ABSTRACT

            The Community College of Vermont (CCV) does not have
a campus library, but supports its programs with library services
offered at 12 different sites within the state. The 12 sites, which
were begun in spring 1965, each have a 500-volume non-circulating
reference collection, with a special emphasis on business and human
services materials to match program needs. Specialized collections in
such areas as adult education, science, fine arts, Vermont history,
sign language, cultural anthropology, and psychology, are circulated
on a rotating basis among sites. The site libraries serve as research
skills laboratories, helping students to begin their research by
becoming familiar with reference materials, the card catalog, and
various indexes. The college provides direct reference service to a
community of students and instructors scattered throughout the state
via a Wide Area Telecommunications Service (WATS) line installed into
the office of CCV's library coordinator. Each of the site offices is
equipped with the hardware and software to access the Instructional
Resource and Information System (IRIS), a newly developed computer
program designed to assist CCV instructors in sharing successful and
exciting teaching techniques, classroom materials, exercises, books,
videos, films, journal articles, and guest speakers. It is no easy
task to provide library services to students in a non-campus setting.
CCV relies heavily on telecommunications, computers, and cooperation
with other libraries and institutions to accomplish this task.
(EJV)

Off-Campus Library Services Community College of Vermont

Eileen Chalfoun

Community College of Vermont

"The role of the library within a college or university
can be understood only in the context of the institution's
philosophy of education (Princeton Alumni Weekly, April 23,
1986, p. 6). While this may be true of most libraries in general,
it deserves special attention at a school like Community College
of Vermont. At the heart of the college's philosophy of education
is the concept of the Self-Reliant Learner. Students are constantly
encouraged to assess their educational needs, plan ways to address
those needs, implement plans and evaluate the success of completed
learning activities. The role of its library must be a flexible
and dynamic one in response to the needs of students who are
designing individual degree plans.

Community College of Vermont does not have a campus library,
but rather provides library services for programs offered at twelve
different sites within the state. (see p. 128 of The Off-Campus
Library Services Conference II, 1985, for complete data.) It is
one of five state colleges who have been involved in a joint
planning process for library development since fall 1982. As a
non-campus institution the college has had to rely heavily on
the cooperative planning efforts of member colleges in order to
improve access to materials and services traditionally found in
campus libraries. Accessing those research materials in a variety
of ways has inspired the college staff to use modern information
technology in implementing its long-range development plan.

In its report of July 1984 all of the five state colleges in
Vermont adopted the following goal statement: "A student, by the
time he or she completes a VSC degree program, should be able to
make efficient and effective use of library/information resources
and personnel in the identification and procurement of material to
meet an information need." (Report of the Task Force on Library
Development, July 1984, p. 3.) It has become the task of Community
College of Vermont to help its students and instructors access the
information they find necessary for their individual degree
programs.

The college has adopted its own set of objectives designed
to help students achieve their library goal. Their degree plans
should show evidence that they can:

develop appropriate topics or questions
as a basis for their research;

locate, organize, and use resource materials
such as catalogs, bibliographies, indexes,
abstracts, computer data bases, and Biblio-tech
(CCV handbook of research skills for use both in
and out of the library);

gather and assess research data;

report research results in a variety of formats
and set up a research paper in correct form using
an outline, footnotes, and a bibliography. (Steps
To Degree Planning, 1985, p. 25.)

The planning process for curriculum and collection development
involves the whole college community. Students, instructors, and
Coordi. tors of Instruction funnel their suggestions for print and
non-prin materials to the Coordinator of Research and Information
Services and the Instructional Resources Committee. Recommendations
are revi wed and researched for quality and applicability to the
college's curriculum; materials are then acquired for site
collections.

The twelve site collections were begun in the spring of
1985, and further developed during the following year bringing
the volume total to approximately 6,000 (about 500 per site office).
They may be generally described as reference collections covering
all sections of the Dewey classification system with special emphasis
on business and human service materials to match program needs.
With the exception of specialized materials, these are non-
circulating collections. Specialized collections to be circulated
on a rotating basis among sites include: adult education, science,
fine arts, Vermont history, sign language, cultural anthropology,
and psychology. Each site receives subscriptions to general
subject and business journal indexes. Non-print materials accessed
through I.R.I.S., the college's computer index, are housed in all
sites.

The collections are not mini-libraries designed to fill all
the research needs of students. They could be described as laboratories
for the acquisition of library/research skills. The college still
maintains formal relationships with local public libraries, regional
public libraries, and other academic institutions for borrowing
books through inter-library loan. The site libraries help students
to begin their research by becoming familiar with reference materials
and by learning how to use a card catalog and various indexes. In
short they serve as the classroom centers for bibliographic instruction.

In order to provide direct reference service to a
community of students and instructors scattered throughout
the state, the college has installed a WATS line into the office
of its library coordinator. This line enables students to obtain
reference assistance from any location within the state without
direct cost to them. The system has been used experimentally for
a year and has gained praise from librarians at other Vermont
colleges as a distinct benefit to students studying at a
distance from a college campus. Another service which the college
provides is telefacsimile transmission of information from its
three regional offices (Brattleboro, Montpelier, Winooski). Students
are able to use serials' indexes in each of the twelve site offices,
and request articles located in any of the four state college
libraries. During its first semester of operation, approximately
200 requests were made to VSC libraries for information, and print
materials were delivered to students for research purposes, again,
at no direct cost to them. This service is part of the continuing
effort toward library cooperation among the five state colleges.

According to ACRL standards, the college ought to have three
professionals working in its library system. (An Evaluative
Checklist for Reviewing a College Library Program, 1979. p. 316).
Currently, the college employs one professional reference librarian
with the title "Coordinator of Research and Information Services"
and one half-time receptionist/clerk-typist, both housed in the
Brattleboro site office. In spring of 1986 a recommendation was
made to add the services of one half-time reference librarian to
serve the northern part of the state, and one half-time technical
services librarian to assist with cataloging and classifying the
college's non-print materials. Clearly, there is a need for more
professional help in providing library services to over 2,000
students each semester.

A brief summary of the functions of the Coordinator of
Research and Information Services for the college appears in the
VSC's classification handbook:

> The Coordinator of Research & Information
> Services provides information and research
> support services integral to the college cur-
> riculum. This includes management of the instruc-
> tional resources network of a non-campus institution
> which consists of reference libraries in each
> site office, a computer resource network, and
> inter-library loan activities. The Coordinator
> acts as a liaison between the college and the
> Vermont State College's library projects and personnel.

Responsibilities include: advising and instructing students, instructors and field staff in the use of the college's computer resource network as well as other instructional media; developing the college's print and non-print collection; selecting and recommending materials to be purchased or discarded. The Coordinator performs traditional and on-line searches, manages the processing of library/ media materials, and participates in program development. The Coordinator provides assistance to VSC students and instructors participating in off-campus programs in the vicinity of Community College of Vermont site offices.

As the college continues to grow and expand its library services, a number of these responsibilities will need to be divided among other staff members in various parts of the state. Hopefully, modern communications technology will aid the college in this redistribution process.

I.R.I.S. (Instructional Resource and Information System) is a newly developed computer program designed to assist CCV instructors in sharing successful and exciting teaching techniques, classroom materials, exercises, books, videos, films, filmstrips, journal articles, bibliographies, guest speakers. Each site office is equipped with a computer and software to enable instructors to access information at their convenience. All staff and instructors are invited to contribute information about materials which they have successfully used in classes. These are reviewed by the Instructional Resources Committee, and systematically entered into the program for college-wide use. Information can be accessed in a variety of ways: title, author, title key word, LC subject, course title/number, type of media.

CCV does not have a traditional faculty. Courses at the College are taught by independent contractors recruited by Coordinators of Instruction and Advisement, and hired by the College through the regional directors. There are problems associated with the large teacher turnover in the college each semester--approximately 40%. Using I.R.I.S. has proved a useful way to provide the continual stream of new teachers with materials and methods in a systematic and convenient way, and to help them lose the sense of isolation working in a non-campus institution.

Of special use for research purposes is the bibliographic instruction manual, Biblio·tech, planned and written by CCV staff in 1985 especially for students in a non-campus setting. All students are encouraged to purchase their own copy of the manual

to help them with degree planning, and with courses having a research component. A sample of the kind of information the manual contains is clearly shown in its table of contents: Retrieving and Using Information, Helpful Hints for Conducting Research, Information Search Strategies, Library Resources, Interlibrary Loan, Computers in the Library, Catalogs, Reference Departments, Government Documents, Research Guides and Handbooks, Research Terminology, Library Research Facilities in Vermont. The manual has been enthusiastically received by librarians and faculty in other off-campus settings who are trying to provide services similar to CCV's. It is addressed to students, and allows them to follow the steps to doing careful research without the strict guidance of an instructor.

Library training of staff and students has been largely the domain of the Coordinator of Research & Information Services. During tne academic year orientations and workshops are held in site offices. Specific courses in research and writing are listed in the college catalog and arranged for students, and staff development days are held on a yearly basis. Coordinators work with instructors to incorporate research objectives into course descriptions, and plan formal library instruction periods for students each semester. Bibliographic instruction remains the largest goal in our program, but the logistics of providing quality instruction state-wide each semester are complicated. Trying to use modern technology without sacrificing the values of close human interaction has always presented an interesting challenge for the non-campus college community, and CCV continues to experiment with ways of providing information electronically without sacrificing those values.

Until three years ago there was very little resource sharing or cooperative collection development among the Vermont State Colleges Libraries. Interlibrary loan was available through the Vermont Department of Libraries and most often took from two to three weeks for delivery of books. Times have changed dramatically and 1986 finds all five of the state colleges working together on the tasks of collection development, a joint serials list, increased use of online searching, retrospective conversion, a joint online catalog, and a common policy for online searches.

The decision has been made to combine the state college catalogs into a single online system which will be made available to off-campus and non-campus students and faculty. There will be one point of access for all VSC holdings and electronic mail capability within the system for ordering materials. Obviously, the benefits to Community College of Vermont will be enormous.

For the first time in the history of the College students will
be able to access the VSC catalog from any site office, then
request and receive materials directly. It is expected that this
project will be implemented by the spring of 1987, and ready for
use by CCV students and staff by fall of 1987.

It is no easy task to provide library service and instruction
to students in a non-campus setting. Community College of
Vermont has been in the vanguard of institutions trying to create
"electronic libraries" which rely heavily on telecommunications and
computers to accomplish this task. However, providing electronic
access to materials does not guarantee satisfied library users.
(Brown, 1985). Users need training and a well-organized library
instruction program to become good researchers . With continued
support from the Vermont State Colleges, increased staffing, and
vigorous academic and financial. planning, Community College will
continue to develop ways to provide that training and library
service. It will continue to strive toward national recognition
for some of its experimental library programs, and to work toward
improving its electronic networking services. The key to success
in this delivery system is cooperation, and it is hoped that
everyone involved in the library planning process throughout
the state will remain deeply committed to working together
effectively to provide library assistance to all VSC students.

In the U.S. Department of Education's report entitled
Alliance for Excellence: Librarians Respond to a Nation At Risk,
recommendations in support of the learning society include the
need to: "improve service to people of all ages; strengthen
research; expand resource sharing in support of lifelong learning;
and refine the educational preparation of library and information
professionals in order that they may work more effectively."
(Annual Report, 1983-84). These are the goals Community College
strives for in the state of Vermont,and the reasons it remains
committed to strengthening the network of library and information
service within the area.

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