creating Multicultural Collections and Programs in Canadian Public Libraries (AWI) was published, which “was designed to help "librarians in towns and small cities ... establish continuing contacts with the ethnocultural minority communities that may use your library's multilingual collection" ” (Dali & Dilevko, 2002, p. 116). Studies showed that providing a good multicultural library as well as language skills started with librarians having an open mind. An issue became “because staff members do not have knowledge of multilingual languages, it is inevitable that they show "ignorance of resources available" for the purposes of selection and purchase of materials in these languages” (p. 122). To prevent this, there must be awareness of the multicultural community.

Sweden has an ideal library that makes it a point to work with families outside of the library because multiculturalism is viewed as a positive phenomenon. Most importantly, “Libraries take an active part in both introducing the immigrants into Swedish language and giving possibilities to keep in contact with native culture and language” (Jönsson-Lanevska, 2005, p. 132). New breakthroughs are making it easier for librarians to work with multicultural societies. Digital libraries and databases are now being created that has ethnic groups mother tongue as well as publications from their home country. The international children’s digital library is one of these breakthroughs. “The ICDL project seeks to build on and combine research in both international and children’s digital libraries” (Bederson, Druin, Hutchinson, Rose, & Weeks, 2005, p. 5). However, this project did have challenges. For example, collecting books from around the world was a challenge, especially when dealing with copyright. Despite the hardships, ICLD is multilingual, multicultural, and multigenerational all at the same time, which is an accomplishment.

Moving away from digital libraries, let us look at databases. Australia has an expanding population of immigrants as well as indigenous groups. Because of the issues of finding printed materials in these languages, electronic services allowed Australia to
acquire materials in many languages. While it is possible to develop tailored services based on the ethic groups in a specific area, there are problems such as keyboard design and font development, with an example being Chinese characters. However, the Internet is uniting the world and becoming a way for multicultural societies to become and stay bilingual as well as bicultural.

“For some languages, there is limited publishing in the country of origin. It may also be difficult to locate and develop a working relationship with reliable distributors from the country of origin. The only practical and efficient method of providing services to these communities is through the use of electronic multicultural library services” (Cunningham, 2004 p. 117).

With the rate that resources are becoming available in other languages, multicultural library services via databases and digital libraries will expand.

Knowing that libraries must have a diverse staff and be exposed and open to biculturalism and bilingualism, it is important to note what libraries need to make sure the multicultural library is efficient. There needs to be a sense of belonging in the building as well as a well-balanced collection to create a cultural competency. “Many minority and underserved populations are still underrepresented among library users placing them at a distinct disadvantage in accessing information” (Montiel-Overall, 2009, p. 177). By having a better understanding of cultural competency, libraries can go further because they still have a long way to go. Cultural competency starts with interacting with members from diverse groups. “There is a critical need to develop cultural competence among LIS professionals to address social, linguistic, and academic needs of culturally diverse individuals who represent a population most in need of library services” (p. 199). With technology and a better understanding of cultural competency, challenges with multicultural libraries will become almost nonexistent and librarians will be able to establish and maintain relationships with diverse groups.
Entry 1:

Abstract: “Key documents guiding U.S. library service, including Reference and User Service Association (RUSA) guidelines and the American Library Association (ALA) Code of Ethics and Bill of Rights, focus on equitable public library service. By viewing literacy practices as an increasingly crucial realm of the social structure, librarians, policy makers, social researchers, and other interested groups can better understand information barriers that result in social inequality. A clear understanding of vernacular literacy will afford librarians greater insight to the information needs of the public, including a greater understanding of nonusers of their libraries. The reality of providing materials in multiple languages to meet information needs for multiple cultures is more complicated than simply looking at demographics that are available through the Department Of the Census. This study demonstrates the value of field research to more fully understand the literacy needs of one's service community.”

Annotation: Providing specific examples about the Latino community in Kansas City in conjunction with the minority-majority public library, this article is a good example of why practicing vernacular literacy, or environmental literacy in libraries will help non-native English speakers “can better help linguistically isolated populations and non-linguistically isolated populations have better discourse” (p. 67). There is issue with the location of the public library, stating that in lower income neighborhoods, the library is ill equipped to help the non-native English speakers. However, the article gives no advice on how to fix this problem.

Search Strategy: I searched Web of Science because of its multidisciplinary content, which includes a large Social Science citation index and its cited reference and related articles search features. Because this was one of the last databases I used, I thought the citation index would be a great feature to see related articles on works I had found in other databases. Since articles by D. Agosto kept turning up in my searches, I thought
many authors might cite her, therefore I knew Web of Science would be a good place to search for citations of an article she had written.

**Database:** Web of Science (Hagerty)

**Method of Searching:** Citation searching

**Search String:** “The cultured word: Cultural background. Bilingualism, and the school library” in Title field in the cited reference search tab.

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** After this article was located through Web of Science, Ulrich’s lists *Reference and User Services Quarterly* as a scholarly journal that is referred.

**Entry 2:**


**Abstract:** “Advice for librarians on transforming libraries into bridges for the cultural and linguistic gaps that confront minority students is provided. Librarians should reevaluate their mission statements, assess their libraries' physical environment, diversify their collections, emphasize collaboration, model bilingual materials, model multicultural materials, foster dialogue, arm themselves with research, engage their communities, and appreciate diversity.”

**Annotation:** Viewing children’s native languages as valuable as learning English, this article takes into account the importance of keeping a person’s native culture alive while also learning English. There is emphasis on the importance of not losing the culture of ones home country, and incorporating these elements into the building and materials of the library, not just the books. By reevaluating the mission statement, librarians are restructuring the library from the top down, which is important to become truly multicultural.

**Search Strategy:** This article was found in the references to the Welch (2011) article listed below. The title of the article was then entered into Hagerty’s Library “Articles & More” search bar where the full text was found.

**Database:** N/A

**Method of Searching:** Footnote chasing
Search String: By typing “challenges in multicultural libraries” into Google search, I found the article referenced in Welch (2011) article (see citation below) on the second page of my search.


Scholarly/Referred Status: After locating the article through the above steps, I checked Ulrich’s and saw that Journal of Youth Services in Libraries is listed as a scholarly journal and that is referred.

Entry 3:

Abstract: “Presents major research related to cultural background as a framework for textual meaning-making, bilingualism, and literacy development. Discusses bilingualism, literacy, and social context; considers why these issues are important to school librarians; and offers suggestions for making multicultural materials central aspects of school library collections and curricula.”

Annotation: Read in conjunction with “Bridging the cultural gap,” this article goes into more detail about the importance of a bicultural library. It is important to be sensitive of cultural groups, which will help librarians better select appropriate books and create a multicultural library environment. This article is especially helpful because it shows that bilingual-bicultural libraries are not only beneficial to multicultural students to feel welcome, but multicultural educational settings also benefit majority students.

Search Strategy: When searching in ProQuest, I did a keyword search in all 41 databases. I then narrowed my results to scholarly and peer reviewed and looked at articles in ERIC and Library and Information Science Abstracts because of their abundance of resources in the library and information science field. The article was available in full text.

Database: ERIC (ProQuest)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching in field codes

Search String: “Multicultural librar?” AND (challenge? OR “collection development” OR issue?)
**Scholarly/Referred Status:** As the article was located in ERIC the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists *School Libraries Worldwide* as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 4:**


**Abstract:** “This article discusses the collection of multicultural resources as a form of student advocacy and the ways in which students can benefit from a diverse school library collection. It presents five criteria to use when evaluating multicultural resources: accuracy, expertise, respect, purpose, and quality. The article concludes with a discussion of recommended resources for building diverse library collections and a list of methods for integrating multicultural library resources into the school library curriculum.”

**Annotation:** Read after each of Agosto’s other articles, this article goes into detail about what a well-balanced multicultural collection should be. It also lists the benefits of a multicultural school library space. Most important, the article gives examples of how to evaluate multicultural resources and goes into detail about two reviewing journals: School Library Journal and Booklist and how they do not do an adequate job of reviewing multicultural material. Unfortunately, the article does not list reviewing journals that do review multicultural materials.

**Search Strategy:** When searching in ProQuest, I did a keyword search in all 41 databases. I then narrowed my results to scholarly and peer reviewed and looked at articles in ERIC and Library and Information Science Abstracts because of their abundance of resources in the library and information science field. The article was available in full text.

**Database:** Library & Information Science Abstracts (ProQuest)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching in field codes

**Search String:** “Multicultural librar?” AND (challenge? OR “collection development” OR issue?)
Scholarly/Referred Status: As the article was located in LISA, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists Teacher Librarian as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

Entry 5:

Abstract: “Multiculturalism is one of the great buzzwords of the age. Even a casual glance at the professional or popular press shows pages and pages of writings both for and against, with strongly held views, and emotions running high. Oddly enough, however, there seems to be very little agreement, indeed, as to what constitutes multiculturalism, and what exactly is a multicultural children's book. All people, all communities, all societies are multicultural. To define multicultural, multiculturalism, or multicultural children's literature, we need to get, first of all, a working definition of "culture".”

Annotation: This article looks at the problems in libraries with multicultural societies. Providing examples from specific countries, like Canada, the article expresses ways of building good multicultural relationships in detailed ways. Detailing what multicultural is defined as, and what people believe it to mean gives us insight into the prejudices of people and why they think the way they do. By providing ways to overcome this and examples of multicultural literature, this article gives great insight into the problems of multicultural libraries.

Search Strategy: When searching in ProQuest, I did a keyword search in all 41 databases. I then narrowed my results to scholarly and peer reviewed and looked at articles in ERIC and Library and Information Science Abstracts because of their abundance of resources in the library and information science field. The article was available in full text.

Database: ERIC (ProQuest)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching in field codes

Search String: “Multicultural librar?” AND (challenge? OR “collection development” OR issue?)
**Scholarly/Referred Status:** As the article was located in ERIC, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists *New Library World* as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 6:**

**Abstract:** “The challenges encountered in building the International Children's Digital Library (ICDL), a freely available online library of children's literature are described. These challenges include selecting and processing books from different countries, handling and presenting multiple languages simultaneously, and addressing cultural differences. Unlike other digital libraries that present content from one or a few languages and cultures, and focus on either adult or child audiences, ICDL must serve a multilingual, multicultural, multigenerational audience. The research is presented as a case study for addressing these design criteria; current solutions and plans for future work are described.”

**Annotation:** When read in conjunction with “Global and local support dimensions for emerging community languages,” this case study expands on the digital library by making it global. Stressing the point that the library needs to be understood by a culture, the study details background and why multicultural libraries benefit all children, focusing on feedback from people, and detailing the book selection process. Such a subjective issue of cultural interpretation is the biggest challenge the study faces, which is fitting because these articles share a common theme that one must understand a culture before picking books for a multicultural library.

**Search Strategy:** Because Web of Science has such a multidisciplinary content, which includes a large Social Science citation index and I had not done a general search in the database yet, I knew I could find something within the Social Sciences. A keyword search was performed using the terms below, and this article appeared in the results once my search was narrowed by category and document type. The article is available with full text through three Drexel resources.
**Database:** Web of Science (Hagerty)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching in field codes

**Search String:** Topic field code: Multicultural librar* Refined by: Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) --1980-present then Category: INFORMATION SCIENCE LIBRARY SCIENCE and Article.

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** After locating this article through the above steps, Ulrich’s lists *Information Technology and Libraries* as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 7:**


**Abstract:** “The Constitution of South Africa recognizes the multicultural nature of its citizens by stating that the South African nation consists of a diversity of cultural, religious and linguistic communities where everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice (South Africa, 1996). As a public enterprise, public libraries need to acknowledge the Constitution and provide products and services that support the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of South Africa's communities (LIASA Policies 2005). A study into the services and products offered by public libraries, specifically in Region Eight of the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services (CJLIS), examined the role that public libraries are playing in supporting the multicultural nature of the communities they serve. It became evident from the investigation that, although policy documents that encourage the principle of providing equitable services and collections to culturally diverse communities do exist, public libraries — such as the CJLIS, Region Eight, which operates within a culturally diverse environment — often do not provide these. Possible reasons for the current situation were identified. Based on the research findings, recommendations on the development of multicultural library services and collections were made which may be applied — not only to the CJLIS — but also to other public libraries in South Africa that have to serve culturally diverse communities. We, the people of South Africa, ... believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity ... Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 Reprinted by permission of the publisher.”
Annotation: By looking at such a unique case, this article shares the common theme seen throughout all of these articles that the needs of each cultural community must be understood for a multicultural library to work. South Africa is interesting because the majority is not represented in libraries. As of the 2001 census, 73.5% of the region spoke indigenous languages and yet 85% of the book stock was in English. While it is known that the library staff needs to be equipped to help fix this problem and a plan is needed, no solutions are stated.

Search Strategy: Library Literature and Information Full Text was chosen because it has a wealth of information on Library Science dating back to 1994 with full text articles. Looking at the thesaurus I found no hits on the terms “challenges,” “issues,” “problems,” or “difficulties.” I then did a general search of “multicultural” in Basic search. I looked at some of the articles subject headings and noticed “multiculturalism” was used very frequently. From my research, I began to search for more school and public libraries, so I did a controlled vocabulary search using the terms below. I then narrowed my search to full text and peer reviewed scholarly journals.

Database: Library Literature & Information Science Full Text (Hagerty)

Method of Searching: Controlled vocabulary search

Search String: Subject field code: Multiculturalism AND subject field code: public librar*

Scholarly/Referred Status: As the article was located in Library Literature & Information Science Full Text, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists Mousaion as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

Entry 8:

Abstract: “Changing immigration patterns and increasing migration from Africa provide Australian public libraries with new challenges in providing equitable library services. Trends in the development of electronic multicultural library services indicate the need for them to engage with local culturally and linguistically diverse communities and
cooperatively develop solutions to resourcing and service delivery problems. Solutions for African communities involve the exchange of information, resources and knowledge between libraries and other service providers. Future electronic multicultural library services projects need to develop multilingual content infrastructure solutions to assist in ethnic community web publishing.”

Annotation: By looking at expanding technologies and listing new Internet opportunities in Australia, this article discusses the details of creating an electronic multicultural library for indigenous groups and immigrants. By discussing the challenges of locating books in certain languages and problems with keyboard and font issues the Public Libraries Unit of the State Library of Victoria have faced, we see both sides of creating a database for multicultural communities. The article is lacking statistics of the outcomes of electronic resources, so one cannot know how well or not well they are working.

Search Strategy: Library, Information Science & Technology was chosen because of its focus on library science. I first typed multicultural into the thesaurus and noticed that “multilingual” was used. I then did an advanced controlled vocabulary search. Scholarly, peer reviewed journals were selected and the PDF full text was downloaded.

Database: Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (Hagerty)

Method of Searching: Controlled vocabulary

Search String: Multilingual librar* AND challenge*

Scholarly/Referred Status: As the article was located in Library Literature & Information Science Full Text, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists Australasian Public Libraries And Information Services as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

Entry: 9


Abstract: “A Web-based survey was conducted to determine the extent to which Canadian public libraries are collecting multilingual materials (foreign languages other then English and French), the methods that they use to select these materials, and whether
public librarians are sufficiently prepared to provide their multilingual clientele with an adequate range of materials and services. There is room for improvement with regard to collection development of multilingual materials in Canadian public libraries, as well as in educating staff about keeping multilingual collections current, diverse, and of sufficient interest to potential users to keep such materials circulating. The man constraints preventing public libraries from developing better multilingual collections are addressed, and recommendations for improving the state of multilingual holdings are provided.”

**Annotation:** Focusing on the 81% of immigrants who settle in certain parts of Canada, this article is beneficial because it looks at the hesitation of librarians from 166 libraries in multicultural environments and discusses the results of the survey which prove that library school is lacking any training in how to deal with multicultural environments, especially when the study showed that lack of demand for multicultural materials is a good thing for librarians because they feel ill equipped to handle multicultural societies.

**Search Strategy:** Because Web of Science has such a multidisciplinary content, which includes a large Social Science citation index and I had not done a general search in the database yet, I knew I could find something within the Social Sciences. A keyword search was performed using the terms below, and this article appeared in the results once my search was narrowed by category and document type. The article was available in full text through two Drexel resources.

**Database:** Web of Science (Hagerty)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching in field codes

**Search String:** Topic field code: Multicultural librar* Refined by: Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) --1980-present then Category: INFORMATION SCIENCE LIBRARY SCIENCE and Article.

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** After locating this article through the above steps, Ulrich’s lists *Library Resources and Technical Services* as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 10:**

Abstract: “The cultural composition of the United States is undergoing a transformation. It is no longer primarily a Euro-American country. People from different ethnic backgrounds - Hispanics, African Americans, and Asians - are swelling the ranks of the population and becoming major forces to contend with. Yet, this diversity is not reflected in the libraries of today. Most libraries still have an overwhelmingly Euro-American staff and do not reflect the ethnic composition of the geographic entities that they serve. This has been acknowledged by the past President of the American Library Association (ALA), Barbara J. Ford in her comment that "Libraries are not representative of the constituencies they serve, and that's a challenge, especially among professional staff" (St. Lifer & Nelson, 1997, p. 42). This is further supported by Hollis's research according to which only 14.4 percent of all librarians in the U.S. belong to minority groups (St. Lifer & Nelson, 1997, p. 45). This paper focuses on the major issues pertaining to cultural diversity in libraries. Why is it important for libraries to have a culturally diverse staff? What are libraries doing to attract minorities to the profession of librarianship and create a multicultural environment? Are these efforts having any impact on the profession? What is the perception of minority librarians about diversity initiatives? What can libraries do to really promote diversity?"

Annotation: Focusing on graduates from library school, this article is unique because it shows statistics on why librarians are having such a problem creating multicultural environments in libraries. The issue that many minorities are not becoming librarians is a problem. Library Science degrees did not make the top ten lists for minorities, ranking the lowest for Hispanics. The article proposes ways for libraries to become more multicultural and even ways to bring minorities into the profession, thus making multicultural environments less fearful.

Search Strategy: Library Literature and Information Science Full Text was chosen because it has a wealth of information on Library Science dating back to 1994 with full text articles. Looking at the thesaurus I found no hits on the terms “challenge,” “issue,” “problem,” or “difficulty,” or “multicultural.” I did a general search of “multicultural” in Basic search. I looked at some of the articles subject headings and noticed “multiculturalism” was used very frequently. From my research, I began to search for
more school and public libraries, so I did a controlled vocabulary search using the terms below. I then narrowed my search to full text and peer reviewed scholarly journals.

**Database:** Library Literature & Information Science Full Text (Hagerty)

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary

**Search String:** Multiculturalism AND librar* in advanced search as subjects

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** As the article was located in Library Literature & Information Science Full Text, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists *Current Studies in Librarianship* as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 11:**


**Abstract:** “This article addresses six of the many challenges of working in a multicultural setting. As library staffs and patrons become increasingly diverse, it is critical that library administrations create environments where all individuals feel comfortable and supported. It is equally important that all individuals working in libraries are given equal opportunity to gain professional satisfaction and success, as well as demonstrate their unique strengths and skills. The six challenges addressed include: (1) fluctuating power dynamics; (2) merging a diversity of opinions and approaches; (3) overcoming perceived lack of empathy; (4) tokenism, reality or perception?; (5) accountability; and (6) transforming challenges into opportunities.”

**Annotation:** This article, read in conjunction with “Cultural Diversity and libraries: Reaching the goal,” goes into detail of why minorities are hesitant to become librarians. One of the main reasons in both articles is the fear of being forced to lose their culture and become “white.” A major theme in this article is to educate library staff about different ethnicities. This theme is used throughout the articles. One must understand a culture in order to create a multicultural environment. By listing six challenges, the problems and how to fix them, this article is following the top-down approach that change begins with staff understanding.

**Search Strategy:** Library Literature and Information Science Full Text was chosen because it has a wealth of information on Library Science dating back to 1994 with full
text articles. Looking at the thesaurus I found no hits on the terms “challenge,” “issue,” “problem,” or “difficulty,” or “multicultural.” I did a general search of “multicultural” in Basic search. I looked at some of the articles subject headings and noticed “multiculturalism” was used very frequently. From my research, I began to search for more school and public libraries, so I did a controlled vocabulary search using the terms below. I then narrowed my search to full text and peer reviewed scholarly journals.

**Database:** Library Literature & Information Science Full Text (Hagerty)

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary

**Search String:** Multiculturalism AND librar* in advanced search as subjects

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** As the article was located in Library Literature & Information Science Full Text, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists Journal of Library Administration as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 12:**


**Abstract:** “The purpose of this paper is to investigate the special services for immigrants which are offered by Swedish libraries on their different levels (regional, local and school) and how these services conduct themselves to the development of the harmonic multicultural society. The guiding theory was a three-phase model mentioned by Gillis Herlitz, according to which a newcomer goes through stages in an adaptation period. Phase 1 is described as a positive "honeymoon" phase, while phase 2 is a critical period of negative emotions, dominated by disappointment, which then ideally should be resolved in phase 3, where the individual reaches a balancing stage of cultural integration and successful adaptation. The performances of public libraries on different levels seem to operate in a way that corresponds to the different phases in this model. The approach of the local libraries is more individual and psychological. Their services correspond to those immigrants, who find themselves in the "disappointment" phase, whereas the activities of the regional libraries are more informative and suitable for the "balancing" phase.”
Annotation: Sweden is among one of the more advanced countries in creating multicultural libraries because librarians are meant to not only educate, but to inform the community of the multicultural groups, and bring these people together. By detailing the immigrant adaptation process, the article raises the issue that immigrant children need special attention, stressing that both learning Swedish and keeping them in touch with their native culture and language is important. We see not losing touch with a culture as an important theme throughout these articles. Looking at the advanced library systems of Denmark and Finland, the article provides examples of how to create a multicultural library system for immigrants.

Search Strategy: When searching in ProQuest, I did a keyword search in all 41 databases. I then narrowed my results to scholarly and peer reviewed and looked at articles in ERIC and Library and Information Science Abstracts because of their abundance of resources in the library and information science field. The article was available in full text.

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts (ProQuest)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching with field codes

Search String: “Multicultural librar?” AND (challenge? OR “collection development” OR issue?)

Scholarly/Referred Status: As the article was located in LISA, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists New Library World as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

Entry 13:

Abstract: “This article explores issues that emerged from a longitudinal reading and literacy research project carried out in three high-poverty primary schools in an urban South African setting, implemented by the Academic Literacy Unit (ALRU) at UNISA. This project researches facets that affect and influence reading and literacy, including access to books and school libraries. The focus in this article is on the development of a collection policy, taking into account various issues in the South African environment (such as multilingualism and limited publishing in the indigenous languages) and the
educational environment. The article takes a closer look at book collections in these school libraries, how they have been developed, and what measures can be taken to contribute to further literacy and reading development regardless of language. The article discusses issues of multilingualism in South Africa, including mother-tongue teaching and parental attitudes. It also examines aspects of book collection development at the three schools, with special reference to the quality versus quantity problem of children's books in indigenous languages. The authors make recommendations for book collection policies in multilingual school libraries based on the principles of McDonaldisation. The four key elements of McDonaldisation, namely efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control, are applied to find a simplified solution to the question of book collection development issues in the three school libraries.”

Annotation: This article focuses on mother tongue, and literacy is more successful when children learn first through their mother tongue and then the language of the country, in this case South Africa, is integrated into their library curriculum. This does not happen without challenges because South Africa has 11 official languages. The study discusses three-school library’s approaches: English only and learning in mother tongue first. The problems are that many of the teacher-librarians do not know the mother tongue, which is a common problem with librarians. There is a need for books in native languages, as well as equipped teacher-librarians. While suggesting that the libraries stay open to multicultural library benefits, there are no solutions provided in the study.

Search Strategy: Library, Information Science & Technology was chosen because of its focus on library science. I decided to use a general keyword search to see what I could find. I then did an advanced search. Scholarly, peer reviewed journals were selected and the PDF full text was downloaded.

Database: Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (Hagerty)

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: Multilingual librar* AND issue* AND collection development

Scholarly/Referred Status: As the article was located in Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tab. In addition, Ulrich’s lists Mousaion as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.
Entry 14:

Abstract: “A recent interpretive shift in library history posits public libraries as institutions that advance the dominant culture's ideology. Complicating the research questions that arise from such an interpretive stance is the multicultural society in which libraries in the United States operate. This article reviews selected books and articles, particularly those related to African-American experiences in and around libraries, and suggests possible ways to move toward a more inclusive American public library history.”

Annotation: By providing both background and the history of America’s library systems, we gain insight into why librarians today are so hesitant of change. Read in conjunction with “Challenges of working in a multicultural environment,” we see where the library stereotypes were formed and why not many minorities are in the library profession by looking at African-American’s experiences with public libraries. Despite providing examples of why a multicultural library would be beneficial to Americans, the article lacks specific examples.

Search Strategy: Library Literature and Information Science Full Text was chosen because it has a wealth of information on Library Science dating back to 1994 with full text articles. Looking at the thesaurus I found no hits on the terms “challenge,” “issue,” “problem,” or “difficulty,” or “multicultural.” I did a general search of “multicultural” in Basic search. I looked at some of the articles subject headings and noticed “multiculturalism” was used very frequently. From my research, I began to search for more school and public libraries, so I did a controlled vocabulary search using the terms below. I then narrowed my search to full text and peer reviewed scholarly journals.

Database: Library Literature & Information Science Full Text (Hagerty)

Method of Searching: Controlled vocabulary search

Search String: Subject field code: Multiculturalism AND subject field code: public libr*
under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tab. In addition, Ulrich’s lists *Library & Culture* as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 15:**

**Abstract:** “Only small portions of librarians have been trained to lead efforts in diversity awareness and training. This study, consisting of surveys and interviews, explored diversity training of librarians and the impact that training has on their efforts to promote cultural competency at their libraries.”

**Annotation:** While giving detailed explanations of what cultural competency means, the article does not provide examples of what type of training or where to receive training for cultural competency can be done. While there is research from the American Library Association to show the push for change in multicultural libraries, there are no specific examples. The article does a good job of detailing how librarians are not prepared to handle multicultural libraries by providing survey results, but only say that there is much to be done in diversity training prior to entering the profession.

**Search Strategy:** I searched Web of Science because of its multidisciplinary content, which includes a large Social Science citation index and its cited reference and related articles search features. Because this was one of the last databases I used, I thought the citation index would be a great feature to see related articles on works I had found in other databases. Since I thought the article by Dali, K., & Dilevko, J. titled “The challenge of building multilingual collections in Canadian public libraries” was beneficial, I looked at related records and found this article.

**Database:** Web of Science (Hagerty)

**Method of Searching:** Citation searching

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** After locating this article through the above steps, Ulrich’s lists *Journal of Academic Librarianship* as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 16:**


**Abstract:** “Today’s twenty-first-century library and information science (LIS) professionals are faced with the challenge of a growing population of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, many of whom are from minority and underserved populations representing the poorest segments of society with little or no experience with libraries. This article argues that although considerable efforts have been made by LIS professionals to meet the needs of minorities and underserved populations, a cultural competence framework is needed for these efforts to be successful. This article proposes a conceptual framework for developing cultural competence for LIS professionals and identifies three domains in which cultural competence is developed: cognitive, interpersonal, and environmental. The development of cultural competence within these domains is discussed, and essential elements needed to develop cultural competence within the domains are identified.”

**Annotation:** This article read in conjunction with “Librarians working with diverse populations: What impact does cultural competency training have on their efforts?” provides greater detail in librarians being more culturally competent. By discussing what libraries have tried and what procedures have worked and have not worked, the article provides specific examples on how to make libraries culturally competent. Once again, the issue of hiring minorities is discussed, but no specific ways for how to do this are mentioned. The problem of offensive terminology in library catalogs is mentioned, which confirms that knowledge of the community and other cultures is a necessity.

**Search Strategy:** I searched Google with the keywords “Challenges in multicultural libraries” and found this article, noticing that it was from the American Library Association website. I then located the article in Hagerty’s “Articles & More” search tab, where the full text was found in JSTOR.

**Database:** Google

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching
Search String: By typing “challenges in multicultural libraries” into Google search I was able to find the article and search for it in Hagerty’s database.

Scholarly/Referred Status: After this article was located through JSTOR, Ulrich’s lists The Library Quarterly as a scholarly journal that is referred.

Entry 17:

Abstract: “Historically the US has subscribed to the "Melting Pot" theory - conformity for success; the assimilation & Americanization of the foreign immigrant. The 1950s & 1960s brought an awareness of the importance of our cultural diversity - cultural pluralism. Both the Civil Rights movement & the Cuban Revolution had a tremendous impact on the cultural complexion of educational resources, including library materials. In 1972 Lau vs. Nichols mandated bilingual/bicultural education, making even greater demands on school librarians. The end of the war in Vietnam saw thousands of East Asian refugees being resettled in American cities & their children placed in bilingual/bicultural classrooms. A major concern for school librarians at this time was whether their obligation to provide materials for limited-language-ability children extended to providing materials in the representative languages, & if so, where these materials were to come from. Higher education must provide training for librarians who must function in this changed cultural milieu & criteria for selecting materials that eliminate racism, sexism, & cultural bias. School librarians themselves have a responsibility to develop an acute awareness of the needs of children whose culture may be radically different from their own, to assist those children to develop & retain respect for & pride in their uniqueness, & help them, at the same time, to adjust to the demands of a changed environment.”

Annotation: This article brings together many of the themes discussed, focusing on multicultural education in library school and knowledge of the community. By looking at this article of the times about school librarians learning to work with immigrants from East Asia, we see the earliest ways librarians were learning to create effective multicultural libraries. This article is beneficial because although it may not be as relevant now, it is a glimpse into how the multicultural movement in libraries began.
Search Strategy: When searching in ProQuest, I did a keyword search in all 41 databases. I then narrowed my results to scholarly and peer reviewed and looked at articles in ERIC and Library and Information Science Abstracts because of their abundance of resources in the library and information science field. After noticing some common subject headings, I decided to add them to my results. Because I could not get the full text through ProQuest, I went to Hagerty and searched the title “School librarians and cultural pluralism” in ERIC and the article is available in full text through one Drexel resource.

Database: ERIC (Hagerty)

Method of Searching: Controlled vocabulary

Search String: multicultural librarian? AND (issue? OR "collection development")

Scholarly/Referred Status: As the article was located in ERIC, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists Reading Teacher as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

Entry 18:


Abstract: “The children of Mexican migrants face a number of hardships and difficulties that greatly hamper their ability to succeed in American schools. This paper examines some of the major difficulties and suggests multicultural programs that school librarians can implement in order to help migrant children achieve academic success.”

Annotation: This article provides specific examples on how school librarians are creating multicultural environments for immigrant children as well as majority children. Because the literature in school is “Anglo-Saxon white,” Mexican children cannot relate, thus success in school is hard. By creating a library with appropriate books and a welcoming environment, librarians are hoping to end the stereotype of low income immigrant families and not succeeding in schools.

Search Strategy: When searching in ProQuest, I did a keyword search in all 41 databases. I then narrowed my results to scholarly and peer reviewed and looked at articles in ERIC and Library and Information Science Abstracts because of their
abundance of resources in the library and information science field. I decided to do a general, basic search to see what it would return. Because I could not get the full text through ProQuest, I went to Hagerty and searched the title “Meeting multicultural needs in school libraries: An examination of Mexican migrant families and factors that influence academic success” in ERIC and the article is available in full text through one Drexel resource.

**Database:** ERIC (Hagerty)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching

**Search String:** multicultural libraries

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** As the article was located in ERIC, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists *Journal of Access Services* as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 19:**


**Abstract:** “Norway is becoming increasingly multicultural, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the capital Oslo. While immigrants only make up 7 per cent of the population at the national level, the figure is 20 per cent in Oslo, where in addition, 35 per cent of all pupils in primary and secondary schools belong to a linguistic minority. In Norway, and especially in the capital Oslo, multiculturalism is rapidly becoming the rule rather than the exception. At the same time reading tests show that immigrant and minority children have special problems. Successful integration of “new Norwegians” starts in the kindergartens and schools, including the school library. In this situation traditional librarianship training is inadequate. Improved pedagogical and communicational skills are required of the librarian in multicultural school libraries, and drama is a promising technique to improve language proficiency among pupils. The article presents some insights from Vahl Primary School in Oslo which has the highest concentration of multicultural pupils in the country – 95 per cent.”

**Annotation:** This article is useful because it looks at Norway’s most multicultural school library. The Public Library Act of 1985 made it law that Norway’s libraries must extend
to all residents of Norway, which included immigrants. Because of this, the school library in Norway became a center for knowledge, not just a place to read, which we see as a common theme throughout these articles. Unique to these libraries are theme boxes that have items related to authors from different countries, which creates a very interactive environment. This confirms that having a successful environment means more than just providing multicultural books.

**Search Strategy:** When searching in ProQuest, I did a keyword search in all 41 databases. I then narrowed my results to scholarly and peer reviewed and looked at articles in ERIC and Library and Information Science Abstracts because of their abundance of resources in the library and information science field. The article was available in full text.

**Database:** Library and Information Science Abstracts (Hagerty)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching with field codes

**Search String:** “Multicultural library?” AND (challenge? OR “collection development” OR issue?)

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** As the article was located in LISA, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists *New Library World* as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.

**Entry 20:**


**Abstract:** “From 2003 through the fall of 2009, St. Catherine University (formerly the College of St. Catherine) and the Saint Paul Public Library collaborated to create the Urban Library Program (ULP), an Institute of Library and Museum Services (IMLS) supported project to recruit, educate, hire, and retain a diverse paraprofessional workforce in the metropolitan Twin Cities of Minnesota. Studies of graduates of the ULP demonstrate its success in educating diverse individuals for employment in libraries in spite of the complexity of their language, economic, and educational challenges. These same studies also reveal institutional and professional barriers to hiring a qualified, diverse workforce. This case study investigates challenges to attracting and educating a
diverse workforce, structural barriers that inhibit hiring, class conflicts arising in the workplace, and unexpected results from the program. The authors conclude that for the population targeted in this project, education alone is not the answer to diversifying the workforce. A strong support network is necessary to navigate higher education systems, the hiring practices of libraries, as well as the professional library community."

**Annotation:** This unique article describes a plan to get more minorities into public libraries. The Urban Library program describes specific steps taken to train minority librarians. The case study is unique in that it details this program, outlining all the steps taken and goals to be reached, but admits a diversified library goal has not been reached. Despite this, there is no mention at the end of the article of a different plan or new study that is to be conducted because this one essentially failed. What this does show, however, is the first real approach to get more minorities into the library workforce.

**Search Strategy:** When searching in ProQuest, I did a keyword search in all 41 databases. I then narrowed my results to scholarly and peer reviewed and looked at articles in ERIC and Library and Information Science Abstracts because of their abundance of resources in the library and information science field. The article was available in full text.

**Database:** Library and Information Science Abstracts (ProQuest)

**Method of Searching:** Keyword searching with field codes

**Search String:** “Multicultural librari?” AND (challenge? OR “collection development” OR issue?)

**Scholarly/Referred Status:** As the article was located in LISA, the search was refined to include only articles that are under the Scholarly Journal and Peer Reviewed tabs. In addition, Ulrich’s lists Library Trends as a scholarly journal and that it is referred.
**Personal Statement**

This annotated bibliography was a chance for me to learn just how dire the need is for multicultural libraries, meaning bicultural and bilingual and equipped librarians are in this workforce. By looking at examples from all over the world, I see what libraries are both succeeding at and lacking. The common themes throughout the articles: diverse training in library school, bicultural and bilingual library spaces, and a diverse library staff made me realize that there is no easy answer to the challenges in multicultural libraries. With electronic resources taking over, this presents an even greater challenge and there are no solutions just yet. By knowing the community, being open and accepting to culture, and making an effort to find culturally acceptable reading materials, libraries can make the multicultural environment more attainable.

Throughout this process I learned that there truly are a variety of ways to search, and when you think something is scholarly and peer reviewed, it sometimes is not. I have had much frustration searching and learned that you must first study a database and its thesaurus before you search to make sure you will benefit from the search. I started my search process with a few key words and expanded to a page of synonyms and began to know what a good search was and was not from much trial and error. The more I learned about databases, the more I enjoyed the detail that goes into making a successful and efficient database. There was much frustration throughout this process and many searches that turned up no results, but I learned a great deal not only about databases, but also about the subject of multicultural libraries.

I went into this assignment with no expectations, because I knew nothing about multicultural libraries. Now that I have completed this assignment, I can say that I know how far we have come and how far we have to go before truly multicultural libraries are prominent throughout society. I was able to spot the same reoccurring themes throughout my searches, which I view as a success because I have determined these as important issues in multicultural libraries. This truly was a subject that I had no background in, but I can now say that I have learned so much and I am well read on the scholarly material of the subject.