State of Washington
The Evergreen State College Library
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LIBRARY POSITION PAPER NO. 1

Introduction

This is the first of a series of papers on involvement of the
TESC Library in the learning processes of the college. These papers
are intended to be provocative but hopefully, not irresponsible.
Some will be exploratory, others may urge specific programs and
decisions. Several topics, touched on briefly here, particularly
in the assumptions or in response to requests generated by this
paper, may be developed more fully in later position papers.

When I become skittish or cowardly about current decisions, I
turn back for guidance and inspiration to President McCann's 23 December
1968 memorandum addressed to members of the TESC planning committee--
this document cannot be forgotten as a basic statement of both
aspirations and problems. I, of course, did not sit in on the
January meeting of the planning committee (I didn't even know at
that time of the existence of TESC) but I did attend the Memorial Day
weekend meeting - I found much of the discussion vigorous and stimu-
lating but I was also disturbed by the willingness of some of the
committee members to settle very basic questions raised by falling
back on contemporary educational dispositions--the comfortable re-
assurance of the known with all its known limitations. We are still
in the now time of "making big mistakes." Before we lock-in too
early on any generally accepted (that is conventional) approach, we
should heed the advice (perhaps out of context) of W. Shakespeare--
"Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win
by fearing to attempt."

My position, perhaps unique among some librarians and some clergy-
men, is that of being a generalist. That I have some limited "expertise"
in a few areas is relevant to me only as I find meaning in relationship
to the overriding human problems of our time: ecological suicide, race,
poverty, peace and sex. I value the specializations of others in the
same way and as they are able to communicate the significant impact of
their knowledge and understanding on these problems. I respect the
individual for his humanity, abhor violence (the ultimate failure of
communication) in any manifestation, and, as a peasant, respect things
as they satisfy our basic human needs and expectations.

Following John Gardner and Arthur Flemming, I see this nation in
deep trouble. We are in the midst of several unconventional revolutions,
racial, social, student, political, etc., which are difficult to recog-
nize in the affluent society.

By technological accident in requesting a change of address, I have
two copies of the current issue of the New York Review of Books, 9 Oct 69
(neither of which bears our current address). I offer the second copy
for reading to those who do not see NYR regularly. Two articles in
particular are relevant to our problems -

pp. 3-6, "Education and the Technological Society," John H. Schaar
         and Sheldon S. Wolin.
 pp. 21-27, "The Education and the University We Need Now,"
         Christopher Lasch and Eugene Genovese.

Assumptions

1. I am concerned with, and responsible for development, operation and exploitation of a generic library at TESC. By generic I include man's recorded information, knowledge, folly, and wisdom in whatever form put down, whether in conventional print, art forms, 3-dimensional realia, microforms, various audio and visual forms, magnetic tape, laser storage, etc. By generic, I also eliminate physical boundaries such as specific building or portion limited and identified as "the library." The generic library should have an outreach to any classroom, any laboratory, any dormitory, any working station, or elsewhere as its potential for exploitation is discerned. Exploitation includes systematic, logical, intuitive, and serendipitous methods of utilization and enjoyment. It also includes management on a college-wide level of computer-assisted instruction, simulation and game theory applications, programmed instruction and other student and faculty options available in getting at the guts of the learning process which often is the lonely, demanding encounter of the individual with ideas and concepts however conveyed.

2. I am primarily concerned about students and teachers engaged as colleagues in pushing harder and farther in ways of knowing, recognizing the greater experience of the teacher and also the responsibility of the student as an adult for making his own decisions. This is a rejection of the teacher/master--student/slave approach so prevalent in higher education today.

3. Corollary to this is the need for insuring various student options in developing competence in ways of knowing--there must be a number of tracks open on which the student may back-track, branch, switch or race head long, as well as the option to blaze a new trail. Implicit in such an approach is the risk of failure - to be recognized, analyzed and dealt with; also implicit is the fact, disturbing to some teachers, that a student in some aspects of a discipline or in an interdisciplinary area may well come to know more than the teacher.

4. We must make maximum utilization of information theory and technology in developing generic library services.

5. Budgeting will not be a routine function for library services at TESC. Conventional library functions are covered by the 05 formula approach. Many of the general library functions are unconventional and must be covered as non-comparable activities requiring strong administrative support.

6. Generic librarians will be recruited, function, be rewarded on parity with, and recognized as colleagues of classroom faculty. (See section on personnel organization.)

7. Little more is known about the effectiveness and evaluation of present library services than of teaching and learning processes. Certainly conventional library resources, to say nothing of generic library resources are now among the least exploited resources available to higher education. Nevitt Sanford, for example, either takes libraries and librarians for granted or ignores their potential. As I recall, neither word appears in the indexes of The American College and Where Colleges Fail, (neither book yet unpacked) nor did I find any explicit discussion in the text portions.

8. Most undergraduate students are unnecessarily handicapped in, if not actually prevented from, acquiring skills which are part of a liberating education. Few develop any facility in exploiting campus library resources, let alone skill in making effective use of any information resource. Few know the extent of relevant resources, except in very limited areas, which are potentially available for exploitation. Such skill is as necessary as discrimination in evaluation of information however presented or in knowing the capabilities and limitations of technological tools such as the computers.

9. We'll be lucky to have as much as 30 days in our permanent quarters before students arrive!

Priorities

1. Dave Carnahan and I concentrated first on getting as many of our ideas incorporated in the working drawings as possible. We worked for flexibility and keeping a maximum number of options open, avoiding unnecessary lock-ins and limitations.

2. Development of the basic portion of our opening day collection is underway. We are contracting for procurement, shelf-ready processing and storage. From now until August 1971, an average of 1,000 items per week must be processed to reach an initial goal of some 100,000 generic library units.

3. Development of a time-line chart for phase control of all aspects of a generic library ready to operate in September 1971.

4. Sustained, intensive, and continuing participation in academic planning and definition of educational objectives.

5. Establishment of an on-site temporary library service building to meet urgent present staff needs. (See Carnahan memorandum, 8 Oct 69).

6. Development of generic library systems, to include conventional and new services, media services, CAI, simulation, programmed instruction, etc., with priorities and objectives derived from the academic programs and educational objectives of TESC.

7. Development of staffing concepts.

8. Development of budget recommendations.

9. Development of inter-library cooperative lines of action. This effort relates to systems developed and is based on the conviction that library autonomy is no more viable today or tomorrow than institutional self-sufficiency.

Generic Library Staff Organization

Conventional libraries are organized in a linear fashion in two branches, readers' services, and technical processes. Professionals are scattered through both branches, often bogged down in routines because of backlogs, workloads, and personnel shortages. The user suffers the most. My proposal obviously raises questions about the current organizational chart of the college.

I propose to consolidate all routines however related to efficient on-going operation of the generic library in a single linear group under a head, competent in managerial skills, applying every technological resource available to insure efficient services with minimum frictions so that the resources are available for full exploitation in many personalized ways. This line portion of the generic library staff would largely be filled by para-professionals and clerical personnel.

Exploitation potentials are realized through another group made up of the bulk of the professionals whether bibliographically expert librarians, media specialists, information scientists, and others including classroom faculty. These people are colleagues, not quasi- or para-colleagues of students and classroom faculty working in task force contexts on problems related to the learning processes, fully engaged as effective learners and teachers. (Titles are to be functional, not borrowed.)

There is much flexibility and mobility in such an approach. There is also the possibility of occasional movement back and forth between a line assignment and staff assignment on the task force group. This also insures the option for movement of a student or a classroom faculty member into the staff group for development of new areas of exploration or other involvement. It may also be a key to interdisciplinary activity and a limitation on the development of the departmental syndrome as a political force.

In other words, personnel as well as equipment should support the goals and functions of TESC rather than dictate the functional limitations. Such an organization for exploitation of resources should involve both students and faculty (and administration) in "hands-on" situations using the library as a workshop not as a museum or worse, considering it as an unused mausoleum. We anticipate also that students, librarians, and teachers may work much harder and with some sense of joy in such a climate of learning.

Miscellaneous Recommendations

1. Dave and I believe that it is essential that in-house seminars begin soon on exploration of various learning strategies. An all-hands approach is essential initially for internal communication on TESC objectives. Such informal seminars should explore basic concepts, support ideas, and back-up services.

2. Later in the fall or winter after Dave Barry's science meeting, I recommend bringing in several outsiders for a two-day conference on library exploitation aspects of learning strategies and processes to meet with academic and administrative members of the college staff. I am developing a list of the names of possible participants in such a conference.

3. Both in-house seminars and the conference should be reinforced by continuing attention to development of an effective back-and-forth communications net on campus as we grow. Such a net, beyond physical equipment, should include

- discussions if not debates on controversial topics having an impact on the life of the college

- student-generated activities, forums, etc.

- foreign film programs and art exhibits

- video repeats of various college generated projects and programs

- community forums continuing the town-meeting approach

- community services and continuing involvement of the college in the life of the community in which it lives

- utilization of mass communication potentials

4. Develop assignments for each incoming academic and administrative person requiring some preparation for in advance, and on arrival in a personal encounter with the generic library. This could vary from recommendations on development of resource requirements in a particular area of competence to "hands-on" work with existing resources. In fact, exposure of candidates for appointment to what is going on in the TESC generic library may well become one of the measures in evaluating whether a person is likely to fit in or is not for us.

That's enough for one position paper.

Shalom!

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