

Learning about nursing librarianship: reflections on the course in Library Techniques at the Royal College of Nursing - 28th November - 2nd December 1983.

I am sure that in saying the course proved to be varied and enjoyable, I am echoing the feelings of all thirteen other course members.

The staff at the Royal College of Nursing coped very well with the alterations to the programme which became necessary due to illness of speakers, and I do not think this detracted from the overall benefit of the course.

The course was well structured in that we were given not only an overall view through lectures on the provision of libraries in schools of nursing and 'Finance and the library' but also lectures on specific tasks. This included Cataloguing, Classification and Sources of Information. The emphasis was also on putting theory into practice, with a large proportion of each session devoted to cataloguing/classification exercises. This was, in my view, a strength of the course since it is possible, for example, to think that you understand classification from a lecture on it, but it is only when you actually start to classify that you begin to see what problems can arise!

I found the three arranged visits to outside libraries and the tour around the R.C.N. library especially useful since it was interesting to compare and contrast the variety of service provision, facilities and staffing in each library. The visits also brought us closer together informally as a group and it was constantly amazing to hear in conversation how different each course member's working environment was despite the fact that most of us worked in nursing libraries.

The course ended with a feedback session which gave everyone the opportunity to ask questions emerging from the lectures and voice ideas about the weaknesses of the course. Some suggested weak areas were that the course could include more on user education and library promotion and technical difficulties such as the shortage of classification schemes and copies of reference books for the Sources of Information session - both areas which it would have been difficult entirely to resolve.

I think, however, it should be appreciated that the staff undertook a very difficult task in trying to pitch the talks at just the right level for everyone since there was such a variety of experience and qualification amongst the group (two of us, including myself having already qualified as librarians) that it would have been impossible to go at the right pace to suit everyone. I felt this probably showed up most in the cataloguing session where I thought that the pace of the session was slightly slow, but I can appreciate that it may have been too fast for other members.

One part of the course which I felt was particularly important was the talk on Library Organisation and Procedures. This is an area which can easily be neglected in a working situation, since it is difficult to look objectively at the alternative methods of carrying out a particular task instead of the method at present used.

In this way, I think the course was refreshing in that it enabled us to ask questions about the way services should be provided and tasks carried out.

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LETTERS
From the Rcn Library Staff

The Royal College of Nursing Library regularly receives requests of the kind made by Mrs Rowson (NISG Newsletter 3 (4) Winter 1983 3-4). However, we feel it is neither desirable nor feasible for us to select materials on behalf of other nursing libraries.