



Training and Research in Correctional Librarianship

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In connection with treating our charges in correctional institutions, we speak often of rehabilitating men, of changing their lives. As a matter of fact we don't change other people's lives; we can only help them to do so themselves.

In this process of so assisting men, we lay stress on academic and vocational training. These do not of themselves change men. These are effective tools in helping a man to lead a better life, once he has determined to do so. However, something must happen to a man intellectually and spiritually before he is going to get the inspiration so to direct his life that he will make good use of such talents and skills as he may have, or may develop under our tutelage in the schools.¹

FOR PURPOSES OF reviewing training and research in correctional librarianship, it is meaningful to turn to the thinking of leaders in the field of corrections. The above statement was made by Garrett Heyns, a pioneer who devoted most of his professional energies to correctional rehabilitation in the states of Michigan and Washington and served as executive director of the Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training from 1966 until his death in 1969.

Heyns would be the first to recommend that the librarian who works in a correctional setting examine the environment in which services are given, in order to understand that environment and to be actively involved in identification of those issues for which there are no easy solutions, no ready formulas. This involves self-understanding translated into continual learning and caring about the skills of negotiation, compromise, and the alignment of power structures.

Let us first consider where we are today. The various jurisdictions which comprise the world of corrections have not advanced equally far in the 1970s. As one reads the literature on corrections, it is clear that the primary goal is to do the best job possible in building an

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effective system of corrections and prevention. The need for improved personnel is central to achievement of this goal. Fundamental to staff excellence are effective training programs articulated with tenure, adequate salaries and promotional possibilities as part of a career service. The librarian must realize that this pervasive need for personnel applies to all correctional employees, including librarians and library staff. The team concerned with changing individual lives has generally recognized the need for strong library and information services, but in relation to a spectrum of goals and programs. For the librarian familiar with services to individuals, knowledge of prison administrative organization and communication modes is mandatory.

The librarian who works in corrections must believe that the offender can change, and this includes understanding individuals in relation to education, vocational training, treatment within the institution and community, and the affective power of family and social relationships. This requires building library programs around people rather than fitting individuals into predetermined library planning. Observation of corrections reveals a magnitude of agencies working with the same individual, often with little reference to one another: the police, representatives of the courts, welfare agents, etc., may be involved concurrently, even on the same day, with minimal knowledge of what others are doing or why they are involved.

Equally important is recognition of the fact that correctional librarianship is not for everyone, even though all librarians are involved to the degree that they must understand problems and needs if they are to support planning and action. The correctional librarian must complement basic values and goals and work effectively within the correctional environment. This demands ethical awareness and the avoidance of actions which are inconsistent with good citizenship, good moral character, and with the dominant values of society. Changes in the terms/labels used to describe the correctional setting have moved from "dungeons" to "correctional" or "training" institutions. These changes are significant in that they represent a transition in the thinking about functions of agencies and in the perceptions of individuals involved in and with them.

The characteristics of the librarian who will work well in corrections are essentially the same as those required of all librarians, but with added emphasis on broadness of sympathies, absence of prejudices, penetrating insight evident in a person that both inmates and staff can respect, amenability to criticism, and the ability to set sights beyond the attainable. Appropriate education for this librarian must be

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geared not only to the present but to the future, a future of at least ten to twenty years. The continuing pattern of increased populations in urban areas is affecting the flow of information and the development of all library services. Changes in the correctional world—specifically, the implementation of standards and new programs—has brought the focus to rehabilitation and the addition of a range of personnel (administrators, educators, parole specialists, penologists, physicians, police scientists, etc.) whose information needs to support their work are increasingly specialized. Library services needed by correctional staff have become integrated both with prevention and with a shift from traditional, isolated institutions and programs to involvement with the general community. These factors require librarians familiar with subject content, who can design and activate delivery programs which are interdependent with the world of information resources.

Notable among the changes in corrections is the emphasis on community-based programs concerned with both prevention and treatment, programs which are of necessity involved with multiple governmental jurisdictions. While current events following the impact of Watergate have reintroduced the death penalty in some states and reinforced conservative philosophies, the commitment to community-based action, utilizing treatment-based parole services and a range of treatment settings designed to match individual prisoner needs with appropriate programs, is a reality. Concurrent with this is the growing emphasis on the rights of prisoners, especially those rights related to accessing legal information, and the signal decisions of the courts.

In the last decade librarianship has demonstrated growing social awareness and increased concern for the information needs of prisoners. This is evident in the work of the American Library Association's Health and Rehabilitative Library Services Division (HRLSD) (formerly the Association of Hospital and Institution Libraries or AHIL), taskforces of the ALA, Social Responsibilities Round Table, and the recent creation of the Section on Library Services to Prisoners within HRLSD. These groups represent concern and action and provide a core of resources for future planning. In addition, the work of such agencies as the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), and their stated concern with all users of library services within the context of a national network, must be heeded. The concept of the national network is based substantially on the utilization of extant (and envisioned) information data bases,

which are tailored to both specific and broad areas of subject content and linked to mechanization. The use of computers to provide bibliographic access to information is a reality; it remains for the correctional librarian to be both informed about and active in its use. Equivalent to the growth of bibliographic networks is the interdependence of all libraries. The potential of the network, based on both the computer and human services, links the correctional setting to the total world of information. The days of local autonomy, reinforced by the traditional nature of prisons, are now limited; the advantages of cooperative efforts must not only be realized, but can aid in selling library services to prisoners, staff and correctional planners.

Consideration of the educational needs of the correctional librarian have been—and continue to be—considered in relation to general library education. While services in correctional settings are specialized, they comprise a specialization integral to all library education. This is not to deny the need for specific focus, but traditional concepts, theories and techniques remain basic; the correctional librarian isolated from a growing profession would be so narrow as to exclude access to resources and support. Specialization in the field of corrections is necessary in addition to training in librarianship.

The longstanding argument, however, continues: Can the needs of the librarian best be met through a generalist approach, or by addition of specialized courses in library school curricula? The 1972 *ALA Standards for Accreditation* permits specialization in a particular area; thus, an educational program devoted exclusively to the needs of the correctional librarian is a possibility, providing there is tangible evidence that the area of specialization is comparable to those of other academic disciplines and is of sufficient stature to be taken seriously within the worlds of academia and professional practice. Library education is broad enough, with increased awareness and clear planning, to allow latitude for specialization and response to the specific needs of the correctional librarian. Progress is being made in the identification of those components which will enhance individual skills so that professional growth can both be established and continued.

In 1971 Albert Roberts summarized the thinking of correctional leadership concerning librarianship in a review of the historical background of prison libraries. He stated that the library should be organized and administered by a professional librarian, trained and experienced in both librarianship and correctional work. Of specific importance, Roberts emphasized, is the need to guide inmates and

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staff to appropriate materials: "A well-trained librarian is necessary because there is no substitute for a real professional in selecting the library materials best suited to the needs and interests of the institution. Personalized guidance is needed to change the nonreader into a reader—librarians are trained to do this."²

Before turning to standards and specific programs of library education, attention should be given to the fact that correctional library services are concerned with a wide range of individuals, including children, young people and adults, whose needs, while paralleling those of the general population, are characterized by a variety of special requirements. Homogeneity, therefore, cannot be assumed.

STANDARDS

The main reference source for correctional work in the United States is the *Manual of Correctional Standards*,³ which first appeared in 1946 and was revised in 1959 and 1966; each edition contains a chapter on libraries. New standards are now in the process of being approved by both the American Correctional Association and the American Library Association. The various revisions, echoing general changes in corrections, move from a security/custody orientation to an increasing emphasis on individuals and rehabilitation. The new standards state clearly that correctional librarians should be actively involved in institution planning and programming, meet regularly with other institution department heads in planning, and take an active role in the total rehabilitative program. Recognition is also given to the need for training in legal reference services on a continuing basis. It is recommended that salaries be competitive with area, state and national library agencies and comparable to other professional personnel on the institution's staff, with compensation for continuing education and travel to workshops, conferences and institutes of both library and correctional groups.⁴

To achieve this level of professional involvement, the standards specify procedures and requirements for personnel selection, training and classification. The basic professional training requires a fifth-year degree from an ALA-accredited program of library education, plus a basic knowledge of penology, sociology and psychology, which can be obtained through continuing education. Three significant staff categories are specified:

1. Librarian—Fifth year degree in library science; with knowledge of audiovisual materials and equipment; three to five years

experience in public, school, or institution libraries; specialized training in use of legal reference materials to be gained by continuing education; and a sensitivity to current social problems and the correctional setting.

2. Assistant Librarian—Fifth year degree in library science; or bachelor's degree in the social or behavioral sciences with 15-18 hours credit in library science and experience in a public or institutional library.
3. Library Technician—Minimum of two years of college, plus secretarial skills and some knowledge of library techniques and procedures.⁵

These basic recommendations parallel essentially the "Library Standards for Juvenile Correctional Institutions" approved in 1975.⁶

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

In 1966 Ray Trautman urged competition for the most sought-after graduates of library schools.⁷ This was earlier asserted by Maryan Reynolds, speaking before the 1963 Congress of Corrections, in which she recognized the absence of a corps of librarians with appropriate course background or experience in corrections. Her recommendation also emphasized attracting the very best librarians to meet the then-current standards which required the librarian to be an educator, an information specialist in all subject areas, a public relations expert, a cataloger, an administrator, and an expert in human relations—something which any qualified librarian should be able to accomplish. Reynolds also identified the importance of the correctional institution or system's recognition of the need for and support of a strong library program.⁸ More recently, Agnes Griffen asserted the need for librarians who could analyze and understand the environment of the correctional institution; explore, define and negotiate specific library functions; and serve all groups in the institution—i.e. to possess all the basic characteristics of a good librarian.⁹

Any account of specific educational programs must consider Margaret Monroe's analysis of education in librarianship for serving the disadvantaged.¹⁰ Monroe recognized that library education is charged with the responsibility for preparing librarians to work with a wide range of library service needs and contexts in a world which lacks a homogeneous character. Even though the term *disadvantaged* is a negative one, it is currently in use, pervades our indices, and provides the context for finding information about the public offender. In

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1971 Monroe surveyed all ALA-accredited library education programs to determine what specifically was being done to train librarians to provide special services to the "disadvantaged." Fifty-five instructors representing thirty-five library schools responded. Results indicated that there were: (1) nine courses in seven schools specifically designed to prepare librarians; (2) twenty-four basic or core courses which gave particular attention; and (3) a cluster of traditional, elective courses incorporating selected service elements. When specific groups were identified, however, criminal offenders and their needs ranked lowest. Among the major purposes of such educational programs the following were cited: understanding of special groups, service to individuals, provision of service techniques, and understanding of the dynamics of society or the community as a whole.

Especially significant are the instructional methodologies utilized in the various programs for producing sensitivity, awareness and insight: student papers or projects, class projects on selected groups in a general course, field observations, institutes, internships, and special courses on special publics. This array of methodologies is applicable to a wide range of groups and certainly parallels the requirements for correctional librarians as specified by standards and individual writers.

Monroe also found concern expressed as to whether subject content should be integrated into established courses or separately developed; support for separate courses was based upon the need for content depth and specialized experience. The question remains whether such coverage belongs at the master's level or at specialist or continuing education levels. In addition, course content involved specific materials, exposure to the dynamics of various groups, and interdisciplinary education; the latter is specifically identified in the literature on education for the correctional librarian.

A recent review conducted by this writer of courses offered by ALA-accredited programs of education revealed little change in Monroe's findings and substantiated her data that subject content for specialized groups, especially the "disadvantaged," involved instructor use of research findings, concepts, and theoretical structures from the fields of business administration, communication, education, psychology, and sociology. Monroe also identified increasing use of student field experiences, including observation, field projects, practicums, and internships. This continues but remains controversial, especially within the contexts of the beginning-degree level and time constraints.

In considering the above findings, it is interesting to contrast the professional development concerns of correctional educators. Franklin Semberger reported on objectives generated by the 1971 Florida Institute of Correctional Educators. Consensus called for bringing together correctional educators to assist each other in realization of their roles in the world of corrections and to delineate the needed professional responsibilities and images which should be held. The interdisciplinary aspects of the institute have particular relevance for correctional librarians,¹¹ as does the affirmation of the need for cooperation at all levels of the corrections system—local, state and national.

Of equal significance is the need for librarians, especially library educators, to be cognizant of the past, present and future impact of federally supported library training programs. Sarah Reed has reviewed the considerable impact of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) and the Higher Education Act (HEA) Title II-B, especially noting improvements in the pool of library school faculty members, the increased number of minority members of library school faculties and library staffs, and increased specialization in both library education and library services.¹² The potential for federal funding must be considered in areas of interdisciplinary and multimedia education, areas specifically addressed by correctional library standards.

Specific attention must be given to the ongoing plans of the NCLIS regarding their concerns for the institutionalized user, faculty quality, and fellowship support for students with academic majors in the specific areas valuable to corrections. Continued aggressive involvement in these areas cannot be stressed too strongly.¹³

SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

In reviewing actual programs pertinent to the education of correctional librarians, it should be noted that most accredited programs of library education allow no more than six credits of academic study to be earned outside of the library curriculum; these credits are frequently limited to computer sciences, management and education. Academic articulation, enhancing interdisciplinary, interdepartmental programs, has significant potential at both the master's and post-master's levels, and deserves both further consideration and study.

Realism demands recognition of the current restricted employment market for correctional librarians in relation to needs for both formal and informal continuing education. The potential for research,

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especially within library schools, also deserves further consideration, especially research focused on users and the correctional environment, rather than being limited to an emphasis on actual and recommended library services.

Among the ALA-accredited education programs which currently offer opportunities for the student and librarian interested in correctional library services, the following should be noted: Case Western Reserve University, School of Library Science; Catholic University of America, Graduate Department of Library Science; Columbia University, School of Library Service; University of Maryland, College of Library and Information Services; University of Minnesota, Library School; University of Washington, School of Librarianship; Wayne State University, Division of Library Science; and University of Wisconsin (Madison), Library School. Among the educational programs not currently accredited by ALA, specific attention should be given to the Community Information Specialist (CIS) master's degree program at the University of Toledo (Ohio), and the recent experimental institute for twenty students at Sam Houston State University's Library Science Department. The latter was funded by a grant under the Higher Education Act Title II-B for a twelve-month period beginning August 13, 1974; a report on this program is currently being developed for distribution. Participants were required to hold a baccalaureate degree and be admissible to the Graduate School of Sam Houston State University. The Master of Library Science degree, awarded to those completing requirements, contained a minor in criminal justice focusing on legal research, reference services, readers' services, administration, organization and information retrieval, as well as on an understanding of inmates and the correctional institution setting. Research supporting the institute proposal revealed a total of thirty-three professional librarians serving full-time in fourteen correctional institutions in the United States in 1973.

It is important for the individual considering correctional librarianship to weigh various factors in selecting an educational program: content and analysis of basic, required courses; the possibilities for independent study courses; research papers and projects; and the opportunity to study in related fields as part of the degree program or concurrent with the program. At the master's level, narrow specialization could leave the graduate unprepared for a profession in which it is common for practitioners to change both positions and responsibilities. Strong, informed faculty advising should include exploration of career possibilities (the correctional librarian will not always find a

created position and may have to sell his/her services and create positions) and specific strategies for job hunting in the correctional world.

LAW LIBRARY SERVICES

Prison law library services, especially since the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the State of California's decision in *Younger v. Moore*, have achieved full legal standing reinforcing the prisoner's right to information. Legal information needs of prisoners center in three areas: (1) postconviction relief, (2) civil problems, and (3) mistreatment or abridgment of constitutional rights in prison. If librarians are to provide significant services in these areas, they must acquire the needed expertise at both specialist and general levels. Celeste MacLeod has carefully summarized both the evolution of prison law library services and information needs.¹⁴ Attention is also called to courses related to legal literature in the curricula of the University of Minnesota's Library School and the University of Washington's School of Librarianship.

RESEARCH

The body of research culminating in the work of the Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training provides basic information valuable to education and research in correctional librarianship. The commission's work, funded by the Correctional Rehabilitation Study Act of 1965 and administered by the Social and Rehabilitation Service, had as its primary objectives study of the correctional needs of minority groups and of public attitudes toward crime and corrections. Results of the research substantiated a lack of organization in the field of corrections characterized by overlapping jurisdictions—some of which with organization that was wasteful of personnel resources. Probation and parole services were found to be particularly complex because of the many differing patterns of authority, administrative responsibilities and organizational structures. It was difficult to obtain reliable and comparable data on probation and parole, and this problem was compounded by the myriad patterns of corrections found in the various states.

Effects of noncoordination were dramatized in a correctional personnel survey which asked individuals what goals they thought were most emphasized in various correctional settings, i.e. in adult and juvenile institutions and field agencies. Twenty percent of the re-

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spondents said punishment was the primary goal; 42 percent said rehabilitation; 34 percent said protecting society; 2 percent said changing society; and an additional 2 percent were not sure.¹⁵ This confusion pointed to the critical need for an organized and coordinated system of corrections in the United States.

While corrections and library services have a long history, most observers would admit that very little was achieved prior to this century, and it was not until the third decade when ALA and the correctional world became cooperatively involved with each other. In the 1940s the American Prison Association established a Committee on Institution Libraries, generating the movement toward surveys; surveys still constitute the main body of research in correctional librarianship today. S.H. Souter conducted the first survey, reported in 1941, which revealed that one-half of the institutions studied lacked funding continuity for library services, and one-half indicated that inmates could read in some type of library facility.¹⁶

Involvement of the ALA accelerated action, with the founding of the AHIL in 1956 and with another survey in 1963 which substantiated the earlier findings. In 1963 the ALA *Standards for Library Function at the State Level*¹⁷ affirmed responsibilities of the states and encouraged cooperation between institutions and state library agencies. In 1964 Maryland surveyed its correctional institutions' libraries and thereby stimulated both the 1965 AHIL inventory of libraries in state and federally supported correctional institutions¹⁸ and the significant passage of the Library Services and Construction Act Title IV, which funded library services to a variety of institutions substantially supported by the states, including correctional libraries. The 1965 AHIL survey, based on data obtained from 924 institutions within the United States, found that staffing was critically deficient, i.e. only one-quarter of the respondents reported professionally trained librarians working on even a part-time basis. The U.S. Bureau of Prisons was somewhat better, with 20 percent of its total budget allocated for all social service programs.

In 1966 Marion Vedder conducted a survey of state library agencies¹⁹ to determine patterns of organization, especially administrative responsibility, and the current status of library development; this was updated by Lesta Burt in 1972. While growth is indicated there is still much to be accomplished. Most significant and of current value is Marjorie LeDonne's *Survey of Library and Information Problems in Correctional Institutions*.²⁰ This major study, reported in 1974, had as its purpose the provision of current information for making decisions

to plan strong library services. Focusing on goals and objectives, the study included intensive analyses of programs in ten selected states. The study concluded that needs continued to be great, and recommended that one pattern of library services be provided in the future. Because this survey is discussed in depth elsewhere in this issue of *Library Trends*, attention will be given to specific elements regarding staffing. Essentially, the study recognizes both the growing coordination responsibilities of librarians and a change in focus of the responsibilities to the administration of programs rather than to staffing specific libraries. This changing role of the correctional librarian is characterized by broader responsibilities, fuller participation in institutional planning, increased capabilities in library program development, and the supervision, planning and coordination of library services in several institutions. This is based on the objective realizations that individual correctional institutions cannot compete for qualified personnel, that many institutions are geographically isolated, that salaries are not competitive with other library positions, and that a career ladder is usually absent. In addition, among those states surveyed, a move toward contracting for library services was identified, e.g., in Florida, Illinois, Virginia and Washington.

Specific research concerned with the education of correctional librarians discusses problem areas in education: censorship, materials selection, control of both users and materials, and efficient utilization of library space. Specific recommendations of significance for library education include the following: (1) a professional librarian should serve as an agencywide coordinator of library programs within each correctional agency; (2) librarians should serve as administrators of institutional library programs; and (3) continuing job-related educational activities should be provided for library staff.

The various states, supported by the Library Services and Construction Act, conducted surveys of institutional library services and have generated reports relative to their action. In addition, a variety of bibliographies are readily available. The most useful is that contained in LeDonne's report which includes the significant references to library-related information about adult and juvenile correctional institutions at federal, state, county and municipal levels. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency Information Center served as primary sources. Comprehensive bibliographies on correctional library services prior to 1970 have also been compiled and are cited by LeDonne.

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In the area of bibliotherapy, it is important to note the work of Rhea Rubin, who surveyed the theoretical bases for prison library services.²¹ Of special significance is the doctoral research conducted by Lesta Burt in two Wisconsin correctional institutions, one for men, the other for women. This carefully designed project provided research control for variables of age, sex, race, crime, number of months incarcerated, and the number of months remaining to be served. Burt concluded that bibliotherapy involving book discussion may be a helpful adjuvant to correctional programs for improvement of both attitudes related to selected behavioral concepts for all inmates, and attitudes toward prisons. She also found that such bibliotherapy may be effectively conducted by librarians when working with small inmate groups. In summary, Burt recommended that group book discussion programs be utilized as an agent in creating anticriminal attitudes to complement structured rehabilitation programs.²²

Other than the studies cited above, research related to correctional librarianship has yet to be tapped. An analysis of academic research, i.e. that conducted within or connected with library education, reveals, in addition to Burt's doctoral study, a total of six master's theses which are primarily focused on the analysis of existing library services utilizing survey techniques.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the literature of both corrections and librarianship is giving attention to: (1) the need for literacy studies concerned with the efficacy of graduated reading programs, (2) the use of various media with individuals exhibiting various information needs, and (3) the characteristics of inmate populations.

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