

competencies can have on a student. Vega stated, "It's not just skills, it's a way of life that we are imparting."

This theme was reiterated and expanded in the keynote speech by Costa Rican librarian Saray Córdoba. She stressed the importance of active, participatory learning in teaching information competencies. She identified a cycle of information use that begins with young children learning to read but not developing a habit of reading. Deficient libraries that do not support the educational process are coupled with teachers who do not promote resource-based learning, library/information use, or reading. This leads to a lack of knowledge about the importance of information. Leaders in all areas of society make important decisions without adequate information, and we see in society a lack of understanding or culture of information use, which reinforces the lack of reading habits in society as a whole, both in adults and children. The lack of reading habits returns us to the beginning of this cycle, which may be more or less evident depending on the country being discussed but which is unmistakably universal. The role of the librarian is to teach the concept that having information is having power.

Recognizing that not much research has been done in Mexico on the topic of user education, Patricia Hernandez, of the Centro Universitario de Investigación Bibliotecológica, also noted the need to change the "culture of study." To do this, three important changes must take place: students must learn to do research not just study by rote; professors must also develop research skills, something not always required in Mexican faculty; and libraries must be developed to support the educational level and academic programs of the university. Hernandez elaborated on several research projects that are underway.

Brainstorming solutions

Perhaps the most significant part of the conference was the evening brainstorming session. All participants were asked to identify three problems and three possible solutions to reaching the goal of developing programs for teaching information competencies. The animated discussion that followed generated lists, which included many concerns we share with our Mexican colleagues. These were then compiled, and a committee was chosen to draft a declaration. This statement, demanding action

to address the needs of libraries in Mexico and support for information competency programs, was reviewed on the following evening and adopted by the participants. It will be sent to numerous public agencies and university administrators and posted on the UACJ Web site.

Sessions aimed at sharing experiences included discussions of specific libraries, recent developments, and programs they are implementing. These included descriptions of additions to the library collection, Internet workstations, CD ROM's, and additions or renovations to library buildings. Many cited the need to provide continuing education opportunities to their library staff. Worth noting is the program developed at the Universidad Autónoma de Quintana Roo, which includes strong and active learning with hands-on components. Reinforcing the concept of team teaching, an excellent presentation on how to prepare and implement a quality instructional session was one of the five sessions explaining the impressive UACJ instruction program.

Of special interest were the exhibits that displayed instructional programs, handouts and pamphlets, and videos produced by the various institutions represented at the conference. On Saturday, participants were taken on library tours at the University of Texas at El Paso and the University of New Mexico, Las Cruces libraries. More information about the university, the library, and this conference can be found at the Web site: <http://www.uacj.mx/dirinfo>. ■

Letter

To the editor:

Cynthia Coccaro's article on Career Development (*CE&RI News*, Nov. 1997) is a very nice overview, but I was disappointed to see that she missed one very important site: mine!

My career and job-hunting site has many great features, including expert advice on writing dynamic cover letters; writing powerful resumes; links to other expert advice on topics such as interviewing; a "Marketability Test"; the "Domino Effect"; and links to many job sites.

The name: Quintessential Career and Job-Hunting Resources Guide. Access: <http://www.stetson.edu/~rhansen/careers.html>.
—Randall S. Hansen, Stetson University; e-mail: Randall.Hansen@stetson.edu