

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.

Dawn McGerty
Library Assistant, Charles West School of Nursing

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.

Decisions of this nature can only be made by those with responsibility for individual libraries, in the light of local circumstances: client groups using the library, courses offered by the school, existing stock, recommendations and requests, money available. Furthermore, the Rcn Library is not typical of other nursing libraries, and our services for the staff of the Rcn, and its members, as well as staff and students (all post-basic) of the Institute of Advanced Nursing Education, are reflected in the materials we buy. The different funding of the schools of nursing libraries and the Rcn Library means that at the present time we have no extra resources allocated for our bona-fide service to nursing libraries.

We realise that many staff responsible for nursing libraries have not had the benefit of professional library training (which includes selection skills). We are always pleased to discuss the problems of providing services and the facilities that are available to help, with individuals and from time to time we run courses on basic library skills for unqualified staff.

But it is on this level and this level only that we at the Rcn are able to offer help.

PEOPLE

Mrs Patricia Potter BA ALA has recently been appointed as Librarian to the Breakspear Nurse Education Division based at Hillingdon and Mount Vernon Hospitals. She has previously worked at Brunel University, Uxbridge and Slough College of Higher Education. She recently completed a degree course with the Open University and is now embarking upon a course leading to an Honours award.

REGIONAL NEWS

North East Thames Region

A study day was held by the North East Thames Regional Library and Information Service on Monday, 5th December 1983 at Newham Hospital Academic Centre.

The first speaker of the morning was Miss A Dummett, District Occupational Therapist for Islington Health Authority, who spoke about the education of the remedial professions and the implications it has for information needs. Miss Jane Stephen, Librarian at the Whittington Hospital, spoke to us briefly about the new multidisciplinary library at the Whittington Hospital. The next two speakers gave us the case for and against multidisciplinary libraries.

Martin Sanderson, Assistant Regional Librarian, S.W. Thames, questioned what a multidisciplinary library really is and whether it really means access for all.

Dr Peter Leggate, from the Oxford Regional Library Service gave the case for multidisciplinary libraries from a managerial and administrative point of view.

The morning session ended with a time for questions.

In the afternoon, John Hewlett, Regional Librarian for North East Thames gave news from the Region and drew attention to some useful books and publications which could be of use to medical librarians.

Mrs Angela Head, District Librarian, Newham Health Authority, spoke about new developments in Newham Health District Library service and future plans.

Mr Paul Hockney, Librarian, London Hospital Medical College, spoke about choosing and installing a microcomputer in a teaching hospital library and gave practical advice on how to select the most useful microcomputer to meet individual needs.

Mr George Royle, Director of Nurse Education, Basildon and Thurrock Health Authority spoke about the use of computers in Schools of Nursing, both the background to their introduction and their present use.

The afternoon session finished with a time for questions and further discussion.

Maira Stenhouse

The report of the North East Thames Regional Librarian for 1983 can be obtained from John Hewlett, Regional Librarian, West Essex Medical Centre, St. Margaret's Hospital, Epping, Essex CM16 6TN on receipt of a self-addressed envelope.

Publications/Articles

Council for the Education and Training of Health Visitors

Completed and on-going research related to health visitor education, training and practice (including local and small-scale enquiries). The Council, 1982.

I have found this publication very useful for the health visiting students at the Polytechnic and thought it would be worth drawing it to readers' attention. Although it provides an index to research rather than abstracts, it is a valuable complement to Nursing Research Abstracts because of its specific coverage of health visiting topics and ease of use, with references to several years of research on a topic visible at a glance.

The register was produced in March 1982 and an appendix was issued in May 1983. It is arranged in twenty-three sections such as sudden death in infancy, non-accidental injury, elderly, clerical help. The research listed includes work done for theses, for employing health authorities or academic departments and published as journal articles or monographs.

Within each section the entries are arranged chronologically and show the author, title and date finished (of completed research) or date started (of on-going research). Other information is given such as type of thesis, university awarding the degree, name of employing health authority and publisher of monographs.

The register and appendix are available free to interested librarians (one per library!) by writing to:

Miss M Thwaites,
Professional Adviser (Health Visiting)
English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and
Health Visiting,
Victory House,
170 Tottenham Court Road,
London W1.

Perhaps nursing librarians could inform their colleagues in postgraduate centres who may also serve health visitors.

Rosemary Clarke

Royal College of Nursing Library.

Steinberg Collection of Nursing Research. Catalogue Rcn, 1983, £1.00.

The catalogue lists theses by nurses or about nursing submitted for higher education United Kingdom which can be read at the Rcn Library.