

The Education of Library Development Personnel

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THIS ARTICLE DOES NOT attempt to provide a total survey of the educational characteristics of library development personnel. Such a study was included in Marie A. Long's *The State Library Consultant at Work* in 1965,¹ but it is beyond the scope of this paper to replicate that research and bring it up to date. It is rather the intention here to make some generalizations about the character of the needed education of library development personnel, part of which may be of a formal nature and part of which more appropriately should be obtained through the more informal methods of continuing education. Some of this latter body of knowledge, incidentally, may be obtained through state library agency continuing education efforts intended for the general benefit of other librarians in the state, but there is no intention of duplicating the information contained in Taylor's article on the outwardly directed continuing education activities of the state agency.

It seems axiomatic that the education of personnel in a field should reflect the demands of the profession. In this paper observations will be made on some of the changes which have taken place in the demands made by the profession, followed by an attempt to identify some of the competencies which seem to be necessary. Discussion will conclude with observations on the general response from the total educational system to provide these competencies.

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CHANGES IN LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT WORK

Most important of the changes in recent years has been that from the strictly advisory, consultative role of state agencies to one which emphasizes more administration and coordination. It is difficult to find material which synthesizes a description of this continually changing role, but an article by John Humphry in *Bookmark* gives an example of a case study of the profound organizational and, implicitly, functional changes found in the New York state library agency.² The changes are seen to have been the result not only of changes in the field of operation but also of changes in the financial administrative structure invoked by federal and state laws involving library service.

Most funds channeled to state library development agencies are not directly intended to make them more effective. Federal funds offered through the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) are designated primarily for the improvement of library service throughout the states. However, the states are charged with the task of devising plans of ever-increasing sophistication for the use of these funds in implementing whatever set of objectives is currently stated as part of the national goals. Over a period of twenty years, the Library Services Act (LSA) moved from a rurally-oriented program to one which no longer mentions priorities for rural libraries but does have special provisions to assure urban areas of receiving preferential treatment under certain conditions.³

State aid to local libraries and systems is also channeled through state library development agencies, with responsibility lying there for the development of regulations, guidelines and administration to provide the wisdom not specified in the body of the law. Furthermore, there is a reluctance in some legislatures to spend money in the state capital bureaucracy which cannot be demonstrated to have been of local benefit back in the districts.

Thus, the needs not only for numbers but also for the types of state agency personnel have continued to change through the years, and have often not received adequate attention at either the state or local levels. As little attention as possible will be given here to the quantity of work; rather, emphasis will be on the kind of work now being assigned to state agencies and the consequences of this for the personnel of state agencies.

The Monypenny study of state libraries,⁴ the Nelson study of state agencies⁵ and the ALA *Standards for Library Functions at the State Level*⁶ were all indications of quasi-official recognition of the changing roles of such agencies. One of the most fortuitously-timed pieces of library

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research — Long's study *The State Library Consultant at Work*⁷ — was completed and published at the height of the transitional stage of such development work in 1965. One can only regret that it could not have been preceded and followed in ten years by similar studies that would have illustrated the rapid change in the roles of these persons.

In addition to the Long research, there were results from a conference in the New England states⁸ which produced a list of additional needs for education for library consultants, an Allerton Park conference on the changing role of the library consultant,⁹ and a document prepared by the Association of State Library Agencies (ASLA) Library Education Division (LED) Interdivisional Committee which enumerated with considerable specificity those competencies needed by development personnel and a strategy for providing them.¹⁰

Since 1970, however, there seems to have been less emphasis and publication on the matter, although not necessarily a lack of action. An appreciation of the need is seen through the regional meetings of state library agency personnel from time to time, as well as in the two major efforts of the federal government to provide significant continuing education workshops — the 1971-72 seminar on planning and evaluation¹¹ sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the 1976 workshop on management and administration, funded by NCLIS¹² (although the latter was criticized in some quarters¹³). Nevertheless, the impact of such workshops on numerous states is significant. These efforts all stand on one common admission: the state library agency's role has changed and with it the nature of work and competencies demanded of its employees.

COMPETENCIES AND NEEDS

To consider education of state agency development personnel, one must identify the role of such persons in order to state requisite competencies. Viewing development as encompassing more than the field consultant (traditionally considered to be the "development" arm of the state agency), the participation of the agency's top administration, and to varying degrees staff throughout the agency, is essential to successful development efforts. Therefore, the competencies mentioned below may be needed by persons throughout the state agency, whether involved in administration, consultant work, central collections development, development of systems of materials sharing, etc. Table 1 lists the summary statements from *Standards for Library Functions at the State Level* which are most pertinent to library development activities. In addition to these

TABLE 1. PARTIAL LIST OF LIBRARY FUNCTIONS AT THE STATE LEVEL

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1. The state library agency, in fulfilling its responsibilities at the state level, must ensure that library functions essential to each state are achieved.
 2. The state library agency should exercise leadership and participate in the development of statewide plans involving all types of libraries at all levels within the state. It should take the initiative in marshalling qualified individuals, groups and agencies to engage in such overall planning.
 3. The state library agency should review continuously both federal and state legislation affecting library service in order to ensure compatibility and to maintain a legal climate conducive to total library growth and development.
 4. The state library agency should encourage and facilitate cooperative library services across state lines through interstate library compacts, contractual agreements and other established cooperative endeavors.
 5. The state should gather, compile, interpret, publish, and disseminate annual statistics on all types of libraries in the state, including the state library agency. The state library agency should be a central information source concerning the libraries of the state.
 6. The annual statistics gathered by the individual states should be designed to provide a common core of data among the states and for the nation.
 7. The state should also publish an annual report showing state library activity as a coordinating agency.
 8. It is the responsibility and obligation of the state library agency to initiate and encourage research. A position including the duties of research and planning should appear in each state agency position roster.
 9. The state plan should indicate particularly the structure of coordinated library service needed to achieve national standards for all types of libraries.
 10. As a standard of first priority, every locality within the state should be encouraged to participate in a coordinated library system, so that every resident has access to the total library resources of the state.
 11. Some circumstances, such as very sparse population and low economic base in specific local areas, may lead the state to provide direct library service.
 12. A high-priority standard of library development is that of designating or developing a pattern of centers over the state so that everyone has access to more comprehensive resources and specialized staff in addition to the resources within his locality.
 13. The state library agency should make provision for reference, bibliographic and interlibrary loan service to supplement community and regional libraries.
 14. The state library agency must make provision for consultants sufficient in number to stimulate all libraries to develop their full potential. It is also advisable for qualified consultative services to be provided at a regional level.
 15. State library consultant service should emphasize guidance in special aspects of library service.
 16. The state library agency is responsible for interpreting library service to the government and to the public, and for promoting a climate of public opinion favorable to library development.
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Source: American Association of State Libraries. Standards Revision Committee. *Standards for Library Functions at the State Level*. Rev. ed. Chicago, ALA, 1970, pp. 1-7.

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points, another ten standards¹⁴ are put forth concerning the necessity of state and federal financial aid, which presupposes the task of developing regulations for and administration of the funds.

If examined carefully, the reader can discern in the list certain common elements of responsibility demanding competencies which must be held by the staff in order to carry out such functions. Considering these functions as the ultimate goals toward which a program of education of development personnel should be directed, the following highly generalized competencies can be derived:

1. Ability to evaluate and plan in relation to public needs.
2. Ability to lead and to persuade groups and individuals to work together.
3. Ability to analyze library resources and relationships.
4. Ability to gather information, organize it and do meaningful research.
5. Ability to communicate and disseminate information effectively.
6. Understanding of government, law and the legal machinery of all different government levels.
7. Understanding of finance as it relates to the operation of libraries and the ability to administer funds.

Additional competencies not related to library development could be derived from the standards, but concern here is only with those related to development.

This deductive analysis of educational needs among such personnel departs somewhat from the method of assessing needs through the use of questionnaires addressed to persons in the field. This was done in order to find whether or not an alternative exists to the usual "shopping-list" type of questionnaire used to determine, in particular, continuing education needs.

In the study by ASLA mentioned earlier, the committee drew upon a more detailed breakdown of these needs which had been developed by Lawrence Allen and published in *Southeastern Librarian* in 1968.¹⁵ His method resembled an acute analytical approach to the canvass of opinions concerning educational needs contained in Long's 1965 study. It is interesting to note that the needs extrapolated from the standards correspond rather closely with the more specific lists made by Allen and the ASLA LED Interdivisional Committee, which seem to have been based to some extent on a field survey.

CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATION IN THE FIELD

As the employment market has changed, staffs come and gone, and educational backgrounds discovered in Long's study presumably changed, the most effective way to determine the present situation with respect to the education of development personnel seemed to be to go to the source. For this purpose, letters were sent to the state agency directors and other persons who were concerned and knowledgeable, due to their present association through federal activities or through library education. (All had previously been associated with state agencies, however.)

The purpose of the letter was to solicit the opinions of these persons on the general subject of the education of library development personnel. In order to make the opportunity as open-ended as possible, the letter was general rather than being a questionnaire. To obtain some degree of comparability, however, an attachment suggested three general points for consideration:

1. the factor of formal education beyond the master's degree in library science (MLS) as being necessary or desirable for development work;
2. alternative types and methods of continuing education most needed in the field and the agency(ies) most responsible for providing such opportunities; and
3. an assessment of general conditions in the field, both as to present educational characteristics of personnel and their opportunities for professional growth.

FORMAL EDUCATION

Long had noted in 1965 that the preponderance of library consultants held the MLS degree and that the younger the librarian, the more likely he/she was to hold the master's.¹⁶ This seemed to be attributable to the fact that many persons still active in librarianship had received the bachelor's degree in library science in earlier years, before library education was standardized at the graduate level. Statistical certainty is impossible without repeating her research, but it would seem that education at the master's degree level in library science (or in an appropriate specialty) is now more nearly universal among development personnel, considering the degree of attrition and the improved labor market. One of the points suggested for consideration was whether postmaster's education would be an important factor in employing new personnel. Without exception, the response was that appropriate experience (in addition to the MLS) was far more important than additional education. Patricia

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Klinck, State Librarian of Vermont, stated that: "Those librarians who lack solid experience have a false image of the real library world, little flexibility, and little patience with the problems of librarians in a working situation. The most successful library development personnel seem to be those who have interspersed formal education with periods of significant related work experience."¹⁷ David Palmer, Acting State Librarian of New Jersey, asserted that after about five years the consultant tends to become somewhat divorced from the practical aspect of library work and assumes a theoretical attitude. He suggested that sabbaticals of some sort for actual work in a library should be arranged in order for the consultant to regain a feeling of immediacy of contact.¹⁸

Emphasis was also placed on the importance of desirable personal characteristics of those who will necessarily be largely concerned with working with people. Many librarians pointed out the need for empathy, alertness, curiosity, willingness for change, and an interest in pursuing new ideas.

Although appropriate experience and personal characteristics were considered to be of prime importance, additional education was also considered to be valuable. This was to be expected, but it should be emphasized that in most instances further education was explicitly recommended in a field other than library science. Areas such as public administration, finance, management, and group dynamics¹⁹ were suggested. There were also suggestions that a sixth-year program in library science would be useful; however, the suggestion usually accompanied statements indicating a need for some change in existing programs.

There is an appreciation, as stated before, of additional education, but emphasis was placed on the need for education appropriate to the particular assignment. (For example, the head of the Research and Evaluation Section in Hawaii holds a doctorate in educational administration as well as the MLS.²⁰) Another factor influencing this particular need is the current emphasis on intertype library cooperation, which places an unusual stress on the employee involved.²¹

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Format

In the 1968 Allerton Park conference on "The Changing Role of State Library Consultants," it was noted that at that time there was a great deal of activity in allowing consultants to update themselves through attending conferences and workshops, both in-state and out-of-state. This was considered an improvement over the type of in-service training pro-

vided by department heads.²² As another step forward, the ASLA Board of Directors, at its 1976 midwinter meeting, noted continuing education as second on its adopted list of priorities.²³

Review of the commentaries received in 1977 indicates unanimous agreement that continuing education is of utmost importance in maintaining an effective development staff. With the rate of change in society and librarianship, the best of persons must work continually through reading, participation in professional organizations, and formal and informal education to stay abreast of events. One can hardly "lead" while being behind.

Respondents were asked to react to the occasionally expressed sentiment that the library schools or a particular group are at fault for not providing more opportunity, considering especially the best way to organize continuing education for participation. The overwhelming response was that the seminar and/or workshop format was the most desirable. Development personnel must observe variations in work and travel schedules which make regular attendance at prolonged courses very difficult, even when repeated travel for the sessions would not be insupportable. Elizabeth Hughey, head of the USOE State and Public Library Services Branch, commented that she had attempted many times while in North Carolina to involve personnel in continuing education other than workshops but never succeeded in getting a course short enough or demanding enough, and was therefore forced to favor the workshop format.²⁴

As for the nature of the seminars, the length proposed varied from an academic quarter to an unspecified, much shorter period. Obviously, it is impossible to determine a suitable length of time for such a session without analyzing the topic and the behavioral objectives to be achieved, but the limiting factor ultimately is that of adjusting the work schedule at home to allow for the participant's absence. Joseph Anderson, State Librarian of Nevada, commented on the undesirability of a series of sessions interspersed over a long period of time during which the participant returned to his work. His letter states the following: "Rather, a series of concentrated seminars on various aspects would be helpful if the background readings were accomplished ahead of time rather than being fitted in during training sessions or after the fact of the seminar. It is being away from the regular work setting that permits the learner to concentrate and produce."²⁵

Content

Comments received on needed subject content of seminars or other modes of continuing education correspond closely with those outlined

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earlier on the basis of competencies implied in previous publications.²⁶ Only at first glance should this be surprising; change occurs in society and in work so quickly that updating is always needed. In addition, there is considerable turnover in staff, so that there are continually new people who need training in old subjects.

Frequently mentioned was the quality of presentation at workshops. Although it seems to be a negative contribution, a few of the specific complaints should be mentioned here. First, the level of presentation is sometimes not up to the intellectual standard expected. Moreover, the speakers sometimes have no concept of the nature of the audience they address. Third, the announcement or prospectus is sometimes misleading, which can result in participation in an irrelevant conference.

Responsibility for Continuing Education

One respondent commented:

It puzzles me that every group dealing with this on the association level (national, regional or local) seems to have a different interpretation, and none of these levels . . . have found a realistic mechanism for delivery. The National Commission seems to advise that continuing education be conducted as policy. The ALA gives lip service to the concept and hands it off to CLENE. The U.S. Office of Libraries and Learning Resources provides discretionary funds for specific activities for use only to elites or "chosen few," and library schools seem not to have the slightest interest in providing such experience by extension even within the states in which they are located. My perception of the latter is particularly burdensome in terms of defending librarianship as a profession because most others . . . provide continuing education and/or professional update activities to keep especially midcareer professionals up to date as time goes on and the state of the art expands the body of information and practices needed for changing conditions.²⁷

This statement illustrates the frustration of trying to obtain a clearer picture of continuing education opportunities for development personnel and others. Respondents expressing their opinions on this subject ranged generally from the view that it is each individual's own responsibility to organize his own continuing education, to the view that the employing agency has the responsibility to do so. Both are correct in their own way, of course. The assignment of responsibility for planning or initiating continuing education programs to NCLIS, CLENE and ASLA or to the li-

brary schools was alternately condoned and condemned as possibilities by the various respondents. However, insofar as state agency development personnel have unique needs, it would seem desirable that some agency undertake identification and fulfillment of those needs, as suggested by the ASLA LED Interdivisional Committee on Education of State Library Personnel in 1970 (i.e., that the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education attempt to coordinate such an effort).²⁸

One could discuss at great length the desirability of an attempt by some agency to stimulate or initiate appropriate offerings, but Elizabeth Hughey pointed out that primary responsibility should probably not lie with any one agency; it should be a cooperative approach, with initiative from any one agency bringing them together to function.²⁹ Perhaps CLENE (especially with state funding³⁰) or some other agency will serve as the vehicle of facilitating such coordinated efforts.

Environment for Continuing Education

In 1967 Nelson Associates, Inc., suggested: "Appropriations might be used for sabbaticals, further education, exchanges for key state library staff or for institutes at colleges and universities to upgrade state library staff. It should be pointed out, however, that such institutes could now be funded under Title II-B of the Higher Education Act."³¹

Ten years later one finds in report after report, both in response to the present inquiry and in statements made personally, that the administration of state libraries favors the allowance of time and funding for conferences, seminars and even sabbaticals (often sanctioned in theory by state policy), only then to announce that such funding is difficult or impossible to obtain. This has had a particular impact on travel to the regular ALA meetings, which is the primary opportunity for the librarian to observe trends in the profession on a national scale. Even the larger and more sophisticated states can foster the development of provincial attitudes if one does not leave their boundaries. Essentially, the current situation reflects a dichotomy in which state administrations endorse an idea (continuing education) and yet institute financial restrictions which defeat their own purposes.

SUMMARY

The employment market has altered to the extent that librarians with full educational qualifications are available to fill most development positions.

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Although the MLS is the first requisite for employment, followed by experience in the field and personal qualifications, state library agency employers also appreciate and seek employees with appropriate additional formal education. The general attitude prevails that postmaster's education should be in fields other than library science.

Continuing education in one form or another is considered of extreme importance not only by the national associations but apparently universally by state library agency directors.

Short-term programs remain the most desired format of continuing education.

Expressed needs for continuing education remain consistent with the general statements contained in the standards for library service at the state level and have apparently not varied significantly since 1970.

The conclusions reached above indicate distinct educational needs for library development personnel that are not currently satisfied and that have the peculiar constraints of requiring certain formats (as well as subjects) and an apparently cyclical need for repetition as new people come into the field or as new developments occur. Work toward a solution of the problem should therefore be undertaken in a way which will not place too great a responsibility for completion of the entire program in one place too soon. It would seem logical to begin with a joint committee of ASLA and CLENE. This committee should concern itself with the following objectives:

1. Update the 1970 report of ASLA LED Interdivisional Committee on Education of State Library Personnel, redefining the needs in the field.
2. Specify needs fully and clearly, both as to content and acceptable format.
3. Define a method of both involving ASLA, CLENE and the Association of American Library Schools in a continuing working arrangement that will facilitate the development of necessary educational opportunities where and when needed, and assuring that they will be attended by the appropriate people when offered.

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