The role of public libraries in supporting adult learning: a consideration of the British experience

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Abstract

Libraries have long provided learning materials for adults, whether attached to an educational institution or learning independently. Focusing especially on public libraries, this article traces the development of practice in the United Kingdom, showing an increasing emphasis on technological developments such as the Internet. It argues the need to develop a greater understanding of library-related learning from the learner's perspective as well as the provider's and offers a preliminary framework for analysis, based particularly on the degree of definition of the learning aim and the degree of control retained by the learner in the process.

Key words
Libraries; Public Libraries; Adult Education; Lifelong Learning.

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Introduction

It is a commonplace that libraries have an association with learning. This is most obvious in institutional settings, where academic libraries not only make learning and research materials available, but also provide learners with a range of support services, particularly through the presence of subject specialist librarians. The role of libraries in supporting learners outside educational establishments is less evident and less developed, but nonetheless real. In this article the British experience is analysed and an attempt is made to work towards a theoretical framework for the role of libraries, drawing on the British experience and on the wider literature of adult learning and of librarianship.

The context

Libraries are not new partners of adult learning in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere. Before the advent of publicly funded library systems, charitable benefactors and, later, self-help groups, established collections for the education of those who had limited access to schooling. Kelly quotes examples from the early seventeenth century, with indications that some collections dated back at least into the sixteenth century (KELLY, 1992, p. 44-45). In the nineteenth century a number of working class organisations (self-organised or established for the benefit of workers) developed education provision, including libraries, as a support for the aspirations of their members. These included miners' institute libraries (FRANCIS, 1976), co-operative societies (DRODGE, 1988b) and a variety of other local collections (see, for example, GRAHAM, 1983).

If there is a long history of libraries providing support for adult learners, that is not to say that adult learners have constantly been seen as key clients for libraries, nor that libraries have always been perceived as important elements in the edifice of adult learning.

In the academic context, adults participating in mainstream higher education have had access to the same specialist range of services as "traditional" younger students. Adults accessing universities' extra-mural provision have less often had access to these well-developed services, and have more usually depended upon the special provision of extra-

mural libraries (FISHER, 1988; DAVIES, 1995). The system of the so-called "book box", i.e. a small travelling collection, made up centrally and sent out to the extra-mural department's various teaching locations around the region, has a long and, in many ways, proud history. Although limited – the largest box allows only constrained scope for "reading around" a subject – this was a largely effective way of supporting learners on specific extra-mural programmes. University adult education, however, though significant in its own right, especially in the earlier twentieth century, is hardly the totality of adult learning.

Other formal adult education, that is to say, classes for adults, has tended not to take place within the university sector, but in local authority accommodation, often in schools outside hours, in further education colleges, or in a variety of locations arranged by community groups of one sort or another (including public libraries). Of these only the colleges have their own extensive library provision – and this has not always been available in the evening, when many adults have traditionally attended classes. Where classes have actually been located in public library premises, this has not necessarily meant access to services; as with the colleges, these classes tend to take place outside opening hours, so that the library becomes a convenient place to hire a room, rather than a learning support facility. Nevertheless, learners in these types of context are likely to be largely dependent on the public library for information and learning resource provision, since little else is available, assuming, for the moment, that they are unwilling or unable to purchase materials.

This is even more the case when it comes to independent learners. Without any institutional base at all, independent learners are thrown on their own resources when it comes to learning material, which means, essentially, purchasing it or making use of public library facilities and services. And, indeed, going right back to the work of Allen Tough in revealing the scale and scope of independent learning, not only do libraries appear as sources of materials, but librarians are among the variety of people cited by learners as their sources of information and guidance, as "learning assistants" in Tough's terminology (though they are far from being one of the most frequent of these and appear, as one might expect, as sources of information, rather than in a more formative role) (TOUGH, 1967).

Service developments

Perhaps the most significant single experiment in relating public library provision to adult learning took place in the United States in the 1970s and was influential in terms of some subsequent development in the United Kingdom. This was the Adult Independent Learners Program (AILP).

At the heart of the programme was the idea that librarians could act in a much more purposeful and, indeed, interventionist way than is traditionally the case. Librarians could act as learners' advisers, working alongside them to help formulate their learning programmes and support them – not only with information – as they made their way through them (DALE, 1979; MAVOR, 1976; SURRIDGE; BOWEN, 1977). The project sought to formalise and develop the service provided to learners by training librarians in learning support activities and introducing a recording system to enable a record to be kept of the transactions between learners and librarians and of the progress made in the learning activity. Although the process was cumbersome in terms of paperwork satisfaction rates appeared to be high. However, one has to register that most learners who made use of the service actually restricted themselves to the traditional library functions, i.e. aspects of document supply, rather than the longer term, more in-depth guidance that was a central part of the concept (MAVOR, 1976). In addition, a number of the librarians involved found themselves ill at ease in the new relationship implied by learning support (BOLES; SMITH, 1979).

The publicity given to the AILP project coincided with a growth in interest in adult learning in the British library community, linked, perhaps, to the library role in the national adult literacy campaign of the 1970s, which increased the visibility of learning in libraries. A number of initiatives followed over the next years, some locally devised, others supported on a developmental basis by government funding, and taking a variety of different approaches to the support of adult learners, and some of which took on board the thinking in relation to the role of the librarian which had been developed in the course of the AILP. Initiatives in the 1980s and early 1990s included

a)   work with independent and distance learners in Clwyd, North Wales, which focussed particularly on offering both information and advice for learners who needed to upgrade their skills in circumstances of economic difficulty and redundancy (WATKIN, 1998), which grew

out of wider community intervention work to tackle unemployment, in which libraries played an information and guidance role not specifically linked to education (SHUTER, 1987);

b)   inclusion of some learning opportunities within a broad community support model of library engagement in inner city districts of Manchester (LATHROPE, 1985);

c)   provision of open learning (OL) materials in libraries, available for use both in the library and on a special loan basis, and geared particularly towards skills training either for unemployed people, or for employed people whose skills needed upgrading (e.g. HARTRIDGE, 1991);

d)   development of levels of provision, including both materials delivery, on a relatively wide basis, the introduction of computer hardware into the library, collaborative links with other community organisations active in the learning sphere, and the use of "trained library staff to act as 'mentors' for adult independent learners" (ALDRICH, 1995)

e)   local initiatives such as producing structured reading guides for any library users who find the topic interesting, and backed up by a circulating collection of relevant materials (DRODGE, 1988a, 31-2)

f)   reading and literature based programmes, harking back, perhaps, to the earlier days of library provision, but linking libraries firmly to the arts and cultural activity of their local communities (KINNELL; SHEPHERD, 1998). Although these activities, under the rubric of "reader development", tend to be promoted as cultural events, they have a clear and real educational content and impact.

Changing demands

In the past two decades it is clear that major changes have occurred worldwide in relation to learning technology and information provision alike. Almost inevitably one thinks of the Internet, but the availability of study materials in a variety of offline formats – especially, perhaps, CD-ROM – is also significant. Concurrent with this many educational establishments have developed open and distance learning programmes

in a wide variety of formats, though with an increasing tendency to converge towards the Internet and e-mail.

Both of these sets of developments have profound implications for the potential role of libraries in supporting learning.

During the 1980s a number of libraries started to develop collections of open learning materials, including a wide variety of formats - paper based, video, computer based, practical kits. Some of the library initiatives mentioned above included or were based on this approach. This immediately posed a number of questions:

" How should such materials be stored and handled? (Practical - in a sense, technical library management issues)

" How should they be used? (Practical issues combined with educational issues. How long would a learner need to retain OL materials, as opposed to traditional library stock? Could a learner be allowed to make use of consumable elements within some packages? If not, would this have a deleterious effect on learning?)

" Should the materials be seen as entirely stand-alone, or should some form of support be offered? (Educational issues, perhaps involving links with local education providers, through which learners could purchase some tutorial time to add to their OL packs.)

With increasing volumes of educational software on the market, libraries have also started to provide collections of CD-ROMs for use on computers placed in the library for public use. Sometimes tutorial support may also be offered, usually on a timetabled basis, and probably involving a fee. The installation of equipment and purchase of software is a serious issue for public libraries with limited financial resources, and examples of local initiatives in these areas often result from bids to government or government funded agencies to enable the non-computer-owning public to access such facilities (e.g. the cases outlined by DRODGE, 2000, p. 38-9). Some developments have also proceeded on a collaborative basis, with networking allowing users of different libraries to access software held elsewhere.

A significant number of public library systems are actively involved in the recent development of the "University for Industry" (generally referred to as UfI, or by its learning provision brand name of "learndirect"). This is a government sponsored initiative, designed to bring electronic learning opportunities (e-learning) to an increasingly wide public, including non-

traditional participants. Although many of the learning centres that have been established across the country are located within educational institutions, particularly colleges of further education, there has also been a conscious attempt to bring new locations into the system – workplaces, community centres, and, quite widely, public libraries. As learning centres the libraries concerned provide access to workstations, through which learners can access web-based learndirect packages. Staff provide limited back-up, as the packages are designed to be self-contained, but are available to offer advice both on the technicalities of running the learning software and, to some extent, on issues that may arise during its use, although they are not there as tutors or tutor substitutes. The practical difficulties arising from hosting the learndirect service in this way – especially issues around charging and reimbursement from the centre, but also in relation to learner support – have been the subject of ongoing vigorous discussion on the "Ufl Lifelong Learning" e-mail forum, which brings together practitioners from all types of learning centre, libraries included[1].

In a parallel fashion the increasing spread of open and distance learning (ODL) formats operated by educational providers brought to the fore issues about how learners who live at a distance from the library of the institution with which they are registered can access information and reading material. In some cases the parent institution has negotiated arrangements with local libraries about the provision of learning materials to their learners. This, however, applies mainly to neighbouring academic libraries (especially to arrangements between university libraries) and for those ODL students who depend on public library support there is rarely any formal agreement in the UK. In the USA, where ODL (or "off-campus") programmes have a longer history, there appear to be more such arrangements, but this does not mean that public library support for adult ODL students is adequate (POWER; KEENAN, 1991). Nevertheless learners pursuing ODL do use public libraries. The work of Unwin et al (1998), the largest survey of its kind so far undertaken in the UK, shows significant use of public libraries (though less than of academic libraries), and considerable dissatisfaction with the results of this use, principally in relation to the lack of suitable stock and the difficulty and cost of obtaining inter-library loans.

Whether any of the models of local support for distance learners – essentially, involving a core collection sent or otherwise provided by the parent institution in a local library, or special access to a loan service by

request (or the non-model of leaving learners to their own devices, to find what they can in their local library) - applies in a given locality is in some senses a second order issue. Local people use their local public library. It is certainly possible to argue that, if they are being effectively forced by their distant education provider to draw on local rather than central resources, this is unfair and unreasonable. However, it has also been pointed out that "Public libraries are being used by students whether they have been sent directly from a learning site or they have wandered into the most convenient library" (POWER; KEENAN, 1991). The reality of learning need is there, irrespective of inter-institutional protocols, or their absence, and a way of handling the demand has to be found.

To some extent the availability of the Internet in the public library may be seen as a development that applies to both of the strands of this section. It is of course the location for an increasing number of ODL, more frequently referred to in this context as e-learning, packages, learndirect packages among them. But it is also an exceptional means of access to information on an immeasurable range of topics and therefore represents an alternative to the traditional library stock in terms of obtaining materials beyond those supplied within the learning package itself. Providing Internet access can be a problematic area for public libraries. Initially the main barrier was cost, but this has now been largely overcome through government support (see below), there remain, however, questions of security, which will not be explored here since, though serious, they are essentially technical in nature. More importantly, it may be argued, the Internet raises major issues of learning support and information guidance. The Internet's enormous advantage, the access it gives to such a huge range of resources, is also its great problem. It is relatively easy to use; it is rather difficult to use well. In an institutional setting, instruction in Internet use is now frequently a part of the induction process. In public libraries this is much more difficult to organise. Moreover, adult learners are less likely than young university students to be familiar with the Internet, or to be familiar with the general context of computer technology within which it resides and may, indeed, require considerable time, patience and support to come to terms with it (HARRISON, 2000; QUINN, 2000).

In any event, the fact is that the Internet is now widely provided (43% of public library service points in 1999, up from only 5% two years earlier, and rising (KENDALL, 2000), often with an hourly charge at first

(though the arrival of additional government funding is changing this), and with limited assistance in its use. Exactly how this assistance is configured may be seen as a key indicator for the further development of library services for adult learners, since it is inconceivable that the Internet will not be a central part of them. At the same time it is important to recognise that many households have their own Internet access and will not need to make use of the support of the public library to avail themselves of it. This can be seen as implying a risk of marginalisation; it may also be seen, however, as offering the public library an important role in combating the so-called "digital divide" which is said to separate the information rich from the information poor in a knowledge society. Combining web resources with e-mail and electronic communications offers libraries the opportunity not only to provide access to information *per se* but also to support community and communication-based learning of a less formal kind, linking to another part of the current government agenda, that of social inclusion and community capacity building (KENDALL, 2000).

Government policy

Until recent years neither adult learners nor libraries have figured very significantly in government policy, with perhaps the single major exception of the adult literacy campaign of the 1970s, self-evidently an aspect of adult learning, and in which libraries were seen as important partners. In general, however, both areas of activity have had their identities submerged, adult learning mostly subordinated in policy terms to school age education, libraries largely ignored entirely in terms of wider government policy, and mostly incorporated within larger departments at local government level (principally leisure services or education).

This position has been changing, with a growing emphasis on lifelong learning (DfEE, 1998; DfEE, 1999; FRYER, 1997), the establishment of the Library and Information Commission (LIC) and its work on libraries and learning (LIC, 2000; MORRISON, 1998), and the linking of libraries to the government's policies for national access to the Internet (LIC, 1997).

Although school age education remains a focal point of education policy, the extension of interest to the lifelong dimension has been striking in recent years. A significant proportion of this interest has centred on how

learning can be turned to the service of the economy - even in the report of the government's advisory panel of educators (FRYER, 1997), still more in the subsequent government green and white papers and in the legislation that followed. It can be argued that, even when the rhetoric moves away from explicitly instrumental uses of learning and towards a greater emphasis on personal dimensions and individual development, the policy is still based on a set of assumptions about learning which are essentially economic in their inspiration (SHIROMA; DRODGE, 2001). Whatever the motivation and political drive behind it, however, what is clear is that official support for learning among adults has a higher profile and a stronger arm than has generally been the case in the past, and that there are numerous initiatives designed to engage adults with learning of some sort - particularly, but not exclusively, with vocationally related learning.

At the same as it has fastened on lifelong learning as a means of raising skill levels in the nation the government has identified the public library service as an under-appreciated and underused resource. In an echo of the language of the nineteenth century, the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (the minister with general responsibility for libraries at central government level), declared in 1999 that "each library is a 'streetcorner university', with a vital place at the heart of its local community"[2]. A key policy decision here is that every library is to have Internet access via a workstation provided by government funding; and that all library staff are to be trained in order to be able to support members of the public in their use of the resource provided. This clearly builds on work that was already beginning to happen across the public library system, but which was hampered by the lack of a clear national directive and, more importantly, by the absence of funds to pay for such a major outlay.

With this infrastructure in place, the thrust of a number of official reports, by or for the government-established Library and Information Commission (LIC) and its successor, Resource, becomes one which is in line with national intentions and, therefore, more easily realisable.

The groundwork for this was laid in the LIC's major report "The new library: the people's network" (LIC, 1997), which set out a comprehensive vision for libraries, particularly public libraries, emphasising the importance of the learning society, the role of ICT within learning, and the role of libraries in supporting both. More concretely, in a subsequent report, developed as the

government's lifelong learning agenda sharpened its profile, the LIC stated "Central to our report has been the recognition that libraries must play a critical role in realising this government's ambitious plans for lifelong learning. By connecting to the National Grid for Learning, libraries will become a vital extension of mainstream online educational programmes" (LIC, 1998). The plans for the so-called National Grid for Learning involve providing computers and Internet access in all schools; the "people's network" or "new library network" extends this into not only all public library services, but all public library service points. And the LIC sets this firmly in the context of access to learning opportunities, prioritising self-directed learning (LIC, 1998), but also emphasising the importance of links to formal learning opportunities and networking between public and academic libraries to help support learners (LIC, 2000a). Within this there is clear evidence of an attempt to connect library learning provision with the different key aspects of the wider government agenda. Self-help learning links with the government's call for greater individual responsibility; the LIC's repeated references to the role of libraries and learning in combating social exclusion (LIC, 1998, 2000b) relate to the heavy stress on the power of learning in this role in the lifelong learning policy papers (DFEE, 1998, 1999); skills are highlighted among the areas of learning to be supported by libraries (LIC, 1998).

Finally, as well as proposing this important identification of libraries with learning and a significant investment in infrastructure and learning resources, the LIC and Resource indicate that librarians have specific roles to play in relation to learners. It is claimed that "best practice in museums, archives and libraries has shown that, for many people, learning is a mediated activity. People need support... in order to enhance their learning and enjoyment" (RESOURCE, 2001). Specifically, librarians are seen as having "an important role in supporting lifelong learning, acting as a means of accessing the increasingly wide range of learning materials available in print and digital form" (LIC, 1998) and it is to this end that the extensive ICT training referred to earlier is being provided.

Constructing a framework

There are two dimensions that require particular consideration in devising a framework for the analysis of libraries in relation to adult learning, and these are the provider dimension and the learner dimension.

Provider dimension

A useful and essentially robust set of role headings for the provider dimension was proposed many years ago:

ˮ "common carrier"
ˮ back up service
ˮ self help service
ˮ direct service
ˮ network organiser
(ALLRED; HAY, 1979, p. 21-23)

The first of these is simply part of the general remit of the library, providing a range of stock to meet the needs of its community. In relation to learners, the problem is, inevitably, that they are likely to need more specialist materials than any but the largest public libraries normally supply. Nevertheless, access to a range of materials, now massively extended by the availability of Internet, remains both a core function of the public library and a genuine service to adult learners, albeit one which has limitations as learning projects develop.

The back up service is where the library links with a main agent to provide certain additional services. In this case the learner relates primarily to, say, a college or a community education provider, whilst the library supplies such services as contextual reading materials (beyond the core texts that may be recommended for purchase or supplied by the institution in a book box), reading lists, class accommodation, out-of-hours access.

In the self-help service libraries develop learning packs or collections which learners can take advantage of, without becoming involved in individualised learner support. The production of reading guides, accompanied by a circulating collection of books, referred to above, would be an example of this category of provision.

The term direct service is used here to designate individual support for learners, along the lines of the guidance provided through the AILP and the mentoring referred to by Aldrich (1995). Whilst it is clear that many librarians possess the skills needed to help learners progress learning projects, and that more could build their skills in this area if training were provided, it is also evident from the AILP experience that not all librarians feel comfortable with such a role.

Allred and Hay (1979) report having discovered examples of libraries acting as co-ordinators of local support networks, bringing together a variety of agencies which can contribute to assisting learners. This network organiser role is an interesting one. Libraries are often participants in local networks - possibly the description "network organiser" would be better replaced by "network member". Leading or organising the network is perhaps less common, although, in an area where relatively large and powerful educational institutions may have a competitive relationship the library could be seen as an "honest broker" in establishing a local collaborative set-up.

All these roles are played, to some extent, by public libraries. Undoubtedly the first three are more common than the last two and, in that they represent the performance of the libraries' core competences, this is natural and appropriate. There is, however, scope, for the further development of the more challenging roles envisaged in addition to these.

Learner dimension

The learner dimension is less clear. It would be invaluable to know whether there are indications that learners using libraries behave in some way differently from other learners, or whether there is something distinctive about "library learning". The evidence is so far largely lacking.

The overwhelming majority of the research and activity in this field has been about the organisation of services, sometimes with an element of investigation of the learner experience or obtaining learner feedback. This is important, but does not constitute a thorough exploration of how library learners learn. Perhaps we can derive some indications about relationships between libraries and learners, however.

Peter Mann's (1974) study of the book using habits of university undergraduates suggests that both library use and book purchase are relatively limited, with many students relying on a restricted range of sources. He also identifies possible problems with the level of information skills possessed by students, particularly as they progress through their courses, moving from relatively general introductory phases to more specialised studies. This work relates to young, full-time students with access to a large and complex university library, and is now nearly thirty years old, so it would be dangerous to generalise too much from it. It does raise important issues, however, and the most important

of these, in relation to adult learners, is probably their level of information skills, and their consequent ability to both locate and handle information effectively in relation to their course of study or self-defined learning objectives. In the university sector this has long since been addressed by the growth of subject specialism; in the public library this is a much more intractable issue.

Whether an adult learner is operating in a fully autonomous mode or is a participant in some organised learning activity there is at least one respect in which his or her relationship to the public library is quite distinct from the relationship of the university student to the university library. The relationship is entirely voluntary – there can be no sense of compulsion, or even obligation, involved. In this sense, at least, whether a participant in formal instruction or a self-guided independent learner, the adult comes to the public library through a process of choice and, essentially, in order to deal with a learning or information problem that has been encountered. The relationship of adult learner to library therefore exemplifies Knowles' (1973) dictum of the problem-centredness of adult learners, arguably in a way that many other learning settings may not.

This may help us understand some aspects of what adult learners require of libraries. In particular it suggests that they may often require answers to questions, rather than simply access to general resources. This does not necessarily mean that those questions are fully defined, in the same way as the underlying nature of a problem confronted may not be clear, although its existence may be all too evident. This may tend to lead towards a model of support for learners in libraries which centres on the helping relationship and on the mutual diagnosis of the "problem" together with joint efforts to deal with it, at least in information terms. This was a key assumption of the AILP, and has been developed in terms of a systematic professional consultancy relationship by Penland and Mathai (1978). In the Penland and Mathai model the librarian operates in a community and professional context, exploring with learners the problems they are seeking to deal with and applying psychological, counselling and consultancy approaches to defining these, both through observation of the client's behaviour and through joint definition of issues and solutions. As in the case of the AILP, this requires training and preparation.

Despite the emphasis on training librarians to advise in the AILP and related programmes and in the Penland and Mathai model, it has been suggested that learners are often unwilling to seek support from

librarians unless they are very sure of their ground, or if their enquiry is a low intensity one – related, perhaps, to a hobby or general interest, rather than to a learning objective of major significance. In this interpretation, what is required of the library first and foremost is clear and accessible information, on the basis of which a learner may then make a further enquiry, in control of the situation, rather than feeling uninformed and, in a sense, at risk in approaching an official and "admitting ignorance": "People can accept the situation, if it is perceived in terms of resources... provided they can name the product... people tend to ask only for products they think the library can supply" (SHUTER, 1987, p. 77).

From a pragmatic point of view, then, it may appear that a low profile approach, concentrating on information provision rather than personal intervention, is more productive. On another level, an over-emphatic intervention may be seen as running the danger of "colonising" the learner's own learning. The essential independence of the learner is an important consideration: learners should not "be wrapped in blankets of professional care and... have their independence and initiative surgically removed... sensitivity to the whole need of the client, which includes the need to retain control and identity, is fundamental" (DRODGE, 2000, xii). Fisher (2000) argues strongly that, in facilitating a learner's search for information, it is important that the librarian should not lead them to over-definition and too great a narrowing of their search and, consequently, learning. Any library work with adult learners involves a balancing act, providing support, but not implying or developing dependency.

From all of this it may be possible to suggest some learner-related factors to set alongside the dimensions of library service drawn from Allred and Hay. In terms of need one could identify:

· articulated information requirement
· definitional requirement in relation to a learning question
· learning planning support.

In terms of preferred form of assistance or involvement one might propose:

· demand-controlled, the one-off enquiry (even if repeated)
· structured on demand, the planned relationship, but defined by the learner
· surrendered independence, where the problem is essentially placed in the hands of the "professional".

By combining these, or similar, factors with the factors of the provider dimension it will be possible to locate learner interactions with the library within an overall framework.

Conclusion

The evidence is not currently available to allow a systematic analysis of learning in the public library context. Whilst there are many reports on initiatives these mostly look at provision – they are about how successful the initiative has been in terms of user numbers, organisational considerations. This may, indeed include satisfaction surveys, but, important though satisfaction is, it does not get to the heart of the learning process and offer a substantial insight into distinctiveness, if any, of learning through the library. Resource has recently commissioned research into the impact of libraries (and museums and archives, which are also within the organisation's remit) on learning[3] which may help to clarify some of these matters, but here, too, if the starting point is the impact of provision, rather than the nature of the learning, it seems likely that the provider dimension of the analytical grid will continue to be favoured over the learner dimension. It is the contention of this article that there is a significant area of learning here, in the interaction between public libraries and adult learners, which has been studied, but which has not yet been thoroughly explored. We are now reasonably well informed about options for action, but much less so about how they really affect learning. The topic deserves that further exploration, and to do this will require a step away from a basically provider orientated research approach. The previous section of this article proposes a form of framework that might facilitate this analysis, although its factors are at this stage tentative.

Notes

1   Ufl Lifelong Learning e-mail forum messages, followed 1999-2001.

2   Chris Smith, cited in LIC 2000.

3   Reported on the Resource website <http://www.resource.gov.uk> and. Accessed: 27-10-2001.

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O papel das bibliotecas públicas no apoio à educação de adultos: considerações sobre a experiência britânica Unido.

Le rôle des bibliothèques publiques dans l' éducation des adultes: considérations sur l' expérience dans le Royaume Uni.

Resumo

As bibliotecas, há muito, têm fornecido materiais educativos para adultos vinculados a uma instituição educacional ou realizando estudos independentes. Este artigo, focando especialmente as bibliotecas públicas, aborda o desenvolvimento deste serviço no Reino Unido, evidenciando a crescente ênfase em avanços tecnológicos tais como a internet. O trabalho ressalta a necessidade de desenvolver-se maior compreensão sobre a relação entre a biblioteca e a educação tanto da perspectiva do usuário quanto do bibliotecário e oferece uma estrutura preliminar de análise baseada, sobretudo, no nível de definição dos objetivos educacionais e no grau de controle exercido pelo usuário neste processo.

Palavras–chave

Bibliotecas; Bibliotecas Públicas; Educação de Adultos; Educação permanente.

Résumé

Les bibliothèques ont toujours offert du materiel éducatif aux adultes, soit qu'ils appartiennent à un établissement d'éducation, soit qu'ils poursuivent des études autonomes. Dans cet article, où il s'agit pour la plupart de la bibliothèque municipale, on montre la façon de développement de tels services dans le Royaume Uni, qui se basent de plus en plus sur des développements technologiques comme par exemple l'Internet. On propose qu'il faut mieux comprendre l'éducation à la bibliothèque du point de vue du participant et non seulement du point de vue de la bibliothèque, et on offre un procès préliminaire d'analyse, concentré surtout sur le niveau de précision du but éducatif et sur le contrôle relatif exercé par le participant sur le projet éducatif.

Monts-clés

Bibliothèques; Bibliothèques Publiques; Education d' Adultes, Education Permanente.

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