

Report from Project 2000, NIS Study Day, May 1990

Implementing Project 2000 at Avon College. Anne Lawrence

Reporter: Tony Shepherd

The Implementation of Project 2000 (P2K) requires an enormous amount of change and inevitably involves many emotions during the time of adjustment. The process has varied considerably across the country and the experience at Avon may not be applicable in other places.

1 The process of amalgamation

The Avon School of Nursing was formed in October 1985 from three schools of nursing in the Bristol area. This resulted in a school on 13 sites but, as Anne pointed out, the three main centres and a number of the smaller sites were fairly close together. The education unit at Weston super Mare was 24 miles from Bristol with its unstaffed library having previously been run from Bristol. This geographical spread does not have the problems which the other amalgamations have with their much larger spread of sites.

2. Interim senior staff structure

Anne, who had been librarian at Bristol and Weston School, was appointed Learning Resources Manager along with other senior staff following internal advertisements. The three heads of centres were confirmed in post at the same time. Anne's post carries responsibility for libraries, audio-visual services and computers used in learning and teaching. She is a member of the Senior Management Team which is involved in the general management

of the College.

3 The role of learning resources

At Bristol and Weston, libraries and learning resources were given reasonable funding and status and this has been continued within the new school. This is not the case within all 'old' or 'new' schools/colleges, but the reasonable baseline from which Avon has started is a distinct advantage.

4 Statistics of staff and libraries

There are 12 libraries at the 13 centres, with libraries of between 450 to 12,500 books. The L.R. department has 9.5 WTE staff as well as Anne, with 6.5 of these designated 'library' staff. These posts are held by 10 people working across 12 libraries and three of these work at the Bristol Centre - the only library open with staffing at all times.

In July 1989, the two Schools of Midwifery joined the School and added their 'libraries' which were not staffed and had only minimal funding. Anne acts as their adviser and will not 'stretch' her present staffing to cover these extra libraries.

5 Problems arising from amalgamation

- i A major problem was that the unqualified library staff were on different grades. Following review - all of these staff were placed on A + C grade 3, which did 'wonders for morale' of library staff since

much hard work was now rewarded and formally recognised.

- ii The need for a single site is agreed as being much needed: no solution in sight (no pun!) at present.
- iii Variation of services and systems: problems included the rationalisation of four different classification systems. The installation of an automated library system will help somewhat in solving the problem of retrieval.

Allied to this is the need to ensure that the school 'links' into local higher education partner - the Bristol Polytechnic - to provide integration where appropriate of the two installations' library services. Decisions were delayed pending further discussions about relationships between the two - and the new college will still 'stand alone' for the foreseeable future.

6. Status

The status of the library has improved on some sites as services have improved and the benefits recognised. As teaching staff are themselves increasingly studying for higher degrees, so the necessity for a 'proper' library service has been seen more clearly. Increased demand has led to new problems - eg. the duplication of journals and other resources across the sites.

7. Project 2000, preparation

Because of the pressure of change, the preparation has had to be reactive - a more highly organised approach has not been possible.

The maximum intake of students was reduced from 110 to 90 because of the costs of higher bursaries and the problem of providing placements whilst the RGN courses continue. The first intake of 86 have been accommodated and Anne says, by way of reassurance, "so far it's been unbelievably calm and collected... throughout the whole building", but pressure on the library will increase as students are given more work to undertake and as their total numbers expand.

8. Links with Bristol Polytechnic

Strong links are being formed and the support from their staff, especially the subject librarian, Malcolm McEachran, has been a great benefit. P2K monies have funded 4 new polytechnic lecturers, including teachers of sociology, psychology and biology.

The College of Nursing is an Associate Faculty of the Polytechnic, perhaps an unusual arrangement within the P2K situation in the UK?

The Learning Resources Manager is an ex-officio member of the Course Management Committee and the Faculty Board of Studies. She is also co-opted on to the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee with the Polytechnic's subject librarian. (So the educational role of this post has been fully recognised).

9. P2K librarians

As a demonstration school, additional funding was provided for three additional librarians (A + C grade 5) to be phased in over three years from 89/90 session. (Anne opted for two librarians at A + C grade 6 with the hope that

these posts become subject-tutor librarians in the future).

10. Curriculum planning

Not much involvement as yet! The creation of book lists, eg, prior to the tutor being appointed, posed problems of course, as does the provision of American books as "core" texts and out-of-print titles on lists. (There is a clear need for full involvement of librarians in this vital aspect of curriculum planning - to say nothing of contributions concerning library skills etc - your reporter would add).

11. Books, loans and journals

Decisions about the number of multiple copies must be made early in the planning stage. Short-term loan collections are valuable but library staff are needed to control the issue systems. Journal subscriptions have been expanded to allow for more titles available across the sites and in the Polytechnic - to avoid unnecessary duplication, so as to develop a wide a range as possible.

12. Inter-library loans

As an experiment, students will be allowed 10 free BL forms each during their three year course (to be reviewed at the end of this period or when the money runs out if sooner).

13. On-line and CD ROM searching

On-line provision has been available for a number of years. This is available after a manual search is completed and evidence of this is produced, together with a £1.00 fee. CD ROM will be introduced when time permits (a

job for the new P2K librarian?).

14. Future events

Anne listed seven 'lurking in the wings':

- i. Implementation of automated system and data entry, for each site;
- ii. Possible addition of direct entry midwifery course in the autumn this year. (Therefore problems of resources provision);
- iii. Possible amalgamation of Bristol Schools of Physiotherapy and Radiography. (Each with libraries - but no library staff);
- iv. Planning for a 'new' central site at Glenside Hospital. This requires the design of accommodation, possible staff moves, negotiation of hospital provision on site for nurses and students and moving 12 libraries;
- v. Working more closely with the Polytechnic and perhaps seeing the College becoming a full faculty;
- vi. PREPP;
- vii. Distance learning modular conversion course.

To sum up Anne's informative and interesting talk, may I quote from her paper a sentence which, perhaps, provides an idea of the aim of all this activity:

"I have a vision of a librarian who has time to know in depth all the resources for the main P2K areas and is able to give full support to the teachers and students".