

Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Lipsman, Claire K. *The Disadvantaged and Library Effectiveness*. American Library Assn., 1972. 208p.

Claire Lipsman has given public librarians a valuable study in an area of librarianship filled with rhetoric and little data. Using a combination case study and survey approach, Dr. Lipsman analyzed fifteen cities with library programs serving the economically disadvantaged. Five basic program factors deemed critical to program effectiveness in serving the disadvantaged are "competency and effectiveness of staff; degree of community involvement and understanding of community dynamics evidenced by project; degree of autonomy exercised by project director in decision making; quality of materials used; and effectiveness of publicity, or project visibility." Each of these areas is explored by case study and survey data. Three major policy recommendations are made involving improvement of existing programs; utilization of systems approaches and data collection for program budgeting; and adoption of new roles.

There was difficulty in determining who was a user or nonuser. Physical identification with a library within a six-month period was the deciding factor. It was found that in areas with the economically disadvantaged the predominant clientele are grade school children using the library for school-related purposes and that sometimes fewer than 10 percent of the adults are identified with libraries. This data leads to one of the recommendations calling for more effective integration of libraries with schools. Public librarians will approach this with caution, having experienced several decades of unsatisfactory integration which, among other things, did little to reach the nonuser.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Lipsman suggests "training for those holding leadership potential in low income communities" and "meeting more sophisticated needs for technical assistance to community groups." She also notes that success may be easier if a program does not set out to serve just

the poor, but to provide services that attract a broad spectrum of users. Indications are that substantial economic investment must be made to serve the disadvantaged; that unit costs may be high; that system planning and data gathering are necessary (also expensive); and that interagency planning and cooperation are essential. A question still remains unanswered: Can such action advocated by Dr. Lipsman reach a significant portion of the target group to gain and maintain the budget viability necessary for success, or will the public library still have to justify its existence upon significant use by its middle class public? Dr. Lipsman claims that . . . "unless libraries in ghetto areas can be perceived as important, prestigious, and useful by more than this relatively tiny book-oriented minority, it is doubtful that they can survive as institutions."

This book is must reading for all librarians wishing to work with the disadvantaged. Its message is articulate and clear. While some of the new directions are debatable, the analysis of successful and failing library programs with the disadvantaged should serve as a useful tool for the profession.—*John F. Anderson, Library Director, Tucson Public Library, Tucson, Arizona.*

Neal, Kenneth William, et al. *British Academic Libraries*. Wilmslow, Cheshire, England: The Author, 1973. 193p.

This is a bad book. Its fifteen chapters are a mishmash. Some read as though they originated in off-the-cuff lectures on administration, others appear to be problem situations invented to serve as student exercises, and still others—the best—are pedestrian descriptions of libraries. Although at least ten different people are among the authors, some two-thirds of the contents are written by Neal, senior lecturer, Department of Librarianship, Manchester Polytechnic, who is also compiler and publisher of the volume. The libraries described serve institutions that, at least in name, are different from those in the United States, such as colleges of further education, colleges of