

2-1-1981

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Recommended Citation

Emmert, Mark A. (1981) "The Well-Read Administrator: An Introduction to Public Administration Literature for Collegiate Middle Managers," *Journal of Student Financial Aid*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.
Available at: <https://ir.library.louisville.edu/jsfa/vol11/iss1/6>

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THE WELL-READ ADMINISTRATOR AN INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LITERATURE FOR COLLEGIATE MIDDLE MANAGERS

by Mark A. Emmert

In reviewing the educational and experiential backgrounds of mid-level college administrators, we often find as wide a variety as in any professional grouping. Some have B. A.'s in business, some Ph. D.'s in the humanities. One may have years of private sector professional experience, while another comes from academia. We are, indeed, a diversified group. And from this diversification comes the strength of multiple perspectives and attitudes. But, our various backgrounds bring differing levels of managerial and administrative knowledge.

The one characteristic we all share, however, is our profession. We are all public administrators regardless of our backgrounds. It would seem useful, therefore, to develop our administrative skills and knowledge to allow us to take full advantage of our diversity. By improving our abilities we can demonstrate our professionalism and thereby improve our status in and contribution to our institutions and higher education in general.

This paper is intended to provide practitioners in mid-level higher education administration with an introduction to the literature of public administration with the goal of assisting in the development of administrative abilities. The bibliography is divided by areas within this discipline and is prefaced by a brief description of that area. It is hoped that this arrangement will assist the reader in locating readings and texts of particular interest.

The bibliography is not intended to be complete, but should supply an adequate introduction to the vast literature of our generic profession. It should also be noted that few of the readings deal exclusively with higher education. Nonetheless, they are appropriate, and we are sure that the readers as practicing administrators will readily connect past experiences to the theories and approaches discussed.

Introduction to Public Administration

The study of public administration as an academic discipline must, of course, begin with a definition of what public administration is. The field, however, is neither easily described nor its boundaries easily delimited. Simple, concise definitions are inadequate.

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Our first tendencies are to make comparisons with private sector business administration, that is to say we function as managers of a service-oriented enterprise not unlike the phone company. Indeed, many activities are very similar. But the comparison reveals major differences under further scrutiny. The overriding distinction is that public administration is the public's business. We use the tax payer's capital contribution, not the stock holder's investment. We are, therefore, subject to public opinion as expressed through the political process. Further confusing this comparison is the seeming inability of the public administrator to find a definitive measure of performance, "a bottom line." We cannot check to see if we turned a profit last year, only if we "served the public interest."

Any definitions must, therefore, be more complex and include the political process and the basic mission of public administration's efforts.

To this end Felix Nigro and Lloyd Nigro have developed a summary of activities to serve as a definition of the field:

Public administration

1. Is cooperative group effort in a public setting.
2. Covers all three branches — executive, legislative, and judicial — and their interrelationships.
3. Has an important role in the formulation of public policy and is thus a part of the political process.
4. Is different in significant ways from private administration.
5. Is closely associated with numerous private groups and individuals in providing services to the community.

The texts listed below expand upon this definition and provide introductions into the various facets of public administration as both an academic field and a career.

- Gordon, George J., *Public Administration in America*, New York, N.Y.: St. Martins Press, 1978.
- Gortner, Harold F., *Administration in the Public Sector*, New York, N.Y.: John Wiley and Sons, 1977.
- Henry, Nicholas, *Public Administration and Public Affairs*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.
- Nigro, Felix A., and Nigro, Lloyd G; *Modern Public Administration*, fourth edition, New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1977.
- Shafritz, Jay M., and Hyde, Albert C; *Classics of Public Administration*, Oak Park, Ill.: Moore Publishing, Inc., 1978.

Organization Theory

As practicing administrators we are creatures born of organizations. Our functions and duties are developed and defined by them and we, in turn, provide both form and direction to the organizations. Consequently, the study of organizations is imperative to the nurturing of a full understanding of our roles and our ability to induce change within our institutions.

It is organization theory that provides the academic resources for such understanding. Organization theory is an effort at identifying the differences among various organizations and then classifying them into different typologies. More

specifically, by studying organization theory we can hope to gain a sense and knowledge of what organizations are, how they work, where they fit in a societal context, how they are controlled, what is their environment, and how they interact with that environment.

Downs, Anthony. *Inside Bureaucracy*, Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, and Company, 1966-67.

Etzioni, Anitai. *Modern Organizations*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964.

Perrow, Charles. *Complex Organizations*, 2nd edition, Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1979.

Pugh, D.S., ed. *Organization Theory*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1971.

Pugh, D.S.; Hickson, D.J.; Hinings, C.R. *Writers On Organizations*, Second Edition, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1975.

Organizational Development and Psychology

While organizational theory deals with the definition and classification of organizations, organizational development (OD) aims at modifying the organization through applied behavioral science. More specifically French and Bell define OD as

... a long-range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture ... with the assistance of a change agent ... and the use of applied behavioral science ...

OD, therefore, is centered not exclusively on the formal, overt organization, but also upon the actions, attitudes, group norms, feelings, and beliefs of the informal organizational systems. By applying social psychology and other behavioral science techniques, OD attempts to build team approaches to management that allow institutions to plan and adapt better to change and growth. By helping convert fear or frustration into healthy, goal-oriented attitudes, organization development techniques can prove invaluable to administrators.

The text offered here will not transform the practitioner into a skilled OD consultant, but should provide a firm introduction to organizational development and applied behavioral sciences.

Argyris, Chris. *Understanding Organizational Behavior*, Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1960.

Bennis, Warren G. *Organizational Development: Its Nature, Origins, and Prospects*. Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969.

French, Wendell L. and Bell, Jr., Cecil H., *Organization Development*, Second edition, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978.

Herzberg, Fredrick; Mausner, Bernard; and Synderman, Barbara. *The Motivation to Work*, New York, N.Y.: John Wiley & Sons, 1966.

Katz, Daniel and Kahn, Robert L. *The Social Psychology of Organizations*. New York, N.Y.: John Wiley & Sons, 1966.

Natemeyer, Walter E., ed. *Classics of Organizational Behavior*, Oak Park, Ill.: Moore Publishing, Inc., 1978.

Public Personnel Administration

Many college and university administrators perceive personnel problems as lying within the purview of the personnel office only. Yet few areas of public administration can have as pronounced and direct an impact upon the quality of an organization as personnel management. All institutions and their sub-units

function only as well as the people within them. Public personnel administration (PPA) is, therefore, of concern to everyone striving toward the improvement of their organization.

As a field of study, public personnel administration is often blended with other related areas. Indeed, as all aspects of administration deal with "people problems" in one form or another, one can easily relate PPA to all administrative areas. Most common, however, is a linkage between PPA and organizational theory, organizational development, and social psychology, including concepts of leadership and motivation. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this article the readings listed deal with the nuts-and-bolts of personnel administration. More specifically, topics discussed include recruitment, selection, in-service training, promotion, retention, dismissals, and other similar items.

This narrow definition is intended only to simplify the reader's selection of books. For one to develop a full understanding of personnel management, an interdisciplinary approach is necessary. By augmenting the readings chosen here with selections on organization theory and development, a much broader feel for "people problems" can be gained.

- Byers, Kenneth T., ed. *Employee Training and Development in the Public Service*. Chicago, Ill.: Public Personnel Association, 1970.
- Donovan, J.J., ed. *Recruitment and Selection in the Public Service*. Chicago, Ill.: Public Personnel Association, 1968.
- Institute for Local Self Government, *Public Employment and the Disadvantaged*. Berkeley, Calif., 1970.
- Stahl, O. Glenn. *Public Personnel Administration*, 6th ed. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1971.
- McGregor, Douglas. *The Human Side of Enterprise*, New York, N.Y.: McGraw Hill, 1960.

Management Techniques

This aspect of public administration offers a high degree of utility to the practicing college administrator. Its goal is to teach techniques of management: to improve our ability to make decisions, to utilize resources efficiently, to plan for the future, and to administer our current projects and programs.

The methods and subjects included in management science are indeed numerous. They include Performance Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT), Critical Path Method (CPM), Operations Research (OR), Electronic Data Processing (EDP), Statistical Decision Making, Management by Objective (MBO) and systems theory, and Management Information Systems (MIS). The selections listed are intended to help explain both the meaning and function of the more relevant techniques. By gaining knowledge of these methods and approaches we can acquire new tools to apply to the nebulous problems in higher education administration.

- Bursk, Edward C., and Chefman, John F. *New Decision-Making Tools for Managers*. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965.
- Childers, Robert L. *Mathematics for Managerial Decisions*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974.
- Churchman, C. West. *The Systems Approach*, New York, N.Y.: Delta Publishing Co., 1968.
- Cornog, Geoffrey et al. eds. *EDP Systems in Public Management*. Chicago, Ill.: Rand McNally and Co., 1968.

- Huseman, Richard C., Logue, Cal M., Freshley, Dwight L., eds. *Readings in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication*. Boston, Mass.: Holbrook Press, 1969.
- Mockler, Robert J. *Information Systems for Management*, Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1974.
- Nickerson, Clarence B. *Accounting Handbook for Nonaccountants*. Boston, Mass.: Cahners, 1975.
- Sanders, Donald H. *Computers in Business: An Introduction*. 3rd edition, New York, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1975.
- Van Gigch, John J. *Applied General Systems Theory*. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974.

Budgeting Financial Administration

As practitioners in higher education administration we are becoming increasingly aware of budgetary and financial matters as they are being thrust upon us. There is, therefore, no better time than now for administrators to gain further knowledge of the concepts and strategies that have developed in this area. Budgeting approaches have, for example, progressed from their original line-item approach, through the performance budgeting stage, and into the planning-programming-budgeting process gaining national attention in the form of zero-based budgeting. Thus budgets have evolved from negative controls on inputs into planning strategies that Aaron Wildavsky has defined as "a series of goals with price tags attached."

As administrators we must understand these concepts and their nuances or simply accept the decisions of others. We must acquire new techniques to achieve our goals through knowledge of the budgetary process or lose administrative control of our organizations. Limits on capital and operating funds require that every dollar be targeted toward specific projects and goals if we are to maintain the public's support.

Budgetary constraints are, of course, the result of financial constraints. Thus, public sector finance is also of great importance to each of us. As attitudes and perspectives toward funding public enterprises change we need to be able to understand and thereby plan responses to new developments. For these reasons, included here are readings dealing with finance and economics. While somewhat more cumbersome, they are nonetheless worthwhile.

- Hay, Leon E. and Mikesell, R.M. *Governmental Accounting*, 5th ed. Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1974.
- Lee Jr., Robert D. and Johnson, Ronald W. *Public Budgeting Systems*, 2nd ed. Baltimore, M.D.: University Park Press, 1977.
- Lekachman, Robert. *Economists at Bay: Why the Experts Will Never Solve Your Problems*. New York, N.Y.: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1976.
- Musgrave, Richard A. and Musgrave, Peggy B. *Public Finance in Theory and Practice*. 2nd ed. New York, N.Y.: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1976.
- Wildavsky, Aaron. *The Politics of the Budgetary Process*. 2nd ed. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown and Company, 1974.

Public Policy and Political Environment

The single most important differentiating characteristic between public and private sector administration is the political environment in which we must live as college administrators. While the concept of "politics" often carries a negative connotation within the higher education community we are all nonetheless "policitians." Whenever we establish a new policy, exert our discretionary

power over a budget decision, or simply make a value choice we engage in the political process.

Since we cannot perform our administrative functions without such political actions, it is most appropriate that we seek to improve our knowledge of both the generic political environment and the public policy-making process. Decisions must be made and we need to know how and by whom questions are resolved. To this end public policy literature attempts to answer the questions: Who really holds the major sources of power? Can we, as individuals, have any impact? How thoughtfully formed are policy decisions? Does the structure of an organization affect the decision-making process? The selections listed here should help supply some answers.

Allison, Graham T. *Essence of Decision*. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971.

Keefe, William J. and Ogul, Morris S. *The American Legislative Process*, 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973.

Lindblom, Charles E. *The Policy-Making Process*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968.

Pressman, Jeffrey L. and Wildavsky, Aaron B. *Implementation: How great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1973.

Richman, Barry M. and Farmer, Richard N. *Leadership, Goals and Power In Higher Education*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Rourke, Francis E. *Bureaucratic Power in National Politics*. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, and Company, 1972.

Wade, Larry L. *The Elements of Public Policy*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill Publishing Company, Inc., 1972.