LBSC 640: Library Media Specialists as Information Professionals
Tuesdays, 2:00-4:45 pm HBK 0109
Wednesdays, 5:30 – 8:15 pm HBK 0115

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Over the past 100 years, education in the United States has grown in size and–even more–in complexity. Part of this development has involved the developing recognition of the importance of the library media program as an integral part of the educational system. In order to function effectively within that system, school library media specialists (LMSs) must understand a number of elements affecting their status in the school: the historical, organizational, and contemporary contexts of library media programs; the principles of teaching, learning, and information literacy that underlie the library media program; and the importance of the LMS's provision of leadership and encouragement of collaboration to the fulfillment of library media program goals. This course introduces students to all these elements, concentrating on the various roles of the LMS in supporting student learning.

Those roles are derived from the mission statement adopted in 1988 by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) to guide the development and improvement of library media programs nationwide. Reaffirmed in 1998 in the latest version of the national guidelines for the library media profession, that mission statement underlies the CLIS School Library Media Program and LBSC 640, which is designed to introduce students to the program and to the information professions in general:

> The mission of the library media program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. This mission is accomplished:
> > *by providing intellectual and physical access to materials in all formats
> > *by providing instruction to foster competence and stimulate interest in reading, viewing, and using information and ideas
> > *by working with other educators to design learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students.
> > > –*Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, AASL and AECT, 1998

TEXT:　　　　American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communication and Technology (1998). *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*. Chicago: ALA Editions.

READINGS:　　As assigned (see attached list). Other readings may be assigned as appropriate during the term.

GRADING:　　Your grade will be determined through your performance on a midterm paper, a presentation and report on your observations in two library media programs, and a final exam:

Midterm paper	30%
Observation presentation	15%
Observation paper	25%
Final exam	30%

Each product is expected to reflect the highest professional standards, and both substantive and technical quality will be considered in determining your grade for each. Thoroughness, accuracy, salience, and effective organization are required; correct English grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage are expected. Adherence to University policies on matters of intellectual integrity is also imperative.

Attendance at each class is required unless prior arrangements have been made.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I.   The student will understand the educational system within which the library media program exists and the library media specialist (LMS) functions.

A. The student will identify the formal organizational structures of federal, state, county, and local educational systems and will describe the impact of each system on the development and improvement of library media programs.

B. The student will discuss and analyze major issues facing educators, policy makers, and parents and the impact these issues have on the development and improvement of library media programs and on the roles and responsibilities of the LMS.

C. The student will compare and contrast the relationship of the library media profession to other segments of the information profession and the role of the LMS to the roles of other information professionals.

II.   The student will understand the role of the school library media program and that of the LMS within the educational system.

A. The student will identify and characterize the objectives, functions, and clients of library media programs.

B. The student will identify and describe the major functions performed and roles assumed by LMSs.

C. The student will explain foundational concepts in information studies as they relate to the library media program and the roles of the LMS.

D. The student will describe the results of recent research on the nature and effectiveness of library media programs and explain its significance.

E. The student will describe the relationship of professional standards and guidelines, state standards and expectations, and other appropriate documents to the library media program and the LMS.

III.   The student will understand the issues and concepts related to the learning/teaching process as these affect the library media program and the LMS.

A. The student will summarize current theories about learning and will relate these to the development of an effective library media program.

B. The student will describe the importance of collaboration and leadership in the development of a library media program that is integral to teaching and learning.

C. The student will describe the importance and value of an effective learning community and the role of the LMS and other information professionals in creating such a community.

IV.   The student will analyze, evaluate, and create new knowledge about the major topics covered in the course.

MIDTERM PAPER: EDUCATION AND THE LMS

Paper topic and one-paragraph description due: Week 2

Paper due: Week 8

Rationale: Exploring the ideas and movements that have shaped or are shaping a field leads to an informed perspective on one's professional context. This project requires you to select a current (or reasonably current) issue in education (see attached list of suggestions); research the impact of your topic on education as a whole; and draw inferences on its implications for library media programs and for you as an LMS.

Description: You will prepare a 10- to 15-page paper -- double-spaced, 12pt. type, with at least one inch margins -- that will include:

> *a BRIEF description of the nature of the topic (background information, definitions, explanations, descriptions, etc., as appropriate);
> *an explanation of the impact of your topic on education today (overall effect; specific effects on policy, curriculum, teaching/learning theory or practice; etc.; as appropriate);
> *a discussion of the implications of your topic for the development of an effective library media program and for the role and responsibilities of the LMS in that program.

Please note that all three areas should be addressed and that each should receive approximately the same degree of coverage. Please note, too, that you should take a researcher's stance toward your topic–that is, skeptical objectivity rather than advocacy. Be sure to seek out conflicting opinions, disconfirming evidence, etc., to ensure your report is balanced.

The first two sections–the description of the topic and the explanation of its impact–should be developed through your research. Be sure to focus primarily on the research literature (refereed journals) rather than the popular literature and seek studies and research reviews that are substantive and compelling. A number of databases and services will be especially useful to you: EBSCO, ERIC, Library Literature, and ProQuest.

The third section–implications for the LMS–should be developed through your own careful thinking. In general, the topics you'll choose will address issues that are important to education as a whole, and you'll have to consider how they apply specifically to library media programs. This is an exercise you'll do throughout your career, since you're rarely likely to find research on critical educational issues that's directly related to your role and program.

Your paper should be prepared in accordance with the guidelines in that appear in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* and should include a full reference and resource bibliography. A paragraph, which identifies your topic and provides a brief description of the rationale for selecting the topic and the main issues that you plan to cover in your paper, is to be turned into the instructors for approval at the second class meeting.

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR MIDTERM PAPER

You may select one of the following topics or another of your own preference (subject to instructor approval).

Authentic assessment
Back to basics
Classroom libraries
Cooperative learning
Desegregation in education
Differentiated instruction
English for Speakers of Other Languages
      (ESOL)
Equity in education
Gifted/talented education
Home schooling
"Inclusion" of exceptional children
Intellectual freedom
Issues related to specific disabilities
Issues related to technology in education
Multiculturalism in education

Multiple intelligences
National and state standards
Open schools
Parents' roles
Privatization of public schools
Private education
Reading and the LMS
School choice/vouchers
School financing
School restructuring
School violence
Site-based management
Statewide testing
Vocational education
Whole language/phonics
Year-round schooling

FINAL PROJECT: OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Presentations and papers due: Weeks 12 and 14

Are library media programs today effectively carrying out the mission outlined in *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*? This assignment is designed to enable you to compare the vision and expectations described for school library media programs in *Information Power* and the realities that you find in schools in your community. Each member of the class is expected to observe three library media programs during the semester and make an oral presentation and submit an analytical and reflective paper about the observations. One observation is to be made at each level -- elementary, middle, and high school. Each observation must last a minimum of three hours during a typical school day. At least one of the three observations must be done in a public school in the District of Columbia, Baltimore City, or Prince George's County school districts; however, no more than two observations may be made in any one district so that you can observe differences in expectations, staffing, collection development policies, programming, and/or levels of support between or among districts. You may observe one non-public school library media program; however, at least two of the schools that you visit must be publicly funded.

During each observation, you are to focus on the following issues, which also are the topics you are to address in your presentation and paper:

> 1. Does the collection–including print, non-print, and electronic resources–appear to provide intellectual and physical access to appropriate information for students and staff? Is the collection up to date? What criteria did you use to reach your conclusion?

> 2. Describe examples of learning and teaching that you observed during your visits. What examples of cooperation, coordination, and/or collaboration did you observe between the library media specialist and classroom teachers? What factors supported or hindered collaboration and why? Did the staff in the library media center seem to work effectively together? Cite evidence that supports your opinion.

> 3. In what ways did the physical facility support learning and teaching? What changes to the facility would improve access and use by students and teachers?

> 4. What were the most striking differences that you observed among the programs that you observed? What were the reasons for the differences?

> 5. What were the most important things that you learned about effective library media programs as a result of your observations?

Information gathered is to be presented to the class in a 12-minute oral presentation, and in a 5-7 page typed, double-spaced paper, in a standard 12 pt. type face, which is to be submitted to your instructor of record at the time of your presentation. Your oral presentation should be enhanced with visual aids such as a PowerPoint presentation, videotape, transparencies, or slides. A copy

of the visual aids used is to be submitted with the paper. Both the presentation and the paper are to begin with brief descriptions of the schools visited and then focus on your analysis of the library media programs observed. The oral presentation should focus on questions 4 and 5. The analysis in the paper is to be guided by all five questions listed above.

Groups of up to three students may visit library media programs together and may make joint oral presentations that can last up to 24 minutes for two students and up to 36 minutes for three. The contributions of each member of the group must be interwoven throughout the entire oral presentation. It is not acceptable for each member of the group to address only one school observation during the oral presentation. Each student must submit an individual paper.

If you need assistance in identifying schools to visit, the instructors can provide you with the names of library media specialists who have indicated that they would welcome students to visit their programs.