By MORRIS A. GELFAND

Techniques of Library Evaluators in the Middle States Association

THIS STUDY* concerns itself primarily with the techniques currently used by library evaluators in the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. It deals also with library evaluation, general institutional evaluation, and accreditation by the Association in order to provide appropriate, indeed necessary, background for better understanding of the task of the library evaluator.

PROCEDURE

To study the techniques of library evaluators a comprehensive questionnaire was designed for submission to those who have served the Middle States Association during the past several years.

The questionnaire (a copy of which may be borrowed from the author) was organized under three principal headings which represent the usual stages of a library evaluation for the Middle States Association: (1) preparation for an evaluation visit; (2) the evaluation visit; and (3) preparation of the evaluation report. Questions under each of these headings were prepared on the basis of the writer's personal experience on Middle States library evaluations since 1949, study of pertinent Middle States Association publications, and after reference to Wilson and Tauber,[1] McDiarmid,[2] and Lyle.[3] Many questions required only a "Yes" or "No" answer, but some relating to specific techniques or practices called for an indication of the degree to which a particular method

or device was used, under the headings "Regularly," "Occasionally" and "Never." Respondents were also invited to submit comments where they considered them appropriate in order to provide a better view of their practices. A "general" section was added to the questionnaire for the purpose of eliciting information concerning the background of the evaluators, the benefits, if any, which they received as library evaluators, and their general comments on the evaluation process.

Mr. F. Taylor Jones, executive secretary of the Middle States Association Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, supplied a list of twenty-nine librarians who were "among the librarians who have worked successfully with the Middle States Association teams in the past several years."[4] To this group two names were added by the writer and the questionnaire was then mailed to thirty-one persons. Twenty-nine responses were received, representing 93 per cent of the persons who were questioned. Bearing in mind the limitations of the questionnaire method, some ambiguities in the questionnaire used in this study, instances where no responses were made to specific questions, and the relative size of the group to which the questionnaire was directed, it is believed that the responses as a whole present a valid picture of current techniques most commonly used, and give some indication of the extent of their use.

For presentation of Middle States Association policies and procedures relating to accreditation and library evaluation, extensive use has been made of official publications of the Association. To avoid errors in interpretation and to state the position of the Association as fully as appears necessary, the writer will quote liberally from these publications.

* Paper presented at the Eastern College Librarians Conference, Columbia University, November 30, 1957.

[1] Louis R. Wilson, and Maurice F. Tauber, *The University Library*. 2nd ed. (N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 1956).
[2] E. W. McDiarmid, Jr., *The Library Survey* (Chicago: ALA, 1940).
[3] Guy R. Lyle, *The Administration of the College Library*. 2nd ed. rev. (N. Y.: H. W. Wilson, 1949).

[4] F. Taylor Jones, Letter to M. A. Gelfand, of October 30, 1957.

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Library evaluations for accrediting purposes present peculiar problems which need to be clarified and solved. This condition has been recognized and expressed frequently. Only recently in a paper presented at a meeting of the ACRL Junior College Section in Chicago, February 1, 1956, Dr. Manning M. Pattillo, formerly associate secretary of the Commission on Colleges and Universities, North Central Association, said:

After some seven years of coping with the practical problems of examining institutions for accrediting purposes, I can testify that the library is one of the most difficult phases of an institution's program to evaluate effectively. This is generally recognized among men who have made many surveys of colleges and universities. In almost every other area of the institution's program informed persons have a reasonably clear notion of what to look at and how to draw conclusions in an evaluation. . . . In the area of the library there is no such unanimity. There seem to be serious problems in almost every method of appraising the effectiveness of a college library. Beyond certain very general propositions which would be widely accepted, there is a paucity of constructive thought as to how to proceed in the specific situation. Somehow we need to develop some very different way of looking at the whole problem.[5]

Pattillo's remarks have equal, if not greater, pertinence to the problems of evaluating university libraries.

In a broad sense all types of library evaluations have a common purpose: to determine how effectively the library supports the educational program of the institution it serves. But library evaluations by regional accrediting agencies differ from other types in that they are conducted as an integral part of total institutional evaluation with the primary objective of determining how successfully the institution is meeting its self-declared purposes and objectives. Highly detailed descriptions and analyses of library resources, services, and facilities are not, and usually cannot, be made by the library evaluator of the accrediting association. Efficiency and economy of library services are not primary subjects of inquiry as they might be

in a conventional library survey. They are significant only in so far as their absence indicates that the library is not fulfilling its its mission. This is not to say that improvements in library performance have not resulted from the accreditation process. It is probable that some libraries have been improved very substantially as a result of searching self-surveys or surveys by outsiders which have been conducted in preparation for an evaluation by a regional accrediting agency. It is also probable that improvements in the quality and efficiency of library services have resulted from the adoption of recommendations made by visiting teams.

MEANING OF MSA ACCREDITATION

The Middle States Association represents a voluntary association of higher institutions —a mutual aid society—whose purposes are "The improvement of educational programs and facilities and the broadening of educational opportunity. Membership in the Association is synonomous with accreditation by it."

Accreditation by the Middle States Association indicates that an institution has been found qualified for membership in the Association after evaluation by its own staff and by a team of qualified colleagues from other institutions.

Evaluation for Middle States membership covers the entire institution, including all the instructional and non-instructional activities of every constituent part and unit. Middle States accreditation also extends to the whole institution.

Accreditation signifies that the institution offers commendable programs leading to the achievement of its own particular objectives. It indicates that all its work is conducted at a satisfactory level, in the judgment of the Middle States Association, but not that it is all necessarily of uniform quality.[6]

The last phrase of the preceding sentence has special significance for libraries. It is quite conceivable that the library of a given institution might not be regarded as one of its strongest features and that this institution would nevertheless be accredited. Often, however, it is found that where the li-

[5] M. M. Pattillo, "The Appraisal of Junior Colleges and College Libraries." *College and Research Libraries.* XVII (1956), 397-402.

[6] Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. *Middle States Membership and Accreditation.* Document No. 3.12:1, September, 1955.

brary is inadequate there are other significant weaknesses which, taken together, tend to support a judgment of overall institutional weakness.

The Association makes certain formal stipulations as to the kinds of institutions eligible for membership.

> In addition to these formal stipulations, the Association holds a concept of the essential nature of higher education which, without disparagement of other worthy kinds of instruction, enters into its determination of eligibility, although its factors have to be tested in the evaluation itself. They are:
> The extent to which the institution's curricula provide, emphasize, or rest upon general or liberal education.
> The extent to which its objectives and programs seek to inculcate power to form independent judgment, to weigh values, and to understand fundamental theory, rather than solely to amass facts or acquire skills.
> Whether its students are stimulated to continue and broaden their education beyond the point they must reach to earn its credits, certificates, or degrees.[7]

The library implications of this concept are clear. They have been recognized in professional library publications and are reflected in the attitude of the Middle States Association toward library evaluations.

> The Middle States view of accreditation rests upon the premise that the importance of accreditation is its effectiveness as a stimulant to educational improvement, and that the process leading to accreditation must accordingly be designed to be of maximum service to the faculty, administration, and trustees of the institution concerned, rather than to the accrediting agency.
> The Middle States Association holds that each institution must be judged in reference to its own declared purposes and objectives; that the judgment should be made jointly by its own personnel and competent colleagues from neighboring, but not competing, colleges and universities; and that the *significant criteria for the judgment are qualitative*.
> Essentially, therefore, a Middle States evaluation is concerned with (a) the institution's explicit definition of its own task, and the adequacy of that definition;

(b) its plans, resources, and procedures for fulfilling its responsibilities; and (c) its success in doing so.[8]

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process begins with a request for an evaluation from an institution which desires membership in the Middle States Association. Or it may begin with a decision by the Association to re-evaluate a member institution. In recent years the Association has introduced the policy of periodic re-evaluations of member institutions on a ten-twelve year cycle. After a preliminary visit to the institution by the Executive Secretary of the Middle States Association, a tentative date is set for an evaluation visit to take place at least a year later. The institution then embarks upon what has been characterized as the most valuable part of the evaluation process, self-evaluation of its purposes and objectives and of the success it has had in achieving them. At this stage the institution is usually guided by the questionnaires which the Association has designed for institutional self-evaluation and by other pertinent publications of the Association. It is also privileged to seek the help of Association officials and to turn to outside consultants for assistance in special areas.

Evaluation teams may range from five to six members for a small single-purpose institutions, to fifty or more for a large, complex institution such as a university. Librarians are always members of these teams, and in some instances there may be as many as three or four librarians on a large team. Members of the evaluating team receive copies of the self-evaluation report of the institution for study some time, usually several weeks, before the visit is scheduled to start. Then comes the visit which usually takes three days.

The visit is followed by a report from the evaluation team to the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the Middle States Association. This, together with the self-evaluation report of the institution and a verbal report from the chairman of the evaluation team, is presented to the Commission and provides the ·basis for its action. The chairman of the Commission

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[8] *Loc. cit.*

then notifies the head of the institution of the Commission's action, and the report of the evaluation team is mailed to the institution.

ACCREDITATION DECISIONS

Accreditation decisions are made by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the Association. The decisions of this group, which is elected by the membership of the Association, can be any one of five, ranging from accreditation of a non-member and re-affirmation of the accreditation of a member, to denial of accreditation to a non-member or dropping of a member from the accredited list. In recent years, the Commission has qualified some decisions by requesting progress reports in regard to the implementation of recommendations made in the evaluation report and additional follow-up visits to the institution to ascertain whether certain weaknesses have been corrected. In some instances it has required a full or partial re-evaluation of an institution.

THE WORK OF EVALUATORS

In a document entitled *Your Work as an Evaluator; Suggestions for Team Members,* the Middle States Association emphasizes the importance of the self-evaluation study of the institution to be visited and suggests that it is the "first responsibility [of the evaluator] to master and think about its contents."[9] Some additional excerpts from this publication reveal clearly the Association's concern for objective, impartial, and constructive attitudes among evaluators.

> The team's function is to make an independent analysis, for the institution's use, of the quality of its performance, and of the effectiveness of its procedures and the adequacy of its resources for continually improving its performance.
>
> Your task is not to "inspect" the institution. We have no formulas to give, no rules to apply or patterns to impose. You go as a colleague, to help identify the institution's strengths and discover how to solve its most critical problems. You have been selected because the Commission believes that you, supported by your teammates, are competent to do that. But approach the task humbly. No one knows all the answers. Your advantage lies simply in your detached position.
>
> The primary consideration to keep in mind (during the preparation of your report) is that in it you are speaking to the institution just as surely as if you were addressing its assembled staff in person. The Middle States Commission, and any other agencies which may be operating in the evaluation, also use the report, but it is designed for and directed to the institution.
>
> That fact determines its nature and content. Your task is not to describe; it is to evaluate. The institution's own staff has described it. You do not need to tell them what they already know. Your part is to assess its work, sympathetically, critically, and constructively.[10]

The Middle States Association concept of the place of the library in a higher institution has been set forth in a remarkably concise and profound statement recently issued by the Association as an official document. Designed primarily "for the use of faculties and evaluation teams,"[11] it can be studied with profit by all who are interested in the improvement of libraries in higher institutions even though some may wish to take issue with statements made in it. Some excerpts from this document are given here by way of bringing to a close the presentation of the Middle States Association's policies and procedures and preparing the way for consideration of the techniques of library evaluators.

> The primary characteristic of a good academic library is its complete identification with its own institution. The measure of its excellence is the extent to which its resources and services support the institution's objectives.
>
> Every library must therefore be evaluated in its own setting rather than by comparison with general patterns or norms, because each library must support a particular educational program. The prerequisite for library evaluation, accordingly, is an exact description of the institution's mission and of the means by which the institution proposes to fulfill it. Given that, scholars can identify the re-

[9] Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. *Your Work as an Evaluator; Suggestions for Team Members.* Document No. 2.41:1, January, 1956.

[10] *Loc. cit.*
[11] Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. *Evaluating the Library; Suggestions for the Use of Faculties and Evaluation Teams.* Document No. 4.81, October, 1957.

sources they must have to accomplish the task. The evaluation of the library can then begin.

The process can be summarized in a series of questions: What access to the world's intellectual and creative resources does this institution's educational program require? To what extent are these resources now available and accessible through the library? How can their availability and accessibility be increased and their use encouraged?

Obviously no one person can make an evaluation of this kind, nor can professional librarians do it alone. Identification and appraisal of the materials to support instruction and stimulate research in a given field demand a scholar's knowledge plus a librarian's skill. Analysis of the use which students and faculty are making of the library and the reasons for it is aided by intelligently designed statistical records, but goes beyond them into educational philosophy and teaching methods. Library specialists can organize and give technical competence to such a study, but must depend on their professional colleagues to identify the resources required to meet the full needs of undergraduate students, the basic needs of advanced students in each field in which the institution offers such instruction, the professional and research requirements of the faculty, and for estimating the strength of the collection as it stands. The librarians who work with them must guard balance and coverage, which means they must have a good general knowledge of the scholar's field and of the teacher's problem.

These considerations suggest the characteristics of a good librarian. He and his professional colleagues are responsible for the administration and development of a major element in the institution's intellectual life. He needs the skill to direct a highly complex organization well, but his thinking and planning must be that of a teacher and scholar, not a curator or technician. He must be chosen with the same care and under many of the same criteria as other high-ranking faculty members. Professional qualifications are not enough. He must know what scholarship is and what teaching entails. He must demonstrate the competence to merit the respect of his colleagues as an educator and be given the status that will enable him to speak with equal voice in their company. He and his professional assistants must have an effective place within

the faculty councils in order to relate the library properly to the curriculum and to ensure good communications in both directions.

Library evaluation involves a study of faculty attitudes and teaching methods. The faculty is deeply concerned with the library; it is of primary importance in their instructional program and in their professional growth. They ought therefore to have an important voice in determining its objectives and a constant advisory relationship to the head librarian, although he should report in his administrative capacity to the president or dean. An alert faculty never allows a library to suffer from neglect or to diverge from the educational program. Neither does a good faculty meddle with internal administration or attempt to deal with technical details—it participates in establishing objectives and general policies and expects the librarian and his staff to give them effect.

The faculty usually operates through a standing committee of which the librarian is a member, perhaps secretary, which meets regularly in an advisory capacity, keeps itself thoroughly informed, guards and advances library interests, and reports frequently to the faculty for discussion, counsel, or confirmation. The importance which this committee's work can have for the institution warrants selecting its members with great care among those who are most interested in the library, use it extensively themselves, and understand the difference between advisory and administrative functions.

The use the students make of the library—the ultimate test of its effectiveness—is not an accident. It is the result of many forces, including habit, convenience, the ready availability of the materials the students want, the attractiveness of the setting, staff personalities, and the way the librarians and instructors work together. But it is chiefly the result of the faculty's teaching methods. If statistics or observation suggest that the library may not be serving as fully as it might or is being used as a study hall with books from outside, look for lecture-textbook or other unimaginative teaching. Since the quality and amount of library use is one of the clearest indices of the kind of teaching the students are getting, experienced evaluators are apt to turn quickly from the library to the classroom. They know that a stimulating instructor creates an inquiring

student, who develops resourcefulness because he wants more than routine methods will give him. Thus good teaching and good librarianship unite to produce skilled, self-reliant, habitual library users. Independent and honors work provide an especially favorable climate for it.

Clearly, therefore, the emphasis in evaluating a library should be on the appropriateness of the collection for the instructional and research programs of the students and faculty, its adequacy in breadth, depth, and variety to stimulate both students and faculty, its accessibility, including proper cataloging, the competence and interest of the staff, and above all, what happens in the reading and reference rooms. Statistical comparisons need to be handled with caution. Percentages of the educational budget spent on library service and growth, per capita expenditures, number of volumes, circulation figures, and the ratio of staff to students and of students to seats often provide suggestive leads, but they should be studied in context and perspective.

When the institution's objectives and its curricula have been analyzed and the resources and services the library ought to provide to support them have been described, questions like the following may clarify the final stages of the problem. Others will suggest themselves to the evaluators. They must be dealt with candidly and objectively, of course, and every negative answer should be coupled with a practicable recommendation.[12]

Here follow a group of twenty-six questions which deal with the major characteristics of good library service. Two of these questions are quoted to provide an indication of their searching quality:

1. Is the library book stock sufficiently broad, varied, authoritative, and up to date to support every part of the undergraduate instructional program?
2. Is there adequate additional strength in source, monographic, and periodical material for any graduate work, honors work, and research which is offered or proposed?"[13]

TECHNIQUES OF MSA LIBRARY EVALUATORS

The results of the questionnaire inquiry will be presented under these headings: (1)

[12] Loc. cit.
[13] Loc. cit.

preparation for an evaluation visit, (2) the evaluation visit, (3) preparation of the evaluation report, and (4) qualifications of library evaluators and their comments on the evaluation process. Responses will be collated and analyzed and such conclusions as arise from the data will be presented. In addition, the writer will make some personal observations based upon his experience and present recommendations. It should be emphasized that the analysis of data will be based only upon the replies which were received. While no claims are made for the statistical reliability of the conclusions which will be presented, it would appear that a representative group of qualified evaluators has responded to the questionnaire. Their views and practices as presented and interpreted here may therefore be characterized as adequately representative.

PREPARATION FOR AN EVALUATION VISIT

After a librarian accepts an invitation from the executive secretary of the Middle States Association to serve on a particular evaluation team, he will usually receive from the Middle States Association a list of the members comprising the whole team and an "Evaluation Handbook," a collection of official publications of the Middle States Association which relate to the aims, policies, and practices of the Association. The contents of this handbook will vary from time to time as new publications appear or old ones are superseded. For the novice evaluator, the handbook is the most valuable single source of information about the point of view and methods of the Association. Experienced evaluators also find the handbook to be valuable for review purposes and a way of keeping up to date with new publications of the Association.

Several weeks before the visit is scheduled, each of the evaluators usually receives a copy of the complete self-evaluation report of the institution which is to be evaluated, together with catalogs, and other materials such as bylaws, promotional literature, etc. Often the report is a long and apparently formidable document or a series of documents depending upon the size and complexity of the institution to be evaluated.

As he studies the self-evaluation report, the evaluator may encounter ambiguous pas-

sages and decide to write to the librarian of the institution for clarification or additional information. He may also find it advisable to consult professional library literature for assistance in interpreting or evaluating the report. At this point in his preparation the evaluator may wish to make some plans for the visit, note subjects he will want to inquire into further during the visit, and list a few questions which arise from his reading.

The questionnaire inquiry revealed that nearly all respondents find it helpful to review regularly the Middle States Association publications relating to policies and procedures in preparation for a visit.

The self-evaluation report of the institution under study is without doubt a major element in the evaluation process. How many library evaluators read this report in its entirety; how many selectively?

The data in Table I, reveal that most library evaluators read the entire report of a single-purpose institution, while among those who must evaluate a complex institution, the apparent practice is to read the report selectively. In this connection, selectively, is taken to mean that the library sections alone are read or the library and a few additional sections concerning subjects closely related to the library are read. It is appropriate to mention here that only fourteen out of the twenty-nine respondents had evaluated complex institutions; fifteen had never done so. Evaluators of complex institutions, however, often are invited also to evaluate single-purpose institutions, and they, therefore, account for some of the responses recorded for single-purpose institutions, while some library evaluators who have visited only single-purpose instiutions indicated what they would do with the report of a complex institution.

Twenty-three library evaluators indicated that they do not correspond in advance with the librarian of the institution to be visited. Six stated that they write to the librarian before the visit but one commented "not always." One evaluator commented that he "would not consider this [writing, that is] advisable practice."

In answer to the question: Do you make use of books and other materials to assist you in assessing the report of the institution to be visited and in locating problem areas?

TABLE I

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT OF INSTITUTION

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	REPORT READ	
	ENTIRELY	SELECTIVELY
Single-purpose institution	25	2
Complex institution	4	13

twenty-four replied in the affirmative; four, negatively; and one did not reply. The materials most commonly used, although not always regularly, are listed in Table II.

It is interesting to note here the extent to which the annual statistical summary in the January issue of *CRL* is used by library evaluators, and that the use of American Library Association, *Classification and Pay Plans*[14] is not insignificant.

Most of the evaluators queried (twenty-five) indicated that they formulate a plan for the projected visit during the preparation period. But two evaluators stated that their plans at this early stage were quite general. One respondent said: "Generally [yes] but more specifically at the first evaluation meeting," referring to the initial meeting of the visiting team on the campus of the institution undergoing evaluation. Another reply was along similar lines: "Yes, only in general terms. I find it better not to make too formal plans. Each institution is unique and the atmosphere of the institution frequently gives the surveyor ideas on the scene."

The complete catalog of the institutions to be visited is read by nineteen of the respondents before the evaluation visit. Among the ten remaining evaluators some apparently do not read the catalogue at this time, but the figures are inconclusive as the ques-

[14] American Library Association. Board on Salaries Staff, and Tenure. . . . *Classification and Pay Plans for Libraries in Institutions of Higher Education*. 2nd. ed. (Chicago: ALA, 1947).
——*Library Score Card. Vol. II—Degree-Conferring Four-Year Institutions*. Supplement to *Classification and Pay Plans for Libraries in Institutions of Higher Education*. (Chicago: ALA, 1950).
——*Library Score Card. Vol. III—Universities*. Supplement to *Classification and Pay Plans for Libraries in Institutions of Higher Education*. (Chicago: ALA, 1950.)

TABLE II

MATERIALS USED DURING PREPARATION FOR AN EVALUATION VISIT

MATERIALS USED	REGULARLY	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
Wilson and Tauber, *The University Library*	3	13	4
Lyle, *The College Library*	9	11	1
McCrum, *Estimate of Standards*	2	9	6
Branscomb, *Teaching With Books*	3	10	3
ALA *Classification and Pay Plans*	6	10	2
College and Research Libraries, January issue	14	9	
McDiarmid, *Library Survey*	1	6	9
Other (by respondents):			
History of institution	1		
Tauber, *Technical Services in Libraries*		1	
MSA, Evaluation report of own institution	1		

tion relating to catalogs was not well phrased. Among those who read the catalog selectively, the sections dealing with the aims of the institution, the library, the faculty, curricula and course descriptions appear to be read most frequently and in the order indicated.

THE EVALUATION VISIT

The section of the questionnaire which deals with the evaluation visit was designed in the form of a check list. In the first column at the left side of each page, under the heading *Methods and Devices,* there were listed sixty different methods and devices which evaluators use in greater or lesser degree during the course of an evaluation. These included many which are mentioned in Middle States Association publications, in Wilson and Tauber,[15] Lyle,[16] and McDiarmid,[17] some which the writer has used in his work, some suggested by colleagues. The object of this section was to determine what devices and methods are most commonly employed, the degree to which they are employed, and the principal purposes they are designed to serve.

Ten columns were arranged to the right of the column listing methods and devices to permit the respondent to indicate under each heading the extent, if any, to which he employed a particular approach. These headings were (1) program of the library; (2) adequacy of library collection; (3) quality

[15] Wilson and Tauber. *op. cit.*
[16] Lyle, *op. cit.*
[17] McDiarmid, *op. cit.*

of readers' services; (4) quality of technical services; (5) student use of the library; (6) faculty use of the library; (7) adequacy of space (building); (8) adequacy of library staff; (9) attitude of institution toward library; and (10) overall effectiveness of the library. Under each of these headings the respondent could make a check mark in the appropriate column to indicate whether he used a particular method or device regularly, occasionally, or never.

When the responses were tabulated, it was found that some evaluators had added a device or two of their own to those already listed and that some did not respond to every item listed. On the whole, however, the responses to this section of the questionnaire were sufficiently full to justify a full tabulation and analysis.

An analysis of the data was made along two lines. In the first, the object was to determine the relative ranking, if any, of the ten principal headings under which evaluation was being conducted. In the second, the object was to discover how frequently each of the methods and devices listed and those that were added by respondents was employed.

To determine relative ranking of subjects of evaluation, such as adequacy of the book collection, quality of technical services, and the others, the check marks in each of the ten columns headed by these subjects were added together under each sub-heading, that is under the sub-headings, "Regularly," "Occasionally," and "Never." The results, which appear in Table III relate only to the re-

TABLE III

RELATIVE RANKING OF SUBJECTS OF EVALUATION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SUBJECT OF EVALUATION	DEVICES REGULARLY USED NUMBER OF CHECKS	RANK	DEVICES OCCASIONALLY USED NUMBER OF CHECKS	RANK	DEVICES NEVER USED NUMBER OF CHECKS	RANK
Program of library	701	1	309	1	299	1
Overall effectiveness of library	585	2	231	4	255	2
Adequacy of library collection	581	3	268	2	241	3
Student use of the library	493	4	212	6	234	4
Quality of reader's services	472	5	248	3	219	5
Faculty use of the library	471	6	190	7	210	6
Attitude of institution toward library	465	7	231	5	209	7
Adequacy of space: building	449	8	188	8	205	8
Adequacy of library staff	449	8	188	8	192	9
Quality of technical services	367	9	177	9	143	10
Total number of check marks	5,033		2,242		2,207	
Percentage of total responses	53		24		23	

sponses of the particular group who answered the questionnaire and are not offered as universally representative indications of the relative importance of these subjects to library evaluators.

Fifty-three per cent of the total responses to this section of the questionnaire were given under the subheading "Regularly" in each column; 24 per cent under "Occasionally," 23 per cent under "Never." As 77 per cent of the responses indicated that the ten subjects of evaluation were considered in greater or lesser degree, it was decided that it would be helpful to compare the responses under "regularly" with those under "occasionally" for some positive indication of relative ranking among the subjects of evaluation. Comparison reveals a fairly consistent relationship between the subjects of evaluation; whether particular methods or devices were employed regularly or occasionally, the relative ranking of subjects is remarkably close in each instance.

METHODS AND DEVICES

To obtain an indication of the extent to which each of the methods and devices listed in the questionnaire, or added by respondents, was employed, the check marks indicating regular use of each of the methods or devices were added together at the end of each row. Analysis of the data reveals an extremely wide range in the employment of the various methods and devices. Use ranged from 277, for *Conferring with the librarian of the institution,* to one for *Reading the faculty library handbook.* In the first instance, most of the respondents indicated that they used regularly the method of conferring with the librarian in respect to each of the ten subjects of evaluation. With twenty-six to twenty-nine check marks in each of ten columns, the final score of 277 was achieved. *Reading the faculty handbook* was suggested by one respondent, who employed it regularly among other devices when evaluating reader services. Since there was only one check mark in this instance the final score was one.

It is also desirable to note that some methods and devices ranked high in frequency because they could be applied to the evaluation of a wide range of subjects, while others were useful in very limited areas. For example, conferences with key members of the library staff might conceivably be useful in every area under study; but talks with deans might have to be limited to only a few subjects. The dean is not expected to know very much about the

quality of technical services but he might be most useful in discussing the attitude of the institution toward the library. Discussion with key staff members scored 185 as a device; with deans, seventy-four.

The data revealed in the questionnaire returns are presented in a series of tables, the first of which, Table IV, is a master list of methods and devices arranged in the order of the frequency of their use "regularly" by the respondents. This table, however, does not reflect accurately the degree to which each method or device is employed and could, therefore, be misleading. Additional analysis of tabulated responses indicated that certain devices were employed more widely than it would at first appear, as they were used "occasionally," to a large extent. Adding together figures representing "Regular" and "Occasional" use produced another, more significant view of the evaluation techniques. A decision was made finally to present a report of methods and devices under three headings to indicate more precisely the degree to which these devices are employed. The selection of items to be placed under each heading was based mainly upon the questionnaire responses and partly on the writer's own experience and judgment. The results are offered in the following three tables.

It should be emphasized as these tables are examined that they represent only the practice of those who responded to the questionnaire. It is believed that a representative group of library evaluators responded to the questionnaire but this should not be taken to mean that these lists of practices are offered as being authoritative and complete. They are, to be sure, highly suggestive, but they do not represent the intangibles, such as sound experience, good judgment, tact, diplomacy, and humility, which an evaluator should possess in order to perform his work satisfactorily. It should also be emphasized that the practices referred to in these tables are reported as those used during the course of a visit. *CRL* statistics and ALA standards may be used with some frequency before and after a visit, and journals

TABLE IV

METHODS AND DEVICES USED DURING EVALUATION VISITS

METHODS AND DEVICES	FREQUENCY
1. Review library sections of institution's report to the Middle States Association ...	277
2. Confer with chief librarian	277
3. Read librarian's annual reports and other significant reports and memoranda	210
4. Confer with colleagues on evaluation team	194
5. Confer with key library staff members	185
6. Confer with chief librarian upon conclusioon of visit	172
6a. Read survey reports, if available, by outside consultants to the library	157
7. Discuss briefly basic routines and problems of major library departments with their heads	147
8. Compare library practices with prevailing practices of other libraries	146
9. Examine statistics and/or reports of circulation	138
10. Compare library expenditures with total institutional expenditures	136
11. Explore administrative structure of library; relation of departmental libraries with main college library or of college and school libraries with university library	132
12. Confer with library committee members	129
13. Inspect book stacks	127
14. In connection with No. 11 above, confer with appropriate deans and department heads	123
15. Examine statistics and/or reports of use of neighboring libraries	121
16. Inspect reading rooms	117
17. Confer with faculty members other than library committee	110
18. Check library hours	107
19. Read samplings of minutes of library committees	106
20. Examine statistics and/or reports of reserves	106
21. Check seating capacity	105
22. Examine statistics and/or reports of interlibrary loans	104

23. Examine statistics and/or reports of cataloging and processing 100
24. Read college or university catalogs 98
25. Read college or university statutes, if any, relating to library policy 97
26. Inquire about relationships with and possible dependence upon neighboring libraries 96
27. Examine reports and/or statistics of orders 94
28. Examine surveys of library resources made by library and/or faculty 89
29. Inspect work rooms 87
30. Examine statistics and/or reports of audio-visual services 83
31. Examine library card catalogs 79
32. Inquire about methods and quality of teaching 75
33. Confer with deans 74
34. Examine statistics and/or reports of unavailable books 68
35. Confer with president 67
36. Compare library expenditures with ACRL statistics in *CRL* 67
37. Confer with students at random 52
38. Read survey reports, if available, of the whole institution for library implications 51
39. Compare library expenditures with those of other libraries in MSA territory 50
40. Confer with administrative officers other than the president and deans 46
41. Spot-check availability of books listed in public catalog 39
42. Confer with others in institution upon conclusion of visit (others than librarian) 31
43. Examine desiderata files, if any, in order department 31
44. Confer with representative students 26
45. Compare library's expenditures with ALA standards *(Classification and Pay Plans)* 22
46. Confer with head of student body 17
47. Visit classes (other than library) 15
48. Compare library practices with those of one's own library 11
49. Check *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* 9
50. Check Shores, *Basic Reference Sources* 7
51. Compare library expenditures with Randall and Goodrich, *Principles of College Library Administration* 6
52. Check Lyle and Trumper, *Periodicals for the College Library* 6
53. Visit classes in use of library 6
54. Check *Lamont Library Catalog* 4
55. Check *Essay and General Literature Index* 3
56. Read recent accession lists 3
57. Check Shaw, *List of Books for College Libraries* 2
58. Make breakdown of budget to course offerings 2
59. Use *ALA Score Card* 1
60. Read list of periodical holdings and current subscriptions 1
61. Read faculty handbook 1

TABLE V

Methods and Devices Regularly and Widely Used

METHODS AND DEVICES	FREQUENCY OF USE
1. Review library sections of institution's report to the Middle States Association	277
2. Confer with chief librarian of institution	277
3. Examine librarian's annual reports and other significant reports and memoranda ..	210
4. Confer with colleagues on evaluation team	194
5. Confer with key library staff members	185
6. Confer with librarian upon conclusion of visit	172
7. Read survey reports, if available, by outside consultants to the library	157
8. Discuss briefly basic routines and problems of major library departments with their heads	147
9. Inspect book stacks	127
10. Inspect reading rooms	117
11. Check seating capacity	105
12. Examine catalogs of the institution	98
13. Examine surveys of library resources made by library and/or faculty	89
14. Inspect work rooms	87
15. Inquire about methods and quality of teaching	75

TABLE VI

METHODS AND DEVICES OFTEN, BUT NOT WIDELY, USED IN SOME PHASES OF
EVALUATIONS

METHODS AND DEVICES	FREQUENCY OF USE
1. Compare library practices with prevailing practices of other libraries	146
2. Examine statistics and/or reports of circulation	138
3. Compare library expenditures with total institutional expenditures	136
4. Explore administrative structure of library; relations of departmental libraries with main college library, or of college and school libraries with university library	132
5. Confer with library committee members	129
6. In connection with (4) above, confer with appropriate deans and department heads	123
7. Examine statistics and/or reports of use of neighboring libraries	121
8. Confer with faculty members other than library committee	110
9. Check library hours	107
10. Read samplings of minutes of library committees	106
11. Examine statistics and/or reports of reserves	106
12. Examine statistics and/or reports of interlibrary loans	104
13. Examine statistics and/or reports of cataloging and processing	100
14. Inquire about relationships with and possible dependence upon neighboring libraries	96
15. Examine statistics and/or reports of orders	84
16. Examine statistics and/or reports of audio-visual services	83
17. Examine library card catalogs	79
18. Confer with deans	74
19. Examine statistics and/or reports of unavailable books	68
20. Confer with president	67
21. Compare library expenditures with ACRL statistics in *CRL*	67
22. Confer with students at random	52
23. Read survey reports, if available, of the whole institution, for library implications	51
24. Compare library expenditures with those of other libraries in Middle States Association territory	50
25. Confer with administrative officers other than president and deans	46
26. Spot-check availability of books listed in public catalog	39
27. Examine desiderata files, if any, in order department	31
28. Confer with representative students	26
29. Compare library practices with those of one's own library	11

and other professional tools may be consulted at these times. During the course of the visit there is little time for such devices, and there is the very important question: how should they be used when it is desired to make a qualitative, educational approach to library evaluation?

PREPARING THE EVALUATION REPORT

The "primary function" of the evaluator's report, according to the Middle States Association, "is to give the faculty, administration, and trustees a critical analysis of their program and resources in the light of their objectives, with suggestions for strengthening them."[18]

[18] Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. *Preparing the Evaluation Report.* Document No. 2.76:1, January, 1956.

According to the questionnaire responses, most (twenty-five) of the evaluators queried analyze their findings during the course of their visit. Those who answered the question on this point in the negative, indicated that they made at least a tentative analysis of findings while on the visit. This is understandable when it is known that during the course of an evaluation visit, the team comes together two or more times for the purpose of exchanging views as to findings and recommendations. The chairman of a team usually directs discussion along these lines in order that he can gain an impression at first hand of the views of his colleagues. This is considered important for it is the practice of the chairman to confer with the president of the institution before the team leaves the campus. In this confer-

TABLE VII

Methods and Devices Rarely Employed

METHODS AND DEVICES	FREQUENCY OF USE
1. Confer with institution officials, other than librarian, upon conclusion of visit	31
2. Compare library expenditures with ALA standards (Classification and Pay Plans)	22
3. Confer with head of student body	17
4. Visit classes (other than library instruction)	15
5. Check Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature	9
6. Check Shores, Basic Reference Sources	7
7. Compare library expenditures with figures in Randall and Goodrich, Principles of College Library Administration	6
8. Check Lyle and Trumper, . . . Periodicals for the College Library	6
9. Visit classes in use of library	6
10. Check Lamont Library Catalog ...	4
11. Check Essay and General Literature Index	3
12. Check Shaw, List of Books for College Libraries	2
13. Make breakdown of budget to course offerings	2
14. Use ALA Score Card	1
15. Read recent accessions list	3
16. Read list of periodical holdings and annual subscriptions	1
17. Read faculty handbook	1

ence the team chairman is the official spokesman for the team. He often gives the president an overall impression of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution as seen through the eyes of the visitors and indicates what the general tenor of major recommendations is likely to be. Under these circumstances, it can be seen that team members work under pressure to form judgments but most evaluators do not appear to object to this condition.

Twenty-four of the respondents indicate that they decide upon the major suggestions or recommendations they will make in their reports during the course of the visit, but even those who do not claim to have made their decisions indicate that they make a tentative list of recommendations or suggestions before they leave the campus. Among respondents who commented on this subject, one wrote: "I think it would be unfair to arrive at major recommendations after the committee had disbanded— or after leaving the institution—it is important to let the institution know the trend of your thinking." Another respondent commented: "[I] talk over all recommendations with members of the team and with the librarian, dean, president, etc., and make sure before I leave that my recommendations are reasonable."

On evaluations of complex institutions two or more librarians serve together on the visiting team. The librarians usually confer among themselves during the course of the visit and decide how they will make their report. Among those who responded to the question on this subject, seven indicate that one man writes the report after consultation with his colleagues; six, that each man writes a report on the area he has been immediately concerned with and submits it to the library evaluator who has been designated to make the complete report; and two state that each man makes himself responsible for a report on certain functions, schools, or departments, drawing upon the findings and recommendations of the whole group of library evaluators.

During the preparation of the report, many respondents (about 50 per cent) indicate that they find it helpful to consult books and other sources of information concerning librarianship. But one evaluator wrote: "Aside from items checked (in the questionnaire) I very often write librarians in similar colleges in the area or state for comparative data." This is an unusual practice; apparently very helpful, however, to the librarian who uses it. Those who use books and other materials, such as those mentioned previously in this study, have oc-

casionally found it helpful to refer to *Library Trends*,[19] institutional histories, publications dealing with library buildings, or to other publications that are pertinent to the problem in hand.

Queried about the amount of time they take for the preparation of the report, twenty-one respondents indicate that they prepare their reports within a week after the visit; six state they take one to two weeks, and two take from three or four weeks. It can be seen that the whole process of library evaluation is performed within a relatively short time.

COMMENTS BY THE EVALUATORS

In order to establish the authority of the respondents whose comments on library evaluation methodology are summarized here, it might be well to view briefly a few facts concerning their professional experience and backgrounds. All are librarians of colleges or universities, except two who are associate directors of large university libraries. Thirteen have served as library consultants to college or universities, and among these, four have been consultants for four to six libraries. Many have had extensive experiences as library evaluators for the Middle States Association.

Their experience as library evaluators appears to have been helpful in many ways to the evaluators who responded to the questionnaire. Answers to a question along these lines appear in Table VIII.

The high number of affirmative responses to a question along these lines indicates clearly that librarians who have served as evaluators believe they have profited from this experience, both as librarians and evaluators. Comments from some of the librarians who responded to this question reveal further satisfaction with the experience and additional outcomes. One evaluator wrote: "What one learns from other members of the team about the operation of the institution as a whole aids a great deal towards the proper understanding of the library's place in the institution." Another wrote: "Stimulus to do better work; widen the scope of one's work; toward better handling of library associates; new insights into the

[19] *Library Trends,* Urbana, University of Illinois Library School, I— (1952-).

TABLE VIII

BENEFITS DERIVED FROM EXPERIENCES AS A LIBRARY EVALUATOR

BENEFIT	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE
Broaden one's professional outlook	27
Afford an opportunity to observe different and sometimes new library practices	28
Provide better insight into the library needs and attitudes of colleagues among teachers and administrators	25
Provide better acquaintance with unique and/or important book collections in the libraries visited	14
Widen scope of professional acquaintanceship with fellow librarians	28
Help in the administration of one's own library	24
Provide excellent experience in general library evaluation	29
Help one in preparing for the evaluation of his own institution by the Middle States Association	23

significance of books. I have learned much from other members of the visiting team; have learned too, how to propose recommendations more effectively, and that mechanical standards do not impress top-flight administrators." From another, a man with much experience as an evaluator, the process "helps particularly in developing a growing conviction that any strictly formal standards are unsatisfactory; points up the individuality of each institution and the wisdom of studying each institution in terms of its objectives and aims."

GENERAL COMMENTS

"I think we do a good job!" writes one evaluator, but another asserts: "In my opinion, it is impossible to evaluate adequately and fairly a college library (including collections) in two or three days."

Again, a positive statement of approval: "Personally I am satisfied with the evaluation as conducted by the Middle States Association," while another statement indicates doubt of the effectiveness of library evaluation by the Association: "We still need better measures of effectiveness and better ways to assess the role of the faculty in using the

library as an educational tool. [A] wide gulf between the 'potential' of the library and the actual achievement continues to be a worrisome matter."

In all, fourteen respondents accepted the invitation to make comments at the end of the questionnaire. Several expressed a need for better guidance of the evaluator by means of quantitative standards. Some have expressed doubt as to the ability of other team members to appreciate the librarian's point of view. One respondent finds that "librarians have lost somewhat in effectiveness of their reports because [he is told] many reports by librarians find fault; do not seem reasonable; make it seem that the library is taking over." He strongly urges that library evaluators always find something to praise.

A question that brings doubt about the wisdom of a fundamental Middle States Association policy is raised in this comment: "I have long argued that the Middle States Association's 'achievement of purposes and objectives' attitude is a poor criterion for evaluation itself. I have felt called upon on occasion to 'approve' a miserable library simply because it was indeed adequate to the demands of a limited conception of education held by the institution."

Taking the advice of the librarian who writes that library evaluators should always find something to praise, this section of the study will close with a few positive affirmative comments: "Procedures and attitudes toward library evaluation have improved steadily since reorganization of the Middle States Association in 1946. The new statement, *Evaluating the Library*,[20] should help further in impressing institutions and colleague evaluators with the importance and significance of the library and its relation to teaching methods. "Generally, I have been impressed by the attitude and seriousness of purpose evident in evaluating teams." "Teams and sizes of libraries vary so greatly that it is hard to generalize. In general standards are high and we work hard."

CONCLUSIONS

The Middle States Association has stated its position in regard to evaluation generally and in reference to libraries with admi-

[20] Middle States Association, *op. cit.*

rable clarity and conciseness. It has placed great emphasis upon the importance of the self-evaluation which precedes a formal evaluation visit and the need for a program of continuous evaluation of itself by every higher institution. It has developed effective conditions for bringing together the diverse talents and interests of evaluation team members and encouraged frank and searching analysis by visiting teams of the problems with which they are confronted.

The measure of the effectiveness of a visiting group of evaluators lies not only in the quality of the individual members and the leadership of the chairman but also in the quality of the self-evaluation which the institution is encouraged to make. If the institution has made a sincere and thorough study of itself along the lines suggested by the Middle States Association questionnaire, or in accordance with an individual design, it will provide a good visiting committee with a sound basis for constructively critical analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. The Association does not insist that its members follow literally every step it suggests in the evaluation process. Indeed, one of its great virtues as an organization lies in its emphasis on qualitative and individual approaches to educational problems.

The Association has shown much interest in the evaluation of libraries. Its latest document on that subject provides excellent guidance for those of its members who wish to improve library services because they are convinced of the fundamental importance of libraries. But the document, however admirable, will not serve its purpose unless its contents are considered with great seriousness on every campus. Librarians and their colleagues on the teaching staffs of colleges and universities may not agree with some of the statements made, but the larger implications of the document will be found worthy of the most serious study by representative members of the whole academic staff, which includes, or should include where it does not, the professional library staff.

In a practical sense, the Middle States Association document on library evaluation suggests a series of progressive steps beginning with a definition of the mission of the library in support of the objectives and purposes of the institution and continuing

with suggested measures of its effectiveness in the form of questions concerning most of the important aspects of library service. It is when some of these measures are examined that problems arise. For example, how is this question answered: "Is the library stock sufficiently broad, varied, authoritative, and up to date to support every part of the undergraduate program?"[21] The answer to this question would require a thorough appraisal of the book collection by the academic staff or by an outside library consultant working in conjunction with the academic staff. It might have to be as wide and thorough an appraisal as the ones conducted at the University of Chicago[22] or Pennsylvania[23] or, in the case of a small college library, a faculty-library project involving the use of checklists, catalogs, such as the Lamont,[24] or other devices.

In other words, the implementation of the suggestions made in this document would appear to call for a penetrating self-evaluation, or for a library survey conducted by an outside consultant in order to provide helpful answers to the questions which are raised. The type of evaluation or survey implied here would be far more comprehensive than that which has been suggested in older Middle States Association publications relating to the library. And this is to the good.

For despite the imposing list of methods and devices available to the library evaluator, he cannot function at the highest level unless the institution has made proper preparation for him. This preparation should consist of a sound analysis of the effectiveness of its library program by means of a thorough survey. The evaluator would then have the means to assess the program "sympathetically, critically, and constructively,"[25] as suggested by the Association.

The technique of the evaluator should be determined by the conditions he encounters at the institution undergoing evaluation and by the character of the documentary materials provided for him by the institution. Generally, however, he will find it useful to review in detail the self-survey or survey reports relating to the library and to confer with the chief librarian and key library staff members. He will examine the librarian's annual reports and other significant reports and memoranda, acquaint himself with the physical facilities, and compare notes with library and other colleagues on the evaluation team throughout the course of the visit.

After a full day or two at the institution during the course of an evaluation visit, the members of the team begin to put together and crystallize their thoughts about the institution. Patterns of policy characteristic of the institution begin to emerge; attitudes of the administration toward the faculty, the library, the students, become clearer; faculty influence in the affairs of the institution or lack of it, can be recognized. Emphasis on teaching and research is noted. As observations begin to fall into place and form recognizable patterns the evaluators begin to express their impressions. Criticisms, recommendations, and suggestions begin to emerge, and the individual members of the team are encouraged by the chairman to state their views. As this process goes on the library evaluator may find it necessary to employ some of the lesser used devices as he attempts to reach a decision concerning the effectiveness of the library and its place in the institution.

Before he leaves the campus, the evaluator will usually find it highly desirable to discuss his observations with the librarian of the institution, and perhaps he will mention tentatively the recommendations he is considering. If he is one of two or more library evaluators he will exchange views with them and help to decide how the report will be made.

When he prepares his report, the library evaluator will do well to reread the document on library evaluation and he will probably scan some of the other Middle States Association publications. He will remember that he is addressing himself primarily to the institution in the role of colleague and constructive critic.

[21] *Ibid*, p. 2.
[22] M. Llewellyn Raney, *The University Libraries.* University of Chicago Survey, Vol. VII (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).
[23] Charles W. David, "On the Survey of a Research Library by Scholars." *College and Research Libraries,* XV (1954), 290-91.
[24] *Catalogue of the Lamont Library, Harvard College.* Prepared by Philip J. McNiff and members of the Library Staff (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953).
[25] Middle States Association. Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. *Your Work as an Evaluator; Suggestions for Team Members.* Document No. 2.41:1, January, 1956.