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# Library Education: Its Past, Its Present, Its Future

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## ABSTRACT

This paper traces the history of library education primarily as it developed in the United States. The issues pertaining to curriculum, students, and faculty are presented as are the current questions of whether the educational program should have a professional, vocational, or discipline-based focus.

## INTRODUCTION

The modern period in the history of education for librarianship began in the mid-1800s as librarians around the world recognized that systematic education and training were required so that order could be brought to the collections that had been growing in all libraries. Librarians also sought ways to bring techniques of organization and management to the public libraries as the public library movement gained momentum. Librarians sought to apply standards to the acquisition and preservation of collections, to consider services to users, and to adopt careful management practices to libraries. This paper sketches the highlights of development of the educational system for the profession and traces the continual assessment of the curriculum, the standards that help shape the elements of the educational programs, the development of the faculty, and the continuing debate over certification and accreditation. It acknowledges the ever-present tensions between librarianship as it is practiced and librarianship as it is taught. While some reference is made to library education in other countries, the dominant perspective is that of the United States.

The paper acknowledges the important contributions of Professor F. Wilfrid Lancaster to library education. Lancaster was one of the information scientists in the 1970s who was instrumental in infusing library

education with theories and research from information science. Famous for his classes at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on the evaluation of library services and the use of standards in undertaking such evaluations, Lancaster also lectured and consulted throughout the world. He inspired many students in the United States and abroad to take up careers in library and information science and was generous to them as they sought his advice and counsel.

The history of the education for the field has been well studied and well documented. Its complexity and its richness cannot be examined thoroughly in this paper. Various readers will find a topic of great importance mentioned only briefly or not dealt with here at all. The author urges a closer look at the references cited to gain a greater understanding of the education for librarianship, the role dedicated men and women played in creating the vibrant profession that exists today, and the inevitable changes that occur as society itself changes.

The past encompasses the period beginning with 1853, the date of the first library conference held in the United States, to 1990, a somewhat arbitrary date reflecting the adoption of computer science techniques and automation elements into most curricula of accredited library school programs in the United States. The present includes the 1990s to the present. The final section presents some indicators for the future and comments on the central debates that have and will continue to rage over whether the educational programs reflect education for a profession, whether a return to vocational training will occur, or whether information studies is an academic discipline unattached to any particular profession.

#### ANTECEDENTS OF PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY EDUCATION

Most general histories of the development of the profession of librarianship in the United States establish 1876 as the year in which the profession emerged. Three events are singled out to establish 1876 as the year: the publication of the first issue of *Library Journal* (founded as the *American Library Journal*); the 1876 conference in Philadelphia, which led to the formation of the American Library Association; and the publication of the monumental *Public Libraries in the United States of American, Their History, Condition, and Management*, issued by the U.S. Bureau of Education, which documented the development of libraries in the United States and offered papers on the standards of practice in existence at that time. The events surrounding the organization of the Librarians' Conference of 1853, however, offer the evidence that the profession had emerged earlier than 1876 and the issues that would form the basis of education for the profession already were identified. Had the Civil War not intervened, it is possible that the profession would have made greater progress earlier in its establishment. Similar developments were going on in Europe, but the American librarians, while aware of them, were unable to take full

advantage of those because of the war and the postwar construction that engaged the country.

Although the 1853 conference did not address directly the issue of education for the profession, the participants considered issues of importance in the organization and management of libraries (Utley, 1951). Under the leadership of Charles Coffin Jewett, the librarian of the Smithsonian Institution who was elected president of the conference, the eighty-three men attending considered issues relating to the purchase of books, their arrangement, the formation of catalogs, and the protection of the books.

Jewett's opening address set the stage for the meeting:

we have assembled this morning . . . [for the purpose] of conferring together upon the means of advancing the prosperity and usefulness of public libraries and of seeking mutual instruction and encouragement in the discharge of the quiet and unostentatious labors of our vocation, for which each, at his separate post, finds perhaps but little sympathy – for which each, when at home, must derive enthusiasm only from within himself and from the silent masters of his daily communion. . . .

our object . . . is of a more manifestly and eminently practical and utilitarian character. We meet to provide for the diffusion of knowledge of good books, and for enlarging the means of public access to them. Our wishes are for the public, not for ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

The attendees shared information and debated the issues, presented forcefully by Jewett: a central catalog and adoption of agreed upon rules for cataloging. The convention adopted resolutions in support of the development of public libraries in the United States and, in particular, recognized the need for the development of a “popular Library Manual,” which would include information on:

- the best organization of a Library society, in regard to its officers, laws, funds and general regulations;
- the best plans for Library edifices and the arrangements of the shelves and books, with the requisite architectural drawings;
- the most approved method of making out and printing catalogues;
- the most desirable principle to be followed in the selection and purchase of books, as to authors and editions; with lists of such works as are best suited for libraries of various sizes, from 500 to 1,000 volumes of upwards.<sup>2</sup>

The delegates shared their own experiences and points of view with each other and developed networks of support that continued after the meeting. By and large, though, each librarian attending the meeting sought to find his own solution to the particular problems surrounding the responsibilities he had for managing a library.

In the United States as well as in Europe, the apprenticeship system of education was the accepted practice. In the United States it continued long after the founding of Dewey's school at Columbia University in 1887.

The great comprehensive survey of public libraries in the United States (*Public Libraries in the United States*, 1876) includes advice regarding education for librarianship. The emphasis in these chapters is on books and reading and the placement of such study in professorships in American universities. In the introduction to the survey, however, the authors suggest another approach to library education:

it is clear that the librarian must soon be called upon to assume a distinct position, as something more than a mere custodian of books, and the scientific scope and value of his office be recognized and estimated in a becoming manner. To meet the demands that will be made on him he should be granted opportunities in instruction for all the departments of library science.

The authors then refer to developments in Germany, specifically to a proposal authored by Dr. F. Rullmann, librarian of the University of Frieberg. In 1874 Rullmann proposed that librarians should be especially trained for the post, specifically in a university course of three years at the end of which the student would sit for an examination that would lead to a certificate. Rullman was making reference to those people, primarily professors in universities, who also were appointed to head the university's library; he was not making reference to the various people who did the more routine or clerical tasks necessary to library operations (Rullman, 1874). In his paper Rullman also refers to a paper published in Vienna in 1834 by Schrettinger. Schrettinger, in his *Manual of Library Science*, (1834) was advocating for a special school for educating librarians. So proposals for systematic education for library science were made in Europe early in the 1800s, and librarians in the United States were aware of these proposals.

American librarians were influenced by the proposals from Europe as they were by the development of the importance of the German universities and the influence they had upon all aspects of the American university (Rudolph, 1990; Lynch, 1998). As the history of the American colleges and universities show, libraries featured prominently in their development. Beginning with the founding of Harvard in 1636, libraries were a part of the American college. The early years, of course, emphasized the importance of books as assets of the college. The colonial colleges worked hard on the procurement of books from Europe and on keeping the books, considered capital assets of the college, safe. As the collections grew, keeping track of books became a major assignment and how to organize them a major concern. So those men assigned responsibility for the college library sought information from one another and shared questions and concerns. University libraries developed their own local systems to use in organizing their collections, and some of these, for example the Yale scheme, continued well into the twentieth century. The notion of a formal course in library education did not emerge, although

there were calls for manuals that would assist librarians in addressing their questions.

Dr. F. Rullman proposed a curriculum for library education, which does not seem all that unfamiliar to today's observers of library education. Linguistic studies was an important component. Rullman noted that most students who would matriculate into a library science program in Germany would have completed the gymnasium program and thus would know German, French, Latin, and Greek. In addition to these languages, students of library science would require knowledge of Hebrew, English, Italian, and Spanish.

Other courses proposed by Rullman included the following:

- General history and collateral studies, e.g., diplomacy
- Systematic universal encyclopedia of sciences, with special regard to the best way of defining the proper limits of each science
- Universal history of the more important literary production, with special mention of their scientific and booksellers' value
- Knowledge of manuscripts
- History of the art of printing
- History of the book trade
- Some knowledge of the fine arts, so as to enable the librarian to know the true value of engravings, (copper, steel, and wood,) lithographs, and photographs
- Graduate development of library science and introduction to it
- The most interesting data concerning the well known libraries of the world: "bibliothecography"
- Library economy, (administration, financial management, etc.)
- Practical exercises in cataloguing and classifying, (especially the more difficult subjects, e.g., manuscripts and incunabula.)
- Management of archives

In both the United States and Europe, leaders of university libraries were confronting issues beyond those of the acquisition of materials. They were seeking systematic ways of describing and making known their collections, of expanding their knowledge of the many aspects of the book trade, the history of printing, of manuscripts, of archives. The leadership of the American library community in the United States, by and large those responsible for university and college libraries and the major collections of government in the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress, were confident of their knowledge of the libraries for which they were responsible and were imaginative in their administration of those libraries. As they considered the fast growing public library movement in the United States, however, they recognized that there were few people who had the knowledge to manage these local public libraries. Thus the practical issues surrounding the administration and management of the libraries, particularly of the

local public libraries, led them to consider the questions of education and training for those who would staff these libraries.

The period prior to the founding of Dewey's Library School was one marked by apprenticeship and in-service training classes. But the university movement was growing in intensity, and one of the outcomes of the movement in the United States is that it blurred the distinction between professions and vocations. As Rudolph (1990) writes:

The American university, in one of its characteristic manifestations, thus became a collection of postgraduate professional schools, schools which replaced the apprentice system in law, put responsibility into the study of medicine, tended to relegate theology into a separate corner, created education as an advanced field of study, and responded—in one institution or another—to the felt necessities of the time or the region, thus spawning appropriate schools at appropriate times, whether they were schools of business administration, forestry, journalism, veterinary medicine, social work, or Russian studies.

Education for the library profession fit right into this important development in American higher education. In this respect it reflected the educational model of other professions, notably medicine and law, and thus was very much in keeping with the times. Prominent librarians were called upon to provide advice and counsel to those charged with establishing new libraries. The growth of public libraries in the United States, which was rapid during the period following the Civil War, (the publication of *Public Libraries in the United States* reported 2,240 libraries were established between 1850 and 1875) led many to call upon those already well-known as fine librarians, for support and instruction. Plummer reported this method of instruction as "management by imitation," describing it as "The board of the new library sent the librarian for two or three weeks to some large city library to pick up what he could by observation and by working in some of its departments" (Vann, 1961). As the number of public libraries grew and as Andrew Carnegie began to fund the building of local public libraries, issues regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the people assigned to manage these libraries and the kinds of education and training required to successfully administer these libraries grew in importance.

#### DEWEY'S SCHOOL AND THE DEVELOPMENTS RESULTING IN THE PROFESSIONALISM OF LIBRARY EDUCATION

The influence of Melvil Dewey on the development of library education in the United States has been a topic of much study (Vann, 1961; Wiegand, 1996) and of much criticism (Williamson, 1919, 1923). Writers have faulted Dewey for not setting the right direction for education in librarianship; first by not requiring college graduation as an entrance requirement; second, by concentrating too heavily on technical matters, thus functioning, in many respects, like the apprenticeship program that preceded it; and third, by

creating an educational program that was not research-oriented. Miska correctly observes that widespread research is a more recent development in all fields serving social service professions. He also observes that the widespread criticism of the educational programs as being too technical is another way of saying that the education was in some ways "anti-intellectual," or that it was vocational. Miska masterfully traces the development of Dewey's thinking about the curriculum. Miska points out that Dewey approached the issues of systematic education by seeking ways to make the practice of the field more economical, that he had little experience in large university libraries until his appointment at Columbia, and that his Columbia experience began to change the ways he approached the issues of curriculum content and course development. Miska comments favorably on the contributions Dewey made to the development of the "ABCs of practice"—there were few of these in existence prior to Dewey's school—and the important contributions Dewey made to the literature of the field through the use of his *Library Notes* to publish some of the lectures given at the school and to comment on several sides of an issue (Miska, 1986).

Miska deftly uses the criticism of the lesson of "Library Hand" courses to place the contributions of Dewey's educational program in perspective:

Dewey's inclusion of library hand in his library school curriculum has long been the object of amusement. It has been spoken of in hindsight as an indication of the clerical practice and therefore the nonintellectual orientation of early library education. Dewey, however, was not as ignorant as this kind of judgment implies. *The chief technology for bibliographical control during the 1880s was handwriting.* And if that technology was to be effective it had to be efficient and well done. This meant that some effort to control handwriting was not only useful but absolutely essential if the broader goals of the library were to be met.

Dewey was less interested or knowledgeable about the requirements of administering the large university and college libraries already in place. His interest, although it never really was articulated, was on the need for education and training for personnel in the growing numbers of public libraries and in the small college libraries that continued to be established. His classification system, itself, was useful to these libraries.

Vann neatly traces the development of training methods and assesses their strengths and weaknesses. She also describes the growing interest of the Carnegie Foundation in library training as the foundation sought to determine whether the establishment of public libraries, supported by the foundation, were providing effective service: In 1915 the Carnegie Corporation authorized an inquiry "into library schools and the adequacy of the output of trained librarians." The corporation had provided support for four library training programs, Western Reserve University, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, the Carnegie Library of Atlanta, and the New York Public Libraries. Besieged by requests for additional grants to

establish training programs as well as to fund the building of local public libraries, the corporation invited Alvin Saunders Johnson to study the impact of the library buildings and also "to inquire into library schools and the adequacy of the output of trained librarians." Johnson's report offered a damaging assessment of the programs of study at the thirteen library schools then operating. Although, upon receiving his report, the corporation rejected most of Johnson's recommendations, the report did bring to the attention of the Carnegie Corporation the many issues related to training for the library profession. Two years later, the Carnegie Corporation assigned to C. C. Williamson the task of assessing library education and making recommendations for its future.

As is the case for most, if not all, ideas that appear upon first glance to be revolutionary, many such ideas appear earlier and are debated, evaluated, and changed in a process that leads to what ultimately appears to be a revolutionary statement. The Williamson report, of course, had enormous influence on library education as it subsequently developed. It was, however, heavily influenced by the Johnson report and the concerns of leaders in the field. Williamson was not alone in his call for standards for library education, for expanding training beyond technique, in demanding a research base, and calling for the American Library Association to assume responsibility for accrediting library schools. Williamson built upon the work of others who followed Dewey in the establishment of library training programs and sought quality programs and agreed upon standards of quality in the presentation of library education programs, although he was reluctant to credit earlier efforts. Vann outlines these efforts beginning with the founding of Dewey's school in 1887 and culminating with the Williamson report in 1923 and labels this period as the pioneer period in American library education.

## CONTINUING INFLUENCES ON LIBRARY EDUCATION

### *The Nature of the Work and the Kind of Training Needed*

Many of the concerns emerging in the influential report of Charles C. Williamson continue to this day. The first and perhaps the central issue relates to the nature of library work. Williamson recognized that there is work in libraries that is professional and work that is clerical. In acknowledging this, Williamson attempted to identify what kinds of training would be required for each type of work and where that training should take place. How to organize the work of the library into jobs and then to separate those jobs that are primarily clerical in nature from those in which the work is categorized as professional plagued librarians in Williamson's time as it continues to plague librarians today. And, as the jobs of librarians continue to change and evolve, and as what were once considered professional tasks now are designated paraprofessional jobs, so do



expectations of people who work in libraries change (Oberg, 1992; Lynch & Smith, 2001; Sweeney, 2006; Veaner, 1982; Rider, 1996).

In 1970 the American Library Association issued its policy statement on "Library Education and Manpower" later retitled, "Library Education and Personnel Utilization." The policy was reviewed and revised in 2001/2002 and retitled again to "Library and Information Studies and Human Resource Utilization."<sup>3</sup> The policy document attempts to identify the various categories of library personnel and the levels of training and education appropriate to the personnel in the various categories of jobs found in libraries. What has happened since Williamson's time is the expansion of jobs into levels of specialization between the professional level and the clerical level and the recognition that other job specializations, in addition to the librarian's job, now are required in the effective operation of libraries.

Williamson (1923) carefully observed the differences in tasks and in the jobs in various types of libraries and recognized that the individual library would determine the nature of the staff training in relation to various jobs:

In the last analysis every library will have to make its own decision as to what positions on its staff require professional training. The number and proportion of such positions will be determined by the size and character of the library as well as by the money available for the payment of salaries. A reference library will require a larger proportion of professional librarians than a circulating library of the traditional type. The large library system will require a smaller proportion, tho [sic] perhaps a higher grade, of professionally trained librarians than the small library, for the reason that the greater specialization made possible in the large organization permits the professional worker to supplement and supervise the work of a larger number of workers of clerical grade.

Williamson proposed that professional training required a broad, general education as represented by four years of college, plus at least one year of graduate study in a "properly organized library school." He saw that clerical work done in libraries could be done by people with a high school education followed by a short training course in library methods. Such training courses, he observed, could be provided by the libraries themselves. This two-part model, reflecting the kinds of work carried out in libraries, has sustained the organization of library education for nearly one hundred years. It is reflected in library practice to this day, although the recent expansion of work carried out in libraries has led to a third category of library jobs. These new jobs have their base in specializations that are found in professions outside of librarianship, or they are jobs formerly done by professional librarians and now assigned to staff members who can be trained in-house to do the job tasks. The ALA policy statement on "Library and Information Studies and Human Resource Utilization" recognizes that the library occupation is much broader than that

segment of it, which is the library profession. The policy gives to the library profession the responsibility for defining the necessary training and education needed for the preparation of personnel who work in libraries at any level, supportive or professional.

Some courses, based primarily in community colleges in the United States, have been designed to train paraprofessionals to work in libraries. These courses are not widespread, and, for the most part, they have not been adopted as requirements for jobs in libraries. As library administrators have more carefully described library jobs and have identified the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities required in these jobs, there have been efforts to make a more discriminating delineation of professional from nonprofessional, or paraprofessional, work. Some libraries are more successful at this than others, and as the professional undergoes rapid change, there is a lag in making changes in job definitions.

The American Library Association's policy on education for the profession continues to be:

The master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association (or from a master's level program in library and information studies accredited or recognized by the appropriate national body of another country) is the appropriate professional degree for librarians.<sup>4</sup>

The inclusion of the degree obtained in another country reflects the growing need of large urban public libraries in the United States for librarians with specific language skills and the immigration into the United States of people who have studied library science in various kinds of programs in other countries and seek employment as professional librarians in the United States. The policy reflects the continuing agreement in the United States and Canada that a master's degree, which is built upon a bachelor's degree in another subject, is an essential component in the qualifications of people hired into professional library positions.

The profession has embraced the policy of the master's degree from an ALA accredited program for appointment as a librarian, which grew out of the recommendations of the Williamson report, but it continues to grapple with the issues of defining appropriate training and education for various categories of jobs in libraries. At the moment the responsibility rests with the individual library or library system, not with the profession at large, to determine the categories of jobs and the training requirements for those jobs.

While there has been interest in identifying specifics for the job training of paraprofessionals, there has yet to be a national response to this training issue. The profession as it is practiced has continued to recognize the ALA accredited degree as being appropriate for appointment to professional posts in libraries. It has not addressed, formally, the matter of training of paraprofessional staff, leaving that to the local library.

*Students*

Williamson discussed the issues surrounding the recruitment of students into library schools and into the profession. The issues are familiar: Who should do the recruiting—library schools or the profession? How might the image of a “feminine” profession be overcome so as to attract more men into the field? How can the salaries and status of librarians be improved so as to interest ambitious students to the field? And, since Williamson was convinced that graduate professional education was essential, he was most interested in the salaries and status of college librarians who were the professionals most college students observed and thus would be motivators for recruitment into the profession. Financial aid also was mentioned in Williamson’s report as being an important element in recruiting.

Table 1 charts the number of library school graduates with the professional degree beginning in 1921 through 2004. Data through 1983 are from the paper by W. L. Williamson in 1986. Data on the number of graduates from 1984 through 2004 are from the annual reports of the Association for Library and Information Science Education.

At the moment these numbers of entry-level professionals seem adequate to meet the demand from the profession for beginning librarians. But the issues relating to recruitment into the profession, identified by Williamson, have not gone away.

*The Curriculum*

Williamson surveyed the curriculum of eleven schools and found that the top five courses in terms of numbers of hours of instruction offered were Cataloging, Book Selection, Reference Work, Classification, and Administration. Other specializations also were taught; among these were Children’s Work, Public Documents, History of Libraries, and School Libraries. His principal observation was that the curriculum represented the demands of librarians who were employing the graduates. Education for the field as it was practiced was a major consideration in what courses library schools offered.

Courses in cataloging, book selection, reference administration and management, continue to be found in the offerings of library and information master’s programs. Most of these, however, no longer are represented in the core curriculum. Since the mid-1990s the curriculum has been changing dramatically. The names of courses have changed as has the question of whether the courses should be required or not. For example, while cataloging for some still may be considered absolutely central to the knowledge base of librarianship, others now are not so sure, particularly as cataloging for a local collection is no longer being done in the local library. Others, who have had the responsibility for the local library’s catalog for some time, fear loss of job, loss of professional identity, and loss of the profession of librarianship if library schools no

Table 1. Library School Graduates 1921–2004  
Annual and Cumulative

Year	Number of Graduates	Cumulative Total	Number of Schools
1921	4664	15	
1922	729	5393	
1923	729	6122	
1924	500	6622	
1925	100	6722	
1926	509	7231	14
1927	512	7743	
1928	1086	8829	
1929	336	9165	
1930	993	10158	
1931	1100	11258	25
1932	1874	13132	
1933	1875	15007	
1934	755	15762	
1935	1188	16950	
1936	1961	18911	26
1937	1058	19969	
1938	1790	21759	
1939	424	22183	
1940	1648	23831	
1941	2101	25932	30
1942	1625	27557	
1943	1016	28573	
1944	919	29492	
1945	824	30316	
1946	1612	31928	36
1947	1355	33283	
1948	1289	34572	
1949	1580	36152	
1950	1581	37733	
1951	1698	39431	36
1952	1698	41129	
1953	1856	42985	
1954	1510	44495	
1955	1731	46226	
1956	1317	47543	31
1957	1297	48840	
1958	1383	50223	
1959	1477	51700	
1960	1714	53414	
1961	1779	55193	33
1962	1926	57119	
1963	2094	59213	
1964	2500	61713	
1965	2827	64540	
1966	3337	67877	37
1967	3897	71774	
1968	4378	76152	
1969	4941	81093	
1970	5506	86599	
1971	6071	92670	57
1972	6877	99547	
1973	7112	106659	

Table 1. *continued*

Year	Number of Graduates	Cumulative Total	Number of Schools
1974	7494	114153	
1975	7282	121435	
1976	7070	128505	64
1977	6856	135361	
1978	6008	141369	
1979	4090	145459	
1980	3899	149358	
1981	3993	153351	69
1982	4228	157579	
1983	3945	161524	
1984	3784	165308	64
1985	3674	168982	63
1986	3231	172213	54
1987	3596	175809	55
1988	4058	179867	59
1989	3868	183735	55
1990	3793	187528	61
1991	4393	191921	57
1992	4699	196620	59
1993	5128	201748	58
1994	4955	206703	55
1995	4805	211508	50
1996	4991	216499	51
1997	5271	221770	56
1998	5068	226838	56
1999	5024	231862	56
2000	5046	236908	56
2001	4877	241785	56
2002	4953	246738	55
2003	4923	251661	54
2004	5175	256836	55

Sources for Table 1: 1921–83 data are from Williamson (1986), p. 446–447. 1984–2004 data are from the Association for Library and Information Science Education. *Library Education Statistical Report*. Chicago, 1986.

longer require a solid knowledge of cataloging principles. The criticisms centered on cataloging have been severe, with practitioners unable to acknowledge that “the organization of information” embraces cataloging, but includes organizing other kinds of information besides paper documents. Another example is the specialization in school libraries. In those states, North Carolina for instance, in which professionally educated librarians are required to staff school libraries, that specialization will be included in the curriculum. In those states such as California where there is no requirement that the public schools include a professionally educated librarian on the staff, the library education programs may or may not include a school library specialization. The point is, if there are jobs for catalogers—or any particular specialization—schools will teach that specialization. If the profession as it is practiced, is seeking candidates for jobs requiring a master’s degree from an ALA accredited program in a

particular specialization, it will make its wishes known to the library educators as to the type of specializations it needs and the program will likely respond. This response to the profession is required in the *ALA Standards for Accreditation*.

The curriculum has been a matter of interest worldwide, as schools have embraced information studies and sought to determine the appropriate changes useful to the profession. The Bologna process is the major reform in higher education in Europe. It grew out of the Bologna Declaration signed in Bologna in 1999 by the Ministers of Education in twenty-nine European countries<sup>5</sup> The European goal of harmonization has led to educational goals to facilitate student and faculty mobility and to seek standardized curriculum and qualifications. Library education in Europe has varied considerably from country to country. The effort now is to achieve agreement among the various programs in the many countries. The debate on the LIS curriculum has been an ongoing process over the past several years, and the first published report was released in 2005 (Kajberg & Lorrington). The report offers a fine description of LIS curriculum in Europe and proposes some agreements on future development. The ongoing work in Europe will be important for educators and practitioners in the United States to watch, particularly in relation to degree qualifications necessary for employment as professional librarians in the United States.

An international survey of competencies, conducted in 2000/2001 concluded that a consensus was emerging on the important competencies that should be in the curriculum of schools of library and information studies. These were:

knowledge of information theory, information use and user, the social context of information, information needs, ethics, information resource development concepts and processes, information organization and processing, information searching and retrieval, access services, automation and networking, web design and searching, research capabilities, planning and evaluation, human resource skills, and communication. (Rehman, 2002)

Following World War II there were many conferences and reports on education for librarianship (Carroll 1970) and education for various specializations was debated. New pressures emerged as the scientific community gained in importance and its literature exploded (Williams & Zachert 1986). While some, such as Mortimer Taube (1953), saw a complete split between what was then called “documentation” and librarianship, what ultimately happened during the 1950s–70s was an acceptance, albeit gradual, of information science into the library school curricula.

Moving into the 1980s there was need for library education programs to examine what the Information Age had brought. The challenges as articulated by Williams and Zachert (1986) remain:

[the movements into the information age] compel attention to the need for change, for bringing together traditional library education and the new information programs, for reexamining the profession's underlying philosophy, for converging the information professions, for developing new types of education to support the whole. To achieve such a turnabout judiciously, harmoniously, and to the optimal benefit of society is the task educators now face.

The educational programs for the profession have their base in the professional practice, as they have from the beginning. One of the good collaborations between librarianship as practiced and librarianship as taught is the work on library standards, assessment, and library effectiveness. F. Wilfrid Lancaster taught many library school students about the purposes and methods of evaluation of various library services and practices. His work and that of others, including Robert Orr, a fine practitioner in medical librarianship who published the seminal theoretical article on evaluation in 1973; Ernest DePropso and Ellen Altman who did early work on public library effectiveness; followed by Nancy Van House and many others, provide evidence of the work library educators have done in service to librarianship as practiced.

Library educators and library practitioners were shocked by the University of Chicago's decision to close its Graduate Library School in the 1980s; by Columbia University's decision to close its library and information school in the 1990s; and the efforts at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), among others, to close those library and information science programs. While the actual reasons for these institutional actions were influenced by local situations, they have their base in the fierce competition on university campuses for resources in terms of faculty, students, dollars, and space.

The Berkeley program emerged as a changed information school removing education for librarians completely from its curriculum and turning its attention (where most of the faculty already had turned) to the study of all aspects of information. Its mission statement says:

The UC Berkeley School of Information prepares leaders and pioneers solutions to the challenges of transforming information—ubiquitous, abundant, and evolving—into knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

The UCLA program changed dramatically too, in its name (now a Department of Information Studies within the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies), in its curriculum, and in its faculty. UCLA did not abandon library education completely, but, like Berkeley and other programs in research universities, it sought more leverage in broadening its curriculum so as to study all aspects of information, moving the curriculum and the research interests away from an institution-specific type of professional education, which is what *library* education programs represented.

While library education programs placed in schools within research universities either close or move away from a professional perspective to a more broadly defined study of information with a discipline perspective, new library educational programs are emerging, which appear to have support from the practitioner community. Columbia University, through its School of Continuing Education, now is offering a masters degree in information and archive management. The curriculum emphasizes particular types of information content (business information, government information, records and archives management, for example) and its faculty are librarians working in the various libraries at Columbia.<sup>7</sup> California State University, Northridge, is introducing a master's program in Library and Information Management jointly sponsored by the Roland Tseng College of Extended Learning and the University Library.<sup>8</sup> There is a newly accredited program at Valdosta State University in Georgia. The program, Master of Library and Information Science, has its stated mission "to provide a quality publicly supported education for generalists and specialists in the library and information science fields. Its primary focus is to educate librarians for academic, public, and special libraries in Georgia."<sup>9</sup>

These developments suggest that market analyses and assessment of student and employer demand is leading some schools to turn again to professional education for the library environment. They also suggest that some programs may return to a vocational approach to library and information science education, the approach adopted by Melvil Dewey and criticized so forcibly in the reports commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation. These will be interesting developments to watch in terms of course offerings, the faculty—practitioner based or academic based, the student body, and most importantly those employing the graduates.

### *The Faculty*

Williamson is scathing in his report on the faculty. Of the twelve schools that were offering ten or more classroom hours at the time of his investigation only 52 percent of the instructors were college graduates. This statistic has provided the benchmark against which subsequent change in the qualifications of the teaching faculty has been measured. The qualifications of the teaching faculties also changed as library education was placed firmly in the university. The placement of library education in the university was a strong recommendation of Williamson. He believed, and history has proven him right, that such a change, that is removing professional library education from public libraries, would improve professional library education. As universities themselves required educational training beyond the bachelor's degree, now at the PhD level, continual improvement has been made in the qualifications of the faculty. In the most recent survey of library and information science faculty, 92 percent



of full-time faculty at the fifty-six schools reporting had completed doctoral degrees.<sup>10</sup>

The library profession, like others, welcomes the contributions of part-time faculty or adjunct faculty or clinical faculty, those practitioners working at a high level in a particular specialization in the field, who teach a course in their specialization from time to time. These part-time faculty members, while making fine contributions to professional education at the master's level, are supplements to the educational program, providing good instruction, but not providing the core of the educational program for the profession. The 2004 ALISE data show that 764 people taught part-time. This represents a full-time faculty equivalent of 234, which is 23 percent of the total FTE faculty strength. This percentage is one to watch as programs like Columbia emerge, which have as the base faculty, working practitioners. It also bears watching in terms of the credential required of the faculty.

Using the most recently published ALISE data (2004) the total number of the full-time faculty in the fifty-six reporting schools was 785. The average faculty size was 14 with a range of 5 in two schools to a high of 41 in one. Small faculties remain the norm in American library schools.

While faculty credentials don't ensure an interest in or ability to do research, the PhD as a credential now is expected in full-time faculty hiring in American universities. At the very least it is an indicator that the faculty have been prepared to do research through the requirement of a doctoral dissertation.

#### *Accreditation and Certification*

The Association of American Library Schools was organized in 1915. While it adopted standards that would be required of all schools desiring membership, as is often the case in the establishment of specialized organizations, the founding members set higher standards for new members coming in than the founding members could meet. The association, being unwilling to remove any member who did not meet its established membership criteria, therefore, was unable to enforce any agreed upon standards for library schools.

In 1919, Williamson, at the request of the American Library Association, surveyed the library education scene. In his report to the ALA he recommended that the ALA establish a training board to coordinate the educational efforts for the field. The American Library Association subsequently embraced the responsibility for setting the standards for library education and assessing the library schools against those standards. The ALA has continued to develop standards for library and information science education, the most recent statement was adopted in 2008. Through its Committee on Accreditation, ALA also has continued to assess those

programs that seek accreditation, making the assessment against its standards. A significant change was made in the standards adopted in 1972 and subsequently continued into the current standards, that is, the programs are to be evaluated against their own and their institution's objectives. Observers familiar with tight prescriptions made by accrediting agencies for professional schools in fields outside of librarianship find this to be troublesome. What it does enable is accreditation for library and information science programs within institutions with wide-ranging missions and purposes. For many this is strength. Particularly for those schools that serve a tight local or regional market, not a national one, it is of particular value. For others who seek a prescribed curriculum for all graduates, it is a negative.

Many professional associations representing specializations within the library and information science field, including the Society of American Archivists, the Special Libraries Association, Association for Library and Information Science Education, the Medical Library Association, the American Association of Law Libraries, have an interest in accreditation of programs. All have agreed to let the ALA continue its work in accrediting educational programs in library and information science and in developing the standards for accreditation. In undertaking this responsibility the ALA does take into consideration the goals and objectives of education for the various specializations. All of the stakeholders acknowledge that the accreditation of programs for the master's level educational programs is designed to evaluate educational programs that educate for the entry level into the field.

As the profession has changed and become more technologically sophisticated, and as the organizations in which professionals work also have become more complex, continuing education programs have been developed, and growing interest in certification programs has emerged. Accreditation is based at the institution level, and recognition is placed there. That is, accreditation is the process of affirming that an educational institution meets established levels of quality in carrying out its program. Graduation from an accredited program is an important consideration for many jobs, but it must be clearly understood that the individual is not accredited, the institution is.

Certification is recognition attached to the individual, and there has been growing interest among practitioners to establish certification programs for library professionals. The Medical Library Association has a long history of continuing education for medical librarians, with certification having been a part of that. The American Library Association only recently established its first certification program. It is a program that will enable the certification of public library administrators. The voluntary post-MLIS certification program is aimed at public librarians who have had at least three years of supervisory experience. The program is based

on nine standards that are designed to provide a breadth of skills necessary for public library management. Four courses represent the core: budget and finance, management of technology, organization and personnel administration, planning and management of buildings.

While there is growing interest in certification programs, there also are many continuing education courses aimed at developing the leadership in librarianship (Mason & Wetherbee, 2004). Other courses and workshops seek to introduce new knowledge, skills, and abilities in areas such as special collections and assessment. While some of these programs have been organized within the framework of schools of library and information science, most have been developed and conducted by the practitioner community. Enrollments in all of these courses suggest that there is a need for such courses and a market for them. And new courses continue to be developed and offered.

### ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL TENSIONS AND CHANGE

So what does the future hold for professional education in library and information science? Libraries have undertaken major change as the new models of scholarly communication, the new technologies, and the interests of the user have brought about change. Librarians have not sat idly by on the sidelines, but have embraced change. As a result, jobs have changed and continue to do so and new jobs are being created. The question for the educator is whether the historic reliance on the master's degree from an ALA accredited program will continue to be valued and sought after in new hires or if a new model will emerge. And, if a new model is required, where will that educational program be placed, who will the teaching staff be, what kind of curriculum will be offered, what will the research base be, who will make the necessary assessments as to quality and against what standards, and a very essential question, "Will the students come?"

Universities, having embraced vocational education historically by placing professional schools within their purview, may decide that this kind of education is no longer in their mission. That decision certainly played a part in some of the closings of library schools in major research universities, and it has been at the heart of some of the dramatic restructuring of other programs. Library education programs in institutions that do not emphasize research to the extent the major research universities do, may continue to thrive. These may seek accreditation, as the Valdosta program has done, or they may not, as the Columbia program has decided, and will perhaps return to a vocational model that was so decried by C. C. Williamson. Those that have established degree programs through distance education programs may continue as long as the distance programs continue to bring in adequate funds. Blaise Cronin assesses these situations and suggests that future may in fact separate one set of schools from another. (Cronin, 2002)

And then the practitioner community, seeking ways to upgrade the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the members of the current workforce, and looking to hire people with backgrounds not yet found among library and information science graduates, may continue to design and implement continuing educational programs, long- and short-term residency programs, and other creative models to bring into libraries a workforce educated in new areas.

Libraries are continuing, they are not closing. They require an educated workforce to serve their publics. Reflective practitioners and educators are striving to answer the many and complex questions relating to the education of that workforce.

Ragnar Audunson (2007) assesses the development in the field according to three perspectives: the vocational perspective, the professional perspective, and the discipline perspective. He correctly observes that over the past decade many educators and researchers have been moving library science education away from a professional program of study to a discipline-oriented information science field. This effort and the change that has resulted have led to some bitter battles within the LIS faculties and have pitted some practitioners against educators. Audunson offers a reasoned approach:

The disciplinary approach and the profession-oriented approach represent two epistemologies that produce different knowledge that together adds to the repertoire and arsenal of knowledge of LIS. Initiatives that can trigger dialogue and communication between different approaches to LIS research and education are probably more fruitful than efforts that are concentrated on one specific perspective when developing curricula. Just as libraries are vital in constituting librarianship as a professional field, the profession-oriented perspective plays a vital integrating role in keeping the patchwork-like field of LIS together as a field of research and education.

Professional education for the library and information science field has an impressive history. The practice of librarianship has been enriched by the knowledge gained from a research-based educational program placed within the university, and the research base has been enriched by the work of educators and researchers who have concentrated on questions growing out of the workplace. The objectives of all professional schools are to educate and train present and future practitioners in the profession and to advance knowledge relevant to the practice of the profession. Library and information science has done this well while meeting many challenges in its efforts to do so. New challenges now are arising and the responses to those are many and varied.

All of the efforts for change in library education are based in the quest for quality in the educational program and quality in the workplace. The

debates about curriculum and the changes in educational programs will continue and will enrich the discussion and the developments of the profession. Those educators moving the educational programs into a discipline-based design and away from professional practice cannot ignore the fact that the continuation of any educational program is influenced by whether there are students interested in undertaking the program of study. And students, ultimately, are interested in the question of whether there are jobs for them at the end of their study. So education and practice are partners in the continuing development of the field.

## NOTES

1. Quoted in Utley (1951). pp. 137, 139.
2. Quoted in Utley (1951). p. 156.
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