

electronic discussion group, or the Association of Public Data Users (APDU)—neither of which are mentioned by Sieber.—*Martha L. Brogan, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.*

***Bibliographic Instruction in Practice: A Tribute to the Legacy of Evan Farber.*** Ed. Larry Hardesty et al. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian, 1993. 168p. \$35 (ISBN 0-87650-328-8).

***What Is Good Instruction Now? Library Instruction for the 90s.*** Ed. Linda Shirato. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian, 1993. 184p. \$35 (ISBN 0-87650-327-X).

***Working with Faculty in the New Electronic Library.*** Ed. Linda Shirato. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian, 1992, 195p., \$35 (ISBN 0-87650-291-5).

Ann Lipow begins a 1991 LOEX conference presentation reproduced in *Working with Faculty in the New Electronic Library* by promising her audience that "because ours is a practical occupation," her talk will quickly turn to the "nitty gritty." It is at this level that the collections under review define their utility. Although this turn to the nitty gritty—rough, pestiferous, and hallowed ground of practicers everywhere—intends to persuade us of the detailed real-life veracity and value of these volumes, it ensures a certain tedium as well.

These volumes are the three most recent in Pierian's Library Orientation Series, which began in 1972 with a collection documenting the first of the LOEX conferences. Two of the volumes, *Working with Faculty in the New Electronic Library* and *What Is Good Instruction Now? Library Instruction for the 90s*, constitute the proceedings of the nineteenth (1991) and twentieth (1992) LOEX conferences; *Bibliographic Instruction in Practice: A Tribute to the Legacy of Evan Farber* includes papers presented at the fifth (1992) bibliographic instruction conference sponsored jointly by Earlham College and Eckerd College as successors to a series held at Earlham.

Both LOEX volumes reproduce four papers and a dozen "instructive" and

poster sessions. The papers tend to be synthetic, hortatory, and prognosticating, while the session reports describe projects designed around specific user groups, technological applications, courses and fields, or methodologies and "problems." *Working with Faculty* finds Evan Farber rehearsing the arguments for and challenges of working with faculty in any environment; Ann Lipow discussing how librarians at the University of California, Berkeley, communicate with faculty; Nathan M. Smith et al. describing Project FORE, a hypermedia library skills program at the University of Utah; and Fred Roecker and Thomas Minnick talking about the *Gateway* that provides online guidance in research at Ohio State University, and about the *Gateway's* relationship to the "how-to-college" requirement the university places on all incoming students.

The second LOEX volume, *What Is Good Library Instruction Now?* offers Thomas T. Surprenant on teachers and students and the library's future place in their work; Virginia Tiefel on a number of university library projects to enhance user services with electronic information technologies; Mary Reichel on the complex of issues surrounding developments in scholarly communication, learning theory, and the future of libraries and librarianship; and Hannelore B. Rader on the last twenty years' work among library instruction practitioners, a period during which she sees an evolution from concern with library orientation to a more broadly conceived information literacy.

*Bibliographic Instruction in Practice* epitomizes the work of Evan Farber and others at Earlham College since they began their now famous program in the 1960s. After Farber's introductory paper, in which he rehearses the familiar arguments for library instruction and the development of the Earlham program, the volume reproduces papers that describe departmental instructional rationales and goals, specific assignments, and instructional techniques. Transcripts of discussions, presentations, and testimonials cover the librarian's role in

course and assignment design and the role of library instruction in the experience of students, faculty, and administration; the volume concludes with a helpful annotated bibliography of major works in the library instruction field from 1980 to 1992.

As a snapshot of current thinking on library instruction, these volumes offer a picture in which a concern with the opportunities presented by electronic information technologies is primary. In the foreground of the picture are university libraries, whose staff contribute the majority of the literature. Also much in evidence is a move toward a set of goals and methodologies gathered under the redundant rubric *active learning*. The snapshot represents librarians as having to take responsibility for identifying ways in which the library can enhance courses and assignments; it thus recognizes the need for librarians both to be proficient in and knowledgeable about the tools of their trade and to be sufficiently knowledgeable about the substance of work being done in academic departments to be able to see new ways in which the library can promote it. The picture further shows that there is no single, correct way to relate a library to its community: what works in one place may not work in another because a host of local realities can make a mess of what looked good somewhere else. The message between the lines of these papers is, then, that good library instruction is whatever works in each library's particular circumstances.

In this last regard, Tom Kirk's Introduction to *Bibliographic Instruction in Practice*, which discusses Evan Farber's management philosophy, suggests how different the possibilities for library instruction in university and college libraries are. The size, variety, and geographical dispersion of the university's user populations, together with its organizational structures and the patterns of human interaction that prevail in a large, heterogeneous organization, make the leadership, staffing, and content of library instruction programs look very different from the way they look at

Earlham College. Sheer size and bureaucratic compartmentalization, for example, militate against, although they do not preclude, the integration of service functions, ongoing personal attention to individual students and courses, and close cooperation between librarians and faculty that tend to characterize user services in a college library. For much the same reasons, a college creates more opportunities for substantive interaction between librarians and faculty, opportunities that increase the likelihood of faculty's recognizing the intellectual as well as procedural contributions that librarians can make to their work.

Uniting the elements of this picture of current library instruction practice is a desirable convergence of librarians' "how-to" expertise and the faculty's "what-for" or "what-about" interest in designing courses and expanding students' knowledge of their field. This aspect of the picture includes something of an admonition for librarians, one heard best in the remarks of Earlham professor Gordon Thompson. His two pieces in *Bibliographic Instruction in Practice* remind us that information, knowledge, and the procedures that construct and relate them are meaningless outside of what is done with them. Thompson tells us, in effect, that research and interpretive expertise (for which "information literacy" may simply be the emperor's new clothes) cannot be divorced as a set of skills from the substance and disciplinary traditions that people study and certainly cannot be equated with what happens in a library or in front of a networked computer. Since much of "information literacy's" program can be achieved in literature and philosophy courses that need have nothing to do with a library or even "information," librarians should avoid the tendency implicit in our vocation to put the cart of the library before the horse of course matter. The library does not exist, after all, so that people can learn to use it, and Thompson's advice about "recalcitrant faculty" reminds us that the best library instruction will not teach information-seeking skills so much as it will use a library as a way of thinking about a subject.

That a sense of *déjà vu* accompanies these volumes is inevitable, so widely circulated are news and discussion of the projects and ideas recorded here. Although this fact makes these collections hard to read, they are nonetheless valuable as part of that ferment of redundancy through which the profession both moves toward consensus about its history and "major ideas" and finds a habitat for general principles in local situations. That these papers also have the inert quality which "how-to" advice tends to have outside the live performance of a conference (where such advice can be inert enough) is probably equally inevitable. Finally, even though one knows that the excitement of working with students and faculty on a project does not travel well beyond the moment of involvement, one misses that very excitement in these papers.

A number of the papers collected here inform us that ACRL's Bibliographic Instruction Section is its largest subgroup. This is good news because what strikes one is how strongly the proponents of

libraries' instructional role still voice the concerns that have characterized their work since it began in the growth-oriented 60s and, indeed, that have always characterized the best of librarianship's public spirit. Today, this voice remains one of the library world's most humane. It reminds us, muffled though it sometimes is by practical detail, that what we librarians do is more about people and their development than it is about information or technologies or the troubles of large bureaucratic organizations. In the end, the affirmation of human capacity implicit in this commitment to the educational purposes of libraries provides the best possible ground for the profession, pesky with nits and rough with grit though that ground tends to be. One heartily endorses, therefore, Ann Lipow's exhortation, in the paper referred to above, that "our libraries should be redesigned so that you have to trip over a librarian when you walk in the door."—Robert Kieft, *Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania.*

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