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Evidence-Based Practice and Organizational Development in Libraries

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Abstract

This article is written for a Festschrift for F. W. Lancaster, and it summarizes the author's library school experiences as a student of Professor Lancaster and Professor Herbert Goldhor at the University of Illinois. Both professors instilled in students a strong inclination to use real and appropriate information in evaluating situations, making decisions, delivering information services, and managing libraries. The author suggests that this Lancaster-Goldhor approach to information, and to data-driven decision making, anticipated the current movement toward evidence-based practice (EBP) in libraries. He suggests that libraries embrace the premises, philosophy, values, and practices of organizational development (OD) as an overarching discipline that facilitates EBP in the library culture, and ultimately leads to healthier and more effective organizations. This article complements a 2004 *Library Trends* article on OD, and numerous recent publications on OD and related topics are cited.

Introduction

The title of the Festschrift in which this article appears is "The Evaluation and Transformation of Information Systems: Essays in Honor of the Legacy of F. W. Lancaster" (Haricombe and Russell, 2008). That title reflects the influence his work has had on how information systems are evaluated and improved over time. The word "transformation" refers to the tremendous change in the last forty years in the capability of those systems to help society expand and maintain its control over an ever-growing body of intellectual content and bibliographic information. Lancaster is one

of the researchers and educators who helped shape information systems during the dramatic change of that transformation.

Some of Lancaster's students actually went on to work on the research, technical, and practical aspects of designing, testing, and improving information systems. Some became library school faculty, following in his footsteps, doing research on information systems, publishing, and educating the next generation of librarians. Most of his students became practicing librarians, serving in all types of libraries. By training those students about information systems, vocabulary control, measurement, and evaluation of library services, and other topics, Lancaster had a significant impact on the ability of those librarians to understand and master information systems (even as they changed); to ensure that their libraries provided access to the best information systems for their users; and to facilitate, through instruction and consultation, the understanding and effective use of those systems by the user. The ultimate outcome is that the user finds and gains access to the information needed.

Lancaster is known for his creative analysis and synthesis of earlier publications; design of innovative research to augment that existing information; and his application, publication, and teaching of the new ideas and methodologies that resulted. Many of the articles in the Festschrift explore aspects of information systems affected by Lancaster's work. Other articles discuss topics such as bibliometrics, using Lancaster's voluminous publication record as a dataset to be analyzed using techniques he taught his students. In this article I comment on how he served as a role model for his students, teaching by example the importance of reviewing the literature on important topics in order to understand, develop research areas, make good decisions, improve upon the past, and advance human knowledge. For his students who went into library work, the application of his approach would enable them, on the basis of evidence, to improve the programs and services offered to customers.

When evidence-based practice (EBP) in libraries emerged, Lancaster's students already knew what that was all about. As librarians they would be able to create healthy libraries that are effective in serving users. They would pay attention not only to the *what* of libraries (the services and programs), but also the *how* (the processes by which they designed and delivered programs and services, did planning, and made decisions). In a parallel sense, Lancaster worked with the applications and system features (the *how*) in information systems that would enable librarians and others to gain control over the intellectual content and bibliographic records (the *what*) that document humanity's history and progress.

Library School, University of Illinois, early 1970s

Professor Lancaster was one of the first professors I met in 1970 when I started the master's degree program in library science at the University

of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS). The department participated in a national effort to recruit and train librarians to work in biomedical libraries, and Lancaster coordinated that program for GSLIS. I was finishing up my master's thesis on plant ecology in the botany department when I started library school. As a part-time student in GSLIS I was not eligible to be part of the biomedical librarian program, but I did meet Professor Lancaster early in my studies. I would later take Lancaster's information storage and retrieval course and his vocabulary control course. He made those subjects interesting and understandable, and his demeanor and sense of humor meant that we the students were entertained (as well as educated).

As mentioned elsewhere in this Festschrift (Hayes, 2008), Lancaster had been hired at GSLIS by Herbert Goldhor, then director of GSLIS. (This was before the director carried the title of dean.) On reflection, I now see Lancaster and Goldhor as an excellent pairing that successfully engaged students with academic leanings. Both of them based their prolific scholarly works and cutting-edge practice on research, were on top of the literature in their fields, and were excellent at synthesizing vast amounts of information and making it understandable and useful to others.

Goldhor, along with assistant GSLIS director Robert E. Brown, taught the library administration course. Goldhor was known for his research and publication in library administration and in evaluation (Goldhor, 1968, 1972; Wheeler & Goldhor, 1962). Lancaster was known for augmenting published research with data from scientifically designed studies of information systems, was well informed about issues on scientific communication and the sociology of science, and would later become well known for his work on measurement and evaluation in libraries (Lancaster, 1968a, 1968b, 1988; Lancaster & Brown, 1969; Lancaster & Joncich, 1977; Lancaster & Smith, 1979; Martyn & Lancaster 1981; Kyrillidou & Cook, 2008).

My classes with Lancaster and with Goldhor reinforced my experiences in the sciences—wherever possible, one bases his or her actions on what others have discovered before, and when there is a lack of information (or data) needed to make a decision or design a plan of action, then one seeks out (by experimentation, surveys, research, or other approaches) the information that will allow one to make an informed decision. Naturally, additional information and data are more important in some cases than in others; most decisions do not require extensive information and data gathering; and in many cases where that information and data would be helpful, there may not be time, opportunity, or resources available. GSLIS students were exposed to these ideas in Lancaster and Goldhor courses. Current textbooks on library research methods, such as the one by Powell and Connaway (2004), cite their works.

After library school I worked in a biomedical library, and (no doubt because of the Lancaster-Goldhor influence) was part of a research team that used operations research techniques to gather and analyze data (including cost and library user survey information) to develop a computer model for allocating the library's budget among twenty-three user institutions at the Texas Medical Center in Houston (Bres, et al., 1977). I pursued further the interest Lancaster had encouraged in the sociology of science, the characteristics and history of scientific information, the information-seeking behavior of scientists, and national information policy issues in the sciences. The principles of information systems I learned from Lancaster continue to be useful. Inspired by Goldhor, I took additional management courses, and became involved in library administration. In a course on organizational behavior in the mid-1970s, I first heard about organizational development, which has been a keen interest of mine ever since.

Evidence-Based Practice

With my background and inclinations, the influence of Lancaster and Goldhor, and early library career work in the biomedical sciences and operations research, I was simply amazed when I became aware of the rather recent movement to emphasize "evidence-based librarianship," "evidence-based medicine," and "evidence-based management." In my idealism, I had always assumed that everyone shared my enthusiasm for published information, would always want to make evidence-based decisions, and would be eager for any new report that came out that could influence future action. Silly me! It took the evidence-based practice (EBP) movement to get practitioners in several disciplines focused on using available research and data in making decisions, and if they needed more information they would go out and get it—by such means as gathering more statistics, analyzing further the data that were available, or designing surveys.

I should not have been so surprised. My experience in management and in training has been similar. Managers and decision makers I have known, and workshop participants I have worked with, are seldom interested in the research and other publications that could be of use to them, and rarely are willing to design an approach to gather their own data that could help with decisions and actions. Consequently, once I absorbed the shock of "what do you mean, this is not an evidence-based society," I could begin to embrace, welcome, and promote the new focus on "evidence-based" practice.

There is rich literature on this movement, including works on EBP in libraries (e.g., Booth & Brice, 2004; Cleyle, 2006; Connor, 2007; Genoni, Haddow, & Ritchie, 2004; Wallace, 2007), in medicine and medical libraries (briefly summarized by Groen, 2007, pp. 157–158), and in management (Hamlin, 2007; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006; Rousseau, 2007; Rynes,

2007). In many of those works there is a chapter or article on why practitioners in a field often ignore the literature, thus creating a gap between research and practice.

EBP, Action Research, and Organizational Development

"Action research" (AR) is another approach to getting the evidence needed for EBP in any discipline or setting. The field of organizational development (OD) routinely uses the practice of AR when existing research, available data and other information, and established best practices do not provide the evidence needed in order for an organization or group to develop an appropriate action or set of actions in a particular situation. Jackson (2006, p. 139) identifies AR as "the most fundamental approach to organization development and change. . . ." She defines AR as

> a systematic method of data collection and feedback, action, and evaluation based on further data collection. It is a method that combines *learning* and *doing*—learning about the dynamics of organizational change (research), and doing or implementing change efforts (action).

AR is used in many fields, and most OD books devote attention to the topic. Recent works on AR include Coghlan and Brannick (2005), Freedman (2006), Greenwood (2007), Levin and Greenwood (2008), Levin and Martin (2007), Reason and Bradbury (2008), and Vezzosi (2007).

Organizational Development

OD is a field that is heavily based on research and established best practices, that synthesizes work from several fields, and that encourages the use of action research in those cases where the research base and the established best practices are not clear about what to do in a specific case. Cummings and Worley (2001, p. 1) define OD this way:

> Organization development is a systemwide application of behavioral science knowledge to the planned development, improvement, and reinforcement of the strategies, structures, and processes that lead to organization effectiveness.

(AR is a behavioral science practice.) Stephens and Russell (2004) provide a simpler working definition: OD is

> an ongoing, thoughtfully planned effort by all members of an organization to improve how that organization operates, serves its stakeholders, fulfills its mission, and approaches its vision. (p. 241)

It seems logical that libraries would embrace evidence-based practice. People who work in libraries are knowledge workers (Davenport, 2005) and are better equipped than most citizens to identify information on any particular topic, locate it, and gain access to it. When more information is

needed, they can do library research (Powell & Connaway, 2004), conduct assessments (Hiller & Self, 2004; Kyrillidou & Cook, 2008), or do action research.

Highlights of the Literature on OD in Libraries Through 2004
There has been (and continues to be) a lot of interest in OD in libraries, even if we have not always been conscious that what we are doing is OD. In my opinion, any standing program or any special activity designed to improve the organization is an OD activity. Several works have been published on OD in libraries, and the areas of library operations targeted include management, services, collections, personnel, employee development, planning, teambuilding, mentoring, and assessment. One of the early publications was Johnson and Mann (1980), which discussed OD efforts in several libraries and highlighted MRAP (Management Review and Analysis Program), an important landmark in library OD work at Columbia University. In 1982, Euster edited a series of eight commentaries on the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Office of Management Studies (OMS) Consultant Training Program (Euster, 1982). This was an innovative program to select and train a cadre of process-oriented librarians to be consultants. In 1997, Schwartz edited a collection of papers relating to OD and change in academic libraries (Schwartz, 1997).

In 2001, Denise Stephens and I noticed that several academic and research libraries had created library positions with OD or OD-related titles, such as assistant dean for organizational development. We interpreted that to mean that the administrators and staff in those libraries considered OD so important and beneficial that someone should be charged to lead or coordinate OD efforts. We contacted Lancaster, as editor of *Library Trends*, and suggested that an issue be devoted to the topic of OD. He approved our prospectus, and in 2004 that issue was published (Russell & Stephens, 2004). It included articles by twenty authors on such topics as change, organizational culture, the learning organization, systems design, team management, assessment, renewal, human resources, leadership, and appreciative inquiry—all topics related to OD. In one of those articles Holloway (2004) identified many of the reasons libraries embrace OD, and the various approaches being used to implement OD.

Stephens and I did the concluding article (Stephens and Russell, 2004). We identified several beliefs that related to our interest in, and adoption of, OD. In addition to our day-to-day working definition of OD (mentioned above), we cited more detailed definitions of OD. We also presented a five-step OD process model to support the establishment and maintenance of a healthy organization; identified characteristics of library staff that facilitate the adoption of OD; discussed several aspects of change and change management in general and in libraries; identified some paradoxes in leadership and leadership development; and con-

cluded with a positive outlook for the future of OD in libraries.

In the rest of this article I comment on what has happened with OD in libraries and in general since that 2004 article, and initiate a discussion of how a library culture of OD might look.

Library Literature on OD since 2004

In 2005, Budd authored a work on change in academic libraries (Budd 2005). Wood, Miller, and Knapp, in 2007, focused on change and OD, and presented case studies. In recent years several other authors in the library field have commented on OD issues, including Moran (2006a, 2006b), Lubans (2006a, 2006b, 2006c), Lowery (2005), and Lowery and Hanges (2008). This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of publications on OD in libraries, but it does provide some starting points for the interested reader.

The General OD Literature since 2004

Publication of books (and articles) on OD in general continues at a rapid (probably accelerating) pace. New works have appeared, and older works have been updated, including: McLean (2006), Jones and Brazzel (2006), Jackson (2006), and Cummings (2008). A simpler, basic guide to OD is Haneberg (2005).

Gallos (2006) edited a useful massive work that reprints forty-one noteworthy OD articles from the last forty years or so. In the foreword (p. xviv), Edgar H. Schein comments that a review of the contents of that work indicates the field of OD has retained a core of common "elements: a concern with process, a focus on change, and an implicit as well as explicit concern for organizational effectiveness." That pretty much says what OD is all about, and why those of us who embrace it find it so very useful and energizing, and why we are so passionate about OD.

OD specialists and others have also continued their analysis of the field and its evolution to date and its potential future. These works include Bradford and Burke (2004, 2005), Torraco (2005) on OD in higher education, Varney (2006), and Worley and McCloskey (2006). One of the comments frequently mentioned in some of those works is the fuzziness between OD and other disciplines. OD is a field that interprets, synthesizes, and seeks to adapt and apply research and best practices from any field where the work there can help increase the health and effectiveness of an organization. For that reason, I list other works that focus on allied fields that relate to OD in some way, including organizational effectiveness (Burke & Cooper, 2008; Lawler & Worley, 2006; Sowa, Selden, & Sandfort, 2004), productive workplaces (Weisbord, 2004), the learning organization (Senge, 2006; Watkins, 2005), and organizational behavior (Greenberg & Baron, 2008; George & Jones, 2008).

As mentioned above in the quote by Schein, change management is a key element of OD. In the last four years we have witnessed a variety of new or updated useful works on change and change management. These

include Holman, Devane, Cady and others (2007); Burke (2008); Gilley (2005); Helfat et al. (2007); Palmer, Duford, and Akin (2006); Hayes (2007); Biech (2007); and Wallace, Fertig, and Schneller (2007).

The most universal and often-used process in OD is facilitation. Since 2004 there has been continued growth in the numbers of new works and updated editions. These include: Jenkins and Jenkins (2006); Parker and Hoffman (2006); Kaner et al. (2007); Justice and Jamieson (2006); Rees (2005); Schuman (2005); and Schwarz et al. (2005) (which augments Schwarz, 2002).

Within OD, a key focus is the establishment and nurturing of effective teams. Several useful works on this topic since 2004 are: Thompson (2008); West, Tjosvold, and Smith (2005); Ephross and Vassil (2005); Thompson and Choi (2006); and Parker (2008). Related works on group and team processes and dynamics include Levi (2007) and Tubbs (2007). Within libraries, Edgar (2007) comments on group work in university libraries.

In the past four years, then, many works have been published that are of potential interest to OD practitioners and researchers. I have not seen every item published on the topics covered above, but I have reviewed all of those I listed. Each seems to be useful in one way or another, and the list is meant to represent the range of literature available. I also reviewed many other works that I chose not to list. A significant portion of the ones I list that are monographs do not end up in general bookstores (such as Borders or Barnes and Noble), either because they are university textbooks or are too specialized for a general audience. All the monographs are available from a Web bookseller such as Amazon.com. Because so many of these are relatively expensive, and may not be viewable locally, one might want to request a couple that look interesting (using such criteria as subject, author recognition, title, publisher, or book review) through interlibrary loan in order to assess first hand the potential value to a person's professional collection. There is much overlap in content in similar books, so it then becomes a matter of evaluating style, approach, coverage, and potential utility.

How Fast Are Libraries Embracing OD?

I would like to be able to say that every year more and more administrators and staff in libraries are excited by OD, and that they are applying it in evermore creative ways in libraries. I would like to be able to say that OD processes, practices, philosophy, and values are becoming central to library management and operations in, say, half the libraries in North America. I would like to be able to say that Stephens and I were totally right in 2001 when we observed what we thought was a groundswell of interest in OD in libraries, and proposed doing that special 2004 issue of *Library Trends* on the subject.

But I cannot say that at this time. No one seems to have established

benchmarks by which we can judge if there is more use of OD in libraries, and how much. *Are there more OD positions in libraries?* We have gained a couple and lost at least one. *Are there more publications about OD in the library literature?* Marginally, in my judgment. *Are there more workshops and presentations on OD and OD-related topics available to librarians?* Somewhat more. *Are more courses on OD and OD-related topics taught in library schools?* I have not seen data on that. *Are there more OD consultants working with libraries?* Perhaps, but it is not obvious to me. *Has the LAMA LOMS (Library Administration and Management Association, Library Organization and Management Section) Organizational Development Discussion Group grown significantly, and is there increased discussion on the online discussion forum it sponsors? Do more ALA attendees participate in that discussion group at annual and midwinter ALA meetings?* Not that I can tell. *Are more librarians going to annual meetings of the OD Network, one of the major membership organizations for OD practitioners and OD academics?* Not that I can tell. There were fewer than ten librarians (out of eight hundred participants) at each of the last four annual OD Network conferences.

My conclusion is that we are experiencing slow adoption of OD in libraries (as in Rogers' work on the adoption of innovations [Rogers, 2003]). Administrators and staff in libraries continue to adopt and adapt various tools and approaches from OD (often without realizing the connection to OD), as it suits their purposes, but not many are declaring publicly that "our library is an OD organization, and we live by the principles, values, and practices of that discipline." One of the most encouraging signs may be the growing use of assessment tools offered through the Association of Research Libraries, as reported in Kyrillidou and Cook (2008). The use of such tools is OD, even if that is not broadly realized.

A Culture of Organizational Development

Should libraries more fully adopt OD and strive to create a culture of OD? Culture is a significant consideration in OD. Schein opens the third edition of his classic work on culture (and leadership) with these two sentences:

> Culture is an abstraction, yet the forces that are created in social and organizational situations that derive from culture are powerful. If we don't understand the operation of these forces, we become victims to them. (2004, p. 3)

Several pages later he provides a definition:

> The culture of a group can now be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 17)

Cultures are everywhere, are very difficult to change, and have tremendous influence on how groups and organizations operate and serve their customers. Cultures can have important implications for an organization's health, its effectiveness, and how it reacts to change. The article by Kaarst-Brown et al. (2004) highlights cultures in libraries as important resources that need to be managed consciously. Phipps (2001) focuses on four specific aspects of, and sources of ideas for, culture change in libraries. Efforts are underway to improve a climate assessment tool (the Organizational Climate and Diversity Assessment, OCDA) that can be used online in a variety of libraries to assess and improve organizational health (Lowery & Hanges, 2008; Kyrillidou and Cook, 2008).

At times, in order to emphasize a strategic direction, an organization will highlight a certain theme. Sometimes that is done by designating a specific "culture" to be a visible driving force for the organization. The organization may say it is developing a culture of assessment (Lakos & Phipps, 2004), a culture of learning (Goodyear, Ames-Oliver, & Russell, 2006), or a culture of mentoring (Zachary, 2005). Since all of those cultures, if effectively nurtured, will result in a healthier and more effective organization, I propose that the umbrella culture for all of them would be a culture of OD.

The field of OD is well enough established that its philosophy, values, assumptions, and normal way of operating are understood and widely available. Most books on OD cover the values and premises of the field. The authors may use different wording, but the underlying concepts are almost always similar, focusing on ideas such as respect and participation. The OD Network, the professional organization mentioned earlier, has its "principles of OD practice" on its website (http://www.odnetwork.org/aboutod/principles.php, retrieved March 26, 2008). The listed values on that website include respect, inclusion, collaboration, authenticity, self-awareness, and empowerment. Jackson (2006) sums up the characteristics of effective organizations and OD, then explores the assumptions and values of OD as they relate to individuals, groups, and organizations. She also covers the various and typical actions that are common to OD efforts, and shows them to be consistent with humanistic values and systematic planning (pp. 24–28).

OD Is about Process

Administrators and staff in libraries are always dealing with decisions on particular topics at various levels within the organization and within different time frames—sometimes urgent, sometimes not. OD provides several tools that can help the organization or group reach those decisions, and it focuses heavily on the process by which we do our work, interact with one another and our customers, and deliver programs and services. OD is big on questions, since the questions we ask can have a significant

impact on the answers we get, and the relevancy and usefulness of those answers. And research, best practices, and tools from OD help to ensure that the *process* used to arrive at decisions is appropriate, timely, involves the right people, and produces the information and data needed.

In addition to process, there is the element of *content*, the subject matter about which a decision needs to be reached. On most subjects, there is a significant (sometimes overwhelming) body of information from which a group or organization must sift out the relevant parts for use in a decision. That information may contain data, opinion, firsthand experience, or other facts that can be used in the process and can inform the decision and future actions. For example, a group working on funding issues may find a recent work on funding options in nonprofit organizations (Young, 2007) helpful. Another group working on diversity programs may find it beneficial to review a recent work that points out some of the pitfalls in diversity programs (Thomas, 2008). Or a group focused on assessment may want to review recent literature that discusses some of the problems with an overemphasis on assessment (e.g., Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Hammer, 2007; Radin, 2006).

I should add that I did not consciously seek out these content-specific works, but rather discovered them by *serendipity* (a word commonly used in library school) while consciously seeking other works on OD and related topics. There are, however, established "checklists" of approaches to try when one is consciously seeking established best practices in a discipline. (OD is big on best practices.) One example of such a checklist is one we developed at the University of Kansas during a project to discover new approaches and tools we could use in campuswide employee development activities. That checklist is contained in Russell et al. (2003, pp. 191–193). While it focuses on employee development, the ten items ("places to check for relevant information") are general purpose and would work with any topic of interest.

The Importance of Planning in a Culture of OD

One of the most important and most used established best practices in healthy organizations is planning, a process that, properly done, reinforces many of the values of OD (e.g., inclusion, teamwork, setting direction). Planning benefits essentially all organizations, and may be a key component of any effort to change a library's culture. The outcomes of planning include a shared sense of where the organization has been, where it is today, and where it is headed. Staff, customers, and other stakeholders are on the same page. The mission is clarified (and updated if necessary), service standards and "who we serve" are made evident, and employees are clear about what their role is in the organization. A vision for the future emerges, as well as strategic directions that will help the organization approach that vision. Milestones may be set, so progress

can be charted. Values are made obvious, and everyone is aware of what staff behaviors will reflect those values (Goodyear, Ames-Oliver, and Russell, 2006, pp. 3.4 & 3.6). Members of the organization articulate a few simple rules (Holladay, 2005) for how they will work together, much like the ground rules healthy groups establish for themselves (Schwarz, 2002, pp. 96–135). Progress is continually measured by some simple tracking mechanism, such as the dashboard for nonprofit organizations described by Butler (2007). The comprehensive plan that results provides guidance for future decisions and actions, including those related to: annual planning and budgeting discussions; the selection of activities to promote and enhance (and those to de-emphasize); the design of employee development programs to ensure the organization has the capabilities it needs, now and into the future; and changes in funding and other resource levels (whether increasing or decreasing). The plan is updated periodically to reflect changes in the organization and its environment.

The Importance of Leadership in a Culture of OD
Stephens and I (2004, p. 249) mentioned that leadership is key to OD, and that the trend has been toward valuing and encouraging (and training for) leadership at all levels in the organization. Some of the leadership literature since then continues to challenge traditional leadership perspectives, including Lakomski (2005), Nielsen (2004), and Rock (2006). Along similar lines, Whetten and Cameron (2005), in a university textbook on management skills, no longer make the customary distinction between management and leadership. They devote three pages to discussing relevant research and explaining why that distinction is no longer useful (pp. 15–17). The model they use identifies skills (subsequently taught in the book) that "serve as a foundation for effective management as well as effective leadership" (p. 17). There have been several other works on leadership, too, including Bass and Riggio (2006), Conger and Riggio (2007), Yukl (2006), and Leskiw and Singh (2007). Mason and Wetherbee (2004) reviewed library-based leadership development programs, and one of their conclusions was that we do not do a good job of evaluating leadership development programs, so we cannot judge how effective those programs are and do not have good information on which to improve those programs or create new ones. At least one work on the evaluation of leadership development programs has been published since 2004 (Hannum, Martineau, & Reinelt, 2007).

Warner Burke, the first president of the OD Network more than forty years ago, was the primary keynote speaker at the association's 2004 conference. He posed a question similar to that of Mason and Wetherbee. He asked (and I paraphrase, since his speech was apparently never published; his slides, however, are available at http://www.odnetwork.org/events/conferences/conf2004/followup/Monday_Plenary.pdf [retrieved May

27, 2008]): "For fifty years we as a society have focused on developing leaders. Is there any evidence we are being successful?" What I heard him say in response to the question he posed is that the jury is still out—there is no compelling evidence that the way we have tried to develop leaders has significantly improved the quality of leadership in organizations today. Harrison (1972) says that in his experience it is very difficult, if not impossible, to change the leadership style of a leader. This fits with leadership quotes Stephens and I presented in our article (Stephens & Russell, 2004, pp. 249–252), and may explain why Lipman-Blumen (2005) wrote her book on toxic leaders.

What Would a Culture of OD Look Like in a Library?

Some aspects of an OD culture can be gleaned from the general literature on OD and from related discussions in the library literature. Here are just a few elements of a culture of OD in libraries scenario, from my point of view. Please consider them a starting point for a dialogue on this topic. (OD is big on dialogue.)

1. The library clearly announces to staff, stakeholders, and the world (via the Web) that it strives to cultivate a culture of OD, one that values involvement and participation by all staff, respects all staff and customers, follows proven practices in decision making and operations, and develops, and builds on, the strengths of its employees. The library defines its view of OD, and incorporates that into key planning documents. Members of the library staff have some level of orientation to OD, what it is, and what behaviors are endorsed and encouraged by it. Managers and other key staff have more in-depth training in OD, as recommended by Cummings and Worley (2001, p. 45), Pledger (2007), and Warrick (2006). Staff training in key subdisciplines is broadly available in the library, and staff members are strongly encouraged to participate in training. Those key areas include facilitation, teamwork, and leadership/management. Every staff member receives some level of training in all these areas, and some employees receive in-depth training in their respective specialty. Designated facilitators, for example, participate in advanced facilitation training. All employees in management and leadership positions participate regularly in leadership and management workshops and seminars in order to keep skills up to date and polish their capabilities. (Stephens & Russell, 2004, p. 250–252) Communities of practice relating to OD, related specialties, and other skills needed in the organization may be established to nurture the understanding and capabilities of participants. Members of the library staff share their experiences with OD widely in the library world, through conversations with colleagues, presentations, publications, and notes on the library's website.

2. An administrator or staff person is designated as OD specialist or co-ordinator, whether that function is reflected in a job title or not. That person is a member of the leadership team, participates fully, watches both the group dynamics and the subject matter content of the discussions, and makes recommendations from that perspective. If it is helpful, at appropriate times (such as during a key decision or a crisis), someone turns to that person and says: "And what is the OD perspective on the situation, and what should we do (if anything)? What does the literature say, what are the best practices in this situation, and what action research can we do to inform our decision? Are we following the proper steps in this process of evaluating the situation and deciding and acting?"

3. The OD specialist is a facilitator first, and may have more in-depth training and experience in other subdisciplines of OD. The OD specialist is similar to a general practitioner in health care—he or she can handle day-to-day OD activities, but knows when a situation is beyond his or her capabilities and another specialist needs to be consulted and possibly brought in to help. Other OD specialists may be available from the campuswide OD office or human resources, from campus departments with faculty in OD and organizational behavior (such as the business school or department of public administration), or from outside the organization (e.g., consultants).

At this point, I mention Logan and Royston (2005) and Harrison (1972) as resources on the practicalities of doing OD from the inside in any organization. Within libraries, while we would like everything we do to be perfect, the reality is that we can accomplish much by remembering the 80/20 rule: 80 percent of the benefit comes from the first 20 percent of the effort. There are thick, advanced tomes on any topic, but frequently a shorter version can be just as useful. As one example, the new edition of the standard work on appreciative inquiry (a positive process for discovering what a team or organization already does well, then seeking to use those strengths into the future) is 454 pages long (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008), and a popular simplified alternative to it is only 63 pages long (Hammond, 1998). There is a place for each, and we should be judicious in choosing which is most appropriate in any particular organization and situation.

The Reality of OD in Libraries

From my experience participating in OD Network annual conferences, most employed OD specialists within organizations (which I differentiate from those OD specialists who work as consultants) work with much larger populations than we normally encounter in academic and research libraries. These specialists are often responsible for managing change for thousands or even hundreds of thousands of employees (e.g., in the mili-

tary, the auto industry, and other huge corporations). OD specialists in libraries serve considerably smaller populations, and most libraries cannot afford a full-time, highly-trained, extensively-experienced OD person. Many of us who do some level of OD work in libraries were trained in other disciplines, and picked up facilitation and other types of OD training along the way. As mentioned earlier, we can handle routine OD work, but often rely on OD specialists in the campuswide OD office, or consultants from outside, to come in when more in-depth OD expertise is warranted (such as for serious conflict management interventions, or a major planning or assessment activity).

Future Work

OD is a broad field, and it provides a wide range of behavioral science research and established best practices that can help improve organizational health and increase organizational effectiveness. For this reason, OD, as an umbrella "super discipline," is an excellent area of research for librarians interested in the topic, whether or not they have faculty positions where research and scholarly activities are expected or even required.

I have purposely written this article from the 40,000-foot perspective, pointing out highlights of how I see the EBP movement being a natural component within a broader culture of OD. Administrators and other library staff who are interested in OD ask questions about the scope of the discipline, how they can use it, and how it can benefit them, their organization, and their customers and other stakeholders. They need examples of other libraries' experiences, and would welcome more publications (and presentations at conferences) that supplement or complement existing library literature on the topic, both broad philosophical essays and more specific, more practical pieces that can be immediately useful. The library literature on OD mentioned earlier in this article is just a start. There is other literature, and still more is needed.

As one example, members of the LAMA LOMS OD Discussion Group have talked about developing an annotated bibliography of the OD and OD-related information resources that have proven to be useful in libraries. As another example, librarianship would benefit from a widely available document (an article or website) that synthesizes and analyzes what some libraries have done with OD. (The work by Wood, Miller, & Knapp [2007] may give ideas on how to approach this.) And, of course, the field needs ready access to more specific examples of how OD has been successfully applied in libraries—and also, just as in the sciences, reports of when an OD application has not worked. The opportunities for research and other scholarly activity relating to OD in libraries are plentiful.

Conclusion

Evidence-based practice is important in librarianship, but it is not new. The emphasis on basing decisions and actions on existing information in the literature and new information from processes such as action research is a natural tendency for librarians who have studied with library school faculty such as F. W. Lancaster and Herbert Goldhor. EBP reminds librarians that evidence is important, and provides a theme around which discussions can be held, new approaches (processes) can be developed and shared, and content-focused applications can be advanced (e.g., in programs such as library instruction). EBP is an approach that leads to better decisions and healthier, more effective libraries. It is a natural element within a broader program such as organizational development, which I have called the "super discipline" that melds together a whole suite of approaches, tools, and techniques already in use to improve the health and effectiveness of a library. Since there is a tendency to talk about "creating a culture" when we want to emphasize a topic in an organization, I have proposed in this article that libraries consider creating a "culture of organizational development" as a broad, useful, well-researched and well-established culture that encompasses many of the successful cultures we have sought to develop in libraries. I have listed three components of a scenario for a culture of OD in libraries.

Creating and nurturing a culture of OD in a library is a new frontier in most libraries, but it is a frontier worth crossing. The evidence says so!

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