

HYPOTHESIS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RESEARCH SECTION OF MLA

HYPOTHESIS. The Newsletter of the Research Section of MLA

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RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT IN MLA NEWS



BY JULIE KELLY

The Research Section's "Research Spotlight" in the MLA News highlights research projects by MLA members that have been presented or published in places other than MLA meetings or the BMLA. Authors may suggest their own work, or nominate a colleague's project. Included in this issue of HYPOTHESIS is a green, short form for submission. Take a moment to reply today or contact Julie Kelly (J-KELL1@tc.umn.edu or 612-626-5454).

RESEARCH SECTION CHAIR'S MESSAGE

BY ZOË STAVRI, PhD

As I sit to write this 'message,' I realize I might appear to be stepping up to the same soap box. The crux of my message is essentially the same as in the last issue of Hypothesis, even if it does come from a different angle. After you read this, you'll know what I mean.

Earlier this year I attended the Association for Library and Information Science Educators Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. After perusing the resumes of qualified applicants for open faculty positions, a dearth of job-seeking PhDs or PhD candidates with a specialization or apparent interest in health sciences librarianship became evident. In fact, the only nod to medical anything was apparent in the handful of applicants with medical informatics backgrounds. It seems to me that this situation could be interpreted in several ways.

Is it that fewer schools are offering health science librarianship courses and thus fewer doctoral students are choosing to focus their studies in these areas, thinking about their later marketability? Is it perhaps that students with an interest in medical information are increasingly moving toward informatics research and future employment in schools of informatics? Or are new PhD's in areas related to health science information landing directorship positions? Probably all of the above, and in combination. I'm going to skip the last possibility and focus on the rest.

Within our organization, interest in health sciences information research is on the rise. MLA continues to offer a fellowship to doctoral candidates working in the health sciences information area. Our Section continues to receive high quality abstracts for the Research Section sponsored contributed paper sessions. And at the 1997 annual meeting there will even be an NPC sponsored research session. Our present members seem to be headed in the right direction.

See next page

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Jan LaBeause, Editor
Medical Library and LRC
Mercer University School of Medicine
1550 College St.
Macon, GA 31207-0001
VOICE: 912-752-2516
FAX: 912-752-2051
E-MAIL: labeause.j@gain.mercer.edu

HYPOTHESIS is the official newsletter of the Research Section of MLA. It is published three times a year by the Section: Spring (March), Summer (July/August), and Fall (November). Items to be included should be sent to the Editor by the 15th of the preceding month (i.e., February 15th for Spring, June 15th for Summer, October 15th for Fall). Copy is preferred by e-mail, but will be accepted in other formats.

Message, continued

We already know this is a provocative combination but we need to get the word out.

For the most part research methods cut across the questions of many disciplines. Every good research endeavor begins with a thorough search of the literature. We need to build upon previous research and existing theory. And we are adding to the body of knowledge with germinal work. How do we reach students with the idea?

Who will teach students about health sciences librarianship? In library school, one's professors and advisor are always in view. Currently several schools make good use of adjunct faculty who are practicing librarians. This places a great deal of the burden on them to recruit fledgling librarians into the health sciences information research, but is this enough?

Again we have to spread the word. Within MLA we know the benefits of our profession and increasingly, the benefits of conducting research within our profession. Yet while speaking to my colleagues at ALISE, I came to realize that many of them never thought about focusing their research efforts in the health sciences domain. In order to continue to bring in a stream of motivated new professionals, we need to establish a presence outside of MLA. Maybe we have to investigate having MLA student chapters much as ALA, ASIS, and SLA do. Maybe we need to involve faculty at library schools with our research efforts. Plenty of professors and invited speakers talked about their research in public or general academic libraries, in newspaper or law libraries, and even as information brokers. But not one came to speak to us about medical librarianship. How did I develop an interest? Through another medical librarian who was beginning on her own research career. It was the personal touch that encouraged me to investigate the possibilities of a career in health sciences information research. And my life has never been the same since.

So it is the same message: let the spark of your enthusiasm about what you do as a researcher and health sciences information specialist inspire someone else. Just one person will do.

ELECTION RESULTS

BY NATALIE SCHOCH

**Congratulations to our
new officers for 1997-1998:**

Chair-Elect (1997-1998) -
Ruth Fenske, Ph.D.

Section Council Representative -
Julie Kelly

Section Council Alternate -
John Coffey

Secretary/Treasurer -
Lothar Spang

Candidate for the MLA Nominating
Committee -
Ann McKibbin

RESEARCH SECTION OFFICERS, 1996-1997

CHAIR	ZOË STAVRI, PhD
CHAIR-ELECT	JULIE MCGOWAN, PhD
PAST CHAIR	JOCELYN RANKIN, PhD
SECRETARY/TREASURER	ANN MCKIBBON
SECTION COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE	GARY BYRD, PhD
SECTION COUNCIL ALTERNATE	JULIA ANN KELLY
SECTION NOMINEE FOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE ...	PAM BRADIGAN
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BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIR	LEAH ANDERSON
CONTINUING EDUCATION LIAISON	NATALIE SCHOCH, PhD
GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS LIAISON	JON ELDREDGE, PhD
HISTORY TASK FORCE CHAIR	ROBERT BRAUDE, PhD
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR	NANCY WOEFFL, PhD
NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR	NATALIE SCHOCH, PhD
RESEARCH RESOURCES COMMITTEE CHAIR ..	NATALIE SCHOCH, PhD
.....	& DAVID OWEN, PhD
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	JAN LABEAUSE
LAYOUT EDITOR	MIRIAM HUDGINS

FOR CONTACT INFORMATION, SEE MLA DIRECTORY OR
RESEARCH SECTION HOME PAGE
([HTTP://WWW-HSL.MCMASTER.CA:80/LRS/INDEX.HTML](http://www-hsl.mcmaster.ca:80/lrs/index.html))

BY-LAWS REVISION

BY LEAH ANDERSON



The proposed changes to the Section's bylaws will be voted on at the next business meeting at MLA:

Article V, Section 2:

Add new section as follows:

"Section F: The duties of the Immediate Past Chair are to ensure continuity in the transfer of responsibilities to the Chair, and to provide counsel to the Chair as needed."

Article VI, Section 1, Part C:

Add the following to Part C: "Members of the Executive Committee are not eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee."

Food for
thought...

"Most of the knowledge and much of the genius of the research worker lie behind his selection of what is worth observing. It is a crucial choice, often determining the success or failure of months of work, often differentiating the brilliant discoverer from the ... plodder."

Alan Gregg (1890-1957), The Furtherance of Medical Research

"When you steal from one author, it's plagiarism; if you steal from many, it's research."

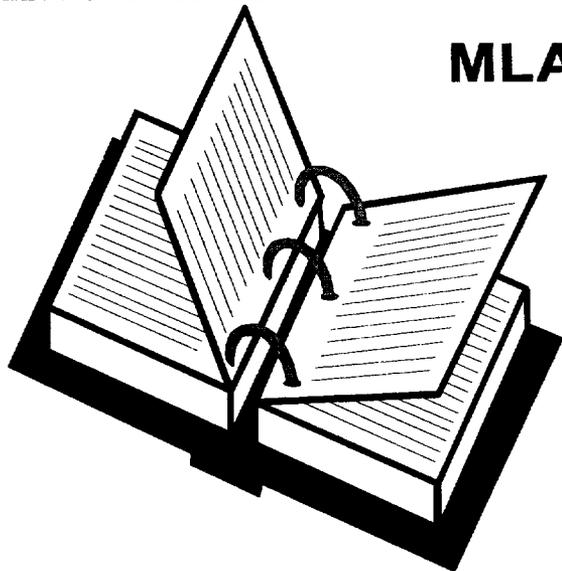
Attributed to Wilson Mizner (1876-1933) US writer and wit.

PERSONALS

Congratulations to **Natalie Schoch** on her new position as Information Specialist for the Kellogg Company. She may be reached at their Science and Technology Center, 235 Port St., Battle Creek, MI 49016-3423 (616-961-6182). Her fax number is 616-961-6779, and her e-mail address is: natalie.schoch@kellogg.com.

Also please correct your directories to show **Zoë Stavri's** new phone number (301-435-4083) and fax number (301-480-1467). She has moved to the National Network Office at NLM.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS:



MLA 1997 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The MLA 1997 Annual Meeting and Exhibit is just around the corner. To take advantage of early registration fees, you need to make your choices and mail your registration by April 11th. Here's a preview of the program from a research perspective for those who haven't had time to study it yet. Mark your registration forms and your calendars accordingly!

First and foremost, our **Business Meeting** is scheduled for Monday, May 26th, 4:00-5:30 PM. Your attendance and participation are crucial to letting your voice be heard and making your opinion count. Be sure to join us as we plan future events and form the policies of the Research Section.

The Program Committee has been hard at work putting together our biggest and best program ever. We are co-sponsoring three contributed papers sessions and sponsoring a poster session. Our first session, with the Medical Informatics Section, will be Sunday, May 25th, 2:00-3:30 PM, and is entitled "**Collaborative Challenges Leading to Change: Medical Informatics Research.**" Tuesday's offering, May 27th (11:00 AM-12:30 PM), will be co-sponsored with the Research Policy and Implementation Task Force and is entitled "**The Challenge: Building Foundations for Change.**"

Our final contributed papers session, with the History of the Health Sciences Section, is entitled "**Historical Research: Foundation for Change, Preparation for Challenge,**" and is scheduled for Tuesday, May 27th, from 2:30-4:00 PM. In addition to three submitted papers, a special bonus is the invited presentation of Dr. Elizabeth Fee, Chief of the History of Medicine Division at NLM, on "**Supporting Historical Research: The Resources and Tools of the National Library of Medicine.**"

The Research Section Poster Session, "**Foundations for the Future: The Challenges of Change**" may be viewed Monday, May 26th 4:00-6:00 PM, and Tuesday, May 27th 12:30-2:30 PM. In addition, the National Program Committee is sponsoring "**Research Challenges Facing Health Sciences Librarians**" on Monday, May 26th, 2:00-3:30 PM with the Research Policy and Implementation Task Force. Still another opportunity for Research Section members, with an interest in the activities of their Chapters, is to attend the Sunday (7:00-9:00 AM), May 25th, **Chapter Sharing Roundtables** where a "Research" table is among the sixteen being featured.

We also hope that many of you will be taking advantage of the impressive line-up of Continuing Education courses from the 700 series on "Research, Analysis, and Interpretation," some of which are being taught by Research Section members:

Friday, May 23rd (Full-Day - 8 contact hours)

- 700 **Survey Design**
Alexandria Dimitroff, Ph.D.
- 701 **The Web as a Research Tool**
Laura Larsson & Charles Hendricksen

Saturday, May 24th (Afternoon - 4 contact hours)

- 703 **Advanced Research Methods**
Leslie Behm
- 704 **Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods**
Lynda Baker, Ph.D.

NEW AWARD ASSISTS HOSPITAL LIBRARIANS

A new award proposed by MLA's Hospital Libraries Section was approved by MLA's Board of Directors at their September 1996 meeting. The Hospital Libraries Section/MLA Professional Development Award, will be offered twice a year to librarians who have been employed in hospitals or similar clinical settings within the last year. The award provides librarians with financial support for educational or research activities, and award winners will receive a cash prize of \$800. Recognizing that many librarians would like to be involved in scientific research, but cannot obtain financial support from their institutions, the Hospital Libraries Section specifically included support for research. The preamble states:

An endowed professional development award has been established by the Hospital Libraries Section of MLA to encourage participation in professional programs that will aid librarians working in hospitals and other clinical care institutions in developing and acquiring the knowledge and skills delineated in Platform for Change (MLA's educational policy statement) and Using Scientific Evidence to Improve Information Practice (MLA's research policy statement). The award may also be utilized to support reimbursement for expenses incurred in conducting scientific research such as professional assistance in survey research design, statistical analyses, etc.

MLA expects to present the first award in the Fall of 1997. The application deadline is July 15. An application form is available on the Hospital Libraries Section Web site (www.njc.org/hls/hls.html) or from Beth Ruddy, Research and Professional Recognition Coordinator, Medical Library Association, Suite 300, Six North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60602-4805 (312/419-9094 x28 or e-mail at: mlapd@mlahq.org)

THE MLA COOKBOOK PROJECT

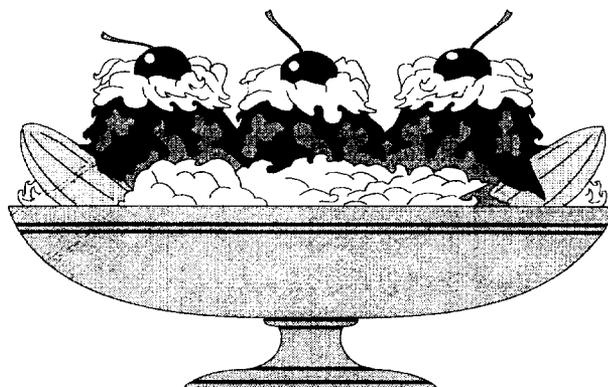
As you have read in the November MLA News, the Board of Directors has established a Cookbook Project to honor Dan Richards, former member of the Board of Directors and Director of Dartmouth's Dana Biomedical Library. Dan made many friends in MLA, and he shared his enjoyment of life with them. This cookbook project serves as a fun activity to show our enjoyment in the pleasures of food, wine, cooking, eating and entertainment.

MLA members and their friends are welcome to submit recipes for the MLA Cookbook. The criteria for submitting a recipe is that it is one of your favorites or a favorite of your family, friends or colleagues. Relatively easy preparation and quick cooking times are also good characteristics. Ethnic dishes, potluck specials or other satisfying food items are all needed to provide plenty of recipes for the first MLA cookbook. Friends of Dan are encouraged to submit recipes of memorable dishes shared with him.

Another facet of this project is its publication in time for MLA's 1998 centennial. Cookbook sales will begin at the Philadelphia meeting. A special feature of the cookbook will include historical graphic material that will be solicited from the special collections of MLA member libraries; details will be announced later in the year.

To make editing and publishing easier, electronic mail will be the preferred means of submitting your copy. For format and more information, please contact:

James Shedlock, Director
Galter Health Sciences Library
Northwestern University
303 E. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611
VOICE: 312-503-8133
FAX: 312-503-1204
EMAIL: j-shedlock@nwu.edu
shedlock@casbah.acns.nwu.edu



Editor's Note: "Southern Chapter/MLA Journal Usage Study: Hospital Library Analysis" by Cheryl Dee, Jocelyn Rankin, Carol Burns, Lynn Fortney, Joy Harriman, Jett McCann and Karen Warren was presented at MLA '96 in Kansas City, Missouri, at the contributed paper session "Using Scientific Evidence to Improve Public Services in the New Information Frontier." The session was co-sponsored by the Research and Public Services Sections, and the paper received the first Research Section Award for Best Paper.



Research Spotlight



RESEARCH COLLABORATIVES: SOUTHERN CHAPTER/MLA JOURNAL USAGE STUDY

BY JOCELYN RANKIN, PH.D.

The Southern Chapter of the Medical Library Association's Research Committee is charged with fostering and enabling individual research studies as well as initiating and possibly implementing joint projects. Over the years, a number of strategies have been taken by the Research Committee to support individual researchers including sponsoring continuing education opportunities, spotlighting researchers in the Chapter's *Southern Expressions* newsletter, offering small grants, and mentoring. However, a major commitment was made by the Research Committee and the SC/MLA membership when it was decided to design and implement a chapter-wide collaborative study.

The SC/MLA organized its Research Committee in 1990. This group has received a great deal of continuing support from the Southern Chapter Executive Board including funding for several mid-year committee meetings. Prior to its initial planning retreat in Macon, Georgia, the Research Committee had surveyed the SC/MLA membership regarding their research interests and current research projects. The survey results indicated a surprising amount of on-going research activity within the membership, as well as a strong interest in collaborative projects. Thus, at that memorable first retreat, Committee members had adequate information from the membership to outline the committee's work including the design of several potential research studies.

In its planning, the Research Committee examined several research topics for possible chapter-wide collaboration. The decision was made to

select a journal usage study because all members, both academic and hospital, had an interest in this topic; all members could participate and benefit at the institutional as well as at the group level from the results; and, given the rising costs and growing number of journal titles, this was a timely topic. The Research Committee identified the following purposes for the study:

1. To develop a multi-institutional research model which would enable implementation of a standardized methodology for collecting journal usage data;
2. To measure the effectiveness of journal collections in response to local usage;
3. To provide the data needed to effectively manage budgets in an era of increasing subscription costs and restricted budgets; and
4. To develop benchmarks for journal collections, demonstrating the value and utility of a chapter-wide study.

The Research Committee intended to explore a number of research questions through this study including identifying values that could be set to benchmark the performance of journal collections such as frequency and cost of usage, frequency and cost of non-usage, and the percentage of a journal collection meeting 80% of the usage. In the early phases, other variables were examined as well: language of publication, country of publication, subject areas, etc. We wondered also about the commonality among the frequently used titles such as whether there were differences in journal use patterns among different types of hospitals.

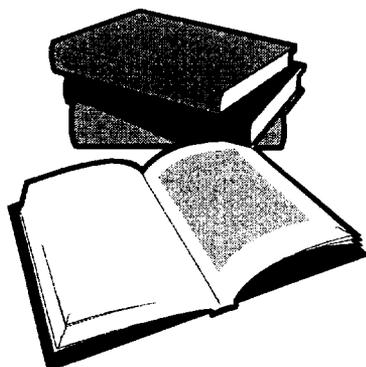
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Spotlight, continued

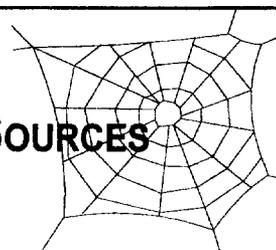
In 1992, the Research Committee implemented a pilot study which essentially involved the committee member institutions - three academic medical libraries and two hospital libraries. A Phase II Study took place in 1993 with participation by 22 SC/MLA libraries. A Phase III Study involved 36 hospital libraries and 17 academic libraries. Reports on the various study phases have been presented at Southern Chapter and annual Medical Library Association meetings in the form of posters and presentations.

The paper presented at MLA '96 in Kansas City reported on the data from the 36 hospital libraries included in Phase III. That presentation, as well as a paper submitted to the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, described the full design of the study. In it, the hospital libraries were categorized by the SC/MLA Hospital Library Committee into three groups to better control variables among the participants. Some of the highlights among the findings included an average cost of use among the three categories of \$6.86, quite similar to the cost of an interlibrary loan. The average cost of non-usage of journals was \$144.97. The average frequency of use of a journal title ranged from 8.3 to 53.3 uses per title, with an average of 30.4 uses per title. One of the most interesting findings in all phases of this study was that there was very little commonality among the top 80% of journals used in these hospital libraries. In fact, despite the fact that there were almost 1,500 titles in the final hospital library database, there was little commonality among the individual subscription lists.

The SC/MLA Research Committee continues to massage the data from this study, now turning its attention to the results from the academic medical libraries. Individual hospitals also have continued to study the usage of their own collections. The committee hopes to repeat the full study at 3- to 5-year intervals to observe and record significant changes in journal usage patterns.



CITING WEB SOURCES



The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, the style manual of the Modern Language Association, is used by many authors (including those writing for BMLA). The 1997 edition will have full guidelines for quoting or crediting information gleaned from the Internet. In the meantime, here are a couple of useful web sites:

•MLA-Style Citations of Electronic Sources. Site maintained by Janice Walker, Department of English, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL. Endorsed by the Alliance for Computers & Writing.

<http://www.cas.usf.edu/english/walker/mla.html>

•Beyond the MLA Handbook. Site maintained by Andrew Harnack and Gene Kleppinger at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY.

<http://falcon.eku.edu/honors/beyond-mla/>

For those using the APA format of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, these sites may be of interest:

•APA-Style Citations of Electronic Sources. Site maintained by Janice Walker, Department of English, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL.

<http://www.cas.usf.edu/english/walker/apa.html>

•APA Publication Manual Crib Sheet. Site maintained by Russ Dewey, Psychology Department, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA.

<http://www.gasou.edu/psychweb/tipsheet/apacrib.htm>

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

The Research Resources Committee of the Research Section is sponsoring the Research Spotlight, a column in the MLA News featuring research projects by MLA members. The focus is on work that has been published or presented in places other than the Bulletin of the Medical Library Association or the MLA annual meeting. Authors may suggest their own work, or you may nominate a colleague's project. To have a project considered for the Research Spotlight, simply fill in the form below and mail or fax it to: Julie Kelly, Bio-Medical Library, University of Minnesota, 301 Diehl Hall, Minneapolis, MN 55455 (FAX: 612-626-2454).

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT REPORT FORM

Project title/topic:

Brief description, including statement of purpose, methodology, and results:

Have you received funding? From what source?

Has this project been reported in the literature or at a meeting? If so, please give the citation. If not, do you plan to submit it?

Name of project leader:

Title of project leader:

Institution:

Address:

E-mail:

Fax: