

**Training Needs of Librarians  
Doing Adult Education Work**

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A report of the Allerton Park Conference, November 14-16, 1954, held under the auspices of the American Library Association and made possible by a grant from the National Committee on Study Grants of the Fund for Adult Education

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## Preface

For what purposes does the American public library exist? They are many and varied, and they differ in different communities. But in one essential all libraries subscribe to a similar goal: to provide equal opportunities for access to ideas to everyone in the community who wishes it. For some library users this means the opportunity to read the latest word on topics currently being talked about. For others, it means the opportunity to learn what the great minds of the past have had to say on the great questions of continuing importance. For still others, it means the opportunity to fill in gaps in formal schooling; or to increase one's own knowledge of a particular technique or skill; or to enlarge appreciation of the arts and skills of others; or to meet more effectively the demands made upon one by renewing the mind through constructive relaxation or sharpening it through intellectual discipline.

All of these purposes are educational in one sense or another, and the library, by making these opportunities available, can properly be called an agency of adult education. But this is well known, and has been true of the American public library from its beginnings. Why is there lately so much talk of the library's role in adult education? What is there new about the concept? Are we merely exploiting a popular catchphrase to give a puffed-up importance to an activity which has always been the library's responsibility?

There is one very essential difference which distinguishes

the current approach to adult education by the library from that of the past. This is the library's rejection of the passive "handmaiden" role in favor of an active one in the patron's search for self-education. The new approach is that of leadership; of integral rather than incidental participation in the education process. It is new, and it is exciting, and it is dynamic. And it is also challenging, for to the reference work, the circulation services, the cataloging and classifying, and the book selection through which the librarian has traditionally provided and interpreted the materials of communication is now added a more detailed and intensive task of interpretation: through guidance in the intelligent and purposive use of the materials. The familiar services are as important and as basic as ever, but over and above them, the librarian now assumes a new and even more exacting obligation.

For librarians who wish to assume the responsibilities which the new approach entails, it has been a troublesome problem to identify the kind of training which will equip librarians to assume this active role and the agencies best equipped to provide it. This report records one serious and forward-looking attempt to identify the needs and explore the means through which they can be satisfied.

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## Introduction

Early in 1954 the National Committee on Study Grants of the Fund for Adult Education awarded \$7,500 to the American Library Association for a conference to discuss appropriate training and learning situations for librarians now engaged in adult education activities or planning to undertake them. A group of six librarians<sup>1</sup> met in Chicago on April 8, 1954, to draw up plans for such a conference. The place selected was Allerton Park, an estate in Monticello, Illinois, belonging to the University of Illinois. The dates were set for November 14 - 16, 1954. Lester Asheim was elected director of the conference. This conference, and the matters discussed in it, form the basis for the report which follows.

The Conference Planning Committee defined the purpose of the conference as follows: to promote the establishment of more extensive training in attitudes, methods, and skills of adult education by exploring the establishment of sound training situations for academic study, field work, and in-service training. To serve this purpose it was recommended that the agenda of the meeting should be concerned with these things: (1) an analysis of the library's adult education activities which would lead to a listing of the attitudes, methods, and

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<sup>1</sup>Lester Asheim, Ruth Gregory, Gertrude Gscheidle, Anita Hostetter, Grace Stevenson, Donald Strout (Margaret Monroe and Violet Myer attended as American Library Association staff members).

skills which librarians need to conduct such activities successfully; (2) the establishment of a list of types of learning situations which are, or could be, made available to librarians and would be librarians whose interests lie in the field of adult education activities; (3) the establishment of a suggested list of learning situations best suited to each of the attitudes, methods and skills involved in (1) above, for librarians at different points in their careers; (4) the promotion of such training opportunities; and (5) the proposal of additional recommendations which could be useful in preparing better-trained librarians in the field of adult education activities.

It was the feeling of the Planning Committee that the conference should not attempt a demonstration of adult education in practice, but rather try to take an active step in the direction of the establishment of more extensive training opportunities. In other words they chose as participants — not those who need convincing about the importance of adult education as a library responsibility — but those who are already convinced and who would work for the promotion of such opportunities. The conference group was made up of practicing librarians from large, medium-size, and small libraries, members of library school faculties, representatives from state and extension agencies, and leaders from the field of adult education. But more than that, the participants were chosen because they had engaged in successful adult education activities or had expressed an interest in them and were in a position to translate conference suggestions into action. Thus representatives from the library school and adult education department of the same university were invited in several instances because they could be counted upon to work together in following through on the conference recommendations. The conferees may not represent all of American librarianship, but they do represent a common interest in adult education, a shared concern about the kinds of preparation needed to carry on adult education activities successfully in libraries — and the power to do something about it.

The question of whether libraries should engage in adult education activities — a legitimate question which many librarians might raise — was not debated in this conference. The immediate goal was not conversion of non-believers, but the implementation of an accepted philosophy of library service. If the recommendations of the conference can be put into action, the conversion of non-believers will be accomplished

ultimately through demonstration of the value of adult education goals for libraries.

The writer of the report is, of course, only the channel through which the conferees speak. The constructive ideas, the plans, and the recommendations are the result of the group thinking of the participants in the conference. Everyone who participated deserves recognition as a contributor to this report. But my very special thanks are due to Grace T. Stevenson, Associate Executive Secretary of the American Library Association, for her guidance and help throughout the planning as well as during the conference itself; to Donald Strout, whose local arrangements contributed so importantly to the success of the conference; to those conferees who assumed committee responsibilities, spelled the chairman for many of the meetings, and contributed advice and suggestions which guided him through the intricacies of the conference agenda; and to Miss Helen Bailin and Mrs. Yuri Nakata whose services as stenographers, court reporters, hostesses, and maids of all work were so uncomplainingly rendered throughout the entire conference.

## Chapter 1

### The Problem of Definition

In general terms the assignment which faced the forty participants in the Allerton Park Conference was clear enough. Their task was to promote better preparation for librarians doing adult education work. As the planners of the conference interpreted this assignment it consisted of these requirements: (1) to designate the several kinds of training needed for the several kinds of adult education activities in which librarians may properly engage; (2) to suggest which agencies and learning situations can best provide the most efficient training for each of the kinds of knowledges, attitudes, and skills needed; and (3) to recommend ways in which such training situations can most effectively be established. All of the words which go to make up this statement of the conference's purpose are familiar — but different connotations attach to them for different people. As always when several minds address themselves to the analysis of a complex concept, some basic definitions were deemed essential before any fruitful exchange of ideas could be expected.

It was clear from the beginning to the planners of the conference that some arbitrary definition of what is encompassed in the phrase "adult education activities in libraries" would have to be established. True, the ultimate goal of the conference was not the definition of library adult education activity, but common agreement was basic to the discussion, and readers of the report must be familiar with the meaning which was attached by the conferees to the term "adult education" in order to understand the conference results.

Consequently, both a working paper — which was prepared prior to the meeting and sent to all participants in the conference — and the opening remarks of the first meeting of the conference proper were devoted to a tentative definition. This definition was a synthesis of many previous and standard definitions, adapted specifically to the needs of the conference. Its purpose was not to create a new and startling interpretation of the term "adult education," but to serve as a springboard into discussion from which could emerge a definition which would represent a consensus of the conference group.

### STEPS TOWARDS A DEFINITION

The first step in this direction required some delimitation of the broadest view of adult education. This is the view that anything that helps to fit a person for life is adult education and that therefore all library activity is related to the education of adults. Every librarian knows that this is true enough in one sense, for education is often incidental and inadvertent and much of what we consider recreation or even escape has important educational value. Such a view of adult education, however, permits it to be anything that anyone does at any time. To serve the purposes of the conference, one of which was to approach the problem of preparing librarians to operate effectively in specific areas, so broad a view had to be reduced so that those specific areas could be pinned down.

There is, on the other hand, a definition of education which would have been too narrow to be of value for the conference. This is the view which would limit education to the formal relationship between instructor and learner (or group of learners) where the teacher is in full control of the factors in the learning situation and where tangible recognition of accomplishment is made in terms of grades, credits, or degrees. Such a definition would limit education to formal schooling, and to accept it would have been to repudiate the assumption on which the conference rests: that adult education activities are appropriate ones for the library to undertake.

Clearly the narrow view of adult education is in direct conflict with the view taken by the Fund for Adult Education which has defined it as "that part of the total educational process which begins when formal schooling is finished." The emphasis here is on those aspects of education which are undertaken by adult men and women as a continuation, supplement,

or substitute for formal classroom instruction. This kind of educational experience — the free-choice, self-motivated effort of the adult to educate himself — is one in which the library can play a logical and important role. The conferees were agreed that attention should therefore be centered on out-of-school education.

The distinguishing characteristic of the library's goals in a program of adult education has been described very well in a favorite phrase of Cyril Houle's: "To change random reading into purposeful reading." In this phrase, Mr. Houle has caught the sense of "conscious design" which is an essential of the program with which the conferees elected to be concerned. The educational benefits that accrue from a program which they felt should properly be designated as adult education are the result of purposefully planned activity rather than a by-product of chance and circumstance. This does not deny that the latter frequently occurs; it merely reiterates that the conference was concerned with formulating plans — and one cannot plan inadvertence.

In seeking other definitions of adult education activities in libraries which might serve as a guide to the one underlying the conference, the planning committee naturally turned to the Survey of Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries.<sup>1</sup> From the six categories of service defined by the survey, four were selected as pertinent to the objectives of this conference. These are planning, advising, training, and doing. Supplying and informing — the other two categories — are seen as services which the library performs in any case as part of its regular program. They are a portion of the total educational experience provided by the library whether it formally undertakes adult education activities or not. Presumably the graduate of any respectable library school will have already received training in the areas of supplying and informing adequate to prepare him for the conventional functions with which librarians are concerned. But present-day librarians engaged in adult education activities are finding their traditional education inadequate in many ways, and the problem of the conference was

<sup>1</sup>Helen Lyman Smith, Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries; A Report of the ALA Survey of Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries and State Library Agencies of the United States. Chicago: American Library Association, 1954.

to suggest the kinds of additional preparation which could be utilized to remedy these lacks.

Although the stress thus far has been placed on the active role of the library — on the doing rather than the supplying category — the conferees wished to make very clear that such a stress does not rule out those activities which are initiated outside the library. One of the most important adult education functions served by the library is its activity as a supplementary resource service to organized groups. It was pointed out that there are many libraries whose adult education activities are properly confined to cooperation with programs which they themselves did not initiate. Such programs are included within the definition, but only when the library is involved actively in them. Merely to have a collection of books from which organized groups draw is not to play a sufficiently active part. But to help in the program planning, to draw up and select appropriate materials, to assist with advice and cooperative participation — these are the activities which qualify this area as adult education in the terms employed by the conference.

On the other hand, although group activities loom large among those which have been defined as adult education, the interest of the conference was not limited to group activities solely. Wherever a planned program with a specific educational objective is undertaken for an individual reader — in the provision of special reading programs and lists, in guidance and counseling, etc. — this too should be recognized as part of a library's adult education activity.

Because large-scale programs so frequently involve the use of non-book and audio-visual materials, the provision of these is often taken to be synonymous with adult education. The conferees felt, however, that the key is not the form of the material but the purposive, guided use of it. The use of films, recordings, radio and TV can also be haphazard, isolated and unplanned and where this is the case it should not qualify as adult education in the formal sense.

In other words, the definition has been set up to guard against the confusion of means with ends which so frequently characterizes library activities in many fields. The end which motivates the librarian to undertake adult education activities should be the education of adults: for a specific purpose deliberately chosen and carefully planned for. It should not be the establishment of a film program or a discussion series

or a forum project *per se*. Nor can it be — if our definition holds — the vague hope that the showing of films or the scheduling of discussions in the library may, by bringing people into the building, expose them to the book shelves and thus stimulate occasional borrowing of titles which may prove attractive at the particular moment. This is defensible promotional practice, but it lacks the specificity of objective and planning which characterizes an integrated program of adult education.

The conferees wished especially to underline the fact that the defined goal of any adult education program should be one which is related to the needs and interests of the people it serves. This goal is derived from an analysis of the community or the individual and an understanding of them. The analysis may be informal, based upon experience and sympathy rather than upon a formally designed survey. While the goals are often mutually agreed upon there can be programs which qualify as adult education, the ultimate objectives of which are not consciously sought by the participant. But this much is essential — the programs should bear some meaningful relation to the needs of the group or the individual.

Implicit in the characteristics defined in the preceding paragraph is the assumption that long-term objectives are part of an adult education activity. It is true that important educational benefits are frequently derived from individual contacts and single instances of reference or readers' advisory service. Such "one shot" contacts, however, do not constitute a program which can change random into purposeful reading. The group did not attempt to indicate what the "proper" length of an acceptable educational program must be, recognizing that length in itself is not the key to a program's effectiveness. But they felt that, to qualify as adult education, activities should have as their goal some continuing and lasting effect upon the participants.

#### THE CONSENSUS DEFINITION

All of these characteristics were gathered up into a single definition, as follows:

The conference is concerned with those library activities for adult individuals and groups which form a part of the total educational process and which are marked by a

defined goal, derived from an analysis of needs or interests. These activities aim at a continuing cumulative educational experience for those who participate, require special planning and organization, and may be originated by the library or by a request from the individuals or groups concerned.

Typical activities which would qualify as adult education in these terms are:

1. Readers' advisory programs which entail a planned program of readings specifically designed for a particular individual or group, involving analysis of specific needs, guided progression, and specific educational objectives over and beyond the promotion of reading in general or the provision of pleasant entertainment. In other words, existence of readers' advisory service does not automatically guarantee activity of an adult education nature as defined here although most of the larger projects undertaken by the readers' advisor do qualify.
2. Discussion series, film forums, and other sequential programs planned around a topic or theme and organized to give continuity and direction to the educational process.
3. Cooperation in an active and integral way with similar planned programs initiated by others. This does not include the provision of books on request from people who happen to be connected with such study groups. It does include the cooperative planning of the over-all program and the selection of the readings most appropriate to the program and most suitable for the participants in it.

Using the definition as a guide, the conference did not attempt to explore the proper preparation to carry on such activities as these:

1. Provision of physical facilities for meetings and other activities which, although serving an adult education function, require no more of the librarian than his approval of the use of space or existing facilities.
2. General book selection practice aimed at providing a well-rounded collection for the use of the public-at-large.

3. Quick reference service and other "one shot" kinds of assistance to library users, which although contributing in a way to the education of the adult, do not form a part of a planned program with a predetermined educational objective.
4. Technical processes which interpret and organize the total collection for the benefit of all users equally.
5. Bulletin board and other display materials aimed at general promotion of reading, even when centered around a single subject. The target audience is here too generalized and the control of the educational experience too haphazard to qualify.
6. Book talks, book reviews, radio and TV appearances the purpose of which is primarily promotional.

It should be recognized that the definition is an arbitrary one and that the list of activities is by no stretch of the imagination seen as a comprehensive inventory of the librarian's obligation. The conference is concerned with only one small corner of the library field ("a part of the total educational process") and the inclusion of activities for consideration in this conference and the rejection of others from it do not reflect a judgment as to their comparative importance or value. They reflect only the need to delimit the field sufficiently so that the conference could operate in a meaningful fashion. Thus, although purely promotional activities are excluded, this does not mean that it is not a defensible activity for librarians to make friends for books and libraries. It may well be that this is one of the most important contributions that libraries can make to the individual and to society. But the conference recognized that librarians and libraries make many contributions of different kinds and that the assumption of one responsibility does not necessarily eliminate another. The definition is meant to be, not a prescription for libraries, but a guide for the conferees. It has been described here at length because it establishes the limits within which the conference was confined. The suggestions and recommendations which came out of the conference are contained within this frame.

## Chapter 2

### **Educational Needs**

Once the conferees had reached mutual agreement on a definition of adult education activities, it was possible to proceed to the next step: the preparation of a list of the kinds of proficiencies needed by librarians for the effective execution of the activities of adult education as defined. These needs were categorized under three major headings. The first group was listed under the heading Attitudes; the second, Knowledges; and the third, Skills. A separate committee was set up for each grouping to draw up a list of the attitudes, knowledges or skills required.

In many ways such a division is unrealistic. On a professional level one seldom acquires only one without some inclusion of the others as well. Attitudes derive from knowledge plus skills; skills are knowledge applied; knowledge carries with it the data on which attitudes are based. When the time came to assign learning situations to a specific attitude, knowledge, or skill it became quite clear that the most desirable learning situations are those which give the learner something of all three. Yet certain situations are more favorable to the inculcation of one than of another, and in a general way it may be said that knowledge is most efficiently provided through formal course work, skills through actual practice, while attitudes derive from all experience whether it be in a formal or an informal learning situation. This is not to deny the possibility that other situations may contribute to the acquisition of each. It is meant to say merely that — generally

speaking — the balance falls in favor of the division described above. In selecting the appropriate learning situation for each proficiency, the group frequently found this principle to be an influential one in forming a decision.

### ATTITUDES

The conclusion that attitudes derive from all experience testifies to the somewhat intangible character of the proficiencies which qualify as "attitudes." Attitudes are built up through a lifetime; they are seldom completely changed, for example, in the short period when one is in library school, although they are often introduced and their direction charted during that period. In the first three or four years out of library school the supervisor has an equally great influence and responsibility for shaping and reinforcing the attitudes of his employees. For attitudes are formed not only — or even primarily — by teaching; they are passed on even more effectively if they are exemplified by those who hold them. In other words, attitudes are found in the spirit and the atmosphere of school and jobs; they are molded by reading and observation; they are compounded of thought and feeling. We may not be able to pinpoint the time when they are created or the manner for creating them — but we know when they are not there.

That certain attitudes towards one's public, one's immediate work, and one's total profession are essential to effective and successful performance in any field of endeavor was accepted by all members of the conference. For librarians doing adult education work the following were specifically designated as basic:

1. Conviction that the librarian is an educator
2. Faith in the learning ability of adults
3. Belief in the library's staff-wide responsibility for adult education
4. Conviction that librarians should take a positive role in working cooperatively with other adult education agencies
5. Desire to serve as a resource in community improvement
6. Willingness to learn
7. Acceptance of the obligation for continued professional growth
8. Interest in people and their problems
9. Belief in democratic society and democratic processes

10. A sense of appropriateness, timeliness, proportion and perspective.

The last five of these attitudes, of course, are basic to any successful professional library activity; the first five are more specifically limited to the librarian's adult education activities. But in listing those of general as well as specific application the committee records its conviction that wherever else they might be valuable, they are indispensable in the field of adult education.

The committee wished also to make clear that, in general, attitudes are attained, not only in those courses and other learning situations which are designed specifically to teach attitudes but also in those concerned ostensibly with knowledges and skills. For example, let us take the essential attitude: faith in the learning ability of adults. This would probably not grow out of a course in attitudes as such, but out of a course which is concerned with extant knowledge about the way adults learn or one dealing with particular skills and methods in the teaching of adults. The attitude would also be formed, in part, by experience with the learning of adults, experience with one's own learning processes, observation of the teacher's attitude in the presentation of the materials, etc. Thus while the makers of curricula may never establish a course designed specifically to teach faith in the learning ability of adults, they should never lose sight of the importance of this attitude in giving meaning to the knowledge and skills for which formal courses are set up. Attitudes therefore transcend the limits of direct instruction; they are built both within formal courses and outside them; and in the long run they are the really valuable residue that remains when specific knowledges and particular skills drain away.

### KNOWLEDGES

The committee charged with drawing up a list of the desirable knowledges for the librarian engaged in adult education activities divided its list into two parts. In the first falls background knowledge — general sociological information which will create a framework of understanding and insight to give meaning to the specific work of adult education. In the second falls specific knowledge — that which relates directly to history, theory and practice of adult education. Such a listing assumes

prior mastery of two broad areas of knowledge: (1) basic liberal (or general) education and (2) basic professional education.

Neither the committee nor the conference as a whole wished to divert attention to the definition of these two fields of basic education. Boardly speaking there is agreement on the meaning of the terms, despite the complete lack of agreement on the specifics subsumed under each. For the purposes of the conference it was considered sufficient to equate "basic liberal education" with the kind of knowledge gained from an accredited, American four-year college course of study leading to the award of the A.B. degree. "Basic professional education" was equated with the one-year program of study represented in an accredited American library school on the graduate level. No attempt was made to assign a certain number of "hours" of work in a specific subject or to argue, for example, whether a course in economics might be substituted for one in political science in fulfillment of degree requirements. The quality and the richness of acceptable programs varies considerably and this was recognized. On the other hand, most of us act on the assumption that a B.A. degree, or a master's degree in librarianship, represents a definable minimum of knowledge and skill, of cultural background and specialized information, and this minimum forms the base on which the knowledges listing was established.

To the extent that he or she has not already been exposed to such information in his or her college studies, the librarian who plans to do adult education work needs the following background knowledges, according to the committee charged with drawing up the list:

1. A knowledge of social structure and processes. This includes a general survey knowledge of sociology and anthropology, and of the characteristics, agencies and devices of social control. In more particular terms, it focuses upon the factors involved in community analysis for use in adult education: the human, organizational and material resources within the community. The librarian should know the kinds of organizations and agencies which engage in adult education activities or could be counted on to cooperate with such activities, the kinds of people in the community who would be helpful in a certain endeavor, and the sources of information about them.

2. The psychology of individual personality. This is seen

as something more than general psychology; it is concerned with the changing life pattern of the individual, and most specifically with the things he is interested in or needs for different purposes and under different circumstances.

3. Social psychology. Special emphasis here is on the dynamics of inter-personal — including group — relations.

4. The psychology of adult learning. Here the emphasis is on the facts that are known about adult learning, and particularly about reading interests, reading habits, and reading difficulties of adults.

5. Communications. The stress here is not on how to use the media for library purposes, but on communication theory and the organization and control of the media, to provide an understanding of the place of the media in the community in which the library intends to serve.

As can be seen, all of the above-listed areas of knowledge lie outside of the field of librarianship and — in a narrow sense — outside the field of adult education as well. They are, as categorized, background knowledge. The librarian who has mastered these areas will not yet be an adult education expert — but he will be ready to become one with the best possible hope of success.

The specific knowledge areas within the field of adult education were divided by the committee into two large segments. The first has to do with adult education theory; the second with adult education practice. Theory has to do with the philosophy of adult education, its history, and its present nature. This too is, in a sense, a background knowledge, but of a very specific kind.

The area of practice is closely allied to the general area of skills; it differs in that the knowledges tell about the needed skills rather than how to perform them. The knowledges listed by this committee are those on which the development of skills are based.

First, there are the principles of adult teaching; the methods and techniques employed in the teaching of adults. Second, there are the principles utilized in the organization and administration of adult education activities. And third, there are the methods and techniques of program planning and evaluation. To many in the conference the third seemed to be the single most important area for librarians to master. The need of being aware of one's own value judgments in developing a program, the available planning techniques, the

methods for judging effectiveness, evaluating strengths and weaknesses, gauging the needs to be served and the means for serving them — all these are the core of the librarian's part in adult education activity.

Although the assignment of the specific learning situation comes later in the report, the question was raised specifically in relation to the kinds of learning situations best suited to imparting the knowledge of program planning and evaluation. Is the practice of adult education as taught in the schools of education the same as that in which librarians will be engaged? Generally speaking both the general and specific knowledges recommended by the committee fall outside the usual pattern of library school curricula. Does this mean that adult education in libraries should be carried on by non-librarians, or that the library knowledge is only incidental? The committee's reply to these questions would point out that the basic professional education is assumed, and that a knowledge of the library's fields of materials — books, films, records, etc. — is supposedly gained in that period of training. But beyond that, the consensus seemed to be that, generally speaking, the principles, theory and history are basic to all adult education and may properly be obtained by the library school student from schools of education. The adaptation of the general principles to library practice, however, might more properly be taught by the library school. Wherever possible it was considered desirable to avoid the establishment of courses in library schools to deal with subject matter which could more competently be handled by other schools and departments. But it was recognized that few situations now exist where library schools have access to departments of adult education or even schools of education, and that even where such schools exist on the same campus with a library school, there is a wall, a departmentalization, which will have to be breached before the necessary cooperation can be achieved and the necessary mutual understanding reached to make possible the pooling and sharing of experience and problems. Such cooperation should be fostered. There are certain common concerns in the administration, practice, and objectives of adult education which are shared by adult education workers everywhere. This must be recognized, not only by the special fields outside of formal education (like librarianship) which do adult education work, but also by the adult education experts themselves, who often fail

to take into account the many ways in which their general principles can be adapted.

The impetus may have to come from the library schools to promote this kind of cooperation and exchange. The crossing of departmental lines, and the inclusion of broader materials in existing courses, could enrich the school of education as well as the library school. The initial responsibility, however, may well lie with the administrators of the library schools, and it was the hope of the conference that its recommendations might help the librarian to convince the schools of education of the desirability of increased cooperation.

### SKILLS

The list of skills created the greatest amount of disagreement and discussion of the three committee reports. Only the final, revised listing is given here, with a summary of those comments which are needed to clarify the meanings which the conference wished to convey through the terms employed. But some of the excitement and stimulation of the conference proper came from the exchange of ideas and viewpoints occasioned by the discussion of skills, and the writer regrets the pedestrian tone which has been imposed upon a lively and provocative session.

The list of skills, as finally revised after a discussion of its initial presentation, reads as follows:

1. Versatility in the communication processes
  - a. Ability to train leaders and members for group participation
  - b. Ability to lead and conduct discussion groups, forums, panels, demonstrations, etc.
  - c. Ability to utilize mass communication media (press, radio, television) as a means for adult education
  - d. Ability to interview, counsel and develop a program of reading guidance for the individual
  - e. Ability to present orally and in writing ideas derived from the analysis of library materials in relation to the interests and needs of the audience.
2. Ability to plan, organize, and administer a program for adults of all ages

- a. Ability to identify the needs and interests of the individuals and groups in the community
  - b. Ability to stimulate and relate expression of the community needs and interests, or  
Ability to help the community to articulate its needs and interests
  - c. Ability to recruit discussion group leaders and speakers from the community
  - d. Ability to select and use books, printed materials, films, recordings and other materials for groups and individuals
  - e. Ability to develop and evaluate techniques to measure the effectiveness of adult education programs and activities
  - f. Ability to operate equipment (actual physical and mechanical skills)
3. Ability to work with other departments, other adult education agencies, and formal and informal groups in the community; and to interpret the library's functions to them.

It can readily be seen by comparing this listing with that of the knowledges report that skills are closely related to knowledge. Part of the confusion which arose in the discussion derived from this circumstance, for the conferees were constantly raising the question: is this really a skill we are speaking about, or a knowledge which should properly be listed elsewhere? Part of the confusion arose also from the tendency to think of the attitudes, knowledges, and skills in terms of library school responsibilities. The resistance of some of the conferees to the teaching of skills in library school, and the recognition by others that skill comes only with practice and experience, led to considerable questioning of certain of the skills because they seemed not to be the province of the library schools to handle. To guard against a similar confusion on the part of readers of this report, it should be emphasized that the listing is meant to include those skills which a librarian engaged in adult education activities has need of if he is to operate most effectively. There is no attempt here to determine how, or where, or at what point in his career, the librarian gains these skills. The only legitimate question is whether they are indeed useful to the

effective performance of adult education activities in libraries and therefore desirable skills for the librarian to acquire.

Under 1, most of the points are probably sufficiently clear as stated. Skill 1a has to do with the training of others; the responsibility of the administrator of a program of adult education to prepare staff members and others to carry out the program. Skill 1b is the skill of the responsible person to conduct such programs himself. The particular library situation will dictate the extent to which one or the other of these skills is required. Larger libraries may well take the training of group leaders as one of the adult education activities in which the library participates. In smaller libraries, on the other hand, the librarian may have to handle by himself whatever programs there are or are going to be. The staff is often too small to permit a selection of personnel for training. The community may not provide the kinds of persons who will undertake to enroll in a program of training. And time may not be available in any case; to conduct a training program may mean that the objectives for which such training is undertaken will meanwhile have to be abandoned. Thus, both of these skills need not be seen as mandatory for all librarians, and skill 1b may well be a matter of native ability rather than a learned proficiency.

Skill 1c is seen by many of the conferees to include not only the use of press, radio and television in programs of adult education but also their use for publicizing adult education services and activities. The public relations aspect was listed separately in the original committee report but was rejected by the group as a whole as more properly a promotional rather than an educational function. This conflict arose several times during the conference because the promotion of library services is, in itself, seen by many as an adult education activity. In many senses it is, but if the delimiting definition is insisted upon, promotional activities must fall outside the concern of the meeting.

Skill 1d caused little comment, for it falls squarely within the realm of adult education activity which has long been accepted as a particularly distinctive service which can be offered by librarians. But skill 1e which was added to the original list of skills on a motion from the floor, raised a heated and enlightening debate. The discussion began with the suggestion that "the ability to present a book talk" be added

to the list of communication skills. The book talk idea was opposed by many on promotion-rather-than-education grounds, although there were many champions of the book talk as a true adult education service. That a book talk is limited to a single program rather than to the "continuing" experience which is demanded by the basic definition was another point raised against inclusion of this skill in the listing. In any case, it was pointed out, the ability to speak in public is really what we are after rather than just the ability to give a book talk, and this broader description was suggested as a more acceptable substitute which would include book talks but not be limited to them. On the other hand, if the ability to speak well is given special attention, it was claimed that the ability to write well is an equally important skill through which many librarians make an important educational contribution. Thus the original point was now enlarged to include the ability to organize and present ideas orally and in writing.

At this point two lines of thought were clearly represented in the group's thinking. In one it was felt that the ability to speak and write well is really part of a liberal education, not specifically a skill of adult education alone, and that therefore it has no place among the recommendations of this conference. The second group felt that although it is a part of liberal education, the special application of speaking and writing ability to the analysis of library materials in relation to the interests and needs of the audience is a specific ability essential to adult education preparation and that it should be listed. In the end there was unanimous approval for the inclusion among the recommendations of the conference of this particular aspect of reading and writing ability as sufficiently pertinent to the needs of adult educators.

The second major category, "ability to plan, organize, and administer a program for adults of all ages" related to the more specific skills required, as contrasted with the general skills enumerated under category 1. Here again the descriptions offered by the committee are clear in most instances, and special mention will be made only of those which occasioned some controversy.

Ability 2b carries a double connotation. The first part of the statement, "ability to stimulate . . ." emphasizes the part played by the library in whetting interest and taking the initiative in bringing subjects to the attention of the public; the second part, "...help . . . to articulate" lays the stress on the

library's role in eliciting the expression of interest from individuals and groups. Some of the conferees preferred the emphasis on the first, some on the second; some felt that both should be included. The two-way statement included under 2b represents both aspects of the conference discussion.

Skill 2d is seen by the group as including something more than the general principles of book selection which are presumably contained in the regular library school program. Here particular attention is paid to the adaptation of selection principles to programming; selection for a particular group or individual with a stated objective in mind and a guided program involved. The selection is not for all of the library's publics, but for a segment of its publics whose interests lie in particular programs.

Skill 2f created a controversy which was not resolved to the satisfaction of all the participants. The majority felt that the ability to operate equipment is indeed a skill which those who actually carry out adult education programs should have, even though they may not always be required to employ it. A minority argued that these are special skills which can be found in the community and that the professional librarian need not be concerned with them. The resistance to listing the skill is related to the resistance of library school people to including such technical training in a program of professional education; but there were those who contended, not only that this kind of knowledge has no place in a university curriculum, but also that it has no place in the librarian's preparation at all. The argument that one can always get "the kid across the street" to run the projector, was countered by the majority who pointed out that in smaller communities you can't "always" do any such thing, and that even in more favorably endowed institutions emergencies may arise which will require the leader of the program to take over the responsibility. The minority which insisted that while the librarian should know "about" the equipment, he need not know how to run it, was a sufficiently small minority that the point remains in the listing as a majority conviction.

Category 3 underlines once more the need for cooperation with other agencies and individuals which formed so important a part of the concept underlying the categories of knowledge. Here the skill is one of personality and innate ability as much as it is of learned techniques. The implication is strong, as it is throughout the entire discussion, that much of

the problem could be solved at the level of recruiting for the profession. The recruiting question was not one with which the conference was officially faced, but it is important to note here that the kind of people who enter librarianship can make or break the most carefully wrought plans for education and training. An underlying implicit assumption of the conference is that the professional librarians of the present and the future will be teachable, flexible, and interested. And with this, we are — of course — back to the area of attitudes.

#### A PROGRAM FOR SPECIALISTS?

Reviewing the somewhat formidable list of attitudes, knowledges and skills which they had designated, the conferees raised a question concerning the exact nature of the preparation that would be provided by their mastery. Such a program would seem to indicate the preparation of specialists — but there were many in the conference who doubted the wisdom of preparing specialists in the field of library adult education. The demand from the field at the moment is seldom for adult education specialists as such; there is considerably more expressed need for generalists with some adult education talents. Is it literally the intention of the conference to provide the kinds of programs which will turn out narrow specialists in this field?

While it was agreed that adult education represents a kind of specialization within librarianship, it was the feeling of the group that such an interest does not eliminate the necessity for the librarian to be a generalist as well. It was pointed out that actually there are four levels of adult education training now already represented in the better library schools. In the first place, quite a bit of the recommended knowledges, attitudes, and skills are already included as part of the regular training of all librarians. Additional, more intensive preparation along these lines is made available to those who elect public librarianship as their field of concentration beyond the core courses. There are also courses on the advanced level for those who specifically seek to be trained as adult education specialists *per se*. And finally there are courses for those who, having had considerable experience in the field, return for more intensive training in specific areas of interest. The conference is interested in all of these levels, without specifying, for any particular skill or

knowledge, the level for which it is intended. Our concern is a larger one: the promotion of better preparation for librarians. But the problem of levels is a complicated one, and it becomes particularly pertinent when — as reported in the next chapter — one attempts the assignment of appropriate learning situations for each of the recommended attitudes, knowledges and skills.

## The Assignment

### of Learning Situations

At this point in the conference, the task which faced the participants was simply to state which learning situation is best suited for providing librarians with any, some or all of the attitudes, knowledges and skills they need. But "simply" turned out to be the wrong word to apply to this assignment, for "best" — as always — had to be qualified to indicate "best for what" and "best for whom." The "what" related to the content of appropriate preparation, but the "whom" related to librarians at different points in their careers. Simplifying as much as possible, a distinction had to be made at least between the kinds of learning situations best suited to the young person receiving pre-service preparation and the kinds best adapted to the needs of the person whose adult education training comes after he or she is in service.

At the pre-service level, there are certain obvious learning situations which could be utilized. The major ones are these:

1. Formal course work —
  - a. In library school
  - b. In divisions outside library school
  - c. In interdivisional courses
2. Demonstration laboratories
3. Field work
4. Internships
5. Work-study programs

6. Research experience; participation in surveys; etc.
7. Professional reading
8. Participation in professional activities

At the in-service level, the learning situations are of two kinds: those undertaken formally with the specific purpose of learning a particular knowledge or skill, and those which incidentally provide knowledge and skill as a by-product of experience. The major ones of each kind may be designated as follows:

#### FORMAL

1. On-the-job training
2. Workshops, institutes, conferences, etc. These may be offered by —
  - a. Library schools
  - b. State library agencies
  - c. Library associations
  - d. Libraries
  - e. Other adult education agencies
  - f. Other organizations and agencies
3. Correspondence and extension courses
4. Exchange programs
5. Consultant services
6. Special study grant programs

#### INCIDENTAL

1. On-the-job experience
2. Participation in adult education activities
3. Staff self-study surveys
4. Professional activities
5. Professional reading
6. Participation in teaching
7. Travel and observation

As can be readily seen none of these categorizations is as neat and discrete as we should like it to be. Formal classes in the library schools are often attended by practicing librarians; students frequently take advantage of the professional activities of organizations and agencies; both groups utilize professional reading; and the work-study program is, by

definition, a hybrid activity. Yet, to all intents and purposes, it is somewhat impractical to tell the professional librarian in the field that his best source for learning a specific skill is in a course in library school; or to inform the library school student that in order to prepare for his professional career, he should participate in a library self-study survey. The assignments of specific learning situations to specific skills for specific levels which were made in the conference should be seen, therefore, as "by-and-large" generalizations, with tacit recognition of the possible variations for particular instances.

### LEARNING SITUATIONS FOR THE KNOWLEDGES<sup>3</sup>

As was indicated in the preceding chapter (see page 13) the knowledges listed by the committee were essentially those which are gained outside the library school. For the pre-service student, knowledge of social and political structure and processes, of social and individual psychology, and of community organization and analysis can best be gained in courses in other divisions and departments of the university and college. In many cases, much of this should have been learned as part of the college background represented by the B.A. degree, but where the student is deficient in certain areas, he should be encouraged by the library school to take courses in other schools on his campus.

For the librarian already in the field, the means are many for remedying gaps in his background in these fields. Workshops, conferences, and other educational opportunities offered by state agencies, universities, and organizations of many kinds can be utilized. These are frequently offered, but are seldom attended by librarians because they usually think they must limit themselves to subjects more directly within the scope of traditional library activities. The conference wished

<sup>3</sup>No attempt was made to assign a learning situation to the inculcation of attitudes because of the intangible character of attitudes, and because no one situation can logically be assigned to them. As stated on page 12 attitudes are derived in classrooms and outside them, on the job and off it, from reading, from experience, from precept and example. Therefore no single "best" situation is feasible; attitudes are built through cumulative experience, not from a single instance.

to recommend a greater receptivity to such non-library sponsored opportunities where the subject knowledge is so pertinent.

Correspondence and extension courses are also available in these subject areas, and again the librarian has tended to concentrate on "library" courses and to overlook other subject fields. Professional reading is still a third method for gaining information in areas outside the field of librarianship but useful to it; by applying his own readers' advisory techniques to his own reading problems, the librarian could frequently remedy many lacunae in his general knowledge.

The area of communication — its theory, structure, organization and control — is available to both pre- and in-service people within the library school and outside it. Generally speaking it was the feeling of the group that such a course belongs more properly inside the library school so that its relevance to the library's place in the communication pattern can be identified. For the in-service person who cannot take advantage of formal course work in the library school, the workshop, extension course, and professional reading again can be utilized.

The philosophy and history of adult education should be gained from departments of education rather than from library schools, wherever possible. That some library schools may feel an obligation to offer this training because it is not available in a department on the local campus was recognized and accepted, but not recommended. What was recommended was some kind of inter-divisional course which would utilize resources in both the library school and the school of education to strengthen such a course for both. The librarian in the field should also turn to departments of education and adult education for formal courses, for workshops, and for extension work. As always, judicious reading can do much to provide knowledge of such background.

The adaptation of adult education theory to practice in library situations takes on the character of a skill as well as of a knowledge. Thus, for the pre-service student, formal course work in a library school is only one of the ways in which he can gain this knowledge; it was recommended also that attention be paid to field work, to research experience, to participation in surveys, to work-study programs, and to internships to provide the practical situation which will best

permit the student to gain experience in adapting theory instead of just learning about it.

For the librarian in the field, much the same kinds of situations are recommended: field work, participation in surveys, and internship experiences. Recommended too, of course, were on-the-job experience, particularly through participation in adult education activities themselves, exchange programs, and travel and observation. Workshops would also be useful here, particularly workshops sponsored by library schools working jointly with other adult education agencies, by state library agencies, and by libraries with successful adult education experience.

In other words, the more closely we approach the skills, the more we begin to move away from the formal classroom and into the field of actual experience. For skill, as defined by Webster, is "the ability to use one's knowledge effectively," which implies continual practice in the application of knowledge. Continual practice, in turn, requires time — and time is more than filled with the knowledge-gaining situations while the student is in school. His time on the job, however, virtually requires him to use his knowledge and to sharpen his proficiency. He needs his school-gained knowledge in order to become proficient — but he becomes proficient after he leaves school rather than while he is there.

#### LEARNING SITUATIONS FOR THE SKILLS

The "best" learning situation for most of the skills is really a combination of two situations; one in which the necessary knowledge is acquired, and one in which the practice in using the knowledge is provided. Thus, for the first broad category of skills — versatility in the communication process — the schools are the best place for gaining the basic knowledge. The first four skills areas — leadership training, discussion leadership, use of the media, and interviewing and counseling — fall pretty generally outside the library school's competence. Departments of education, of speech, of communication, of journalism, and of social sciences are more likely already to have well-organized course materials available in these fields, in which are taught the principles which are needed by any discussion leader, interviewer or counselor, whatever his specialization. Library school courses will build upon these principles to teach the student to adapt

them to specific library practices, but the "outside" course is probably the most efficient method for gaining the basic knowledge.

The in-service librarian — assuming that he cannot take advantage of the formal classroom — will have to use field substitutes for it. On-the-job training is an important means for learning these knowledge/skills; so is the workshop or conference (sponsored by non-library as well as library agencies), the services of an expert consultant, and judicious professional reading. But both the student and the professional librarian must then develop his skill, on the basis of this knowledge, through on-the-job experience, participation in adult education activities, and — especially in the cases of training leaders and members for group participation, and of actual group leadership itself — in participation in teaching.

The fifth skill — ability to present orally and in writing ideas derived from the analysis of library materials in relation to the interests and needs of the audience — is definitely a library school responsibility. It will be remembered that speaking and writing skills are assumed as part of liberal education, and that students who have completed a four-year college program are alleged to have some understanding of the principles involved. The library school's responsibility, then, is not to teach the student how to speak and write, but how to speak and write about library materials, how to analyze them for use in speaking and writing, and how to relate them to audience interests and needs. These are specific and distinctive library skills; more than that, they are skills which all librarians must have to some degree, although the adult education expert must be highly proficient in them. To a large extent, then, this material should be part of the library school's course work for all students, with additional training provided those who wish to specialize in the adult education activities of library work.

The librarian who leaves, until he is in the field, any efforts to sharpen these specific speaking and writing skills requires considerable native ability to gain the desired mastery. Practice in reading, in writing, in speaking will give him the opportunity to make mistakes from which — if he is intelligent enough — he can learn. The incidental learning situations for the in-service person can all be useful here; perhaps more useful than the formal situations, although workshops can contribute much, and on-the-job training — by giving direction to

experience — can shorten the time in which the learning takes place. Generally speaking, however, it would appear that the conferees felt that the librarian cannot begin too early nor practice too much to improve his ability to present his ideas orally and in writing.

The second category of skills, — ability to plan, organize, and administer a program for adults of all ages — again leans heavily upon the knowledge which is best gained from the classroom — and from the classroom outside the library school as well as in it. Greater emphasis is placed here, however, on the particular application of more generalized knowledge, and the stress was laid by the conferees on the necessity for library schools to include more course material on these skills, particularly those having to do with identification of community needs and interests, the stimulation of community (or individual) expression of these needs, and the techniques for evaluating library programs and activities. The ability to select and use books and other materials is seen as basic course content for all librarians, with intensive specialization for those who know in advance that adult education activities will be their major interest.

Two of the skills, however, may or may not belong in the formal course work of the school. One — the ability to recruit discussion group leaders and speakers from the community — is one that is best gained from actual experience. There may be a few techniques of interviewing and interpersonal relations that can be taught, but generally speaking this is an operation which must be "played by ear" in the individual situation. Tact, intelligence, social ease, good interpersonal relations are not readily teachable.

The other — physical and mechanical skills — was one which some of the conferees felt does not belong in the library school at all (see page 21). Disregarding for the moment the opinion of one member of the group who felt that these skills need never be learned — in school or out of it — the majority feeling was that some technical proficiency of this kind is essential, and must be learned somewhere. Most were agreed that formal class work on the graduate level is not necessary, but many felt that a kind of laboratory situation should be provided for introducing these skills to the student while he is still in school. Demonstration laboratories, field work, work-study programs can provide practice in the use of equipment which need not undermine the graduate character of formal

class work while still providing the introduction to practical tools of the trade which is considered desirable. In any case, all but one were agreed that the in-service situation should provide opportunities for the librarian to become familiar with the techniques of operating equipment — through on the job training, special workshops and clinics (sponsored perhaps by non-library agencies), and the services of consultants who may, for example, be salesmen or demonstrators of the equipment. Actual on-the-job experience might also provide the necessary skill, but this is a more expensive way to gain it, particularly when ineptitude with the equipment while the librarian is learning may well destroy the effectiveness of adult education programs. It is usually not wise to practice on an audience when the program may stand or fall upon the smoothness and ease with which it is carried out.

The third category is, again, an unteachable one. Ability to work with other departments, with other adult education agencies and formal and informal groups in the community, and to interpret the library's functions to them — this is, in a sense, a description of adult education work as a whole. If the librarian or the student has mastery over the attitudes, knowledges and skills already enumerated, he will possess this skill. It is, in a sense, the integration of all the other requirements: innate ability, special knowledge, the proper attitudes, and well-developed special skills.

#### IMPLICATIONS

Three learning situations were mentioned with great frequency for almost every knowledge and skill listed in the committee reports. These three were: (1) library school courses; (2) classes in other divisions and departments of the university or college; and (3) workshops, institutes, clinics, etc. It was very clear that the group — like the professional field from which they were drawn — expect the library schools to do almost everything. One very important reservation was underlined in the conference, however: that the schools cannot be expected to make students proficient in all the areas indicated and that their major responsibility is to open the field to the student, to introduce him to the attitudes and knowledges, to acquaint him with the kinds of skills that he will be expected to acquire, and to make him ready to gain proficiency, competency, and skill through later experience.

This is an important proviso, for it indicates recognition on the part of the field that the library shares with the library school the responsibility for training in professional librarianship.

Another implication of the listings is that greater cooperation is desirable, between the library school and other departments, divisions, and schools on the campus; between the library school and the field; and between the library and other educational agencies. Throughout the session dealing with the selection of learning situations it was made clear that the librarian, working with all subject matters and with persons from all subject fields, cannot prepare himself for maximum effectiveness by limiting his preparation to the field of library science alone. Library materials deal with other subjects; library patrons are not librarians; the language of the librarian must be shared with non-librarians, and theirs must be understandable to him. When the librarian begins to accept adult education responsibilities, therefore, he cannot limit himself to library-oriented information. The general basic principles of adult education are important to him; and so he must look to schools of education for part of his background. The make-up, organization, and control of the community are important to him; and so he must look to sociology departments for another part. The individual and his life pattern is important to him, and so he must look to psychology. The group and its leadership is important, and so he must look to interpersonal relations and group dynamics. Ready access to these areas has not always been available to the librarian, but sometimes the fault has been at least partly his.

Another important implication of the conclusions about learning situations is that opportunities for learning need to be made more available. It was pointed out that many learning situations are utilized because they exist. The student chooses courses which are included in the curriculum; the librarian in the field takes advantage of opportunities when they are offered. The frequent requests for workshops, institutes, and other such training situations which could be sponsored, not only by formal institutions of learning, but by state library agencies, library associations, and libraries themselves throw a very real responsibility on librarians in the field to work towards the establishment and scheduling of more such opportunities. Library associations, to take only one example, are constantly meeting at one place or another throughout the

country, and program planning committees are constantly cudgeling their collective brains for program ideas. A series of ready-made program ideas is embedded in the suggestions of this conference.

Another implication which derives from many of the suggestions is that of a need for a more careful screening of recruits for librarianship. Many of the suggested learning situations are based on the assumption that the learner brings certain knowledge with him. Much of the knowledge which is deemed essential in this conference is that which should have already been gained by the time the student, or the librarian, is ready to emphasize his specialization. Can the schools assume prior mastery of this knowledge? Are the courses, the workshops, the other learning situations built upon a real foundation of the necessary knowledge? Does the librarian who elects to assume adult education responsibilities have the background necessary? The plans outlined here for improving the preparation of librarians in this special area may stand or fall upon the learner's prior preparation in other fields and in basic knowledge. Some kind of screening device to determine the breadth and depth of this assumed background seems indicated.

Finally, it should be noted that we have been speaking from the standpoint of the librarian, or the student, who wishes to prepare himself for adult education activities. The considerations which underlie the selection of a desirable learning situation for a particular knowledge or skill have been stated from this point of view. These considerations are not always the same for the person who has responsibility for setting up the learning situation. They are useful as guides to needs and interests, but they should be used with caution as blueprints for course building, curriculum planning, and the design of workshop programs. A learning situation should be established with firm educational objectives in view; the length of time taken, the facilities employed, the objectives selected should be based on the needs of effective teaching. Thus while it is useful for the educator to know that many of the people who need a particular knowledge have only three weeks in which to obtain it, he must not pretend that a three weeks' course can handle material which really requires three months. The schools have frequently found themselves under pressure to reduce the length of a course, the requirements for admission to it, or the difficulty of the work involved

in the learning process in order to fit certain practical needs and conveniences of potential students. Similar pressures will be exerted on any person or group wishing to set up a learning situation, whether it be a full curriculum for a year of graduate work or a one-day institute on how to run a projector. But the major considerations should be the time demands of the subject matter rather than those of the learner. Some materials can be compressed only so far, and while the educator may be justified in trying to find shorter approaches to specific aspects of a problem wherever possible, his ultimate responsibility should be to the educational values of his program and not to the number of students who can be lured into it. It is this conflict — between the demands of preparation and the demands of those who wish to obtain the preparation — which causes the greatest problem in the recommendation of the best learning situation. For “best” includes the concept of possibility as well as that of desirability, and the conferees felt obliged to take into account the fact that some of the necessary attitudes, knowledges and skills may not lend themselves to the most convenient and available learning situations.

#### Chapter 4

### **General Recommendations of the Conference**

The note on which the preceding chapter ended — that there may be a gap between the ideal and the readily attainable — is not so pessimistic as it sounds. Certainly the conferees were not discouraged by its implications. To come closer to the ideal than we have in the past is the goal which librarians are always setting themselves, fully recognizing that to be close to the goal is not necessarily to be directly on it. The recommendations of the conference, then, are not tendered as an immediate panacea to the ills that librarianship is heir to. They are meant to serve as means not for perfecting but for improving the preparation of librarians for adult education responsibilities.

The recommendations grow out of the discussions of the first two days of the conference. In some cases they have been derived by this writer from the discussions, and have been stated as recommendations by him even though in the conference itself they were implicit rather than explicit. In other instances, the recommendations were formally stated in the conference as representing a definite suggestion for action. Both the implied and the stated recommendations have been submitted to the conferees for revision, acceptance or rejection, and may firmly be set down as representing the majority consensus.

RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFICALLY TO  
THE LIBRARY SCHOOLS

1. That an introduction to the library's responsibility for adult education be made a part of the general basic work of all library school students whatever their area of interest. Adult education work is seen as part of the normal responsibility of the library which, like cataloging, reference work, book selection, etc., should be understood by all librarians even though their particular specialization may not require them to undertake it.

2. That a broad, liberal arts education be made an essential prerequisite for those wishing to specialize in adult education work as it is for all library school students. While particular emphasis is placed in the student's preprofessional preparation on a knowledge of sociology, psychology, social anthropology, and speaking and writing skills, this should not be interpreted as condoning any dilution of general education in favor of earlier specialization. The attitudes, knowledges, and skills specifically called for in this conference are to be based on a foundation of general education and on the professional specialization normally represented by the basic program of an accredited library school.

3. That many of the core concepts in adult education should be learned in courses taught in departments of education rather than in library schools. By and large, it is desirable to avoid the establishment of courses in library schools which will deal with subject matter which can more competently be handled by other schools and departments. The use of outside courses in theory, history, and organization of adult education are particularly recommended because of the opportunity they provide for library school students to exchange opinions and ideas with non-library people in adult education situations. This is often lost if the courses are centered exclusively in the library school.

4. That the application of the general principles of adult education to the specifics of library practice, on the other hand, properly rests with the library schools. Generally speaking, the student cannot be relied upon to make the necessary adaptations and transference from the general principles to the specific needs of library programs, nor can non-library courses be expected to devote the necessary time to so special an aspect of the broader field.

5. That library schools should develop adult education courses in those subject areas where they have recourse to existing supplementary strengths outside the school, and that library schools should take special responsibility for fostering closer cooperation between the library school and the departments of education and adult education on their campuses.

6. That where education and adult education departments are weak or nonexistent it is the particular responsibility of the library school administrator to work for the creation and strengthening of such departments.

7. That those who plan course work in the field of adult education activities recognize that knowledge and skill are almost always two interdependent aspects of a single competence, and that the "skill" aspect generally derives from practice and experience. It is recommended, therefore, that formal courses should be planned with major emphasis upon the basic knowledge, leaving the application of the knowledge in specific techniques for practice situations, on-the-job training, and experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFICALLY TO  
THE FIELD OF LIBRARIANSHIP

8. That units within the American Library Association which have an interest and a stake in adult education in libraries should consider the ways in which they can encourage, and cooperate in carrying out, the recommendations of this conference. Such units and agencies include the Adult Education Board, the Adult Education and Extension sections of the Public Libraries Division, the Library Education Division, the Board of Education for Librarianship, the Association of American Library Schools, the National Association of State Librarians, the Division of Libraries for Children and Young People, and the several state library associations. It is urged that the chairmen or presidents of these several units, as a first step, meet at the earliest possible time to consider the report of the conference, to discuss the recommendations in the light of the objectives of their individual units, and to explore the means through which they can advance and implement the recommendations of which they approve.

9. That state and regional library associations make room in their annual meetings for sessions dealing with the problems related to the establishment of learning situations in adult

education for librarians, and the exploration of needs in this area.

10. That state and regional library associations should also consider the establishment of adult education committees to plan, on a regional basis, for the creation of learning situations to meet existing needs.

11. That the Adult Education Section of the Public Libraries Division (or some other unit in the A.L.A.) consider the establishment of a planning and counseling service to assist in the planning of conferences, workshops, and institutes on regional, state and local levels.

12. That the Adult Education Section of the Public Libraries Division (or some other unit within the A.L.A.)—because of the urgent need for better communication within the field—assume the responsibility of acting as a reporting channel to the field concerning training needs in adult education and existing facilities for meeting these needs.

13. That public libraries explore every possibility for establishing field work and internship situations which will provide training in the knowledges and skills most appropriately learned in the practical situation.

14. That public library administrators recognize their responsibility for encouraging promising staff members to take advantage of suitable learning opportunities in adult education work, through the provision of tuition assistance and released time.

15. That invention and initiative in the field of adult education activities and training should be encouraged, and that fuller and wider publicity be given to good practice and new ideas. Such publicity should be recognized, not only as a means of communicating to the field but as a stimulus to invention and a reward for it, and should appear not only in the professional journals of librarianship, but in the literature of other professional fields, and in the local press and internal publications of the library agencies concerned.

16. That library trustees be included whenever conferences and discussion groups meet on regional, state and local levels to deal with adult education needs in librarianship in order to gain layman support for the establishment of adult education services and layman recognition of the need for them.

#### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

17. That special effort be made to bring together representatives from the several agencies, institutions, and subject fields to discuss cooperative efforts at the establishment of suitable training situations and to promote the pooling and sharing of experience, problems, and talent. Among the groups and agencies whose cooperation is urged are the following: library schools; university and college departments of education and adult education; state agencies; university extension departments; local libraries; professional associations, in the fields of librarianship and adult education, and on the local, regional, and national levels. This is not an exhaustive listing; the agencies here cited merely help to illustrate the variety of relationships and cooperative groupings that are possible. The local situation will dictate the particular steps to be taken; the particular agency which should properly take the initiative; the key persons who must be convinced. As in other recommendations of this conference, it is assumed that the general recommendation will be adapted to take advantage of the peculiar strengths of the particular situation.

18. That greater efforts should be made to foster research and the publication of findings concerning adult education techniques. Such research is important on both the formal and informal levels. Those actively engaged in adult education activities should be encouraged to keep diaries of their experience, and to report successful and unsuccessful experiments. Surveys of the effectiveness of existing practice and techniques should be fostered, and schools and other research institutions should make every effort to direct students and scholars to this area when projects are being sought.

19. That funds be secured to make possible a series of in-service training institutes, using regional persons and resources if this seems desirable, to develop and upgrade library staff members throughout the country engaged in adult education activities.

20. That a fund be established which will enable experienced librarians (and those of potential growth) to enroll in intensive training programs in adult education and to spend time in the observation of good adult education programs in actual operation in a variety of situations—in libraries, in schools, in industry, in labor groups, etc.

## CONCLUSION

The recommendations of this conference are suggestive rather than prescriptive. They represent workable, immediate steps which might be taken by librarians and educators, working independently and together, to bring into being a group of practitioners better equipped to carry out the objectives of adult education. But they are not the only steps, and a statement of recommendations can often serve its purpose equally well if it stimulates others to initiate steps of their own in the direction of the same goals. In any case, the conferees recognize that the situation varies from place to place, and that adjustment will be required to fit the specific situation.

What the conferees wish, more than any single thing, is that the enthusiasm and excitement of the three-day session might be transferred generally to librarians and others. It was suggested, for example, that a series of little "Allerton Conferences" throughout the country might well be a constructive step in the direction of improving the state of preparation of librarians for adult education work. It was not the spirit of this suggestion that the agenda of this particular conference be made a rigid pattern for others, but rather that the same interest, the same sense of urgency, the same creative approach should be fostered in other groups through the interested, informal exchange of ideas on the general subject.

Another suggestion, indicative of the enthusiasm with which the group looked forward to the application of its recommendations and ideas, was that the conferees be brought together — perhaps at the time of the 1956 American Library Association Conference — to report progress and discuss results growing out of the Allerton meetings. As was indicated in the Introduction, the participants in the conference were chosen, in part, because their position and authority makes it possible for them to initiate and support the implementation of the recommendations. Presumably, then, no group could be assembled two years hence who give better promise of having tangible progress to report. More than that, the group represents many sections of the country and a variety of library situations. Its members are thus able to keep in touch with the activities of others in the field of adult education in libraries of many kinds.

A follow-up meeting in 1956 seems like a sound suggestion. It would permit an evaluation of the 1954 recommendations

in the light of experience which might well lead to some realistic amendments and some additional recommendations. It would keep the recommendations alive by refusing to inter them permanently within the covers of the printed report. It would permit the conferees, on second meeting, to drive directly to the heart of the more serious problems, thanks to the ground covered and the accords reached in 1954, and to the concentrated attention to this specific area of interest which the first conference has fostered. And — because even so enthusiastic a group as this is still composed of human beings — the knowledge that a report of progress is expected in 1956 would act as an important stimulus to the immediate initiation and implementation of those recommendations which lie within the power of this group.

The heartening and promising aspect of the recommendation is that the conferees themselves voted this commitment upon their time and energies, thus testifying to their own faith that there will, indeed, be much to report at that second meeting. The report closes, therefore, not with the familiar legend, "The End," but with the much more exciting words:

TO BE CONTINUED

## Appendix:

### Participants in the Conference

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