

## Library Research for Librarians: Introduction

“LIBRARY RESEARCH FOR LIBRARIANS” was the title of a conference held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in March 1979. Sponsored by the Librarians Association of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, this conference attracted 110 librarians from throughout the southeastern United States.

The purpose of the conference was to stimulate practicing librarians to undertake research by helping them identify research topics, devise workable methodologies, recognize the standards by which research is judged, and understand the requirements for preparation of manuscripts for publication.

The program committee for the conference recognized the importance of research for libraries and for librarians. For the development of libraries as well as for their more effective and efficient management, many questions need to be answered and problems solved. Not only must we have more and better trained librarians with advanced degrees who can undertake sophisticated research, but the profession also needs the participation of many other interested researchers who can contribute sound, honest, clearly written studies.

Librarians have the raw material for research at hand: reports, statistics, library collections, archives, and experience.

They have the need to know, because

most of the research to be done has quite practical application to librarians' daily activities. Academic librarians also have additional incentives in many libraries, with recognition and promotion as rewards for successful researchers. But few librarians have had training in research. Many are interested in research but need some help. This the conference was designed to give.

In his concluding remarks at the conference, Paul S. Koda of the university library called attention to the happy work situation for librarians:

We have been called a “practitioner” discipline because our work and our thinking about our work constitute a reciprocal give and take of idea and doing. This organic, ever-evolving view of “our” profession was described years ago by the famous theologian and scholar Theodor Mommsen. He summed up the work of many professions as the best of two worlds. The “pragmatic historian” he described is today’s “pragmatic scholar-librarian.”

Do we not share the best of these two worlds? As pragmatic scholar-librarians let us begin and let us continue those habits of mind and application which hone our skills and refine our research. Let us become capable to the point where we not only carry on the day-to-day business of our libraries, but also provide the intellectual means to improve our libraries for the future.

Those attending the conference were very positive in their evaluations and praised the speakers highly. The following three articles are based on addresses given at the conference, and we are pleased that they are now available to a wider audience through their publication in *College & Research Libraries*.

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*David C. Taylor is undergraduate librarian, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and chair of the program committee of the Librarians Association at the university.*