DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 243 890 SP 024 906

AUTHOR	Sullivan, Peggy
TITLE	Libraries and the Learning Society: Relationships and Linkages among Libraries.
INSTITUTION	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC. Center for Libraries and Education Improvement.
PUB DATE	[84]
NOTE	43p.; One of the five issue papers prepared by the "Libraries and the Learning Society" project, the response of the library community to "A Nation at Risk." For the final project report, see SP 024 901.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Libraries; *Delivery Systems; Independent Study; *Library Cooperation; Library Facilities; Library Instruction; Library Materials; *Library Networks; Library Personnel; Library Research; Library Role; *Library Services; Public Libraries; School Libraries
IDENTIFIERS	*Libraries and the Learning Society; Nation at Risk (A)

ABSTRACT

The easiest link for libraries to establish in relation to the learning society is the direct managerial link that many have with educational institutions. Libraries in schools, colleges, and universities of all kinds are significant parts of the education enterprise. They become more so when the emphasis of education shifts to independent learning and the need for access to a wide variety of materials. A learning society, however, is made up of learners, with diverse needs, whose access to information and reading materials may be limited to the public library. While libraries have individual missions, there are overlaps in the kinds of collections and other resources they offer. Each library must be small enough to be manageable, and each needs to be linked with other libraries. Coordination of effort means that some activities and resources may be divided among libraries and agreements reached about what will be borrowed or loaned. Linkages strengthen individual libraries when added to the traditional components of library services. Exchange of information and materials, communications, and cooperative decisions for some libraries in networks or consortia are becoming increasingly common. (JD)

LIBRARIES AND THE LEARNING SOCIETY

RELATIONSHIPS AND LINKAGES AMONG LIBRARIES

Peggy Sullivan

Dean
College of Professional Studies
Northern Illinois University

Whenever education is criticized or challenged, libraries must be considered. The publication of A Nation at Risk and other critiques of U.S. education today causes the library community to review its priorities and what it can do for the problems identified. Unfortunately, the main response tends to begin with a wistful: "But why weren't we mentioned?" This attitude is roughly comparable to that of the citizens of cities who write to editors of newsmagazines when their places of residence are not included in the list of those major cities most likely to be bombed in a sneak attack. The intent is to say: We are important, we do make a difference, and this should be recognized. But too often, this comes across as second-guessing rather than the reaction of a full participant in the educational enterprise.

LIBRARIES: WHAT THEY ARE

That libraries are participants in education can not be challenged. Whatever definition of education or learning is used, libraries are part of it. They are sources of information, open depositories of literature, sites for tutoring programs and almost every kind of self-help activity a community can envision, and they offer or are parts of many kinds of instructional programs. Libraries are part of education, but the parts they play vary by the kind of library they are as well as the location, the scope, the purpose, and the resources they have.

Range of Types of Libraries

The four major categories of libraries are public, academic, special and school. The latter three are by definition most likely to be parts of other institutions, but there are few hard and fast distinctions among libraries. While most research libraries are associated with universities, government and public

libraries are numbered among them also. Many libraries in schools and community colleges have taken on some of the characteristics of public libraries, opening their doors to the community and lending materials beyond their immediate publics of students and faculty, just as public libraries, especially in times when support has eroded, offer services and materials closely coordinated with the schools in their communities.

Each of these libraries has its subgroups also. Typically, one thinks of the closely-linked branches of a public library system, but there are networks of many kinds among libraries. These include the automated linkages of some law libraries, the extension-site branches of academic libraries, and the developing systems of multi-type cooperative library networks. Librarians and the libraries where they work have developed interesting mixes of autonomy and cooperation. And those mixes are shifting and changing all the time. The corporate library of a major industry may have a collection that stresses journals for the attorneys, accountants, and marketing experts who make up most of its clientele, but it may add some items of more general use if its location causes its users to rely on it for other reading materials, and it will surely need, from time to time, to use the resources of other libraries when a potential client or a possible merger requires background information in an area not earlier recognized as being in its purview.

It is too easy to generalize about libraries, to picture that all public library branches serve children, housewives and senior citizens; that school libraries, with their distinctive ties to the curriculum, have limited, very similar collections and clienteles; that academic libraries serve only the education-based needs of their publics, and that special libraries are small, one-person operations with emphasis on personal services. These may be characteristics of many libraries in each category, but the picture of libraries is richer, more diverse than those characteristics suggest.

In their relationships, libraries also have different patterns and purposes. A single library may be associated with other libraries because they are part of the same community or linked through a common management, but it may be related to another group of libraries because of similar purposes or patterns of organization, as various state universities within one state may be linked, while it shares bibliographic utilities with an entirely different mix of libraries. Each of these relationships may affect every aspect of the library's program of service. By agreements formal or informal, it may have been assigned a part of the collection for intensive development so that it may serve as a major resource for neighboring libraries in an area such as art, in return for assistance it may seek and get from another library in the cooperative effort that is emphasizing business or literature in its collection.

Uniqueness and Similarity of Missions

No two libraries have identical missions nor identical means for achieving them. It is hard to imagine that any library does not have as part of its mission a commitment to the learning society that is as broad as our civilization, and as narrow and focused as a neighborhood or a small group of users. Some libraries, notably those in schools and other academic settings, are committed to making it possible for users to use them more effectively, but even libraries that are seen as places for more personal service provide signage, personal assistance, and directions for users who wish to be able to conduct their own searches for material.

Margaret Edwards, former coordinator of young adult services at the Enoch Pratt Free Library and a champion of direct assistance to library users, maintained that the seven most hated words in the English language were: "Look it up in the card catalog." She was making the point that there should be space and time in a library's mission and in a librarian's day to provide help to any user who needs it. The demands that are generated by computer-assisted reference are simply an extension of those generated by searches in a card catalog

or any more traditional tool for the use of the library. There may be some confusion about library missions and learning when there is need to realize that there are levels to that learning, ranging from the flicker of an idea that comes from wide reading in a variety of sources to the most prosaic addition to an individual's store of information about how and where materials are located and accessed in a library's collection.

Library personnel are not always totally aware of what the full mission of their own libraries are, and they are often muddled about the missions of other libraries. When that is the case, how can a searching, learning public be better informed? One of the problems of supposedly cooperative networking is that library personnel may set limits on what they will provide for library users, with the limits based on rather narrow interpretations of mission rather than on the range of materials and services that are available within the network for the individual user. Knowing that a user has access to a special library at work or to a school library often causes a public librarian to refer the user back to those resources without exploring the public library collection as fully as might be justified. Arbitrary decisions about what will be made available to what kinds of public also obscure statements of purpose and mission. "We don't do that for students," or for children or for non-residents or for people who don't pay taxes or for people who can not for whatever reason get the service elsewhere is a negative statement of a mission that often contradicts the formal mission statement.

Students enrolled in formal programs of study are undoubtedly the group best served and acknowledged as a target audience by libraries in the U.S. Libraries in educational institutions acknowledge this appropriately and formally, but public libraries also devote much of their effort to service to students. Even when the library in a school or college or university states that its mission is to undergird the curriculum by excellent service to students, it may

make decisions that work against that stated mission and it may need to make interpretations that extend its mission beyond that of the institution where it is located.

It is in a library's interpretation of its mission and the decisions and actions based on that interpretation that its quality is established. There have been mindless decisions that, with hindsight, have some elements of humor were one not tinglingly aware that some similar ones are being enacted today. When the "new mathematics," for example, was introduced, some school librarians ruthlessly tossed out counting books because they were seen as contradictory to the emphasis of the curriculum. Similarly, there are academic libraries that take no responsibility for providing general reading for students or faculty because their lofty mission is to provide the materials required for study and research. The fact that resident students may not be eligible to use local public libraries or that other libraries and bookstores may simply be unable to provide general reading materials for the public in the college or university is simply ignored.

Just as a mind does not grow on what is cut down to fit it -- as librarians have maintained for years when they have resisted drastically abridged or edited versions of classics -- so a library does not grow or help others to grow when its interpretation of mission and of its public is narrow. There will always be tension between what a public needs and wants and what a library can provide, but the opportunities to ease that tension need to be explored more than some libraries have been willing to do in the past.

A library's mission requires constant review and dissemination. If it is understood by the staff, that is helpful; if understood by other librarians that have cooperative dealings with it or by its public, that is rare but highly desirable. Incorporation of new services or technologies almost inevitably change the mission somewhat. When catalogs on microfilm or automated circulation systems call users' attention to items they might not have known about

otherwise, their expectations are raised. They are more likely to request interlibrary loans or special purchases. When they know that the library uses a computer for some of its reference work, they begin to think it is reasonable for their home computers to be able to communicate directly with library computers to get information they want. The library's mission usually moves in the direction of expansion, and it is appropriate that it should. Consistent review and revision of the mission are desirable.

Rather like other library protocols or policies, mission statements may be diluted if they are treated too casually and changed with too little thought. When reaching out to new constituencies or offering new services, it is probably better to err on the side of being general and inclusive rather than being so specific that some groups may sense they are excluded or some services beyond the range of the library.

Libraries have commitments to quality as well as missions. Here, too, there is tension. There are those who believe that, in attempting to attract a new public or to offer a new service or even to improve some aspects of service, there will be a lessening of quality. There is a widespread sense of ambivalence in libraries about the urge to be excellent and the urge to offer equitable services to a variety of constituencies. The question that John Gardner asked twenty years ago: Can we be equal and excellent too? still rings in librarians' ears. In offering special assistance to students in remedial programs, will the library be giving less to gifted students? By adding videotapes for loan, will the library be stretching too thin the already-tight budget for materials? By being more aggressively involved in cooperative enterprises with other libraries, is there a risk of overwhelming the system with outside requests when there is much to be done in developing programs of service for the primary public?

Each library must determine its own answers to questions like these, just as each library must set its own mission. In the long run, it is the inde-

pendence and individuality of the library that will determine many of its decisions, although relationships with other libraries and recognition of interdependencies with them will surely affect those decisions.

Relationship to Learning

The easiest link to establish for libraries in relation to the learning society is the direct managerial link that a number of them have with educational institutions. Libraries in schools, colleges and universities of all kinds are certainly significant parts of the educational enterprise. They become more so when the emphasis of education shifts to independent learning, the need for access to a wide variety of materials, and the need for new publics to enter education.

Recognition of the value of English in education cries out for libraries in elementary and secondary schools to be essential resources for materials that will stimulate taste and pleasure as well as develop requisite skills in reading and writing. As A Nation at Risk and other critiques have noted, there is a quality gap between available textbooks and what students should have to read. Library materials can help to fill that gap, offering diversity of reading levels as well as diversity of subject matter for

students who will be expected to enhance their skills in English communication. If students are to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and use what they read, they are likelier to do so if they are not all reading the same materials. Exchange of ideas about what is read can be accomplished even if the teacher responsible for English instruction does not know every title or has not read every book that students are reading and sharing among themselves. Many library tools in common use can suggest materials on similar themes to stimulate discussion and real exchange of information.

Writing, listening, discussing ideas call for information but, more than that, they call for differences of opinion and background, testing for authority and accuracy, and evaluation of sources. While no subject area holds domain over

these activities, surely English courses and library skills instruction are necessarily involved. Effective coordination of the provision of skills for students to work independently in these areas should be the intent, so that some instruction may come in the English program, others from library personnel, but with understanding and information shared so that the best use is made of students' time, and so that the goal of learning these skills is seen as more significant than the means of doing so.

When it comes to knowing the literary heritage and its meaning for today's life and culture, libraries again must be recognized as essential. School and public libraries probably do their most effective jobs in this area at the elementary level, when it is easier to get agreement on what is good quality material and when reading levels, tastes, developmental levels and other characteristics of the readers are likelier to be similar than they are even in junior highs or high schools. Just as good teachers have always known about the need to capture and build on the right "teaching moment," library personnel as well as teachers need to be ready for good moments when suggestions about reading, viewing, listening can best be made.

In 1984, one should not have to point out that the literary heritage is not transmitted by books alone. There are special values in group activities, such as seeing films or listening to tapes or watching television in home or school settings that can enhance the values of the activities themselves. It may be that, when there are appropriate laments about the drastic budget cuts in materials or personnel, libraries need to turn more attention to targeting media that students can find more readily on their television sets. This is not to say that libraries should not be aggressively concerned with seeking budget improvements, but rather, that they should be sources of stimulus for students to increase their access to culture in many ways.

Library materials in mathematics and science have more often been seen as being "straight facts" than as being materials to stimulate wonder, discovery

and the testing of ideas and hypotheses. One of the significant publishing accomplishments of our time has been the increase of literate, thoughtfully searching materials in the areas of science and mathematics. Unfortunately, school libraries often have not been strong in these kinds of collections because they are not too neatly tied to the curricula of the schools, and it is the rare science or mathematics teacher who requires or permits -- or perhaps even knows about -- some of the materials that bring those subject to life beyond textbooks and tests.

It may be that public libraries will have to exercise their appropriate initiatives to call such materials to the attention of teachers and students whose interest in sciences may have been stimulated by recently recognized needs for more and better backgrounds in science. A sense of the constantly developing world of the sciences may best be demonstrated in journals where new findings or interpretations are reported, but it will not be enough to add these to a subscription list without making some effort to call them to the attention of those who would be interested if they had some introduction.

There is scarcely a community that does not have some industrial or research library where science materials are the major component of the collection. Students and teachers may need to be introduced to such resources, even if they can not or will not be regular users, but to get a sense of the range and variety of materials that move the world of science forward. In a time when the most isolated person must sense some concern about the effects of asbestos poisoning, acid rain, nuclear disarmament, or, on a more individual level, the effects of smoking or drugs, the development of artificial organs, or the selection of an appropriate diet, it is clear that it is not just the college-bound students who need this kind of materials in wonderful profusion

Libraries are in a distinctive, if not unique, position to reach all kinds of students. Those who shy away from the sciences may not realize that, if their goals are journalism or human services or any of a wide variety

of careers, the time will come when they will need to understand aspects of science in order to do their work. Libraries are places where the diversity of materials and the diversity of users should provide many lively and long-term interactions.

The social sciences, happily included among the New Basics, are oriented to methods and problems rather as the sciences and mathematics are, but there is a readier acceptance of linkages with them in libraries than is customarily true in the other areas -- probably because library personnel are more likely to be conversant with these fields. If the emphasis in these basics is to be on recognition of the understanding of times and places and ideas of some divergence, there should be no question that libraries must be focal to such studies. More than that, libraries, as sites for public meetings, debates, and presentations of films and other media, should be the natural places to test the great ideas of the social sciences.

There is no question that access to computers is one of the benefits that libraries were among the first to offer their publics. Use of computers for library-related searching should be taken for granted by students as well as by other library users. In schools, locations of computers in libraries can considerably extend access to them, and payoff in immediate values should be evident. It is important, however, to see that computers are not used just as a jazzier way to acquire the same information that one might get from a search through a card catalog or an index. If that is the case, it is probably a waste of resources. Computers have the capacity to provide more personalized services, and their capacities should be extended as far as possible. Bulletin board communications via computers have great appeal for young people especially, and these can be the means of stimulating the ideas and the testing of viewpoints that are noted as so essential both in the development of communication and in the building of sound ideas in the social sciences.

There has been confusion in libraries about the quantity and kind of materials to provide in foreign languages. Recent statements that English must be recognized as the major language of this country, and that proficiency in foreign languages is desirable to introduce students to other cultures, to heighten awareness and comprehension of English, and to serve the country's needs in commerce, diplomacy, defense, and education are welcome. Libraries are logical sources for the variety of materials in foreign languages that are required if the languages are to be well learned, and libraries are also the sources for many more materials about other cultures that need to be used in conjunction with foreign language study.

In some instances in the past, school and public libraries have limited their acquisition of foreign language materials to those based on a specific method of teaching or have provided general materials for non-English-speaking members of the public. The need for these materials still exists, but if libraries are to assist in the best implementation of recommendations for education, they need also to serve as bridges to English for new residents in the U.S. who may need to be stimulated and supported in their efforts to master English.

Cooperative collection development and exchanges of foreign language materials among libraries should be utilized so that the effort required to locate good library materials published in other countries can serve several libraries for the greatest economy of time and money. There is a tendency for eager readers of some foreign language materials to exhaust the collections available to them unless the collections are consistently developed and maintained with the variety and freshness that exchanges among several libraries can stimulate.

If the effort to create more competent readers in foreign languages is successful, there will ensue demands for library materials that appeal to these readers as part of their general reading diet. Periodicals in foreign languages are an immediate and relatively easy acquisition, but thoughtful development of publishing and imports in these areas will also have to occur if libraries are to be adequate sources for a cultured, bi- or multi-lingual public.

There is no aspect of curriculum that is separate or unconnected with libraries. Career and vocational materials and programs, guidance assistance for students entering the world of work or planning further study, and many links with the fine and performing arts are provided in libraries. These are areas where students' personal inclinations and ideas determine what they want and when they want it, so the settings of libraries should be good places for them to explore the wealth of available resources. Many educational and general media provide useful introduction or background about various careers, and the linkages that libraries have established in providing access to free and inexpensive materials from industries and government should serve students well in these areas. Especially in regard to information about vocations and careers, there is great need for good organization of materials for easy retrieval, along with the means to locate related materials on topics that might not be first requests. For example, the high school junior who is considering a career in health care may need to be encouraged to explore dietetics or industrial hygiene as well as the more traditional nursing or medical careers. Informed library personnel and well-organized, current collections are essential to assist in making these connections. It should go without saying that good relationships with guidance personnel in educational institutions is essential for libraries if these needs are to be served.

In referring to all the good basic learning that students should have before they enter secondary schools, A Nation at Risk observes that "These elementary years should foster an enthusiasm for learning and the development of the individual's gifts and talents." (p. 27) There could scarcely be a better definition of what can occur when elementary school children develop early and lasting pleasures in libraries. Planned visits by classes to the school or public library are only the tip of the iceberg. Access to a library for quick research or sustained effort in work on a project and acquaintance with libraries and

their contents from early ages are among the rights of every child. Unfortunately, just as federal funds in the mid-1960's gave elementary school libraries their biggest boost ever, the withdrawal of those funds has had impact on these programs that is drastic and tragic.

It is not easy to prove that elementary school libraries in themselves have a major effect on the children who have access to them. In a way, the libraries have been doomed by their successes. Where schools have invested wisely and well in the instructional program, elementary school libraries are a part of it, but then all the good components of instruction combine for excellence, and, by corollary, when good school libraries are missing, so are the other components of instruction that are essential for excellence. It also takes starving libraries a long time to die, and in elementary schools, where the need for current materials may not be as critical as in some other settings, students and teachers can survive for some time on a library collection that is not being sustained. But time is running out in many schools where this is the case. These libraries need to be revived, notably with personnel who can conduct sound library programs, as well as with materials.

Having noted that many libraries have their impact on learning whether they are located in educational institutions or not, we should also comment on whether they are primarily places for information or not. They must be both more than information places and less than information places. If information is taken to refer to all the resources that inform and inspire, stimulate and satisfy, offer questions as well as answers, then surely libraries are information places. But they are not merely locations where individuals or groups visit or call to add facts to their collections. Each library makes a slightly different decision about the extent to which the user must find information contrasted with the services provided to make information in the broadest sense accessible.

Questions about the extent to which library users are or should be independent in their use of libraries will probably be with us as long as there are libraries and users. Here, too, each library has some mix of responses. There may be telephone connections in the stacks of university libraries where people can get a quick answer on directions, just as there are in many public and special libraries telephone reference centers where questions are answered within the limits of carefully selected reference resources. With the technology of the telephone, tapes providing brief definitions of medical treatment or information for tenants or owners of pets have been developed in many libraries. However, it is frequently true that easy-access reference is not provided as readily to students as to other members of the public. The joke about the student who calls to ask for definitions of ten words -- evidently part of a homework assignment — and finds he can get only five at a time concludes with his outwitting the librarian by making as many additional calls as necessary.

What this points up is the need that can not be noted too often: libraries need good, consistent rapport with the faculties of schools so that student needs can be meshed with those of other parts of the public, and so that the purpose of homework assignments will not be lost by having too ready assistance from a librarian provide answers when it was the method of finding those answers that was one of the goals of the assignment.

Twenty years ago, heavy student use of public libraries for school assignments was so overwhelming that it was a major focus of an annual conference of the American Library Association. Since then, the dwindling emphasis on homework has virtually eliminated the problem in terms of heavy demand. However, if recommendations from current educational critiques do lead to increases in homework assignments, the problem could be with us again, and larger than ever. Since the number of elementary and secondary students who attend schools in neighborhoods other than their own is large and evidently growing larger, the

libraries in their communities may be ill-prepared with either information or other resources to assist them in their required studies. This points up the need for coordinated response among libraries to the recommendations being implemented to improve education. Every kind of library may need to be alerted to the quests that students will undertake if truly creative, demanding homework assignments are made. The purpose of those assignments will be thwarted if a few parents, for example, simply transmit the request to the special librarians in their places of work and carry answers or materials home. This underscores the need for all libraries, all librarians to be aware of the purpose of school requirements and committed to assisting in the most appropriate ways -- which may often mean saying, "No -- you may find that yourself," and, when necessary, providing the clues or guidance that makes the finding possible.

The need for excellent reference skills among library personnel (not just among librarians) is critical when school assignments are being considered. Interviewing, interpreting, listening, and trying out possible solutions are all part of the reference encounter. In recent years, fortunately, there has been more emphasis on these skills in the education of librarians. Unfortunately, there has been less emphasis on the need to know materials and to access them rapidly and well. In some instances, the prospect of referring users to other libraries has caused librarians to do that rather than to pursue elusive materials in their own libraries. Distinctions need to be made between too easy referral and using other libraries for referral when appropriate. Studies have been made of when the "end user" (i.e., the individual who actually wants information or material in a library) should use libraries' various technologies independently and when it is more cost-effective or efficient for a library staff member to conduct searches in data bases. Historically, this controversy repeats one that raged when the first libraries opened their stack areas so that users could enter them. The stakes are somewhat higher now, because access to many data bases is expensive, and wasted time counts heavily in tele-

communications costs as well as in computer time and the time of the user and others who may have to wait for access. Until computer proficiency is more widespread, it is probable that library personnel will conduct many searches for users, but the tide of demand for independence and the ability to exercise that independence are sure to rise. The people who joked once about replacing librarians with little black boxes may sense their jokes coming true. In the real world, however, what will continue to be needed for some time to come is guidance from library personnel about access to data bases and, perhaps equally essential, assistance in interpreting and using what is located there.

Publics Served

Among the things we know for sure when we deal with a learning society is that learners will be diverse in age, background, size, competence, and willingness to work to achieve their learning goals. Equally diverse are the means of achieving those goals. While some libraries -- often community college and public -- provide television monitors for students pursuing individual courses of study, there are others where reserve or reference collections, pamphlet files, and listening rooms provide a part of the response to the public's learning needs.

There is considerable overlap among these publics, and this is likely to increase. As high schools respond to criticisms of course offerings, they send busloads of students to community colleges or universities to take laboratory sciences in appropriate settings. Does the stude~~nt then~~ have to use the high school library for most courses, but go trailing back to the post-secondary institution for course-related materials there? When large numbers of students are involved, it is probably the library in the high school that should adjust and provide the required resources, but that may not be true when two or three computer geniuses from that same school take individually tutored classes at another location. Adults returning to school may be willing to drive miles for the courses they want once or twice a week, but it has been effectively proved that they will not

make additional trips to use the libraries at those same institutions. They may seek resources from libraries nearer where they work or live, regardless of the missions of those libraries. When libraries can readily meet such needs, there are no problems, but when special materials or equipment are requested, the students may be encouraged to go elsewhere to satisfy their needs. This is an area in which more aggressive cooperative efforts could have many good effects. Too often, a request from a student is discounted simply because it originates with a student. Competent assistance in the library may result in finding appropriate substitutes, and even more imaginative responses may lead to the establishment of mini-collections from the college or university library to satisfy such demands.

The libraries in educational institutions may have no direct way of knowing that students in their programs are making demands on other collections. The value of a well-used network of communications among libraries in a geographic area is that this kind of use can be reported and ways to address the needs can be discussed before the problem becomes too large or widespread.

The mobility of faculty is another part of the picture. In some schools, the end of the school day signals a total exodus, and few teachers frequent the school library before classes begin. A teacher in an inner-city elementary school commented to me at a workshop where many relevant books were displayed that she had no idea there were so many good materials she could be introducing to the children she taught. She had been regularly borrowing materials from the suburban public library near where she lived without ever finding stories that would be successful with the children in her school. Had she asked for assistance? No. Had she gone to any library in or near the school? No. Would this mismatch have gone on forever if she had not happened to attend the workshop? Alas, perhaps it would.

This also means that any library that serves an unselected public needs constantly to identify its users and their needs in order to provide the best service. While

there are good sources for strategies on conducting library community surveys, shrewd observation and open communications with the public can provide much useful information. A public transportation transfer point may be relocated, a school may change its time of closing, or a college extension course may relocate -- and all have their impact on library use patterns. Knowing the public in order to provide better service does not just mean learning a few names of regular users. It also means finding out more about where they come from, what their time pressures are, and how these and other characteristics may affect their use of libraries.

There is one group in the library public that may need more focused time in the library. These are the latch-key children, a large and increasing number of children of school age who are on their own from the time school is out until parents or responsible adults return home for the day. Several studies of this group of children have presented information about the loneliness, fear, and potential dangers they feel or create. Several of the studies have concluded that what is needed is a community institution that will permit the children to come in, perhaps registering so that their parents will have some record of where they are, engage in activities or read, and leave for home after a few hours. One would think that this is practically a description of the public library, but the longstanding resistance of children's librarians to serving as quasi-babysitters is the major obstacle toward working out some reasonable program of services for latch-key children. It may be that longer school days, as proposed in A Nation at Risk and elsewhere, will alleviate or resolve this problem. If not, it is surely one for more careful study and action by those who would lead public libraries into new social responsibilities.

The joining of efforts to provide better library service from all kinds of libraries begins with communications, an increase in understanding of other kinds of libraries and their missions and resources. In effective systems, newsletters or bulletin-board use of computer terminals among libraries can supplement tele-

phone communications, but somewhere in the planning, meetings, preferably held in some of the cooperating libraries, or scheduled visits should enhance interests and potentials for cooperative service to the learning society. It is more complicated than most people realize to plan a "librarin-for-a-day" activity in which library personnel exchange locations for a day, but it can be a most productive experience. Actually having to use the collection in another library and to recognize some of the problems it or another kind of public can create can do much to increase understanding of other libraries. From that understanding comes more effective cooperation.

Planning for any large-scale or long-term cooperative venture, such as a delivery system or automated circulation control, requires communications on many levels. It is difficult to keep all levels of staff within one library or system informed, and increasingly complex to see that decisions are made at appropriate levels and communicated where and when they need to be known. Totally open communications, with whole library staffs speculating on when bids will be opened or who will win out in the matter of getting morning rather than afternoon deliveries, can be destructive. Communications need to be managed just as libraries need to be managed.

School libraries are traditionally the last type of library to be included in any multi-type cooperative of libraries, and this also means that they often come in when the initial bursts of enthusiasm and injections of funding have passed. Often, school libraries are deliberately delayed when they request access to systems, because of two stereotypes that still prevail: all school library collections are alike, so they won't have much to offer, and school libraries are self-sufficient because of the limited demands made of them. Neither of these has much validity today, but the stereotypes persist. A major effort needs to be made to stimulate and assimilate school libraries to be active parts of formal cooperative efforts among various types of libraries.

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

As has been discussed, libraries have individual missions, but there are overlaps in the kinds of collections and other resources they have to offer, as well as in the publics they serve. Planning of libraries has been encouraged, but on the whole, it has not been effective, and current fiscal constraints have further limited good planning.

Evaluation of Libraries

Judging what is good about a library is somewhat more difficult than to judging what is good about a school. There are many focuses of interest, many kinds of services -- to individuals, to groups, to the community beyond the library -- to explore and to evaluate. One of the most promising suggestions of recent years has been that libraries should be evaluated in terms of what they do rather than what they have. While it is certainly true that libraries without resources of many kinds can not provide for their publics' needs, it is too true that libraries may have resources but not display or utilize them effectively, perhaps not even have the resources appropriate for their public.

No statement of standards for libraries has ever been ideal. There is, first of all, discussion about whether standards really are minimums or optimums, whether any library meets them if they seem too high, whether they are worth considering if they are too low, etc. And yet, there is a certain reassurance in counting things: books, people, transactions, chairs, hours. Some standards and measures are essential if libraries are to be able to justify themselves in budget discussions or to describe and compare themselves adequately when considering cooperative efforts with other libraries. Designation of a library as a good one to turn to when others have not been able to fill a request requires recognition of the quality and quantity of resources that make it a good prospect when other library resources have been exhausted.

When determining the extent to which libraries really serve the learning society, however, evaluative techniques must consider the extent to which libraries sti-

mulate as well as satisy their publics. A library that appears to be totally self-sufficient is probably disappointing its users more frequently than one that regularly calls on other libraries for assistance. The learning society demands libraries that lead to other resources and that establish the connections that people need to utilize them. These connections may be truck deliveries of interlibrary loans, telephone responses to questions, or computer linkages with data banks.

It is practically axiomatic to note that library users who are accustomed to good service and at least adequate resources are more demanding than those who have no idea what a library can provide. User satisfaction, in itself, is not an adequate means of evaluation, but it does give some useful clues for assessment.

Planning

Short- and long-range plans for libraries abound. They are not of uniform quality, and probably the long-range plans are more likely to be extant and of fair quality. What tends to be lacking is a relationship between plans and reality, a charting of steps to be taken to achieve the goals of the plan. Almost every kind of library would benefit from reviewing or writing such plans anew. Doing this at a time when the need for libraries to be recognized -- and to recognize themselves -- in relation to the learning society could well lead to clearer recognition of what libraries need to do to serve better the needs related to learning.

Only by planning and comparing later activities with timed goals can libraries get a sense of what they are really accomplishing. Often, there are ideas afloat to the effect that public librarians will visit schools regularly. Without a plan and a record of when such visits were made, too often the time between the visits extends for longer and longer periods. Some services may be seasonal, but they need to be planned well in advance, and, when they involve other libraries or educational institutions, those schedules and priorities also need to be part of the plan. Some efforts that may initially appear to be uncoordinated can be

repeated and offered again until they become parts of significant coordinated efforts. A public library supervisor of children's services, for example, was constantly annoyed that she was not invited to speak at the first public school teachers' meeting of the fall. She and her colleagues offered to speak to faculty meetings in every school instead, a practice which seemed to be redundant, but which was widely welcomed. The school library supervisor invited her public library colleague to the opening meeting, and the visitor's eyes were opened to the problems of information overload. When eventually she achieved her goal of being on the program, she continued the well-established practice of talking to faculty in their own schools, where questions and discussion flowed more freely, and where a more personal relationship could be achieved.

Coordination of Libraries in Systems, States, etc.

Cooperative accomplishment among libraries are matters of history and current accomplishment. Most of them have been achieved by moral suasion, with libraries combining forces to improve or extend services. However, many cooperative efforts have been strongly supported by funding patterns that have rewarded those libraries willing to cooperate. State library agencies, for example, have sponsored workshops on better supervision of personnel bringing together directors of small and medium-sized public libraries to stimulate more cooperation among them, or they have offered computer terminals to libraries that will sign on for a common circulation system. Cooperation has certainly thrived in atmospheres like these.

Coordination is something else again. What is often missing in cooperative efforts is real coordination so that services and resources are planned as efficiently as possible. When funding has been the carrot that encouraged cooperation, withdrawal of funding for whatever reason has all too often been the cause for stoppage or slowdown in working toward a common goal. Coordination implies leadership and a recognized direction of effort. These are not always present in the simplest cooperative efforts.

Well-established systems of libraries are coordinated efforts. A problem that has beset libraries through all time has been that each library needs to be small enough to be manageable, and it needs to be linked to other libraries, but if they are only similar small nodes in a network, they may not offer real strength. Coordination of effort means that some activities and resources may be divided among the libraries, some agreements reached about what will be borrowed and loaned. Government document collections, for example, may be in different depths in different locations, but an information service can call attention to those government publications that would be "good buys" in other locations.

One of the best benefits of the decades of strength of the Library Services and Construction Act was the strength it offered to state library agencies. Not all have had long-term success, but many used that period of growth to become forceful advocates for library development in their states and real coordinating agencies, providing the stimulus for reference networks, relationships with library education programs for pre-service and in-service education, and leadership in planning and evaluation of library service throughout the state.

There is a dark side to this picture. Often state library agencies have no rapport with school libraries within their states. Or the rapport may be informal and fairly ineffective. This has often been a barrier to truly effective coordination of planning among all types of libraries within the state. While it is desirable for school library consultants in state agencies to be associated with the education branch of state government, they need to have the freedom to work across agency lines to establish good liaison with state library colleagues. In some states, where the state library agency is housed in the education unit, this effort still needs to be made because school library consultants or supervisors are in another part of the unit. There is some irony in the fact that when state library personnel were fewer, they were better able to keep in touch with colleagues and to work toward common goals even with resources more meager than those available to them today.

Constraints

Problems of turf, as suggested above, are constraints on cooperative effort among libraries and, indeed, can be problems even in the provision of services to individuals. It is not uncommon for libraries within the same cooperative system to have conflicts about which one can better serve a community that lies on a mutual border. There are instances, too, when the cooperative system can result in poorer service to areas that are not initially well served. If, for example, a neighboring public library offers excellent resources, many residents of a community with more limited quality of library service are attracted to the better library. The losers, in the long run, are the residents of the community with the poorer library who do not have the means of transportation or the personal drive to stimulate them to go where resources are better. There was a time when, in a situation like that, those with drive would turn their energies toward improving what was theirs. Now, with cooperative systems and reciprocal borrowing, there is less incentive for this kinds of leadership. And often it is the school population who suffer most, because children are more limited in where they can travel and students in high schools may not have the time or transportation to go beyond their own library.

Just as the attitudes of leaders in librarianship led to the development of good cooperative systems, it is attitudes of librarians and others that place constraints on them. Reasons or excuses for not linking resources with other libraries can be based on apparent strengths as well as weaknesses. Some library personnel assess their own views of what is right for the patron rather than exploring a patron's real need and interest. The stories of libraries that refuse to request an item on interlibrary loan because they do not wish to borrow from a smaller or less prestigious library are not just apochryphal.

The directors or trustees of those libraries may not even be aware of value judgments made by members of their staffs, but that does not help the patron who is caught in a kind of power squeeze.

Lack of financial resources is the most significant constraint on the ability of libraries to achieve their goals and expectations. This also results in a malaise among library personnel when their problem is not lack of imagination, will, or competence, but rather the lack of resources to provide the best services and materials to their patrons. When limited finances also result in limited personnel -- both in the sense of numbers of people employed and in the quality of staff available to work for low salaries -- the role of librarians as advocates for better service and as designers and providers of that service is diminished.

COMPONENTS OF LIBRARY SERVICES

The services that libraries offer to the learning society are determined by the amount and kind of personnel, materials, and physical facilities that can be deployed to provide those services. To these traditional compoents of service must be added one that cuts across all of them and that can increase their individual strengths when well utilized: that is the linkages among libraries.

Personnel

The people who provide library services are not all direct providers. The quality of service is determined by those who make decisions about the layout of physical facilities as well as by those who decide how many subject headings will be permitted for accessing juvenile materials. Michael Buckland has commented on the "bittiness" of librarianship, and this may apply to the need for concern about what may appear to be minor details as well as to the fractioning of library personnel into many different specializations and competencies.

Librarians form the major professional component of library service, but among their professional colleagues in libraries are public relations specialists, personnel officers, accountants, and others. In public service areas, librarians are assisted by other specialists as well as by a variety of personnel including technical assistants and others who assist in the myriad tasks of library service. Librarians are most likely to come from backgrounds where the humanities, social sciences, or education were their college specializations. As a result,

high value is placed on librarians with strengths in the sciences and mathematics. As school curricula emphasize those areas more, this value is likely to increase. Understanding the structure of a discipline is essential if one is to provide the best library service to resources and students in that discipline, but the real specialization in librarianship is in the identification, organization, and implementation of resources in a variety of disciplines. There is also need for people who can work well with diverse publics, interpreting people as well as library resources in order to bring the two together to best effect. Library personnel are usually public employees. Their numbers are not always sufficient in terms of service needs, even when there are limited opportunities for employment. Their orientation toward service also means that they may accept positions with salary and status far inferior to the levels their education and competence should demand. If anything, their salary and status, on the whole, are on at least as low a level as teachers, but, because in any community, they are likely to be fewer in number than teachers and difficult to classify in collective bargaining or other pro-active groups of public employees, they have usually been ineffective in improving their status. Add to that the fact that, with positions being more limited because of fiscal constraints, some library personnel are willing to work for far less than appropriate compensation, and the best and most promising newcomers to the field may be irresistibly drawn either to the more entrepreneurial parts of the profession or to other fields, and there is a lessening in quality of personnel that causes the cycle of low pay and low status to reinforce itself.

Many libraries have long traditions of effective use of volunteers, and their contributions to librarianship need to be recognized and appreciated. There are many kinds of work for volunteers to accomplish in libraries, but ideally, they need direction, coordination, and opportunities for education to perform at the highest level possible. Investment in volunteer programs can be another cooperative effort shared by several libraries. This is not to say that volunteers can

not carry major responsibility for some programs. Tutoring programs in public libraries targeted for out-of-school adults as well as for students have benefited from the work of volunteers. There is considerable appeal in working with adult illiterates, but often more skill and patience are required than are first apparent. For these roles also, volunteers need to be carefully selected and provided with the resources they need for success.

Materials

The collections of library resources are characterized by their diversity in formats, levels of difficulty, and organization. The content of collections is affected by many external factors, notably the budget available for purchase of materials and the space to house them, but also by availability of materials in other centers. Reserve collections, for example, in many academic libraries have been transformed as paperback books have become more readily available in bookstores, but increasing costs may cause a shift back to the library's providing many titles in considerable duplication.

Every library balances needs that are immediate with those that are either less obvious or deferable to some other resource. Providing materials for students usually carries the requirement that many items should be available to circulate, but that may work against the research and reference needs of other groups in the academic community. Libraries have often taken the stance that they must set limits on materials purchased for general collections in order to serve scholars in the community more effectively. And yet, much of that service to scholars may consist of steady interlibrary borrowing from richer, more relevant collections.

Serial publications are like anchors of the library collection. Essential they are, but their sheer weight and the commitment that libraries tend to have toward continuing what has been begun have caused larger and larger percentages of library budgets to be devoted to their maintenance. Even their housing and physical arrangement raise some of the toughest questions about library collections. Ought

they be kept as separate items for multiple access or bound or located together in what may appear to be more logical order? While photocopying has eased some problems of access to journals and other serial publications, and considerable improvements have been made in indexing and providing subject access to them, serial publications are a resource that the learning society recognizes as essential without being near anything like agreement on their relative values.

Computer software, videodiscs and videotapes as well as more traditional media are especially significant in libraries serving students. Even libraries that pride themselves on being organized in orderly subject categories usually make exceptions for some collections to be by format. One reason that students especially need orientation to specific libraries in addition to overall information about how to use libraries is to call their attention to such variations in access. If libraries are to participate in the cultural awakening of students as well as in other aspects of their education, they must also provide either in the library or in some convenient location opportunities to use the varied media they include in their collections.

In educational settings, libraries usually benefit from recommendations for purchase from various parts of the user community. Selection is not exclusively, nor, in many instances, primarily the task of library personnel. Their task is to develop cooperatively with the community the policies and guidelines for rational selection of materials. Collections that do not include some materials that offend some people are probably not providing the ranges of opinion and the variety of formats that a learning society should demand. The biggest impediment to collections that stimulate ideas is probably the selector's fear of being responsible for purchasing and providing what may seem less than "safe." Thus, high school students are delayed in their encounters with adult materials, and elementary school students find nothing that is controversial on their school or public library shelves. Libraries need occasionally to remember that it is ideas, not things, that are their content.

Physical Facilities

Libraries are places. Because they are, library personnel who are responsible for them have responsibilities different from those of teachers who are more like tenants than proprietors of classrooms. Libraries require different kinds of space for materials and people and their various kinds of interaction. Even the most limited branch of a public library may be expected to offer some reference services, some space for quiet study, a place for a conversation among students, and a place for library staff to work. On larger scales, demands for all these activities and for access at round-the-clock times are considerably increased.

Libraries in educational settings need to maintain their close associations with the rest of the institution as well as an atmosphere that is conducive to the best use of the library itself. The problems of discipline and community malaise that affect education today are highly visible in libraries, too. In an ideal society libraries would be pleasant communal gathering places. The fact is that, because they are often large and impersonal, and because they have no single place for the focus of attention (as laboratories, for example, are more likely to have), libraries may exemplify the worst of settings when they become gathering places for gangs or are divided up into units of workers, drones, and mischief-makers.

Libraries have long since given up the pretence of being quiet places. Library personnel today probably spend more time defending the need for the noise of business (copying machines, computers, typewriters, seminar rooms, etc.) than they do insisting on relative quiet. In any accessible setting, either within a larger building or in a building of their own, libraries must have good traffic patterns, and when well planned, these can encourage better use with less noise and discipline problems. Library hours typically are far longer than those of the instructional programs they serve directly or indirectly, so the facility needs to allow for individual use with some personal security.

Linkages

Linkages among libraries include formal compacts as well as casual, friendly telephone conversations. Essential to them are mutual understanding of various libraries' goals and priorities. The exchange of information and material is probably the most visible, most customary result of linkages, but communications through microcomputer "bulletin boards" and cooperative decisions for some libraries in networks or consortia to take special responsibility for some areas of collection development are becoming increasingly common.

Communications among library personnel should include discussions of common concerns or problems, not just accounts of solutions. Sharing of personnel is probably one of the under-represented aspects of cooperative linkage, but one that needs to be explored and developed. As some age groups within the learning society decline in proportion to others, it makes sense for library personnel who are age-level specialists to serve in more than one location or library so that access to their special competencies is as available as possible to the public that needs them.

In order to call to public attention the accomplishments as well as the needs of libraries, linkages need to be maintained so that the library community can speak effectively for itself. There are constant shifts of alliances in regard to public policy, including legislative development. Libraries may need to band together to assert the right of a public librarian to place on general shelves a title that is considered highly controversial by some people in the community, and they may also need to combine forces to speak to the need for maintaining fiscal support for school libraries within a community. Other issues, such as response to monopolistic practices among library suppliers or questionable pricing by library jobbers, also must from time to time be addressed by libraries. Library associations at any level can not carry these burdens alone. As the communication systems among libraries become more sophisticated, so may the abilities to represent library concerns effectively to the public at large.

LEADERSHIP IN LIBRARIANSHIP

Librarianship is strongly oriented toward service, toward practical solutions, and toward the present. Its leadership needs to question these orientations by challenging some emphases and by looking toward both past and future for better models and new or rediscovered ideas. It is intriguing to note, in a profession dedicated to providing resources for others, that it is sometimes easier to repeat an experiment and to announce the "new" finding than it is to persude library personnel to search for solutions in the literature which is a part of their stock in trade.

Educational Programs for Librarianship

The major sources for library personnel are library education programs. Most librarians possess masters degrees in librarianship, but there are variations in professional requirements. There has never developed the career ladder that many people thought was promising where an individual might move up through various technical levels to achieve education as a librarian. This is primarily because there is widespread belief that the best educational background for librarians includes the broadest kind of undergraduate education capped by a masters degree in librarianship.

One effect of this is that most library education programs are free-standing masters degree programs in colleges or, more often, universities. As such, they are lacking in the numbers and the clout that would make their institutional identity clearer and their existence more secure. Having decided that undergraduate education in librarianship was, for the most part, inappropriate for the profession, education programs and the American Library Association, the accrediting agency for all programs in the U.S. and Canada, went rather systematically about the task of creating these fragile masters degree programs. Budget crunches of recent years have called attention to their vulnerability; some have already been wiped out, and more are likely to follow.

There has always been some concern about whether school librarians are part of this same educational program for librarianship are not, and the debate rages

anew as the library profession pores over A Nation at Risk. Historically, many school librarians entered that field of librarianship after some years of teaching, and their allegiances and many of their strengths lay in teaching. As school librarianship needed more people, many came to it from library education programs, having achieved the necessary state certification as teachers, usually by combining education courses and library science courses. Often, library education programs have tracks for students wishing to earn school library certification , but it would seem to be inappropriate to return to school library education programs housed exclusively in schools of education. It is bad enough that school librarians are often excluded from other mainstream library concerns such as networking. To exclude them from the outset of their professional education would be a mistake.

In what now seems to have been the high tide of library education programs in the late 1960's when they were more numerous and stronger, the promise of having library education at the masters level within easy geographic reach of all comers seemed to be on the verge of achievement. There has always been a conflict between having library schools become special in their directions and having them provide appropriate general library education programs for a geographic area. They are by no means evenly distributed across the country, and some have created pockets of under-employed librarians because place-bound graduates have clustered near their alma maters. There is limited evidence to support the idea that people will decide , in any significant numbers, to relocate at considerable distances to attend the library education programs of their choice.

On the other hand, too few library schools are willing to admit that there really are career plans they do not serve well. Although ALA accreditation requires special or single-track programs to designate themselves, it does not require programs of limited offerings to state they are not appropriate for all fields of librarianship. Fortunately, many students entering library education programs are embarking on second careers or additional degrees, and they usually

have the ability and experience to determine for themselves how to design programs and select courses that suit their purposes. What they more often do not know for sure is the wide variety of opportunity librarianship offers, so they may prepare with too narrow a view of the field.

There is another problem related to the fact that many librarians come from other careers. Often, those careers are in teaching, and in some instances,especially in recent years, doctorally-prepared potential faculty members have found librarianship a refuge from their own crowded fields. In their earnestness to identify themselves as librarians and perhaps in relief in having left teaching, many librarians eschew any activity that smacks of teaching. They have been encouraged to become tutors in libraries, to offer literacy programs to adults, to serve as teachers in various ways. And, usually overwhelmingly, they have responded in the negative.

School librarians have been the notable exception. They are in many instances directly involved in the teaching process, meeting classes on a regular basis, supplementing classroom study with appropriate presentations on research, giving book talks as classes begin wide reading, presenting media related to the instructional program. And, in a more recent enthusiastic move, academic librarians have become more active as teachers of library skills and research. Notably missing are library educators, who might serve several purposes by taking more responsibility for introduction to research in undergraduate programs, and who could thus build a strong base for the masters degree programs with which they are associated.

Research

A characteristic of American professional development has been the constant testing of its research and innovations against the practice of the field. Actually, this has often meant that research has justified or codified innovation rather than stimulating it. Thus, ideas about better outreach programs in public libraries or how to conduct reference interviews have usually been based on

observation of practice, the gathering of many comments and recommendations, and reporting them to a wider audience, rather than on the development of ideas in the abstract and dissemination of them as responses to a commonly recognized problem.

Some of the best research about librarianship has been conducted in other fields, such as education, history, or human behavior. Within librarianship, researchers who are recognized as leaders in the profession are more likely to be recognized because of their activity in professional organizations or their more popular writings directed to practicing librarians, than for what they consider their best research.

Combined with these as problems is a mistrust on the part of librarians for research in their fields. They look askance at library history and thus doom themselves to repeat some of its wackier mistakes. They question studies that can not be replicated and are reluctant to replicate ones that are meant to be tried in other settings. By and large, they do not engage in, read, nor benefit from research in their own field.

It may be a forlorn hope, but it does seem that the way to improve this situation is to stimulate better communication and sense of purpose among library educators and their colleagues in the field. While awards and seminars devoted to research have increased in recent years, they have not yet had significant positive impact in increasing either the quality or quantity of research. And the spurt of numbers of librarians with doctoral degrees that came in the past fifteen years appears to have subsided without dramatically increasing the number or the quality of library researchers. Too many of these people have been caught up in administrative posts, where the doctorate is highly desirable in some areas, and they have not been able to follow their own inclinations or to build on ideas they developed in doctoral research.

Communication among Librarians

Especially when networking and other cooperative efforts are the topic, the communication channels used by librarians warrant some emphasis. A major chan-

rol, often disregarded, is their participation in organizations. There are library organizations at many geographic levels and ones where people gather according to the type or size of library they represent as well as ones where members are from the same areas of specialization within librarianship. These organizations provide channels for communication and ways to deal with mutual problems; they offer a path to leadership for librarians who may feel frustrated in their jobs, especially as job mobility is more limited; they provide a way to express to a larger public the common concerns of librarianship in areas such as intellectual freedom, legislative needs, general public support, to name a few.

Library organizations appear to be the likeliest ways to make different kinds of librarians aware of other kinds of libraries. Ideally, librarians should belong to a mix of the organizations: one or two toward which they have more to contribute than to gain, and one or two from which they stand to benefit rather that to give. Also, some should provide them reassurance by giving a sense of unity of purpose with others like themselves, while other groups introduce them to colleagues whose goals and jobs may be vastly different. What better agencies could there be to sponsor librarian-for-a-day exchanges or discussions of different career paths or different ways of dealing with problems?

These references to library organizations are to local, primarily social gatherings as well as to national or state associations, which may be highly structured. Library school alumni organizations may be among them, and so may users groups as those using a bibliographic utility or other cooperative service gather to set policies or to be instructed on what they are sharing.

Library periodicals do a good job of linking the field, although they, too, are sometimes divisive, with some groups of librarians avidly reading journals that are scarcely recognized by title by other groups. Theme-oriented issues appear to be becoming more popular, and these may further divide the readership, with

hospital librarians, for example, reading only the issue of a journal that is devoted to their special concerns. The economics of journal publication seem to be melding the characteristics of monographs and journals in professional areas, and the impact this may have on communication among librarians promises to be interesting to watch.

ISSUES

Many challenges have been offered to librarianship, and nearly all of them relate to the needs of the learning society. The nature of librarianship and those engaged in it makes it more inclined to find common causes than to identify and to deal with issues. As a profession of generalists, librarianship offers scope and space enough that one may spend a lifetime in it without dealing with some of its major issues. This is not to say that one may not have been affected by them, but often it is the symptoms of the issue, rather than the issue itself, that most affects the individual. For example, as has been noted, "safe" materials are regularly purchased and those that might be questioned (note the "might be") are not purchased. While the issue is censorship, it is the prospect or possibility of censorship, rather than the actuality, that drives the softer decision. Nonetheless, there are issues that need to be noted so that they are parts of the discussion of libraries and the learning society.

Libraries Are Reactive Rather Than Pro-Active

To some extent, this characteristic is appropriate. Libraries can probably best shape and serve the societies where they are located by responding to them. To be reactive does not mean the same thing as being passive, but it does suggest the need to acquire information before mounting campaigns or initiating services. When libraries are at their best, they are doing that. Perhaps more important, they should be setting their goals and determining their programs in accord with the distinctive needs of their communities rather than in imitation of successful libraries elsewhere.

Community Focus vs. General Scope

It is foolish to believe that libraries must be distinctive in their selection of what will best serve their communities when they are, after all, drawing on the same generally available materials for their collections. What is important is for libraries to recognize their obligations to the communities they serve as well as their relationship to a broader society. In providing service to a learning society, for example, libraries can not wait for the community to formulate its needs or to outline its plans. The offering of some services should lead to the demand for others. Sometimes, this may be fairly direct, as when adults working to achieve high school equivalency come across media that help them with one part of the curriculum and find in them references to other media in other subjects, and the library assists by locating and providing that material.

Varying Patterns of Communication and Organization among Librarians

The different settings and sizes of libraries in which librarians are employed mean that their means of communication and observation of each other are considerably varied. Many impressions of the quality of colleagues' leadership are more likely to be based on observation at professional meetings or classes than on seeing what the person is like at work. On the other hand, in libraries where a number of librarians work together, especially in public service, they are likely to be a close-knit (if not always mutually respectful or congenial) group with strong senses of one another's strengths and weaknesses. Their interest in organization extends to organizing themselves, but there are issues here, too.

How effectively have librarians, with all their organizations, presented the case for appropriate salaries and prestige? They have been far more occupied with dealing with the need for more money for resources or campaigns to keep costs of materials low. Their organizations need either to become somewhat

more militant and informed concerning needs for salary and status improvements, or to yield to organizations such as unions that may address those needs more successfully. The apparent failure of the continuing effort to have librarians in the federal government continue to be classed in appropriate professional levels occurred in spite of hasty alliances among library groups and consistent effort on the part of some librarians and library leaders.

The formal literature of librarianship, as has been noted, has changed, for the most part for the better, in recent years. One of the kinds of material no longer so easily accessible is the "how-we-do-it-good-in-our-library" report. However, some reports of this kind are needed to address current concerns of the learning society. It is not always new information or hypotheses that are needed; how ideas are implemented, evaluated, and maintained in practice also needs to be documented. It may be that in this regard, librarianship has thrown out the baby with the bath water, and needs to encourage such documentation.

Another result of more emphasis on librarians as published writers (partly caused by the maturation of the profession, partly by tenure and promotion and other status requirements in libraries) is that it is not as easy to obtain by purchase or loan such materials as libraries' reports, policy statements, manuals, etc. One reason suggested for this curtailment is that the people who produce the materials are retaining them as evidence of their scholarship or service, rather than sharing with others.

Social Environment Factors and Libraries

Libraries are social as well as educational institutions that must respond to many factors that affect the social environment. The composition of the population, for example, with increasing portions of it among the aging, affects librarianship not only in changing the composition of its user groups, but also in reflecting that changed composition among those who work in libraries. Patterns of advancement can not be determined from observation of people who have preceded

younger colleagues. For entire careers, some of the most promising recruits ever attracted to librarianship will be struggling within the overpopulated "baby boom" group, and their opportunities for leadership will never be what they deserve. Ironically, the thinner ranks of their seniors include many people who have been thrust into leadership roles for which they are poorly equipped, but who are unlikely to yield them to junior colleagues.

Strategies that have worked well with some age groups in libraries need to be evaluated for their extension to others. Facile judgments about adapting techniques that worked well with groups at one age level to working with groups -- e.g., providing programs for senior citizens based on techniques use with children -- are usually wrong. Demands for group activities in libraries need to be weighed against the needs to provide space and time for individuals on some equitable basis. The learning society needs individual attention as much or more than it needs group programming, but it is easy for the individual to get overlooked in planning.

Library service to minorities has tended to be among the newer emphases of libraries, often supported with "soft money," and most endangered when budgets are cut. There is probably no strategy of service to minorities that is good that is not based on generally sound library theory and practice. Recognition of minorities as major potential users of libraries is fairly general. Orientation of services to attract them both as library users and library supporters requires some reallocation of resources, but the emphasis should be on integrating services to minorities rather than leaving them as vulnerable, high-unit-cost parts of library service.

Service to Specific Groups vs. General

If the enthusiasm to serve the learning society in libraries results in many targeted programs providing for students (or, worse yet, some classes of students, such as full-time or college-bound or gifted), the results may be disappointing

if not disastrous. Arbitrary determinations of who is entitled to what services work against effective library service to the learning society. While it is difficult to identify what needs are to improve library service on an overall basis, and even more difficult to evaluate such improvements, it is broad-based improvement that will, in the long run, be most effective in making libraries significant in the learning society.

Relationships to Instruction

Library programs need to be based on information about what instructional programs are without being limited to providing only for narrowly defined instructional requirements. Undergirding the curriculum is a long recognized function of school libraries, but it is not their only function. Collection development, services, and facilities will obviously be affected by what instructional programs are, but they can not be limited to the stated needs of those programs.

The means of informing libraries' publics about how to use libraries to best effect must vary according to the publics' needs and availabilities in terms of time, travel, etc. Unified programs of library orientation with some of the responsibility for their design and implementation lodged in libraries make a lot of sense, but close coordination with other academic units is needed to avoid costly overlap and confusion. The same kind of coordination is needed so that libraries will provide what is needed in terms of the curriculum without having to interpret needs through the sometimes faulty reporting or requests of students.

Whenever there is renewed interest in the basics, under whatever rubric the basics are described, there is usually loss of interest and support for libraries. At this time, libraries need to make strong affiliations with the basic educational programs that are being strengthened, without losing their linkages with such aspects of the educational program as those for the gifted, the handicapped, the special learners, etc.

Library Education

Although library education is blamed for much of what is wrong with librarianship, especially its conservative characteristics, whenever reform or improvement is attempted, library educators are usually first among those asked to assist, as well as among those first to note the needs and directions for change. Better rapport and mutual respect between library educators and their colleagues in library service are recognized needs, but in addition, there is need for library educators to gain increased respect from their academic colleagues. Professional education is often seen as some kind of technical-school program even by fairly open-minded academics. Library educators need to work to destroy such attitudes. Resulting improvements in status and recognition for themselves would have similar efficacy for practicing librarians.

If, as a result of recent critiques of education, the teaching profession polices itself by requiring competency tests for pre-service students and more stringent certification requirements as well as standards for continuing education, librarianship would do well to incorporate to the extent practical as many of those more stringent requirements as possible. Especially when the masters degree in librarianship is being challenged as the standard for entry-level professional positions, the possibility of nationally coordinated examinations deserves more careful exploration than it has received in the past.

Among the linkages that need to be strengthened in librarianship are those among library education programs. Exchange of information is probably more limited than in recent decades when plans for institutes and fellowship programs and more frequent seminars for library educators brought library educators together. It also seems that nationwide (not federally sponsored) effort might well be focused on the continuing areas of shortages of library educators, notably teachers of cataloging and organization. Similarly, better deployment of those educators whose specializations are in declining demand might be achieved if it were recognized and addressed as a nationwide problem, rather than an isolated instance.