

Experts in the management of and planning for networks, agree that library networking is moving from traditional bibliographic networks to broad information delivery and access support systems, and from a national to a global focus. Because of this transition, library professionals face major challenges in the 21st century.

Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the institute is tuition-free, with lodging and meals at Rosary College provided from Sunday evening, May 14, through Friday afternoon, May 19. However, participation is limited to 75 library professionals with relevant networking experience. The selection committee is chaired by

Beverly Lynch, university librarian at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

All interested professionals should submit an application by April 1 to: Beverly Lynch, University Librarian, University of Illinois at Chicago, Box 8198, University of Illinois, Chicago, IL 60680.

For a free brochure, contact the Rosary College Graduate School of Library and Information Science at (312) 366-2490, ext. 302, or write: Library Network Management Institute, Rosary College Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 7900 W. Division St., River Forest, IL 60305.



BI Library coursework - faculty attitude

Survey of faculty attitudes towards a basic library skills course 2

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BI vindicated by university faculty members.

The ninety-year evolution of Iowa State University's required library skills course, Library Instruction 160, is described in a feature article in the 1981 *ALA Yearbook*.¹ Today the course is taught twice each semester and students earn one-half credit for their efforts. There are 2.5 FTE library faculty members teaching the course to over 4,000

students each year. In the course students learn the basics of using a library and about the services and resources of the Iowa State University Library. The Library Instruction faculty has written a manual which is used in the course. Supplementing the lectures is a three-part video program produced with the help of the Media Resources Center. Although formal bibliographic instruction has a long tradition at ISU, the basic bibliographic instruction course has often had an uncertain future. Several times in the past it has been targeted for elimina-

¹Warren B. Kuhn and Gertrude Jacobson, "Ninety Years of Library Instruction at Iowa State," *ALA Yearbook*, 1981, 13-18.

tion in order to save money.

Faced with budget reversions in the mid-1980s, when the department head and an instructor retired, the dean of library services was forced to eliminate these two budget lines from a six-person department. In Spring 1986, faced with further budget reversions, the dean listed six options for meeting the library's reversion quota. The last of these was the elimination of the Library Instruction Department. Compounding this situation was the transition to a new university president, who at his first convocation in the Fall of 1986, stated that he wanted all remedial courses abolished. The president had expressed particular interest in the dissolution of Library Instruction 160, which he viewed as remedial.

The University Curriculum Committee had also been discussing this issue. Resolution was necessary because the *University Bulletin*, a catalog of course descriptions and curricular requirements, was scheduled for production.

The Library Instruction Department agreed that it would be useful to poll the university faculty members on their perceptions of the need for a library skills course. Library 160 was already on the minds of the faculty because of articles in the *Ames Daily Tribune* and the *ISU Daily* concerning the possible elimination of the course. Some faculty viewed this as micromanagement by the university president and were upset that curriculum decisions were being made without faculty input. Others were genuinely concerned about the future of the course. But what was the overriding opinion of the faculty on this matter? To obtain that information, the Library Instruction Department decided to survey the faculty on Library Instruction 160 and the teaching of library research skills.

Five-hundred and five faculty members were randomly selected from the 1,763 faculty members on campus. Librarians, extension personnel, and those faculty members known not to have undergraduate teaching responsibilities were eliminated from the population. A stratified sample from seven of the eight university colleges was drawn. The College of Veterinary Medicine was excluded because it does not participate in undergraduate education. There was a return rate of 74%.

Results indicated that faculty members prefer to have the responsibility of teaching library skills taken out of their hands. Seventy percent believed that incoming freshmen do not have the necessary skills to use a research library and 88% believed that it is important for college students to know how to use the library. Despite these beliefs, those faculty teaching courses requiring library research ranged from 12% at the freshmen level to 50% at the senior level. Only 22% indicated that bibliographic instruction was an integral part of their course objectives, and only 10% use library faculty to present course-related bibliographic instruction. Still, 62% believed that a library skills course should be required of undergraduates.

Although rank and type of appointment showed little effect on responses, differences by college were very noticeable in responses to some questions. Also noticeable from the data were differences in responses between the people who require library research in their undergraduate classes and those who don't. Eighty-one percent of those who give library assignments felt freshmen don't have the skills necessary to use a research library while 67% of those who don't give library assignments felt that way. Of those who give library assignments 60% felt Library 160 relieved them of the need to teach skills while only 40% of those who don't require library research felt that way. Also, 66% of those requiring library research thought Library 160 should continue to be required while 51% of those not requiring research felt the course should continue.

The range of support for Library 160 remaining a university required course varied by nearly forty percentage points among the colleges. In the College of Sciences and Humanities only 44% favored the requirement while 47% had no opinion and in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences 82% favored the requirement and only 11% had no opinion. On many of the other questions the trend for support tended to vary by college, with the highest level of support for library usage and the Library 160 requirement coming from the colleges of Family and Consumer Sciences, Education, Agriculture and Engineering, while lower levels of support came from the colleges of Sciences and Humanities, Business and Design. For those desiring complete results and a copy of the survey, please contact the authors.

Results of this survey certainly did not show that the faculty was ready to abolish the Library 160 requirement. The University Curriculum Committee has agreed that the requirement should stand, and it will appear in the 1989-91 *University Bulletin* just as it has in past bulletins.

The Library Instruction faculty believed there was University Faculty support for the course and the survey results confirmed this belief. Fortunately, we did not need to use these results to convince the university administration to keep the course requirement. Individual faculty members, college curriculum committees, and even parents came forth in support of the course. However, should the need arise to further document this support, the data are collected.

Within the library a committee has been established to review bibliographic instruction at Iowa State. This group will study issues relating to bibliographic instruction, such as staffing, resources, and educational objectives. A broader based group, including persons from both inside and outside the Library will decide how best bibliographic instruction can be delivered. This may or may not include keeping the Library 160 requirement in its current form. But, the Iowa State Library will continue to provide bibliographic instruction to all stu-

dents and not leave it up to individual faculty members.

In some universities bibliographic instruction librarians and their services are seen as non-essential or as the fat in the library's budget, while at other universities bibliographic instruction programs are expanding. In any case, decisions on the retention, expansion, or elimination of bibliographic instruction programs are often made without the benefit of data. It behooves the bibliographic instruction librarian to become familiar with survey techniques and to take responsibility for examining bib-

liographic instruction contributions to library services. Most colleges and universities have experts on campus who can help librarians conduct surveys and interpret their results. In this case, the coordinator of instructional development from the Media Resources Center helped with the survey design, while a statistician from the Statistical Lab helped draw the sample and interpret the survey results. Conventional wisdom may believe that bibliographic instruction is a library service luxury but when belief is tested against data, conventional wisdom may be dispelled. ■■



INNOVATIONS

Humor and creativity: Preservation

Library humor

By Norman D. Stevens

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Even the most casual perusal of contemporary ephemeral library publications confirms the fact that the emergent field of preservation has become a fertile field for our imagination. The surprising wealth of library humor that now focuses on this aspect of librarianship deserves attention and analysis. Why should this arcane subject exercise the creative minds of librarians and result in the production of a wide range of what are meant to be—even if they aren't always—humorous items and events? Part of this may be simply the allure of a relatively new field but there may also be some darker underlying explanation.

Much of this humor is generated by preservation advocates themselves largely in the context of their continuing efforts to educate both staff and users. The theory, which I heartily endorse, seems to be that a light-hearted approach in respect to serious efforts to improve the behavior of staff and users in respect to their treatment of our precious books will get the message across in a more palatable fashion and might, thus, even result in actual positive changes in behavior. Whether or not this theory

can be proven, it certainly is widely held.

Perhaps the best example is a splendid 3:55-minute video, *Handle With Care* (\$39.00), produced by Lora Hays at the New York University Libraries. In this offbeat video, which effectively utilizes imaginative fake paper sets, a careless young male patron demonstrates all the wrong ways to treat books to a background of strange comments by an off-screen narrator and weird sounds. As the video ends the reformed user finds true love as he helps an attractive, young, uninformed female patron learn how to treat library books properly.

This same kind of creative approach is often widely used in exhibits, such as that at the Fairfield University Library in 1988, which attempt to visually demonstrate to users the horrors of food and drink in the library and how, in other ways, poor treatment can damage library materials. Using as their theme "Murder in the Stacks," the Fairfield University Library staff, for example, set up two display cases labelled "The Evidence," one of which contained an evening's worth of garbage