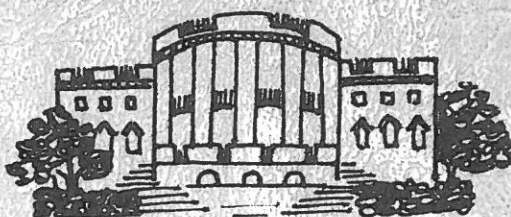


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**PROCEEDINGS  
of the**

APRIL 28-29, 1978

**Seminario on Library and Information  
Services for the Spanish-Speaking:  
A Contribution to the Arizona  
Pre-White House Conference**



*sponsored by*

**THE GRADUATE LIBRARY INSTITUTE FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING**

**AMERICANS (GLISA) of the Graduate Library School,**

**College of Education, University of Arizona in Tucson**

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# PREFACE

by

Arnulfo D. Trejo

This preface to the proceedings of the SEMINARIO ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR THE SPANISH-SPEAKING held in Tucson, Arizona on April 28-29, 1978 highlights the major issues singled out in five position papers covering library education and school, public, academic and special libraries. This will also include comments on the responses which these papers elicited. In addition, attention will be given to the resolutions introduced at the close of the conference. This capsule of the proceedings, however, is not intended to be a substitute for the total volume. It is simply a catalyst to stimulate interest in the various topics which were discussed and to draw the reader to the entire work.

Prior to the *SEMINARIO*, the White House Conference had been mentioned at various meetings of Spanish-speaking librarians such as REFORMA: THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF SPANISH-SPEAKING LIBRARIANS IN THE UNITED STATES, but no definite plans were ever made to put ideas into action. In view of this situation, the GLISA Institute took the initiative to organize the *SEMINARIO* as a forum that would contribute information to the Arizona pre-White House Conference scheduled for November 29-30, 1978. The *SEMINARIO*, designed to focus attention on the library and information needs of Hispanics, turned out to be a milestone in the field of librarianship. Never before had so many lay people and librarians gathered to discuss this par-



particular area of concern. In the course of the conference, it became evident that libraries have been unimportant to most Hispanics. It also became evident that the time was ripe for change.

The short and long range importance of the *SEMINARIO* was quick to surface in the position paper by Dr. Antonio Rodríguez-Buckingham of St. John's University entitled "The Pressure Is Off - A New Look at Library Education." His profile of Hispanics showed this segment of the population to be generally poor, undereducated, and politically uninvolved. As a result, Hispanic heritage people seldom use the library, if at all. In addition, he reported that there are approximately only 245 Spanish-speaking librarians to serve a total U. S. population of eleven million Hispanic persons. (His census documentation is based on 1970 figures.)

Dr. Rodríguez-Buckingham also pointed out that while the government provided funds for library programs and services as a result of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's, it feels safe in gradually withdrawing support on a continuous basis now that social unrest is on the decline. In other words - the pressure is off - and the need for improved library and information services for the Spanish-speaking are again a major issue. He stressed the need for the federal government to continue supporting Title II-B (of the Higher Education Act) which provides funds for library training.

Margaret Flores Hughes of Pima Community College in Tucson, attributed the poor education and economic status of Hispanics to the fact they they, for the most part, have been denied equal opportunity in education. She specifically indicated language as the

major barrier. The solution, according to her, lies in bilingual education.

Martín Gómez, a budding librarian in San Diego, noted in his position paper entitled "Public Library Services to the Spanish-speaking," that traditional standards designed for the conventional public library need modification if Hispanics are to be served satisfactorily. He suggested the need to employ approaches, services and materials other than those used to serve middle class America. He also observed that librarians of the "old school" philosophy find it difficult to adjust to more current methods and concepts, which include services and programs specially designed to serve ethnic minority groups. To make matters worse, many library administrators do not understand the need for outreach, which includes going out into the community to create awareness among Hispanics, as these people will not automatically come to the library if they have never done so before.

Jerrye G. Champion, head librarian at the Scottsdale (Arizona) Public Library, reinforced Mr. Gómez's position. She said that the public library holds the greatest potential for enriching the lives of Hispanics by providing positive identification, self acceptance, and ethnic pride and history.

According to Rafael Mesa-Aguirre, the Mexican Consulate in Tucson, libraries have been partly unsuccessful in reaching the Mexican American population because these institutions have never played a significant role in their cultural heritage. In Mexico,

libraries have generally been used only by the upper class and, for the most part, are ignored by the lower class which comprises the majority of the Mexican population immigrating to this country.

José Taylor, a librarian with the Los Angeles Public Library System, pointed to the "walls of prejudice" that still must be scaled in order to provide better library services to Hispanics. He stressed the need for Hispanic librarians who are attuned to our multi-faceted communities. He went on to say, "This scarcity must be considered sufficient reason for intensifying the recruitment of Hispanics into the profession and for helping to develop specialized training programs which will become integral components of library science schools in our universities."

On the topic of school libraries, Dr. Mauricio E. Charpenel of the University of Texas at San Antonio, presented a position paper entitled "A Magical Library for Carlitos: The School Library and the Hispanic American Child in the U.S." He described how the effort to keep the school library up-to-date has resulted in name changes which over the past ten years have varied from "School Study Center" to "Media Center." Name changing, however, has not always meant that library service for "Carlitos," a symbolic Hispanic American child, has improved. Dr. Charpenel explains that Carlitos possesses a rich and varied heritage characterized by an oral tradition. Therefore, he may not be comfortable with books and other print materials because they have not been a part of his daily family life. Dr. Charpenel feels that the school library could perhaps



perform the "magical" act of changing these attitudes by making the library a more meaningful part of the child's school experience, as the school librarian is the magician who interprets the illusions and dreams of Carlitos.

For Margarita Calderón of the Institute of Cultural Pluralism in Southern California, the dream of a magical library for Carlitos will not come true unless the school librarian is familiar with the philosophy of bilingual education, the culture of the child, and the latest educational techniques, as well as the availability and source of bilingual materials and, most of all, how to get them into the hands of the child.

The layman's viewpoint was expressed by Ronaldo Martínez Cruz, the owner of a Tucson bookstore, who sees the school library as much more than a student learning center. He envisions it rather as a community information and referral center which would provide a variety of services, experiences, and materials. This new type of school library would include, in addition to books, recordings of oral history, photo albums, old records, and even old tools and instruments; in other words, anything of interest that would attract both students and parents, as well as other community residents, to become involved with the school library.

Ruth Thomas, Coordinator of PROYECTO LEER in Washington, D.C., observed that ethnic studies collections in academic and public libraries have steadily increased, but school libraries with bilingual programs are largely neglected, even when bilingual education programs have been implemented in the regular school curriculum.

She strongly advocates library services to bilingual children as a top priority. Ms. Thomas looks to Spanish-speaking librarians to alleviate the existing problem, but Spanish-speaking librarians are scarce. As a matter of fact, she sees them as "candidates for the official list of endangered species." Therefore, more Spanish-speaking librarians should be recruited for schools with an enrollment of bilingual students. But action must not stop here. Non Spanish-speaking school librarians must also be made aware of the importance of bilingual education. Furthermore, bilingual teachers, aids, and parents should also be encouraged to relate reading materials to the children. Ms. Thomas is confident that school libraries can and will eventually develop into truly "magical" learning centers for bilingual children who will benefit from the many new learning adventures.

The library situation for Hispanic heritage college students also calls for improvement. These students have need for courses and library materials related to their culture and language. César Caballero, Reference Librarian at the University of Texas at El Paso, emphasized the high rate of attrition for Chicano college students. He made the following suggestions to improve academic library services for Hispanics:

1. Selection of relevant library materials in both English and Spanish. (It is important that the cultures of all Hispanic nations be represented in the collection.

2. Employment of librarians who are knowledgeable in and sensitive to the socio/political/economic conditions of the Spanish-speaking.
3. Implementation of special services such as reading enhancement programs and the preparation of subject bibliographies.

Lastly, he stressed the need for graduate programs, such as the one at the University of Arizona, to train Spanish-speaking students in the field of library science, and noted that such programs should be incorporated into regular university budgets rather than rely on "soft" monies.

Commenting on Mr. Caballero's paper, Silvia D. Espinosa, a Cuban-American librarian at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, stated that although Louisiana has a strong Hispanic heritage and a considerable Hispanic population, the number of Spanish-speaking librarians in the state is almost non-existent. She explained that her work varies from helping students in the use of the library to preparing translations of business correspondence for students and faculty, and doing recordings of Spanish language materials for the blind and physically disabled. Yet she feels that her bilingual skills have not been fully recognized. She pointed out that most countries in the world place value in bilingualism, but that the U.S. is still fighting for the existence of a monolingual nation.

In regard to Mr. Caballero's statement that there is a desperate need for materials relevant to Hispanics, Julio Martínez, Reference Librarian at San Diego State University, brought to light some interesting statistics. Thirty-five books on Mexican Americans were in print in 1970. By contrast, 180 were in print in 1977. He also noted that the number of films had increased by leaps and bounds in the last ten years. The problem, then, is not so much a lack of materials, but rather in determining what is available and where it can be located. To meet this need, he suggested a clearinghouse of library science materials prepared with the Hispanic student in mind. This agency would be a nationwide source of library science information and bibliographies, course programs, surveys, in-depth studies, statistics and audio-visual materials.

The last position paper on special libraries was prepared by Laurita K. Moore, Reference Librarian at the Energy Library of the U.S. Department of Energy in Washington, D.C. She underscored the scarcity of Hispanic librarians working in special libraries today. She could identify only twenty-two in the 1975 QUIEN ES QUIEN. As a means of acquainting those present with the work of a special librarian and of encouraging more Hispanic librarians to go into this field, she described some interesting facets of her assignment. Furthermore, she pointed out ways through which sophisticated storage and retrieval systems could be used to the benefit of Spanish-speaking people. She asserted that data bases can be useful in

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affirmative action programs and in organizations such as IMAGE and REFORMA. Finally, she affirmed that special librarians could greatly contribute towards the development of data banks which would collect and disseminate information by, for and about Hispanics.

The remarks by Ms. Moore were received with mixed feelings. Robert Trujillo of the University of California at Santa Barbara, found the paper too limited in scope. Therefore, he felt that before a policy statement on special libraries could be made, a needs assessment should be undertaken.

On the other hand, Martha Cotera, an information broker from Austin, Texas, picked up on the enthusiasm generated by Ms. Moore. She declared that the Hispanic special librarian is particularly important now that the information revolution is in progress and that "information systems will do to organization and communication what low cost jet travel and WATS lines did for us in the 1960's."

The work of the first day of the conference was distilled into 45 resolutions for presentation at the Arizona pre-White House Conference. Even though each committee worked separately, four common areas of concern were reflected in the various resolutions, dealing with the need for:

1. An increased number of Spanish-speaking librarians
2. Increased employment of Spanish-speaking librarians
3. Development of relevant library collections
4. Establishment of a clearinghouse



In the first category, resolutions varied from recruitment to curriculum, and from the need for more Hispanic instructors to more library training programs for Hispanics. In regard to employment, the resolutions called for affirmative action programs and the elimination of sexism and racism. The resolutions dealing with library collections emphasized the need to develop current and retrospective bilingual/bicultural materials. One resolution recommended that publishers be given financial incentives to produce these types of materials. Finally, there was strong interest in the development of a clearinghouse to handle materials relevant to Hispanics. Along the same vein, resolutions called for the establishment of data banks.

The implementation of all these resolutions in one way or another involved the appropriation of funds at the federal, state and local levels of government. The time has come for the President of the United States, Congress and our own legislatures to be apprised of our needs and to be convinced that our goals will not only enhance the well being of Hispanics, but will strengthen the nation as well.

Lobbying legislators for increased library financial support will not be easy at this time of the so-called "taxpayers' revolt." On the other hand, legislators could be reminded that in addition to facing unhappy librarians, they may also have to face an augmented, unemployed and restless populace at the polls.

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In conclusion, I wish to remind the reader that this summary is merely one man's overview of the entire volume. No doubt, some topics have been covered more extensively than others. Also, it was not possible to comment on the response of every person who contributed to the proceedings. But regardless of my interpretation and assessment of the *SEMINARIO*, the purpose of this summary remains the same: to invite the reader to ponder on the many challenging thoughts contained in this publication.

At this particular point in time, it is of special interest to draw the reader's attention to the resolutions as these succinctly capture the essence of the one-and-a-half day conference. Since this *SEMINARIO* resulted in the only pre-White House Conference of its kind concerned with library services for Hispanics, the resolutions derived have significant value to Arizonans as well as to those persons and agencies in other states who are striving to elevate and broaden library and informational services for this segment of the U. S. population.

Therefore, whoever the delegates may be to represent Arizona in Washington, D.C., they must keep in mind that they will be speaking not just for the Spanish-speaking people in Arizona, but for all Hispanic Americans in this country. Whatever gains are achieved in Washington, they will certainly symbolize what can happen when people of different cultures work together, and the results will be a victory for all.