

succeeded in encouraging improvements in programs and resistance to erosion.

In Iowa we have done a better job of encouraging systematic planning and evaluation in our Area Education Agency Media Centers than in local schools. The AEAMCs are designed to provide back-up collections, production, and consultative services to local schools. Since their inception their directors have been required to do periodic needs assessments. They are required to submit a program plan to the state annually. They have also been encouraged to plan systematic, research- and outside consultant-oriented evaluations. In 1978, the Department published Media Center Program Evaluation Document for Iowa Area Education Agencies (MEDIA), prepared by David Loertscher, Blanche Woolfs, Russell Blumeyer, Paul Spurlock and Betty Jo Buckingham. The document encouraged the use and careful analysis of action research in addition to an objective outside team consisting of an advocate, an adversary and an overall evaluator. The visiting teams would examine and test the self evaluation and the supporting action research and write their evaluation to which the Director was then to respond including their plans for the future.

Standards documents can provide purpose statements which can be used to establish service related goals. Evaluation, however, needs to be based on criteria established ahead of time, upon stated objectives based on standards-generated goals. Evaluation should be continuous, comprehensive and cooperative. It should identify both

strengths and weaknesses and use many instruments, not just collection counts. The evaluators should know children and young adults and evaluation should result in improvement of the service.

There can be no real accountability in evaluation unless a bargain is agreed upon; if the school district provides a given level of support, given pupil outcomes can be expected.

When we have planned, we have tended to plan only to meet some quantitative guidelines provided by a state department of education, an accrediting institution or a professional association. When we have evaluated, we have tended to test whether we met those same quantitative guidelines. We have not done enough research validating the positive effects of the library media program on the learning process, and we have not done enough to evaluate the effect on students of good library media programs nor have we publicized what we do know. We have tended to feel that libraries like mother and apple pie needed no defense. Now we find all three being challenged.

We need to reassess our planning/evaluation cycle. Liesener has proposed a carefully detailed nine step process for systematic planning, which includes evaluation and publicity:

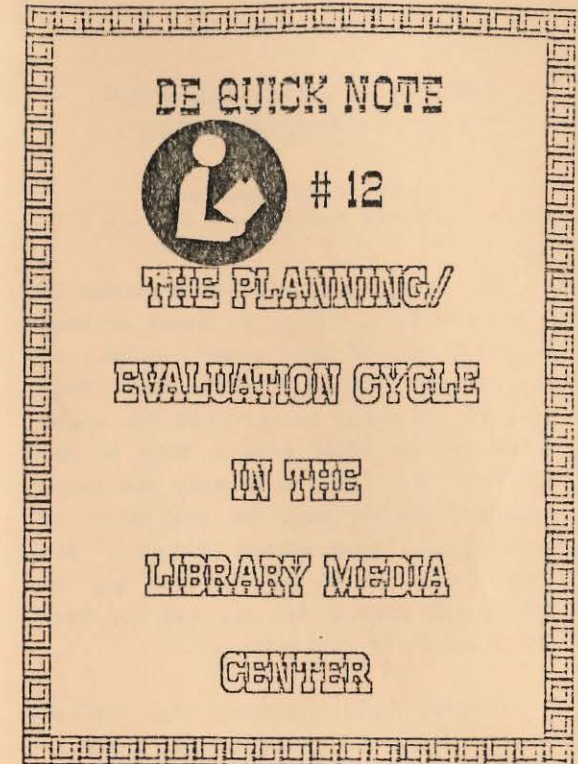
1. Definition of Program Output Alternatives
2. Survey of Perceptions of Current Services

3. Determination of Service Preferences and Priorities in Relation to Local Needs
4. Assessment of Resources and Operational Requirements of Services
5. Determination of Costs of Preferred Services and/or Current Services
6. Calculation of Program Capability
7. Communication of Preferred Services Currently Feasible to Total Client Group
8. Reallocation of Resources and Implementation of Changes in Operations to Provide the Range and Level of Services Selected
9. Periodic Evaluation of Services Offered and Documentation of Changing Needs.

School Library Media Specialists need to learn about the interdependence of planning, evaluation and public relations. We must become more accountable, we must build and publicize more effective programs or we may not survive.

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THE PLANNING/EVALUATION CYCLE
IN THE LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

by Betty Jo Buckingham

The story is told about a worker in a cake factory. Eggs in cases holding 30 dozen rolled down a moving belt at the rate of one every two seconds. Near her the belt was interrupted for about three or four feet with a drop of two stories. Her job was to move the cases from one moving belt to the other by lifting each case across the gap. She knew there had to be a better way to handle the problem but she was too busy for planning or evaluation.

Despite long standing lip service to the need for evaluation, American school library media program administrators still seem to be moving eggs by hand.

When the American Association of School Librarians introduced Standards for School Library Programs in 1960, they instigated the School Library Development Project which developed individual school and school district guides for planning school library development. Both guides proposed in "Part One: Preparing for Action" that schools

1. Establish a Planning Committee
2. Obtain Qualified Help [Consultant]
3. Evaluate the Present Library Service

4. Set Goals for Action
5. Enlist Community Support

"Part Two: Initiating Action" included as action areas library personnel, library budget, collections, quarters and equipment, policies for operation, and library services to pupils and teachers.

All of these documents included evaluation and planning for improvement of existing programs by comparison with the 1960 Standards. Both the 1969 Standards for School Media Programs and 1975 Media Programs, District and School included evaluation and planning as important components of a library media program but the emphasis continued to be on comparison with standards or guidelines.

The North Central Association, which is probably typical of other accrediting associations, continues to place its major emphasis on meeting quantitative standards.

We have only to look at the library media centers today to see that planning and evaluation require more justification than standards or guidelines generally based on what has been called "best educated guess."

In Iowa, state level quantitative guidelines have been available since 1969. The guidelines were offered in three phases with the third phase reaching the guidelines in the 1969 Standards for School Media Programs. A chart was provided to help encourage

planning and evaluation. In 1976, schools were surveyed to see how many of these "standards" in Phase I of Plan for Progress in the Media Center were met. The Plan for Progress in the Media Center, K-6, and Plan for Progress in the Media Center, 7-12 were then revised. While some newer categories were added or revised upward, most quantitative standards remained the same. A few were lowered. A second survey was taken in 1980. There was little progress in the overall ability of the schools to meet the quantified standards. The ability of secondary schools to meet equipment guidelines declined markedly.

Nearly seventeen percent of the reporting elementary schools met the professional staff standards in 1976. Over twenty percent met the same standard in 1980. The secondary schools dropped from 45% to 39%. In fact, a study of teachers in general showed Iowa public schools losing 189 school librarians between 1977-78 and 1981-82. Taking into consideration the decline in enrollment, the overall ratio went from one librarian for 629 students in 1977 to one for 691 students in 1981. While the enrollment dropped by 12.29% and the teaching staff dropped 7.2%, librarians dropped by 20.33%.

Although collections of books, sound filmstrips and recordings grew some between 1976 and 1980, nothing in the library media program survey indicated relevancy or recency. Visits to individual schools appear to show that collections are larger

because they have not been weeded. This is supported by the surveys' reports on per pupil expenditures. The average amount spent on materials at the elementary level went from \$6.44 in 1976 to \$8.97 in 1980. At the secondary level it went from \$9.08 to \$11.74. This does not cover the inflation rate. When this is coupled with strong declines in enrollment, the monies available for collection building are reduced. A comparison of the expenditure for library books for 1980-81 through 1983-84 supports this. While expenditures for books rose from \$6.42 per pupil in 1980-81 to \$7.52 per pupil in 1983-84, the adjusted (by the January 1985 Urbanized Consumer Price Index) expenditures fell from \$2.75 per pupil to \$2.57 per pupil.

Many programs are being eroded in this period of economic strain. Despite that—perhaps even because of that—we must take seriously James W. Liesener's contention

that unless significant improvements are made in the planning, evaluating and program communicating behavior of library media specialists, the effectiveness of these programs as well as their very survival will be, if they are not already, in serious question. [Journal of Library Administration, Nos. 2, 3, 4: 1981]

Liesener is correct in his assessment that the standards approach to evaluation has not resulted in the development of continuous planning and evaluation. Nor has this approach