

III:i -

The Planning Process

Planning is one managerial task that is stressed in administration courses in library schools. Library educators place great importance upon planning in these courses, and every student is aware that planning is an important function of the practicing librarian. The amount of time devoted to planning and the emphasis upon this managerial task in courses, however, often appears to be out of proportion with the realities confronted by many practicing librarians.

During the recent holiday period, I met a former student who exclaimed, "I know planning is important! But quite frankly, I simply don't have any time. I've been in a crisis management situation since I walked into the library!" Many other library school graduates may be facing this same problem. The exigencies of the moment delay and even postpone the function of planning. The fact that allocations of time for planning in the past were minimal (probably nonexistent) explains in part why every situation today is a crisis.

The statements of this student evoked some very clear and very real memories from my managerial experiences. And I realize that the lack of time for planning is a serious problem; somehow in that busy day, in that busy week, one must allocate time for planning.

The articles in this issue will not solve the problem of allocating time for planning, but the authors do address the planning process from four different aspects.

In "Reflections on Library Planning at Crawfordsville District Public Library," Bridgie Hackstaff Brelsford describes the community analysis project at that library. She states of the experience, "We had moments of frustration and moments of enlightenment." Perhaps an accurate summation of all library experience! The Library's implementation of this project emphasizes one important principle of planning: Successful planning involves the cooperation of staff members, and in this particular case, the entire community.

Arthur S. Meyers of the Muncie Public Library stresses the importance of utilizing community assistance in the planning process, when such assistance is available and offered. Not every city in Indiana, however, has an academic institution with a Department of Library Science. Meyers, in his description of student projects, appears to have gained valuable knowledge and statistics for Muncie Public Library from the endeavors of several students who gained valuable practical and professional experience.

Children's librarians will welcome the conclusions reached by Jill P. May of Purdue University in her research, "Oral Folklore Presentations: Storytelling or Media?" May reports that "many of the theories given by librarians concerning the significance of the traditional story hour are correct." Librarians can plan storytelling programs, knowing which of their approaches are most effective. Additional research in this area would be welcomed by children's librarians.

Mary Ellen Kennedy of Purdue University reminds academic librarians in "Academic Library Planning: Looking at Needs of Special Groups" that they must consider the needs not only of students and faculty but also special user groups who utilize the institution's educational services.

These articles reinforce the fact that planning achieves significant results for librarians as they strive to provide and improve library services to their communities. It may be difficult to resolve the problem of allocating time for planning, but the results of planning can be demonstrated.—RT