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Assignment #1-

Part 1- Identifying User Needs- Looking at a Community

Information obtained from community analysis studies

1) Historical data and profile of the community- this information is
important for assessing any changes that have occurred over time in a com-
munity.

2) Geographic Data (including topography and climate) this is important
in assessing the direction of community growth and service points.

3) Transportaion availability- useful in developing service points and
hours of operation.

4) Legal research- may determine how a collection is to be developed.
This information is also useful for policy making.

5) Political information- this may influence the ways in which funds
are secured and allocated, and is useful for gaining a sense of the
'climate' of the community.

6) Demographic Data- this information is fundamental for determining the
characteristics of the target and user populations. It includes such var-
iables such as age, sex, ethnicity, population, income, education, housing,
language, occupation, number of people per household, etc.

7) Economic data- useful from the standpoint of planning and of the over-
all development of the collection. This information helps determine, in
part, who uses the library and the economic base of the user.

8) Communications systems- knowledge of these resources and their avail-
ablity may be of use in developing educational networks between the
schools and libraries and the community at large; these are usually good
sources for community access.

9) Social and educational organizations- these reflect the values of the
persons making up the community and provide a list of possible information
and referral sources available to the community at large.

10) Cultural and recreational organizations- these also reflect commu-
nity interests, and are possible networking sources.

11) Other community resources- especially important for developing infor-
mation and referral services. This information is vital to libraries.

2) Mission statement of the library- important to know in order to assess
whether the library is meeting its goals.

13) Breakdown of the community library system- this information is important because it tells you what library service is currently available in your community, and which sectors of the population the individual branches serve.

14) User profiles- this information tells the librarian who uses what, and what the characteristics of the user population are versus those of the non-user population.

15) History of the library system in the community- gives an indication of the growth of the library system in one's community over time and an idea of how the overall collection has changed and developed.

16) Community perception of libraries- This information is important for assessing the success of the library in terms of meeting the needs of the public, and in terms of its public outreach programs, if any exist. This information is usually obtained through the use of surveys, interviews and questionnaires.

Part 11- Identifying User Needs- Looking at a Target group

The target group which I selected is Hispanic youth from the ages of ten to nineteen in Tucson.

A) Reading and information needs of target group

1) Culturally relevant materials, including works on the history, culture, art, music and literature of Mexican Americans, preferrably material that is written by Hispanic authors.

2) Materials in both English and Spanish, and those which are bilingual.

3) High interest/low level reading materials

4) Job and career information

5) Information on higher education and availability of scholarships

6) General information and referral services, especially those dealing with birth control, drugs, and legal rights.

7) Storytelling and tutorial materials- these kinds of services would be helpful in supplementing the Mexican American's education,which is usually inadequate.

B) Characteristics of the target group that would have implications for
selecting library materials to satisfy their reading and information
needs.

1) Strong family orientation- many activities which involve only one person
in a family are not well received by one's parents or siblings. It would
be beneficial to involve the family in reading and other activities, in
order to gain positive feedback on such activites.

2) A high concentration of Mexican American families live in poverty. The
median income for Hispnics in 1975 was less than 10,400, far below the
national average. In addition to this, the average size of the Mexican
American family is four or more children per household.

3) High drop-out rates exist among Mexican American youth. Median school-
ing for this group is 8.2 years, with only 34% of the population complet-
ing four or more years of high school.

4) Functional illiteracy- 60% of all Mexican Americans are functionally
illiterate. The rate is declining among youth, but this data has important
implications because many parents don't have the skills to help their
own children to read or write.

5) The unemployment rate among Mexican Americans was 12% in 1978, and
has not improved since. There is a very high concentration of Mexican A-
mericans in low wage-blue collar and unskilled labor. This affects the
ability of the family to maintain a good and healthy attitude toward the
schools. Although education is highly valued in the Mexican American fam-
ily, many become discouraged and many teenagers have to work to supple-
ment the family income.

6) Almost 60% of the Spanish speaking use it in the home. This is a cru-
cial variable because many Mexican American children use Spanish as their
primary language. When they enter school, they have to start all over and
learn another language. Bilingual education is now making the transition
a bit easier, but it is increasingly coming under attack.

7) Many Mexican Americans view libraries as white only institutions. This
attitude stems in part from negative experiences in the library, and also
because in Mexico and Latin America, education has traditionally been a
privilege of the rich. Immigrants from those countries that enter the U.S.
are usually from the lower classes, so they rarely even know what a li-
brary is.

8) Because of their low economic standing, a disproportionate percentage of Mexican American youth get into trouble with the law. Drug abuse, burglary, gang warfare and teenage pregnancies are especially acute problems.
9) Public schools with heavy Hispanic and Black populations have been proven to be less effective in educating youth than those schools in anglo areas. Here in Tucson there is currently an uproar over the accessibility to materials in Tucson High, which is predominantly a minority school. Students from University High, a school for gifted youth, have been given better access to such materials as computers and typewriters. Both these schools are very close in proximity, but the resources of each vary greatly.
10) Hispanics are the fastest growing minority in the U.S. today. We are approaching ten percent of the total population. In Tucson, Hispanics comprise an even larger proportion of the population.-10 to15 percent.

Although the above characteristics apply to the total Mexican American population in the U.S., I think that they are very relevant for the Tucson area. From personal experience alone, I know that libraries and ibrarians are not very highly regarded among Mexican American youth.Use of the library is usually regarded as a chore or some form of punishment. The language barrier is a problem as is the unavailability of easy reading materials which are of importance to this group. In order to meet the needs of these kids, lots of time and money will need to be spent, and bilingual librarians who understand the culture and the values of this group will have to be recruited. Otherwise things will stay as they are, with very little usage of the library by Mexican American youth.

In comparing parts I and II of this assignment, overlapping occurs in the study of the demographic variables of the community,because Mexican Americans are a part of the whole. However, in order to get a complete picture of the target group and the community at large,it is important to use both methods. This is because within a community, there exist a myriad of sub-groups, each with their own cultural and linguistic characteristics. When I examined the literature on Mexican American youth, for example, I und a great disparity in ~~between~~ reading levels and habits, language development, and overall scholastic achievement between them and their Anglo

counterparts. If I had taken into account only the community at large, these differences would not have been as pronounced. Also, when working with and assessing branch libraries, it is especially important that one look at each branch's respective target group, because different geographic sectors of the community have markedly different constituencies, especially in Tucson.

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