

**Continuous Assessment Plan, 1998-2000**  
**School Media Librarian, Initial Teacher Preparation Programs (New Teacher Version**  
**and Experienced Teacher Version)**

**School of Library and Information Science, February 1998**

**I. Conceptual Framework**

Introduction

In their work, school librarians must have command of two bodies of content knowledge and expertise: that of teacher and that of librarian. Since school media librarians carry out their work in elementary, middle and secondary schools, they must be, first and foremost, excellent teachers. For this reason the faculty for the certification plan in school media librarianship, situated within the School of Library and Information Science, adopts the overarching conceptual framework of “Professional Educator as Reflective Decision Maker” that guides the work of the College of Education. In concert with the School of Education, the School of Library and Information Science is committed to preparing professional educators who successfully fill the unique role of teacher-librarian in the school setting.

A. College of Education

The College of Education at the University of Kentucky has adopted the model of “Professional Educator as Reflective Decision-Maker” as the conceptual framework for its professional education programs. The characteristics of reflective decision-making included in professional education programs are derived from concepts of reflective practice as espoused by historical and contemporary leaders in education. As such, reflective thinking is based on the individual’s open-mindedness, that is, the ability to actively challenge personal beliefs by continually seeking new information. This open-mindedness goes hand-in-hand with whole-heartedness and intellectual responsibility. Whole-heartedness is an absorbing enthusiasm for and dedication to one’s work. Intellectual responsibility includes caring enough about the consequences of one’s professional duties and actions to seek necessary information on which to base intelligent decisions.

Reflective decision-making guides proactive practice as differentiated from reactive practice. Reflective decision-making in professional education programs at the University of Kentucky includes knowledge of and attention to Kentucky’s New Teacher Standards, Experienced Teacher Standards, and Administrator Standards; contemplation of possible long-term consequences of professional actions; evaluation of the appropriateness of these actions and the effects of these actions on student performance; and maintenance of an informed perspective concerning all aspects of teaching and instruction.

B. School of Library and Information Science

The program for the preparation of information professionals in the School of Library and Information Science extends and enhances the quality of information service in a culturally diverse, technological and global society. Successful information professionals must be able to analyze complex issues and problems and make informed, thoughtful decisions in a variety of settings, including school media libraries, academic, public and special libraries, information centers, and the information industry.

Characteristics of thoughtful decision-making include: an understanding of the ways the process and results of research inform decision-making and their essential contribution to an evolving body of knowledge and professional practice; a professional commitment to the principles of intellectual freedom and an understanding of the ethical dimensions of information services in a variety of settings; assessment and evaluation of changing technologies and information environments which affect existing and possible systems for delivery of information to clients; and application of basic management concepts and methods in effective problem-solving.

The conceptual frameworks of the College of Education and the School of Library and Information Science share elements of "Professional Educator as Reflective Decision Maker." Both frameworks emphasize the need for successful professionals in their respective disciplines to continually seek new information; to reflect upon, analyze and understand problems and issues and to make incisive, thoughtful decisions based upon the information gathered.

### C. Certification Programs for School Media Librarians P-12

Each day, school media librarians must seek to broaden and deepen their knowledge base in order to make informed, thoughtful decisions that will support the instructional goals of the schools in which they carry out their work. They encounter opportunities to act as instructional partners with colleagues; assist in the design of student-centered curriculum; and engage in assessment, evaluation, problem-solving and planning with regard to the library media program and the needs of the school community, exercising reflective decision-making practices. It is also within the context of their work that school library media librarians encourage and support students, teachers, administrators, and staff in their development as information literate individuals and as self-directed, life-long learners.

The explosion of information available to students and teachers alike through increasingly rapid communication systems is at the heart of a transformation taking place in schools and school library programs. Libraries have become information centers that are no longer limited by walls. It is imperative that students and teachers become knowledgeable consumers of information, able to find the information they need in the most efficient and effective way possible using the most appropriate print or electronic resource and, having found the information, critically evaluate it for accuracy and potential use. Over time, these abilities have come to be known collectively as *information literacy*.

To achieve information literacy, students and teachers must be provided with frequent opportunities to actively utilize information sources in authentic situations. As information specialist, it is the responsibility of the school media librarian to provide access to these resources to the school community. The school library media librarian supports the development of student and adult information literacy by: (1) providing access to the library media center; (2) providing adequate electronic and print resources; (3) providing assistance in locating information; (4) guiding users in the selection of appropriate resources; (5) developing flexible policies for the use of resources; (6) providing retrieval systems; and (7) providing appropriate instruction regarding the use and evaluation of information sources and systems (*Information Power*, 1988).

The certification plan for the preparation of school media librarians adopts the central theme, “Teacher-Librarian as Information Specialist,” which incorporates reflective decision-making practices and extends the use of these practices to the work of the school media librarian. The work of the Information Specialist in the school setting requires knowledge of and attention to Kentucky’s Experienced Teacher Standards, the Content Standard for School Media Librarians, in particular; the NCATE Approved Curriculum Guidelines for the School Library Media Specialist Basic Program described by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL Competency Matrix); and thoughtful consideration of the document, *Information Power*, published jointly by the American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1988, which emphasizes the roles of the school library media specialist as teacher, information specialist and instructional consultant.

## **II. Assessment**

The School of Library and Information Science plans to employ continuous assessment of its teacher education students and the program itself. The School has adopted plans for continuous assessment, using the guidelines prepared by the Ad Hoc Task Group on Continuous Assessment in November 1997. The following definition provided by that task group served as a directing force for the continuous assessment plan in the School of Library and Information Science:

Continuous assessment is an institution’s internal quality control mechanism to ensure that teacher preparation programs consistently address and integrate the appropriate performance standards and the EPSB’s policies. A continuous assessment plan honors each institution’s human, financial, and physical resources and reflects the institution’s singular mission statement and student population. Each institution’s plan is the product of intense reflective analysis by faculty, administrators and staff, and supports the institution’s claim of a quality teacher preparation program. In that each teacher preparation program is unique, so too is each assessment plan. Continuous assessment goes beyond individual student assessments, which are necessary but insufficient components of the assessment

loop. Student assessments are part of the total assessment plan that continually operates to improve the quality of the institution's programs and its program graduates...

Students will be assessed a minimum of three times during the program. These assessments will follow all the specifications outlined in the "Admission, Retention and Exit from Teacher Education Programs" which are found on pages 110-111 in the *University of Kentucky Bulletin 1997-1998*. The three assessments will include (a) an admission assessment which will occur when the student enters the program, (b) a midpoint assessment which will occur after the completion of 15 semester hours, and (c) an exit assessment which will occur during and at the completion of the practicum.

Assessments include, but are not limited to, (a) skill assessments (as evidenced upon entry into and throughout the program), (b) content related assessments (as evidenced by course grades, fieldwork, portfolio entries, and on-demand tasks), (c) portfolio documents (which reflect the knowledge and skills obtained throughout the program), (d) on-demand tasks and the Praxis Library Specialty Exam required by the Kentucky Department of Education, and (e) program competency evaluations that are completed by the field-based cooperating teacher and the university coordinator, interviews held with the students and self-assessment surveys completed by the students at the end of the program and during follow-up surveys.

### **III. Continuous Assessment Plan**

The faculty of the School of Library and Information Science and the program faculty for the school media library program have put much time, reflection, and thoughtful decision-making into the preparation of the school media library P-12 program folios and the continuing assessment plan for school media librarians. They are aware that this will be an ongoing process, and thus, they have planned continuous evaluation of the program and its students. This reflective decision making will be carried throughout the evaluation of our program.

Research has consistently demonstrated that the services and programs of the school library media center are critical to quality education and to student learning. Thus, the faculty of the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Kentucky will strive to prepare students who can provide the proactive leadership needed to establish effective, high quality school library media programs that encourage lifelong learning.

The continuous assessment plan for the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Kentucky is presented in the following matrix.

**University of Kentucky  
School of Library and Information Science  
Continuous Assessment Plan**

**Entry Assessment**

<b>Data</b>	<b>Plan of Action</b>
<p>Valid teacher certificate or a Teacher Internship Statement of Eligibility or its equivalent.</p>	<p>Students having a valid teaching certificate or a Teacher Internship Statement of Eligibility or its equivalent will be considered to have the necessary educational preparation to enter the program. Any student not having a valid certificate or a Teacher Internship Statement of Eligibility or its equivalent will be referred to the Teacher Certification Office at the University of Kentucky.</p>
<p>Undergraduate and Graduate GPA's</p> <p>GRE scores.</p> <p>Three personal recommendations.</p> <p>An interview.</p>	<p>The School's Admission Committee will assess the entry data. All of these items will be considered jointly by the School's admission committee. Students with: (1) undergraduate GPA's of 2.75 and graduate GPA's of 3.0, (2) GRE scores of 450 or higher on the verbal portion of the exam and a score of 400 or higher on either the quantitative or analytical portions of the exam, and (3) positive personal recommendations from qualified professionals will be considered as having the academic and personal skills needed to enter the program. Not meeting one of these requirements will not automatically prevent a student from entry into the program. If a student has low GRE scores, she/he will be encouraged by the director of admissions to retake the exam. Students not admitted to the program will be given the phone numbers of other Kentucky schools who have school library media certification programs.</p> <p>Upon entry into the program all students will have an interview with their faculty advisor who is chair of the program faculty for the school library media program.</p>

### Midpoint Assessment

Data	Plan of Action
<p>Completion of 15 semester hours.</p> <p>Cumulative GPA's.</p>	<p>The faculty advisor to set up an appointment for a midpoint interview will contact students who have completed 15 semester hours. Students who have successfully completed 15 hours of coursework with at least a 3.0 will be considered as ready to proceed in the program. Any student who does not have a GPA of at least 3.0 will meet with the faculty advisor and together they will discuss how to address the problem. Assistance will be provided to the student by the School faculty.</p> <p>The School will contact any student who experiences academic difficulty (as outlined in the Graduate School Bulletin) before the completion of 15 semester hours. The student will meet with the faculty to make a plan to remedy the difficulty.</p>
<p>Submission of a personal philosophy statement for professional practice as a school media librarian.</p>	<p>Students will discuss personal philosophy statements in LIS 644 Administration of School Media Centers. The faculty advisor will read the philosophy statements and offer assistance to any student experiencing difficulty with this assignment. Students will be encouraged to continue to think about their personal philosophies and will be told that they may alter or add to them before submitting their final portfolios.</p>
<p>Submission of a prescribed number of portfolio tasks meeting a prescribed number of teacher standards (the number depends upon the specific program that is being followed).</p>	<p>Students will examine a sample portfolio in LIS 644. A handout outlining directions for the portfolio will be given to all students. The faculty advisor will discuss the submission of the midpoint portfolio tasks with each student. Students will be given suggestions on how to improve their portfolios for the final submission at the end of their program.</p>
<p>An interview.</p>	<p>Each student will meet individually with the academic advisor. If any of the above requirements are not adequately met, the student and faculty advisor will develop a plan to remedy the problem.</p> <p>Any student demonstrating particular strengths or distinguished work in the midpoint assessments will be commended.</p>



## Exit Assessment

<b>Data</b>	<b>Plan of Action</b>
<p>Completion of a prescribed number of semester hours, depending on the program of study that is being followed.</p>	<p>Students having a GPA of 3.0 after completing the prescribed number of semester hours will be assessed by the School faculty as having obtained the necessary skills to be considered as a candidate for school media librarian P-12 certification. If the student does not have a GPA of 3.0 after completing the prescribed number of courses, the student will be encouraged to take other courses to bring up the GPA. The faculty advisor will meet with the student to determine which course(s) should be taken and to set up a plan to assist the student to successfully complete this exit requirement.</p>
<p>Praxis II Library Specialty Exam, if the student is seeking initial school media librarianship certification.</p>	<p>Students passing the Praxis II Library Specialty Exam will have successfully completed one of the requirements of the Kentucky Department of Education to be eligible to apply for school media librarian P-12 certification. If the student does not pass the Praxis II Library Specialty Exam, the student will be encouraged to retake the exam. The faculty advisor will meet with the student to try to ascertain the student's area(s) of weakness in relation to the content of the exam. Faculty members will provide assistance as needed.</p>
<p>On-Demand Performance Assessment Tasks, if the student is seeking initial school media librarianship certification.</p>	<p>Several On-Demand Tasks will be imbedded into the coursework of the students and copies of the On-Demand Tasks will be put on reserve for the students. A review session will be set up before the exam is administered. Students who successfully complete the On-Demand Tasks will have completed one of the requirements of the Kentucky Department of Education to be eligible to apply for school media library P-12 certification. If the student does not successfully complete the On-Demand Performance Assessment Tasks, the student will meet with the advisor to cooperatively make a plan to help the student prepare to retake the exam. The program faculty will review the scores received by the students and make recommendations for possible changes in the program as indicated by areas of weakness exhibited in the On-Demand tasks. These recommendations will be submitted to the executive committee, who will present them at a faculty meeting.</p>

<b>Data</b>	<b>Plan of Action</b>
Student portfolios.	Portfolios are completed at the end of the student's program of study. The faculty advisor assesses them. If a student receives an overall rating of "Proficient" or "Accomplished" the student will be considered as having successfully evidenced the Kentucky teacher standards in his/her work. If a student does not receive a rating of "Proficient" or "Accomplished," the portfolio reviewer will put in writing the areas that need to be improved. The student will meet with the faculty advisor and set up a plan to improve the portfolio and resubmit it for review. The faculty advisor will keep a record of the ratings received by the students, as well as the strengths and weaknesses displayed in the portfolios. These records will be submitted to the school's executive committee who, in turn, will present them at a faculty meeting each semester. Any need for changes in the program to improve the portfolios will be discussed.
Oral responses from school library media students.	Each student who is seeking initial school media librarianship P-12 certification will meet one-on-one with her/his faculty advisor at the end of the practicum to discuss any professional needs that were not met by the courses and experiences in the program. The faculty advisor will record the responses and give them to the faculty executive committee, who will then direct them to the appropriate faculty committee (curriculum, admissions, planning, and exam). These responses will be used to make needed changes in the program.

**Continuous Assessment**

<b>Data</b>	<b>Plan of Action</b>
Formal evaluations.	Students will formally evaluate all courses with the College of Communications and Information Studies Teaching Evaluations. Responses will be given to individual faculty members and to the School director. The director will meet with individual faculty to discuss needed changes.
Informal evaluations.	Individual faculty members will conduct informal evaluations in their classes and use the responses to improve their courses.

### Follow-up Assessment

<b>Data</b>	<b>Plan of Action</b>
<p>Surveys to all graduating students.</p> <p>Surveys to all school library media students.</p> <p>Surveys to all employers of school library media students.</p>	<p>Surveys will be given to all graduating students in the School at the end of each semester.</p> <p>Surveys will be sent to all school library media students six months after graduation.</p> <p>Surveys will be sent to all employers of the school library media students after the previous survey is returned.</p> <p>Responses from all surveys will be given to the faculty executive committee, who will then direct them to the appropriate faculty committee (curriculum, planning, admissions, and exam). These committees will meet to consider the responses and determine needed changes or additions to the school media librarianship program.</p>
<p>Kentucky Teacher Internship Program.</p>	<p>The faculty will work with students who are completing the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) and will help the students successfully complete their internships.</p>

## **V. Summary**

Information gathered from the data, which has been described in our continuous assessment plan, will serve as the basis to make program revisions. When weaknesses in the students or the program become apparent, the School faculty will address the problems through committees, and the committees, in turn, will offer suggestions for changes. The data used to assess the students will be formally gathered at three main points (entry, midpoint, and exit). The follow-up surveys from students and employers of school media library students will also be important sources of information that will be used by the School faculty and the program faculty to make revisions in the program. Data collection and analysis for course and program revision will be ongoing. Additionally, the School faculty will periodically evaluate the continuous assessment plan itself. New sources of data will be added to the plan if deemed beneficial to the program, while sources of data that do not contribute to the program or its possible revisions will be discarded.