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Library Trends, a quarterly journal of librarianship, provides a medium for evaluative recapitulation of current thought and practice, searching for those ideas and procedures which hold the greatest potentialities for the future.

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Adult Learners, Learning and Public Libraries

ELIZABETH J. BURGE
Issue Editor

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Introduction: Changing Perspectives

ELIZABETH J. BURGE

In the 1959 issue of Library Trends, "Current Trends in Adult Education," the editor, Walter Stone, stated that "optimism, enthusiasm, and personal dedication are among the most distinguishing characteristics of all those, including librarians, who work and write in behalf of adult education."1 Almost a quarter of a century later, adult educators still show those characteristics, but with a major difference: the characteristics are based on knowledge and skills that have significantly increased since 1959, and which are supported by an important shift in perspective.

The 1959 issue and this issue of Library Trends show interesting relationships. Both share the key assumption that librarians are adult educators, and both outline examples of innovative and responsive work with adults. This present issue argues by implication that an acceptance of educative roles for librarians is developed only with a clear understanding of how and why adults learn. The current issue reflects the increase in knowledge and skills over the past twenty-three years, and illustrates a new perspective for work with adult learners.

The new body of knowledge and skills, as summarized for example by Kidd and Cross,2 is supporting the growing recognition that we and all other adults learn throughout our lives in various styles which do not depend on classroom-bound teaching. The fact that learning does not stop at graduation has enormous implications for anyone working with and for adults. Some of those implications are addressed in this issue:

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others can be dealt with later as readers examine their individual library contexts.

The developing recognition by educators of the qualities of adult behavior and experience has led to the growth of a specific body of knowledge and skills that supports a facilitative or helping approach toward adult learners; as distinct from an authority-based, prescriptive and pedagogic approach.³

The focus of “Adult Learners, Learning and Public Libraries” is on the specific helping or facilitative approach as it relates to adult learners, and the implications such an approach has for library services and administration. This approach reflects, in short, a concern for the learner—a learner-centered view—which is challenging adult educators to examine their traditional values and practice. The issue has been structured to encourage a change in the reader’s perspective, and to depart from some traditional conceptual frameworks used for assessing adult education services in libraries.

It is not meant to duplicate the existing monograph material on library services to adult learners.⁴ Rather, it goes to the adult education world in order to present the perspective, knowledge and concerns which condition adult educators’ work with adult learners. The term learner will be used throughout the issue to refer to any adult who uses a library. The experience of librarians and the research into informal and independent learning justifies regarding reading and information seeking as learning behavior.⁵

A Collaborative Collection

Adult educators in the introductory articles focus on significant knowledge and issues concerning adult learners and their learning behavior. Such an approach illustrates three concepts. Often the presentation of new or significantly revised perspectives needs the stimulus and accuracy of new speakers. The collaboration by adult educators and librarians in this issue parallels the collaborative learning relationships between learner and facilitator. It also models collaborative administrative relationships between adult education and library organizations.

As Roby Kidd’s personal and professional stature was international, so is his review of global trends. As an internationalist he affirmed the belief that access to opportunities and skills for learning are a fundamental human right, not a privilege. As a practitioner, he regretted what he saw as a decline in working relationships between librarians and other adult educationalists. As a scholar, he acknowledged the extent of radical changes in our understanding about the
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processes of learning and adult learner behavior. As a realist, he posed critical questions and choices for librarians if they accept the validity of the question, "Is a right to learning a basic issue?" Librarians who knew Roby Kidd will recognize in his article the conviction, skill, style, and sensitivity that characterized his active and lifelong commitment to adult learners. His comments about involvement and commitment are appropriate for professional as well as personal development: "People tend to commit themselves deeply under circumstances in which they dare to make a dramatic break with their past or a marked shift in attitude. If we are serious about social and educational change, we must multiply the number of experiences in which commitment may occur."

Joan Neehall and Allen Tough discuss the results of their recent research stemming from Tough's earlier work already familiar to some librarians. Their focus on intentional and unintentional change as a reason and outcome of learning leads into the learner-centered context of this issue. Their discussion of the elements of choice, activity and the degree of self-directedness shown in learner behavior has sobering implications, as has the finding that the adult learners were, at the beginning of their interviews, remarkably self-deprecating about their own efforts to bring about change.

Neehall and Tough have identified some very personal and individual characteristics of noninstitutional adult learner behavior. Alan Knox in contrast has identified issues around entry into participation in more formal learning programs. He argues that the design of appropriate information and counseling services depends on an accurate knowledge of factors which influence levels and extent of participation and effective marketing strategies. He refers to well-known adult education research and, by his synthesis and perspective, provokes further questions regarding practice.

Dorothy MacKeracher takes a strongly theoretical approach to our understanding about what happens to adults during the process of learning. Her arguments support two basic assumptions—learning is a continuous activity, and its context cannot be limited to formal classrooms, group discussions or individual reading. Using a clearly defined learner-centered view, she explains why learning is an individual and active process, identifies conditions which affect that process and its facilitation, and outlines alternative strategies for librarians who want to strengthen their skills in helping people learn. Readers will recognize familiar and recurring problems associated with reference interviews, learner's advisory work, and other adult services.
David Carr concentrates on the subtleties of the helping process within a library context. His exposition of the theme that helping is “instrumental participation” in people’s lives shows up the limitations of the “serving patrons” concept. The dynamic quality of this participation is dependent not only on communication, knowledge and skills of the librarian and of the client, but also on the further dimensions common to all developing interpersonal relationships. The associated theme of interdependence draws out significant implications for practice.

The evaluation of North York (Ontario) Public Library’s services to adults shows successful practice supported by sound theory. Phyllis Goldman and Joan Fulford identify success factors that bear strong resemblance to those listed in 1956 by Phinney. Their programming content and method show a close and collaborative relationship between learner and librarian, and an accurate identification within reasonable limits of that “teachable moment”—the point at which the learner is ready to learn. The trends they identify are not new in themselves—what is important and worth watching is the interrelationships of those trends, and how those dynamics affect the ongoing revision of specific work objectives.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore has shown a long commitment to work with adult learners, and a high level of responsiveness to individual and group needs. The strength of this tradition enables an honest pragmatic view of the future, and realistic assessments of internal and external constraints. It is significant that staff attitudes are noted here as a critical problem. This identification reflects the concerns of other adult education agencies for the development of human resources, as distinct from the development of material resources.

The two case studies refer to various short- and long-term effects on services, library administration decisions and the levels of funding resources. Lois Fleming argues that past experiences should have taught library staff some tough lessons without denying them alternative strategies for constructive and planned action. She stresses the need for adopting a conceptual framework for solving problems in management. This parallels the emphasis on and use by the adult educators of their conceptual frameworks for dealing with issues in adult learning. Frameworks provide contexts and reasons for setting specific objectives before establishing policies and procedures. Her concern about reasons for and methods of evaluation extends traditional thinking on this issue.
**Introduction**

Robert Clark links his discussion of management implications to the areas of funding and community support in a United States political context. He states that the broad community input inherent in the procedures for setting agency rules and regulations can stimulate new or revised directions for libraries. He sees the work of American state libraries as essential in gaining funds, licensing staff, providing consulting services, and helping in community assessments. Such services illustrate state libraries adopting deliberately proactive stances in a very competitive arena. Clark's emphasis on knowledge of the power structure reinforces his themes of assertiveness and political skills.

While each discussion introduces various implications for learner-centered practice, each in turn leads to questions about education and training to support that practice. John Allred and Judith Bowen discuss the British experience and perspectives around professional education, and emphasize the development of education programs which evidence a sophisticated treatment of political and economic factors affecting the design and delivery of programs and services. A continuing problem for the future will be the assessment of congruence between the demands of practitioners and the philosophies and attitudes of library science educators.

The choice of articles for this issue represents a highly selective approach to this 1983 update on adult learners and their relationships with public libraries. The article sequence supports a conceptual framework that starts in an adult education context, moves to the individual learner, and then examines institutional responses. The selection has been based on the need to avoid repetitive discussion of library-based work with adult learners. No attempt has been made to include excellent historical reviews and earlier summaries of practice, or more contemporary generalist writing. A futurist approach has been avoided, because librarians and other adult educators are concerned chiefly with perspectives and responses appropriate for present demands. For maximum value, this issue on "Adult Learners, Learning and Public Libraries" needs to be related to recent specialist work in the development of learning how to learn skills, in educational brokerage services, and in the development of conceptual frameworks that relate the processes of learning to library-based activity.

**A New Perspective**

One significant theme in all the articles is a concern for learners— for how and why they learn, and for how sensitive and relevant are the
institutional responses to learner needs and behaviors. This theme reflects the learner-centered view of education discussed earlier; one which recognizes differences in value and practices from an institution-centered view. Such a latter view is evidenced in staff preoccupation with rules and regulations, to prescriptive rather than exploratory, risk-taking approaches to change, and to a reliance on and reference to the past.

It is a key contention of this issue that library services to adult learners are doomed to relative obscurity and irrelevance unless library staff strengthen a learner-centered view, and lessen their preoccupations with institution-centered concerns. Such a view will help confirm the inescapable fact that it is not so much what the library prescribes for learners that is important, but rather what the learners perceive and feel about what the library does. It could be argued that this learner perception factor ranked equally with several social and economic factors to explain the legendary success of public library adult education activities in the latter nineteenth century, especially in Britain.

This learner-centered view is not based on an abdication of professional responsibility, nor on "an (erosion) of high principle."12 Neither is it based on a concept of "serving patrons," which this writer feels is not only inappropriate, but dishonest in terms of professionals interacting with adult clients. Rather it is based on:

1. understanding the processes and contexts of learning;
2. recognizing that adult learners do not wait for educators;13 that they exemplify the adult educator's adage that "education is too important to leave to the educators";14
3. understanding adult characteristics relevant to learning situations;15
4. accepting a developmental function in learning, as well as a task- and problem-solving one;16
5. encouraging the learner to be skilled and assertive, and to be able to assume responsibility for learning;17
6. recalling that a very significant historical contribution of many public libraries has been their planning of activities for individuals;18
7. ensuring that interactions between library staff and clients are adapted as far as possible to individual needs, rather than being characterized by standardized or unsolicited responses.19

A learner-centered view is designed to move the focus of library-based adult education activity away from abstract, idealistic service goals that depend on an intrinsic desire to learn and an advanced stage
of moral, intellectual and psychosocial development in each individual. Work goals for librarians instead would recognize the problem, task and prepersonal change factors which stimulate learning; they would also recognize the idiosyncratic ways in which adults learn. This view recognizes that the other end of the attitude continuum is also inappropriate for the 1980s. For example, an attitude characteristic of "the other end" would hold that "adult education is a kind of seedy activity, concerned withremedying deficiencies, making up lacks, earning more money, or painting figurines."20 Certainly these examples are valid and common reasons for learning and for socializing during learning, but they now command more positive connotations. Between each end of the continuum are foci for services that spotlight realistic and differing needs for and styles of learning over the whole adult lifespan.

A Significant Perspective

If it has been important to clarify some origins and characteristics of a learner-centered view, it is equally important to explain how such a significant shift in thinking could be used in librarianship. First, if its adoption can encourage more focused thinking around work objectives it may help to free public libraries from their history of argument about the scope and excellence of library-based help for adult learners. Lynn Birge's plea in 1982 for librarians "to recognize the need for planning and coherent development of a total program of adult education activities, based on specific objectives and goals" resonates with that of Darlene Weingand in 1980, and with earlier but very similar comments by Marion Hawes, Helen Lyman Smith, and Cyril Houle.21

Second, it can help to focus reactions to comments about library responses being conservative in relation to the needs of their clientele, or of being inappropriately focused on groups, rather than individual needs.22 A third reason for encouraging this significant shift in thinking and in self perception revolves around the demands of the future—the next quarter century. Weingand's Delphi study recommendations are only one library-based example of informed prediction which has serious and immediate implications for those who want to do more than react to the external forces of change.24 Many of these recommendations either directly or indirectly affect the public library's work with the individual adult learner.

A fourth reason may well be associated with methods used in professional education of librarians. When these are based on a "hierarchical, authoritarian model of intellect-in-charge," library school stu-
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dents have reduced scope for the development of their personal and social maturity and for self-responsibility for learning, at least compared with the use of a more interdependent, facilitative approach to learning. The traditional education model that stresses a teaching orientation, as distinct from a learning orientation, can lead to low levels of learner self-direction and reduced learner assertiveness, especially in interpersonal interactions. When learners under this model begin work as professional librarians, there is a strong probability that they will adopt a similarly hierarchical approach with their library users—they have experienced no alternative integrated styles of helping, nor have they adequate experiential-based training for interpersonal interaction that is sensitive as well as task-effective.25

Relevant service objectives cannot be specified, conservatism and financial realities cannot be confronted, or education methods improved without conviction and focused thinking. Let us assume that conviction is assured; focused thinking is a more complex activity.

Toward the Future

The continuing usefulness of this issue of Library Trends will depend on how far it encourages its readers seriously to examine the concept of a learner-centered view, and to assess how far their present values and skills around helping adults contribute to the development of that view for their professional practice. Further reflection still may lead to some significant general shifts in thinking. The results of such shifts at a professional level can be understood in terms used to describe significant shifts in perspective at a personal level. Mezirow argues that the process and outcomes of significant personal change and growth involve the development of a critical awareness of one's existing assumptions, using appropriate "sustaining relationships," and then "seeing one's self and one's roles and relationships in a consistently coherent way, a way which will dictate action priorities."26

A question about 1984 and beyond is needed, especially as it draws near. In 1954 Helen Lyman Smith reported that the commitment in public libraries to the adult education movement was as vital and alive then as it was thirty years previously.27 That commitment and its resulting extent of activity had enabled the library to be "recognized both inside and outside the library profession as an educational institution with a major role in the movement. The librarian [then] was recognized as an educator with the right and duty of assuming a vital active role in contrast to the passive custodial role of the past."28 The
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question for 1984 becomes: To what extent can this be said of the present generation of public libraries—thirty years on?

This issue of Library Trends pays tribute to earlier generations of library-based adult educators, and acknowledges their evident skills and their "optimism, enthusiasm and personal dedication." It also asks for the further development of an informed and articulated perspective shift for the present and future generations. The maturation, or as some would argue, the restoration of significant services to adult learners depends on identification of the problem or task, accurate and relevant information, critical analysis, decision making, and reflection. These are also key conditions of change, growth and learning. If they contribute to change and development in the personal learning of librarians, then they may encourage concomitant changes in practice.

Editors, like adult learners, work with others. The quality of this issue has been enhanced by the generous help given by several colleagues, but I am especially indebted to Helen Huguenor Lyman. She gave the encouragement and constructive comment that characterize a skilled helper, not just for adult learners, but also for editors.

References

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16. For Phinney's relevant definition of educative activity see Phinney, Eleanor. Library Adult Education in Action: 5 Case Studies. Chicago: ALA, 1956, p. 3. ("An educational activity, then, might be any library service which would directly help an adult user to build upon and realize (her)/his potentialities").


18. Birge, Serving Adult Learners.

19. Reilly, The Public Librarian as Learners' Advisor, p. 60.


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25. A similar point in regard to university teaching has been discussed in Heron, J. "Assessment Revisited." In *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning,* edited by David Boud, p. 59. London, Eng.: Kogan Page, 1981. He argues that the help given to learners under this directive model may be not only inappropriate in what it tries to do, but also inappropriate in how it tries to do it.


28. Ibid., p. xii.

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Learning and Libraries: Competencies for Full Participation

J. ROBY KIDD*

The day I began to prepare this paper I also started to learn how to use a word processor. I am not a good candidate for operating even simple electronic media and progress has been slow. But it is no coincidence that the struggle and exhilaration of being engaged in one difficult learning project renewed my zeal for another. I am not alone in finding that people are at their best, and their most human, when they are learning.

This entire issue of Library Trends is about learning—learning for personal enlargement and learning for social development, perhaps ultimately learning for survival. I will argue that, concerning most aspects of learning, there have been such changes as constitute what the cliché manufacturers now call a “paradigm shift.”

May I start with a word about my own debt to libraries for what they have offered to me and to my children. I once heard a famous Canadian author, B.K. Sandwell, say, “I am what libraries and librarians have made me, with a little assistance from a professor of Greek and a few poets,” and in part he was speaking for me. Some of the best days of my life have been associated with the stimuli and comforts of some favorite library. Regularly now, I go into the Toronto Reference Library, designed by an architect of rich feeling, Ray Moriyama, just to read and feel more like a human being, not just a worker or consumer. I have had

*Editor's note: J. Roby Kidd died before revision of the manuscript was completed; it was prepared for publication by Elizabeth Burge, issue editor.

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delightful association with other favorite libraries, which I helped "open," such as one at Hunter River in Prince Edward Island (a building that is solitary, wind-swept, sometimes almost covered with snow drifts, needing some paint but inside warm and composed, yet exuding an atmosphere that checks complacency); an even more lonely hut amid the grasslands of Swaziland, the sole memorial, and the one that would have pleased her most, to a great lady and innovator in literacy, Margaret Wrong; and a bougainvillia-framed public library in Udaipur, the foundation for many learning projects covering much of west India, seeking cooperation of its users with a hand-lettered sign that urges gently, in both Hindi and English, "Let thy voice be low."

I have been rereading the July 1959 issue of Library Trends with the theme "Current Trends in Adult Education." I note the date, 1959, just a little more than twenty-three years ago. Indeed, the lead article by Robert Blakely, who was the most eloquent voice in American adult education for almost two decades, was entitled "Nineteen Eighty (Not Nineteen Eighty-Four!)") and Blakely was reflecting on future educational needs, as well as issuing a caveat based on Orwell's novel. Since the tyranny that Orwell predicted was a monstrous system of surveillance and information control, long before "chip" technology or miniature recorders, such a warning may not be redundant.

If it is possible to find and reread that 1959 issue, please do so, for it gives an excellent time frame for a review of learning. It was a period in which the library was perceived, along with the university offering textbooks, as the central agency in adult education. People like the editor, Walter Stone, were very active members in adult education councils, local, state and national, and were cited frequently in adult education publications. At the same time, adult educationists such as Knowles, Sheats and Houle were published regularly in library journals. I remember with pleasure the year and a half when I was studying adult education at Columbia University and was able to meet and work with such librarians as Mildred Mathews, John Crory, Grace Stevenson, Fern Long, and Miriam Tompkins.

Associations by adult educationists with librarians were almost daily, and librarians, particularly public librarians, were considered front line militants in the struggle to advance adult education. At such a time, when libraries and adult educationists were considered to be "playing on the same team," the articles in the 1959 issue of Library Trends were concerned with services to adult education and the role of the library as the community information base.

At that time too, both librarians and adult educationists were becoming more conscious of the need for graduate training and
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research. The most quoted reference, noted by Eleanor Phinney and other writers, was An Overview of Adult Education Research, whose senior editor was Brunner. The book served as a baseline statement of research for both fields: librarianship and adult education.

I hope I am wrong, but I suspect that the mutually advantageous and reinforcing relationships between practitioners called librarians and those called adult educationists may have declined somewhat since that period. Or perhaps that feeling reflects my own international preoccupations. At home I may have misunderstood, but I sense that there is greater distance now between two kinds of professionals that used to be partners within many kinds of shared achievements. Moreover, I have discovered to my regret that in most developing countries, one can never take for granted that librarians and practitioners in workers' education, literacy, vocational training, and health education will mingle and cooperate. It is not true, unfortunately, that invaluable forms of collaboration, mutual support and cooperative training and research are seen as obvious and necessary by either side; they have to be planned for, and organized, before many people will recognize the benefits of working partnerships.

For better or worse, neither life nor learning stands still for a quarter century. Notice a basic change in the title of this 1983 issue of Library Trends. The focus is not on adult education, but on adult learning. This is a profound transformation; it goes much deeper than semantics, and it recognizes a situation that might have the effect of making the library an even more important principal or partner in most of the enterprises affecting the lives of men and women.

I have already said that the changes that have occurred in learning are so complete that they constitute a "paradigm shift" or "perspective transformation." I dislike the terms, but welcome the distinctions because there are conversion ideas that can only be attained by a leap (in consciousness, in intellect, in psychomotor energy). I say "leap" in part because the most graphic representations of this state that I have seen are when a high jumper or pole vaulter is preparing to break a record: gathering himself in, integrating mind, feeling, muscle, blood flow, breath; and readying himself for propulsion. The change in emphasis from educating—valuable, useful, and essential though educating is—to an emphasis on learning constitutes such an intellectual leap: a very big shift or transformation. By this I mean no "putdown" to education, a cause I have tried to serve most of my life. But we should not veil important distinctions, although we lack the metaphors and the linguistic styles to present well this difference, unless we use poetry. Many years ago when I asked Father M.M. Coady of the famed Antigonish
Movement in Canadian adult education, to tell me about some of God's revelations to him, he refused, replying that, "These ideas are too great for me to tell them to you. I could not even tell them to myself lest I did it in Gaelic."

Lacking Gaelic, what can we do with English? Let me choose two associated alterations in meaning, one in literacy, one in adult education, to suggest and perhaps clarify what has happened to the concept of learning.

In 1959, literacy was typically considered to be a handout or welfare offering for some neglected people and was equated with a few basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, at about the level of fourth grade attainment by children. Now, there is worldwide agreement that literacy is a human right for all and consists of all of the learnings (skills, attitudes, knowledge) that help people to be competent to participate in all of the affairs of living at the best level they can attain. Please think about that. Under the earlier view, a library might take some part in a literacy campaign for its conscience's sake or as a duty; under the current concept, the library became the central or foundation institution.

In 1959, adult education, or fundamental education as it was sometimes called, was considered to be a desirable activity, one of many; but by the World Bank and other agencies, it was termed remedial or soft, to be given grants only if there were extra funds, and never to receive loans or appear as a regular item in a national budget. In the main, education was equated with schooling of the young, although some of the rhetoric had begun to change. Now adult education is perceived as a recognized and regular member of the educational family and, much more, considered a strategy for achieving all forms of international, national, group, and personal development. Economics, nutrition, health, political factors and leisure activities are studied in many adult education arenas. If that change in perspective and function is true, and increasingly it is becoming true in more places, can the library or librarian stand aside? When constant and convulsive changes appear increasingly more often in our professional careers, many of us may fear and feel threatened by these changes and our ability to respond effectively. And yet, for people in libraries, or in adult education, much of what has happened in terms of this change in perspective means new and renewed opportunities, worth the adventures and the risks that are required.

I suppose I am more aware than most of the extraordinary changes that have come so swiftly to the concept of "learning." In 1958, a book of mine attempted to integrate what was known about adult learning that I
thought I understood at the time. Since that year I have once faced the task of major revision, eight times been faced with some modifications related to translations into other languages, and very often faced the opportunity to "teach" courses in adult learning and personality development. Each time, I have been made increasingly aware of how much has been discovered about learning that I do not know. About somewhat similar changes in physics during an earlier decade, I remember an interview between Edward Murrow and Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, in which the latter said: "We were cruising along safely in the 1940s trying to understand our little business, and then all Hell broke loose."

But in the field of adult learning, the changes have occurred so simultaneously and to such an extent that they can be regarded as radical. They have occurred around concepts and styles of learning; the dimensions and various domains of learning (e.g., the affective domain is gaining more attention); the extent of learning during all the developmental phases of maturity (life-span, lifelong learning); the situational contexts of learning (e.g., nonclassroom or distance learning); the facilitation of learning and the role of the professionals; and around the communications media. Those words are all familiar, perhaps too familiar to denote a feeling of radical transformation. Some of these changes can be summarized under the following headings:

1. Learning Society
2. Lifelong Learning
3. Learning as a Human, not just a Cultural Phenomenon
4. Domains and Dimensions of Learning
5. Learning and Mathetics
6. Learning and Andragogy
7. Self-Directed Learning and Intentional Change
8. Distance Learning.

Learning Society

I know when the term learning society began to be used because I can remember Alan Thomas, then director of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, persuading me that it was a more extant general term than "educative society." The latter term did have a certain currency in North America in the late 1950s. All during the 1960s and 1970s "learning society" began to have greater currency; it was basic to the prestigious Faurisi Report from Unesco; it was used in many government reports and speeches by university presidents and politicians. No lobbies were trying to sell this term or concept, it seemed to win its way
because it denoted something that was important for human experience. Now we see some of its applications, for example in the series: *Future Directions for a Learning Society*, of the College Entrance Examination Board.\(^8\) The Club of Rome has been noted for its reports on various world problems, the most famous being *The Limits to Growth*.\(^9\) In an effort to consider specifically human factors in world problems, the Club commissioned a report to investigate the extent to which adults felt capable of coping with social and technological change: its short title is *No Limits to Learning*.\(^10\)

So much for the use of rhetoric. Is there also some substance? Do we have anything that approaches a learning society?

With the very rapid advance in media for electronic information processing, much more attention in recent years has been given to the concept of an "information society." It is also recognized that there exists potential or real power for a group or a nation with the possession, the ownership and the sale of some kinds of information. But information, while potentially important, does not equal learning; there is needed an important linking operation which enables learners to make their own sense out of information. Moreover, learning involves the psychomotor (skills) and affective (feeling) domains in addition to the mastery of cognitive (intellectual) processes which are primarily used in information processing.

The growth of understanding about the processes of learning, the numbers of self-managing learners and also our knowledge about the real hardships and handicaps faced by millions of people who have lacked learning opportunities even in industrial societies has helped shape a different perspective for comprehending what may be meant by a learning society. So has an increasing awareness that although no one intended such a consequence, it seems often to be true that adult education has tended to widen the gap between the well-educated and the poorly-educated. What all citizens should be accorded as their right to learning is now an important social issue.

What, for example, does the celebrated clause in the UN Charter of Human Rights mean about the right of every citizen to learning?\(^11\) Is there a basic education that a citizen should have as a birthright and would the provision of such constitute the main conditions of a learning society? Or would something more be needed, such as national declarations or laws, or an ethos of learning, or an environment for learning? These ideas and experiences have not yet been woven into a major concept or theory about a learning society, but they are available when creative minds will take them up.
The difference between information and learning is both fascinating and fundamental for libraries. Will the new libraries still resemble what Powell described in 1949? "For the lack of a teacher's impulse libraries have remained places from which books were taken rather than centers in which a community may cultivate the skill and power of its thinking."12

So is a "right to learning" and even a "right to read" the basic issue for libraries? If people other than the current users, or the middle class in general, and some special interests, are to become the clients and supporters of libraries, it will arise from a view that all kinds of people are the "owners," and need the services of the library. That view has often been professed, but it needs to be implemented on a much wider basis and with due regard to the consequences of encouraging clients to assume "ownership" of library-based services.

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning was a concept heard and accepted in North America long before 1959, but the universal acceptance and application was to come in the 1960s and 1970s, largely through Unesco auspices. The idea was expressed and debated at the World Conference on Adult Education, 1960, in Montreal, was advanced by the Unesco Advisory Committee on Adult Education, 1962-67, singled out as the basic harmonizing idea for the Faure Commission on Educational Development (1973), and in 1976 became the basis for a "Recommendation on Adult Education" approved by the representatives of 144 countries at a General Conference of Unesco. The notion is harmonizing because it covers the life-span, because all phases of learning, formal, nonformal, and informal are included, and because it has three dimensions:

1. Perpendicular—"of learning continuing throughout the entire life span, consonant with all the divisions of education, from the nursery school to the post-Ph.D..."

2. Horizontal—"of learning penetrating into every discipline and every form of intellectual and spiritual activity known to man, and bursting through the artificial barriers erected between fields of study...."

3. Interior or Depth—"of learning responding to simple basic needs up and into the most agonizing or most sublime search for the truth 'that sets us free.'"13

At many points the philosophical tenets of any library service meet and speak to this concept: for example, it is the only major educational
J. ROBY KIDD

institution with a mandate covering the entire life-span of its clients. But translating concepts and tenets into actual services and resources, both material and personal, is a considerable challenge. Libraries have to gather and make available various resources that will be relevant to individuals during their various life stages and transitions. Like other adult educationists, public librarians face the challenge of working with individuals and meeting them metaphorically and often literally on their clients' own grounds.

Learning as a Human, Not Just a Cultural Phenomenon

The organization of learning reveals endless variations: because men and women are so different and they tend to learn in ways derived from and approved by their own culture. Nevertheless, there are also underlying human traits, respecting learning, that seem to derive from one's membership in the human family. Perhaps this also explains another phenomenon that, while education is suffused with political values, the concerns of adult learning seem to cut across these potential obstacles and act as a bridging activity to overreach barriers of language, nationality and national advantage. People who govern their lives by very different ideologies and values find they can cooperate around learning needs and campaigns. This was demonstrated dramatically in 1960, at the Montréal World Conference on Adult Education. While it occurred during the depths of the Cold War, and although it had been widely predicted that the conference itself would break down and fail, representatives from all countries found that they could agree on basic principles. Considerable international cooperation has occurred ever since.

The International Federation of Library Associations has also discovered that many forms of international cooperation for librarians across national barriers, are possible. This is the experience, also, of the International Council for Adult Education. These international groups continue to work because they prove that people from different cultures share some common values. Learning is our international value and an international activity, and as such, like sports and science, becomes an international language. The resulting camaraderie is both reassuring and challenging.

Domains and Dimensions of Learning

During the past two decades the transformations about our ideas of learning have stretched outward, and also inward.
Learning and Libraries

When I took my first course in adult education in the 1930s learning seemed like a familiar concept, although we knew that the verb was complex and could be applied to acquiring information, improving skills and modifying attitudes. In other words, the one verb signified many other verbs. Later, when there began to appear taxonomies of educational objectives learning was seen to exist in and extend throughout three domains, cognitive (primarily about facts, information, thinking), psychomotor (primarily about skills), and affective (primarily about feelings). Armed with these ways of perceiving learning, most observers soon noted that the psychomotor domain was very much larger than had been understood and that many of the increments about learning were occurring in the affective domain. Also reinforced was the understanding that in many or most cases all three domains should be regarded together because they are interacted so closely in any effective program of learning.

Still later, in my own work it became apparent that three dimensions of learning can be discovered, those that are congregated under being, those considered under belonging and a whole additional array that can be listed under becoming. Being, in the sense of personal development, had already been well described in the work of Maslow and "becoming" in the sense that we are never "finished," that we never stop growing, if we continue to move through stages and transitions, had been discussed by Allport. The last dimension, "belonging," was my own addition to the group, and became a reminder that learning often occurred in informal environments such as the family, that it is social as well as solitary, as much for the purposes of the community as it is for the benefit of the individual person.

A critic may say that these are all semantic contributions and simply offer names for analyzing and understanding learning. However, to clear up some misconceptions is no mean accomplishment.

Many persons, of whom Paulo Freire is just the latest, have reminded us that we need ideas and concepts to understand, and to live adventurously in the world. If educationists and librarians comprehend more fully what is learning, they will not only be enriched in their personal lives, but in all of their professional activities.

Learning and Mathetics

People may be tiring of lubricated terms, particularly those associated with educational fads that pass in the night. But mathetics, meaning the sciences of behavior and learning, is an important word,
worth adding even to a well-stocked vocabulary. Notice the plural; mathetics is all about disciplines that offer insights and clarifications about learning, including, of course, the social sciences (sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, as well as psychology); the humanities (history and philosophy, esthetics, comparative ideologies); and very particularly the natural sciences, including physiology, chemistry, biology, and nutrition. Mathetics also includes some fields of practice such as brain research and acquiring a new language or communications technology. The importance of the concept of mathetics is that it is a way of linking together most of the fields from which a data bank about learning is developing. The concept stresses interrelationships at a time when increasing specialization has tended to impede knowledge. It also recognizes that important research about learning may not only be discovered in special applied fields such as library science, but that it may integrate contributions from the "regular" fields of scholarship in almost every discipline. But to obtain useful results, librarians and adult educationists will need to collect records of appropriate research, competence in the forms of expression of these disciplines and knowledge of the languages in which this research is published. No individual can possibly relate to more than a small part of this vast field, but if libraries will collect such results through cooperative efforts and with the creative use of computers, there may be substantial and shared results. This is not to underestimate the occasional benefit that may arise from serendipity, but a little planning helps. Stephen Leacock once said something similar in a speech: "I am a great believer in luck and I find that the harder I work the more I have of it."18

Learning and Andragogy

Those that use the term andragogy believe that there are such differences between children and adults, based on maturation and experience, that the science of teaching children is insufficient to apply to the instruction of adults. In consequence, a new term, andragogy, to be distinguished from pedagogy, has been applied to adult teaching. Andragogy is not a term that I use myself, because I tend to emphasize continuities in learning throughout the life-span, rather than age differences. However, adult educationists in Yugoslavia and some other European countries feel that the distinction is necessary, and some Americans like Malcolm Knowles and Howard McClusky believe that substantial distinctions should be recognized.19 To the extent that these differences in definition and technique are significant, their implica-
tions affect the service designed for and with library users, just as they affect the work of adult educationists.

Self-Directed Learning and Intentional Change

At earlier times, considerable stress has been placed on individualized learning, meaning that curricular materials (books, tapes or others) are produced, organized and directed to a single learner. However, when studies of effective learning were completed, it became evident that a learner will benefit both from social experiences with others and by individual application, through reflection and synthesis, to internalize such experiences. In other words, both individual and corporate experiences are valuable, perhaps necessary, for good learning, and a distinction between the individual and the social may be like choosing food or drink when both are needed.

The concept of self-directed learning, on the other hand, will often describe more than an individual enterprise. When a person chooses a learning experience, the inquiry method may be entirely individual or the learner may enroll and participate in classes, seminars or courses. What is characteristic of the concept is that the learner chooses and has some direction over the desired learning, the steps to be followed, the learning activities to be undertaken, the methods and materials to be utilized, and the assessment of results. One of the immediate consequences of research about this phenomenon has been the discovery that many or most adults do pursue self-directed learning of consequence, and that a large proportion, perhaps three-quarters of these learning activities, are carried on outside of schools and colleges. Research by Allen Tough that began about learning “without a teacher” led to the conclusions that most people want the help of some facilitators in their learning, although such persons rarely bear the title of teacher, and are often a friend, work-mate, or a neighbor, someone who is seen to have the desired knowledge or experience. Librarians were much less frequently consulted.

The distinction between unintended versus planned change has been the subject of an important recent book by Tough. Of course, intended change and how the learner acts within a situation requiring change gives greater attention to proactive behavior, rather than simply reaction to stimuli or command, and encourages people to believe that they can choose and act. Most of us are self-directed learners at one time or another and a typical forum for such behavior is the library. I remember that when a famous Broadway impresario, Billy Rose, was
learning how to write popular songs, he said that he did so in the public library. Many people also go there when they have an inkling of the change or learning they hope to achieve, not only for books but because of the skills of librarians. Tough's research has indicated that most people can learn to become better at the process of carrying out self-directed learning and intentional change. He has not found it to be true, but it follows that there are ways and means of making the library a more attractive and stimulating place for the activities of the self-learner, and for encouraging closer collaborative interactions between learners and library staff.

Distance Learning

Distance learning is a term which began to be used during the last decade to describe something that has been known for ages. At least 3000 years ago, for example, the emperors and top officials of China were closely directing the activities and policies of magistrates and civil servants in many parts of the vast Chinese empire, through the combined use of correspondence education, traveling tutors, portable audiovisual lessons, and planned contact sessions with fellow learners. All of these are components of a good distance learning program today, but there are now some new additions to the media, like tape recorders and satellites. References to distance learning have appeared in research many more times of late, and educators are being reminded of the vast potential of the distance learning market. Wedemeyer is one of an increasing number of practitioners and writers who argue that nontraditional learners need access to and support from more innovative educational institutions—especially ones that do not restrict learners to time and space-bound learning activities.22

Another salutory reminder is that distance learners who are enrolled in courses either choose not to go the classroom route, because of learning styles, life and career pressures or negative school memories, or simply cannot get to classrooms because of their condition of life, for example the institutionalized, ill or geographically too distant. The implications in terms of the size of the market, and the design, delivery and evaluation of support services and resources, have as many implications for librarians as they do for other adult educationists.

The dramatic success of the Open University in England and of similar experiences in Japan, Poland, Canada, Africa, the Pacific Islands, Australia, and many parts of the United States has given a new and necessary impetus to the belief that learners can be helped wherever
they live, or shop, or consume, or work, and that if well designed, the quality of distance learning programs can be excellent.23

Once it is determined to use distance learning procedures, the role of the public library and the librarian comes immediately to attention. It is no coincidence that the library is often a major resource base for a distance learning program, or that people who are successful in these programs are usually the first to demand that library resources, combining all kinds of human and material resources and not just books, are made available.

It would not be difficult to list a further decalogue of significant developments in learning, but I will merely summarize a few. Contractual learning, now becoming an important principle both for credit and noncredit forms of education, refers to a design where the learning objectives (content, methods, assessment, outcomes) are specified and where the learner agrees to carry them out. Such a learning process typically does fully utilize libraries and stresses learning skills associated with effective library use.

The term experiential is usually applied to some form of learning that arise from activities and their analysis by the learner. These may be planned or unplanned, and arise in many settings, for example, in a political campaign, or in a job, or in a workshop. In practice, much experiential learning depends on learners interacting with resources.

There are also nontraditional studies, a term that covers a range of activities usually within an educational institution but where self-management of library-based resources and interaction with library staff are essential for exploration of ideas and the development of new concepts.

There are hundreds of new solutions or pseudo-nostrums around health and personality issues, typically offered by "gurus" who rarely have degrees or credits of any official kind. Some of the services are valuable, it seems, and many not. The library is often the one source where balanced information can be found to understand or to question such doctrines and processes. For all of them, sounding like a chant or a litany; the response is: "more opportunity for the library."

Even this brief review of some changing concepts is one way of noting trends in learning and their possible applications to public libraries. A more typical way for libraries and universities would be to investigate "the literature." This used to be comparatively easy, if one exclusively examined books, because there weren't many. However, that situation is beginning to change, both in North America and abroad. A review of some recent books confirms the extent and kind of changes about learning reflected in the above analysis.
Of the newer books about adult learning, the largest in scope is Alan Knox’s handbook *Adult Development and Learning*. The title is significant. Adult educationists have been lacking a coherent theory of life-span learning against which to project and understand lifelong learning. Many people around the world have been thinking about developmental patterns. Knox ranges over a broad field of “individual growth and competence in the adult years” and makes an excellent integration of at least a thousand studies of development and learning. The fact that his is a large book of 679 pages does not mean that it is over-extended or contains pretentious writing: Knox writes carefully and selectively, and the size of the book is simply an accurate reflection of the growth of and knowledge in this field.

In a more recent book, *Adults as Learners*, Patricia Cross has concentrated on the learning part of the development-learning equation. As the title suggests, Cross integrates much research information about the learners (for example, it is estimated that one American adult in three took part in some form of organized instruction), how they learn, why they participate, what skill and subjects they learn, and what they want to learn.

A comparatively recent book, *Americans in Transition*, by Aslanian and Brickell, as one of the College Entrance Examination Board’s publications under the general title of “Future Directions for a Learning Society” provides much evidence of a thesis, now well established, that developmental changes, life changes, passages, call them what you will, affect markedly what will be learned. This has always been true and most adult educators know it from their own practice and from earlier studies such as Johnstone and Rivera in the United States and an even more complete study by Waniewicz in Canada. Now there is considerably more research evidence which helps explain how these changes may be utilized in developing programs. However, the main impact of these books has been on institutions. What has been done less frequently is to apply the same data and experiences to counseling and support systems for self-directed learners. Authors are beginning to try to integrate theory with practice and this has been the focus of the most recent publication by Robert Smith, *Learning How to Learn*.

The slimmest of all these recent books, but one that succeeds well in integrating theory for the typical practitioner is *Adult Learning Principles and Their Application to Program Planning*. In eighty pages, Brundage and MacKeracher have brought together and applied many of the implications from learning research, carried out in several countries and over many disciplines, but always keeping in center stage the
learner, and the facilitator of learning. What would be useful would be to have authors like these make a special application of learning theory and practice to the library, stressing the kinds and levels of potential service which the library might provide—to those learning at a distance as well as to self-directed learners, and those in more conventional situations.

If the past two decades have been a period of development of learning theory and practice, as momentous as anything before in human history, what does this mean for the library? Almost every principle and proposal that has been cited strengthens the case for public library involvement with adult learners. It does not appear that the library is outmoded or is likely to back away, as the occasional critic may predict. In fact, to paraphrase a favorite author, if there were no library, it would be necessary to create one!

But what kind of public library should be maintained or created in the 1980s and 1990s, when there are so many public and private agencies competing to provide learning opportunities and resources; and when financial support may be slender and stretched? At least there will not be a plethora of resources unless and until the legislators and the public approve.

Of course there are risks in beating out a new path. Some modifications of typical arrangements, such as choosing to serve clients over part of a life-span, or using private as well as public finances may be advocated. Any changes may bring stresses. But the greater risks for the library may be just to continue just as it is. In business, in the professions, in social and personal life, in athletics, it is not possible to remain in a state of equilibrium. No baseball or football or hockey team that is ahead in a game can be certain of staying ahead if it adopts merely defensive, ground-holding attitudes and postures. This should also be true of libraries.

At least three kinds of options seem open to libraries in the next quarter century. In option one, the most familiar, the library would be primarily a collection, would house all of the materials for learning—books of course, and software for other media, including all forms of electronic media. Instead of a house of books, the library could become an emporium for the software of learning, and as such would be an exceedingly valuable resource for the community. But it would still be a collection, although it might be a demonstration of what people in institutions, organizations and their own homes might have and might do. This is not a service or a fate to be disdained, but would most present and potential library personnel choose this passive option?
The second option would be to become a major community learning institution. It would lead public libraries not only to collect and maintain resources, but provide learning processes for many kinds of learning, primarily self-directed and distance learning. Some libraries offer many such active services now. The larger opportunity is within the tradition and good practices of libraries, and yet it is almost breathtaking if applied literally. It would require general agreement that this option should be chosen. Additional resources, both from taxes and public support (such as is the case of public television), would need to be found.

A third option involves choice and partial services. It assumes that a library will not have resources to do everything and might have to specialize in the clientele to be reached or the character of service that would be offered. The choice might be based on geography, or on a sense of community boundaries. A particular one of skill or knowledge might be selected—a “family” of knowledge and skills, such as support for continuing education in the professions, might be a central focus, with the library coordinating or collaborating with a team of related education personnel and resources. Such a focused service, incidently, is very much needed in all communities. Again, selection criteria might concentrate on an age range—for example, serving all the library and learning needs for the people fifty-five and older selectively, as children’s libraries have concentrated their directions and services. Or a library might become the logistical support system for a variety of distance learning projects, some of them from educational institutions, some from private auspices; or it might become the chief support of learning programs for the home, where much learning has and will take place. The base, the modes of delivery, and the essential services provided for the library might be shifted so that more learners in more ways, primarily the most needy learners, might be helped.

Perhaps these questions may indicate something of the explosive force of the new aspects of learning in their impact on libraries and on librarians. What is particularly challenging is the integration of these aspects into sensitive helping relationships between learners and library-based staff—relationships that are based not on dependency and authority, but on mutual respect and collaborative attitudes and skills.

The results can include shifts in attitude and knowledge about learning that can be just as liberating for the librarian as for the learner. All of us probably have a favorite anecdote which captures the learner’s feelings of joy and achievement in learning, especially in a collaborative helping relationship.
Learning and Libraries

But how often do librarians as adult educationists experience these feelings also? Do they know about and feel the extraordinary, perplexing, difficult, baffling things that are happening to readers, to learners, even to themselves? If so, if a learner-centered perspective is valued, the library teams have more goals to reach. Despite the constraints and the competition, there is still time for choosing strategies. This journal issue, by implication, celebrates a fine tradition of service, but also calls for choices to be made. There is still time—1983, not 1984.

References


Many adults use the public library during their efforts to change and learn. They use library materials and staff for implementing changes, for gaining knowledge and skill, for help with goals and planning, for advice, for encouragement and support, and for information about available resources and opportunities.

Adults, however, could gain even more from public libraries. Through understanding intentional adult changes and learning, librarians could develop improved resources, services and policies. As a result, public libraries could become even more important and useful in adult learning and change.

We have recently completed independent but related studies of adult changes. Our findings will be summarized before the major implications for public libraries are discussed.

Intentional Changes

The comprehensive study by Allen Tough focused on intentional changes among adults. To be included in this study, a change had to contain two key elements. The first element was choice. The person definitely chose a particular change; conscious choice and intention were clearly present; the choice was voluntary, not coerced. The second

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element was *striving* or *action*. The person took steps to achieve the chosen change.

In intensive interviews, a range of 150 adults in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom were asked about their intentional changes. Specifically, they were asked to recall their largest, most important intentional change during the past two years. The study was not focused, as some people might assume, on the adult life cycle, or on the psychology of adult development. In fact, it was found that most changes reported by adults were not particularly related to the person's age or stage in life.

Important intentional changes turned out to be particularly common in four areas: (1) job, career and training; (2) human relationships, emotions and self-perception; (3) enjoyable activities; and (4) residence location. These four areas account for 75 percent of all intentional changes. The percentages for all nine areas of change are shown in table 1.

**TABLE 1**  
**AREAS OF CHANGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career, job, and training</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human relationships, emotions,</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and self-perception</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable activities</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence location</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of home and finances</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer helping activities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic competence (in reading, driving, etc.)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each figure indicates the percentage of adults whose largest, most important intentional change in the past two years falls primarily within the given area. N = 144.  

It became increasingly clear during this study that intentional change is often a natural and healthy component in a person's life, and that it should not be assumed to be a sign of severe difficulty, illness or a
Fostering Intentional Changes

highly unsatisfactory life. It seems more appropriate to empathically grasp or treasure another person's changes than to judge or criticize them. We realized during our interviews that it is rarely correct to consider one area or type of change as inherently better than all others, or inherently worse or more dangerous or unimportant.

The results of the interviews clearly showed that many adults succeed in producing significant changes in their environments, activities and inner selves. On the average these adults achieved 80 percent of their desired change. They found these changes very beneficial to themselves and to others. While it is true that people resist certain changes, they definitely seek and achieve certain other changes. It is clear that almost everyone intentionally learns and changes; this activity is not restricted to some special or elite subgroup in the population.

At the beginning of the interview, some people were quite self-deprecating about the size of their changes, but most of them felt much more positive after recalling and reflecting in detail. Apparently people have a negative stereotype about their capacity to choose and produce significant changes in themselves and in their lives.

The adult was asked who performed each of three major tasks: (1) choosing this particular change and deciding to go ahead with it, including estimating costs and benefits; (2) planning the strategy and deciding the steps for achieving the change; (3) actually taking the steps for achieving the change. For each task in turn, the person was asked, "How would you divide the credit or responsibility for performing this task? That is, what percentage of the task was performed by each resource in the list?" The average percentages are shown in table 2.

On the average, the adult assumes about 70 percent of the responsibility for all the subtasks involved in choosing the change, planning the strategy and implementing the change. A significant but smaller role is played by friends, family, neighbors, coworkers and other nonprofessionals during one-to-one interaction. On the average, interviewees gave such persons 23 percent of the credit for the various steps involved in choosing the particular change, 19 percent for planning the strategy and 16 percent for implementation. In choosing the change, for example, the interviewee may have performed most of the effort of gathering information, weighing alternatives and making a decision but may have relied on a spouse or friend to add some useful information, suggest other alternatives and confirm the tentative decision. An interviewee would be considered as performing 100 percent of the task only if he or she performed the entire task without any help, information, useful advice or encouragement from anyone else. Books, booklets,
TABLE 2
EXTENT TO WHICH VARIOUS RESOURCES CONTRIBUTED TO 
CHOOSING, PLANNING, AND IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Choosing</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Implementing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The person himself or herself</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofessionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In individual one-to-one interaction</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a group</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In individual one-to-one interaction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a group</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and other nonhuman resources</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: For each of the three tasks in turn, each interviewee distributed 100 percentage points among the various resources. This table presents the means of those percentages. Source: Allen Tough. *Intentional Changes: A Fresh Approach to Helping People Change.* New York: Cambridge Book Co., 1982, p. 53.

magazines, television, films, tapes, phonograph records contributed only about 3 percent.

The central importance of the person in his or her own change process emerged clearly by the end of most interviews. The attitude of the adults at the beginning of the intensive interview, however, was often quite different. They believed that they and others changed without much thought, planning, purpose, choice-making, time and effort. One man said, "Change just happens by accident or else it's caused by others. There is not much I can do about it." The adults were remarkably self-deprecating about their efforts, power, competence, and success at choosing and bringing about major changes in themselves and their lives. Many felt that their change pattern was strange or unique, and therefore did not consider it normal and effective and did not discuss it with others. By the end of a probing interview, however, their ideas appeared to have changed. They recognized that they proceeded far more thoughtfully and purposefully than they had initially believed, and had used carefully chosen, well-organized steps for achieving the change. They were surprised to discover their own planning process, competence, power, and success.
Fostering Intentional Changes

Detailed findings, along with definitions and an interview schedule, are available in a comprehensive book by Tough. This study grew out of earlier studies of major learning efforts or "learning projects" focused on the help that the adult learner receives and needs, and the frequency and importance of self-planned learning compared to learning in a group or through private instruction.

The general picture is remarkably similar in the two sets of studies, one set focused on intentional learning and the latter set focused on intentional changes. Whether one looks at intentional learning projects or the broader array of intentional changes, one finds that the adult assumes most of the responsibility, uses friends and family more than books and professionals, achieves the learning or change reasonably successfully, and finds the learning or change of definite benefit. Many adults do, however, encounter obstacles and difficulties: they would like more and better help from books and professionals than they now receive.

Degree of Intentionality

A recent study by Joan Neehall focused on intentional and unintentional changes. The study is similar to Tough's in that it examined the degree of intentionality of adults' changes. It should be noted, however, that Tough's interviewees measured their single, most important intentional change that had occurred two years prior to the interview; Neehall's interviewees were measuring all their changes, both intentional and unintentional, over a four-year period. She interviewed 100 adults about their changes within eight change areas that had occurred over the past four years. These areas were job and career, human relationships, self-perception, assertiveness, knowledge of world, skills, basic competencies, location of residence, material possessions, maintenance, enjoyable activities, physical health, volunteer helping activities, spiritual growth, basic understanding, and religion. In this study changes were perceived as resting on a continuum: at one extreme are highly intentional changes; at the other extreme are highly unintentional changes which are not striven for or not chosen. A man, for example, gets run over by a car: he did nothing to contribute to the accident. This would be a highly unintentional change. Figure 1 illustrates the intentionality continuum.

The study concerned the areas of changes in 100 adult's lives. It specifically examined their size and importance, degree of intentionality and the unintentional and intentional benefits of these changes to self and to others.
The interviewees had experienced many large and important changes over the past four years. On the average, they had changes other than small, unimportant or zero in five change areas. Further, the percentage of intentionality for all their changes within the eight change areas combined was 67 percent. In other words, approximately two-thirds of the interviewees' changes were intentional. The findings about the degree to which they benefited from their changes were as follows:

—changes in this area caused me more harm than good (18 percent);
—of some definite benefit for me (10 percent);
—medium amount of benefit for me (20 percent);
—fairly large amount of benefit for me (29 percent); and
—very large, long-lasting benefit for me (23 percent).

Moreover, the data revealed that others reaped benefits from their changes as well. These findings were as follows:

—changes in this area caused others more harm than good (17 percent);
—of some definite benefit for others (16 percent);
—medium amount of benefit for others (25 percent);
—fairly large amount of benefit for others (26 percent); and
—very large, long-lasting benefit for others (16 percent).

The overall finding, supported by statistical data, was that intentional benefits were significantly higher than unintentional benefits.

The trend that emerges from these studies, then, is one that shows adults being remarkably capable of implementing their intentional changes and in coping with their unintentional changes. Moreover, they and others reap significant benefits from these changes.
Fostering Intentional Changes

Implications for Public Libraries

From the research on changes among adults, several major implications become evident for innovative practices and policies in public libraries. The remainder of this article is devoted to these implications.

The public library is one of the most likely institutions to be highly useful to adults. It already has an outstanding reputation for being motivated primarily by public service, for providing freedom of choice among resources, for being a useful and neutral community information agency, and for its role as a university for everyone.5

Perhaps the most significant implication of all is simply a different way of viewing the adult and one’s own relationship with that adult. Most adults who use a public library are remarkably vigorous, competent and successful at choosing, planning and implementing the learning and changes that seem most important to them. They have a natural effective process for this and for coping with unintentional changes. They do need and seek a great deal of help, though, and would like even more and better help than they now receive. Librarians might well see themselves as helping people with their changes and learning, not just with their recreation, job and so on. Librarians are already being used by adults during their change efforts and learning projects, and will be used even more in the future if they develop fresh, innovative services. Librarians might, therefore, benefit from recognizing and exploring their place in adult change and learning.

Some librarians will also sense a kinship with the wide-ranging helping enterprise devoted to fostering the entire range of efforts to learn and change. In fact, they might feel part of an even wider enterprise: the many diverse efforts to foster the humane, creative, loving, free aspects of humankind.

The public library’s responses to intentional learning and change are related to both front line public services and less visible internal management procedures. In terms of public services, librarians could help people become more knowledgeable about intentional changes in general, more aware of their own unintentional and intentional changes, and more competent in planning and managing their own changes. For example, each library could, at least at times, acquire and conspicuously display resources of different formats on adult changes and have educators talk with library users. As a result, some users will gain increased awareness and knowledge of their own changes and strategy planning. They could be helped to see the effectiveness of their own natural change process, become even more effective at performing
the various tasks and steps involved in changing, and become highly effective at getting appropriate help when needed. This could be a way to help adults overcome their self-deprecation around their skills and change processes.

Public libraries could also explore developing further ways of helping adults set their directions for change and choose broad strategies and paths appropriate for those changes. In Tough's study of intentional changes, about 33 percent of the interviewees indicated they would have benefited from better help with goal setting, and 40 percent from better help with planning their strategy.

Public libraries could continue to develop their tradition of readers' service work or readers' advisory work. They have the distinction of being one of the very few institutions already providing such services for adult learners, but there appears to be, from our perspective and studies, much scope for increased activity that is soundly based on detailed knowledge about intentional and unintentional change behavior. The provision of workshops to teach and help adults choose directions and strategies and develop a repertoire of learning how to learn skills could support and encourage the natural but too often deprecated process of learning.

Also, libraries could simply provide attractive displays of some of the most useful books and other materials for helping people plan their goals and strategies for change. Some books present a broad panorama of possible changes and opportunities. Others provide useful suggestions, principles, and resources for choosing and guiding one's learning and change.

It is not enough, however, for people to have clear goals and an appropriate choice of strategy: they also need full and accurate information about the detailed resources, opportunities, methods, and paths available for this particular change. We are thinking here of very detailed information about courses, groups, films, books, and so on. There is little point in having resources and methods available if the person is not aware of them, or lacks sufficient information to choose wisely. Public libraries could be particularly helpful in expanding and strengthening the existing mechanisms for providing this detailed information, and in developing innovative new ways of providing such information.

In terms of internal management procedures, policy-setting questions could include: (1) Could our scope or mission or services be broadened to facilitate a wide range of individual changes? (2) Are there fresh creative ways in which we could encourage and assist the entire
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range of intentional changes? (3) How can we be most useful in helping people cope with their relatively unintentional changes? (4) In major administrative decisions that we are facing today, which choices around staffing and tight budgets would increase the opportunities and resources for effective intentional change behavior in our readers?

Our research on adult changes may suggest some useful principles for the professional development of staff members. Each staff member is engaged in intentional job-related changes. Each staff member can choose from a variety of paths for improvement, including reading about intentional changes or about becoming an effective helper, discussing problems and methods with colleagues, attending a workshop or professional librarians' meeting, observing a colleague in action and trying to respond empathically to each client. In order to choose initial directions for improvement, a staff member can also seek constructive feedback by observing the client's reactions, by reflection after a helping session, by taping one helping session and listening to the tape a few weeks later, or by directly asking clients to make suggestions about staff behavior.

It can also be useful for library staff to have the experience of interviewing five or more library users about their recent change and learning efforts. This may be regarded initially by library staff as an intrusion into their readers' privacy, but our experience indicates that adults are usually very willing to talk, especially when the interview is handled sensitively and leisurely. The act of listening to these accounts is a powerful experience and can transform the awareness and the behavior of staff members. They will see that their readers' own ongoing efforts to change are common, normal and effective; and that many people are capable, powerful and successful much of the time. They are also willing to change, not unduly resistant or static. Through interviews, a librarian may also see how his or her helping efforts are embedded within the person's total range of intentional changes.

Another series of questions relates to the quality of interactions. Librarians might benefit by asking themselves whether they sometimes tend to overcontrol in their interaction with clients. For any given client and intended change, there will be an optimum range of control by the librarian or other helping professional. In figure 2 this ideal range of control might be 60-80 percent in one set of circumstances, 35-55 percent in another and quite different in a third situation. If the librarian and the changing person stay within this range, the intended change (and the person's future willingness and ability to choose and guide the change) will be facilitated more than if they move higher or lower on the
continuum. Many helping professionals, for a variety of reasons, tend to overcontrol; that is, they control so much that they actually become less effective. The effects of this on the adult learner are difficult to measure of course, especially in terms of the learner's ability and willingness to be self-directed.

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<th>The person has zero control</th>
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Fig. 2. Who Controls the Choice of the Change, the Strategy Decisions, and the Implementation Activities?

Along with helping professionals in many other fields, some librarians have, in recent years, been trying to control less and fit into their client's natural process of changing and learning and seeking information. Some librarians are increasingly seeing themselves as a learning consultant, a helper, a counselor, or highly flexible link between the client and various information systems and sources.

A study by Carr of the interaction between librarians and their clients underlines the importance of this shift toward shared responsibility and less control. His study concluded that the following librarian characteristics, along with several others, were especially important in distinguishing helpful episodes from unhelpful episodes: (1) the ability to attend to and know the learner as an individual with an inquiry unlike any other, (2) a willingness to explore all potential courses of inquiry, guided by a standard of optimal fit, and (3) sensitivity to the learner's need for self-esteem, autonomy, reassurance, and competence.

One research project might be especially useful in the public library field: a study of just what additional help people would especially benefit from. Research that successfully and precisely answered this question would be important in improving services and resources for adult learners. Only by grasping the greatest unmet needs can librarians dramatically increase their effectiveness in fostering adult changes. Insightful research along this line could lead to the provision of much better information, advice, services, materials, and helpers for
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people choosing and implementing intentional changes, and coping with unintentional changes. Such specific research might look at the ways in which adults now use libraries and librarians for their intentional changes and learning, and simultaneously try to discover what additional help would be most beneficial.

Our recent research on intentional and unintentional change articulates what, to many librarians and other adult educators, may have been intuitive understandings or experience-based estimates of learner behavior. But it also presents a final implication that is important if librarians value the quality of their personal interactions with their clients. This implication relates to the findings in these and earlier studies that many adults do not seek help from professionals who define themselves as helpers and information resource people. We believe strongly that librarians and other professional helpers will be used much more as they improve their ability in understanding and fitting into the adult's ongoing change efforts.

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Counseling and Information Needs of Adult Learners

ALAN B. KNOX

Librarians and other library staff members have long been interested in helping adults learn. They have done so by assisting with self-directed learning projects, by conducting book-based discussion groups, and by cosponsoring courses and workshops for adults. Libraries have also cooperated with other providers of adult and continuing education to increase the accessibility and relevance of educational opportunities.

This article explores ways in which library personnel can combine an understanding of adults as learners with a commitment to reaching underserved adults, and thus effectively meet some of the counseling and information needs of adult learners in ways that broaden the range of service. The essence of this proposed approach is the librarian's use of his or her understanding of the influences on adult participation in educative activity as a basis for developing learner-oriented counseling and information services that help libraries (and other continuing education providers) in their recognition of and response to the educational needs of adults.

This community leadership on behalf of adult learners occurs when a librarian assembles information about continuing education opportunities in the community and then uses it to assist adults selecting appropriate learning activities. Such leadership is further strengthened when the librarian identifies unmet educational needs of these adults and uses this information, in summary form, to encourage the library and other providers to respond. The activities are the rudiments

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of counseling and information services for adult learners. In this article, the counseling function is summarized as helping adults to recognize resources and to make decisions regarding their lifelong learning; it does not include psychological counseling. This article suggests ways in which libraries can strengthen such adult services, and outlines the benefits to adult learners, the community and the library.

**Adult Participation in Educative Activity**

In best practice, public libraries help adults discover and use educational resources for self-directed learning and for participation in educational activities offered by all types of providers. These include libraries, museums, schools, colleges, universities, employers, labor unions, associations, penal institutions, religious institutions, and community agencies. Librarians who effectively help adults to find and use such educational resources must understand the resources themselves as well as the needs of the learners. In each community there are many independent providers of continuing education, and libraries can begin to help meet the counseling and information needs of adult learners by serving as a "clearinghouse" where adults can clarify their educational needs and find out about educational resources.

Adult participation in educative activity benefits both the individual and society. Darkenwald and Merriam include cultivation of the intellect and personal development, as well as organizational effectiveness and social progress and transformation, as aims of adult education. Houle lists multiple goals of continuing professional education that pertain both to individuals and to society. These benefits warrant library efforts to increase the responsiveness of continuing education programs to adult learners.

A major issue in educative activity is the low rate of participation by adults with less formal education. As Johnstone and Rivera reported almost twenty years ago, and as has been substantiated repeatedly since then, about one of two adults in the United States with the highest level of formal education participate in some form of adult and continuing education each year, in contrast with only one of twenty adults with the lowest level of formal education. Educational levels are also associated with adult participation in self-directed learning projects, and participation rates are positively associated with other characteristics of adults (such as younger age and higher levels of income and occupational prestige).
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Adult life includes both stability and change. As indicated in the preceding article on intentional change and in the following articles on facilitation and helping processes, the stability and continuity of adulthood is periodically punctuated by changes that contribute to a heightened readiness to learn. Continuity reflects the influence of personality, habit, expectations, commitments, and inertia. Change may be intentional or imposed. Knox explained how change events entail adjustments associated with personality development. Aslanian and Brickell confirmed that changes trigger about 85 percent of adult participation in educative activity. The resulting information-seeking can take many forms; and for many adults, action tasks are both the impetus for and the application of learning.

In addition to higher rates of information-seeking and educative activity, adults with higher educational levels rely on somewhat different sources of assistance than adults with less formal education. Better-educated adults use print and electronic media, impersonal experts, and friends and acquaintances. By contrast, adults with lower levels of education rely mainly on conversations with people they know and trust. This conclusion has major implications for responding to the counseling and information needs of adult learners.

Lower rates of participation in educative activity by adults with low levels of formal education also indicate greater difficulty for continuing education providers in attracting, retaining, and teaching them. Darkenwald and Larson have noted, however, that level of formal education is not the only characteristic associated with participation rates. Within each category of highly educated adults (such as members of a professional association) some engage in limited amounts of educative activity. These are also hard-to-reach adults. A persistent issue in the field has been how to serve all these hard-to-reach adults.

The strong connection between continuing education participation and educational level, income and occupational prestige no doubt reflects their centrality as indexes of social class level. Other characteristics associated with participation, such as optimism about advancement and sense of educational efficacy, are connected with class outlook and perhaps with life-cycle position, as indicated by age and role relationships such as employment and marital status. Adults in those categories of life cycle and social class that are more highly associated with participation benefit from encouragement and support. This encouragement and support comes from internal influences such as verbal facility, belief in the usefulness of knowledge, and optimism about improvement, as well as from external influences such as available
opportunities, expectations of participation, associates who participate, ability to pay, and financial assistance. These and other influences on continuing education participation help explain the extent of participation. Associated barriers also help explain nonparticipation, which Darkenwald and Merriam classify as situational, institutional, informational, and psychosocial. The most useful explanations of participation include an attention to personal and situational facilitators and barriers.

Such transactions between adults and their societal contexts are also reflected in effective procedures to recognize and respond to connections between educational needs and resources. Many counseling and information needs of adult learners entail strengthening such connections. For example, this can be done by considering both individual growth and organizational productivity in work settings, by linking potential participants with relevant educational opportunities through educational brokering for adults in community settings, by using media and technology for teaching adults at a distance, by encouraging and assisting members of professional occupations with self-directed learning activities, and by marketing procedures that help potential participants clarify their educational needs and recognize relevant programs and resources.

Librarians who effectively meet counseling and information needs of adult learners understand some of these dynamics of continuing education participation and some of the distinctive characteristics of libraries as providers of services for adult learners. In some countries, libraries have effectively responded to the counseling and information needs of adult learners. In an early effort of the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board in Canada, the Board began publishing a continuing education directory, which lists many continuing education activities and counseling services for adults available from various organizations. In several recent efforts of cooperating public libraries in New York State, libraries served as educational information centers for adults in each region. In one of the more successful examples, public libraries and public school adult-education programs cooperated to provide assistance to adult new readers. Less satisfactory results occurred when librarians were expected to perform an unfamiliar counseling function.

For librarians who want to strengthen library responsiveness to the counseling and information needs of adult learners, some major publications are available to assist them. Bock provides a general rationale for the combined use of counseling and information services to encourage
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both initial and continued participation in continuing education. Kotler provides both a rationale and specific procedures for the marketing of nonprofit services emphasizing responsiveness to the clientele. Di Silvestro provides both a rationale and many specific examples of counseling and advising adult learners in various agency settings. It is worth emphasizing that this library function depends on building on major and distinctive library strengths, purposes and resources, while minimizing and perhaps compensating for those library characteristics that do not lend themselves well to meeting counseling and information needs of adult learners. The next two sections of this article identify more detailed counseling and information needs and suggest effective ways in which libraries can respond.

Information and Marketing Services

The extent of participation in continuing education activity (including self-directed learning) reflects the balance between facilitating and resisting influences. For many nonparticipants, the resisting influences are much greater than the facilitating influences. Low participation rates by hard-to-reach adults dismay continuing education practitioners. Many practitioners conduct continuing education activities in part because of a missionary commitment to narrowing the gap between the "haves" and "have nots." Although continuing education benefits adults at all educational levels, annual participation rates are ten times higher for adults who have the most formal education than for adults with the least education. The result is to widen the gap. Information and marketing services become, therefore, the main means by which continuing education providers encourage participation by hard-to-reach adults.

Marketing services address both needs and interests of potential participants, and those characteristics of the program and provider likely to influence their decision to participate. Adults vary greatly in backgrounds, experiences, roles, values, interests, circumstances, and resources. Market segmentation is a procedure that may be used for identifying categories of adults with similar backgrounds and needs who are likely to engage in a given continuing education activity. In continuing education, needs-assessment procedures provide the market research to enable continuing education providers to understand and respond to major educational needs of each target market of adults.

In addition to distinctive educational needs, there are widespread needs for information related to educational activities. One is for help in
crystallizing unmet educational needs that potential participants may barely recognize. Human-interest stories and examples of how similar adults discovered and benefited from continuing education activities are especially effective because they help adults clarify discrepancies between their current and desired proficiencies. Another need is for information about programs and resources. Specific information about such opportunities helps adults clarify their own needs, and identify educational activities of interest.

Needs-assessment procedures can yield many ideas for new or revised programs and can help set and justify service priorities. Various procedures can be used: scores from self-assessment inventories or diagnostic tests, suggestions from use of the Delbecq Technique for Nominal Group Process, group discussion about members' educational needs, questionnaire responses regarding topics of interest, responses to new program offerings, suggestions from other providers, and advisory committees. Other useful sources of information about educational needs include preferences of agency staff and resource persons; local agency purposes and trends; ideas from historical, philosophical and operational literature; organizational or community records and reports; and data from personnel department exit interviews.

Writings on adult development and learning also suggest likely educational needs and the ways in which change events trigger participation in educative activity. Such writings also emphasize the importance of identifying educational opportunities and resources. This process helps potential participants deal with sometimes vague thoughts about educational needs in terms of specific decisions. Librarians can respond by helping adults become more aware of their educational needs and the resource options available.

A marketing perspective emphasizes the responsiveness to adult learners and to other publics of each continuing education provider agency. Libraries that provide educational information services for adults can facilitate both the acquisition of needs-assessment information from adults who inquire about educational opportunities (which can be shared in summary form with providers), and the provision of information to adults to help them clarify their needs and recognize opportunities. Writings that summarize generalizations about middle age or old age and provide examples of responsive continuing education programs can help librarians link needs and resources.

But attention to needs is only one aspect of a marketing perspective. Other aspects include attention to program, place, price, and promotion. Program administrators have to make decisions about all of these
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aspects in order to effectively attract and retain adult participants. Libraries that perform an educational brokering function can help providers improve their marketing; and librarians who understand marketing concepts and procedures can be especially helpful in this regard. Potential participants also make decisions based on program, place, price, and promotion information. Adults who decide to enroll in a continuing education activity typically feel that it is for people like themselves; expect that the program content and methods will be beneficial; find the place, time and price satisfactory; and receive promotional and word-of-mouth messages through communication channels they normally use and in a form they understand.

There are many types of information services about continuing education opportunities in a community that libraries can provide, but few do. Illustrative services include:

1. Written and oral statements that the library is a source of information about continuing education opportunities.
2. Holding some continuing education activities (courses, workshops, discussion groups) in library facilities, or with library cosponsorship to increase the library's visibility as an organization concerned with continuing education.
3. Use of needs-assessment procedures to help adults clarify their educational needs and focus on pertinent educational opportunities.
4. Provision to continuing education providers of summary information about learning needs.
5. Listing of information (name, address, phone number, types of offerings) about continuing education providers, so that quick and accurate referrals can be made.
6. Provision of brochures and flyers about continuing education activities, along with an index or other ways to assist adults to locate relevant activities.
7. Collaboration with providers for joint needs-assessment and marketing projects.
8. Information services for continuing education activities in which the library is the provider.36

In providing such information services, libraries can help other continuing education providers market their offerings to adults served by libraries. However, this effort will not benefit those adults (typically with lower levels of formal education) who do not perceive libraries as existing for people such as themselves. Therefore, continuing education providers typically cooperate with organizations other than libraries for
their marketing and information services in order to attract hard-to-reach adults. A total marketing effort which includes libraries can benefit them by broadening their image and contact with hard-to-reach adults. The resulting broader community service and support can strengthen the library's total effort.

Counseling Services

This section emphasizes counseling services to encourage initial participation and persistence in learning so that adults achieve their objectives. The quality of the continuing education activity is a major influence on persistence just as it is on marketing. However, there are many other influences on persistence and attrition which counseling services can address. These include difficulty with decision making, financial limitations, competing time demands, and unfamiliarity with procedures. Learners who confront problems such as poor study procedures, changed work assignments, family illness, or difficulties with transportation, sometimes drop out because they are unaware of assistance to help solve or work around these difficulties. Librarians with some expertise in counseling adult learners can encourage learning persistence both directly and through referrals.

Most people who provide counseling services for adult learners are in one of four categories. They are professionally prepared counselors, continuing educators (including librarians), practitioners in related agencies (such as employment or welfare), or paraprofessional aides or peer counselors. Counseling services for adult learners can include any or all of six general counseling functions: information giving, assessment, educational and occupational planning, coping with related problems, advocacy, and referral.

Many librarians view these functions as incompatible with their roles, and feel that they are better performed by people in other occupations. However, some librarians (especially those who enjoy working in readers' advisory services, the reference desk, or adult-learner services) view some of these counseling functions as important parts of their roles. Writings on counseling adult learners describe their counseling needs and appropriate responsive procedures, along with rationales that librarians can use to select the counseling functions they will perform, and those better performed by people in other roles.

Information giving is a counseling function in many settings, and requires little specialized preparation as a counselor. Adults want accurate information about specific educational and occupational oppor-
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tunities and related services. They also appreciate assistance in using such information to plan further education. If the library has such information on hand, many librarians could perform this function satisfactorily without undue time and effort. In contrast, the use of assessment procedures and instruments (such as inventories, tests and questionnaires) to assess the learner’s abilities, personality and interests usually requires specialized preparation, which some librarians have or can acquire. When this is not the case, librarians can refer adult learners to agencies better prepared to provide such assistance.

Assistance provided by various organizations for adult educational and career planning, tends to be widespread but informal. Unlike educational institutions that provide detailed educational planning, or employers and employment agencies that provide detailed occupational planning, libraries can provide assistance to adult learners at early stages, and then refer them to other agencies for more specialized help. Assistance with personal problems related to educational activities can also be viewed as a part of such a broad educational-brokering approach, with reliance on referrals for specialized counseling. Sometimes counselors act as advocates for the rights of adult learners to representatives of educational institutions and librarians who prefer not to perform this function can identify counselors in other agencies who can do so. But librarians who rely heavily on referring clients should become expert in knowing how to find appropriate and competent counselors in other agencies. They also should be skilled in the process of making referrals so that the learners actually get the help they need.

Clearly, adult users of every library could benefit from some adult learner counseling services. However, the extent and type of services appropriate for a specific library depend on several local circumstances: the other counseling services for adult learners available in the community, the counseling abilities and interests of library personnel, and the importance of continuing education to library policy makers. In setting priorities for library-based services, attention should be given to the special strengths and distinctive purposes of the library as a provider of counseling services for adult learners. For example, many libraries would be interested in providing assistance in self-directed study and discussion groups for adults that are related to library collections, and in giving information about other continuing education providers in the community. By contrast, few libraries would be prepared to provide specialized personal counseling services for problems unrelated to educational activities. Some libraries have found it mutually advantageous to collaborate with a local continuing education council or agency,
such as an adult basic education program, to help adult new readers. Such a project enables the library contribution to be closely related to its purpose and expertise, and brings benefits to the library in the form of broadened community service and support.

The tenth anniversary of educational brokering services occurs this year. The history of library provision of counseling services for adult learners illustrates many issues for the future. Since the 1930s, when some urban libraries established readers' advisory services, counseling services for adult learners have been an attractive idea that has not been widely emulated. During the 1970s, library-based educational brokering services were established in various states, including Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Because of their neutrality as continuing education providers and their client and community orientation, public libraries seemed to be natural brokers. However, comprehensive brokering services have been established in only a few libraries; many were subsequently discontinued, and the total number of such libraries has increased very slowly. Heffernan's conclusions about the reasons for this have major implications for future decisions.

In addition to needing a greater awareness of educational and career opportunities, adult clients of brokering services want help with planning and action, support and empowerment. To respond to such expectations, libraries require information about local educational needs and resources; and they need to pay careful attention to both the quality and support of their services. High-quality services have relevant information, and encourage self-directed efforts. In practice, however, library staff members are often overloaded, have little inclination or preparation to provide counseling services, must confront limited budgets, and are not likely to impose user fees to support brokering services. These constitute powerful barriers to library involvement.

Impact studies of library-based broker services have concluded that clients are less satisfied with referrals to other community agencies than to resources within the library. This probably reflects both staff expertise and libraries' priorities. In all settings, brokers with low service costs emphasize information versus counseling, and one-time assistance versus continuing contacts with a client. It seems likely that library staff members who successfully provide brokering services will be prepared for counseling adult learners, and they will obtain adequate library support for the services.
Counseling and Information Needs

Conclusions and Staff Contributions

This section summarizes the rationale for libraries meeting counseling and information needs of adult learners and suggests contributions that can be made by library staff members. Further detail on interactions between adult clients and librarians, and on proficiencies needed to provide learner-centered services will be found in other articles in this issue.

Library administrators and board members can help by making policy decisions about the relative priority of education of adults as a library function; about the desirability of strengthening connections with other providers of continuing education; and about the importance of broadening service to hard-to-reach adults. Librarians and administrators who want to strengthen their responsiveness to counseling and information needs of adult learners are likely to meet resistance, and progress will require effective leadership strategies. Library staff members who exercise leadership regarding continuing education have writings available to enhance their own skills and those of other people who contribute to the effort.

A persuasive rationale for increased library service to adult learners requires attention to emerging trends and issues. Rising levels of formal education are increasing among adults, and pressures for adaptation and change are resulting in more adults participating in more continuing education programs. In our pluralistic society there are many independent providers of continuing education; their numbers make it difficult for the potential student to locate and select relevant educational resources. The increasing accessibility of educational technology (such as computers, videotapes, and telephone networks) in the home, office and community agencies can be used to support community centers for information about educational opportunities for adults. Another trend that makes it desirable to provide centralized information about educational opportunities is the growing concern about public support of community agencies, including continuing education providers. These trends contribute to increased interest by adults in help with their decision making on self-directed learning and in selecting educational programs. Libraries can perform this important function, and if they do it well, they can strengthen their public support.

Librarians who want to increase library services to hard-to-reach adults face a special challenge. Over the years, libraries have been most successful in serving the people who most often participate in continuing education, and have been least successful in serving hard-to-reach adults. Efforts to better serve hard-to-reach adults are most likely to
succeed if they are combined with a general library commitment to broaden clientele and support bases.

Librarians who coordinate and provide counseling and information services for adult learners will benefit from an understanding of adult learners, marketing and counseling procedures, relations with other providers, and ways to strengthen the support of library staff for continuing education activities. In larger libraries, such librarians typically work with various people to provide counseling and information services. Also involved are other library staff members and volunteers, representatives of other providers and community agencies, marketing specialists, and people to whom adult learners are referred for specialized counseling assistance. Deserving of special attention are the library staff members who talk with adult learners and help them to recognize their educational needs and available opportunities, and to select a sequence of learning activities. They may be professional librarians, or paraprofessional aides, or volunteers, or people at least partly associated with other organizations. But they should be people who perform well in the interpersonal relationships that are central to the effective provision of counseling and information services. This article suggests some of the ideas and sources for further reading that can enhance performance in this important role. Without a library staff member able to perform much of this educational brokering function, library efforts to respond probably will not succeed. With such expertise this activity can be very satisfying. In addition, the institutional benefits include greater responsiveness to the counseling and information needs of adult learners, stronger relationships with other providers of continuing education, and broader service to and support from a wider range of adults. These are considerable benefits and they easily justify the costs.

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Adult Learning and Library Helping

DAVID CARR

Helping designed for adult learners in libraries is more than a task or a duty; it is an idea, an act of the imagination. True, both the helper and the person helped are present in time and space, but they are also part of an intangible act that occurs far beyond immediate needs and words, an act of reaching out to touch the pervasive continuities of adult intellectual life. "Helping," as it is used in these pages, is much like family touching and friendship, especially those affective conversations of inquiry and response that inform our lives, shaping them by invisible actions and silent messages.

These intangible acts occur hundreds of thousands of times each day between strangers in public rooms, in the presence of informing tools and educative processes. It is not useful to complicate, mystify or over-rationalize these acts, but it is valuable to speculate about the meanings and conditions of the library helping process. Helping is a common, and yet remarkable, communicative, prosocial act, having dimensions, metaphors, obstacles, and continuities. Clearly, to discuss these aspects of library helping is to go beyond standard discourse having to do with public service. To serve and to help are different acts, or different conceptions of agency, in the library. The first may be seen as reactive, the second as proactive. Understanding the difference between serving and helping has deep implications for all library interactions with adult learners and for all librarians who choose to be helpers.

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Library Helping Relationships

This article explores the choice to help, and it too may go beyond traditional boundaries by anticipating a renewal of attention to personal helping relationships in the library. Why should librarians attend to these relationships in the age of information technology? The qualities of helping actions offer rich opportunities to understand the invisible dimensions and meanings of information in the lives of human beings. The choice to reach outside traditional channels for new encounters permits librarians to recast and renew their conventional understandings, fundamental images, and basic ideals of helping. Ideals aside, helping is essentially a pragmatic and realistic activity; it leads to informed change in human lives. This article grows out of two informing sources: the experiences of helping, and long contemplation of helping acts and their consequences.

When our knowledge of helping is grounded in experience it is not difficult to place abstractions about the helping process in the contexts of library life. Here, summarizing an extensive literature, are eight generalizations about help.¹

1. Helping involves a mix of affective states: uncertainty, fascination, ambivalence, motivation, reflection, hope.
2. Helping implies individual attention, direct communication, and useful response.
3. Because individuals differ, helping explores new contexts, unpredictable ends, and involves unspoken risks.
4. Both desire for change and resistance to change are present in helping encounters.
5. Helping requires clear information, procedures, and expectations; these communications may first appear in tentative or tacit forms.
6. Helping is educative for both the helper and the person helped.
7. The aim of help is independence in the form of self-designed, self-renewing self-help.
8. Helping assists "the unfolding of a life."²

In brief, helping means instrumental participation, with feeling, in the evolving life of another human being.

Helping is complex, subtle and sensitive work. No easy assumptions about it can survive the tests of daily practice. The literature suggests many adjectives for the ideal helper: accurate, altruistic, analytic, emphatic, engaged, ethical, flexible, mature, nurturant, realistic, self-aware, supportive, uncoercive. To this inventory of ideal qualities some librarians might be tempted to add "saintly" or "mythical." The
helper or agent also may be described as underprepared, deeply challenged, and occasionally confused by the complex tasks of helping.

These last adjectives are likely to apply when the helper is a librarian who assists adult learners. Libraries—centering on community services, collection issues and financial struggles—may tend to undervalue, misunderstand, or simply not be aware of their rich functions as helping agencies, resources of first resort for learners. Consequently, librarians are rarely trained in the arts and techniques of helping. Often this means that librarians may have to confront without warning, complex and daunting challenges. "Helping" can mean anything from minor advice to crisis intervention, brief conversations, or long-term engagements. Moreover, most adult learners do not know when help is needed or, knowing when, do not know how to be helped in the library. The library, so often seen as a formidable edifice or a solemn bureaucracy, adds well-known barriers to asking for help. However difficult it may be to be a helper, it may be tougher still to need help, yet be unable to define the need usefully. There are adjectives applicable to this need too: dependent, wanting, impelled, sometimes stressed, reticent, invisible, uninvited.

Helping Skills

All of these descriptions emphasize the important dimensions and qualities of helping as an idea and an act. The use of descriptors is an example of how the power of librarianship resides in its concepts, which in turn invigorate its acts. The ability to help comes in part from being able to think of helping acts as unanticipated encounters in which we uncover our skills anew each day.

There are no perfunctory encounters in libraries. The simplest messages resonate with implications. A helping encounter between adults, however casually it seems to occur, bears meaning for the private and public lives of both persons. These encounters touch the helper's deepest personal attitudes toward reaching out, communicating equally, keeping and sharing, nurturing, empathizing. For learners, these encounters may mean personal risk or public vulnerability, actual time taken from work or family, or real investments of energy and attention that are not easily given. Like all adult learning relationships, library helping entails the deep complexities of social lives and individual choices.

Any librarian who offers help—and seeks to understand and extend critical helping skills in the process—should strive to know the full meaning of the offer. It is not always obvious. Donald Schön suggests
that we use “generative metaphors” for arriving at perspectives on our work, for “problem-setting,” and for “naming and framing” our tasks. Schöhn means that, by centering attention on a particular, critical aspect of the task, metaphors can assist in the definition and design of purposeful actions. For example, images of library practice suggest ways to participate in complex helping relationships and how to communicate to others. A librarian’s ability to help depends on his or her image of learners, adults, educative tasks, and on the librarian. In a formative way, these metaphors describe the assumptions and intentions of the librarian’s professional life.

Consider these images: the librarian is a weaver, taking strands from here and there to make a whole fabric; or the librarian is a tailor, cutting information like cloth to fit (and cover) the expressed need; or the librarian is a clinician, objectively treating needs, making referrals, case by case. (Hearing these, one of my students said that I had it all wrong and offered his own metaphor: the librarian is a bartender. The client appears, exposes a problem, and the bartender mixes a little of this and a dash of that to change the outlook. Another librarian referred to his help as “an information massage.” Imagine the possibilities.) Other metaphors for library helping are no less dramatic.

Is library helping a form of rescue, throwing a lifeline? Is the library helper a wise, nonjudgmental counselor, an advisor far removed from the transaction? Is the librarian a fixer, a mechanic, a filling station attendant? Is the helper a priest, as suggested by Brammer, “conducting ceremonials, interpreting sacred writings, and providing spiritual support,” or “an alternative self” for the other, “a kind of emotional mirror?”

However exotic these pictures of practice may seem, at different times they may be evocative and powerful ways to see the acts of helping. But such acts are never simple. Consider just a few of the choices to be made in answering any question among the complex arrays of stored information; the levels of response appropriate to the learner’s changing needs; tacit communications by gesture, posture, expression, tone; and what librarians say in presenting themselves to the inquirer. As the inquirer is engaged by the inquiry—as the tasks of helping become more complex—the librarian’s choices become more critical. Yet, in the course of helping, such choices are made all the time, perhaps automatically. Every helping choice, reactive or proactive, is part of generativity and nurturance, and has its roots in our images of the helping act. In the library, solving an information problem depends on the system of thinking and images brought to the task.
Perhaps the strongest metaphor for library helping comes from a common human relationship, the giving of gifts. In this metaphor, the librarian no longer merely strives to have gifts of information available and in order, ready to be supplied (or applied) wherever needed. Rather, the librarian reaches out to touch the process of learning, and to participate in the learner's growth and development. The gift as an instrument of relationship and engagement has a long continuity in social theory. Marcel Mauss, in his remarkable book about the anthropology of giving, describes how, in tribal cultures, "We can see the nature of the bond created by the transfer of a possession....To give something is to give a part oneself....In this system of ideas one gives away what is in reality a part of one's nature and substance, while to receive something is to receive a part of someone's spiritual essence." To speak of helping as giving in this way means that the transaction is a form of rite in which part of the gift is kept, and part of the giver goes with the gift. The metaphor seems natural for the library, where we keep things as we share them, and the quality of our giving is memorable.

Communication Relationships

In the encounters and exchanges between those who give and those who receive (accidental distinctions at times) there exist symmetry and balance, reciprocity, and in the best of encounters, mutuality and bonding. Information, in the helping relationship, passes between actors in a cycle of giving and receiving, like a thread binding a seam. Learners seek this association, however brief, with another human being, an informing other. Though it may be evanescent, such brief bonding is not incidental to the information; the bond, more than the information given, may be the gift itself. This bond is the quality of the giving.

It is unavailing to separate the quality of the giving from the quality of the gift. A helping message combines offers of information or advice with implicit invitations that go beyond the immediate encounter. There are, for example, at least six concurrent messages given to adult learners in library encounters. The first of these offers technical help, a way, or a set of alternative ways, to inform the learner's task in the library. The essential message: "Your inquiry suggests this array of tools or data." The second offers a designer's perspective on the process, an approach over time to a learning goal that may be distant: "You may find certain paths or patterns to follow as you work on this." This map of the inquiry process leads the learner to the third message, having to do with expectations that conform to reality: "An exact fit between the
question and available information is sometimes elusive." The fourth of these messages offers support, assistance in overcoming obstacles and meeting unanticipated challenges: "Ask for help if the work becomes difficult or confusing." Fifth, the adult learner receives confirmation that the inquiry and the inquirer are worthy of attention: "Your interest in this inquiry justifies our mutual effort." This reassurance or affirmation, finally, leads to a sense of individuality and self-esteem, a motivating factor and the sixth message of the helping encounter: "This work will help you to explore and advance what you know." Whatever their sequence or emphasis, these messages are always present whenever an adult inquirer seeks informing help.

There are, however, many obstacles to such communications, spoken or tacit. Human beings, who are separate from each other in consciousness and memory, have to strive to grasp meanings outside the contexts they already know. They reach through space and time to touch the life of another person in an environment where messages can be spoken and understood. The messages then must be accepted after they are heard. Niklas Luhmann points out that these improbabilities—sharing meanings, overcoming separations, accepting messages—are mutually reinforcing. "They cannot be dealt with and changed into probabilities one after another. The solution of one problem makes it that much more difficult to solve the others. The better one's understanding of a communication, the more grounds one has to reject it." Moreover, Luhmann continues, because simple communications occur in the lives of people all of the time, it is easy to behave as if these obstacles have been permanently and universally overcome.

Libraries have a particularly difficult time meeting these communication-centered challenges.8 Consider these obstacles:

1. Communications about library inquiries, however difficult and personal they may be, typically must occur in public places.
2. Even superficial encounters are somewhat complex engagements and have bearing on continuity and motivation in learning.
3. For the learner, library explorations may be largely private experiences; important issues and questions may remain unspoken.
4. It is often difficult to move from the planned inquiry to specific, available data, held and codified in a public file.
5. In an expanding information environment, distractions and distortions can easily occur; the original inquiry is likely to be changed, or even lost, in the process.
6. Being a helper may suggest superiority; being professional may suggest distance; being helped may suggest weakness.
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7. Successful transactions in libraries may have unplanned, accidental qualities; in an environment that emphasizes order, these qualities may create distress.

8. And, from La Rochefoucauld: "On all occasions we assume the look and appearance we want to be known for, so that the world in general is a congregation of masks." In libraries it is often difficult to see behind the highly developed images that both helper and inquirer present to each other.

All of these are difficult obstacles to helping. They are hard to face, they will not go away, and they call for mature responses from library helpers.

Continuities in Adult Inquiry Processes

One response is the introduction of useful continuities to the adult inquiry process. "Continuities" are qualities of order: connections among data, sequences and structures, contiguities and patterns. These connections may be emphasized through concrete presence or skills (the physical availability of the helper, working knowledge of a thesaurus or catalog). Or they may occur through more abstract observations about evolving learning style, or successful approaches to difficult challenges. Whatever their form, they introduce procedures and constructs to the process of inquiry. "Constructs" are used in George A. Kelly's sense: "Patterns that are tentatively tried on for size. They are ways of constructing the world. They are what enables man...to chart a course of behavior, explicitly formulated or implicitly acted out, verbally expressed or utterly inarticulate." The emergence of such constructs and continuities means that, between the librarian and the learner, a structure or pattern of inquiry evolves—a plan, a map, a path. Most important, the evolutionary process leads to a unique, complete, distinct human relationship, a dynamic social system of two. This bond and the continuities that surround it enhance communication between the helper and the other, and permit the learner to anticipate the future of the inquiry. Where there is an environment of obstacles, shared continuities can reduce the probability of chaos and loss.

The continuities of successful library-centered helping are related to the general continuities of adult intellectual life, the broad dimensions, themes, and patterns of concern around which adults build their lives. Four of these relevant dimensions are:

1. the need to be instrumental in the design and process of intellectual experiences;
2. the need to expand and explore the relationships to tasks of data, tools, and time;
3. the need for cohesion, connection and continuing insight throughout the progress of challenging intellectual work; and
4. the need to control a language that permits articulate communication and further inquiry.

These dimensions share public and private aspects, an emphasis on processes rather than products, and implications that go beyond specific topics or inquiries. Each of these concerns is connected to the formative, essential continuity of adult intellectual life, the processing of useful information. What happens between the library helper and the library learner against all probabilities is that this small system of two (exchanging information in conversations, questions, reflections, responses) tests new constructs against reality and reduces obstacles over time. These exchanges engender the informed human passage that is adult library learning.

The librarian is an essential agent for the learner’s intellectual transitions. Inquiries evolve and take form, questions emerge and are resolved in time, information fits or does not. Sooner or later, closure in some form appears. To all of these things, the librarian is more than a witness. The librarian’s helping role entails design, nurturance, and clear planning, mindful of pace and sequence. The librarian as agent centers on the practical side of the task: offered tools and evaluations must be useful, undistorted, and continuous with previous growth. Everything that the librarian gives should sustain the course of inquiry. The librarian offers helping that goes beyond individual moments that enrich the learner’s transitions. Through the impress of patterns—continuities—on memory, effective helping continues beyond the acts of inquiry it comprises. When these patterns are vivid and useful, the learner can reconstruct the process for future inquiries, and for independent learning. Throughout the course of one learner’s life, a single powerful helping relationship in the library could influence many separate learning passages.

Fostering independent inquiry is an ideal library achievement, allowing certain learners to become independent as quickly as they choose. More typically, interdependence, dialogue, and exchange characterize extended library learning relationships. Glaser and Strauss describe three kinds of interdependence; when considered in library contexts, each implies a different kind of helping. In a contingent relationship, the helper is an independent actor on whom the other relies for the success of the learning passage. In intersecting relation-
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ships, either member is free to continue independently or reestablish the relationship at another time or with another person. In a mutual relationship, neither person can go on alone: both are present and active, both contribute, both arrive at resolution and closure, both learn. While certain adult transitions may exhibit all three kinds of interdependence, mutuality appears to be the most deeply informing characteristic of library helping.

Unlike a chartered passage in most prescribed and sequential formal education, the passage of an adult learner in the library is emergent: the learner and the helper mutually discover their own powers of design as they make decisions. In self-disclosing dialogue, messages between actors are mutually affecting. William Wilmot's word for these messages is "interpenetrative," suggesting a mutual gaze that cannot be averted by either participant without an end to the dialogue. "In a dyad," Wilmot writes, "the loss of one is the loss of all." The library-based exploration is collaborative; it is not entirely dependent on the librarian's professional expertise. Helper and learner share a congruent perspective on both the problem and the probing human relationship that investigates it. This common gaze, however brief, confirms and clarifies the shared task. The effect of the collaboration is that something not present earlier has been created, an alliance that moves the library encounter beyond its common frame to a more significant level.

Convergence of Library, Helper and Learner

These are consequential and informing encounters in adult lives. For the helping relationship to work, the librarian and the learner must arrive at a common understanding of topic, vocabulary and tools. Each is a negotiated arrival, requiring several answers. How do I ask this question? What are its boundaries? Does it have smaller components that must be answered first? What are the origins of the question? What do I understand now? How is my understanding changing? What, for me, is the unknown? Who has sought this unknown before? What tools are needed? What notes should I keep? What do other inquirers know or do? How can I recognize useful information and judge its worth? What's out there? What's next? What's possible? What will an answer mean to my life? How must I change?

All helping converges on these leading questions, and each suggests other compelling questions. This process—actually a chain of explosive questions—is the real content of the library helping encoun-
More than an intellectual exploration, this process is an experience of shared action in the realm of information. The learner learns how to be helped, how to make something out of the help given, how coming to the process is as essential as emerging from it, and how to make decisions that can be made only in the presence of information.

Adult learners enter the library with intentions, memories, and styles of learning. The helper, reaching out to touch the learning process, is constrained not to violate these privacies. The librarian carefully talks to the learner, asking questions at first ("Are you finding what you need?" "Is this the kind of help you want from me?"). This talk eventually gives form and language to tentative ideas or hopes. Such speech also leads the learner to the work, and assists the helper by probing and confirming the dimensions of the task. Mediative speech permits the learner’s goals or ideas to appear in a living context of related concepts, and in continuity with the learner’s evolving senses of instrumentality and possibility. It complements, transforms, and interprets the learner’s status. Such conversation is imaginative and speculative, yet it is grounded in the evolving framework of the inquiry.

The instrumental effects of language in librarianship are related to Reuven Feuerstein’s concept of instrumental enrichment and Lev Vygotsky’s idea of the proximal zone. Feuerstein and Vygotsky both address cognitive growth in young children, but since Jerome Bruner has said that “intellectual activity anywhere is the same, whether at the frontier of knowledge or in a third-grade classroom,” it may be safe to draw brief connections between these powerful ideas and adult library helping. A detailed treatment is not possible here.

Feuerstein’s work centers on the improvement of retarded cognitive performance, but his ideas about cultural deprivation and mediated learning experiences are important to all kinds of learning and helping. Cultural deprivation, in Feuerstein’s use, does not describe the condition of a social class; rather, it describes a failure of the processes by which the messages of a culture are transmitted or mediated by its members. Culturally deprived individuals show reduced abilities to organize, elaborate and generalize in response to intellectual stimuli. These disabilities, Feuerstein says, are caused by a lack of mediated learning experiences—meaning the selection, transformation and organization of the informing environment by a mediating agent.

Feuerstein’s description of this instrumentally enriching role suggests connections to the helping librarian and the learning of adults. The goals of instrumental enrichment in library work might include the nurturance of intrinsic motivation, reflection, and insight, and the
initially passive learner's emergence as an active generator of new information. Marcia J. Bates's excellent description of the overloaded and dysfunctional "organic information-transfer system" by which complex "life information" is transmitted between generations is also relevant here. Because it too suggests a failure of social processes, her work tends to confirm Feuerstein's definition of cultural deprivation as endemic discontinuity in the transfer of information by the culture. She also points to the need for a more personal, mediated process. Paradoxically, in an information-rich but communication-poor society, the term cultural deprivation may be applicable to us. It is easy to believe that the need for mediated learning experiences—the need for an informed, collaborative helper who sees us as we are—is universal and vital. Vygotsky says that the convergence of speech and action in the solution of a problem is "the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development." The greater the complexity of the problem, the greater the importance of speech. This is why in the conduct of inquiry talk is more than pleasant; it is essential to planning and guiding action. Moreover, such speech turned inward and used by the learner for self-planned, autonomous problem solving becomes the foundation for socialized, practical intellect. Collaboration is also essential to the idea of proximal zone, which is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." The meaning of this concept of the proximal zone for adult learning in the library emerges in the persona and actions of the more capable peer, the librarian. This person can be seen as a proximal other whose tasks are to assist the learner toward progressive achievements and to evoke a more informed level of intellectual functioning. Such assistance is based on the idea that learners grow into the intellectual life that surrounds them. Whenever we strive to learn from another we do so in the proximal zone. The first part of every library inquiry is the learner's search for a proximal helper who will assist the learner toward behaviors that complete an otherwise unreachable task. A transition to self-conducted inquiry can follow over a longer time. The assumption, as Courtney Cazden points out, is that "The assisted performance is not just performance without competence, but performance before competence."
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Library as Adult Learning Center

Perhaps more than other professional helpers, librarians confront every day the primary social challenge of contemporary lives, overcoming intellectual and personal distances. Helping learners to communicate and connect is difficult. There is no technology or mechanism for this other than speaking and listening, two persons informing each other. In order to develop these skills, helpers need to think about their educative messages and actions, perhaps documenting acts and insights in written journals. My own explorations in collaboration have led to the statements that follow.

1. Every helping act, however practical and mundane its intentions, is also a theoretical and conceptual act.
2. The helping relationship comprises a multiplicity of embedded relationships among active, independent, evolving entities: the librarian, the learner, the inquiry, the library, and the larger informing world.
3. It is difficult to permit “help” to be defined by the learner.
4. It is also difficult to understand the important difference between the psychological need to give and the professional desire to help.
5. The deepest purposes of a library inquiry may have little to do with the content of any answer it produces.
6. Contrary to most images of progress and inquiry, the helper may have to become comfortable with the evolution of a nonlinear process that emerges with a life of its own.
7. Consequently, a helper—often at critical moments in the course of assistance—must overcome the desire to know exactly what is going on.

That is, the helper must at times look away from goals and products and become something he or she is never taught to be, a seeker of continuities between information and human lives.

Collaborative, exploratory, adventurous relationships, based on mutual, trusting exchanges, are valuable goals for library helpers. They require skilled assistance and a direct but noninvasive invitation for the learner to accept the helper and enter an alliance for change. But the invitation must be given. Consider the life of Grace Clements, who appears under the job title “Felter, Luggage Factory” in Studs Terkel’s *Working.* A felter’s life on the assembly line is routine, exhausting, monotonous, and damaging to health, hearing, communication, and imagination. But as she presents her life, Grace Clements is an intact, engaged, perceptive, feeling person. She chairs a grievance committee...
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and edits a paper for her union. For her family, she bakes bread and makes jam; cooking is a source of delight and order. She aspires to be a union counselor and, after retirement, to run a small hamburger shop with her husband, now a janitor. As a woman, the child of poor farmers, a factory worker, and a union member, she understands discrimination and anger. Yet she appears to be in a constant process of becoming as she responds to the unsuspected complexities and continuities in one unfolding life.

Although Grace Clements does not mention libraries, information, books, or helping as she speaks, it is possible to identify twenty or thirty research topics that would be useful to her life as a learner. Of course she is informed by working and striving through the obvious rigors and hidden responsibilities of the assembly line. But she is also the model of the uninvited library learner, and her one story speaks for millions who might find the informing and engaging continuities of the library to be useful. Grace Clements and her anonymous counterparts challenge librarians to design and issue several forms of invitation. These should be more than invitations to learn in an educative place; these are invitations to plan and collaborate for change in the enduring dimensions and capacities of adult life.

References


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13. Ibid., pp. 85-86.
22. Ibid., p. 86.

Additional References

Library Helping


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Adult Learner Services at the Pratt Library: An Evaluative Treatment

ANNA CURRY

As it approaches its centenary in 1986, the Enoch Pratt Free Library can look back on almost a century in which it has played a leading role in adult education. The character of its learner services has evolved through successive decades, influenced by each administration’s interpretation of the role and functions of the public library; financial resources; demographic shifts; and, most compellingly formative of all, the library’s responsiveness to community needs.

Directors from Henry Lewis Steiner to Joseph Wheeler to Anna Curry have perceived the library’s educational role in different ways, but none has ever questioned its importance. That role has been described in a detailed historical study,¹ which is outlined here to provide the general context for a review of recent activity.

Historically Speaking

For Dr. Wheeler and his predecessors, commitment to the educational function of the library meant ready, often imaginative assistance and stimulation through programs and services for library users actively interested in self-education. The first director, Henry Lewis Steiner, “possessed an intimate knowledge of the intellectual needs and ambitions of diverse classes of people, and he had attained a degree of prestige which in a measure dispelled the doubts entertained by some Baltimoreans in this new enterprise in popular education.”² One group eager to use the library’s early adult education services was the immi-

grant population. A Pratt librarian working in an East Baltimore street agency: 'strongly believed that her station had a 'peculiar mission to fulfill' as it was situated in the heart of the foreign colony. Her credo encompassed the idea that 'the library has it in its power to help train these young minds in the direction of good American citizenship.' Indeed, as a custodian, she saw it as more of a duty as 'they virtually come and beg us to help educate themselves.'

Joseph Wheeler's impact on the Pratt Library and its services was distinctive, definitive and lasting, but while he strongly supported the institution's educational role, his conception and support of "adult education" fluctuated throughout his tenure as director. According to Margaret Monroe:

Wheeler guided the development of a strongly education-oriented library service for adults, sustained a firm vision of its relation to library materials, encouraged an excellence in exhibits, reading lists, and contact with community organizations, and remained both sensitive and resistant to the national adult education movement. He maintained as an unresolved question the proper role of the library in adult education... During Wheeler's directorship... the combination of director and staff achieved a level of educational service and an awareness of adult education purposes that prepared the library for making its unique contribution to library adult education in the ten years that followed.

It was not until the era of Emerson Greenaway (1945-51) that the position of Director of Central Adult Services was created, with the specific charge, among others, of developing the library's adult education program. Marion Hawes, the first librarian appointed to this position (and in 1949 to the newly established post of Coordinator of Work with Adults), had a strong, individual view of the library's educational role. It is Monroe's assessment that "it was with [Marion] Hawes that the concept of library adult education came to its most careful formulation at the Enoch Pratt Free Library." From 1933, when Hawes became Pratt's Readers' Advisor, to 1960, when she retired, "the record bears the imprint of her leadership in adult education: to such a degree that "[i]t is fair to say that in 1955 the conception of library adult education held by the staff of the Enoch Pratt Free Library was...the result of her leadership" and the support she received from the directors—Wheeler, Greenaway, Amy Winslow, Arthur H. Parsons, Jr., and Edwin Castagna—under whom she served.

Hawes defined library adult education as:

voluntary, informal education, close to the individual's needs and on his own level of comprehension, at his own convenience, and wher-
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ever he chooses to pursue it. Services in adult education offered by the library included the “reader’s advisory service” (preparation of study outlines, the selection and the loan of materials, and referral to formal course study as needed); “informal study or discussion groups” sponsored by and conducted in the library (“libraries then become part of the mainstream of adult education activity”); “demonstration projects” conducted by the library itself and concentrated upon making the community aware of a particular problem; and “cooperating with the programs of other agencies or groups” through stimulating attention to important subjects and advising in the development of programs. She described the library’s educational responsibility in two ways: the library is “concerned with the spread of ideas and information as well as the distribution of print”; and “the staff tries in numerous ways to make the community conscious of the need to know and then to supply materials to fill the need.”

The declaration of general library objectives included in the Pratt Library’s statement of its 1950 book selection policies also gave specific attention to adult education:

Educational service to adults is a primary function, and the Library pursues an active program of stimulation, leadership, and cooperation with other agencies in encouraging the reading of socially significant materials. It accepts also its responsibility for the direct communication of ideas through organization of discussion groups, institutes, film forums and the like, seeking thereby to direct the individual toward a continuous learning process through use of books and related materials.

By the end of the Greenaway regime, the library had gone a long way toward achieving his stated goals of integrating “the adult services at the Central Library with others in the system” and developing the library’s adult education program. Into the 1960s, the views of Greenaway, Winslow and Hawes provided both the backbone and substance of the Pratt Library’s adult education program.

Urban Change and a Shift in Focus

The fact that this issue of Library Trends is devoted to “adult learner services” rather than “adult education” reflects more than a simple variation in semantics. It implies specificity, rather than a broad, general approach, and suggests a change in focus. Few members of the Pratt administration questioned the need for modification of the library’s organizational structure and services as dramatic forces of social, economic and technological change swept the country in the 1960s and 1970s and placed a heavy strain on the traditional urban
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public library. Since then, the most firmly established institutions have been compelled to reexamine their goals and services, and the Enoch Pratt Free Library is no exception.

The most influential factor in shaping the library's new view of its educational role was the change in the character of the population of Baltimore, a change that paralleled demographic shifts in many other urban areas. The creative imagination and professional skill of Pratt librarians in the library's first sixty years had been directed at developing traditional and innovative services appropriate for the independent, self-motivated adult user engaged in casual or formal study. The educated, middle-class patron was the most frequent "consumer" for whom the library's reading lists, discussion groups, lectures, film showing, exhibits, and book collections were designed. Socioeconomic changes which followed World War II and gained complexity and force in the 1960s resulted in the migration of a large segment of the middle class from Baltimore to the developing suburban areas, leaving within the city a more heterogeneous population than the Pratt Library had previously served. Besides the citizens familiar with the public library and accustomed to making use of its services, there also was a new group of patrons, former nonusers who, supported by the federal commitment to equal opportunity and social justice, began to recognize the library as an accessible resource and to bring their information needs to their neighborhood Pratt agencies. The library had to assess its capacity to provide effective service to these new urban users and to decide upon a responsive pattern of service.

Out of this decision-making process came a fresh direction in planning which led to the proliferation of small library centers in storefronts and municipal multipurpose centers, supported by the library's general operating funds; and the federally financed Community Action Program, which offered library services in Community Action agencies throughout the city.

Learner-Centered Services

Two studies commissioned by the Pratt Library Director and Board of Trustees were seminal to the development of learner services in the 1970s and 1980s. These were the widely read Baltimore Reaches Out: Library Service to the Disadvantaged and Adults and the Pratt Library: A Question of the Quality of Life, both written by consultant Lowell Martin. One response to the recommendations made in these studies was the establishment at the Pratt Library of a variety of learner-
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centered services and activities designed expressly for adult patrons and based on the knowledge that individuals learn best when instruction is geared to their specific needs and abilities. In 1970, while Edwin Castagna was director, Pratt started a GED program at its Pennsylvania Avenue branch with the aid of Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) funds and the Baltimore city schools. Inner-city adults without high school diplomas were the target audience, and their response was overwhelming. To ensure success, enrollment in each class was limited to twenty-five adults. The program was quickly extended to other branches, and since then some two hundred adults have been accepted for instruction each year. Long waiting lists of adults eager to enroll have existed since the program began.

A significant discovery made by the librarians supervising these programs was that they were too difficult for many adults, so pre-GED and Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes were instituted at the central library and eleven branches to serve adults with an eighth-grade reading level or less. A combination of LSCA monies and instructors paid by the city public schools was used to help up to eight hundred adults annually. Again, there were long waiting lists for these classes.

As in all group learning situations, the classes showed variations in growth and progress. Recognition of this, and the availability of Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funds, led to the introduction in 1976 of a supplementary one-to-one tutoring project using a special force of trained tutors. Called the Community Literacy and Learning (CL&L) Program, it employed training methods designed by Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) and was aimed at adults who needed to acquire functional literacy skills or to learn English as a second language. The program was offered at the central library and twenty-three branches, and attracted some five hundred students a year. The project received a severe blow when CETA funding was cut off in 1981, but has now recovered somewhat with the recruitment of volunteers to replace the CETA tutors. The new cadre of nonsalaried aides also receives LVA training and is large enough so far to serve about two hundred students. Long waiting lists exist. As a complement to this project, funds recently have been secured from ACTION to hire six VISTA workers to recruit more tutors and to attempt to interest community groups in starting their own volunteer literacy programs. This last effort has not been in operation long enough for the results to be evaluated.

In 1976, the Park Heights community in northwest Baltimore was awarded a HUD Block Grant for neighborhood development. Studies
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had shown that more than 25 percent of the community's adult residents were functionally illiterate, so the Pratt Library was asked to participate in the HUD project by helping to attack the illiteracy problem. A certified reading specialist was hired to design and direct the program, train and supervise the staff, and recruit clients. As a result, learner services were established in two branch libraries in the target area: Pimlico and Keyworth Avenue.

Today, this program offers an open-ended course of individualized tutoring for all ages and reading levels. Each client is given reading diagnostic tests; has an improvement program devised expressly for him or her by one of the teachers; and remains in the program until his or her goals are achieved. Services also are rendered to any Park Heights resident who has a "one-time" reading need or problem but does not wish to become a regular client, and to community members in need of help with coping skills: for example, parents wishing to learn how to help their children with schoolwork, or citizens needing assistance with filling out income tax or other forms. In the six years of its operation, the Reading Resource Center, as the library project is called, has trained more than one thousand reading tutors and has given tutoring services to over ten thousand individuals.

Related Programs and Services

Mention should also be made of other Pratt learner services which, for reasons that will become apparent, do not quite fit within the framework of those already described. Pratt was one of eleven libraries invited by the Office of Independent Study and Guidance Projects, a division of the College Entrance Examination Board, to participate in a special program for adult independent learners who wished to study at the college level, either to prepare for one of the examinations, such as CLEP, by which college credits can be earned, or simply for the satisfaction of learning and self-development. Pratt established the College Learners Advisory Service (CLAS), under which adult services librarians and subject specialists at the central library and five branches were trained to advise and assist patrons interested in reading guidance to achieve the benefits of the program. Over four hundred adults made use of this service, which was offered until 1979, when staff changes and cutbacks forced its discontinuation.

Motivated adults who lack high school diplomas have been helped by Pratt since 1977 through GED videotapes prepared by KET-TV in Kentucky. These videotapes are used by adults who prefer to study
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independently and at their own pace for high school equivalency examinations. Study guides and audiovisual equipment for these learners are provided by the central library and six to eight branches. About five hundred users a year have taken advantage of this service. Hearing-impaired adults with lower than eighth-grade level reading skills were offered classes in basic reading and mathematics in 1980 with the help of instructors from Baltimore City Public Schools. The program did not reach the anticipated audience—only five learners signed up for the classes; and the project has so far proved to be too expensive to repeat. Beginning in the fall of 1983, a Computer Literacy Project is planned for inner-city adults. With an LSCA grant, the Pennsylvania Avenue branch will provide hands-on experience, instruction, and resource materials for undereducated adults who wish to become familiar with the new technology.

Support Services

The Pratt Library programs and projects described thus far all fall into the category of direct library services to adult learners or potential learners. The library also offers many indirect or support services to this same clientele and to the professionals who work with them. The Literacy Resource Center, opened in 1979 with the aid of an LSCA grant, has as its major objectives the provision of support materials, training and consultation for agencies, organizations and individuals engaged in tutoring adults who are functionally illiterate, wish to improve basic education skills, want to prepare for the GED test, or are foreign born and need to learn English as a second language.

The professional librarian in charge of the center gathers and reviews books, newspapers, pamphlets, films, slides, tapes, filmstrips, and other materials useful to tutors. Of the books in the collection 90 percent are soft-cover. An effort has been made to avoid duplication of materials already in the general Pratt collection, and to acquire specialized materials such as workbooks, teachers' guides and answer keys. To increase access to the center, a core collection of approximately one hundred fifteen representative titles is available for borrowing, and extended loans of materials in quantity (no more than 200 items) are made to organizations, agencies and individual tutors, although not for classroom use. A useful bibliography, Literacy Resources: An Annotated Check List for Tutors and Librarians, listing the holdings of the center, is available for purchase from the Pratt Library. Since 1975, an information-oriented collection of print and nonprint materials has
been developed at the Pimlico branch for the use of adults with low-level reading skills. The books, films, slides, tapes, filmstrips, and recordings are available in the center with viewing equipment and teaching machines for persons over sixteen. Some two thousand adults use the collection each year.

INFER (Information for Every Resident), the Pratt Library's information and referral service, links library users with services available from other institutions, organizations and agencies. A file of agencies and services in the Baltimore metropolitan area is maintained, and every effort is made to locate needed information for a questioner, whether it is in the file or not. INFER is accessible by telephone or in person from all Pratt agencies and will become an online service by late 1983 as the library completes the first phase of its automation program.

An adult education need reflecting hard economic times is being addressed by the services of the Job and Career Information Center at the central library. This center is staffed by a full-time librarian with training in vocational counseling who gathers and dispenses information and materials about careers and employment. Additionally, the center provides information about job search strategies, résumé writing, career changes, and interview techniques. Vocational Information Centers operate as satellites of this central unit in five branch libraries.

Adult learners with hearing or vision problems are given special assistance by Pratt's Center for the Visually and Hearing Impaired, located at the central library. Equipped with a Kurzweil reading machine, TTY phones, a Visual-Tek machine, and offering other specialized services, the center is staffed by a full-time professional librarian with part-time help from other staff.

In the fall of 1982, the Pratt Central Library agreed to provide classroom space and backup materials for classes run by the Open University of the University of Maryland. The classes are for adults interested in acquiring college credits in an external degree program that permits a flexible schedule and self-paced study. Course materials provided by the university are made available to the students on library premises.

The Administrative Framework

The assistant director, as head of public service at the Pratt Library, has ultimate responsibility for all adult education services and has direct line authority over staff who share in the development, supervision and delivery of these services. Staff members participate in identifying adult education needs and in recommending appropriate responses.
The position formerly known as Coordinator of Adult Services is now Adult Services Specialist. Its appointee provides ideas and consultative services to staff working with adults throughout the system. The specialist’s expertise in assessing city-wide adult education needs, planning support services and writing grant proposals has had direct impact on the scope and variety of available programs, from ABE classes to one-to-one tutoring. Proposals for new programs and changes in existing services may emerge from any service point in the system, but they are always discussed by the library administration before they are endorsed or implemented.

**Evaluation of Learner Services**

Some evaluation of Pratt's adult learner services is implicit in the foregoing comments and descriptions, and in the fact that the services are heavily used by the target audience; long waiting lists for participation are common, and the positive evaluation and statistics necessary for continued funding of LSCA- and CETA-supported projects always have been attained. As funding sources were reduced or withdrawn, however, it became necessary to consider the extent to which the new learner services could or should be absorbed into the ongoing budgetary program of the library. Aware of the need for further and more sophisticated evaluative data, the library commissioned a study by Vernon E. Palmour and Marcia C. Bellassai, which was completed in 1980. Through "observation, interviews with administrators, program personnel and clients, and analysis of survey data in relation to background data provided," the study sought to apply scientific research techniques to an evaluation of the library’s adult learner services.

The evaluative survey of tutors and other personnel working with adult learners revealed that "almost three-fifths of respondents felt that the Library did at least as well as other agencies in providing learning programs." More than 75 percent of respondents noted that "some percentage of clients were strongly benefited by the specific learning program" examined. Almost four-fifths of respondents said that Pratt learning programs were "satisfactorily meeting community learning needs." Where failure of the programs to meet needs was noted, it was attributed to the "range of problems of the clients, inadequate class time, need for more publicizing in the community, and the need for better diagnosis of client training needs." No respondent rated overall service at the Pratt Library as poor; 60 percent rated it "excellent or superior." Those surveyed included volunteers, CETA personnel, city.
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school teachers, Pratt-paid GED and pre-GED teachers, and a few regular Pratt employees.

This study identified no firm cost figures for adult learner services at Pratt. Essentially, grant monies provide program staff, salaries and materials; library costs are primarily the typical "in kind" expenses—space, staff, promotion, custodial service, and utilities. Experience and review have both shown that, for the undereducated adult learner, one-to-one tutoring or learning in small groups ensures that each student receives individual attention and learns as effectively as possible.

Pratt's Reading Resource Center prepares regular reports for officials of the library and other agencies involved in the Park Heights block grant program. Monthly statistics are kept on enrollment, attendance, walk-in services, conferences held with clients, new enrollees, reentry enrollees, and dropouts.

The lengthening waiting lists for admittance to all of the Pratt Library's learner services; the growing number of requests and visits for consultation with administrators of the program; and the countless queries received by letter and telephone from other agencies interested in using Pratt learning projects as models for their own, attest to the effectiveness and success of the library's efforts to provide alternative learning programs for Baltimore adults.

The Future

As an institution that has always recognized the inevitability of change and the need to meet it with professional insight and innovative responsiveness, the Pratt Library is building the future of its learner services on the basis of pragmatism and practical experience. Several problems remain to be solved. One of the most critical is the sensitizing of staff who are accustomed to providing traditional library services to a traditional clientele, and are uncomfortable with the library's more aggressive educational role in helping unskilled adult readers. Unable or unwilling to acquire the empathy and skills required to meet this challenge, some staff members feel that their professional status and the prestige of Pratt is damaged by services of this kind. In Adults and the Pratt Library, Lowell Martin said, "Retraining of staff must start with the professional self-image held by librarians. Staff members in Pratt as elsewhere have set conceptions of what properly constitutes library service...."16 It is important to note, however, that members of the public service staff are never required or expected to serve as instructors or
tutors unless they choose to do so as volunteers. They are asked to assist with adult learner services by identifying likely clients, referring them to the appropriate program head, and providing a welcoming, nonjudgmental atmosphere conducive to learning. Staff training for work with adults at all levels of sophistication is planned with supervisors through the office of the Adult Services Specialist.

Increasingly important in times of unpredictable financing and reduced staffing has been the development of volunteer services under a full-time, professional Coordinator of Volunteers. Tutorial programs are now dependent almost entirely on the services of volunteers trained as tutors. The VISTA project seeks to underscore this effort by using VISTA workers to recruit and train volunteers the library has not yet reached.

A second problem reflects the collaborative nature of library-based learner services. As the Pratt Library has become more involved in a range of learner services, it has also grown increasingly aware of the need to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort among agencies active in phases of adult education. Improved coordination among concerned organizations and institutions is vital if the needs and interests of the Baltimore population are to be met appropriately and efficiently. Cooperation among the library, public schools, social service agencies, the area university and colleges, and other educational service institutions and agencies must be even closer than it has been in the past.

One step in this direction was taken in 1981 when Mayor William Donald Schaefer appointed a Literacy Commission, a group of twenty-four members drawn from Baltimore business, education, communications, and culture. Community representatives are also on the commission, as are selected city officials, including the director of the Pratt Library. In September 1981, the library joined with the commission and the mayor's office in sponsoring Literacy Awareness Week.

Improved communication with publishers is another need. Selection of low reading level, high-interest materials requires the librarian's best professional skills, because much is being published that is of inferior quality. Librarians need to work individually and through their professional organizations to make publishers more aware of the need for carefully prepared materials for adult learners. The need is so desperate that in 1980, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) funded a two-year development and demonstration literacy project directed by the Literacy Volunteers of America. Writing new materials for unskilled adult readers was the focus and the Pratt Library was one of the nine public libraries involved.
The competition for space within Pratt agencies affects library learner services as well as other programs. Meeting-room space at the central library and branches is shared by staff members planning film showings, lectures, concerts, and other public programs; learner services; and community groups. Other available space does not always provide the quiet and seclusion necessary for effective instruction and learning. Plans for renovation of the central library are under way, and the need for added meeting-room space is a priority item to be discussed with architects.

The most critical problem is also the most familiar one to urban public libraries—funding. Reduced federal support and the resulting impact of the demands upon monies from city and state government sources complicate future planning for library learner services. Since 1971, when the central library was declared a State Library Resource Center for all of Maryland, Pratt has received vigorous support from the Division of Library Development and Services (DLDS) of the Maryland State Department of Education. As detailed above, many of the library's most effective and needed learner services for adults have been started with LSCA funds channeled through DLDS. Through the years, the Pratt Library has, wherever feasible, absorbed into its regular budget the cost of those services it has considered most worthwhile. To what extent it can continue to do so is a question yet to be resolved.

Conclusion

A new edition of the library's collection development policy and a revision in process of the Pratt Plan of Service underscore the priority given to the goal of providing opportunities, materials and staff to facilitate adult learning. "Serving People—The Public Library Today and Tomorrow" was the theme of the 1983 Public Library Association convention in Baltimore. This theme can be traced through the history of adult learner services at the Pratt Library; it is a theme that will inevitably provoke change in the configuration of services, yet one that is in harmony with the precepts upon which the American public library is founded.

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The Learner and the Library:
There’s More to Learning than Meets the Eye

DOROTHY MACKERACHER

Learning is a natural process, a set of activities which occurs within the individual at both conscious and unconscious levels. It begins in response to a need to be met, a problem to be solved, specific life conditions to be coped with, a desire to be achieved, or just plain curiosity. It can initiate change or be a response to inner or outer changes in the physical, social, emotional, mental, or physiological aspects of daily life. Learning results in changes in the meanings an individual uses to make sense of life experiences; in the skills and strategies she or he uses for acting on, reacting to and interacting with other persons and life events; and in the values and attitudes which affect actions and intentions. Learning involves a sequence of cyclical and repetitive activities, some of which can be observed by others but most of which can be experienced and known only by the individual learner.1 Learning, as described in this article, is assumed to be a process under the control and direction of the learner, but influenced by interactions with others. Librarians, for example, have a unique opportunity to influence learning activities by providing the material resources and human services to assist learners as they extract information and ideas through reading, hearing or seeing the meanings and values which others have given to life experiences.

This description of learning offers a number of basic ideas which are fundamental to understanding the learner-centered approaches proposed in other articles in this journal. Descriptions of learning which

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are not learner-centered tend to focus on how the learner responds to
certain teaching strategies, to specifically designed resources, to struc-
tured experiences, and to facilitative interventions. That is, such
approaches focus primarily on the specific actions of the person desig-
nated as the teacher, facilitator, counselor, advice-giver, or whatever
(referred to in the remainder of this article as the “facilitator” of adult
learning); and secondarily on how the learner responds to these actions.
For example, a nonlearner-centered approach might focus on the con-
tent of a lecture by a noted expert and subsequently on the quality or
quantity of what was learned as a result of this lecture. Or a library
might focus primarily on the most efficient organization, from the
library’s perspective, of a card index file and secondarily on solving the
problem of helping individuals learn how to use the index.

The learner-centered approach described here focuses primarily on
the actions of the learner related to his or her own learning process; and
secondarily on the responses to the learner’s actions by the facilitator of
adult learning. This approach reflects a current and persistent trend in
adult education. It is one which suggests that many librarians, as
facilitators of adult learning, might want to shift their attention from a
primary concern for library organization and efficiency to a primary
concern for individual learning needs. We must hasten to add that our
concern is not to propose an either/or choice reflecting a dichotomous
conflict between the learner-centered approach and other approaches;
but rather it is to discuss ways in which the learner-centered approach
can be used to enhance other approaches, to suggest creative alternatives
to traditional library activities, and to raise the consciousness of librar-
ians about the diversity and uniqueness of the needs, actions and inten-
tions reflected in the personal learning of individual library users.

The first part of the article describes learning as an individualized
process from which general approaches to facilitation can be derived.
To “facilitate” in this context means to help a learner carry out some
aspect of his/her learning activities, rather than the more traditional
notion of teaching. The second part considers some conditions, both
within the learner and in learning environments, particularly libraries,
which affect the learning and facilitating processes. The third part
addresses the issue of using the learner-centered approach to examine
alternative strategies for facilitating the learning activities of library
users. Since I have made a basic assumption that learning is under the
control and direction of the individual learner and that the one adult
learner about whom I have absolutely reliable information is myself, I
will use my knowledge of my own learning processes to illustrate
various points throughout the article.
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The article summarizes some state-of-the-art thinking about learning and facilitating. It also, by implication, indicates some future directions for the field of adult education in general and for public librarianship in particular.

**Learning as a Process**

To describe learning as a process is to emphasize its active nature. There are several aspects to this active nature. As healthy human beings, all of us actively seek to make sense of our internal (emotional, mental and physiological) environments and external (social and physical) environments by reducing the unknown, unpredictable and ambiguous aspects to a manageable level, by giving meaning and value to events and experiences in such environments, and by devising a set of strategies to guide current activities and future intentions. All adults engage in learning at some level of conscious or unconscious activity. The degree to which we actively (i.e., deliberately) engage in seeking information, assigning meanings and values, and devising and implementing strategies, determines a specific profile of our activity level as learners and establishes our individuality as learners.

The process of learning is described by various writers and researchers in different terms. Most writers agree that learning involves a sequence of activities: some observable, some known only to the learner, and some logically inferred. For example, information seeking is observable, while decision making is known only to the learner. If we know that learning activity A is followed by activity C, then we tend to infer that activity B (e.g., problem solving), while unknown and unseen, is probably occurring within the learner at some unconscious or partially conscious level.

In this article, I am assuming that the learning process includes the following activities:

1. seeking out and taking in information (making sense);
2. interpreting and valuing information (making meaning);
3. using meanings, interpretations and values in solving problems, developing strategies, making decisions and creating intentions (planning and deciding);
4. behaving physically or performing in ways which are guided by intentions (acting);
5. interacting with inner and outer environments to get reactions to one's meanings, intentions and actions (getting feedback); and
6. seeking new information (making sense again).
I am also assuming that the learning process is affected by various internal and external conditions. Some conditions, such as individual preferences for certain types of information and approaches to learning, can be used by a facilitator to improve the quality of help offered to the learner. Other conditions, such as stress, anxiety and disruptive change, must be recognized and acknowledged for their potential in affecting the learning process.

Making Sense
To make sense of our environments, we actively search out information about those environments by seeking social, emotional, mental and physical stimulation and by taking in information through sense receptors. The receptors in our eyes, ears, skin, mouth, and nose provide information from and about our external environments; those in our inner ears, muscles and other organs provide information from and about our internal environments. Stimuli in the form of nervous impulses, chemical levels and hormonal regulators become a flow of information to the central nervous system. This information must be interpreted or given meaning and value in order to be useful in learning. The flow of information is modified by such conditions as sleep, emotions, stress, fatigue, anxiety, physical fitness, health, diet, and disability; but it stops only with death. The brain requires this continuous flow of information to remain healthy. In fact, under conditions of sensory deprivation or boredom (as well as acute distress, exhaustion, high body temperatures, and malnutrition), the brain will invent its own information to keep itself active. Depending on what generation you belong to, this phenomenon is variously referred to as burn-out, cabin fever, tripping out, or hallucinating. In persons over 65 years, the same phenomenon is too often viewed as the onset of senility—an interpretation which is usually wrong and potentially damaging to the individual.

As in all aspects of the learning process, each individual has a preference for certain types and sources of information and actively attends to and seeks these out. Most learners also ignore or actively avoid, through selective inattention, other types and sources.

As one type of learner, for example, I have a preference for visual information—both verbal and nonverbal—and a tendency to selectively ignore auditory information. I have trouble obtaining information on the telephone and avoid it whenever I can. In a library, I prefer to get a book, map, picture, or statistical table and see the information for myself. When a librarian tries to tell me the information, I become
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anxious and my somewhat inadequate listening skills become progressively worse. I can imagine that there are individuals with the reverse problem, and others who must both see and hear the same information to make sense of it. Research has shown that redundancy in information, up to an optimal level, enhances learning. Redundancy here means excessive repetition of information. Personal preferences for certain types of information suggest that the learner would view his or her preferred type as essential and all other types as potentially redundant. Libraries, therefore, help learners when they offer information of all types.

Felt or kinesthetic information (i.e., stimulation which comes through the mouth, skin, inner ear, muscles, and internal organs) seems to be a type which, while preferred by many learners and ignored by others, is routinely ignored by libraries, except through the provision of braille books. Libraries sometimes provide kinesthetic displays of crafts, artifacts or models; but they often protect these behind glass, an approach which negates the tactile quality of the display. Museums, as information providing institutions, are more likely than libraries to offer kinesthetic information through hands-on exhibits. Libraries have become highly organized and efficient in distributing visual and auditory information, but it is a service which does not offer the preferred type of information for all adult learners.

Making Meaning

To give meaning and value to the general flow of uninterpreted information from current experience, each learner draws on past experiences. Our experiences provide us with a general framework or perspective from which we search for and discriminate patterns. These patterns are derived from the similarities and differences we perceive in information. Each person’s patterns result from using personal strategies to compare incoming information with existing meanings and to identify new patterns. This process allows us to create meaningful order from the potential chaos of life experiences.

Order can be created in several ways. Existing meanings and values can be imposed on incoming information to filter out irrelevant, ambiguous or incongruent information. This process does not lead to learning, but it does maintain the status quo; that is, existing ideas tend to be reinforced. For example, if a learner views a library as offering only traditional services and a local library attempts to establish a new and interesting service, the learner may filter out information about the library as an innovative institution and continue to think of it as
unchanged and unchanging. Alternately, patterns and meanings can be newly created or old patterns reorganized and appropriate meanings and values assigned. This process allows for learning in that meanings and values change on the basis of experience.

Each pattern is given meaning and value, and is integrated into the general framework. Some patterns are assigned representational words which describe the associated meaning. Simple patterns are combined to form complex patterns and are assigned new meanings and values, and so on. Meanings are our conceptual interpretations for direct experience; values are our emotional interpretations.

By our adult years, we have developed a variety of meanings and values derived from two major sources, personal and social. Those experiences which are ours alone, the personal experiences we know from within ourselves, provide personal meanings and values. They are unique, idiosyncratic, often unarticulated, and sometimes articulable. For example, my personal experience with librarians informs me that they probably can’t help me anyway; so I rarely ask for help unless I am really stuck. As I wrote this article, I realized I had to articulate my experiences with libraries and librarians. The previous statement represents my first attempt to express my library-related experience in words.

Those experiences which form part of our common heritage, the social experiences we know because we have been told about them, provide social meanings and values. These are derived from collective experiences of the social groups in which we are members. Appropriate and approved social meanings and values are learned through socialization, often during childhood. The words associated with social meanings and values provide a common language through which we can communicate with others. For example, in spite of my personal experience with librarians, I have been taught to believe that libraries are important repositories of social and cultural information and traditions; and that I could share in these traditions if I would just go in and ask.

Our personal meanings and values tend to be structured in forms corresponding to the forms in which information is taken in—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and so on. We each have a preferred form for structuring our own patterns. Our preferences are viewed as part of our individual learning style. An individual who prefers visual patterns will turn most incoming information into visual structures first, then search for patterns and assign meanings. Visual patterns tend to become images, maps and models; and knowing something is equated with
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"seeing it." Auditory patterns become rhythms, tone patterns, sounds, and melodies; and knowing something is equated with "hearing it." Kinesthetic patterns become sensations, urges and feelings; and knowing something is equated with "feeling it."

Our basic patterns and their meanings and values can be communicated to others directly as visual, auditory or kinesthetic art forms such as paintings, music or dance; and indirectly through the use of descriptive words. Many adults have developed meanings and values from past experiences and, after assigning descriptive words to their meanings, have lost the connections between the words and the original experiences. Other adults have developed complex meanings and values to which they have not assigned descriptive words.

Our social meanings and values tend to be learned initially as a sequence of words, often without the attendant visual, auditory or kinesthetic experiences. The building of connections, therefore, between social and personal meanings, and the connecting of social meanings to appropriate images, sounds and sensations is a primary function of the facilitator of adult learning. Another function is to help adult learners describe, in words, those experiences which have not yet been articulated.

As one type of learner, I have a tendency to turn all incoming information into visual patterns within which I can see meaning. If I can't see something in my mind's eye, I have trouble understanding it—and that includes seeing the point of the social meanings and values I have learned over the years. Once I have seen it, I can then translate my image into words for other learners. If I were a better artist, I would be drawing this article rather than writing it. As a writer, I have an image in my mind of what I want to convey to you, the reader. It is this image that I am translating into words. Even when I have a clear image of the meaning I want to convey, I must see the words appear on the page as I write so that I can order and reorder them to my (visual) satisfaction.

I know that other learners deal with information in other ways. I am fortunate in that our society has provided more descriptive words for the meanings and values based on visual patterns than for those which are auditory or kinesthetic. It is important that adult educators be able to recognize that many adult learners cannot describe what they want to learn or need to know because their patterns are structured in formats which are not easy to translate into words. For example, an adult who feels uneasy about dealing with doctors, may come to a library for assistance and not be able to explain what kind of information she or he needs, because the kinesthetic patterns of meaning she or he is attending...
to (i.e., the felt symptoms of needing to learn something), cannot be easily described in words.

In helping adults to learn, a major concern for the facilitator is to assist the learner to make sense of information and develop his or her own patterns of meaning. When a learner is influenced to adopt the facilitator's patterns of meaning, the results are often disastrous. The learner may appear to understand—a good technique for placating the facilitator—but go away not having made sense out of the information he or she has been given. It is always a good facilitating technique to try to start with the learner's existing meanings and then connect these, through translation, to the facilitator's meanings, or to the standard terminology used in the content area being learned.

Planning and Deciding

Information, with its associated meaning and value, is used to solve problems, assess alternatives, plan for future actions, and decide on immediate responses. This phase of learning activity occurs at various levels of consciousness. Much of the activity we call thinking is carried on at levels below consciousness. Subconscious thinking usually involves the use of images, sounds and sensations as representational markers for meanings; while conscious thinking involves the use of words as well as images, sounds and sensations as representational markers which can be organized and reorganized to the learner's satisfaction.

Making sense and meaning, as well as thinking, are private activities, carried on solely within the learner. If a facilitator is to help a learner in these learning activities, then the learner must be both willing and able to make them public through descriptive words. Facilitating at these steps in learning, therefore, is limited by the learner's ability to accurately describe the related activities. The facilitator can help by knowing and suggesting alternative words to describe subconscious learning activities.

Acting

The activity of thinking and problem solving allows the learner to develop plans. These are usually plans for action steps to be taken in relation to the content or skill being learned or the problem being solved. Plans are future oriented in that the learner intends to do something at some future time, whether one second, one hour, or one year ahead. Plans are turned into physical or muscular actions. A plan or decision to act might be as fleeting or immediate as shifting the focus of the eyes; as permanent or long-range as learning to be an archivist.
Each learner has a preferred style and setting for acting. Some learners appear to be fearless in testing out new actions in novel settings. Other learners may develop new meanings or acquire new skills and then be reluctant to test these out in interactions with others. Meanings and skills which are never tested out in real or practice situations, can never be confirmed, acknowledged or commented on by others. For most learners, the acknowledgment they receive from others reinforces what they have learned and encourages them to continue.

**Getting Feedback**

As the learner acts, she or he receives feedback or information about actions and their consequences on both internal and external environments. Immediate reflexive feedback comes from sense receptors in the muscles, inner ears and internal organs. This feedback tells the learner if the muscular action was carried out as intended. While this type of feedback cannot be facilitated by others, all facilitators should be aware that immediate reflexive feedback is the first indication the learner receives about actions. If the learner feels himself being clumsy (and values this information negatively), he may withdraw immediately from a learning environment. That is, the learner usually is the first person to assess his own actions. Note that immediate reflexive feedback is always kinesthetic and, hence, is ignored by many learners. Slightly delayed, reflexive feedback comes from the learner's eyes and ears as she sees herself act or hears herself talk. We can never see or hear ourselves exactly as others see and hear us. Therefore, our perceptions of ourselves are usually distorted, and our assessment of our own learning may be equally distorted. Facilitators need to be sensitive to the possibility that a learner seeking help may be assessing his or her appearance negatively while also trying to attend to information being offered by the librarian. Such a situation may cause the learner distress because it requires that his or her sensory abilities work overtime.

We also obtain feedback by reflecting on our own actions, often hours or days after the event. Feedback obtained through both reflexivity and delayed self-reflection contribute to our self-concept—that is, to the meanings and values we assign to ourselves as functioning human beings. Self-reflection allows us time to assess and reorganize our meanings and values. It is an important process in helping us learn from our own experience and assists in connecting our personal experiences to socially accepted meanings and values.

We also receive feedback through interacting with persons and objects in our environment. When others smile immediately after we act, the smile becomes feedback which we interpret through the mean-
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ing we attribute to a smile. Facilitators should be aware of the fact that interpersonal feedback, particularly in the form of nonverbal behavior, is important in that it has the power to encourage the learner to try again, move ahead or quit on the spot. Objects also provide feedback. When an object, such as a computer, is designed to respond to the learner, the feedback provided is immediate. The immediacy of computer feedback, particularly when the learner has made an error, may initially be overwhelming. Some adults have never learned how to cope with immediate feedback, and initially respond to a computer with anxiety. Once they have learned to cope with immediate feedback, they are inclined to become frustrated when the computer does not respond immediately. Libraries which install computer terminals for access to information must help novices to cope with their emotional responses to a machine—a wholly new response for most adults—and to develop new strategies appropriate to computer learning.

Most resources in libraries are not interactive. Some require a librarian to mediate between the learner and the information being sought. In other words, librarians are most helpful when on hand to provide feedback so that the learner knows she or he has achieved something, and also has an opportunity to feel good about it. Most library staff appear to have neither the time nor the facilitating skills necessary for providing feedback to individual learners.

The most important factors contributing to the facilitating quality of feedback are that: (1) the greater the delay between action and feedback, the less effective the feedback becomes in helping the learner; and (2) feedback from persons should, whenever possible, be descriptive of actions rather than prescriptive about improved actions. Telling a library user what she should have done can be counterproductive by irritating the learner.

Making Sense Again

All feedback becomes new information to be taken in by various sense receptors and recycled through the sequence of learning activities already described.

Conditions Affecting the Learning Process

The learning process can be affected by a wide variety of internal and external conditions. Examples of internal conditions which influence learning are health, fatigue, diet, stress, emotions, perceptions of oneself as a learner, anxiety about success or failure, past experiences
and personal learning strategies. Examples of external conditions which influence learning are the kinds of persons available for social interactions, the physical setting, the quality and quantity of information available, and access to opportunities to test out new meanings and skills.

In this article, I will limit the discussion of factors affecting learning to the learner’s past experience and current learning strategies, to basic motives for learning, to issues related to stress and anxiety, and to the quality of facilitating which might be provided in a library setting.

Learning Strategies

While we create meanings and values from our daily experiences, we also create strategies for making sense and meaning, and for guiding current learning activities. Various researchers in the field of learning describe these strategies as styles. A cognitive style describes a preferred strategy for making sense and meaning. An learning style describes a preferred strategy for changing sense and meaning. A problem-solving style describes a preferred strategy for asking questions which will result in gathering information, for using that information to develop meanings which will answer the questions, and for deciding subsequent actions.

There are many such styles; some are more useful than others in specific settings. From a librarian’s perspective, useful ways to think about styles might include the following.

First, some learners take an active approach to seeking out information by going to many different information sources. Others either wait for information to come to them or seek information largely from their own experiences or their immediate surroundings. Learners who actively seek information from many sources are likely to use libraries as information sources. Learners who are more passive or self-reflective about seeking information are less likely to use libraries. Reaching these latter learners may mean that the library has to take the information to them through various communicating strategies.

Second, some learners prefer very concrete information, specific details, drawings, how-to books with plans, and so on. Other learners prefer more abstract information—general discussions, verbal descriptions, books that address the issue of “why” rather than “how.” Still other learners will use any type of information as long as they have the opportunity to abstract their own meaning and not be constrained by the meanings (or values) of the author or the information source. Libraries can facilitate adult learning by deliberately seeking out and
providing different types of resources, in different formats (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic, verbal, nonverbal), for any given content area.

Third, some learners will seek interaction with other persons as a deliberate strategy in their learning process. They may seek information, ask for help in clarifying problems or ideas, and accept comment on their own ideas or activities from these other persons. Other learners prefer to approach material resources, such as books or computers, without assistance from other persons. They prefer to figure things out for themselves. Librarians need to become sensitive to the individual preferences of their clients in seeking or avoiding interaction with others as a strategy in the learning process.

Fourth, some learners prefer to approach learning tasks through a series of steps, each following logically from the previous step. Such learners tend to select and use only that information which they perceive as being directly relevant to each step in the learning process. Others approach learning in more holistic terms, often gathering large amounts of redundant information before identifying patterns of meaning. Serialists, on the other hand, build up patterns of meaning, adding or subtracting as they go. Holistic learners often appear to be getting nowhere; then identify a pattern of meaning in what appears to be a flash of insight. Serialists can usually explain how they are learning; holistic learners have trouble explaining the process they are using. Holistic learners will probably read this article in a piecemeal fashion, creating their own meanings as they go. Serialist learners will probably try to understand each paragraph as they read, page by page, through the entire article.

The styles in these four different areas suggest that librarians could develop a profile of different types of learners based on the type and level of activities involved in the learning process. Such profiles might be developed to describe adult learners in terms which are specific to library concerns. For example, the learner who wants to look at one or two pages in ten different books (but rarely reads an entire book) has different needs than the learner who wants one book which tells all. While all learning styles could not be described in such a profile, librarians could use such approaches to increase their awareness of individual learning strategies and needs, and relate that awareness to resource collecting and reviewing, to staff development, and to reader advisory and other services.

Past Experience

Past experience provides the raw material from which we organize and reorganize meanings and values related to ourselves and to the
world in which we live. Researchers in the field of learning generally refer to meanings and values as our personal constructs, our world perspective or our self-organizing model of reality. Whatever term is used, we all receive information and make sense of it through a set of predetermined meanings and values, using a well-established set of strategies.

This model of reality has several characteristics which are important to both learner and facilitator. First, the various components of the model accumulate over time. The model is open to change; as time passes, the model is increasingly likely to be reassessed, reorganized and redefined on the basis of new experiences. The model gives meaning to past experience through the learner's biography, self-identity and sense of purpose in life. These aspects of past experiences each have a cognitive or meaning component, and an emotional or value component. For example, my self-identity includes both the meaning or concepts I create for myself as an individual, and the value or esteem I hold about myself. These components of past experience are constantly adjusted on the basis of new experience so that all three remain consistent with each other and are integrated as a whole or complete perspective.

Second, each learner has an important investment in maintaining the integrity of his or her model of reality, even in the face of disruptive change or disconfirming information. If the learner feels the valued aspects of his or her model have been rejected, discounted or simply ignored by others, particularly by a facilitator, her or his response may be to feel rejected, discounted or ignored as a person. In such cases, a learner is likely to withdraw from the learning situation. Clearly this issue must be of direct concern to readers' advisors, reference desk staff, and other front-line personnel.

The balance between change on the basis of new experience and nonchange as a form of self-protection is constantly in flux. The learning engaged in by most adults allows them to maintain integrity by modifying the meaning of incoming information so that the various components of their model of reality can remain congruent with each other. Such learning maintains the status quo with only minor adjustments in actual behavior. For example, when someone tells me I have done a task particularly well, I usually counter with, "Well, maybe, but I thought I could have done better." I have acknowledged the feedback but modified the meaning so I won't have to change my self-image.

However, some adults also go through a learning process referred to as perspective transformation. In this process past and current experiences are reinterpreted and meanings reorganized to allow for the
assimilation and accommodation of experiences which contradict existing meanings. This process leads to adaptation, to basic changes in the organizing model by which we make sense of experience and, usually, to changes in actual behavior. I can still recall the day I was forced to acknowledge, after seeing a videotape of my actions, that I certainly did look competent—a bit of feedback that I had been successfully modifying all my life. Note that this feedback only made an impression on me when I saw it for myself, the same way others had always seen me.

A facilitator of adult learning often feels rewarded when a learner makes a joyful discovery or changes important aspects of behavior. Therefore, learning to facilitate perspective transformations in others has the potential for offering the facilitator profound feelings of success and satisfaction.

A facilitator can be most helpful to an adult learner when the first step in the facilitating process acknowledges and indicates respect for the learner’s existing biography, self-identity, inner purpose and integrity and their attendant meanings and values (however inappropriate these may seem). When I go to a librarian for assistance, I feel good about myself when she or he appears to accept my identity as a self-directed learner who prefers to interpret information without assistance. When I am not given this opportunity, I feel my approach to learning has been discounted, my needs have gone unrecognized, and I have been rejected, at least in part, as a unique individual. I rarely go back to that librarian for help.

Our existing model of reality allows us to make sense of current experience on the basis of organized patterns of meaning. However, this same model also limits what we are likely to pay attention to and how we are likely to interpret what we see, hear or feel. There is an ongoing debate in the field of learning about whether we see (or hear) first and then interpret, or interpret first and then see. In reality, both processes proceed simultaneously. However, the process of giving an experience meaning first, and then gathering the information to confirm our expectations, seems to take precedence in the busy and sometimes stressful world of the average adult. To help an adult see (or hear) first and then interpret, we may need to help that adult find the time and space for quiet contemplation and self-reflection free from stress and ongoing novel experiences. We cannot assume that a library is the best place for such quiet activities, but the design of its overall environment should take this issue into account.

Our past experiences contribute to our learning strategies in other ways. The social meanings and values we all acquire, through the
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process of socialization, provide us with approved meanings and values for our roles in life. During professional training, librarians learn how to behave, what to value, and what terminology is most suitable for use in a library. These behaviors, values and meanings, plus the associated words, are useful in the library setting, but may not be understood or valued by persons in other settings, nor by library users. A library which values silence is not likely to facilitate the adult learner who learns best by talking to himself. And the librarian who tells the learner that "information on interlibrary loans" is "available on microfiche" and "the readers are next to the vertical files," may be speaking a foreign language as far as some adult learners are concerned. Every professional who acts as a facilitator for adult learning must be prepared to recognize her or his own jargon and to translate words with specialized meaning into the layperson's meanings.

Stress in Learning

Stress is a term which is applied to the behavioral response of an individual whose sense of survival or security is threatened at some level. The threat may be real or imagined, serious or minor. Anxiety is a stress-like response in which the threat remains unarticulated or unidentified. In all cases, the general response is similar, although the level of intensity varies. The individual's breathing becomes faster and shallower, blood pressure rises, physical and mental activity increases. Stress is an arousal response and also occurs when interest is heightened or emotions are aroused. An emotion is an arousal response which has been given meaning and value within the context of a specific situation. In all arousal responses, the physiological changes initially promote increasingly organized, effective and efficient behavior. As the level of intensity increases beyond the optimum level, arousal behavior becomes increasingly disorganized and is called distress.

In learning situations, the organized aspects of aroused behavior are characterized by increased attention and activity, enhanced interest and enthusiasm, and often increased levels of talking, laughing and coughing. Such behavior can be interpreted by an uninformed observer as child-like and the individual using it may be labeled as childish. An adult who is so labeled may withdraw from the learning situation because the label itself may be interpreted as a threat by the individual.

In learning situations, the disorganized aspects of arousal, or distress, are characterized by increased confusion, inattention, distorted perceptions, misinterpretations, declining activity levels, and deteriorating communication skills. The learner may focus exclusively on
one issue and ignore all others, even those which are essential to the content or skill being learned, or the problem being solved. Such behavior can be interpreted by an uninformed observer as disinterest, lack of motivation, apathy, or even stupidity. An adult who is so labeled will almost certainly withdraw from the learning situation.

Arousal is essential for learning. It can be increased up to and beyond the optimum level by uncertainty, novel situations, ambiguity, or information overload. A facilitator needs to be able to assess the learner's current arousal level (i.e., anxiety, stress or emotions) and have some awareness of how much additional information or ambiguity that person can absorb without becoming distressed. Front-line personnel in libraries can learn to identify the characteristics of aroused and distressed behavior and can use this information to improve their facilitating strategies. A facilitator can initially help the learner identify the cause of her or his distress; then alleviate the associated anxieties before trying to provide information. Often, learner anxiety is associated with the fear of being rejected for asking a question or needing help.

**Motivation**

Motivation is usually defined as a tendency to produce organized behaviors, strategies for action which are designed to orient the individual toward something, someone or some event. Action tendencies related to learning are similar to the personal styles described earlier. They are described in a wide variety of terms, such as approach/avoidance tendencies, internal/external locus of control, achievement/affiliation needs, and tendencies toward mastery, belonging and affection. That is, motivation, or action strategies, describe the ways in which the activity of learning, and its associated energy, is directed toward learning tasks; the apparent source of control over this energy; and the general goals which might exist in company with specific learning goals. The categories described above should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Most human behavior involves some degree of all action strategies.

The basic assumption in any explanation of motivation is that a healthy person is normally motivated and acts in accordance with her or his preferred action strategies. The learner does not need to be motivated by external measures. Therefore, as facilitators, our major concerns should be in two areas. First, we must avoid demotivating the learner by such approaches as discounting his self-identity, existing meanings, or personal perspective of reality; increasing her level of arousal through information overload; insisting on offering assistance in a style which is
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not in keeping with his preferences; and providing judgmental rather than descriptive feedback.

Second, we must ensure that we do not impose our own expectations about what constitutes appropriate motivation. Learners can be helped to redirect their action strategies so that the ways in which they use their existing energy become more effective. For example, a learner with strong tendencies toward belonging may need to be encouraged to read, not only as a solitary activity, but also as an activity which can contribute to the discussions of a reading group or book club.

Conditions Affecting Facilitation Processes

Each facilitator is as much a learner as the next person. Our major learning task, as facilitators, must be to learn about learners and the learning process. In carrying out this learning task, each facilitator uses the same types of activities and personal strategies as have already been described for learners.

In this article, I am (it is hoped) facilitating your learning about learners, through the medium of writing. I bring to this task the full weight of my past experience, through my own meanings and my personal learning styles and action strategies. Because the medium of the written word is not interactive, I must ensure that I describe my images as often as possible in your terms. Although I cannot interact directly with you, I have been interacting with the issue editor who reads my work, then suggests how I can simplify my jargon and provide library-related examples.

My point here is that to be a good facilitator, I must become knowledgable about my own meanings and values, styles and strategies, in addition to having the same understanding about the learners with whom I work. Only when I understand both sides of the learning-facilitating interaction can I determine ways to improve my facilitating strategies.

Within the learner-centered approach, I can distinguish three basic strategies for facilitating adult learning in library settings. I have labeled these the directing, enabling and collaborating strategies. All require back-up services in the form of extensive resource collections; all are time-consuming and labor-intensive.

The Directing Strategy

In the directing strategy, library services would essentially be reactive in that front-line personnel would respond to learner requests that
are specific in terms of the content (knowledge or skill) to be learned. In this strategy, librarians would have a low involvement in the learner’s process of learning but a high involvement in the content to be learned. Librarians would serve as question-answerers, prescribe the best information sources available, and do research on behalf of the user. The answers provided would, as far as possible, be in the learner’s preferred format.

My assumptions about the consequences of this strategy are that the librarian would learn a great deal about the content and that the learner might get an answer which made sense in the context of his/her learning needs. This strategy would also provide the librarian with feedback about the quality of the answers provided. In this way, the librarian would have an opportunity to feel both successful and helpful—human needs which tend to be pronounced among service-providers.

The Enabling Strategy

In the enabling strategy, library services would be designed to be responsive to learner requests for assistance in the various phases of learning or problem solving. The learner might not be able to ask for answers to specific questions; and might need help in articulating experiences and clarifying meanings, in obtaining sufficient information to determine relevant patterns of meaning, and in interacting with others to get feedback about alternative ideas or tentative plans. Libraries would offer one-to-one learning facilitation services. The learning needs of specific groups of learners might be anticipated and specially designed courses offered such as writing term papers, conducting library research, or searching electronic information networks. Librarians would serve as facilitators with a high involvement in the learning processes of users and low involvement in the content to be learned. Librarians would need to be well trained in the use of facilitating and counseling skills.

My assumptions about the consequences of this strategy are that the learner would receive competent assistance in conducting his/her own learning activities, but the librarians might never receive direct feedback on the adequacy of their facilitating activities. Without such feedback, librarians might feel doubtful about how helpful they had been and become discouraged.

The Collaborating Strategy

In the collaborating strategy, library services would be organized so that librarians could become co-learners when working with individual
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users and co-developers in planning and implementing learning programs or courses for various groups of learners. Librarians would need to be well trained in both facilitating and counseling skills, as well as in consulting and program design skills. Libraries would become centers for activities in which personnel would be directly involved. Librarians would have a high degree of involvement in learning processes—both their own and those of library users—and high involvement in the content to be learned.

My assumptions about the consequences of this strategy are that learners would obtain effective services for facilitating their own learning, and that librarians would receive satisfying levels of feedback about their contributions to learning activities in general. The energy generated both within the library and among learners and librarians would contribute to the further expansion of library services of this type.

The choice of library strategies is partly a function of the meanings, values, skills, and styles relevant to adult learning, held by librarians; and partly a function of the identified learning needs and styles of individual library users. This article will have achieved its goal if it raises awareness about the uniqueness of individual learners, promotes reflection on the interrelationships among libraries, librarians and library users, and contributes to informed decision making about library services.

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North York Library-Based Adult Learner Services: An Evaluative Case Study

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Discussions about adult learner services of the North York (Ontario) Public Library often elicit both surprise and interest from librarians and adult educators alike—surprise at the extent of those services, and interest in their management, particularly in relation to staff and budget constraints. This discussion has three parts: historical review of North York Public Library’s development of adult services; an evaluative look at present services; and an indication of future trends.

Supporting the discussion are two main themes. One is the dilemma of the public library regarding the degree to which it can and should be proactive rather than reactive. Institutions, especially public service institutions, are usually reactive; of necessity, the gap between a need and its eventual fulfillment is often considerable. The public library is no exception. The second theme is the importance of holding a learner-centered view in the provision of adult learner services. The implementation of such a view is often compromised by the lack of time available to engage in the processes required to ensure the highest quality of service. The pressures on staff who directly carry out those services often threaten their ability to do other than what is expedient. In such instances, the result is a choice between compromising the processes or not offering the program or service at all.

It is important to clarify our practical approach to developing services. Although some services develop according to an orderly

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sequence of activities (needs identification, goals and objectives clarification, and so on to evaluation, which produces yet another set of needs), most of what occurs is reactive and ad hoc. For example, a staff member may have a personal interest and promote it until it becomes a service or a program; an interesting resource person may walk through the door; a concern may revolve around an underused part of the collection—how can we highlight it? It may be felt that libraries should feature Canadian authors; or a government agency may advertise the availability of grant funds for projects. New programs and services are often born using rather pragmatic and opportunistic approaches.

The use of the terms *programs* and *services* in this article should be clarified. Usually, service refers to an ongoing activity of the library system, whether carried out by specialists, by all members of staff, or by volunteers. For example, home visits to shut-ins are a service. Program refers to an activity or event having a beginning and an end, such as a program on nuclear disarmament. Programs may be conducted by staff or by outside resource persons in collaboration with staff. Thus, a three-part series on "Law and the Layman" is a program, but North York Public Library's operation of over one thousand programs per year is a service.

**Historical Review**

As with any library system, North York's uniqueness lies in the particular range of services offered, in the structure for offering those services, and in the level of development of certain services. Choices and decisions have mostly occurred as a reaction, a response to visible community demand or to felt or observed needs, but have been influenced or restricted by whatever priorities were established by the administration and board at any given time. Community demands and needs are, of course, particular to the population.

North York is the fifth largest city in Canada, with a population of 560,000 in an area of approximately sixty-nine square miles. It is part of the Metropolitan Toronto region of over two million people. Economic levels vary from extreme wealth to very poor "inner city" sections, and its large ethnic population includes Italians, Jamaicans, Chinese, and Jews.

The North York Public Library System is the second largest library system in Canada, surpassed only by the Toronto Public Library. Thirty-five years old in 1982, the library system consists of twenty branches and appropriate back-up services. There are over a million
items in the system and circulation was over 4 million in 1981.\textsuperscript{1} The library employs 360 full-time and part-time staff and has a budget of well over $13 million. Well funded from a municipal tax base, the library provides a multitude of services.

Traditionally, libraries have always played an important role in the field of adult education. North York Public Library's continuing commitment to adult learning is reflected in the amount of resources purchased for adult education, in the attitude of staff and board members, and in its programs and services. In 1963, the library hired a director who had a very strong personal commitment to adult education. One year after his appointment he held a series of Town Hall meetings. This lecture series was not new in the library world, but in a rapidly growing community, with few entertainment and meeting places other than churches or schools, it proved to be very successful. Large crowds came to the library for discussions on such topics as education, law, medicine, and values. The development of cultural facilities in the community did not keep pace with the rapid growth in population. Until 1967, there was only one motion picture theater in all of North York, one swimming pool, and limited entertainment for adults. The library Town Hall lectures acted as a catalyst for further programs, such as traditional poetry readings and authors' evenings in the main branches of the library system. Stimulated by these successes, the branch libraries began planning their own successful evening programs, which led to further experimentation with daytime programs such as crafts for mothers, music for preschool children, and a variety of book discussion and film programs during the day and in the evening.

In 1966, the library established a new department of Community Services, headed by a librarian who directed audiovisual, publicity and programs departments. A year later, and with a rapid expansion of services, a second librarian was hired to plan and coordinate programs and publicity. A second artist and a full-time printer were also hired to cope with the increasing publicity demanded by the operations of the department.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s a distinct trend in the adult education field affected the library. More people were realizing that they could begin to complete their unfinished academic degrees at their own speed and at times convenient to them. This was particularly true for many women who earlier had traded their education for marriage and family, but, with children growing up, were now ready to renew their education. Other women appeared to need a transition between home and career. A six-week afternoon lecture series in 1967 on topics such as
personal and career development, health and public affairs initially attracted over two hundred and fifty women, and continued to attract high registrations for quite a few years. By 1975, the need for this intermediate kind of learning appeared to have declined, and the series ended in 1976. Many women credited the course with helping them make major life decisions. Later, as they came to our offices to discuss their educational and career goals, we provided information, suggestions, and psychological support.

The library responded to these education trends by reorganizing. In 1972 three new departments—Audio-Visual, Publicity, and Adult Education—were established, and the old Community Services Department disbanded. This was the first time a department of adult education had been established in any library in Canada. It was given a specific budget, a staff (a librarian and a secretary), and two major roles: the coordination and, in many instances, planning of programs offered by the North York Public Library, and community outreach.

In relation to the first role, a centralized process was established whereby the Adult Education Department approved and coordinated any program for the whole system. Over 350 of these were implemented after being assessed against specified content and budgetary criteria. The department also coordinated the work of the branch that offered the program with the work of other system components. Ideas for programs came from the public or from individual libraries staging the programs. Their librarians went into the community, talked to clients, and identified the types of programs wanted in local libraries. This community outreach had very positive results for the staff: they were able to meet small businessmen and other significant community people, spread publicity about the public library, introduce the surrounding community to the library, and meet people who never came to the library. Librarians could show people that they were not intimidating professionals, but were part of the community. The library system also benefited with increased library usage, new ideas for programs, help with more appropriate book selections, and important political contacts which helped gain support for library budgets. But there were some negative outcomes: outreach took time, and it meant that librarians were taken away from other tasks. False client expectations were raised: it was impossible to carry out all the suggestions and some clients were consequently disappointed.

A second type of outreach activity was the identification of existing education programs and the unmet needs of the community. North York was experiencing significant changes in the provision of adult
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education. In 1959 York University had opened. It was the first university to be established beyond downtown Toronto, but still within the metropolitan boundaries. A community college opened in 1967, one of the first of many such colleges throughout Ontario. In addition, the North York Board of Education began offering at very reasonable rates a large number of credit and noncredit night-school courses. The Parks and Recreation Department began building arenas, skating rinks, and community halls, and began programming for adults, although on a very limited scale. Not only was the educational field rapidly developing, but all of the social service agencies were growing as well. Hospitals, family services, department of health offices, and clinical services, were spreading throughout the borough.

This increasing number of agencies and services was the major factor in the formation of a new organization, the North York Inter-Agency Council, set up to allow easier access to information for all the institutions. The head of the library's Adult Education Department became the first elected secretary, and she provided resources that helped the growth of the council. Books, magazines, films, meeting space, and her adult education programming skills were used extensively. Special programs for adults, sponsored by the council, helped the council to better understand its role in the community and to gather relevant information about important community issues.

Parallel to this increase in group adult education programs was the growing need for everyday survival and coping information for individual adults. Largely owing to the librarian's involvement in the Inter-Agency Council, a new service was instituted in the library. LINK Community Information and Referral Service was established in 1971 as a joint cooperative project of the North York Board of Education. Essentially, it is a drop-in and phone-in community information and referral service. LINK was housed in the library under the supervision of the head of the Adult Education Department. A coordinator was hired and helped set up a volunteer service. LINK has since become an integral part of the North York Public Library service and the North York community, and is the second largest community information center in Metro Toronto. At present it operates with one coordinator and a part-time secretary, and approximately thirty-two volunteers. Each year LINK answers over 12,000 calls: these include educational inquiries about available courses, questions on recreational and social matters, consumerism, day care, and requests for social and governmental services available in the borough. A registry helps students find odd jobs or babysitting. The Snow Shovelling Project is run in cooperation
with the Department of Correctional Services and the City of North York. LINK also maintains special files for all types of services available to senior citizens in Metro Toronto. The quality and popularity of this service depends largely on its corps of dedicated volunteers. They undertake a twelve month commitment and receive a six-week training course. Their work is assessed in annual evaluations; they produce their own newsletter, and have a strong voice in the operation of the department.

This close relationship of library and community has been reflected in the other activities of the head of the Adult Education Department. The department head's studies in graduate adult education courses enabled her to develop training workshops for library staff running public service programs. She pioneered the establishment of the North York Continuing Education Council in 1973, which was set up to avoid duplication of courses and haphazard planning. The council included representatives from York University, the local board of education, the Parks and Recreation Department, the YMCA, the YMHA, Seneca College, and the North York Public Library. The council meets regularly, and the library still plays a vital role.

In 1976, another significant staff development occurred. For the first time in its history, the library hired a professional adult educator, a graduate who was not a librarian. Both the library board and the union approved this appointment. The educator was responsible for planning all library programs and activities relevant to local community interests; maintaining contact with public and social agencies, other library systems, and municipal government staff; and training library staff (at all levels) in adult education programming skills. This was also the first time in Canada that an adult educator had been hired in a professional category equivalent to that of a librarian.

Recent Service Trends

From 1973 to 1979 there was a period of real growth for the Adult Education Department. Programs increased from 324 in 1973 to over 1000 in 1979. Program formats included one-night lectures, lecture series, discussion groups, courses (some cosponsored and offering college credit), and leisure classes. The department was responsible for the planning and budgeting of all major library programs; the coordination of all programs taking place in all the North York Public Library branches; the room rentals of all auditoriums and theaters in the North York Public Library System; the supervision of LINK Information and
Referral Services; and any miscellaneous items related to the adult education field, such as staff workshops, periodical submissions, and lectures at other libraries. The entire program was growing so rapidly that the staff of three and one-half people was very soon fully occupied with day-to-day responsibilities, and had very little time for research and long-range planning.

Departmental skills included those of librarianship, adult education, and volunteer recruitment and management. Library staff were trained, on a one-to-one basis and in groups, to use procedures and skills needed for determining program needs and for implementing programs. Additional staff training has since dealt with specialist topics such as coping with clients who express anger or talk down to staff, and coping with clients of diverse cultural backgrounds. The department also continues to offer professional development workshops for part-time teachers, mostly dealing with the relationship between adult education theory and the use of library resources.

One example of programming that we considered innovative in relation to the independent adult learner was a university credit course in Canadian literature, which we cosponsored with Ryerson Open College (a distance-learning institution). This course required a large amount of work and money from both sponsoring agencies, and registered twenty-four people. In retrospect, if the library had not been involved with hundreds of other small programs, it might have been able to attract more registrants for this one. However, the program was an example of library response to a certain level of community demand. Eight people finished the course; to some this would appear to be a failure, but we considered it a relatively successful pilot venture.

In 1979 two existing services were added to the Adult Education Department. The Shut-In Service delivered books and talking books to the disabled or elderly. Currently, this service maintains book deposits in twelve senior-citizen and nursing-home locations, and delivers books to over 200 individual homes. The service needs more than the two full-time staff it has, and in a time of budgetary constraints the use of volunteers is being investigated. The Mobile Outreach Service was similar: programs were taken to those who were unable to come to the library. Since its inception, it has undergone a radical reassessment of its service assumptions. In the early days of the service, its craft and film programs depended heavily on the initiative, planning and expertise of library staff. When the Adult Education Department took over the services, adult learners were encouraged to plan their own programs and share in program delivery procedures. Library-based staff became
resource people or facilitators. Craft programs became active and often intense learning experiences, rather than being therapeutic or social visits from the library staff. This example of client growth through trust and self-directedness benefited the client, and, because the library did not need as many staff to operate the service, staff numbers were halved without any reduction in quality. Mobile Outreach staff now work closely with public-health nurses and physical therapists to design appropriate programs and resources for sick people. The service also takes programs to children and adults living in culturally deprived areas and who would not normally use library-based resources. This has been a recent expansion of service. With a special provincial government grant, a children’s reading club was started in summer 1980. We are convinced that the club’s popularity has been based on our trust in the children to use the books as they wish, and to take the initiative in being self-directing learners.

The addition of these services, particularly that of Mobile Outreach, was a natural progression. The Adult Education Department contributed an expertise which helped the service develop program, organizational and communication skills and facilities, and more closely connect the learning needs of the clients to the resource collections.

Further service consolidation occurred in 1982 when the Adult Education Department was merged with the Publicity and Public Relations Department to be called Public Relations and Programs. At the same time, LINK, Mobile Outreach, and Shut-In Services were transferred to other parts of the system. Time and skillful assessment will be needed to measure the impact of this administrative decision.

**Other Current Services**

Worth mentioning in this adult learner context are programs in school upgrading, immigrant orientation, literacy, and teacher training. Each has shown how library services can model some of the known principles and conditions of adult learning, and each has enhanced the development of library staff as well as the more talked about growth and learning of library clients. In cooperation with the North York Board of Education, the library runs a very successful program for up to sixty adults who need their eighth grade diplomas. Learners follow their own schedules and drop in when it suits them. They clearly appreciate using this very nontraditional and friendly learning environment. English as a second language classes, begun in 1977, continue to be successful, and
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are related closely to library-based orientation sessions for new immigrants, telephone tutoring, and citizenship classes. A literacy program has been established and is supervised by a literacy expert: North York was the first public library in Canada to hire such a person as a member of the library staff. Hundreds of volunteer tutors have been trained to work on a one-to-one basis with adult learners, and the summer of 1982 saw the introduction of computer-based literacy learning. Teacher training workshops for teachers hired by the library are held once a year by the adult educator on staff. Not only does this ensure that resources are used appropriately, and that teachers are further sensitized to library services and attitudes, but it also ensures some degree of quality control, in that the teachers are helped to develop appropriate methods for helping adults learn effectively. One very special project stemming out of the International Year of Disabled Persons not only made library staff aware of the needs of disabled clients, but also enabled five handicapped people to take an active part in planning revisions to library programs and physical facilities. Members of the project staff researched and reported on library services, and underwent training to help them enter the work force. Two of the five project people are now working for the library. Changing social and economic conditions are altering the nature of many programs presently offered by the new Public Relations and Programs Department. Currently the most popular topics include legal matters, business and computers, and how to get a job, do your own repairs, write a résumé, cook for one, and operate your home computer.

All the key developments and services reviewed have depended and continue to depend on two levels of administrative structures and a reasonably defined philosophy about adult learners and learning. Library-based adult learning programming at North York is decentralized in the sense that staff at the branch level select and implement local programs but keep in close touch with the central office. Staff encourage their clients to be involved in the planning and staging of programs and to act as volunteer resource people for other special programs. The central office acts in a supportive role for branch libraries: finding resource people, clarifying ideas and program objectives, training staff in procedures and programming, advising staff and (where necessary) working directly with staff. When a client comes to the central office with ideas about programs, he or she is connected with branch staff so that appropriate action can occur with minimum delay.

Our philosophy about adult learner services is guided by a learner-centered view. We assume that to be self-directing is a natural or intrin-
sic adult psychological drive, and that its development can be encouraged. Our emphasis is on client participation in program planning and implementation. We assume that adult learner services should be holistic; services should be based on the recognition that learners may present a variety of learning needs simultaneously and therefore require a variety of options and resources. Library branch staff are continually reminded to relate and integrate programs and resources, not to present them in isolated displays or classes. We also acknowledge the fact that adults have very individual and preferred learning styles. Not all our clients learn best from books or from activities such as solitary reading. Deliberate efforts are made to collect multiformat resources and to plan group as well as individual learning programs. Experts are used to give lectures not only because their presentation style best suits the auditory learner, but also because experts are often the best resource for up-to-the-minute or fugitive information. We recognize that psychologically safe climates are essential for effective adult learning, so considerable emphasis is placed on designing friendly and open learning activities using attractive facilities.

Our theoretical approach seems to echo Reilly's notion of "responsive outreach," where the professional considers "what can be done for people and [creates] feasible methods of instituting and publicizing effective programs of service." But our theory does not always become our practice. We cannot cite enough concrete examples of helping learners to become self-directing. We know that some programs are conducted as if the library were nothing more than a building; we suspect that some teachers have built up a personal following that belies the principle of increasing the independence of the learner; and there are recipients of home visits who have not really taken their learning into their own hands. We notice some but not many language class graduates joining craft and other programs. Our learner-centered goals lack the consistent application needed in learners' advisory services. While we want to encourage our learners to become more skilled in their learning processes and evaluation, we do not measure the effectiveness of our role in that aim, and we would not presume to try to assess the learners' outcomes for them.

Current Issues

While the library system has a long tradition of soundly planned programs and innovative services, its continuing practice and future development face serious internal and external change and constraints.
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Despite the proven popularity and relevance of past programs, budget constraints in 1982 required that services to adults be reduced by 20 percent, in effect canceling 200 programs out of the 1000 or more offered. A combination of tight budgets and the apparently innate conservatism of library boards has also affected North York. Library staff have had to counter arguments that "school should be left to the schools, and social activity to the social agencies." They had to defend their involvement in school upgrading programs, but in the process won significant support from learners and teachers alike. The innovative and streamlined activities of the Mobile Outreach unit have faced some erosion and translation into more traditional library services. Visits to individuals have been reduced, and there is increasing reliance on the use of volunteers as a solution to staffing problems. We have proved in the past that well-trained and well-cared-for volunteers are a definite asset, but will the outreach unit be declared dead if a volunteer cadre cannot be developed?

The LINK Community Information and Referral Service is often challenged by some board members who question whether it has exceeded its mandate. Because it is an important and politically active service, it continues to thrive, but it could easily become a reduced reference-desk service in the library if the board sees its role as too activist.

While diminishing resources and conservative attitudes create internal constraints, changing political, social and economic realities create external constraints. North York is faced with inflation, rising energy costs, rising unemployment, and a very diverse population. Unlike the old social majority, a fairly homogeneous group, the new social majority is composed of minorities that include "women in the labour force; increasing numbers of children...with special social and learning needs...women at home alone, full time, with few supports, raising children on deprivation incomes; increasing numbers of elderly, including isolated and dependent aged, in need of home support and community services....recent immigrants....unemployed...men and women (over age 25) with or without family responsibilities; households without an automobile, or with one automobile, whose residents are transit dependent; [and] divorced or separated household heads, without children, alone or in adult relationships."8

No social change is more evident or more significant to adult learner services in the 1980s than the fact that the baby-boomers have grown up. Out of school, in their early thirties, and confronting the system with their expectations of an affluent lifestyle, they challenge social institutions to meet their needs and to meet the needs of others. They can become a creative force in reshaping those institutions as they
move into responsible career posts. If current trends continue, there will be a decline in overall population that does not suggest fewer households, but fewer children and more elderly people. There will be significant public costs involved in providing income and community services to maintain independent living patterns for the elderly. The responsibility for financing these programs would be assumed by a smaller proportion of households having working-age adults. There are also dependent groups of people in noninstitutional forms of residential living. Although the number of children will decline, the costs of education will probably rise because of factors such as fixed overhead costs and more senior teachers drawing larger salaries.

Meeting needs arising from a changed social reality depends on the cooperation of four levels of government. Although North York has become a city in its own right, it cannot be seen outside the context of Metropolitan Toronto, an entity that embraces two cities and four boroughs. Thus, whatever response North York makes to its vastly changed social reality will affect and be affected by decisions on the Metro level as well. In addition, many of the needs being uncovered are those that depend on provincial and local government initiatives. The political reality for the library is a complicated one. So far, the attention of the North York Public Libraries has focused on the municipal and Metro [Toronto] levels of government. The board of directors and staff are becoming more political. In terms of specific project grants, staff have become more aware during the past year or two of federal and provincial policies and mandates. These are just some of the new needs facing North York in a time of government spending restraints. At present, North York seems to be at a crossroads. It remains to be seen whether planned intervention will redirect the trend of a declining population or whether "changes in the age structure of the labour force could influence the forms of economic development which take place in Metro, and the commercial assessment base upon which local government depends."

These points highlight some of the political, social and economic realities in North York, but they are certainly not unique to that community. They present issues that become increasingly complicated because of their interrelationships (see fig. 1). They suggest an increasingly collaborative role for service delivery agencies so that they can respond more effectively to the specialized needs of a multicultural population. The library system is not immune to this trend. A recent study on suburban development indicated expanded roles for the library system in its recommendations:
That multiple uses be introduced into suburban school, recreation, library, and church facilities...to provide alternative places to commercial plazas for social contact and casual activity...this would include amenities such as indoor eating and conversation areas; convenience and specialty outlets; activity lounges; compact parks, garden allotments, tot lots, outdoor information and performance areas.

That suburban libraries will become important community centres for information, self-directed learning, and support in the eighties; that they [the libraries] conduct a major review to re-assess service objectives and strategies developed in the early sixties.13

Figure 1 shows the change in library-based service planning and programs from the 1950s to the present, as these were related to the structure of the municipality. It also presents some trends in programming and services as governing structures become more collaborative.

Assessing Present Conditions

The first two recommendations suggest a broad framework for evaluating present services. Other planks in that framework include the right of disabled persons to integration into community life, the relationship of library services to technological development, and the satisfaction of minority group and individual needs. How does an institution like the library, which is basically reactive, balance consideration for the individual with the demands of a heterogeneous society? Is a learner-centered view lost in adaptation to changes and constraints? In terms of the recommendations referred to above, the answer is no. But whether that theoretical view is modeled in future services is another question.

What does this all mean to the individual learner who wants to use library services? In most cases, individuals do not have the leadership or the resources to "fight city hall." In particular, those people who need and use library-based services are often the least able to organize themselves and complain effectively. They need advocates who operate at senior administrative levels and who are not restricted by unnecessary or inappropriate conservative attitudes. One strategy for working with the problem of conservative attitudes would be for librarians to examine the process by which board members are chosen, and to seek out and encourage people who are well-informed on community issues and social trends to become members of the board. Another possible approach would be to further educate the board members about the importance of service to the self-directed learner. Such attempts should
stress that in economically tight times, the tendency for many institutions is to base survival strategies on a restricted view of needs and traditional services, rather than on needs emerging from a changing clientele during changing times.

While conservative attitudes can be modified through learning, and while predictions about a library's survival can be based on careful
assessment of reactive and proactive forces, the past performances of library services can be weighed to assess likely success factors. On the whole, we argue that our programs have been successful. Some of the factors that made them successful are:

1. a demonstrated need for information;
2. location (twenty libraries within easy access to all neighborhoods);
3. leadership (librarians with commitment);
4. lobbying (board members who are able to assist in obtaining adequate funding for adult education programs);
5. flexible response (various modes of presentation of information);
6. internal quality control (ability of librarian and adult educator to discuss and choose best possible resources for clients);
7. encouraging self-directedness in the clients;
8. training of staff (breadth of skills and experience represented in the adult education department, and its training of library staff and outside resource personnel); and
9. accountability (emphasis on branch library accountability to the learner, reinforced by the central adult education department).

Trends for the Next Five Years

Over the next five years we expect to see several key trends become more significant in the development (or even maintenance) of library-based services to adult learners.

Skilled, Proactive Learners

We must accept the primary but difficult task of accessing and presenting pertinent information to the client; but, more important, our skills must also be used to help learners access and use information themselves. The role of the librarian in this context changes from being directive and supply-oriented to one that is more collaborative and explanatory.

Library-Based Leadership

Once again, we must decide whether to play a reactive or proactive role. Can we anticipate future needs and begin to expand them before they are in general demand? If we continue to be predominantly reactive, we may find ourselves out of a job.

Community Lobbying

If budgets are to be slashed by elected representatives, we must collaborate with library boards to organize strong proactive lobbies to
Financial Accountability

Accountability is a difficult problem, especially when its theory demands specific and accurate responses to diverse social minorities in a borough population. Library services have to be perceived by the clients as useful and as justifying the expenditure of large sums of public money, but their critical assessment will be restricted if clients see library services confined within four walls, or do not expect very much of library services. Like any other professional group, librarians need critical and informed clients to keep them on their professional toes.

Identifying key trends in the abstract is all very well, but translation into practical scenarios may be more useful. Given the changing conditions of the library’s external environment, the community, and its internal attitudes and methods of adaptation to change, it would be tempting to draw a negative scenario—for example, one that indicates a poor prognosis. But we prefer to work toward a more vigorous state of health and a scenario that models the personal growth and development inherent in adult learning. This more positive scenario depends administratively on the library assuming a collaborative stance with other service agencies in the city. This collaborative model could permit cost savings within agencies and organizations. The first steps were evident in 1982 as the North York library and the city of North York began to explore the possible merging of their accounting and purchasing functions, and computer handling of room bookings. Duplication of effort might also be reduced by this kind of merging. Relieved of some housekeeping efforts, the library could concentrate on developing the old-style reader’s advisory service into one with broader characteristics. Librarians could become instrumental in helping adult members of the public adjust to the new technology by introducing it to them as another tool for learning. Although developing the learner’s advisory role would require considerable staff training, the benefits would be tangible to learner and library alike. The library client could have access to a more holistic range of services and be more aware of the value of the library, and in the process become a more discriminating client. Accountability to the learner could be much more direct and obvious, self-directed learning skills enhanced, and public support strengthened. The library could increase its proactive role in the community and play a major role in integrating the new social majority.

Such a growth and development model will depend on a continuous process of clarifying assumptions and establishing specific service
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objectives. The nature of adult learning and its relationships to library-based services will need greater understanding. Services will need to be situation-specific and will require a joint effort by client and librarian. If the 1970s was "the decade of the adult learner," the 1980s present significant challenges in terms of responses from adult educators.

References

9. Ibid., p. 245.
13. Social Planning Council, Metro's Suburbs, Part II, pp. S4-S5. (Additional implications arise in other parts of the study. For example, the stated need for information to be made accessible in several languages to meet the needs of immigrants affects library decisions around its role as an information resource to the public.)
Internal Considerations in Support of Library Adult Learners' Services

LOIS D. FLEMING

The Modern Library administrator, committed to the library's involvement as an active partner in the community's formulation of educational services for the adult learner, faces some difficult and opposing dilemmas.

On one point is the need for financial retrenchment, and on the other is the increasing demand of the adult trying determinedly to find the human and material resources to continue the learning processes. On one point is the governing unit's questioning of the library's involvement in the educational process, and on the other point is the library staff's questioning of the same involvement. On one point is the awareness of the burgeoning field of information technology that portends a restructuring of public library services and priorities, and on the other point, recent library school graduates steeped in the "traditionalist" world of library service (but with the ability to perform a computerized data search).

Somewhere in this maelstrom of conflicting needs and opinions, facts are being lost or ignored. These facts are: (1) our society is becoming older and better educated; (2) adults in our society look to continuing education as a normal element of adult life; (3) adult illiteracy is still a major national problem; (4) the improved physical health of adults enables them to seek second career instructional opportunities after retirement; (5) current unemployment rates are forcing working age adults to seek retraining to survive; (6) the middle-aged homemaker, with grown children or a spouse, voluntarily or involuntarily absent, is

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seeking training to develop employment skills; and (7) with the development of various educational agencies in cities and communities, there is a distinct possibility that if public libraries do not more actively assert their roles and functions for adult learners, then some other agency certainly will, relegating the library to an archival function.

Public libraries are in the business of serving the adult learner, whether they know it or not, in a multitude of ways under the broad banner of public library adult services. The librarian who vehemently denies the role of educator is going to have to redefine the librarian’s function.

It is forecasted that the number of adult learners will continue to increase over the next two decades; it is time for the library profession to end its internal argument over its responsibility to the adult learner. Once this debate ceases, the profession can direct its full attention to the important task of structuring relevant and continuing services. The two major roadblocks to the development of these services are found within the profession: the library administrator, and the library staff member whose service philosophy separates service to the adult learner from the general provision of information services.

This separation creates an unjustifiable dichotomy: on the one hand, information services are provided to anyone requesting them in person or by telephone; on the other hand, there is a hesitancy to provide the information and resource assistance to the adult with an expressed need to learn about an identified topic. True, certain skills and competencies are needed for working with the adult learner, but the essence of the two services is the same. The differences between the reference interview, or the reader's advisory interview, and the educational counseling interview are differences in time and depth.

Library administrators often tend to use a lack of skilled staff, or a lack of funds to hire them, as explanation or justification for relatively passive or restricted services. In times of financial retrenchment, that defense strikes a sympathetic chord in all library administrators. But a more useful approach would be a critical assessment of existing resources and skills, in both community and library, in order to judge the extent to which services can be proactive and collaborative. It is at this point that the library administrator’s commitment to the philosophy of the public library as an important community educational institution becomes most obvious. Without the top administrator’s leadership, the internal development of adult services will remain unrealized.

The second formidable obstacle to a successful development of adult learners' services is the staff member who does not feel that the role
of educator is appropriate to a librarian. He or she may be content to carry out reader’s advisory or reference work within a traditional perspective, without having the intellectual support or conviction of a wider view of the relationship of that work to the process of adult learning. The fact that these staff members are performing educational tasks as they help their community clients learn to use library resources does not change their perceptions of their current library functions.

Weingand found in her futuristic Delphi study that the participating panel viewed as very high the probability of the redefinition of the library’s goals, role, function, and image to reflect the commitment to lifelong learning. The panel also felt that this redefinition, though aided by some library workers and adult educators, would be hindered by other library workers.¹ The resolution of the conflict in work roles perceived by staff is a key issue for the future and must be addressed in any plans that library administrators formulate to provide adult learners’ services.

This article cannot deal exclusively with commitment and staff attitude factors; rather, it has to include them in a wider framework of factors which as experience indicates, are critical in the effective management of library-based services for adult learners. This framework can support and confirm whatever existing commitment exists; and it can also help to provide a management climate and resource base that will encourage sound development and lateral innovation.

The long and variously successful history of public-library involvement with informal and formal adult learner services has taught librarians many things—sometimes after rather stressful experiences. Reflection on immediate management experience enables revision of principles and the development of new or expanded applications of those principles within carefully defined contexts. In short, library administrators often stop doing more of the same and instead change their tactics and strategies, using a revised overarching conceptual framework. This article reviews past experience by implication, and renews the case for a framework of factors and principles considered essential for the internal management of library-based adult learner services.

Trends are implicit in this summary—and these will affect libraries variously, according to their individual contexts. The challenge will be to develop sophisticated political skills and flexible management procedures to work with learners and agencies rather than for them. Five key components of this management framework deserve attention: planning; staffing; coordinating, both within the library and within the community; budgeting; and evaluation.
Skillful use of these management tools, however obvious in theory, needs balancing in practice by some administrative boldness and creativity if the profession is to resolve any of the issues listed earlier. Much of the following discussion is based on the assumption that only a sophisticated use of the five factors in combination, based on a learner-needs perspective, will help the public library be more adaptive than it has been in the past. Given the present economic conditions and many prevailing professional attitudes, that is a tall order, but we cannot continue to use reduced funding and fixed work roles as safe reasons for minimal involvement with adult leaners.

Planning

Martin states in the preface to Phinney’s five case studies of library adult education programs that “an effective adult education program grows individually and directly from its particular setting.” To examine this setting, and to help in assessing the need for library services to adult learners, some form of community evaluation or survey should be conducted. As more public libraries implement A Planning Process for Public Libraries, this kind of information can be gathered. A needs assessment can also be done informally, if the library administrator and the staff are highly involved in the life of the community, and if communication has begun with groups such as the adult education departments of local school systems, extension departments of community or junior colleges, colleges and universities, local literacy groups, museums, and other library agencies.

Much has been written about the formal community survey process. The library administrator, before undertaking an in-depth community assessment, would be reminded that a great deal of important information can be found in most communities if a search is made. Local educational agencies and other governmental and community agencies will often have conducted studies pertinent to the library’s planning. State departments of education and state health and rehabilitative service agencies can also provide important information on the needs of adults seeking instructional programs.

The information gained from such formal and informal inquiry will form the basis for the identification of the library’s role in the community’s educational picture. This role may be as an initiator of programs, or as a coordinator/cooperator in the community development of adult learning programs. Role identification also will be based on the evaluation of the library’s capability to support such a role; that is the next step in the planning process.
**Internal Considerations**

Client demographic profiles need to be identified and continually checked. The extent and effectiveness of current services has to be assessed against specific criteria (as learner-centered as possible), as do the levels and formats of resources. The levels of funding need monitoring and their sources need further exploration, especially those that are alternative or nontraditional. Even the physical facilities of the main library and its branches will require assessment from a new perspective. For example, trends toward collaborative services mean that libraries may have to share space with other agencies for cooperative programs.

These and many other issues must be resolved before the library administrator can proceed with the development of goals and objectives for the service. The service priorities of the library must be critically evaluated in the context of their current effectiveness, their cost efficiency, and future community demands and needs.

Experience has too often shown that enthusiasm can overcome a careful analysis of the library's capability to successfully sustain an adult learners' service. One of the exciting attributes of committed library administrators is an eagerness to get on with the business of providing this service. But the failure to evaluate fully the library's current service demands and its budget and personnel limitations and failure to set service priorities can scuttle the service before it has an opportunity to demonstrate its worth. The stimulation of community response beyond the point where the budget, the personnel and the materials can be expanded fast enough to meet the community demand can force the library into the embarrassing position of having to renege on its promise to the community. "In moderation, such a failure may serve as evidence of the need for additional funds, but care and judgment are needed to avoid outrunning the community's ability or willingness to pay for services, or the library's readiness to provide them."5

After careful evaluation of the community's need for adult learning services and the library's capability to support them, realistic goals and objectives must be established. Here, again, much has been written in the literature on the formulation of library services goals and objectives.6 Figure 1 illustrates a model of the goal development process. This is perhaps the most difficult of the planning elements. Service objectives that are measurable must be developed because it will be upon these objectives that the performance measurements will be built. These objectives may change as the implementation of the services proceeds, a point that can be unconsciously or deliberately ignored. New factors will emerge that will have an influence on the development of the services. The plan for services that results from the definition of goals
and objectives will provide the guidelines by which service progress and goal attainment can be measured. In the plan, both time elements and financial considerations specific to certain objectives should be detailed. Alternative funding possibilities for specific objectives should also be included.

![Diagram of Levels of Goals and Objectives Specification]

**Fig. 1. Levels of Goals and Objectives Specification**


**Staffing**

Part of the library's evaluation of its potential to provide service for the adult learner will be the assessment of staff competencies and attitudes. It has been noted that negative staff attitudes toward the educational functions of the resource facilitator can be a definite hindrance to the effective development of appropriate services, as well as a barrier in learner/library staff interactions.

The College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) found, during the series of surveys done before beginning the Adult Independent Learning Project study, that
the existing situation in the public library does not emphasize or is not geared to the provision of focused support services for adult independent learners. With very few exceptions, emphasis is placed on traditional goals, services, and training areas by libraries and by librarians. In order to develop a successful national program for providing individualized service to adult learners through the public library it will be necessary to re-orient existing attitudes and programs.7

This statement has important implications for library educators and for the practicing library administrator. A survey of staff to determine attitudes is in order. Results of the survey will provide the information needed to justify a planned staff development training program, or will confirm the positive attitudinal climate in which further planning and implementation of the service can proceed.

There are several options available to the library administrator wanting to organize a planned staff development program. The ideal, of course, is to have the funds needed to provide consultant expertise for staff training included in the library's annual budget, and this is possible if there has been administrative foresight. If no such financing is possible through regular budgeting channels, perhaps an active Friends of the Library group can be helpful in fundraising.

As is often the case, there may be no monies available at all, and library administrators must turn to other means to begin staff development programs. Outside assistance may be obtained from the following sources:

1. A library school in the community can often provide faculty interested in helping develop the program.
2. Adult-education specialists on the faculties of colleges and universities or community colleges will often be willing to provide a "community service" of this nature. Some faculty members will help with the instructional tasks of teaching library staff the essential elements basic to the adult learning process. Often graduate students in education or in library and information science are looking for this kind of instructional activity.
3. State library associations are offering more and more continuing education programs. If the library administrator is active in the association, leadership could be provided to conduct workshops at annual conferences which library staff can be encouraged to attend.
4. Adult and vocational education departments in local school systems often willing to help a library administrator develop an instructional program, and are able to supply information on available instructional personnel.
5. State library agencies often have manpower grant monies that could be obtained for the training of an enthusiastic staff member, who then can return to the library and assist in the development of a staff training program. The state library may be able to provide a continuing education specialist consultant who will help develop such a program.

Finally, if none of these sources is available, the library administrator can begin the planning, development and implementation of a staff development program with a committee of staff members who will provide the service.

If the library administrator must pursue this latter course in order to achieve staff attitudinal change, additional time must be built into the service development plan. It is recommended that the administrator study Conroy's excellent manual of practical guidelines "focused on systematic planning, involved participation and useful evaluation" of staff development and continuing education programs. This publication details the processes involved in assessing, developing and implementing staff development programs. Conroy includes bibliographic references that would be useful to the library administrator and the planning personnel interested in further reading.

Coordination

The coordination function of the library administrator is both external and internal. Externally, the library administrator's active involvement in the community will help establish the contacts necessary to coordinate the library's adult learners' services within the context of the total community education program.

Internally, the extent of the coordination function will be determined by the assessed capability of the library to provide such services. Services to the adult learner may begin with the provision of information on the number and kinds of instructional programs that are currently available in the community. If the library already provides information on community organizations and social service agencies, the educational information can be simply added to the other data maintained for the library's information and referral services. In that case, the administrator's coordination function would be the establishment of the linkage between the library and the various agencies responsible for conducting traditional, nontraditional, and nonformal instructional programs in the community.
Internal Considerations

If the library can provide space for adult study, but does not have the staff to provide resource facilitators, the coordination efforts of the administrator may be directed toward an interagency cooperative program. Through this program the library provides the space, the furnishings, and perhaps the material resources, to support a school-system adult education teacher in conducting adult classes, which could include literacy classes or General Education Development (GED) preparation. In some areas, this interagency relationship has been gradually expanded to include the library in the school system's community education program, thereby making available to the library a community education coordinator to help in further adult education program development. This arrangement can be mutually beneficial to the library and to the community, particularly if the community education coordinator is cognizant of the public library's important role in the community education effort. A community education coordinator can help the library in providing nonformal programming that is not duplicated elsewhere in the community, and can be a prime source of information for the instructional program information and referral service.

If the library is capable of providing a full range of adult learners' services, then the administrator's coordination function will involve the organization of staff, materials, financial resources, and space just as is necessary for the implementation of any other library service.

Budgeting

Probably the biggest challenge to the library administrator in a time of financial cutbacks and economic uncertainty is budgeting. The current admonition of local governing units is "No new programs!" How does the committee administrator proceed to develop services for the adult learner under that mandate?

Data for establishing clear directions and realistic yet innovative objectives will have to come from two distinct sources: details of past performance, and assessments of the library's capabilities to continue and expand or modify services. Data for these sources will need to come as much from clients and staff personally as from quantitative measurement. The following questions have more importance for administrators in the 1980s than ever before.

Can the library document an increasing demand for adult services as now provided? Has the adult services staff experienced, and recorded, an increased number of patron requests for community instructional
program information, or for more in-depth help in using library resources? What budget categories will have to be curtailed to provide the necessary funding to expand the service? If the library currently conducts an interagency cooperative program, what is the retention rate of students in the program? Is there funding through the cosponsoring agency to help the library develop further services? Perhaps most important: if the library restructures its priorities to provide more direct services to the adult learner, what documented justification does the administrator have to give to the governing unit to continue the current level of funding? Searching for answers to these questions can frustrate even the most enthusiastic library administrator.

If the library already has in place some form of service to the adult learner, data to justify the continuance of expansion of the service should be available. If the library recognizes the need for such service, but has not had the opportunity to demonstrate this need, the library administrator would do well to search for alternative funding to initiate the service. If such funds can be found, the need to cut other services will be alleviated, and time will be gained to demonstrate the community’s need for the service. Once the need for the service is documented, future funding can be built into the library’s annual budget. Also, time gained through this kind of funding can be used to further develop staff skills and competencies. Some of these will be recognized as new skills, and this in itself is a planning issue.

Alternative funding sources are many and current financial restrictions on social service agencies imposed by the Reagan Administration are creating a highly competitive arena into which library administrators must advance in search of funding. There are some potential sources in the U.S.:

1. Federal funds are in short supply under the “new federalism,” but monies can still be found in those federal programs supporting adult education activities. LSCA funds may also still be available.
2. State funds (usually administered by state departments of education, and directed by state university, community college and public school adult education departments) can often be directed to public library adult learner programs.
3. Industrial and corporate funds may be available in areas where industry or corporate headquarters are located, particularly if the service can be shown to address the educational objectives of the firms.
Internal Considerations

4. Community funds and private corporations can be helpful in funding such services if the library can show the value of the service to the community.

5. Grants from foundations interested in adult education programs can be sought. Information on foundations is found in the Foundation Directory or in resource collections of various public libraries that have been designated Foundation Center regional centers or affiliates. A list of these libraries can be obtained from the Foundation Center.

Needless to say, the more experience a library administrator has in writing proposals, the better the chances of competing for alternative funds. For those administrators with the desire but little experience, there are agencies to help the executive learn how to develop fundable proposals. Many universities have grants offices that will assist the local library administrator. A search of state agencies may also unearth such assistance. Government departments involved in community affairs activities are possible sources of assistance.

The library administrator should also not overlook the possibility that the adult learner would be willing to pay a fee for instructional opportunities if they meet his or her particular objectives. Distasteful as the concept is to the library profession, fees for human and material resources may enable the library to provide the services and programs so badly needed by the adult learning public.

Long-range requirements will be more likely to become a part of the library's annual budget if the library can prove the worth of the service to the community. To do this, very careful and comprehensive evaluation of the services and programs is necessary—most governmental units demand hard data as expenditure justification.

Evaluation

In this time of greater services and funding accountability, the need for appropriate evaluation processes is a familiar and persistent refrain. They are an essential element in setting service priorities, and they furnish funding agencies proof of the need for a service or a program.

Evaluation can be defined as "a planned systematic process...with implementation procedures, roles, and standards for the quality of the evidence presented." Many books on the process of evaluation are available, but none of them provides an easy trip through a difficult process. The best judge of what should be evaluated in a management
context is the library administrator, who knows the particular emphasis needed to assess how far the library has met its goals. Evaluation instruments are developed from the service objectives established during the planning phase of the services. Different evaluation strategies will be needed for programs or services at different stages of development. Anderson states:

Innovative and developmental programs probably need less restricted or constrictive evaluation designs than are typically applied to static programs that are to be evaluated in relationship to cost-effectiveness, validity or productivity.14

Anderson also states:

There may be reasons why a decision not to evaluate in any formal sense might be made:...if the program is a one-time effort;...if the constraints in the situation prevent a professionally responsible evaluation; if there is no possibility that the results will be acted upon in decisions about program installation, continuation, or improvement; or if there is no one interested or informed enough to carry out the evaluation effort required....The point to be emphasized here is that decisions not to evaluate—to assemble orderly evidence about program needs, processes, or results—should be made as early and deliberately as the decision to evaluate.15

Evaluation “is not simply measurement and data collection;...it is also not decision making;...it does not always qualify as research;...it is not necessarily limited to determining how well programs achieve their objectives. It may begin before a program or policy is implemented, or it may touch on issues that were not envisioned at the time the goals or objectives of the program were formulated.”16 The purposes of evaluation, as outlined by Anderson, are:

1. to contribute to decisions about program installation;
2. to contribute to decisions about program continuation, expansion or contraction;
3. to contribute to decisions about program modification:
   a. program objectives,
   b. program content,
   c. program methodology,
   d. program context,
   e. personnel policies and practices;
4. to obtain evidence favoring a program to rally support;
5. to obtain evidence against a program to rally opposition; and
6. to contribute to the understanding of basic psychological, social and other processes.
Internal Considerations

To further define these purposes, Anderson relates them to specific methods applicable to each purpose. The methods are:

1. surveys,
2. personnel or client assessment,
3. systematic "expert" judgment,
4. clinical or case studies,
5. informal observation or testimony,
6. research studies (experimental studies, quasi-experimental studies, correlational status studies).

In the evaluation of library services, library administrators have often relied exclusively on the client assessment method. A major problem with this method is that the client's responses often provide data influenced by the "halo" effect, or, as Conroy calls it, "happiness data." What we have often failed to assess, and perhaps it is the most difficult area to assess, is the impact the service has had on the client. "Personnel or client assessment at the end of a program can seldom in itself provide data attesting to the effectiveness of that program." Qualitative data collection requires certain methods including a more long-range, longitudinal type of study than does the gathering of the short-range quantitative data that library administrators are familiar with collecting.

Quantitative data, such as the number of people served, retention rates, and the cost per unit of service are important elements of the evaluation process, but it is a sad fact that this type of data is still the only element that most governmental funding units require in their determination of programs worthy of future funding.

Library administrators and staff, however, are interested in the quality of the programs and services they provide. Obtaining qualitative data has proved to be a difficult and sometimes impossible task. But in adult learning services, securing such data is to some extent possible using an objectives approach. To assess the impact on the client's life one must be aware of the client's learning objectives: if the library staff working with the adult learner has helped in the development of these objectives, then the follow-up, or longitudinal assessment, of the accomplishment of these objectives can provide some assessment of the library's effectiveness. In a literacy program, for example, if the client's objective is to pass the GED tests to obtain a high school equivalency certificate, and the client succeeds in this effort, then the program can be assessed as being effective. A longitudinal evaluation of the program could be the number of program participants who then obtain higher paying and more skilled jobs or pursue further education.
If the library is providing an educational brokering service, or an instructional information and referral service, Heffernan cites the need to "be able to demonstrate...the positive impacts" the service has had on its clients. He discusses the problems, the strategies, the approaches, the criteria and indicators, and the evidence of impacts for evaluating this kind of adult learners' service. He also states that multiple functions, activities and outcomes of brokering agencies require a wide variety of perspectives and criteria for evaluation. "We need to recognize and legitimate a variety of ways of assessing our impacts, in both quantitative and qualitative terms." This may be the case for all library services that fall under the heading of adult services.

Library administrators and staff must determine what factors are needed for assessment and structure objectives for that evaluation at the time the service goals are developed; they must not be overcome by the wide spectrum of evaluation processes, procedures and admonitions. Too much hit-and-miss, nonstructured data collection can create a mind-boggling amount of information, and can consume an inordinate amount of precious staff time that would be better spent on individual work with learners.

Conclusion

Public libraries are providing a myriad of services for the adult learner, too often not specifically recognized as such. This is as it should be, as long as the staff participating in these services recognize their functions as educators. The management considerations prerequisite to the planning and implementation of adult learners' services are basically the same as those employed in the development of all library services. The processes and procedures inherent in internalizing these services should be included in the normal management activities.

The library administrator must be committed to the development of the library's potential as an active force in the community's educational spectrum and must be continually sensitive to innovative methods of providing adult education activities in the most cost effective manner.

As the further development of information-providing technologies exerts pressure for the redefinition of public library services, programs, and staff skills, so will a clearer recognition of learner behavior and needs call for reassessments and attitudinal shifts. These are needed not just in terms of the learners, but also in terms of potential collaboration with other adult educators. The assumption of the educational role of
Internal Considerations

the public library will become an alternative of increased importance to
the future of the public library. Development will also require an
increased educational effort through public relations programs and the
active involvement of the library administrator in the political realities
within the community. Governing units, library boards and the com-
munity itself must be made aware of the importance of the public
library's contribution to the community's educational activities. In fact,
this political emphasis may be the most important factor in the 1980s for
the public library in maintaining and developing its active role as a
major community information agency.

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Political Factors Influencing Library Involvement in Adult Learning

ROBERT L. CLARK, JR.

ONE ADULT IN FIVE does not possess basic competencies needed to function in our complex society. However, the smallest percentage of adults participating in planned group learning activities is from segments of the population with the least formal educational background. Increased opportunities for adult education programs in the United States have primarily benefited the white and the wealthy.¹ This situation presents a formidable dilemma to public libraries in their traditional role as agencies of adult education.

Concern for the library's role in adult education continues, despite the fact that the impact of inflation and change in public funding patterns have eliminated or curtailed choices for library services options. Overall public expenditures for libraries are disproportionately less than for other educational programs. Intensive efforts are required for adult education programs to attract target segments of the population, and libraries find that adult programs have a high cost in personnel and space.² Therefore, libraries face the difficult task of securing funds for programs despite poor attendance and shoestring budgets.

People, nations and funding sources think of books when they think of libraries. All too often we do not relate library programming to this image. Daniel J. Boorstin, Librarian of Congress, complained that one had to read fifty-five pages of the transcript of the White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services before the word "book" appeared.³ However simple it sounds, a budget firmly rooted in

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"the book" will provide funds for information utilization and individually impressive programs. Since the public expectation is for library programs to relate to books and related information sources, the most feasible political approach to adult education is in information-providing roles.

**Federal State and Local Political Implications**

The American federal response to libraries' involvement with adult education is the Library Services and Construction Act, Title I (LSCA). Though they are not specifically earmarked in the act, many adult education demonstration programs are funded through LSCA. For example, federal funds constitute the largest source of money utilized by public libraries for literacy education services. Of all adult education activities, literacy is perhaps the most important and obvious for libraries. However, libraries' involvement in literacy has been in response to obvious needs where no other providers of literacy education are available or effective. Cooperation with other providers has been a principal factor in library involvement. A 1981 study by the U.S. Department of Education revealed how small libraries involvement in literacy actually is. The median annual budget of the surveyed public libraries was $6,000. Generally, only 3.4 percent of this figure was spent for literacy. Overall, LSCA has too little money spread throughout too many programs and categories. Adult education applications using LSCA have not captured the attention of congress, and it is extremely unlikely that any specific legislation addressing libraries' involvement will ever come about, unless it addresses literacy.

In most LSCA programs there is no assurance of continued funding for successful programs. This creates a Jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none syndrome. Efforts are now underway to put in place technical amendments that would provide a new focus on access, adequacy and populations served. Technological applications would be emphasized, as would emphasis on the public library as a community information center.

Despite the low levels of funding under LSCA, the act has achieved a broad range of impacts and changes. An estimated 94 percent of the nation's public libraries (serving 197.8 million persons) were able in 1980 to cite at least one change in service or one new service resulting from LSCA, according to a 1981 Department of Education evaluation. This is in spite of the fact that LSCA funds only account for 5 percent of the total outlay for public libraries. LSCA has a widespread influence
which is much more than the measure of funds would indicate (62.5 million in 1981).\(^5\)

One glance at the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* will show the magnitude of federal support for adult education.\(^6\) The large number of individual acts led to the creation in 1964 of the Federal Interagency Committee on Education. Its purpose was to study and recommend methods of assuring effective coordination of federal programs, policies and administrative practices affecting education. It is difficult to find any trace of the committee's activity in library programs, although the American Library Association urged the committee in 1980 to coordinate an attack on illiteracy.

The federal financial role in adult education has decreased from a high of over $1 billion in 1981 to an estimated $206 million for categorized programs for fiscal 1983. The Community Services Block grants, meant for partial makeup of the categorized programs, has only made up $336.5 million, and that amount is expected to decrease to $100 million in 1983 (see table 1).

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Adult Education Programs: Funding</th>
<th>FY 81</th>
<th>FY 82</th>
<th>83 Est.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education—State-Administered Programs</td>
<td>$100,000,000</td>
<td>$84,500,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Services for Disadvantaged Students</td>
<td>64,000,000</td>
<td>57,000,000</td>
<td>57,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Search</td>
<td>17,000,000</td>
<td>15,500,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing-Education Outreach—State-Administered Programs</td>
<td>2,200,000</td>
<td>(12.8 million rescission)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upward Bound</td>
<td>66,500,000</td>
<td>60,000,000</td>
<td>25,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer and Homemaking Education</td>
<td>30,000,000</td>
<td>29,000,000</td>
<td>Block*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Education—Basic Grants</td>
<td>518,000,000</td>
<td>395,000,000</td>
<td>Block*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Education—Program Improvement</td>
<td>93,000,000</td>
<td>88,000,000</td>
<td>Block*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Education—Program Improvement Projects</td>
<td>7,500,000</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>Block*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Education—Special Programs for Disadvantaged Indian Education—Adult Indian Education</td>
<td>15,000,000</td>
<td>14,300,000</td>
<td>Block*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Education—Adult Indian Education</td>
<td>5,500,000</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>3,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran's Cost of Instruction Program</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Opportunity Centers</td>
<td>8,000,000</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>FY 81</td>
<td>FY 82</td>
<td>83 Est.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Vocational Training</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>2,200,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Education Programs for Deaf and Handicapped</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>2,800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's Education Equity</td>
<td>8,000,000</td>
<td>5,700,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bilingual Vocational Instruction Materials, Methods</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>338,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational Education—Indian Tribes and Organizations</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>Block*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training for Special Programs</td>
<td>760,000</td>
<td>880,000</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education</td>
<td>13,500,000</td>
<td>11,400,000</td>
<td>11,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Research and Development</td>
<td>36,000,000</td>
<td>25,500,000</td>
<td>25,600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant Education—High School Equivalent</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>5,500,000</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant Education—Coordinating</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Services Block Grant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>336,500,000</td>
<td>100,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>$1 + billion</td>
<td>$822,000,000</td>
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**OTHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

<table>
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<th>Program</th>
<th>FY 81</th>
<th>FY 82</th>
<th>83 Est.</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants</td>
<td>$370,000,000</td>
<td>$278,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation Services— Basic Support</td>
<td>854,000,000</td>
<td>772,000,000</td>
<td>Block*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitative Services— Special Projects</td>
<td>24,500,000</td>
<td>20,700,000</td>
<td>Block*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehabilitative Training</td>
<td>21,500,000</td>
<td>19,000,000</td>
<td>Block*</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Part of Block Grants


Virtually every federal agency has undertaken some form of adult education in recent years. In 1972, the National Advisory Council on Adult Education identified some fifty adult education programs under the auspices of agencies other than the Department of Education. There are presently eleven federal advisory committees concerned wholly or in part with adult education. Six are presidential committees, and five are appointed by the secretary of education.

The roles of the federal advisory committees should not be underestimated, even though present federal policy advocates curtailment of education programs generally and a lessening of federal advisory committee activity. Adult educators need to study and take an active interest...
Political Factors

in the federal advisory committees, which have been referred to as the fifth branch of government. A list of those committees relevant to adult education follows:

Presidential Advisory Committees

The National Advisory Council on Continuing Education (NACCE), formerly The National Advisory Council on Extension and Continuing Education (NAXECE); established 1965 (Title I, HEA; Education—Amendment of 1972 and 1980, legislative change of title).

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (NACVE); established 1968 (Title II, VEA; Amendments of 1968 and 1976).

The National Advisory Council on Adult Education (NACAE); established 1970 (Title III, ESEA; amended to Title XIII, 1978)—originated as the National Advisory Council on Adult Basic Education (1966, Title III, ESEA).

The National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE); established 1972 (Title XI, ESEA).

The National Advisory Council on Women's Education Programs (NACWEP); established 1974 (Title IX, ESEA).

The Intergovernmental Advisory Council on Education (IACE); established 1979, by U.S. Department of Education Organization Act, Public Law 96-88 (the IACE is in development: it will advise on the impact of federal education activities, assess compliance, and make recommendations on the federal role in education).

Secretarial Advisory Committees

The Board of Advisors to the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE); established 1972 (Title III, HEA; Education Amendments of 1972).

The National Advisory Council on Bilingual Education (NACBE); established 1974 (Title VII, ESEA).

The National Advisory Council on Career Education (NACCE); established 1974 (Title VIII), ESEA; Educational Amendments of 1974; Career Education Incentive Act of 1977.

The Community Education Advisory Council (CEAC); established 1974 (Title VIII, ESEA; Education Amendments of 1974 and 1978).

The National Advisory Council on Ethnic Heritage Studies (NACEHS); established 1978 (Title IX, ESEA; Amendments of 1978).
ROBERT CLARK, JR.

The impact of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities on adult learning activities in libraries has been substantial in recent years. Under the Division of Public Programs, Humanities Projects in Libraries, the Endowment encourages public interest in academic and public library humanities resources and stimulates their use. Thematic programs, exhibits, media, publications, and other library activities that spark the public interest are funded. The division also seeks to enhance the ability of the library staff to plan and implement these programs. Community libraries, library systems, state library agencies, library organizations, library schools, and school and academic libraries are eligible to apply. The grants range from $20,000 to $100,000. For example, under the Humanities Projects in Libraries, a grant was made to the Library of the Central Agency for Jewish Education in Miami, Florida for a “Senior Adult Library Outreach Project” that created a bilingual reading/lecture/discussion series specifically designed for senior citizens. Criteria for selection of grant applications relate to the project theme, public participation, humanities resources in the library, and responsible and knowledgeable staff.

Another important source of adult education funding through the National Endowment is the Division of State Programs, which develops fifty councils in the states to fund project grants. This program has established a link in each state to the National Endowment. Twenty-six thousand projects have been funded, many of these in libraries. In fiscal year 1981 the programs reached 28 million Americans. Funding for Endowment-based programs has been decreasing in recent years. While $23,948,000 was granted through the state-based programs in 1981, only an estimated $13.2 million will be granted for 1983.

The trends of federal support in adult education are toward less categorical funding and more block grants, involving fewer total dollars. States with high demand, abundant resources and a diversified tax structure will fund some of the dismantled federal programs. Local dollars for adult education are not likely to increase. Certainly a substantial amount of funds has been directed toward adult education. Current and future political trends point to cutbacks in areas that have a low measure of quantitative return. Unfortunately, some federally funded programs in adult education fall into this category. According to the National Advisory Council on Adult Education, the Adult Basic Education program has targeted 60 million adults without high school educations, but has reached less than 5 percent. In order to reverse the trend of funding cuts, more effort should be spent on determining why
so few adults were taking advantage of the plethora of programs available in 1981 and 1982. Until more people are reached, the new federalism will continue to cause categorical programs to become block grants, thus forcing increasing competition among programs.

**Involvement of State Library Agencies**

Most state libraries are adept planners. Some state library agencies have staff with the attitude and interest to encourage adult education activity. In virtually every state library agency there are individuals who act as catalysts for creating a state or LSCA-funded program that will make a significant impact in the community. The key to real success for any adult education program in any library lies in the attitude and interest of the local staff, regardless of the funding and planning done at the state level.

State librarians or directors of state libraries know the local political process which differs in each state and community. They also know the governors, legislators, library trustees, and library directors. They should be in tune with the realities of the state's educational needs and economic resources. These men and women are in a position to steer the agency into a role of demonstrator or initiator, trainer, coordinator, and disseminator of adult education. They can provide their best efforts of securing healthy and broadly based state-aid funds for local use options. In many cases they actually have the final word in determining how LSCA funds are spent. There are likely to be identifiable adult education projects in each agency's long-range plan, a five-year document required by the LSCA.

All states have statutes regulating the promulgation of agency rules and regulations. These laws, in each state commonly called the Administrative Procedures Act, specify the method by which state agencies can issue rules and regulations that have the full force and effect of law. State library agencies have the responsibility to establish standards by which public libraries operate. Such standards usually provide for the basic aspects of service, such as payment of staff, opening hours, compliance with other rules and laws, and locally maintained financial support. State agencies enforce their rules by withholding services or funds.

The extensive authority given state boards and commissions via the promulgation of rules and regulations amounts to setting policies and priorities as circumstances dictate. For example, it is conceivable and possible for a state library agency to require plans for adult education from every library seeking state financial aid. Procedures for the formu-
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lation of rules and regulations vary, but most require publication of the proposed rules in advance, an open meeting to hear arguments and some legislative oversight of agency rule-making practices. Entire new directions of library development can be generated by the policy-making authority of state library agencies through the regulation-making process which provides for all voices being heard and all evidence being weighed.

Of all the services provided by the state library agency, raising support for public libraries in the form of state aid is the most important and has the most direct benefit to the communities. Only thirteen states do not have state-appropriated funds for public libraries. State library agencies are much more likely to spend their energies on increasing state funding for libraries than on lobbying for state funds for adult education. How state aid funds are used is actually a local option; they can be earmarked for adult education activities if local community needs warrant doing so.

In addition to fund allocation, the licensing and certification of personnel, consultative and coordinative services, and assistance in needs assessments and library performance evaluations are common. In Wisconsin, the state library has certified and licensed librarians since 1923. In Oklahoma, the state library is equipped with specialists in continuing education, adult services, children's services, performance evaluation construction, and audiovisual services. In states where few trained librarians exist in rural libraries, one is likely to find state agency consultants traveling the highways providing advice to library boards and city officials. The American Library Association (ALA) publishes biennially *The State Library Agencies: A Survey Project Report* that provides a ready statement of the scope, funding and responsibilities of America's state and territorial library agencies. It is also common for state libraries to coordinate library planning and program development with other state agencies and institutions, including departments of corrections and mental health. Over one-half of state libraries coordinate planning and program development with state education agencies and human service agencies. The nature of this coordination ranges from the exchange of information and resources to joint budget planning.

Not all state library agencies have the resources to be effective. If it were not for the LSCA, a few would cut their annual expenditures in half. State agencies are likely to cite as barriers to their involvement in adult education programs a lack of community demand, library unawareness of the need, lack of funds, and unavailability of staff.
Political Factors

Agencies that overcome these barriers have strategies that include increased public awareness of the need, greater cooperation between libraries and government agencies, and increased funding.

Political Involvement at the Local Level

The most significant political clout a library possesses is the pride the community has in its library. Today's politically effective librarians know this and how to take advantage of it for support of responsive adult education programs. These librarians are no strangers to politics and dealing with people. They spend a great deal of time meeting with other community leaders, organizing friends-of-the-library groups, working with trustees, speaking before organizations and clubs, and raising funds.

Traditional political techniques of involvement in the community political process are required. It is at the community level that the vast amount of library funding exists. It is also at this level that the greatest potential for raising additional revenue lies. Techniques of canvassing, speeches, mass media use, and direct mail are not new frontiers to the politically astute library director.

For adult education programs, there are two effective and subtle ways for increasing awareness and support. The first is library responsiveness to citizen participation in program planning. Program attendance will drastically improve in direct proportion to the amount of the target group involvement in planning. Many mistakes are made by providers planning alone and ignoring the citizens they are serving. The second is knowing the power structure and having the right amount of personal contact with it. Understanding the budget process is the first step in identifying individuals in official capacities. Leaders of target populations, reporters and allies in the ranks of other educational providers are of additional help in compiling a list of influence-makers.

Coordination with the Community

Libraries that have high visibility, esteem, credibility, soundly developed collections, and a variety of services will capture the attention of the public. For effective growth the library must know its mission, based on community population needs and a thorough knowledge of other public and private agency services. Financial support derives from public perception of usefulness, and programs are a motivational and educational vehicle through which the resources of the library and other community services can be delivered to their clienteles.
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In order for the library to help achieve and promote public awareness of the total adult educational services available, cooperation between libraries and other community-based agencies and organizations is essential. As public libraries respond to needs for adult independent study, a natural tool would be the development of a community task force on adult education. A collaborative approach with all identifiable providers will firmly establish the library as a community learning center.

Margaret Monroe gives four required conditions for collaboration among providers of adult education: "(1) a conscious preparation of staff with information and skills to carry out the library's collaborative work; (2) making the library a source of information on independent-study opportunities;... (3) having the resources for independent study programs; and (4) making available the interlibrary loan system."  

Nonlibrary providers involved in adult education offer a multiplicity of services, and serve populations that vary greatly in terms of age, ethnic characteristics, and educational background. For funding to be firmly rooted and continuous, the library should exercise caution at all times so that duplication of services is nonexistent. Cooperation with other libraries therefore appears as the first consideration. A look at the adult education services of the public and private schools, community colleges, federally funded categorical programs, ethnic and bilingual communities, prisons, hospitals, and senior citizen groups provides personal contacts essential to creating and maintaining a community awareness of educational opportunities.

Most cooperative efforts will not be formal, although written agreements and contracts are preferable. The informality of cooperative efforts is often effective. Communication with nonlibrary providers is likely to be on an as-needed basis, with less frequent formal meetings. The important objective is personal contact with other providers. The establishment of a community education task force can be the vehicle by which the library can be a de facto community education coordinator, providing program leadership.

Professional Associations

Librarians are found among the memberships of such groups as the American Association of University Professors, the American Association of University Women, the American Society for Information Science, historical associations, Parent-Teacher Associations, the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, and the League of Women Voters. The
Political Factors

AFL-CIO is a group that has traditionally supported library funding. These groups all usually engage in more political activity than do library organizations. Rarely does one find a library organization endorsing a state politician, but it is very common to find education associations and others exhibiting the courage and dedication to work for and help fund the candidates who support their objectives. This lack of political activity is the major weakness in library organizations.

Activity in professional organizations at the community level is a result of the personality, attitude and interest of the library director. At the state level the roles of professional organizations and state libraries are inseparable in affecting positive results. There is a fine line between informing and lobbying. A statewide organization can organize and lobby; a state library agency can inform. The state agency can work within the governmental/political structure with key legislators and the governor, while the statewide organization can develop layers of legislative networks, coordinate with friends’ groups, and finance events for specific ends. No one can do it alone. The joint meetings, strategy sessions and communications between state associations, community organizations and individual libraries can spell success or failure in reaching a goal.

At the national level, the most successful library association on the political front is, of course, the American Library Association. The largest of its kind anywhere, the ALA and its divisions are a formidable lobby and watchdog for libraries in the United States. The trend is for an even stronger association as the issues of intellectual freedom, censorship and federal policy on telecommunications, copyright and funding continue. The ALA’s Washington office is extremely effective in providing up-to-the-minute information on pending congressional action.

Future Funding Patterns

The involvement of libraries in the political process will continue to grow and to be refined. The funds for library service will continue to be mostly community-based. The specific, categorical legislation that we all once enjoyed will eventually vanish. Federal funding will continue to be severely lessened, and state funds for libraries will grow slowly as the economy reflects lower interest rates and increased productivity. The days of federal protection of individual library programs are coming to an end. It has been, it is now, and it will be a local community challenge to increase the quality of life in the city and town, to raise the educational level by providing varied opportunities, and to supply the
salaries and other resources to meet the educational needs of the adult populace.

Summary

Adult learning in the United States is the primary responsibility of the individual. One has ample opportunity to take advantage of a plethora of choices for improving a skill or learning new ones.

Statistics show light attendance at library-sponsored learning activities. Funding for adult learning projects is plentiful and almost entirely nonlibrary based. The trend is toward less federal involvement. Libraries, as a rule, have been successful coordinating forces of adult education programs in the community. Much of the success of libraries' involvement depends on the expertise and political acumen of the library director and staff. Libraries that eschew traditional services for expanded outreach activities risk endangering the support of the public.

State library agencies are a potent source of support for adult learning activities. Libraries should be aware of the state and national activities that provide programs and opportunities for adult learning. The ALA is particularly adept at lobbying for the interests of libraries at the national level. State library associations are still timid, as a rule, about taking political stands. The final and true test of a library's political involvement in adult education is local support. That support is directly related to the community involvement of librarians and trustees, and an understanding by all of the purpose and function of the library as a stable, unbiased educational force.

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**Political Factors**


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Implications for Professional Education: Librarians as Adult Learners

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Before deciding on ways of educating librarians to provide services to adult learners, it is sound practice to analyze the tasks to be performed and to establish learning needs and objectives. This approach is referred to as competency-based learning to emphasize the outcomes in terms of the abilities of practitioners to perform the tasks required of them, over and above any other learning gains such as the inculcation of appropriate attitudes and the communication of knowledge.

There is no doubt that the profession has a responsibility for serving adult learners—no doubt that such service is both historically, currently and in the future a major element in the professional role. In his search for a foundation for education for librarianship, Shera devotes the major part of his chapter on the role of the library in the social process to a discussion of the commitment of libraries to education and adult education and the corresponding difficulty of establishing the role they might play in such a wide and varied activity as learning. This issue of Library Trends probes that activity and that problem. The task facing library educators is to ensure that what might too easily be a temporary response to the demand for competencies to serve adult learners is embraced within a coherent philosophy and an adequate, acceptable system. From the extensive literature on the needs of adult learners some items have been particularly relevant when considering roles for librarians and it is suggested that these can be

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transposed into the following learning objectives for librarians. The competent librarian should be able to:

1. Identify, when appropriate, an adult's need as a learning need. This is not too difficult when the adult is a registered student using an academic library; adult independent learners in public libraries are not so easy to identify.¹

2. Give the learner support, encouragement and confidence. Learning implies asking questions and admitting incompleteness, a difficult thing for an adult to do. It also implies much more than the librarian's ability to answer questions.

3. Understand and be able to discuss with other agencies serving adult learners the different philosophies of adult education and adult learning. This involves an appreciation of the role of education in social equalization, second-chance education, vocational education and training, and in Britain at present for example, the economic arguments advanced for rationing education.

4. Recognize, understand and share the aims of the adult learner. Adults' learning aims invariably arise from life needs and are highly instrumental. Adults learn in order to be able to do things. Learning outcomes are multiple and often unanticipated; for example, some trade unionists have not been able to reenter the world they left to attend a course of instruction.

5. Collect and retrieve for use the many resources available to adult learners. Though this is clearly the traditional role, the emphasis here is on the learner using the materials. Comprehensive but passive collections of books, learning packs and guides to other resources are often seen to be underused in the United Kingdom and the United States. It is argued below that this is partly due to library school emphasis on collection and organization rather than on use. It is annoying to the tidy and systematic librarian that the adult learner's search for resources is wide and informal. Adults also tend to use more resources than just books and educational courses.

6. Recognize and adapt help and provision to the different skills that adult learners may command. Adults are skilled at learning—it is an everyday activity—but their skills are often unconventional and operate at different levels of competence.

7. Support the process of learning with appropriate arrangements. Adults have families and other commitments. Their pace of learning needs to be flexible, so a planned but flexible method of delivering books is needed. Physical conditions of light, warmth and quiet, and availability of washrooms and refreshments are important.
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8. Help adults improve their learning skills and especially library use skills. Training in library use is a growth industry and librarians involved in this field can extend their competencies to teaching learning skills in general.

In order that both British and North American readers can interpret these objectives to suit their own situations, it should be pointed out that there are differences between adult learning in Britain and in North America. The United States was a colony “founded on perfection that strove for improvement.” With such a history, education for all is seen as a right and a necessity, and the American adult education system can be seen as a continuing process of opening up new opportunities for people later in life, as their circumstances change. What matters is how competent the individual is at the end of the process. The U.S. system is much more hospitable to open learning and to credits based on life experience or library learning projects. In Britain, where and how one learns is important. The education system is designed to select and filter; where individuals read for their degree still matters, and to a certain extent polytechnics suffer in comparison with universities when students select courses. The differences between the two systems can be explained using the concepts of sponsored and contest mobility. The outcome in Britain for continuing education is that changes have to be fought for within a system that still gives priority to formal, structured learning in established institutions, where the majority of the population still leaves school at sixteen (only in 1972, in fact, was the school-leaving age raised from fifteen), and where the number of years spent in education still varies according to social class. This means that any process that is not traditional is treated skeptically, and considerable emphasis has to be placed on replacements for systems such as apprenticeship, which were workplace-based and part of a separate but parallel system of education that emphasized practical skills. In Britain the terms vocational and nonvocational have bureaucratic significance.

In this climate it is not easy for libraries (especially public libraries) to attain recognition for their efforts in helping adult learners. Their efforts are mainly nonvocational and informal, and are therefore at a disadvantage in the resource allocation processes when they are compared with the traditional selective system. The education of librarians to equip them to help adult learners must include an understanding of the political and economic factors that influence their ability to design and deliver services to adult learners.

We have suggested a set of educational objectives and a competency profile, and have outlined the problems adult learners may face in

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continuing their education. We must now examine the processes by which some or all librarians can be brought to that state of competency. Here, as we have shown, we are talking about more than technical skills; but the curriculum on both sides of the Atlantic is still very much about technical skills. All professional librarians, whether they work in a large service point or a small one, are assumed to need a basic competence in information storage and retrieval and in library administration. Specialization by service to users (children's work, business services, readers' adviser) normally comes later as part of the post-experience training. Yet it is user needs that are paramount in both large and small service points, and the newly qualified librarian will work mostly with users, rather than with stock acquisition, indexing and retrieval systems. It seems that in spite of some changes in library school curricula and in teaching methods, many courses still do not reflect a library user or learner-centered view. Wilkinson points out that if users require only technical services of libraries, then library technicians can meet their needs as well as librarians.

It is true on both sides of the Atlantic that the curriculum in the qualifying courses has moved in the direction of user needs. Most schools include community profiling, service evaluation, and the reference interview. Lukenbill describes a "Helping Relationships Instructional Unit" developed at the Graduate School of Library Science at the University of Texas at Austin, which is concerned with the fundamentals of human learning and communication. In the Association of American Library Schools' study of the future of library education it was reported that the respondents favored a more general approach for the first professional degree. They thought that specialization, particularly by type of library, should be avoided in a world in which librarianship is becoming less institution-bound. Even though the respondents wanted more study in depth, with less breadth, they were also in favor of the integration of library science with related fields such as educational media programs.

A recent study in Britain of curriculum change also draws attention to the deinstitutionalization of library and information work. Dudley's general conclusions are that the study of the use of books and information and the needs and problems of the user, long submerged beneath the three traditional elements, is now so evident in curricula in Britain that it has become part of a common learning experience for all graduates in librarianship. What is more striking, in our view, are the variety of approaches and methods adopted and the lack of empirical data from which to test the outcomes of different strategies.
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Needham, for example, has argued for a fundamental reappraisal of the curriculum.\(^{13}\) In the British Library report he suggests ways of implementing his ideas.\(^{14}\) He puts absolute emphasis on relevance to user needs, yet he accepts that the world of librarianship embraces a wide range of topics—the structure of knowledge, bibliometrics, opinion research, and mass communications, for example. He advocates the study of bibliography as the vehicle for integration, and his proposals offer a curriculum suited to the first qualification of librarians which would meet some of the learning objectives specified earlier.

The purpose of bibliography is the meeting of needs....Those who would practise bibliography must, as a first requirement, be able to get under the skin of their clients....Nothing we do as bibliographers can have any significance in itself, but only insofar as it serves a purpose beyond itself.\(^{15}\)

Needham goes on to argue that bibliography should be taught with reference to groups of users, their social organization, and modes of communication. User groups should be identified not only by subjects (musicians, scientists, and so on) but by other classifications such as occupational groups, age groups and status groups. This schema would obviously include adult learners, but as examples of user-centered bibliography, not as subjects of specialist study. Needham suggests that in a three-year course perhaps six to nine such user groups could be covered. Such an approach would overcome the fragmentation evident in the traditional three-core syllabus (indexing, management and bibliography), which not only favors a techniques-centered approach but also provides ample support for the vested interests of library school staff who are often divided into separate departments. The problem with the core as it stands, according to Needham, is that its relevance has to be judged with reference to factors outside the core—the context—and its internal relationships are poorly articulated.\(^{16}\)

We have devoted some attention to Needham’s arguments since they are likely to influence curriculum in Britain and since they seem to promise a fundamental shift in emphasis. We feel, however, that there are dangers in a whole-hearted commitment to the study of user groups that would not necessarily equip students with the understanding needed to see the library in its historical and institutional context, or to see users as groups of people interacting with the library, and who may bring with them a variety of different attitudes and beliefs relating to class, gender and current life opportunities which affect their ability to use services. Like most schema that adopt a systems approach to problems, the idea of user groups could lead students to a narrowly defined
picture of the library's market—one that is unduly static and reactive. For example, Needham's argument that subject-oriented user groups are likely to depend heavily on bibliographic services and nonsubject-oriented groups on libraries seems dangerously close to an acceptance of existing priorities in both our educational and information systems, the former, we have argued, currently bearing part of the responsibility for the difficulties faced by adult learners in acquiring continuing education.

If we accept, then that the need for a more user-centered curriculum has been acknowledged by library educators, what criteria do we feel it must satisfy? What are the barriers to introducing and implementing innovations both in the libraries and in the schools? As we have tried to indicate in the first part of this article, librarians will have to acquire not only skills to identify and respond to individual learner's needs but also an understanding of the way in which education and information is transmitted in our society and the problems they will have to face as managers of a service with a low priority for resources at both national and local levels. In the remaining section we show why library educators face particular difficulty in initiating major shifts in the curriculum, how current attitudes and organizational arrangements currently inhibit or facilitate user-oriented services, and the directions we should like to see library educators taking.

The Relationship between Education and Practice

There are currently undergraduate courses in librarianship in five universities and nine polytechnics in Britain. All library education for professionals now takes place in these institutions, a system that replaced the Library Association's control over two-year courses leading to associate membership in the Library Association. Most institutions also offer one-year postgraduate courses, master's courses with various proportions of a taught element, and, in the universities and some polytechnics, research degrees leading to M.Phil. and D.Phil. qualifications. The latter will normally only be undertaken by graduates with library experience. In addition, some of the polytechnics offer part-time undergraduate qualifications for librarians wishing to enhance their professional qualifications, although the numbers accepted into any one school are restricted to about one-third of full-time intake by government regulations. Most institutions offer a variety of short courses in specialist areas not leading to qualifications and, because their regulations are different from the universities', polytechnics are
able to be much more flexible in waiving minimum entry requirements. Education and training for "nonprofessional" staff is still rudimentary and is provided in separate colleges of further education on a part-time basis. Recent changes in the structure of the profession make it possible in theory for staff to move on to degree-level courses once they have completed a higher-level certificate, although the time involved makes this difficult for all but a few.  

Renewed attention has recently been paid to the practical training of librarians emerging from the undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses. Librarians qualifying after 1981 have to undergo one year of planned and supervised basic training, which must be approved by the Library Association. This must be followed by a minimum of two years as a Licentiate. The candidate must submit a written report and must be examined orally on that report by a Chartered Librarian before he or she can be admitted to the register. It is too early to judge the effect of this procedure, but the initial impression is that public libraries are likely to be more interested and involved than other kinds of libraries in operating the scheme. Much depends on the credibility of the Library Association's judgment on training and on the value of the charter at a time when academic degrees have received recognition by many employers. In addition, the present limited budgets available for training have made some employers apprehensive about the costs of the scheme.

Britain, like the United States, has a largely unplanned and uncoordinated system of continuing education for librarians. The Library Association has been one of the main providers of short courses along with the library schools, the British Library, and other libraries. With the implementation of the Licentiate scheme the Association is taking a lead in postentry training, but it remains to be seen whether a bureaucratic model of the kind set up in the U.S. Continuing Library Education Network (CLENE) will follow. Traditionally, continuing education has been concerned with updating existing skills, with courses on new techniques, new systems, and new user groups rather than with a critical assessment of wider issues. This will certainly continue, probably with greater cooperation between the course providers. More open and flexible entry to academic courses and the development of part-time and modular courses are likely to be slower to develop without a commitment from central government to the concept of continuing education for the whole workforce.

The educational issue, too, remains unresolved. Updating can mean grafting new ideas onto an old paradigm of professional service (e.g., new methods of delivery, new ways of arranging stock, community
profiling), or it can assist in creating new paradigms of service, allowing "old knowledge" to take on fresh significance. The latter process is much more difficult. Dudley¹⁰ has called for discussions on how this might take place in the Standing Committee for Professional Education.

Out of all this emerge some key factors. Degree courses are still relatively young. The development of a graduate profession has been hindered by the Library Association's ambivalence over many years.

The Licentiate scheme can be interpreted as an attempt to regain some of the control that seems to have been lost to the professional association. These factors have all influenced the content of courses, and in particular have given an unwarranted emphasis on the need to keep courses relevant to the current demands of the profession. The practical skills of information processing, and more recently management, have dominated the curriculum. There is relatively little evidence of other disciplines contributing directly to courses, particularly from the social science disciplines of sociology, economics, psychology, and political science. Nothing equivalent to educational psychology or the sociology of medicine has yet developed, partly because of a reluctance to attract specialists from other disciplines into library schools and to develop research with a social science base. It is not possible here to discuss patterns of recruitment to different courses, but it seems clear that the conservative nature of much course content is reinforced by the expectations of students whose views of libraries are heavily influenced by prevailing social norms.²¹ In addition, there seems to be little consensus about course content once the core subjects are set aside, and virtually no criticism of current theories of classification of knowledge. This point has been discussed by Oldman,²² who criticizes the positivist assumptions of information science and argues for a view of information that recognizes those beliefs and attitudes the reader brings to information seeking. This is a factor of considerable importance when studying the needs of individual learners.²³ With rare exceptions, library educators still see classification and retrieval as the core techniques of the discipline to be studied in isolation. The structure of courses separates them from the other disciplines and perpetuates specialist divisions among staff.²⁴

To these three factors (the relative youth of degree courses, a heavy reliance on core techniques, and the slow assimilation of ideas from other disciplines) a fourth should be added. While British consumer power in medicine, education and law lags far behind that of the United States, these professions are sufficiently in the public view to provoke occasional debate in the media and in the political arena. This is
patently untrue of librarianship, a factor that seems to place more rather than less onus on library educators to take the lead, however difficult this may be.

The Changes Needed in Current Professional Practice

We suggest that three basic conditions are necessary if adult learner services are to become central to librarianship. First, there will need to be a commitment to the idea of involvement in the learning process. This does not mean that the librarian becomes a teacher; rather it acknowledges the fact that helping people to learn involves helping them to change their attitudes and often behavior. Since this approach challenges beliefs about the neutrality of the librarian's role, it has been something of a stumbling block in the development of information and advice services in Britain. The origins of the neutrality ethic are hard to trace; in public libraries, at any rate, it has been reinforced by the bureaucratic structure of the service and legitimized by the philosophy of fairness and equality—a cornerstone of the social welfare legislation in Britain and we would suggest much more internalized among professionals there than in North America. It is enshrined in the Public Libraries Act of 1964 and assigns to the public librarian the impossible task of providing services to all who live or work within the local authority boundaries. It is interesting to note that the development of community information services paralleled an interest in nonusers and the provision of government funds in the form of urban aid for areas of deprivation, rather than (as seems to have been the case in the United States) concern over the low use rate of large urban public libraries. Where British services have developed, librarians have generally (but not always) avoided saying that they give advice, and have developed the "information" end of the service—directional inquiries, referral, better stock provision, and the provision of leaflets. It is hard to see how services to adult learners can develop without the acceptance of an advice component.

Second, we feel that a fairly radical reorganization of management systems might be needed if appropriate services were to develop. An analysis of the tasks involved in services to adult learners indicates three requirements:

1. diagnosis of the need for help;
2. time to spend with the inquirer on devising a plan;
3. access to resources needed to implement the plan.
We will argue below that in Britain the increase in the size of systems has made it harder for libraries to provide the first two of these conditions, although recent developments in national information policy should in theory make it easier to achieve the third.

Finally, adult learners (actual and potential) will be very much affected by national policies relating to higher education and continuing education. Libraries can only benefit from increased leisure opportunities if these are accompanied by increased opportunities for learning in society at large. Otherwise, commercial enterprises will always step in to fill the need created by enforced leisure (currently in Britain, teletext and videocassettes are the competitors for people's leisure time). Adult learner services will need to offer something that is at once more flexible and less available elsewhere, and that can involve the active participation of consumers in choices about material, study arrangements, and all the features we have identified as being necessary.

These three conditions for the growth of adult learner services—a professional commitment to help and advice, a reorganization of tasks in the library, and the political commitment to an informed society—are discussed in the light of present practice.

Staff/User Interaction in Public Libraries

There is little empirical evidence about what goes on between librarian and inquirer. One exception to this is Barnes's study of staff/user interaction in two large public library systems. The study is interesting not only because it provides data about activity at the reference desk, but because the author relates this to the discrepancy between organizational goals and organizational behavior. She found that interaction between librarian and user was brief, that probing of the initial inquiry was minimal, that there was no attempt to gather feedback on the value of the information provided, and that eye-to-eye contact was avoided. Barnes shows that this kind of behavior is observable in libraries with an organizational commitment to develop community information services. She suggests the type of response provided is more appropriate to "sophisticated" users of library services, that is, people with higher levels of education who can interpret information themselves. She suggests that the librarians' response is not "malevolent" but is a way of coping with a heavy workload and is a tactic employed in many public welfare agencies for rationing time. She does not directly consider the effect this has on the public image of the library.
This image problem is tackled in a study by Burrington of the public perceptions of libraries and librarians. Burrington surveyed a group of middle-class residents and a group of working-class residents in a northern industrial city. Middle-class users see the librarian as someone rather like a shop assistant whose tasks are to find the right books for them and to check that the books are returned in time. This group has no appreciation of the professional tasks involved and would not consider the job appropriate for either their daughters or their sons. Working-class users see the librarians as local government officials whose task is to enforce rules and procedures. Although they see this as a benign rather than a threatening role, the library seems irrelevant to them since it does not provide the kind of atmosphere in which they would want to read. It will be argued that these different perceptions are conditioned by users' experience of interaction with "nonprofessional" staff and that it is the invisibility of the librarian's role that is at the root of the problem. However, the findings of these two studies taken together suggest, inter alia, that some reorganization of tasks is needed if the helping and advice component is to be more evident. With reorganization, people may begin to see the library as somewhere where they can "learn." Some evidence to support this has come from a small study in a branch library which had been operating an information and advice service for three years. Surveys carried out six months after the service had been introduced and three years later showed a 100 percent increase in the use of the inquiry desk, but only a small increase in the use of a "self-help" section of community information material, prominently and attractively displayed. One interpretation is that users prefer to seek information through another person (a finding common to most surveys of information need), and will use an inquiry desk if it is provided. This brings us to the problem of how to organize work in libraries so that closer librarian/user interaction is possible.

Developments in Organization Structure in Public Libraries in England and Wales

Probably the most significant developments in public libraries in the past ten years have come about as a result of the reorganization of local government and the creation of the British Library. (Since the process and timing have been somewhat different, libraries in Scotland are omitted from the discussion.) The first has resulted in much larger library systems, some serving just under 1 million people, and a reduction in the number of services to about one-third of their former
number. Apart from the individual adjustments involved for people moving into new systems, there have been two major changes which the whole service has had to adapt to in many (but not all) cases. These are the introduction of team systems and the development of centralized management control systems, for example in the areas of stock control and personnel management. In addition, there has been a separation of professional and nonprofessional roles, with nonprofessional staff given responsibility for day-to-day running of services, particularly in branches. It is probably worth pointing out that the separation is much more recent in Britain than in North America and that, as we have shown earlier, British formal qualifications for library assistants are new and underdeveloped. Because of the size of the new systems, the underlying philosophy of team librarianship and its outcome for the organization of tasks is to free professional staff for community liaison and other professional work, such as readers' advisory services, with a wider range of users than one branch would attract on its own.

There is as yet no empirical study of the effects of these new management control systems, but two questions need to be posed, both of which relate to Barnes's and Burrington's findings. The first concerns the content of the professional task and the extent to which this is now excessively "managerial," by which we mean that an undue proportion of time is used in planning and controlling rather than in exercising professional skills such as advising readers, selecting stock, and keeping up to date bibliographically. The second question concerns the way in which the nonprofessionals' tasks have changed. This may be because automated circulation control systems place different kinds of pressure on staff, or because the growth in management control systems generally (e.g., fine policies, request systems, overdues) increase the workload and also change the nature of interaction with the user. In short, at the point of contact with the user, pressures may have changed so that user interaction becomes more routinized, and the image of the public library even further removed from that of a helping agency.

Improved Access to Wider Resources

One area where the development of larger systems may have proved beneficial is in the development of cooperative systems, which in the long term could increase the library's ability to find material for the great variety of demands an adult learners' service would generate. We have already mentioned the setting up of the British Library in 1972, a development almost contemporaneous with local government reorga-
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nization. It gives public libraries access to a wide range of nonfiction material. Currently, the use of British Library services is heavily oriented to academic (especially scientific) communities, but it is important that this trend is not seen as inevitable, although pricing and acquisition policies at the national level will obviously influence a public library's willingness to use the service. The creation of the British Library, however, also enhanced the concept of cooperation and networks in Britain; a field in which Britain is currently a leader. Cooperation at the local level has been patchy, but in view of the relative newness of the concept, the progress is encouraging. Added impetus has been given by a recent policy paper produced by the Library and Information Services Council. It is important to recognize, however, that local cooperation between academic and public libraries is likely to give the most immediate benefits to adult learners. Again, progress in this direction has been slow and needs to be much more adventurous—for example, closer working links should be established between college and public librarians so that each can learn more about the others' skills: college librarians have expertise in handling learners' inquiries, whereas public librarians have much more experience in developing outreach services and working with other agencies.

To summarize, from the library educator's view of present practice, the future of adult learner services looks rather uncertain. The resources aspect seems likely to develop fairly quickly, particularly under the impact of new technology and the emphasis on bibliographic services. But the delivery aspects do not look so positive. This is partly because of restrictions on service arising from organizational structures and from the professional ethic of noninvolvement with learners and users. These features are not unique to librarianship, and can be identified among all the major social welfare providers. The ethic of noninvolvement, however, may be more entrenched in librarianship than in other services, and it may be more difficult to effect a shift in the profession's self-image. It would be unfair not to acknowledge some changes currently taking place in response to this problem, notably the adoption of a code of ethics and the setting up of a Community Services Group within the Library Association. Alongside these developments, however, we have to note moves to deinstitutionalize librarianship, and the movement into the commercial sector by members of the profession—factors that could influence the Association's policies.

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Library Education in the Future

In this paper we have identified learning goals for students in degree courses and, by implication, certain relearning goals for professionals who trained under different circumstances. We assumed that the public library is an institution which, for historical and philosophical reasons, can and should provide a service for adult learners, given certain changes in current funding and practices. Changes in funding may well depend heavily on central government policies for continuing education in the population as a whole. Changes in practices will be influenced by the motivation, attitudes and skills of students at all levels as they move between education and practice. However, we also argued that one factor in changing professional attitudes will be a clearer understanding of the interaction between the library as an institution and the society in which it operates. Given the learning goals specified, we see certain changes as crucial to the professional education of librarians if the gains already identified are not to be lost.

For students with little or no work experience in libraries, the user-oriented curriculum will have to include not only a better understanding of the skills of interpersonal communication but also a keen appreciation of how learners' attitudes may have been acquired through their particular educational experience and how the educational system still influences choices and opportunities. In addition, students need to understand how management systems and organizational structures show fairness and efficiency; they need to see that these are social products and are not the only solutions possible. Therefore more attention must be paid to the core disciplines of psychology, social psychology, sociology, and management than is currently the practice. Although these fields are recognized as relevant, it is unusual, at least in Britain, for students to study any of them as disciplines in their own right, or to assess their ability to increase our understanding of people's behavior in libraries.

Continuing education for professionals needs to change its emphasis from updating existing techniques to considering how the paradigm of librarianship can be changed. In master's courses in staff management and organization theory at Leeds, we have found it difficult, but rewarding, to bring students to the point where they can externalize both the institution and the profession; they can then begin to assess how they interact as individual managers with both groups. Problems in this area are concerned with the ways in which funding and training are directed, and the extent to which the universities and polytechnics can continue to provide both flexible entry to courses and courses that
can integrate with the lifestyles of mature students. In our view it would
be detrimental if postexperience learning were to move any further away
from the institutes of higher education. Linked to this is the question of
research funding, a topic we have been unable to explore because of
complexity and lack of space, but it is alarming to note the lack of
empirical evidence to support our arguments (such as that provided by
Barnes and Burrington in their studies of the everyday working of
libraries).

Finally (and crucially) we must turn the spotlight on ourselves, and
ask to what extent library educators are either committed or competent
to effect the proposed curriculum changes. Lack of empirical evidence
again means that we shall have to rely on personal observation, and opt
for hypotheses that need testing, rather than reaching firm conclusions.
The following factors make some of the changes difficult to accomplish
in the short term.

The importance placed on the need for professionally qualified
staff in library schools and the current age structure of staff make it
difficult to introduce new disciplines into courses. It is much easier to
appoint new staff with experience in the new technologies, or in other
words, to continue the updating paradigm. Schools must therefore
either resort to servicing from other departments in the institution or
rely on existing staff to "retrain," either by acquiring extra qualifica-
tions or through redesigning courses. The first of these solutions is
unpopular on educational grounds and because of the internal institu-
tional politics of assessing staffing establishments (at least the British
polytechnics have this problem). The second solution is problematic
unless a rigorous career development policy is designed and followed.
Curriculum design in the polytechnics is also influenced by a time scale
for courses imposed by the validating body. It is too soon to assess the
effect of cutbacks in higher education, but it seems unlikely that these
will make institutions more adventurous in the foreseeable future. In
addition, the shortage of research funds has its most serious effect here,
since the research project has been one way of introducing new people
and new ideas into an institution.

The second feature that slows the rate of introduction of a change is
the structure of library schools and departments. Like those in the
libraries which they increasingly resemble, subject teams develop a life
of their own, and specializations which they are reluctant to give up. It is
much easier to take on new techniques to existing courses than it is to
shift the course emphasis to a critical examination of user needs and the
present institutional response. As we have seen, there are practical and
philosophical grounds for questioning the value of a completely integrated approach, and for arguing that radical change will only occur through a study of other disciplines and in the development of research that uses their tested theories and methodologies. It is important to recognize the undergraduate student's perceptions of the curriculum offered. In Britain, most students enter the higher education system with some idea of what lies ahead, since choices made at age eighteen will have been heavily influenced by choices made at age sixteen and even younger. Sixth-form courses in British schools are discipline-based and it seems illogical and confusing to the student to provide a course that is entirely "practical" and case-study oriented. The problem is oversimplified here: it deserves wider treatment elsewhere, especially as it has to do with debates about the nature and purpose of vocational courses. We do feel, however, that the argument about the extent to which courses should be theoretical or practical is a fruitless one. It is hoped that the earlier parts of this article have shown that it is possible to identify learning goals and the disciplines that will help students understand how to achieve them. Some of these disciplines are traditional to librarianship and some are not. If one of the prime tasks of any professional is to understand the findings of relevant research and apply it to the design of solutions to problems confronting him or her, then library education can only benefit from a more rigorous and multidisciplinary approach. What we need to do now is to extend the debate about libraries and adult learners from the question, "Who is providing what to whom in what forms?" to the much wider question about the nature of the professional task.

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