

the conference is aptly summarized in the book under review by one of the eminent scholars in the field, Bernth Lindfors. His slim volume provides many services at once. It is a statement of research priorities on the part of a representative mix of African literatures specialists. It is a succinct compendium of bibliographic data embedded in a meaningful text. It is also somehow a harbinger of future developments in African literatures that can be culled out of the strong feelings expressed by the few African participants in favor of an Afro-centric, historical and social use of African literary works on their own terms, as opposed to the aesthetic and abstractly "universal" epistemological approach to which these works have been subjected by non-African idealist critics. Finally, the book is a multiple approach manual for beginners, for the budding student of African literatures who is able to glance at the vast subject under the guidance of experts themselves struggling to produce the tools by which analysis, interpretation, and comparison are possible. By almost unanimous agreement, the 1983 London conference participants designated the following to be top research priorities; (1) achievement of bibliographic control now scattered and incomplete; (2) desirability of centralizing the growing body of bibliographic and biographic data; (3) provisions for instruction in new research methodologies in the same center, such as computer assisted techniques; (4) instruction and linguistic research in African languages and systematic translation programs of works produced by African writers. Just as unanimous was the realization that the funds necessary to implement these programs would not become easily available. Considering that this volume is a collection of merely sixteen papers, it goes a long way to give the reader a guide for a better understanding of the cultural realities teeming within the fifty states of contemporary Africa. Indeed, even the seasoned researcher will find considerable insights in the section devoted to literature in Hausa, Somali, Portuguese, and Southern African languages. Those who want to go further can turn to the excellent quarterly journal, *Re-*

search in African Literatures published by the University of Texas Press since 1970. While it may not be practical here to name the titles of general and specialized bibliographies, one must cite the *African Book Publishing Record*, published quarterly since 1975 by Hans Zell, which is restricted to books published in Africa. The *Africana Index*, edited by Colin Darch, lists journals published in Africa. Of the specialized bibliographies, the only one with a global focus is *Bibliographies for African Studies 1980-83* compiled by Yvette Scheven. Hans Zell and others have compiled the most useful *A New Reader's Guide to African Literature* published by Africana in New York in 1983. Finally one may recommend the work of the African Literature Association and its *ALA Bulletin*, a quarterly edited by Stephen Arnold, the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada T6G E6.—Hans E. Panofsky, *Northwestern University Library, Evanston, Illinois.*

Frale, Ruth A., and Carol Lee Anderson.

Library Space Planning: How to Assess, Allocate, and Reorganize Collections, Resources, and Physical Facilities. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1985. 158p. \$35. LC 84-18996. ISBN 0-918212-44-8.

Library Space Planning touches on many of the planning details encountered during planning for reorganization, expansion, and addition of library space, including budgeting for the party at completion of the project, pizza and all. It is based on the librarian authors' direct experiences, made the more poignant by citing mistakes, perhaps theirs, and/or those of others.

The library space planner in this book is the library director or a staff member assigned the job of space planner for the duration of the project, putting aside other responsibilities temporarily. These technically inexperienced individuals check floor loading, electrical power, and even rent cranes, activities normally delegated to professionals for reasons of safety, if nothing else. Occasional references are made to the use of the services of an architect or an electrician, none to those of a professional library planner, an engineer, nor a construction contractor. A more de-

tailed description is provided for the services of a moving contractor, and a sample bid document for moving services is included in the appendix.

For the uninitiated, the greatest difficulties this book poses are in determining when to retain a professional and when to do a task in-house, when a fact is in error or is only partially correct, how much detail is actually required for a particular task, and how reliable planning information can be gathered.

On page 31 the statement is made that "The floor should be able to handle at least 300 pounds per square foot" for compact shelving. The floor-loading capacity required for compact shelving depends on many factors, primarily the specific layout of the compact shelving, which is influenced by the building column spacing. The capacity required may be two hundred pounds per square foot, sometimes lower; three hundred pounds is the higher limit and may be required if material heavier than books is being stored or if shelving is higher than standard.

Often a floor constructed on grade will carry compact shelving if it is constructed with adequate reinforcing steel and if soil and other site characteristics are not unusual. However, before embarking on any program to install compact shelving, a structural engineer should be retained to check the proposed shelving layout against the actual structural characteristics of the building.

"Decreasing the aisle widths by moving the ranges closer together is another way to recoup floor space and maximize collection-housing." This statement appearing on page 36 may be contrary to building code regulations for providing access to the disabled if the aisles between ranges are reduced below thirty-six inches and the cross-aisles below forty-four inches. These dimensions vary from state to state, and the building codes should be checked before changing aisle widths. Planners also must not forget that access must be provided for disabled staff as well as disabled patrons.

The alternative to extend shelving up-rights as a way to add stack capacity without having to shift the collection does not

appear to be an economically feasible alternative. In California, a cost analysis was made to strengthen existing shelving seismically, a process that appears to be no more complicated than extending the shelving. The engineer found that it would be substantially cheaper to buy new frames rather than modify the old ones. In earthquake country, this alternative would also require redesign of the shelving for seismic safety. If you do decide to pursue this alternative, do not rely on the shelving, vendor; retain a structural engineer to confirm or determine the appropriate design.

An extensive description of electrical wiring and power is located on pages 50-52. Inexperienced staff should take no chances with electrical use and requirements. If possible, eliminate *all* extension cords. It is difficult to monitor staff use of these cords and, therefore, the fire danger is substantial. If extension cords appear to be needed, then additional outlets should be considered instead and installed by a qualified electrician. An electrician or electrical engineer should be retained if there is *any* question about adequate power supply and distribution. On page 70, on determining costs, Task Method is discussed. Be certain that the method will work. Some card catalog cases will break apart if they are moved with fully loaded drawers.

Two topics that are particularly interesting and not usually touched upon in library planning publications are cost-benefit analysis on pages 71-74 and the timetables in chapter 7. The cost-benefit discussion is described as "the costs of inactivity," the costs associated with operating with space deficiencies. The most compelling reason to invest in a space change or addition is the cost of *not* doing so, yet few librarians want to take the trouble or the time to think through and gather the statistics for this most valuable justification for a major capital expenditure, the largest single expenditure a librarian may ever make or recommend. A cost-benefit analysis is not easy to prepare, especially when many of the costs cannot be easily quantified. Librarians need help in this area. This book provides some good tech-

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niques in a few pages, but the professional literature has not yet adequately met this need.

Chapter 7, "The Last Planning Steps" contains PERT and Grantt charts and an "Operations Research Time Study," all of which can aid the staff in reducing the complexities of moving to manageable details. Upon reading through this useful, compact volume of 132 pages of text, it sometimes seemed as though it were intended for the librarian who would be faced with doing everything entirely alone and at other times as though one might just be able to get a little outside help. For the novices who read this book, they may not realize just how much help is available nor how possible it might be for them to ask for help. This book is filled with many how-to details that help the read to understand the planning process, but not always fully nor absolutely correctly. It is important for the librarians who read this book to recognize their own limitations in time and experience and to understand when they can do parts of the planning themselves and when they should seek outside professional help.—*Gloria Novak, University Library, University of California, Berkeley.*

Swisher, Robert, and Charles R. McClure. *Research for Decision Making: Methods for Librarians.* Chicago: American Library Assn., 1984. 209p. \$25. LC 84-12381. ISBN 0-8389-0398-3.

This is a difficult book to review because it addresses a significant gap in the literature on research for librarians but does not, in my opinion, fill the most important part of that gap. The authors identify "action research" as research for decision making. This fits well into the more general trilogy: research for the sake of better understanding, research for action, and research for no good reason at all. In each category it is possible to do good research or bad research. In fact, research that is good for one category may be fair or even poor in another.

The trouble with this book is that it does not tell us enough about how to do good action research, or even how to recognize (and thus avoid) bad action research. I am

left somewhat ill at ease by a book that tells me something is doable, and worth doing, but doesn't show me, through either good or bad examples, how to do it well.

On some subtle questions, such as the meaning of confidence intervals, the authors do a very nice job. On other issues, dealing with logical relations, they have more trouble.

An example is the use of flowcharts to illustrate the interrelation of concepts, processes, signals, or other entities. Flowcharts can be powerful aids to thought, or abominable. The worst are diagrams with eight or ten circles, all linked by lines, to suggest that all the parts have something to do with each other. At the other extreme we have the feedback diagrams of systems engineering, which can be so precise that the diagram itself specifies a differential equation, up to a few undetermined constants.

The flowcharts on pages 5, 7, and 9 are poor because they mix concepts, products and processes in a confusing fashion. The authors do not use the powerful analysis of the relation to environment presented in Churchman in "The Systems Approach." He stresses the distinction between resources, which may be used by the system, and constraints, which must be obeyed or satisfied. Churchman's book is accessible to a bright high school senior, and is worth reading.

Again, the flowchart selected on page 36 to illustrate the use of flowcharts is not a good example, because it does not make clear where items enter the system, how they come out, and how many of them follow each path. The basic structure of the process is simpler than it appears here.

Confusion about functional relationships is shown in the pair of graphs on page 15 that ought, by the labeling of their axes, to be symmetric to each other. Nonetheless, the dotted lines droop down in both graphs. This kind of carelessness is reflected throughout the text. Properties, concepts, and objects are loosely interchanged even within a single sentence. In longer discussions an implied equivalence is set up (for example, between research competency and research literacy, on page 15) among different concepts, mak-