

Some Current Concepts About Library Education

The librarian of the future must be more than the traditional librarian-type, more than a cataloger or reference librarian or bibliographer. He must be a humanist in the real sense of the word. He must not merely handle and hand out books. He must know their contents. He must communicate, he must understand. Library education must be less involved with facts and content, more concerned with ideas and communication. Then, after our technological problems have been solved, libraries can turn to people and to people-oriented programs.

THE LIBRARY AS AN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

A CASE IS MADE by Jacques Barzun for a new roving, reading professional librarian who is a brain worker and a scholar. Barzun thinks of the public library as an intelligence agency and of the librarian as the one who has an obligation to rescue his library from an "avalanche of books, a blizzard of newspapers, a hailstorm of quarterlies." He declares that the librarian must keep his library from turning into a city dump. Barzun admits that there may be an increase in the quantity of recorded facts but he defines knowledge differently. "It will be found by those who inquire with care that a very large part of the supposed new knowledge is old knowledge rehashed or else needlessly transferred from one container to another, in either case denatured."¹

He goes on to say that only the librarian can save us from perishing un-

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der the suffocation of publications. "In a word, the librarian must learn what is actually a poor duplicate under guise of a new book. . . . The librarian must serve teacher and student as he has always done, but no longer with mere technical information about the place of books and their titles; this time he must have a first-hand knowledge of their contents and their value; he must in himself and by himself be an intelligence agency, be the glowing point of contact between his library and the inquiring mind . . . (thus the librarian) would in truth be restoring to the ranks of brain workers the now forgotten scholar."²

THE LIBRARY SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE AND TEACHING METHODS

Dorothy Bendix has referred to the teaching of the concept of intellectual freedom in library schools. Her proposition is that teaching is conditioned by the library school atmosphere, the outside activities of faculty members, and the image faculty members create.³

A good deal of attention has been

given recently to library school teaching methods and teaching resources. W. J. McKeachie in a general article on teaching emphasizes the fact that the effectiveness of a teaching method depends upon the competence and enthusiasm of the teacher.⁴ "If the teacher is important, his enjoyment of method becomes a critical variable. . . . National Merit Scholars agree with this philosophy and consider one of the critical variables influencing their choice of a field to be the instructor's enthusiasm."⁵

There are many proponents of the traditional *lecture-discussion* teaching method, and the greatest teachers have achieved their greatest successes through the Socratic discourse. Alan Cartter has been quoted as saying that technical improvements affect the informational and routinized aspects of learning, but that the essential aims of liberal learning—wisdom, understanding, and tolerance—are attainable only through personal confrontation of teacher and student.

What then is the *role of technology in teaching*?² There are many questions about the role of the new technologies in libraries and in library education. These center around computer technology, instructional television, cartridge loading films and projectors, and the learning center concept. Computers are being used in instruction. For example, IBM has a program which permits the transmission of courses by telephone wire to any location in the country.

The introduction of cartridge loading films and projectors represents one important development. The student can now consult a file as he would a book, and he can do this by inserting a cartridge and flipping a switch. Another recent teaching device is the video tape recorder using remote control camera facilities. These permit the filming of live class meetings and allow instantaneous playback of the recorded material. Television in the classroom can be used to

receive either live or prerecorded programs from broadcasting studios or as an independent audiovisual unit through the video tape.

Thus, a variety of materials is available for instructional purposes. In addition to those already named are overhead projectors, tape recorders, record players, and slide and filmstrip projectors. Of particular interest are the improved 8mm film projectors and film loops now available. These are easy to use and are adapted to facilitate individual study and replay.

Dial access is a technological teaching aid with great potential for higher education. Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma has introduced a dial access retrieval system "complete with digital computer for fast dial code retrieval, instructional materials centers, 130 access stations, television studios, recording facilities, tape-storage banks and a systems directory."⁶ William W. Jernigan, director of learning resources at Oral Roberts University, describes the new school's academic program as one placing heavy reliance upon an audiovisual retrieval system which houses both library and audiovisual facilities in a center designed architecturally to symbolize a total learning atmosphere. Early in the planning it was decided to automate the circulation department of the center. "Books were supplied with punch cards for check-out purposes; all bibliographical information and call numbers were stored on computer tape. The most dramatic developments in the DAIR usage, according to Jernigan, "have been in the social sciences and the natural sciences. Entire humanities courses complete with fully produced films, dramatic segments, historical sketches, and art identification have been programmed within the last year and are even offered for summer study without the need of supervisor or professor . . . specific developments in the area of the natural sciences have includ-

ed an audio-tutorial lab."⁷

Library school curricula and teaching methods are being influenced by changing concepts and new resources in certain types of libraries. For example, numerous innovations are being adopted in public schools. The school library has changed from the traditional library to a media center. School libraries are rapidly moving toward the use of computers to improve book processing, bibliographic, reference, and circulation services. Audiovisual materials and remote access facilities are available in many schools, and in some instances the school library is truly becoming the center of the instructional program. Some of the newest technologies are being demonstrated in the library of the Oak Park and River Forest High School in Illinois. According to its library project director, Ted Johnson, the retrieval system of the library can even assist the student at home. "If the student's home is equipped with a standard touch-tone telephone, he can call the computer and direct it to connect him with any of the programs in the retrieval system. Thus, the largest communication system in the world becomes an economical tool for extending library services and makes random access retrieval even more available."⁸ Reference materials, drill exercises, instructional units, and other library materials are placed at the student's fingertips. The random access retrieval system can serve all areas of the curriculum; it facilitates independent study, and can assist both the gifted student and the slow learner.

Learning centers are planned to provide individual study spaces fitted with remote control telephone and push button systems which allow automatic playback of pictures in audio and video form. One such center is located at Oklahoma Christian College. Here there is space for 1,000 individual study carrels. Each student is assigned his own space. Each carrel is equipped with a

telephone dial system which provides the student with access to 100 taped lectures. The student retrieves the lecture he wants by dialing a code number. By this plan, the student is encouraged to assume more responsibility for his own education.

NEWER APPROACHES TO TEACHING IN LIBRARY SCHOOLS

One specific case of the use of a new technology is Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI). This is being used by Thomas Slavens at the University of Michigan in his reference courses. He says the computer can be used in the developmental and administrative stages of diagnostic tests, tutorial instruction, and drill, as well as in the development of programmed learning exercises and in simulated library situations. Slavens says that computer-assisted instruction can help to correct dissatisfaction in library education by making available a type of learning experience in which reference situations can be simulated. "Situations can be set up, for example, in which the computer acts as the patron of the library and the students respond. Because of the difficulties students have in getting professional experience in libraries before graduation from library school, this is a good reason to have simulated interaction."⁹

The Library School at Syracuse University has developed a computer-based laboratory for library science students utilizing the Library of Congress MARC magnetic tapes. The focus of LEEP (Library Education Experimental Project) was twofold: first, "development of the laboratory as an instructional tool," and second, "exploration of such a facility in library education." The instructional aspect of the project is really "learning with MARC tapes."¹⁰

Various other techniques and approaches are being tried by library school faculty members in an attempt

to provide variety to students in the educational process. One approach is *team teaching*, a method whereby two or more teachers work together to instruct the same group of students. Team teaching may be used in various classes. Two instructors may participate in teaching the same class within a given hour; each may have a special competency in a particular subject coverage; the instructors may engage in certain activities which require the participation of two or more people; or, they may have two or more experimental groups which are trying out new techniques or approaches within a given subject area. For example, half the class might be taught by one instructor, and the other half by a second instructor.

The *case study* is used in certain schools and, as employed in basic reference, is a record of a reference encounter in a library. Professor Tom Galvin of Simmons College says the case method usually begins with a description in narrative form of the library in which the problem occurs, followed by a dialog between reference librarian and library patron. At the conclusion of the reference interview, the student is expected to carry the problem to a point of solution within the context of the resources available to the particular library described. As Galvin has pointed out, the case study method is particularly valuable because it is capable of incorporating elements of the reference encounter in qualitative terms.¹¹ Mildred Lowell, professor at the University of Indiana Library School, has written about the case study approach in management. The cases discussed in her three-volume study present problems faced by librarians in a wide variety of library environments. "The cases were not written to prove any theories or philosophies of management but are included because of their intrinsic interest and challenge and because of their value as teaching and learning media."¹²

The *simulation* technique is a method whereby the student is confronted with a simulated problem closely resembling an actual situation. The student is asked to examine the problem, assemble relevant data, and plan alternate strategies for solution. The aim is to develop skills in judgment and decision-making. This technique is used in the Library School at the University of Southern California as part of the "screening" examination for Ph.D. candidates. Each student is given two weeks to solve a problem appropriate to his own area of specialization. The student may consult any source which he thinks might help him solve it. At the end of the two weeks he must present a well-written, documented report. This assignment assesses the student's knowledge, judgment, and ability to adjust to a specific problem and time limit.

Role playing, which is a form of simulation, is also used at USC; this technique has been used effectively to study censorship cases. It has also been used in administration classes where students assume the roles of a librarian and a library board of trustees who are meeting to consider certain typical problems.

Group dynamics, or "T-groups," encourage openness of social response. Problems are identified in a group setting where participants acknowledge their prejudices and attitudes, thereby encouraging further inquiry. Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles recently conducted a sensitivity training workshop which was reported to be very successful by the librarians who attended. This technique has been used in fields centering around human relations. Caution, however, is advised for inexperienced groups lacking a skilled facilitator. "But for the emotionally healthy manager, apparently it is an extremely effective means for deepening his understanding of how individuals work together to accomplish their purposes."¹³

In some administration classes, the *systems approach* theory has been recommended. The systems approach focuses on problem-solving, and is defined as an analysis of the full scope of alternate solutions. The aim of the systems approach is to achieve a more effective operation, and if possible, to do so at a lower cost. The Library School at the University of Southern California offered a six-week institute in the 1971 summer session on "Systems Analysis and Design, with Emphasis on the Role of Middle Managers in Public Libraries." Participants were required to have had at least two years of professional library experience in a supervisory position.

Independent study and honors programs are not new, but the concept of combining them with practical problem assignments is a new one. One such program was proposed at the University of Southern California, and provided for a tri-semester break allowing the student a month for independent study between each tri-semester. The proposal was not adopted, but New College in Sarasota, Florida has used this plan.

Some schools require a certain amount of *off-campus practice* experience. This may include an internship or attendance at an international library school. Or, if such a school were established, it could entail studying on board a ship which would travel to different countries for a specified period of time.

The problem-oriented curriculum is interesting, and may represent the wave of the future. A course, or even a whole curriculum, could be developed around problems; for example, a metropolitan public library might concentrate on the problems of the inner city and on its ability to assist in their solution.

Student-planned and student-directed experimental courses, or the so-called "free universities" which some universities have instituted, provide another

type of educational enterprise, one which can involve the faculty, administration, students, outside lecturers, and specialists. These groups can participate in both a teaching and a learning capacity.

It seems likely that students in the future will be more mobile in their educational programs than they are today, and that they will study at several universities. (Certain universities may be singled out as hubs of intellectual activity and creative ferment.) It is equally likely that teachers will teach at several universities, thereby making scholars and specialists available to more students.

The quiet, contemplative life of the traditional library scholar will be a thing of the past. There may be a few who will escape or retreat to isolated areas in search of the reflective life, but chances are that these will be few in number.

A LIBRARY WITHOUT WALLS

An unorthodox idea, but one which seems to have merit, is a plan whereby students in any library school might move from one school to another and enroll in courses in any of them. Students could gain wider experience through more exposure to different teachers, students, and courses. Although students would be required to complete at least one term at each school, optimum flexibility and variety would be provided. This arrangement would probably not be feasible in a one-year master's degree program, but it might work well in a two-year degree program. Such a plan would be difficult to administer, but given the cooperation of the schools and the universities involved, it would not be impossible. There are many possibilities open to libraries and library education for change, innovation, and experimentation. The future could be exciting!

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