

Research Article**Innovating Curriculum Materials Centers: Programming, Collaboration, and Trends Shaping Teacher Education Resources**MELISSA HOPKINS¹

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Abstract

The evolution of Curriculum Materials Centers (CMCs) in supporting teacher education is reflected in the use of specialized resources, outreach, and collaboration. A survey of 68 CMCs highlights diverse outreach strategies, programming efforts, and faculty partnerships while identifying challenges such as limited staff, funding, and time. Best practices for adapting CMCs to evolving educational standards and resource constraints are discussed, ensuring their continued critical role in shaping future educators. The analysis provides insights into how CMCs navigate current trends and overcome obstacles to maintain effective support for teacher education programs.

Keywords: curriculum material centers, teacher education programs, collaboration, outreach, programming

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Introduction

Teacher education programs rely on access to specialized resources that prepare future educators for the classroom. Curriculum Materials Centers (CMCs) are “collections and/or spaces located in academic institutions that serve the curriculum and instructional material needs of teacher education programs” (Association of College and Research Libraries, Education and Behavioral Sciences Section [ACRL/EBSS], 2023, p. 6). Typically housed in university libraries or education departments, they provide textbooks, children’s literature, teaching aids, and instructional technologies. This paper draws on a literature review, a survey of 68 CMCs, and the authors’ perspectives to trace their history, examine current functions, and identify emerging trends. Survey findings highlight how CMCs manage outreach, programming, and faculty partnerships while addressing funding and staffing challenges. Together, these components explore how CMCs respond to shifting program demands, integrate new technologies, and sustain their role in supporting educational outcomes.

Literature Review

The origins of CMCs can be traced to the early 20th century, when changes in teacher education programs emphasized the value of direct access to teaching materials, including children’s literature (Brooks, 1949; Dickinson et al., 2004; Kohrman, 2012). These changes reflected a growing belief that experiential learning should be part of teacher preparation, and that students training to be teachers needed opportunities to work with real materials, not just read about them. CMCs developed as spaces that brought together theory and practice, giving students and faculty the resources to prepare for classrooms. In their earliest forms, curriculum materials centers primarily provided access to textbooks and children’s literature for teacher education students (Brooks, 1949). Over time, they evolved into broader educational hubs that integrate print, media, and hands-on instructional tools, intentionally designed to connect theory and practice in pre-service teacher preparation (Dickinson et al., 2004; Kohrman, 2012). What sets CMCs apart from other academic library spaces is their focus on K–12 curriculum materials and their alignment with teacher education programs (Aytton & Capraro, 2021; Correll & Bornstein, 2018; Hoffman, 2018; Kohrman, 2015; Reed, 2017).

Many CMCs now offer more than just shelves of books. It is common to see them stocked with manipulatives for math and science, kits for early childhood learning, STEM tools, and makerspaces that encourage creative problem-solving (Douglass, 2023; Halliburton et al., 2024; Hoffman, 2018; Kohrman, 2012). These resources range from sorting sets for preschool activities to geometric modeling kits and algebra tiles for secondary classrooms. Incorporating these materials into programming helps future teachers design engaging, standards-aligned, and practical lessons for their field placements.

Outreach has become a significant focus for many centers. Visibility can be challenging, especially when students do not know a CMC exists until late in their program (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015; Kohrman, 2006; Reed, 2017; Sheridan, 2014). Some centers have developed creative approaches to this problem. For example, the Teacher Curriculum Center at California State University–Northridge created the “TCC Roadshow,” bringing carts of books and materials into education classes and

giving quick presentations on how to use them (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015). This direct, in-classroom approach increased engagement and encouraged students to visit the center afterward.

Grand Valley State University's Curriculum Resource Center faced similar challenges (Kohrman, 2006). In their case, recommendations included opening two separate locations on different campuses to make the collection easier to access. Successful outreach often depends on faculty partnerships (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015). When faculty actively promote the CMC in their courses, students are more likely to use it. Updating the space itself also plays a role. Flexible seating, collaborative tables, and open work areas make it easier for students to work together on projects (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015; Teel, 2013).

The literature also points to the importance of keeping CMC resources closely aligned with the curriculum of the teacher education program (Correll & Bornstein, 2018; Reed, 2017; Scripps-Hoekstra & Hamilton, 2016). This is where faculty collaboration makes the most significant difference. When CMC staff and faculty work together to select materials, design instruction sessions, and integrate resources into assignments, the center becomes a more effective teaching partner (Donaldson et al., 2022; Scripps-Hoekstra & Hamilton, 2016). This collaboration can also help build collections that support diverse learning needs, differentiated instruction, and culturally responsive teaching (Kohrman, 2015; Scripps-Hoekstra & Hamilton, 2016).

Programming is another core piece of CMC work (Dickinson et al., 2004; Donaldson et al., 2022). Hands-on workshops, lesson-planning sessions, and classroom-based activities allow pre-service teachers to test materials, create teaching aids, and see how resources can be used in real classrooms (Scripps-Hoekstra & Hamilton, 2016). Some workshops focus on using manipulatives in math instruction, while others guide students in evaluating children's literature for cultural inclusivity. These experiences give students confidence and practical strategies they can take into their classrooms.

Collaborations between CMCs and faculty can extend beyond one-time workshops. Examples in the literature include co-teaching, thematic book displays connected to course topics, book clubs featuring diverse perspectives in children's literature, and mock teaching sessions (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015; Prince & Boff, 2020; Reed, 2017). These activities strengthen the CMC's role in the teacher preparation process.

Even with all these successes, challenges remain. Limited funding, staffing shortages, and a lack of strong K-12 partnerships can hold back growth (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015). Some researchers suggest looking back at historical models, such as John Dewey's University of Chicago Laboratory School, alongside new educational strategies, to help guide future planning (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015; Kohrman, 2006). By focusing on partnerships, engaging more students, and sharing programming ideas, CMCs can continue to adapt and prepare future educators effectively (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015).

Methodology

The survey (see Appendix A) aimed to gather comprehensive data on outreach activities in CMCs. It consisted of structured questions that captured various aspects of CMC operations and outreach efforts. The survey used a mixed method of multiple-choice and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative data and was created and shared using Qualtrics (<https://www.qualtrics.com>).

The questions covered demographic information detailing participants' work experience in CMCs, their educational background, and the type and size of their employing universities. The survey also explored outreach strategies, investigating how CMC services to faculty and students were promoted (options included: email reminders, in-person interactions, social media, and promotional events). Further questions focused on the types of programs and workshops offered by the CMCs, the frequency of these programs, and collaboration with faculty and external partners. The survey also delved into the barriers to effective outreach, such as lack of funds, staff, and administrative support.

The survey was distributed online to a targeted group of individuals who either previously worked with or are currently involved with a CMC or its collection. This group included members of relevant professional organizations and networks within the educational and library science communities, such as the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Education and Behavioral Sciences Section (EBSS) listservs and 2023 CMC Directory participants (Association of College and Research Libraries, Education and Behavior Sciences Section, 2023). The survey was available for several weeks, ensuring ample time for participation, and successfully collected 68 responses. It was designed to be anonymous and ensured that no identifiable data directly linked to the respondents were collected, encouraging honest responses. This structured and comprehensive approach allowed for collecting valuable insights into the outreach activities and challenges faced by CMCs.

Results

Demographics

All 68 respondents reported having current or past experience working in a CMC and were at least 18 years old. Most respondents (97%, n=66) worked in the United States, with a small representation from Canada (3%, n=2) and no participants from other countries. The experience levels among the participants varied, with 38% (n=26) having over 10 years of experience in a CMC, 26% (n=18) with 4-6 years, 22% (n=15) with 1-3 years, 12% (n=8) with 7-9 years, and 1% (n=1) with less than one year.

Regarding educational background (see Table 1), most (94%, n=64) held an MLS/MIS/MSLS/MLIS or equivalent degree. Additionally, 25% (n=17) had a graduate degree in education, while 18% (n=12) had a graduate degree unrelated to education or library science. Other qualifications included undergraduate degrees in library science (3%, n=2) and education (18%, n=12), along with alternative certifications or credentials (1%, n=1) and alternative undergraduate degrees (9%, n=6).

Table 1. *Educational Background*

Responses	Count (n=68)	Percentage
MLS/MIS/MSLS/MLIS or equivalent	64	94%
Graduate degree in Education	17	25%
Grad. degree NOT in Education or Library Science	12	18%
Undergraduate degree in Education	12	18%
Alternative undergraduate degree	6	9%
Undergrad. degree in Library Science or equivalent	2	3%
Alternative certification or credential program	1	1%

The survey also sheds light on the types of universities where these CMC professionals were employed. A majority (66%, n=45) worked at public universities, 32% (n=22) at private universities, with only 1% (n=1) working at other types of institutions and none at for-profit universities. The enrollment sizes of these universities were diverse, with 37% (n=25) of respondents working at institutions with over 20,000 students. Other notable enrollment sizes include 1,000 - 4,999 students (21%, n=14), 5,000 - 9,999 students (21%, n=14), 10,000 - 19,999 students (18%, n=12), and under 1,000 students (4%, n=3).

The location of the CMCs varied between universities. The survey results showed that out of 68 responses, 66% (n=45) had their CMCs within the main library, while 28% (n=19) were located in the Education department. 6% (n=4) responded that their CMCs were located in other spaces, including the Education Library and “branch” library for professional schools.

This comprehensive demographic profile of the survey participants provides valuable insights into the background and context of CMC professionals, helping to understand the diversity of experience and educational qualifications within this community.

Outreach

Outreach to education faculty is a multifaceted endeavor. The survey revealed that in-person interactions were highly prevalent (see Table 2), with 81% (n=55) of respondents engaging faculty informally, often through departmental meetings and presentations. Email reminders were used by 85% (n=58) of respondents, making email a primary communication tool for reminding faculty about CMC services and updates. Presentations at department meetings were also common, with 60% (n=41) of respondents actively presenting at these meetings to inform and engage faculty. E-newsletters and printed materials such as flyers and newsletters were used by 41% (n=28) and 31% (n=21) of respondents, respectively. Additionally, 24% (n=16) of respondents hosted promotional events like open houses to attract faculty attention. Some CMCs leveraged social media and other creative methods, such as selectively using e-newsletters and contacting newly hired faculty, to promote their services.

Table 2. *Promotion of Services to Education Faculty*

Responses	Count (n=68)	Percentage
Email reminders	58	85%
In-person on informal basis	55	81%
Presentation in department meetings	41	60%
Professional social media accounts	28	41%
E-newsletter to department/college	26	38%
Print materials	21	31%
Promotional event for faculty	16	24%
Other	5	7%

Reaching out to education students involves a combination of digital and face-to-face strategies. The survey found, as shown in Table 3, that 62% (n=41) of respondents provide crucial information to incoming education students during orientation. Announcements in classes and the Learning Management System (LMS) were also widely used, with 86% (n=57) of respondents making announcements in library instruction sessions and 42% (n=28) in the LMS to remind students of available services. Additionally, 89% (n=59) of respondents created education-specific library guides, such as LibGuides, to help students navigate resources. Digital marketing materials were emailed to all or relevant student groups by 35% (n=23) of respondents, while print materials were displayed in the Education building by 30% (n=20) of respondents. Furthermore, 32% (n=21) of respondents organized promotional events specifically for students.

Table 3. *Promotion of Services to Education Students*

Responses	Count (n=66)	Percentage
Education-specific library guides	59	89%
Announcement at library instruction sessions	57	86%
Orientation for incoming Education students	41	62%
Professional social media accounts	31	47%
Reminders in students' courses LMS	28	42%
Digital marketing materials	23	35%
Promotional event for students	21	32%
Print marketing materials	20	30%

Promoting the CMC collection involves several strategies. The survey indicates that 88% (n=57) of respondents used displays, and 83% (n=54) used classroom presentations to highlight collection materials (see Table 4). Programs designed to promote collection materials and the use of professional social media accounts were reported by 51% (n=33) and 38% (n=25) of respondents, respectively. Digital marketing materials were emailed by 15% (n=10) of respondents, and print marketing materials were used by 18% (n=12). Additionally, 34% (n=22) of respondents advertised the collection as part of the University Libraries' marketing efforts.

The survey results underscore CMCs' diverse and comprehensive outreach efforts to engage faculty and students. They also highlight the importance of various communication and promotional strategies in promoting CMCs' services and collections.

Table 4. *Promoting the Collection*

Responses	Count (n=65)	Percentage
Displays	57	88%
Classroom presentations	54	83%
Professional social media accounts	33	51%
Email reminders	26	40%
Programs to promote collection	25	38%
Advertise via University Library	22	34%
Print material in Education building	12	18%
Digital marketing materials emailed	10	15%

Collaborations

There were 66 responses to the section that focused on collaborating with education faculty, education students, and K-12 schools. Over 50% of participants (n=39) strongly agreed that their CMC collaborated with the education faculty (see Table 5), while 32% (n=21) somewhat agreed. Only 8% (n=5) of the respondents disagreed.

Table 5. *The CMC Collaborates with the Education Faculty*

Responses	Count (n=66)	Percentage
Strongly agree	39	59%
Somewhat agree	21	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	2%
Somewhat disagree	4	6%
Strongly disagree	1	2%

One section of the survey focused on some of the ways that education majors utilized CMCs. As shown in Table 6, out of 66 participants who responded to the statement that education majors used the CMC regularly, 47% (n=31) strongly agreed, 44% (n=29) somewhat agreed, only 5% (n=3) somewhat disagreed, and 5% (n=3) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Table 6. *Education Majors Utilize the CMC Regularly*

Responses	Count (n=66)	Percentage
Strongly agree	31	47%
Somewhat agree	29	44%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	5%
Somewhat disagree	3	5%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

There are many ways that education majors might use the CMC. To endeavor to understand this better, one of the survey questions addressed this subject, asking respondents to indicate the ways in which education majors use the CMC. Responses were divided between early education majors, described as PreK-Grade 5, and secondary education majors, described as Grade 6-12. There were 62 responses to this question. Results have been split into two tables, Table 7a and Table 7b. "Class assignments" had high results for both types of majors (early elementary [90%, n=56]; secondary education

[82%, n=51]). 95% (n=59) of respondents said that early elementary majors used the CMCs for “checking out children’s books,” while 48% (n=30) said that secondary education majors used the CMCs for the same reason. Other considerable responses included “studying” for both early elementary (79%, n=49) and secondary education (61%, n=38), “checking out young adult books” (early elementary [35%, n=22]; secondary education [76%, n=47]), “checking out teaching materials/manipulatives” (early elementary [82%, n=51]; secondary education [63%, n=39]), and “using textbooks” (early elementary [56%, n=35]; secondary education [58%, n=36]). Both majors used the CMC “for other resources,” “tutoring,” and “maker space” with less frequency.

Table 7a. *Ways in which Early Elementary Majors (PreK-Grade 5) use CMCs*

CMC Uses	Count (n=62)	Percentage
Checking out children’s books	59	95%
Class assignments	56	90%
Checking out teaching materials/ manipulatives	51	82%
Studying	49	79%
Using textbooks	35	56%
Checking out young adult books	22	35%
Other resources	22	35%
Makerspace	14	23%
Tutoring	10	16%
Other	3	5%

Table 7b. *Ways in which Secondary Education Majors (Grade 6-12) use CMCs*

CMC Uses	Count (n=62)	Percentage
Class assignments	51	82%
Checking out young adult books	47	76%
Checking out teaching materials/ manipulatives	39	63%
Studying	38	61%
Using textbooks	36	58%
Checking out children’s books	30	48%
Other resources	17	27%
Makerspace	8	13%
Tutoring	7	11%
Other	3	5%

Most respondents (98%, n=65) reported partnering with education faculty/staff through classroom instruction (see Table 8). Of the 66 respondents, 52% (n=34) reported partnering through an event, 28% (n=25) reported partnering through conference presentations, and 27% (n=18) reported partnering through professional development programs. Other reported ways were publication (21%, n=14) and grant projects (23%, n=15). Four respondents selected “other,” offering specific examples: panels, satisfaction surveys, curriculum library tours, and collection development collaboration.

Table 8. *Ways CMCs partnered with Education faculty/staff*

Types of Partnerships	Count (n=66)	Percentage
Classroom instruction	65	98%
Event	34	52%
Conference presentation	25	38%
Professional development programs	18	27%
Grant project	15	23%
Publication	14	21%
Other	4	6%

Out of 66 respondents, only 4 (6%) strongly agreed that their CMC partnered with K-12 schools, as shown in Table 9. 17 (26%) somewhat agreed, 11 (17%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 14 (21%) disagreed, and 20 (30%) strongly disagreed.

Table 9. *My CMC partners with K-12 schools*

Responses	Count (n=66)	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	6%
Somewhat agree	17	26%
Neither agree nor disagree	11	17%
Somewhat disagree	14	21%
Strongly disagree	20	30%

Programs

Most survey respondents reported offering various programs. For the purpose of the survey, programs were defined as events organized by the CMC that supported the local educational community, including class visits or library instruction sessions, either currently or in the past. Two of the programs stand out as being implemented by most respondents, as shown in Table 10. Almost all (90%, n=56) gave tours of the CMC to a class or group of students, while 85% (n=53) hosted a class within their CMC. Other responses included workshops (42%, n=26), curriculum-focused programs (34%, n=21), professional development opportunities (24%, n=15), programs with STEM kits (23%, n=14), and storytelling programs (16%, n=10). Four respondents selected “other” and provided tabling, book awards programs, summer reading, and tutoring as alternate programs offered.

Table 10. *Types of Programs Offered*

Program Type	Count (n=62)	Percentage
Tour of CMC to a class or group of students	56	90%
Class hosted in the CMC	53	85%
Workshops	26	42%
Curriculum focused program	21	34%
Professional development opportunities	15	24%
Programs with STEM kits	14	23%
Storytelling	10	16%
Other	4	6%

Of the 63 respondents who agreed with the statement that their CMC provides adequate programs that support education students, the majority either somewhat agreed (46%, n=29) or strongly agreed (27%, n=17) (see Table 11). 14% (n=9) of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, while the remaining 12% (n=8) were split between somewhat disagreeing and strongly disagreeing.

Table 11. *My CMC provides adequate programs*

Responses	Count (n=63)	Percentage
Strongly agree	17	27%
Somewhat agree	29	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	9	14%
Somewhat disagree	4	6%
Strongly disagree	4	6%

There was much diversity among respondents regarding how often programs were provided (see Table 12). Most respondents replied that programs were offered between 1 and 5 times per semester, with 33% (n=21) reporting 1-2 times a semester and 24% (n=15) reporting 3-5 times a semester. A surprising 19% (n=12) reported providing programs more than 10 times a semester, while 11% (n=7) reported providing programs less than once a semester.

Table 12. *Frequency of Programs Provided*

Frequency	Count (n=63)	Percentage
< 1 time a semester	7	11%
1-2 times a semester	21	33%
3-5 times a semester	15	24%
7-10 times a semester	8	13%
> 10 times a semester	12	19%

When asked whether the programs provided in the CMC were directly related to education classes, 79% (n=49) of the 62 respondents strongly agreed (see Table 13). Another 16% (n=10) somewhat agreed, and 5% (n=3) neither agreed nor disagreed. None of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

Table 13. *The Programs Provided are Directly Related to Education Classes*

Responses	Count (n=62)	Percentage
Strongly agree	49	79%
Somewhat agree	10	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	5%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%

There are many different types of programs that CMCs provide, and each type of program can produce a different outcome. The respondents were asked about the results from the programs they provided. Table 14 shows that 92% (n=56) of respondents said that the programs they provided in their CMCs directly related to education classes, while 82% (n=50) said that programs helped to promote their collections. Providing outreach to pre-

service teachers (72%, n=44) was another outcome of provided programs reported by respondents. 69% (n=42) said that the programs they provided helped engage students, while 62% (n=38) said that the programs allowed experimentation with materials within the CMC, and exploration of teaching tools.

Table 14. *Outcomes of Programs Provided in CMCs*

Outcomes	Count (n=61)	Percentage
Directly relate to education classes	56	92%
Promote the collection	50	82%
Provide outreach to pre-service teachers	44	72%
Engage students	42	69%
Provide experimentation of materials w/i CMC	38	62%
Provide exploration of teaching tools	38	62%
Other	0	0%

In addition to the programs described above, some CMCs offered coaching or mentoring to education students. Coaching or mentoring refers to sessions where students practiced with CMC materials and developed lessons under guided supervision. These sessions provided opportunities for experiential learning that help pre-service teachers build confidence and refine their teaching strategies. Research on the Continuum of Care model, in which school librarians mentored new teachers, found that mentoring helped build resilience and encouraged stronger collaboration between librarians and educators (Soulen, 2021). When asked about coaching or mentoring, 63% (n=40) said they had never provided this type of program, while 37% (n=23) said they had.

The motivation for different programming ideas comes from a variety of sources. The survey results show that 90% (n=54) of respondents said their programming ideas were driven by faculty, while 53% (n=32) said student interest played a role. Education trends (48%, n=29) and library trends (45%, n=27) were also common influences. A few respondents (5%, n=3) noted other motivators such as librarian interest or available funding.

Table 15. *Ideas for programs*

Ideas driven by	Count (n=60)	Percentage
Faculty	54	90%
Student interest	32	53%
Education trends	29	48%
Library trends	27	45%
Other	3	5%

Barriers to Providing Programs

When the respondents were asked what barriers they experienced regarding providing CMC programs, 89% (n=51) said lack of time, while 60% (n=34) said lack of staff (see Table 16). Lack of funds was the next highest-rated response, with 53% (n=30) saying it was a barrier. The other three responses, lack of support (30%, n=17), lack of training/skills (23%, n=13), and lack of ideas (16%, n=9) were selected by 30% or less of respondents. Other, selected by 21%, (n=12), returned responses including difficulty

finding collaborators, a lack of relationships with faculty, lack of administrative support, prescribed curriculum that does not leave space for programs, lack of funds for collection development, difficulty obtaining updated textbook materials, lack of space, lack of marketing, lack of interest, lack of seating, lack of parking, and busyness of students.

Table 16. *Types of Barriers Experienced Regarding Providing Programs*

Types of Barriers	Count (n=57)	Percentage
Lack of time	51	89%
Lack of staff	34	60%
Lack of funds	30	53%
Lack of support	17	30%
Lack of training/skills	13	23%
Other	12	21%
Lack of ideas	9	16%

Success of Programs Amid Barriers

Acknowledging the barriers recognized above, the respondents were asked if they still successfully provided programming. They were then asked to explain their answers, and provided a free text space to do so. Of the 32 responses, most (66%, n=21) said they were successful. Responses indicated that successful programs were centered around information literacy instruction and faculty-requested classroom instruction (66%, n=21). Many respondents stated that these programs did not cost money but took up most of their time, leaving less time for more creative and interactive programs specifically designed to promote CMC collections. Several respondents (34%, n=11) stated that lack of time and employees were their biggest barriers to successfully providing programs. Lack of space and money (16%, n=5) were also barriers. One respondent stated that they incorporated programming into their departmental goals, which helped create more intentionality in their programming success.

Program Descriptions

Participants were asked to share specific examples of programs they provided at the end of the survey (see Appendix B). 27 participants provided a response. The most common type of program was classroom instruction (44%, n=12), whether hosted within the CMC or completed in an instructor's classroom. Open houses (22%, n=6) and CMC tours (18%, n=5) were common programs, and several respondents reported completing workshops (22%, n=6) in their CMCs. Various types of workshops were listed, including professional development, educational technology, and curriculum materials and resource use. Additional programs described included storytimes, summer reading programs, and stuffed animal sleepovers. Others reported hosting author events, mock Caldecott read-in events, trivia nights, holiday events, and Read Aloud Book Award events. There were also many literature-focused events like Family Literacy Days, Children's Literature Symposiums, Youth Literature Festivals, speakers on children's literature, and Lit & Learn programs. Recruitment programs for high school students, developed in collaboration with education faculty, were also mentioned. One program, an "Education in Action" seminar, was developed in collaboration with the Education Alumni Chapter, highlighting the alumni's impactful work in education. A word cloud (see Figure 1). was

However, the sample size of 68 respondents limits the ability to draw broad conclusions about the state of CMCs nationwide. The survey also showed that most respondents (66%, n=45) work at public universities, while 32% (n=22) are employed at private institutions and only 1% (n=1) at other types of institutions. These universities' enrollment sizes varied, with 37% (n=25) of respondents working at institutions with over 20,000 students. While informative, this demographic profile highlights the need for a larger, more extensive, and diverse sample to fully understand the demographics and institutional contexts of CMC professionals across the country.

Outreach

The survey results highlight a significant variation in outreach efforts among CMCs in form and frequency. While 85% (n=58) of respondents reported using email reminders as a primary communication tool, and 81% (n=55) engaged faculty through in-person interactions, such as departmental meetings and presentations, the survey did not clarify how often these methods were employed or whether they were assessed for effectiveness. This lack of consistent evaluation reflects a broader trend in the literature, where outreach efforts are often implemented reactively rather than strategically (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015).

As the survey indicates, one method of outreach was the use of e-newsletters (41%, n=28) and printed materials like flyers and newsletters (31%, n=21) to inform faculty and students about new resources, programming, and events. While these approaches offer tangible benefits, such as easy dissemination of information, the literature suggests that their impact may be limited unless paired with more interactive or targeted engagement methods. For example, Scripps-Hoekstra and Hamilton (2016) emphasized the importance of integrating outreach efforts with classroom instruction or faculty collaborations, where the resources promoted were directly tied to course objectives or student needs. This tailored approach increases visibility and highlights the practical applications of CMC resources.

In-person outreach, such as attending faculty meetings or hosting presentations, offers opportunities for direct engagement and immediate feedback. Correll and Bornstein (2018) described successful outreach initiatives where librarians conducted workshops tailored to specific faculty needs, such as integrating diverse literature into lesson planning or leveraging manipulatives for active learning. Such initiatives were particularly effective with follow-up support, like consultations or curated resource recommendations. This aligns with the survey finding that in-person methods remain popular among CMC staff, likely due to how they can help build relationships and foster trust with faculty.

Although it is clear that CMC staff use a variety of outreach methods, the survey raises important questions about their consistency and visibility. For example, it remains unclear whether email reminders, e-newsletters, or printed materials are periodically updated to reflect evolving educational needs or whether outreach is systematically evaluated for its effectiveness. The literature underscores the importance of such evaluations, particularly in identifying the most impactful methods for reaching diverse user groups (Donaldson et al., 2022; Kohrman, 2015). Without this feedback loop, CMCs may struggle to maintain the relevance and engagement of their outreach strategies.

Moreover, the survey reveals a potential gap in promoting outreach beyond traditional communication methods. While email and print materials serve as important tools, the growing role of social media platforms in academic engagement presents an underutilized opportunity for CMCs. Studies suggest that platforms like Twitter or Instagram can be used to share success stories, highlight new acquisitions, or showcase programming, reaching broader and more diverse audiences (Prince & Boff, 2020). For example, a CMC might post a weekly "Resource Spotlight" featuring newly acquired children's literature or share photos from a workshop to inspire faculty and students to explore available resources.

Outreach efforts could also be expanded by leveraging partnerships with K-12 schools or local community organizations. While the survey primarily focused on internal communication within universities, the historical connection between CMCs and laboratory schools offers a framework for engaging external stakeholders (Kohrman, 2012). Collaborative outreach programs, such as inviting K-12 teachers to professional development workshops or hosting community literacy nights, could promote CMC resources and foster stronger relationships between pre-service teachers and practicing educators. Such initiatives not only broaden the impact of outreach efforts but also align with the mission of CMCs to bridge the gap between teacher preparation and K-12 education.

Finally, outreach strategies should incorporate regular feedback mechanisms to assess effectiveness and adapt to users' changing needs. Surveying faculty and students about preferred communication methods or tracking engagement metrics for email campaigns and social media posts can provide actionable insights for improving outreach (Houdyshell & Meyers-Martin, 2015). These data-driven approaches can ensure that CMCs allocate their limited resources strategically, maximizing their impact on user engagement.

Collaborations

Collaboration is a cornerstone of CMC operations, and the survey highlights both strengths and opportunities in fostering these partnerships. 59% (n=39) of respondents strongly agreed that their CMC collaborates with education faculty, while 32% (n=21) somewhat agreed. These collaborations often included co-teaching sessions, joint curriculum design, and integration of library resources into course objectives (see Scripps-Hoekstra & Hamilton, 2016). However, the survey also revealed disparities in how different student groups engage with CMCs. For instance, survey respondents reported that 95% (n=59) of early education majors use the CMC to check out children's books, whereas only 48% (n=30) of secondary education majors do the same. This discrepancy and findings in the literature emphasize the importance of aligning resources with user needs to ensure their relevance and impact (Correll & Bornstein, 2018; Kohrman, 2015). Addressing this gap through targeted outreach and tailored resources could significantly enhance the engagement of secondary education majors.

The survey revealed a notable weakness in CMC collaboration with K-12 schools, with only 6% (n=4) of respondents strongly agreeing that their center partnered with local schools and 30% (n=20) strongly disagreeing. This low level of partnership starkly contrasts with the intertwined history of laboratory schools and CMCs. As documented in the literature, laboratory schools were historically integral to teacher preparation, serving

as environments where pre-service educators, faculty, and K-12 teachers collaborated to refine instructional practices and develop curriculum resources (Kohrman, 2012). CMCs, which developed alongside laboratory schools, provided the materials and tools necessary to support these partnerships and bridge the gap between higher education and K-12 classrooms. This historical connection underscores the potential for CMCs to reestablish themselves as critical hubs for collaboration and innovation.

Revitalizing these partnerships could significantly enhance the impact of CMCs within the broader educational ecosystem. For example, consistent with the findings of Houdyshell and Meyers-Martin (2015), CMCs could organize professional development workshops for in-service teachers, offering training on integrating diverse literature, creating differentiated lesson plans, or utilizing manipulatives for hands-on learning. These initiatives could provide valuable resources for practicing educators and align with the literature's emphasis on the importance of faculty and educator collaboration in CMC programming (Scripps-Hoekstra & Hamilton, 2016; Correll & Bornstein, 2018).

Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the importance of experiential learning opportunities for pre-service teachers, which could bridge the gap between CMCs and K-12 schools (Donaldson et al., 2022). Programs like field trip days, where K-12 students participate in activities designed by pre-service teachers, could foster meaningful connections between university-based teacher education and local classrooms. These initiatives provide practical teaching experiences for pre-service teachers and reflect the mission of CMCs to support differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching practices (Kohrman, 2015). Instruction has long been a defining function of CMCs, serving as a bridge between resources and their effective use in classroom contexts. Previous studies note that instructional activities often include demonstrations of curriculum resources, workshops on lesson design, and collaborative teaching with faculty to integrate materials into course assignments (Donaldson et al., 2022; Scripps-Hoekstra & Hamilton, 2016). These instructional roles are central to preparing pre-service teachers to confidently select, adapt, and apply educational resources in diverse K-12 environments.

By addressing disparities in student engagement and strengthening partnerships with K-12 schools, CMCs can better align with the evolving needs of educators and students. Leveraging the historical connection between laboratory schools and CMCs, and the insights from the literature, provides a framework for innovative and impactful collaboration. In doing so, CMCs reaffirm their foundational mission of enriching teacher preparation while adapting to the complexities of contemporary education.

Programs

The survey data underscores that programming directly connected to education classes is a cornerstone of CMC operations. For instance, 90% (n=56) of respondents reported giving a tour of the CMC to a class or group of students, while 85% (n=53) hosted a class within the CMC. These statistics illustrate how closely CMC programming is intertwined with academic instruction, reinforcing its role as an integral part of teacher education. Additionally, 19% (n=12) of respondents reported offering programs more than 10 times per semester. This high activity level highlights the proactive efforts of some CMCs to provide consistent and diverse opportunities for pre-service teachers. These programs often included tailored workshops that aligned with classroom

instruction, such as evaluation and selection of children's literature, creation of differentiated lesson plans, and incorporation of culturally responsive teaching strategies. The survey results confirmed that instruction remains at the core of CMC programming, with classroom-based activities and guided orientations among the most widely offered services. These sessions go beyond familiarizing students with the physical space; they model instructional strategies, connect resources to course content, and provide opportunities for hands-on practice with teaching tools. Such direct instructional engagement not only aligns with historical models of CMC use but also reinforces their contemporary relevance in teacher preparation.

Despite these efforts, many CMCs face significant barriers to maintaining a robust programming schedule. The survey revealed that lack of time (89%, n=51), staff (60%, n=34), and funds (53%, n=30) are the most common challenges, often limiting the capacity to expand offerings. These constraints can lead CMCs to focus on foundational programming, such as orientations and basic resource overviews, at the expense of more innovative or targeted initiatives. Nevertheless, the survey's detailed listing of programs highlights the creativity and variety of offerings across CMCs, including book talks, mock teaching sessions, and collaborative projects that pair pre-service teachers with faculty mentors. Such examples illustrate the potential of CMCs to enrich teacher preparation when resources and collaboration are available.

The diversity of programs highlighted in the survey responses demonstrates the resourcefulness of CMCs in addressing varied educational needs despite limited resources. For example, the detailed listing of offerings, such as mock teaching sessions and book talks, showcases how CMCs leverage their unique resources to provide tailored support to pre-service teachers. Sharing these programming ideas among CMCs could foster innovation and collaboration, allowing centers to build upon each other's successes. Regularly exchanging ideas through professional networks, conferences, or virtual platforms would enable CMCs to overcome shared challenges, such as budget constraints and staffing shortages, while enhancing their offerings' overall quality and variety. By cultivating a culture of collaboration, CMCs can continue to inspire new initiatives and solidify their role as indispensable partners in teacher education.

To illustrate how key programming outcomes intersect, Figure 2 presents a Venn diagram highlighting the overlap between three primary goals: aligning with coursework, promoting the CMC collection, and engaging pre-service teachers. At the center is a shared outcome: faculty-led sessions that use CMC materials in real assignments, which supports multiple goals simultaneously and reinforces the value of integrated, collaborative efforts.

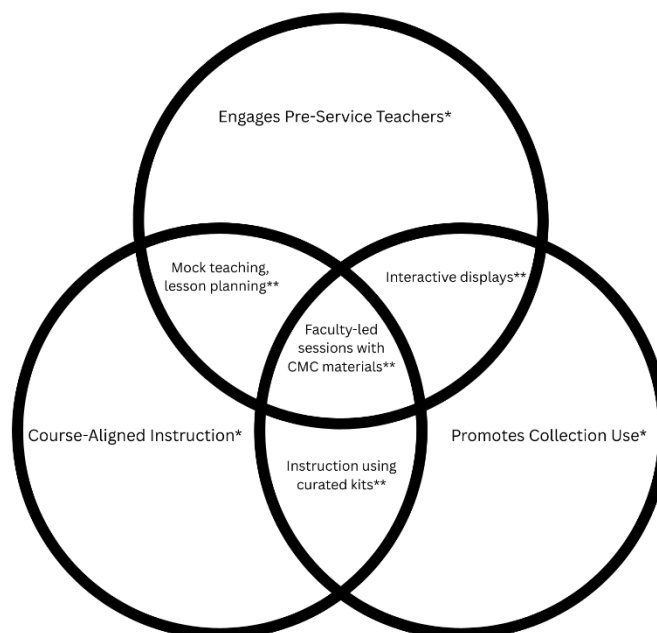
Figure 2. Outcomes of CMC Programming

Figure 2: Note. Venn diagram of CMC programming categories and overlaps based on survey data from 68 participating CMCs.

Greater collaboration and idea-sharing could prove invaluable in addressing the funding, staffing, and visibility challenges faced by many CMCs. By sharing successful programming models, such as co-teaching sessions with faculty, workshops on integrating library resources into lesson planning, or thematic resource displays that connect with contemporary educational issues, CMCs could inspire new initiatives while addressing resource limitations. This approach would expand the variety of available programs and ensure that CMCs effectively meet the evolving needs of pre-service teachers.

Conclusion

CMCs are pivotal in shaping teacher education by offering specialized resources, dynamic programming, and fostering meaningful collaborations. As highlighted throughout this analysis, CMCs have evolved to meet the shifting demands of educational standards, technological advancements, and the diverse needs of pre-service teachers. Through outreach strategies, such as tailored workshops and faculty partnerships, CMCs continue to bridge the gap between theory and practice, providing educators with hands-on experiences that enhance classroom preparedness.

The survey data underscores CMCs' adaptability and resourcefulness, showcasing innovative programs like mock teaching sessions, thematic displays, and collaborative projects. However, it also reveals persistent challenges, including limited time, staffing, and funding, which often constrain the ability to expand programming or develop partnerships with K-12 schools. Addressing these barriers requires greater collaboration

across CMCs, sharing of best practices, and leveraging emerging technologies to maintain relevance and impact.

Key opportunities lie in fostering more substantial connections with K-12 schools and broadening outreach efforts through digital platforms and community partnerships. By building on their historical ties to laboratory schools and emphasizing experiential learning, CMCs can reaffirm their role as critical hubs for innovation in teacher preparation. Additionally, sharing programming ideas and expanding evaluation mechanisms can help CMCs adapt to evolving educational landscapes while maximizing their impact.

As education continues to transform, CMCs must remain flexible and forward-thinking. By embracing collaboration, leveraging diverse outreach strategies, and aligning resources with user needs, CMCs can ensure their continued relevance in preparing educators for the complexities of modern classrooms. This ongoing evolution underscores the indispensable role CMCs play in supporting teacher education programs and shaping the next generation of educators.

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Appendix A - Survey Questions

Purpose of Study:

This paper aims to examine and evaluate the role of Curriculum Materials Centers (CMCs) in enhancing their university through outreach, collaboration, and programming.

Validating Questions:

1. Are you currently working or have you ever worked in a curriculum materials center?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Are you at least 18 years of age?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Demographics

3. What country do you work in?
 - United States of America
 - Canada
 - Other _____
4. How long have you worked in a CMC or a CMC collection?
 - <1 year
 - 1-3 years
 - 4-6 years
 - 7-9 years
 - 10+
5. What is your educational background? (select all that apply)
 - Undergraduate degree in library science or equivalent
 - Undergraduate degree in education
 - MLS/MIS/MSLS/MLIS or equivalent
 - Graduate degree in Education
 - Graduate degree NOT in Education or Library Science
 - Alternative certification or credential program
 - Alternative Undergraduate degree
6. What type of university are you presently employed at?
 - Public
 - Private
 - For-Profit
 - Other (please specify) _____
7. What is the enrollment size at your university?
 - Under 1,000
 - 1,000 - 4,999
 - 5,000 - 9,999
 - 10,000 - 19,999
 - 20,000 and above

8. What types of Education constituents do you work with? (Select all that apply.)
- Undergraduates
 - Master level students
 - Doctorate students
 - Distance students
 - Faculty/staff (as instructors or outside of their role as instructors, e.g. research consultations)
 - Other (please specify) _____
9. Where is your CMC located?
- Within the main library
 - In the Education building/department
 - Other location (please specify) _____
10. How many library employees include the CMC in their job description (not student workers)?
- 0
 - 1
 - 2-3
 - 4-6
 - 7-9
 - 10+
11. How many student workers does your CMC utilize?
- 0
 - 1-3
 - 4-6
 - 7-9
 - 10-14
 - 15+
12. What other positions/responsibilities do you have? (Select all that apply.)
Options to select within the CMC and/or outside the CMC
- Reference/Instruction
 - Cataloging/Metadata
 - Collection Development/Acquisitions
 - Digital Scholarship/Scholarly Communication
 - Administration
 - Systems/Library Technology
 - Data Services
 - Other (Please Specify)

Outreach

13. How do you promote your services to the Education faculty? (Select all that apply.)
- Presentation in department meetings
 - Email reminders
 - Social media accounts used for professional purposes
 - E-newsletter to your department/college
 - Print materials (e.g., flyers and newsletters)

- In-person on an informal basis (at departmental meetings, presentations, etc.)
- Promotional event, specifically for faculty (e.g. open house)
- Other (please specify) _____
- None

14. How do you promote your services to Education students? (select all that apply)

- Information during orientation for incoming Education students
- Social media accounts used for professional purposes
- Digital marketing materials emailed to all or relevant student groups
- Print marketing materials in the Education building/department
- Announcements/reminders of services at library instruction sessions
- Announcements/reminders of services in students' courses LMS (Learning Management System), e.g. embedded librarian
- Creation of Education-specific library guides (e.g., LibGuides)
- Promotional event or program, specifically for students
- Other (please specify) _____
- None

15. How do you promote your collection? (select all that apply)

- Email reminders
- Displays
- Classroom presentations
- Programs designed to promote collection materials
- Social media accounts used for professional purposes
- Digital marketing materials emailed to all or relevant student groups
- Print marketing materials in the Education building
- Advertise as part of the University Libraries' marketing
- Other (please specify) _____
- None

Collaborations

16. My CMC collaborates with the education faculty.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

17. Education majors utilize the CMC regularly.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

18. Some of the ways that education majors utilize the CMC are (check all that apply).

Options to select Early Elementary (PreK-Grade 5) and/or Secondary Education (Grade 6-12)

- Studying

- Checking out children's books
- Checking out Young Adult books
- Checking out teaching materials/manipulatives
- Using textbooks
- Makerspace
- Tutoring
- Class assignments
- For other resources (e.g., lamination, bookbinding, bulletin board creation, supplies), please specify
- Other, please specify

19. In what ways has your CMC partnered with Education faculty/staff? (Select all that apply.)

- Publication
- Event
- Classroom Instruction
- Grant project
- Professional development programs
- Conference presentation
- Other (please specify) _____
- None

20. My CMC partners with K-12 schools.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

In the upcoming questions, the survey will concentrate on the programs completed in your Curriculum Resource Center. For this survey, a program will be defined as an event that the CMC organizes and benefits your local educational community members. Class visits or library instruction sessions may be considered programming.

Programs

21. My CMC provides adequate programs that support our education students.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
-

22. Has your CMC incorporated any of the following programs currently or in the past? (Select all that apply)

- Workshops
- Professional development opportunities
- Curriculum focused programs
- Programs with STEM kits

- Hosted a class in the CMC
- Gave a tour of the CMC to a class or group of students
- Storytelling program
- Other (please specify) _____

23. Describe any of the programs that you have provided.

24. How often do you provide programming in the CMC?

- < 1 times a semester
- 1-2 times a semester
- 3-5 times a semester
- 7-10 times a semester
- >10 times a semester

25. The programs/workshops my CMC has provided are directly related to education classes.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

26. The programs/workshops in the CMC (select all that apply)

- Provide outreach to pre-service teachers
- Directly relate to education classes
- Provide experimentation of materials within CMC
- Provide exploration of teaching tools
- Engage students
- Promote the collection
- Other (please specify) _____

27. The ideas for programs you provide in your CMC are driven by (select all that apply)

- Faculty
- Student interest
- Education trends
- Library trends
- Other (please specify) _____

28. Has your CMC ever hosted coaching or mentoring sessions for education students in the CMC where they can practice with materials and create lessons?

- Yes
- No

29. What barriers do you experience regarding providing programs in the CMC? (select all that apply)

- Lack of funds
- Lack of staff
- Lack of time
- Lack of training/skills

- Lack of ideas
- Lack of support
- Other (please specify) _____

30. Acknowledging these barriers, have you been successful in providing programming?
Please explain.

Appendix B - Responses to “Describe Any of the Programs That You Have Provided”

Note: These responses were taken verbatim from the survey.

- We have held online webinars for K12 educators, hosted open houses, hosted a meeting with teacher librarians, collaborated with the education alumni chapter to host an "Education in Action" seminar, and hosted a half-day workshop
- Students can participate in the Lit and Learn program where they are enrolled in a Canvas shell to learn how to build a classroom library and how to work with a librarian in the field. We also give them tools to navigate book challenges. If they complete this online, independent learning experience, we give them \$100 and a book to start their classroom libraries. We have about 25 students who complete it each year. This is the third year we've been doing this. I also run a podcast listening community of practice through our center for teaching and learning. This year I partnered with the grad coordinator of our reading masters and an english composition faculty member. We are listening to *Sold a Story* by Emily Hanford. This address the Science of Reading. We meet four times a semester and cover two episodes each time we meet. We have 10 participants. Some are education faculty members and some are English composition faculty members. Lastly, we host a mock Caldecott read in each year and have approximately 10 participants each year. It's usually a combination of faculty, staff and students.
- Hosting a class in the CMC and helping students with a specific assignment.
- Hosted a class and picture book activity lesson with group of students and gave tour
- Culturally sustaining education, picture books in secondary, publication process of picture books, Family Literacy Day (campus/community), orientation to FYS, how to use... (teaching resources, Kits, puppets, banned books, award winners, etc.)
- Multiple classes taught each year; tours hosted regularly; Makerspace use encouraged; Children's Literature Symposium hosted biannually
- Educational technology workshops (Editing Images with Photoshop, Creating infographics, Digital Storytelling, Poster design, podcasting, etc)
- We provide outreach services to school districts in our region of the state as part of the CMC's stated mission; professional development on various topics related to book selection, promotion of reading, using instructional technology in instruction; We have held an open house for Education faculty members each year promoting all of our services and resources; We partner with three university school programs for children K-12: Innovation Early College High School (on campus), Child Development Program (Birth - 5; on campus); Community School (off campus). These student programs are in accordance with interest and age level but include storytelling sessions, crafts, hands-on activities with instructional technology tools, and various lifelong reader events (book speed dating, book tasting, etc.).
- Tours, introductory classes for education students
- Classroom instruction
- We have provided in-person, hands-on workshops on using curriculum materials. The CMC is a department/part of the education library so it is included in our annual open house.
- We hosted a trivia night in our CMC classroom to tie in with a book display we did focusing on games and gaming (in alignment with International Games Month).
- The CMC partners with the College of Education for a biennial youth literature festival that brings authors to regional schools and to a family-oriented community day. We also provide (upon request) storytime for the campus child development lab for preschoolers during the summer.

- Most of our programming is course-based; We also do book tastings with two departments in the College of Visual and Performing Arts
- We manage a picture book Read Aloud Book Award program, host storytime for the campus daycare
- Numerous classes held in the Curriculum Collections area, with collaborative instruction (librarian and fac instructor); Story Time for on-campus childcare center approx 2 times/month; Annual Stuffed Animal Sleepover event for fac/staff/student/community children and families
- Storytime with campus childcare center kids.
- We strongly focus on instruction that's directly tied to course curriculum, including assignments or placements. Multiple class sessions meet every semester on a range of topics. We've had less success with "extra" programming, as it really needs buy-in from the departments. Collaborative programming tied to a course or a faculty member's research/specific project works a lot better!
- Robust instruction sessions (close to 100 a year), annual events, and more.
- In addition to classroom instruction and tours, we've held a couple of events that education students were invited to attend (a speaker on children's lit, and a couple of holiday-themed events)
- I am uncertain if we offer programs but my inclination is that we don't.
- We host a weekly Storytime for the pre-k/k class of the on-campus preschool. In the past, we've hosted author events for the children's or young adult literature students.
- We run a summer reading program for students, faculty, staff, and families in the college
- We used to partner with our synod schools to host them when they were looking to adopt new curriculum because we had copies of the textbooks on site that they could look through. Since the publishers no longer are willing to send samples to us we haven't been able to do that for a long time.
- We're the hub for many of the CED events; we do workshops, both hosting and giving; we have classes meet in the library when they're using our resources; we do tours, both as part of a class and for current/prospective students, parents, faculty, and staff; we do programming with high school programs as recruitment; we participate in grad and undergrad open house
- When we purchased material in other languages, we (teaching faculty and I) hosted an open-house
- Lit and Learn -- we teach students how to build diverse classroom libraries and how to work with school/public librarians and they earn \$100 to seed their first library.