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*A study of library and information services of schools for the deaf in Metro Manila : evolving guidelines for the provision of quality services for the deaf**

Almost every one of us communicates through verbal language, and most of the information we know were gathered through hearing. With these facts in mind, it could be said that people with hearing impairment are to a great extent disadvantaged in the learning environment. In most countries including the Philippines, libraries often provide special services for the blind, for they are obviously the most disadvantaged group with regard to printed information. However, the deaf, who also have special reading, learning and communication problems, do not get as much services as the blind do. It is in this light that this study proposed local guidelines for school library services for the deaf. A survey of information needs was administered to 258 deaf students in high school and college from the following schools in Metro Manila: (1) Philippine School for the Deaf, (2) Philippine Institute for the Deaf, (3) CAP College School for the Deaf, (4) Manila Christian Computer Institute for the Deaf, (5) Miriam College, and (6) School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies of De La Salle - College of St. Benilde. The present status of libraries of the first five schools listed above was also investigated. Data from the questionnaires revealed that majority of the deaf students regarded libraries as relevant but a considerable number still perceived it as having a low level of importance. Of the 258 students, 223 have used their libraries. Majority of these library users visit the library rarely and usually for reasons other than independent research. The types of information needed most by the students are information on

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Communication Arts (67), and Computer/Technology (49). The students also regarded most library resources with high importance and were generally satisfied with its adequacy. Of all information resources, the most frequently used are computer/internet resources as compared to printed materials. With regard to research, a high 85 of the library users acknowledged difficulty, especially with understanding the content of materials found. In fact, almost half of the library users only find information "sometimes" (51) and "only at times" find said information useful (45). In assessing the libraries, it was found out that most libraries failed to provide minimum requirements set by national standards, more so special services that meet specific needs of the deaf. Though most school and library personnel agreed that existing library standards do apply to their schools, they also expressed that specific guidelines would be valuable in improving services for the deaf students. The information needs survey and the evaluation of libraries together with information gathered from interviews with school administrators provided groundwork for the development of local guidelines. These guidelines are proposed to better serve the library and information needs of Filipino deaf students with the hope that it will be a stepping stone for national library and deaf associations in developing standards which are more authoritative.