Library Schools and Continuing Professional Education: The De Facto Role and Factors That Influence It

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Introduction

WIDESPREAD INTEREST IN continuing education (CE) within the profession is a phenomenon of the 1970s. Samuel Rothstein characterized continuing education in the library profession in the mid-1960s as "nobody's baby." Since that time, due to the rapid changes that have come to the profession, continuing education has changed its status from orphan to a child of many providers, admittedly still of uncertain parentage. The proliferation of continuing education opportunities has not served to assist the profession in determining appropriate roles for its multiple providers. Provision of CE opportunities is one of several factors that describe the provider's role.

The discussion of the role which library schools should play in continuing education was initially shaped by Elizabeth Stone and drawn from the context of comparable roles of selected professions. Stone recommended a role forged from the assumption of a group of responsibilities which included "creating and funding faculty positions specializing in continuing education" and "appointing a faculty member or administrator to be in charge of coordinating continuing library and information science programming." This role also included allocating faculty time for CE, instructing on CE techniques and values, providing CE in a variety of formats, increasing interaction between library schools and other CE providers, and alerting master's students to the necessity of lifelong learning.
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Under Stone's influence, the Association of American Library Schools (AALS), now the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), adopted in 1973 "one of the first statements on continuing education approved by any library association." That statement, however, "addressed the general continuing education concerns of the profession." The 1980/81 continuing education committee of the association developed a revised statement that was approved by the AALS board in 1981 and is still in effect. This statement develops parameters both for ALISE and for schools and departments of library and information science. The "Programs and Policies" section suggests the following general rule for member library education programs: "provide continuing education programs and activities for the field, encourage evaluation of continuing education programming, and foster faculty development." In order to carry out this role, the policy statement recommends that schools:

- Clarify the continuing education role of the school, develop a strong continuing education policy and include it in the goal statement of the school.
- Develop a total continuing education program; offer both regular courses and special short term CE offerings at times and places which are convenient to the needs of the continuing education audience.
- Assign responsibility for coordination of CE activities.
- Provide sufficient human and fiscal resources to assure high quality.
- Set priorities to the needs of the CE audience in the service area.

The statement further suggests that schools identify and communicate with the program's CE audience, evaluate programming, and that schools encourage "continued participation in learning opportunities" by faculty.

In years since Stone sketched the ideal role of library schools in continuing education and ALISE adopted and revised its "Policy Statement on Continuing Library and Information Science Education," library schools have developed a de facto rather than an ideal role. This article examines that role; it discusses the factors which influence its development, including those which influence improvisation of continuing library education by all providers, and, more specifically, those that are germane to library schools. It analyzes present patterns of delivery of continuing education in library schools and compares these patterns with those of other providers of continuing library and information science education. It concludes with a discussion of the implications of the present situation. The history of library school continuing education is outside the scope of this article; however, Stone's pioneering
work on the topic of continuing library education provides a context and historical perspective on the role of library schools and continuing education.  

**Influences on Provision of Continuing Professional Education**

Librarians and information scientists find, organize, store, retrieve, and disseminate knowledge or information in a variety of environments. The field is influenced by a set of global factors responsible for shaping the way that libraries and other information providers deliver their products. Since knowledge in this profession grows primarily from practice, the factors that shape the direction of the field are those that influence the content of the continuing education. Understanding the functions of the profession and the forces that tend to shape it gives the CE provider the basis for planning effective continuing education opportunities.

The factors that shape the field can be grouped into several major categories: (1) the nature of the field of library and information science and the way knowledge grows in it, (2) the nature of library education and the characteristics of those who enter it, (3) the influence of the technology that the field has adopted, (4) available resources, (5) the environments in which libraries and information services are found and the clientele that use libraries, (6) management factors, and (7) the ability to provide competency-based continuing education.

**The Nature and Growth of Knowledge in the Field**

A basic problem faced by the profession—and therefore by those who seek to develop continuing education for it—is librarianship's inability to develop a body of theory upon which to base practice. This problem was identified by Pierce Butler in 1933: "The librarian is strangely uninterested in the theoretical aspects of his profession." Fifty years after Butler expressed his concern, Michael Winter noted that "the lack of an adequate theoretical body of knowledge is...a serious obstacle to the professional development of an occupation." The problems associated with "the knowledge base, combined as they are with low public recognition and complicated by structural constraint, are probably more serious in librarianship than the same problems are in other disciplines."

In addition, knowledge in the library and information management profession grows primarily from practice as new methods of information delivery or new services are created or adopted. An innovation like bibliographic instruction or the development of community...
information service begins in a few libraries, spreads to other libraries, becomes a topic for articles and continuing education programs, and then finds its way into the library school curriculum. Although some research is conducted in the profession (primarily in schools of library and information science), seldom does it have the impact on the changing face of the profession that innovative library services have had.

Most librarians became aware of the entry of new knowledge into the field through journal articles and through continuing education programs offered at national meetings of professional associations. The way that knowledge enters the field creates a barrier that library educators must overcome; in addition, it serves to isolate library education from practice and is a primary reason for the regular call for increased communication between library educators and the field.

The Nature of Library Education

Library education, as primarily a one-year professional degree which has most often attracted English, history, and education majors, has a negative effect on the nature of continuing education. Those who have pioneered in developing the two-year master's degree have pointed out the problems that face this profession whose knowledge base is growing, but whose educators are unwilling or unable to alter the time-honored one-year professional degree. The increased knowledge base has already resulted in the addition of a variety of advanced courses to the already bursting preprofessional curriculum, but most schools of library science still attempt to produce a professional in thirty-six credit hours.

When one adds to the limitations of the one-year degree the fact that most who enter the field lack reasonable quantitative skills, the result is that, often, continuing education is provided at the least common denominator level. This is particularly true of continuing education in such areas as evaluation of library services. Sophisticated evaluation techniques are beyond the capability of many librarians and library educators. Those who attempt to meet the continuing education needs of the profession must recognize that the relative lack of quantitative skills will not be resolved until library education has begun to cope with its curriculum problem.

The location of schools and departments of library science in universities affects the assumption that there is a continuing education role. The powerful influence that this assumption exerts on library school continuing education has been discussed by Stone. She quotes Frederick Mosher's report on professional education which makes it clear that library schools are not in a unique situation.
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The professional schools are like Janus: they face on one side their professions and the organizations which hire their graduates; on the other, they face the rest of the university, its standards, aspirations, regulations and personnel (including students). They are *at* the university but not completely *in* it or *of* it.\(^1\)

The Influence of Technology

The most visible factor shaping the field is technology. In the past several years changing computer technology has had an enormous influence on the field. Technology-based CE programs, developed as a response to this stimulus, are of five major types: (1) those that give librarians the desire to embrace a particular technological innovation— even if it is not quite ready (e.g., two-way cable applications for libraries or the potential for optical storage technology), (2) programs that provide the knowledge or information necessary to become involved or to purchase the technology (e.g., writing the RFP [Request for Proposal] for an online circulation or integrated library system), (3) those programs that transmit the skills necessary to manipulate the technology (e.g., the use of microcomputer spreadsheet programs for libraries), (4) CE offerings that provide specialized or advanced skills, and (5) programs that focus on the management skills necessary to oversee the technology.

Librarianship can only be changed by the technology that it has begun to use. Although library computer applications were clear to some librarians as early as the 1950s, the technology was not truly embraced by the field until the 1970s. A number of factors, including the capability of computer technology to provide cost-effective library applications, delayed widespread computer applications in libraries for several decades. Optical storage and retrieval technology is an excellent example of a technology that shows great promise for the field. Its dense storage capabilities make it one of the most promising new information retrieval technologies in recent years. In combination with computer technology, optical media will change the nature of future research libraries, but so far optical media have had little impact on local libraries.

The Resource Base as a Factor

The resource base available to libraries and information centers has often hampered change in the field. The financial situation for libraries reached a crisis in the late 1970s and continuing education programs designed to assist libraries through a tight budget era were frequent. Tight budgets likewise influenced the movement in the field toward
developing mechanisms for greater accountability, including creation and increased use of evaluation techniques and methods of improved budgeting. The 1980s have seen several evaluation tools created by associations—Public Library Association’s (PLA’s) *Output Measures for Public Libraries*, its new *Cost Finding for Public Libraries: A Manager’s Handbook*, and the Association of Research Libraries’ (ARL’s) *Objective Performance for Academic and Research Libraries* as well as continuing education programs designed to facilitate the use of these manuals. Continuing education programs on such topics as ways to increase accountability, alternative sources of funding, and fee-based services will be offered to respond to cost-cutting and accountability needs for the next several years.

*The Influence of Library Environments and Clientele*

The several environments in which library and information centers are found have a direct impact on the delivery of library and information services; and as they change, they influence continuing education needs. Thus, type-of-library programming is actually type-of-library-environment programming. There has been a trend in all types of libraries to examine more carefully the relationships between libraries and their parent institutions (which most often serve as funding agencies). The growth of the information sector has resulted in an explosion of jobs with positions for librarians and information specialists outside of libraries and information centers.

In the future, as more information specialists work outside the library environment, there will be an increase in programs designed to increase the skill of those working in extra-library information environments. Programs on information management and on work in information environments have increased. This trend will continue and expand, resulting not only in continuing education programs but in changes in the library school curriculum as well.

During the 1970s librarians discovered their clientele in its myriad incarnations. Interest in the characteristics of library users (and nonusers) has been a major contribution both by researchers and by creators of library services. The late 1960s and 1970s brought better understanding of the aged, adult learners, those who live in rural areas, ethnic minorities, and citizen activists and their unique needs as library users. Knowledge of specific client groups and their special needs has prepared libraries to serve them better.

The resurgence in the late 1970s of interest in community analysis (in its varied forms for all types of libraries), together with new methods of analyzing the needs of specific groups, has resulted in a greater
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awareness by librarians of the differentiated clientele of libraries and has produced continuing education programs as well as additions to the library school curriculum. Programs based on response to the clientele are particularly difficult for library schools to provide because—unlike continuing education programs produced as a result of most of the factors just discussed—such programs do not appear as urgent. The professional obsolescence that may occur if the staff member does not acquire this new knowledge is not obvious. Since continuing education programs in library schools must be self-supporting, these may be neglected if they are not subsidized.

Social, Economic, and Political Pressures

Libraries, like other social institutions, are subject to the social and political pressures that are aimed at shaping society. Pressures in the 1980s often have been exerted by the conservative movement and most often have been felt by public and school librarians. The conservative movement has espoused, among other things, more censorship and less government. Both of these factors have directly affected libraries. Actions taken by the Reagan administration to limit the amount and type of government information provided to depository libraries have affected libraries of all types. Continuing education programs that assist libraries in appropriately responding to book challenges, those that suggest appropriate roles for libraries in maintaining and increasing access to government information, and programs that discuss libraries and the political process have been created to assist librarians in shaping appropriate responses.

The Management Factor

Students learn the basics of finding, organizing, storing, and retrieving knowledge and, increasingly, the techniques to manage these operations during library school. There has been an extensive debate in library literature about the appropriateness of extensive management education at the master's level, but there is no debate about the need for management continuing education. Managing library functions requires personnel and financial management skills that the compact master’s-degree curriculum does not provide. Once in the field, many, if not most, librarians, eventually move primarily from practice to management. The need for management education is recognized by most continuing education providers. Librarians' demands for continuing education programs in management are second only to demands for CE programs in areas of technology. Some library schools have used the
specialist certificate to meet the needs of those who seek in-depth management training.

Competency-Based Continuing Education

Until recently, with the exception of the school media area, the field had had little enthusiasm for using competencies as the basis for developing library education programs—either at the master's level or in continuing education. Failure to consider competencies is due in large measure to the difficulty researchers have had in isolating appropriate competencies and matching them to need. More recently, the field has begun to use competencies in designing CE. For example, the research done by Suzanne Mahmoodi on competencies was used as the basis for a series of self-assessment guides initially issued in the Minnesota Office of Public Libraries and Interlibrary Cooperation and republished by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) in 1986. Although it is too early to comment, the extensive King Research Inc. study of competencies—funded by the U.S. Department of Education and using as its scope the entire information profession—may make it possible for library and information science educators to plan continuing education programs around selected groups of competencies.

In sum, although competencies may not be consciously used by all planners, they are the major influences of CE content. The specifics will change—for example, new information technologies will be adopted by libraries, new social pressures will be felt, and new evaluation tools will be created—but the general factors are likely to remain. Information technologies, social pressures, and evaluation tools are primary influences on members of the profession for gaining additional knowledge and new skills. Where the professional turns who requires continuing education is based on a number of factors including the nature, availability, and cost of the opportunity and the extent to which the sponsor is trusted.

Library Schools as Continuing Education Providers

Continuing education in library schools moved from a barely noticed activity to a flashy golden age during the late 1960s and early 1970s. With the ready availability of federal funds for education, including continuing education, library schools were able to provide many subsidized continuing education opportunities before most schools had examined the roles they might appropriately play in professional development. This activity waned with the lack of federal funding, but a new
wave of expanded library school continuing education activity emerged in the 1980s. White notes "a substantial increase in continuing education programs offered through post-master’s degree or certificate programs, through workshops, conferences, and in conjunction with professional associations and their programs."\textsuperscript{18}

This growth spurt is likely to have a more lasting effect than the earlier one primed by federal funds. The recent activity is the result of several factors, not the least of which has been declining enrollment in the bread-and-butter program of library schools. Library school enrollments fell steadily from the mid-1970s through the early 1980s in most library schools; White noted a 38 percent decline between 1976 and 1981.\textsuperscript{19} That decline was influenced, among other things, by the increased costs of professional education and by tight job markets for library school graduates. Enrollments continued to decline through 1983, showing an additional 12 percent decline; although the statistics show a small increase from 1983 to 1984, library schools that do not seek wider audiences can expect a smaller pool of students in the next several years because most of the baby boom generation have graduated from college. The combined factors just discussed put pressure on library schools to maintain a reasonable enrollment to avoid being closed. McCrossan recommended in 1982 that library schools "redeploy their resources from training beginning librarians to other activities, such as continuing education of those who already have professional positions."\textsuperscript{20}

Another factor that has influenced the increased library school continuing education activity, particularly that which is credit-related, had been the addition of a greater number of advanced and specialized courses to the master’s curriculum as the result of technological changes in libraries. Such credit courses often serve two or three library school constituencies: the master’s degree student, the returning professional, and, at institutions that offer the Ph.D., the doctoral student. Factors that militate against provision of CE have been discussed in detail by Stone.\textsuperscript{21}

**The Post-Master’s Certificate Role in Continuing Education**

Based on an examination of the models provided by other professions, Stone proposed that library schools and all other providers consider adopting appropriate roles designed to facilitate the delivery of continuing library education. For library schools Stone recommended that "the library school based post-master’s program should be recognized as the primary method for upgrading the profession," pointing out that academic credentials like the specialist certificate, unlike the
Ph.D., which is research-oriented, "are usually functionally oriented toward the participant's professional objectives." As Stone, McCros- san, and others have said, library educators have not begun to exploit the full potential of the specialist certificate.

Although the specialist certificate provides a unique opportunity for library schools to assist professionals in a planned program of focused professional growth, it has not become the primary method of delivery, comprising less than 1 percent of the degrees and less than 2 percent of the total library school enrollment. The role played by library schools in continuing education rests on a broader, although uneven, base.

The De Facto Role Examined

Researchers and observers over the years have attempted to present the role that library schools play in CE. Their findings have been influenced to a certain extent by the approach they used. Given the continued lack of a clear library school CE role, I have chosen to construct a de facto role for library schools based on several indicators that were developed from an examination of (1) patterns in the presence of an assigned CE coordinator, (2) ALISE CE and related statistics for patterns, (3) relevant CE announcements appearing in the "Datebook" column in American Libraries, and (4) the CE content of the most recent issues of library school newsletters. Because each component presents evidence that is relatively independent of the other, when examined together they present less biased data than a study based on one method alone, such as a survey, a literature review, or an examination of the ALISE CE statistics.

The ALISE-Designated CE Coordinator as an Indicator of Role

Shortly after the 1981 ALISE policy statement was adopted by the ALISE board, the association's continuing education committee conducted a survey of ALISE-affiliate schools to determine the extent to which library schools had followed the policy statement recommendation to "assign responsibility for coordination of CE activities." The committee found that 78 percent of all ALISE-affiliate schools had designated a CE coordinator. The results of their study showed that:

Typically continuing education coordination is carried out "as needed" as one of a number of other responsibilities usually without a reduction in load. If continuing education is a regularly assigned responsibility, the CE coordinator is more likely to hold a title reflecting administrative assignments. If continuing education is assigned
on an annual basis the CE coordinator’s title is likely to indicate a faculty rank. Since this initial survey of the nature of coordination, each school has been asked to designate a CE contact person for inclusion in the annual ALISE directory. For this paper, entries in the most recent ALISE directory were examined to determine the extent to which library education programs have continued to designate a CE coordinator as well as the type of individual who had been chosen by the dean or director to fill that position.

The ALISE directory shows that two-thirds of accredited schools (i.e., forty-three) have designated a CE contact. The remaining twenty-two schools do not list one. The figures are reversed for affiliate schools. Only one-third (nine) list a CE contact. Most of the accredited schools (49 percent of the forty-three, or twenty-one schools) designated an administrator, either the dean or director or associate/assistant dean or associate/assistant director as CE contact. Five schools assigned the responsibility to a dean’s assistant. The most revealing finding was that only three schools had assigned this responsibility to someone with an administrative title like director of continuing education. The remaining sixteen schools (37 percent) assigned it to a faculty member. This study did not address the extent to which placement of this responsibility affected the assumption of the role, although intuitively one might assume that placement in the administrative structure would be the preferable location.

If a school has designated an ALISE CE contact, it is only one indicator of CE activity, but the fact that one-third of the schools and departments list no CE contact is also an indicator that this activity may be relatively unimportant at those schools. Several of the schools that list no CE contact have active CE programs when the American Libraries “Datebook” listing of upcoming CE opportunities are used as an indicator. Additional research should be done on the relationship between the presence of a coordinator and CE programming.

Statistics as an Indicator

The 1985 issue of the ALISE Library and Information Science Education Statistical Report shows that sixty-seven students were awarded a post-master’s certificate in the most recent year for which data are collected. The small number of specialist certificates indicates that the specialist certificate has not become the primary methods that library schools use to deliver continuing education in spite of its potential value. The certificate represents approximately 1 percent of all
degrees awarded by library schools. The master's degree, on the other hand, comprises 96 percent of the degrees awarded by library schools. The ALISE statistics indicate that library schools can most effectively distribute CE among the master's program, the advanced (i.e., post-master's) programs, and separate continuing education offerings (e.g., workshops, lectures, conferences).

The ALISE statistics show that library schools have chosen to deliver CE in a variety of formats, one indicator of the type of role schools play in CE. The current ALISE statistical compendium shows that 1697 individuals attended library school short courses, 4815 were present at lectures, 691 attended seminars, 5637 participated in workshops, and 5410 attended institutes at ALISE member schools.27

ALISE adhered to a conservative definition of continuing education the first four years for which CE statistics were provided, reporting only data on conferences/institutes, workshops, seminars, lectures, short courses, and tutorials. These statistics did not fully reflect the role that schools have assumed in continuing education. The 1982/83 statistics and subsequent reports have included credit courses that had been "designed and taught specifically for practitioners who were not enrolled in any degree program."28 The initial year of data shows that 38 percent of the reporting schools provided such courses in 1982/83.29 It is likely that some library schools also have included courses that entered the curriculum due to changes in the field and that therefore serve multiple audiences. Since the purpose of providing these statistics is to present a clear picture of what is going on in the library schools, this information will clarify the role that schools play in continuing education.

Content As An Indicator of Role

The content a provider chooses to deliver is another indicator of the role the provider has chosen to fill. To determine the extent to which library schools differ in their assumption of a role, this writer analyzed all complete entries in "Datebook," from October 1984 through September 1985. This monthly column in American Libraries contains the most complete listing of upcoming workshops, conferences, and short courses in the professional literature, containing between thirty and fifty entries per month. It accepts information from a range of providers and in a variety of formats, thus making it convenient for continuing education providers to submit information about upcoming events.

The column entries provide an opportunity to compare continuing education programs offered by schools and departments of library science, library associations, library consortia, companies, and state
library and other governmental library agencies. The purpose of this examination was to determine (1) how library schools differ from other sponsors of continuing education programs in content, in pricing, and in format; and (2) patterns that distinguish library schools from other providers of continuing education.

Entries that lacked complete data (most often cost information) were eliminated. In order to focus only on continuing education workshops and programs, conferences that did not have a specific theme were also eliminated. Of the entries, 195 met the criteria. Four variables—sponsor, cost, length, and topic—were examined for each entry. They are valuable as measures of typical short-term CE programming: two-thirds of the entries described programs that were two days or less in length.

Using these entries as the bases for making statements about CE offerings has its limitations: (1) it includes only those continuing education opportunities that actually were submitted to "Datebook," and (2) it assumes that the "Datebook" entries are representative of those offered by CE providers. In spite of these limitations, this approach introduces less bias and a greater likelihood of obtaining a representative sample of current continuing education topics presented by all types of providers than most other methods due to the highly decentralized nature of continuing education in this field.

Analysis of the "Datebook" entries shows that continuing education opportunities during 1984/85 could be broken into the following major categories (the number of offerings in each category are in brackets): (1) computer technology [69], (2) other technology [14], (3) the communication aspects of management [24], (4) other aspects of management [17], (5) materials for children or young adults [15], (6) reference/information sources (types of materials) [18], (7) improving library services [10], (8) collection development or preservation [10], (9) improving specific skills such as bibliographic instruction or storytelling, and (10) general professional knowledge [8]. Schools and departments of library and information science were very well represented in "Datebook." Over one-third (37 percent) of all the continuing education programs were sponsored by library schools, more than any other category of provider. National, regional, and state associations provided almost one-quarter (23 percent) of the CE programs. The corporate sector provided 11 percent of the CE programs.

Examination of the types of topics offered by the various sponsor categories shows that the twenty-five library schools that submitted entries to "Datebook" (40 percent of accredited schools and departments of library and information science not slated for closure) have taken the
lead in providing continuing education programs in computer technology (including such topics as online database searching or the selection of an integrated library system). Of all the programs, 40 percent of those offered on some aspect of computer technology were sponsored by library schools. Library associations have taken the lead in providing management continuing education. Half of the programs on communication aspects of management were offered by library associations, but over one-third (38 percent) were offered by library schools. Library associations and library schools provided 88 percent of the CE in communication. Library schools provided the most opportunities for CE in general management (35 percent)—a topic encompassing budgeting, fund-raising, buildings, and governance—while consortia (including organizations like the Association of Research Libraries) and library associations each provided about a quarter of the opportunities. In addition, schools and departments of library and information science provided more opportunities than any other providers on the following other topics: materials for children and young adults (53 percent), services (40 percent), sources (39 percent), and on professional topics (75 percent).

The "Datebook" entries show that library schools are major contributors to continuing education among all providers and thus have assumed a leadership role in continuing library education—not only in technology topics but across the board. Library school leadership in providing continuing education on computer technology topics should send a strong signal to the profession that library and information science education is attempting to keep abreast in the area of most critical change in the field.

Cost as a Role Indicator

The cost of continuing education by all providers ranged from no charge or a token fee for a one-day program to over $1600 for an intensive library-school-sponsored management seminar. By and large, library schools—when compared with other providers—have chosen to provide continuing education programs at reasonably moderate cost. Over one-third (39 percent) were priced at less than $60; this compares with 33 percent of those sponsored by library associations and only 9 percent of CE programs offered by the private sector. Of the CE programs offered, 58 percent of the library school programs cost less than $100, while 42 percent of library association programs and 22 percent of corporate CE programs cost less than $100. Finally 92 percent of library-school-sponsored programs cost less than $200, compared with 86.6
percent of those provided by library associations and 59 percent of company-offered programs.

The Role Implied by Library School Bulletins and Newsletters

Marilyn Miller examined the bulletins of schools of library and information science to decide the extent to which she could determine the role of continuing education from the official bulletin, the major information vehicle of most schools. Although she does not indicate the size or nature of the sample, Miller found that “most catalogs include reference to continuing education in the written statements of general goals and objectives” and “a few schools provide a comprehensive description of their continuing education programs.”

Due to the content restrictions that may be imposed on official bulletins, newsletters are more likely to reflect actual CE programming by library schools than bulletins. The newsletter is a major tool used by professional schools to communicate with alumni, prospective students, selected librarians, and others. As part of this study, current newsletters were requested from library education programs. The newsletters were examined to determine to what extent they sketched the continuing education role of the school or department. Responses included newsletters from forty-two accredited library schools and four schools that responded that they had no newsletters, resulting in a 75 percent response rate.

All newsletters were examined for (1) descriptions of future continuing education programs, (2) discussion of recently completed CE programs, (3) announcements of courses in the regular curriculum that would be appropriate for practicing librarians, (4) descriptions of new courses in the curriculum, and (5) the inclusion of a course list. The presence of these elements sends a message to newsletter readers about how active the school is in offering to assist graduates as they continue their education. The findings indicate that many of the schools and departments do attempt to communicate a CE capability to their audiences.

Two-thirds of the newsletters announced upcoming continuing education programs while one-third reported on recently completed CE programs and 19 percent included an entire upcoming-term course list. However, only 10 percent took the opportunity to describe new courses and only 5 percent described courses appropriate for practicing librarians. Half of the library schools had included one of the five types of CE information in their newsletter, most frequently a short article describing an upcoming workshop or lecture. A little over one-quarter used an additional category; 10 percent included three of the five possible cate-
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gories; only 4 percent of the library school newsletters included four of
the five categories.

Summary and Conclusions

In spite of efforts by library education leadership, library schools have not yet assumed a clear role in continuing library education. In order to present that role more clearly, I examined a variety of sources of data that provided information about portions of it. These were considered as indicators of aspects of the role. The indicators, when examined together, can be used as the basis from which a de facto role can be constructed.

The nature of the field—including the lack of theory and the fact that knowledge grows from changes in the field rather than from research conducted by library educators—has affected the type of continuing education opportunities that can be offered. Several general factors influence the content of continuing education. The most obvious one is changing technology. The need for the maturing professional to obtain additional management knowledge and skill is another powerful influence on content which is strongly affected by other factors: (1) the resource base; (2) library environments and clientele; and (3) social, economic, and political pressures. These factors set the parameters for the assumption of the CE role.

The indicators that I selected as the basis for the discussion of the de facto role—i.e., assignment of the responsibility for coordinating continuing education, the actual provision of needed CE opportunities, and their promotion to appropriate audiences—sketch a picture of the role which library schools as a group play in continuing education. As in most studies, a proportion of the population deviates from the norm at both ends of the curve.

Two-thirds of the library schools have chosen to designate a CE contact person who is most often a part of the library school administration. This study showed that the 40 percent of all library schools who submitted information about forthcoming CE offerings displayed leadership in the provision of content responsive to the major factors which influence CE need. Other CE providers did not match this leadership. The extent to which the 60 percent of library schools that did not submit programs to American Libraries' "Datebook" column display the same leadership is not known.

The ALISE continuing education policy statement, adopted in 1981, urges schools to clarify their role vis-à-vis continuing education and to develop a policy to indicate that CE role. The 1986 ALISE CE
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committee is surveying deans and directors of library schools and departments to determine the extent to which schools have undertaken this responsibility. This exercise will encourage deans to rethink the role and may actually result in a clarification for some. Because schools may deviate from stated policy, the actual role will be determined by the CE activities that the schools engage in—including designating someone as CE coordinator, providing CE opportunities that meet the need, and promoting CE to the appropriate audiences.

References

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