

Continuing Education

Library Administrators and the Need for Continuing Education in Process Skills

In an overview entitled *Leadership: What Effective Managers Really Do... And How They Do It*, Leonard Sayles discusses the importance of "process"—the transforming of intentions into results. The process aspects of management (communication, self-awareness, and models for the analysis and improvement of one's organization) may be contrasted to the equally crucial task aspects (matters of substance, such as determining the future form of the catalog, assessing the costs of online searching, or finding ingenious responses to inflation). When task concerns press us as urgently as they do in the 1980s, it is tempting to neglect the process skills. But the administrator must continue to sharpen these skills again and again; a library school course in personnel administration or one workshop in library management simply fail to accommodate ongoing changes in the administrator or in his or her organization.

The snares for not renewing one's education in process skills lie everywhere. For instance, Jay Lorsch indicates the dangers of limiting oneself to a neat, all-encompassing theory, such as Rensis Likert's participative-management model.² One's organizational situation, he says, may call for very specific types of analyses. Whether one learns of such methods through attending a workshop or reading the *Harvard Business Review* is a matter of choice, although experience seems to be more valuable than a review of the literature.

Partly as a result of the 1960s spadework of such pioneers as James Kortendick, Elizabeth Stone, and Paul Wasserman, there are ample opportunities for the renewal of process skills within the profession. Workshops sponsored by the Office of Management Studies and others offer the advantage of being, in Lorsch's terms, situation-specific, that is, geared to real library situations. Outside of the library profession, there is a profusion of possibilities, including Thomas Gordon's Leader Effectiveness Training³ and other programs focussing on communication.⁴

¹Leonard Sayles, *Leadership: What Effective Managers Really Do... And How They Do It* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p.7.

²Jay W. Lorsch, "Making Behavioral Science More Useful," *Harvard Business Review*, March-April 1979, pp.171-80.

³See Thomas Gordon, *Leader Effectiveness Training: L.E.T.* (New York: Wyden, 1977).

⁴For a thorough perspective on this and other

Such programs either bring together the findings of academicians and the support of corporations, or reflect the successes of the human potential movement, and they are often of high quality. The library administrator would be well advised to look to them as an alternative or additional source of continuing education in process skills.⁵

The process of administering a library (or the department of a library) is too complex to lie untuned. Yet the tendency is for the administrator to restrict his or her education to the tasks of management. The tasks are indeed heavy and we should not fail to inform ourselves about them and assure that they are accomplished—but they are unlikely to be accomplished well if we neglect the sharpening of process skills.

Editor's Note: Peter Haskell was a Council on Library Resources University Library management intern with W. Carl Jackson at Indiana University, before becoming director of the library, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. ■■

programs, see Judith W. Powell and Robert B. LeLievre, *Peoplework* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1979).

⁵Two such programs that have received acclaim are the weekend-long Communication Workshop offered by the est organization (write est, 765 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94108) and the PRECISION Models Workshops, which draw on the findings in neurolinguistic programming (write PRECISION Models, 11924 West Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90066). Also, see John Grinder and Michael McMaster, *PRECISION-High Quality Information Processing for Business* (Los Angeles: PRECISION Models, 1980).

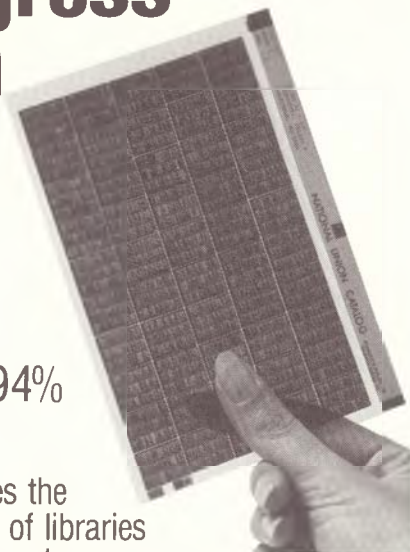
Chapter News

The Western New York/Ontario Chapter of ACRL held its successful Fall program at the University of Guelph, Ontario, on October 4, with over one hundred participants. The topic was "Automated Library Systems: One Library's Approach." The participants were able to examine the online circulation and enquiry system, discuss future developments, and tour the library.

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