

New opportunities with Project 2000 Keynote address by Professor Jean Hooper, Chair of ENB

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Professor Hooper talked about some of the problems facing those institutions which have implemented Project 2000. She discussed the problems faced by libraries, and how these could be tackled and turned into opportunities by librarians. With the merging of 350 schools of nursing and midwifery into 90 integrated schools in England, libraries have often been overlooked. Integration of libraries has been difficult, and many are under-staffed, or lack qualified staff. Few libraries have had any major capital development, and many merged schools have retained multiple small libraries on scattered sites.

The emphasis on self-directed learning for students with a wide range of abilities on entry, has called for some re-evaluation of the library's role. Good resources are needed, in terms of space, stock, accessibility and the presence of qualified librarians. Many libraries have been unable to secure the funding necessary to provide adequate services in support of Project 2000 courses. Multiple site libraries have presented particular problems, especially with the increased demand for services outside normal working hours – at weekends and in the evenings.

Many librarians are faced with a lack of knowledge on the part of teaching staff as to the role the library can play in supporting students. Their skills, as facilitators of learning, are often not appreciated, whilst students' study skills abilities are usually grossly overestimated. The librarian can offer continuing support and advice on study skills throughout the course.

Professor Hooper said that the ENB have been aware for some time that some libraries receive inadequate funding. Four years ago the non-staff allocation varied from £59-£400 per capita between schools. This year the ENB have achieved a non-staff allocation of £191 per capita in all schools. Professor Hooper did state that Project 2000 students are comparatively well off, in relation to other HE students, and need to acquire a higher education ethos, rather than expecting the library to stock enough copies of every core text for each student to borrow.

She then discussed how librarians might tackle the problems of obtaining adequate resources and achieving a key role in nurse education:

- Curriculum planning. 'Be assertive'. It is crucial that the librarian

has a role in curriculum planning, and that importance is attached to study skills from the beginning.

- **Skill mix review.** A realistic review can free up qualified staff to play a greater role in support of students, and make more efficient use of clerical staff.
- **Capital investment.** Money is needed for services such as photocopies, CD roms and online. Libraries may need to look at the option of charging for these services.
- **Accessibility.** Out of hours access does not necessarily require increased staffing. Good networking across multiple sites is an option, giving students physical access to a site, and networked access to services and staff at another site. Professor Hooper also pointed out that schools should allow reasonable time within the curriculum for students to travel to libraries.
- **Access to higher education libraries.** Many submissions to the ENB rely heavily on links with HE institutions. Project 2000 students should have total access to these libraries with no constraints or extra costs.
- **Merging resources.** Media and library resources are often separate and may be duplicated. Bringing them together makes sense.
- **Library participation in ENB validation visits.** ENB officers need to have problems brought to their attention. The library should be involved in the school's presentation. ENB officers can then make conditions to deal with problems, in their recommendations.
- **Write a paper.** Submitting a paper to the Principal and to teaching staff can help to convey the potential role of the library.
- **Tutor-librarian posts.** Librarians are as much facilitators of learning as tutors. Development of the tutor-librarian role will emphasise this.
- **Publicity.** Many nursing journals have carried reports of dissatisfaction with library provision in support of Project 2000 courses. The NISG have carried out useful work and produced a report 'Resourcing Project 2000 [1]. The ENB is currently working with civil servants during the progress of the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Bill. Baroness MacFarlane spoke recently in the House of Lords about the 'pathetic' state of library provision in many schools. These are all opportunities to campaign for resources, and librarians must continue to convey the message.

Professor Hooper took on board various criticisms, such as the fact that many librarians are excluded from ENB visits by their schools, and feel that their efforts are largely ignored by teaching colleagues.

She stated that she had been impressed by the NISG report [1], and that she would be taking its recommendations back to the ENB, and suggesting that it be required that librarians be included in ENB visits. She said that librarians must continue to fight for recognition and funding, basing their cases on comprehensive, factual evidence.

[1] Shepherd T and Yeoh J (1990). Resourcing Project 2000 nursing courses: the role of library and information services. NIS/RCN

