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AUTHOR Guenther, Lorraine
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ABSTRACT

The survey summarized in this report was administered to 54 sample staff members--school teachers, vocational education and shop instructors, corrections officers, counselors, administrators and secretaries, and inmates who hold responsible jobs--at the Connecticut Correctional Institution-Cheshire, to determine the extent to which the staff has made use of the library since the inauguration of the program in January 1976. Questions regarding frequency of library use, importance in filling information and recreation needs, effects that expansion of collection and hours would have on use, suggestions for future programs, and impressions on what the library is doing and should be doing, are included. The results, which are presented in tables, indicate that staff is willing to improve job performance by using library materials if adequate materials and professional guidance in library use are provided. The questionnaire is appended. (MBR)

DELIVERING LIBRARY SERVICES AT A MAXIMUM SECURITY INSTITUTION: STAFF EVALUATION

This survey was administered to a sample of staff members at the Connecticut Correctional Institution-Cheshire. The library program was begun in January 1976, and was funded in part by Title I, Library Services and Construction Act funds.

Lorraine Guenther
State Library Supervisor-
Correction Libraries
Connecticut State Library
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06115

August, 1977

DELIVERING LIBRARY SERVICES AT A MAXIMUM SECURITY INSTITUTION:

STAFF EVALUATION

Introduction

The Connecticut Correctional Institution-Cheshire is a maximum security institution for male offenders between the ages of 16 and 21. There are over 400 inmates and over 200 staff members at CCI-C. This total population forms an institutional community with needs and problems which are separate, but related. Although there are many programs directed at vocational training, academic education, and personal development, there had never been library services at Cheshire to serve these programs. Even the library's main function--fostering recreational reading--went unperformed for want of a professional librarian to match the right book with the right person. Nor had there ever been a planned schedule of funding, necessary for the development of any effective, meaningful program.

In January 1976, LSCA funds awarded to the State Library provided the first professional librarian at Cheshire. The first priorities were to provide an adequate and reliable collection of materials, and to demonstrate to inmates and staff that the library was going to become more than a roomful of books. Interlibrary loan, film borrowing, reference service, orientation sessions, displays, and booklists were initiated.

It must always be kept in mind that the first priority of a correctional institution is security. The movement of individuals is

tightly controlled. This priority unavoidably interferes with the provision of library services, i.e., the library and its materials are simply less accessible in a correctional setting. Specifically, the library at Cheshire is located in the school area, which is at the northern-most end of the institution. Inmates not enrolled in the academic program have jobs during school hours and thus cannot visit the library during the day. Secondly, the movement of individuals is even more restricted at night than during the day. The librarian must therefore make special efforts to encourage use of the library. This had to be done primarily by encouraging staff members to send inmates to the library with authorization passes. To properly evaluate the library program, then, it is necessary to determine the extent to which the staff has made use of the library since the inauguration of the demonstration project.

The survey sample

The survey was sent to all teachers, counselors, and psychologists, and to those administrators and correctional officers (guards) who had contact with the library. The total sample N = 54. 31 of the 54 returned the survey forms, and at least one from each of the above groups did so. When interpreting the data, the reader should remember that only the Academic School staff have convenient access to the library. All others must make a special trip through the cell block, waiting at two separate locked gates, to visit the library.

The sample respondents include: 10 academic school teachers; 2 vocational education teachers; 3 shop instructors; 6 correctional officers; 4 counselors or psychologists; 3 administrators or secretaries; 1 recreation director; and two inmates who have responsible jobs (one in Records and one in the Library). The inmates were selected by the librarian as being influential in directing other inmates to the library.

The survey questions

A three page questionnaire was sent out with instructions to return the form to the Department of Correction's Central Office in Hartford, so that respondents could be candid in their comments about the librarian's services to date. The surveys were mailed to the individuals at their job locations, except in a few cases when they were distributed by the librarian.

The first two questions asked for the name the respondent, kind of program or area of work, and how many inmates they came into contact with in their work. Other items asked respondents how often they used the library, what library materials they used, and what library services they used and approximately how many times. Another question asked them to rate the importance of the library in getting (a) needed information and (b) recreational reading, with regard to inmates whom they knew fairly well. Part (c) asked if the library would be more important to inmates they knew fairly well if it either contained more materials or were open more often. An option was also available if they felt the library was of no interest in any case among inmates they knew fairly well. Respondents were then asked to rank order

other suggestions for future programs. A space for their own suggestions was also provided.

The next question asked for impressions on what the library is doing and what the library should be doing. The four functions suggested were: operating as a public library; operating as a school library; use as a special resource to aid all staff members; and use as a clearinghouse for information about the institution. The final item was an open request for comments about the library's past or future.

Results

As Table 1 shows, half of the sample used the library daily or weekly. Shop instructors never used the library, perhaps because of its inconvenient location, or perhaps because, as one wrote, "I was never invited." We could have been assuming too much in thinking that all staff members realized that the library was a resource tool for them.

Print materials are still the strong point of the library, as Table 2 illustrates. It was interesting to learn that correctional officers, as well as the administrative and secretarial group, were making use of the new reference collection. The services used in Table 3 are those provided by the librarian interacting with the individuals using the service (as opposed to using a material alone). This table shows that the librarian and the staff are not meeting as often as the librarian meets with academic teachers. The numbers of times teachers used these services (not shown on the Table) were very high.

Table 1.

CURRENT USE PATTERN

STAFF GROUP (No. of Respondents)	"Since January of 1976, I have visited or used the library: Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than 6 times a year	Never
School, Academic (10)	4	3	3		
School, Vocational (2)		1		1	
Shops (3)					3
Correctional Officers (6)		2	1	3	
Counselors & Psychologists (4)		1		3	
Administrative & Secretarial (3)	1		1		1
Inmate "staff" (Library clerk and work release man assigned to Records) (2)	1	1			
Recreation (1)		1			
Total # Respondents: 31	6	9	5	7	4

Table 2.

CURRENT USE PATTERN

STAFF GROUP (No. of Respondents)	"I have used the following library materials in work with my group: Books	Magazines	Newspapers	Maps	Globes	Films	Records	Reference	Legal
School, Academic (10)	8	4	5	2	2	6		7	1
School, Vocational (2)	1					1			
Shops (3)									
Correctional Officers (6)	3	1	1	1	1			4	1
Counselors & Psychologists (4)			1					3	1
Administrative & Secretarial (3)	2	2	1	1				2	2
Inmate "staff" (Library clerk and work release man assigned to Records) (2)	2	2	1				1	1	1
Recreation (1)	1					1		1	
Total # Respondents: 31	17	9	9	4	3	8	1	18	6

Table 3. CURRENT USE PATTERN

Library Services Used:

STAFF GROUP (No. of Respondents)	Asked Reference Question	Librarian Visited My Group	State Library Films	Library Bulletin Boards	Inter-library Loan	Consulte with Libraria
School, Academic (10)	9	2	6	9	4	2
School, Vocational (2)	1		1			1
Shops (3)						1
Correctional Officers (6)	4	1		4	1	2
Counselors & Psychologists (4)	2			3		3
Administrative & Secretarial (3)	2	1		1	1	1
Inmate "staff" (Library clerk and work release man assigned to Records) (2)					2	
Recreation (1)				1		
Total # Respondents: 31	18	4	7	18	8	10

(Insert Tables 1, 2, and 3)

Among inmates know well to the respondents, the library is very important as a source for recreational reading, and only somewhat important as a source for needed information (Table 4). Two respondents did not understand the question and left it blank. Suggestions provided by the respondents for future programs, if carried out properly, should meet some perceived needs, such as for survival skills.

Table 5 shows that everyone seems to agree that the library should be open more often and contain materials, and that the library is of interest to the inmates. However, the shop instructors, who suggested that the library should contain more materials, also admitted having never visited the library since the inauguration of the new program. Thus, they have not seen the new materials (over $10,000 worth) which have been added to the library since January 1976.

The relative importance of suggested new programs (Table 6) should be compared with the current use of materials (Table 2). The latter told us that print materials were used more frequently, and the former suggests that audiovisual programs are the most desired new program. 14 respondents ranked the two audiovisual suggestions as #1 and 24 ranked these programs as either #1 or #2. The next most requested idea was for regular meetings or other communication between librarian and staff--12 ranked it either #1 or #2. "Listening stations" for records and the librarian visiting groups were the least ranked.

Table 4.

VIEW OF IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY TO INMATES

"Among inmates I know pretty well, I would say the library is (not important at all, somewhat important, very important) in getting (needed information, recreational reading)"

STAFF GROUP (No. of Respondents)	Information: Not	Some	Very	Recreation: Not	Some	Very
School, Academic (10)	2	3	5	1	2	7
School, Vocational (2)		2			2	
Shops (3)	1	2		1	2	
Correctional Officers (6)		4	1		4	1
Counselors & Psychologists (4)		2	2			4
Administrative & Secretarial (3)		1	1			2
Inmate "staff" (Library clerk and work release man assigned to Records) (2)		1			1	
Recreation (1)			1			1
Total # Respondents: 31	3	15	10	2	11	15

Table 5.

VIEW OF IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY TO INMATES

STAFF GROUP (No. of Respondents)	"The library would be more important to them if it: were open more often."	contained more materials."	"It is of little interest to them because they do not want or need its services or materials."
School, Academic (10)	3	3	
School, Vocational (2)	1		
Shops (3)	1	3	1
Correctional Officers (6)	2	4	
Counselors & Psychologists (4)	1	4	
Administrative & Secretarial (3)	1	2	
Inmate "staff" (Library clerk and work release man assigned to Records) (2)	1	2	1
Recreation (1)	1		
Total # Respondents: 31	11	18	2

Table 6.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF FUTURE PROGRAMS

FUTURE PLANS "What programs or services should the library develop in the coming 18 months? These services may be for inmates or for you."	RELATIVE IMPORTANCE Rankings are printed across the top. Number of respondents who assigned this ranking listed in columns.									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Not Ranked
Groups visiting the library to select books during the day	4	2	5	3	1	0	0	1	0	15
Librarian making more visits to groups	2	1	4	2	4	0	0	0	1	17
Audio-visual program including cultural enrichment	5	5	2	3	0	1	1	0	0	13
Current events discussion group	3	2	5	3	1	1	1	0	0	15
Audio-visual program on basic survival skills or basic vocation counseling or career guidance	9	5	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	12
"Listening stations" for use of records in the library during the day	0	2	1	2	2	2	2	0	1	18
Buying more fiction or non-fiction	1	4	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	16
Regular meetings or other communication with staff to plan programs or select books	6	6	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	12
Instruction in how to use the library (or any library) for pre-release people	2	3	2	4	2	0	0	0	2	15

(Insert Tables 4, 5, and 6)

Because the librarian is beginning these two programs, they were probably not ranked as "future plans" by those desiring them.

Although only one staff member felt that the library was currently providing information about the institution, 13 more (nearly half the sample) felt that it should (Table 7). Likewise, 16 felt that it was performing the function of staff resource center (half of these from the Academic teaching staff) and 23 felt that it should try to do so. Counselors, psychologists and correctional officers in particular felt that the library was not performing those two functions, but that it should.

Comments

The comments on service were generally favorable from the academic school staff. They appreciated the improved book collection, the help of the librarian in selecting the right book, the use of the film service, and noted that the library is "an alive place." Particularly useful suggestions were requests for more popular paperbacks, more "high interest, low vocabulary" books, and more books to improve reading comprehension skills. (This last suggestion was made by a vocational education teacher, whose students cannot participate in the regular academic reading program.) Specific suggestions were made on survival skills materials: first aid, pregnancy, VD, dealing with government agencies and so forth.

(Insert Table 7)

The most frequent comment voiced by staff members, however, was their concern that the new materials were not being used enough because not enough inmates know about the library.

At this point, it is difficult to determine whether the problem is one of publicity or access. A survey administered to the inmates themselves would be the only way of finding out.

Recommendations

Based upon this survey, the following recommendations will be made to the project's librarian and to the superintendent of CCI-Cheshire:

1) Involve vocational education teachers and shop instructors in the library. Use orientation sessions, special group visits, meetings after class and job hours, or public relations techniques like newsletters or special book lists and annotated bibliographies of materials.

2) Library hours should be adjusted so that more people can use the library when there is available space. Co-operation from the academic school staff would be required so that groups from outside the school can be scheduled to use the library. Since space is at a premium in the school, expansion of the library space, although vital, is going to be difficult. Thus, schedules will have to be observed.

3) The audiovisual program should be enlarged. Input from various staff groups, using library selection tools at meetings with the librarian, should be arranged.

4) This selection committee should be called the Library Committee, and should be composed of an academic staff member, vocational education

Table 7. PHILOSOPHY OF THE LIBRARY

STAFF GROUP (No. of Respondents)	"The Library currently functions as: Public Library	School Library	Staff Resource Center	Institution Information Center	"The library should function as: Public Library	School Library	Staff Resource Center	Institution Information Center
School, Academic (10)	8	9	8	1	7	9	9	5
School, Vocational (2)	2	2	1		2	2	1	
Shops (3)	1	2	1		1		1	1
Correctional Officers (6)	5	5	2		4	4	4	2
Counselors & Psychologists (4)	4	2	1		4	4	3	2
Administrative & Secretarial (3)	2	2	1		3	3	2	2
Inmate "staff" (Library clerk and work release man assigned to Records) (2)	1	2	1		2	2	2	2
Recreation (1)	1	1	1		1	1	1	
Total # Respondents: 31	23	25	16	1	24	25	23	14

staff member, counseling member, as well as a correctional officer, and at least one inmate. The Library Committee should meet for the purpose of selecting library materials, planning programs and the like, and not for the purpose of screening inmates' reading materials. Another committee should perform this task if it continues to be mandated by Department of Correction directives.

5) Information about the institution and its policies and programs should be available in the library. Library Committee members could be responsible for bringing new programs to the attention of the librarian.

6) More publicity is needed. Library booklists, posters, and bulletins should be posted in the areas most distant from the library. The inmate newspaper should be used, as it is now, to bring items of interest to everyone's attention. A guide to the library should be prepared and distributed to everyone in the institution.

7) If the library is to further curriculum planning and serve as a staff resource center, more space is needed.

Conclusion

Above all, the survey indicates that the respondents in the sample groups of staff are willing and anxious to improve their job performance by using library materials and services--if there is something available for them to use and a professional librarian on-hand to help them find what they need. If they were not, they would not have bothered with the questionnaire. No one suggested that the library was duplicating another function, or attempting to carry on a service which was not needed. The suggestions also illustrate that the staff,

or parts of it currently served by the library in its infant state, have more sophisticated library needs than are currently being served. Some staff members filled the entire back page of the questionnaire with their ideas and comments. This degree of interest is encouraging and should not be ignored. It would certainly be a mistake to think of the prison library as a "second class" library. The clientele it serves has a wide variety of needs and interests. Satisfying these needs and interests presents a challenging but rewarding opportunity to the modern librarian.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY
231 CAPITOL AVENUE · HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06115

Preliminary Evaluation of Library Services

at CCI, Cheshire-5/27/77

The purpose of the evaluation is twofold. First, we would like to know what the library is doing which is useful to your program or group. Secondly, we are soliciting suggestions for future services.

Please answer the following questions as best you can. Thank you.

1. Name_____Date:_____

2. Title//Program_____Serving(#)_____Inmates

3. Effects of library program on your group or for yourself. Please check the most appropriate response. Space for additional comments is provided at the end.

   (a) Since January of 1976, I have visited or used the library ____daily; ____weekly; ____monthly; ____less than six times a year; ____never.

   (b) I have used the following library materials in work with my group: ____books; ____magazines; ____newspapers; ____maps; ____globes; ____films; ____records; ____reference books; ____law books.

   (c) If you have used any of the following, indicate the approximate number of times.

   ____asked librarian a reference question;

   ____librarian visited my group;

   ____used State Library films

   ____looked at library bulletin boards

   ____used Interlibrary Loan

   ____consulted with librarian on selection and/or use of books or other library materials for my group

   ____other (describe) _____

_____

4. Effect of library on inmates. Please underline the response or responses most nearly correct.

(a) Among inmates I know pretty well, I would say the library is (not important at all, somewhat important, very important) in getting needed information.

(b) Among inmates I know pretty well, I would say the library is (not important at all, somewhat important, very important) in getting recreational reading.

(c) The library would be more important to them if it:

____were open more often

____contained more materials

____It is of little interest to them because they do not want or need its services or materials.

Other Comments: _____

_____

5. Check all appropriate responses: What programs or services should the library develop in the coming 18 months? These services may be for inmates or for you.

For those programs or services you believe should be developed, please indicate their relative importance to you by assigning rank order number, i.e. 1=most important; 2=second most important, etc. You need not rank order all of the suggested programs. A space for "other" programs is at the end of the list.

____groups visiting the library to select books during the day;

____librarian making more visits to groups;

____an audio-visual program including cultural enrichment;

____a current events discussion group;

____an audio-visual program on basic survival skills or basic vocation counseling or career guidance;

____"listening stations" for use of records in the library during the day;

____the library should concentrate on buying more____fiction;

____non-fiction;

____regular meetings or other communication with staff to plan programs or select books;