

Görüşler / Opinion Papers

Library Science Education in the U.S.A.

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde Kütüphanecilik Bilimi Eğitimi

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Abstract

Classical librarianship drowns in the sea of change. In the United States our profession had indicated a profound change –especially in the last 20 years. Until 1976, 15 schools or departments of librarianship had been closed, and the rest had undergone a serious transformation. During the last 20 years, library education became no more homogeneous as it was in the past. New educational programs show vast diversity. The scope of the mission of library services became enlarged. Type of students, ways of teaching had also indicated a substantial change. On the other hand, the librarian of today requires lifelong self-education.

Keywords: Education for librarianship, Library schools, United States of America.

Öz

Klasik kütüphanecilik değişim denizinde boğulmaktadır. ABD'de, özellikle son 20 yılda mesleğimiz çok değişmiştir. 1976'ya kadar 15 kütüphanecilik okulu veya bölümü kapanmış ve gerisi ciddi bir dönüşüm geçirmiştir. Son 20 yılda, kütüphanecilik eğitimi eskisi kadar tekdüze olmaktan çıkmıştır. Yeni ders programları büyük farklılaşmalar göstermektedir. Kütüphane hizmetleri misyonunun amacı da genişlemiştir. Öğrenci tipi, öğrenim biçimi de değişikliklere uğramaktadır. Diğer taraftan bugünün kütüphanecisi, yaşam boyu kendini eğitime gereksinimi ile karşı karşıyadır.

Anahtar sözcükler : Kütüphanecilik eğitimi, Kütüphanecilik okulları, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri.

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Introduction

Hello, it's a pleasure to be here in Turkey. It is my first trip to your country, which is quite exciting for me. I thank you for the invitation.

Today I will be speaking to you about the education of librarians in the United States. My perspective is that of a graduate, not a professor, not an educator. Much of what I will be discussing today comes from hours of reading the literature but also from my own unique perspective of working in the profession for over twenty years.

First, by way of introduction, let me tell you a little about myself:

My official title is: Information Resource Officer. I work for the Department of State of the U.S. I am a librarian, but I must admit, my position is not a traditional library position. I am a consultant. I have a regional position. This means that I travel quite a bit. I visit U.S. Information Centers throughout Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland and Switzerland. In each of these centers there is a director. Many of the centers used to be traditional libraries, with large collections of books on American issues and culture. Now, they are more likely to have very few books and much much more electronic information or rather, access to electronic information. So what do I do as a consultant? In many ways I am a problem solver, a consensus builder. I work with the staff at each of the centers to better use existing technology, to come up with new ideas on using technology to get our message to our audience and I recommend training opportunities when feasible. I am one of those graduates of library school who finds herself in a very non-traditional library job (I will speak more on that a bit later).

The goal of the centers is to provide the people of the host country with information about the U.S. and most particularly, about the foreign policy of the U.S. We often work with teachers and university librarians in sponsoring joint programs on using technology of the Internet as a teaching tool, particularly for teaching an American studies curriculum. Ninety percent of the material that we used to provide free of charge, in hard copy, on American topics (such as brief guides to our history, society and culture) is now available electronically. Much of what I do, in one way or another relates to tech-

nology. And, aside from the basics, all that I have learned about computers and software applications, I learned AFTER graduating from library school.

Twenty two years ago, when I was a student, there were hardly any computers. (The first IBM PC became commercially available in 1981, I graduated from library school in 1979). Today one can not find a library or a library school without computers. Although library science has always, and continues to be, about information, the organization of information and the distribution of information: getting the right information to the right person at the right time, in this age of technology, we have new tools, new mechanisms and new ways and means of reaching these same goals. Computers have changed not only our profession, but our way of life, our entire society. Logically, the curriculum of the seventies is no longer relevant to today's students and the curriculum *has* adapted to today's technology just as we ourselves have adapted to the vast changes that have occurred in technology over the last twenty years.

So, of course, library education **has** been transformed in the information age and according to one author, "the profession is almost *drowning* in the sea of change" (Stueart 1989).

In twenty years our profession has changed tremendously, in large part, because the tools have changed. Marshall McLuhan once said "We shape our tools, and thereafter, our tools shape us." Few tools have changed more rapidly or radically, than those of the information professional.

Along with this new age of technology came a serious shift in the U.S. economy. Not only has the U.S. been experiencing the longest and largest economic expansion in its history, the workforce has dramatically changed from a largely industrial one to a service economy. The heavy-manufacturing emphasis of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave way to a service economy, and more recently to an information-based economy. The Internet, once the purview of the Defense Department and a handful of prestigious university labs, is now ubiquitous.

- It took Radio 37 years to reach 50 million people.
- It took Personal Computers 17 years to reach 50 million people.

- It took 14 years for television to reach 50 million people.
- **It took only 4 years for Internet to reach 50 million people.**

The turn of the century era of Melvil Dewey is long past and rapid social and economic changes continue. The fast pace of the information world has placed different demands on libraries and librarians.

The new information technologies: PCs, CD-ROMs, Digital Video Conferencing, information storage and retrieval, coupled with the new applications: e-mail, database management systems, online databases, computer imaging, desktop publishing etc. have swept us along on the tide of the technological revolution. They have brought sweeping changes to the profession and to the schools that train people for that profession. And how has the world of library education in the U.S. changed?

According to one educator, writing for the American Library Association journal *American Libraries* in 1995, there has been a paradigm shift and it "has created a crisis of confidence in library education in the minds of many library educators, librarians, and academic administrators. The crisis of confidence has affected the support library schools have received from institutions of higher education" (Ostler and Dahlin, 1995, s. 683).

It is becoming a cliché to say that technology has blown our field wide open but the possibilities do seem endless. But is everyone comfortable with this? Apparently not. Is there perhaps TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON TECHNOLOGY? Where have all the libraries gone? Are there no more children's librarians, no more catalogers, no more book clubs, literacy programs, no more BOOKS hardcover or soft? Have they all been replaced by the point-and-click mentality of the Internet? Not likely. In fact public libraries in the U.S. are thriving like never before. Take a look at what's happening at the Queens Borough Public Library in New York City if you have a chance, or Los Angeles. According to U.S. News and World Report. "It turns out that the very electronic revolution that was supposed to make libraries obsolete has made them indispensable" (Marcus, 1999, s. 48). However, when one reads the literature, particularly concerning library education, there is significant alarm. And when one looks at what has happened over the last twenty years to the

schools in the field of library education, it is no wonder that professionals are concerned.

Fifteen library schools have closed since 1976. Some of them were the most prestigious. Remaining schools have radically changed, merged or transformed themselves and some have even been resurrected.

Library school closings 1978-1999

Columbia University (founded by Melvil Dewey)

University of Chicago

University of Oregon

Brigham Young University

Emory University

Northern Illinois University

University of Minnesota

University of Mississippi

University of Southern California

Case-Western Reserve

Western Michigan University

Almost every school of library and information science in the U.S. and Canada, accredited by the American Library Association, has rethought the population it serves and the way it reaches it. Library school education has been forced to change, with varying degrees of success.

About the Schools

Surviving schools like those at Berkeley and the University of Michigan have rebuilt their programs to train students to create and manage databases, websites, and electronic libraries. These library schools have shifted from an emphasis on training librarians and archivists to serve the public, to a profession more oriented toward managing the information needs of business and government.

Berkeley's new curriculum was adopted in 1995 after university cost-cutters suggested it be shut down. New admissions were halted for two years.

The School of Library and Information Studies was closed and the new School of Information Management and Systems was unveiled.

According to John Berry, former editor of *Library Journal*, these closings are “Casualties of a new bottom-line brutality, obsessions with technology and a belief in library obsolescence that marks the academe of the 80’s and 90’s”.

According to some experts: A number of these library schools were terminated not because there was anything inherently wrong with them, but for financial reasons on the part of the institutions that housed them. The nation was facing some very hard times and there was no end in sight (Futas, 1991, s. 467).

LET’S REVIEW WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN LIBRARY EDUCATION IN THE LAST TWENTY OR SO YEARS

FIRST OF ALL, LIBRARY EDUCATION IS NO LONGER HOMOGENEOUS AS IT ONCE WAS

In the late 70’s and early 80’s, with the advent of computers, all schools began to change their curricula (some faster than others). Those with substantial funding established computer labs, adding a few courses in information science, online searching, database construction, programming languages et cetera. The basic core courses (whatever they were called) remained pretty much the same in the early eighties.

Beginning in the late 80’s, very distinct changes began to sweep through library education programs:

- More radical curriculum changes were made involving the application of technology and information dissemination in libraries.
- The schools themselves were reorganized.
- Collaborative programs were developed with other academic units.
- Specialized tracks were developed (for example: for students who wanted only to study automation or perhaps law, medical librarianship, etc.).

- There was a move to distance education via telecommunication

Even more significant changes were to come in the 90's:

Schools were renamed to include information and management or science. **In the nineties**, there are no more schools of just *library science*. Upon careful review of the remaining 56 ALA accredited programs in Canada and the U.S., *information science* or *information management* dominates the choice of titles. For example:

The University of Tennessee is ***The School of Information Sciences***

Syracuse University is ***The School of Information Studies***

Berkeley is ***The School of Information Management & Systems***

The University of Michigan is ***The School of Information***

With the new curriculum:

- Some schools no longer require cataloging as a core course.
- Some require no core courses at all.
- *Library history*, courses on the book, foundations or *the library in society* are disappearing from the curricula in some schools.
- Older cataloging and classification courses are now courses on information storage and retrieval.
- Reference courses have broadened into *Reference and Information Packaging* courses.
- Courses in Library Administration are now a much broader study of generic administration and managerial strategies.
- Students have moved away from **just** knowing a technology to learning about its applications, and to **developing** applications (in my personal experience, I have seen many librarians who were trained as reference librarians or catalogers, developing Microsoft Access databases or even SQL databases).

What have these curriculum changes brought?

- Some schools have completely reconfigured their programs with an emphasis on applications of technology, design and communication.
- Some are still in the more traditional mode: concentrating on the preparation of librarians who are able to respond to new patterns of service, heavily influenced by technology. These librarians can use the technology to expand the outreach of libraries, which are no longer bound by four walls. In other words, *integrating technology applications in all courses and creating short-term courses as new technologies develop.*
- Schools are developing joint programs: for example with schools of policy studies, higher education, journalism, business, history, law and education.
 - For Example: Drexel University's College of Information Science and Technology offers an MLS and an MIS as well as a third choice as of 1997: an interdisciplinary degree cosponsored by the math and engineering departments, in software engineering.
- To avoid closure, several programs have been placed with other administrative units: Rutgers University's library school was placed with programs in communication and journalism; UCLA's has been placed administratively in the School of Education.
- Distance education has become a hot topic in library education in order to reach more students.
- Undergraduate education programs are again being offered. Several Canadian schools now offer undergraduate programs in archives and records management.
- Doctorate program, once only in a few schools, has spread to many.
- Certificates of advance study and sixth-year degrees—the specialist, is more prevalent.

The name changes and the broadening of missions has not been without controversy: The ALA Congress on Professional Education was held April 30-May 1st, 1999.

According to one source, the congress was prompted by the growing dissatisfaction with the elimination of the word "library" from program titles and a perceived lack of preparation of professionals in certain specialties, high among them youth services. *In other words, there was a backlash.*

Not everyone was happy about the transformation to managing information for the needs of business and government. According to one student at Berkeley, corporate interests view information as a commodity, the last thing they want to see is people handing it out for free. But according to some, handing out information for free is just what librarians are supposed to do. Many believe in the profession's public service tradition and think that the school's new business-oriented approach threatens this time-honored emphasis.

The picture painted over those two days was one of "librarianship as a dissipating profession, with practitioners attempting to enlist technology for the delivery of traditional services, and 'library' schools struggling to survive by adapting to market realities and incorporating a hodgepodge of undefined 'information' fields into the curriculum" (Kniffel, 1999, s.12).

In fact, a major issue being debated in the profession at large is: is information an economic public good or a marketplace commodity? In other words:

Culture Clash: Can "soft-edged" service tradition coexist with the "hard-nosed" entrepreneurial future?

According to Sheila Bertram and Hope Olson in their article on this culture clash, "The service, soft-edged and traditional, represents the historical culture of librarianship, carrying with it our traditional social commitment and service responsibility. By contrast, the entrepreneurial infotech culture is future-oriented, scientific, material, and hard-nosed" (Bertram ve Olson, 1996, s.36).

Can the user-centered and system-centered approaches be harmonized in library education?

Another primary question, according to Robert D. Stueart of Simmons College in Boston is “whether schools are educating librarians, or special librarians, or archives managers, or records managers, or information managers. Are those terms mutually exclusive, or is there a generic curriculum which meets the educational needs of all” (Stueart 1989).

According to Cleveland Public Library Director Marilyn Gell Mason, there was no way to overstate the magnitude of the crisis in library education. The three major areas of concern for her are: the shortage of qualified graduates, core competencies and the loss of the word “library” from program titles. In other words, the move away from traditional library core courses in the curriculum.

Julie Cummins, ALA Executive Board member and coordinator of children’s services at the New York Public Library agrees with Mason in terms of finding qualified graduates. Her library is unable to recruit and retain youth services professionals and find that they must go to Canada to find young professionals to fill these jobs.

During brainstorming sessions on the skills needed, these were at the top of the list:

Communications, management, political, technology.

At the end of the congress, the following recommendations were made for alleviating the disconnect between educators and practitioners:

- Alumni should become involved in their alma maters with both time and money, to give back to the profession by mentoring and recruiting and to continue with professional development throughout their careers.
- Library associations must develop a national advocacy campaign for librarianship as a career choice.
- Educators must collaborate with practitioners and engage in targeted marketing and recruitment.

- Educators must provide quality distance education and increase diversity.
- A total overhaul of the accreditation process, including the establishment of an independent accrediting agency supported by all associations with an interest in library and information science education.

According to Ted Marchese, editor of *Change* magazine “when the bad times come, these will be the good old days very provider of a service – and libraries are the single most expensive provider of a service on campus - will come under the most intense scrutiny”...What will count more than anything else, he said, will be perceptions of the profession on the part of deans, presidents, administrators and faculty. “The Web is going to transform almost everything we do,” he predicted, and it “will become the central resource for teaching and learning, for writing, for publication, for content delivery” (Kniffel, 1999).

About the Students

As the degree programs have changed, so have, in some ways, the type of students they attract. With the new emphasis on technology, many are people are pursuing a library science degree as a second career.

The typical graduate school student is in their mid to late thirties

- 80% are female
- 90% work full-time while going to school
- 80% work in a library
- Half already work in the profession and want to advance their career
- Half want to enter the profession for the first time.

Enrollment

In spite of the decline in the number of library schools, the number of students enrolled and the number of graduates both show that the field is expanding. In the age of information, those who can locate, organize and

interpret information are in high demand. This new demand has opened up a considerable number of new career opportunities, attracting people in record numbers.

Despite the decline in the number of degree granting programs, the number of students enrolled and the number of graduates show expansion. From 1986 to 1996, the number of master's degrees awarded annually in the U.S. and Canada rose from 3,596 to 5273, an increase of 46 percent (Dalrymple, 1997, s.31).

The diversity of the student body is also changing. In the U.S. diversity in recruitment is a high priority to the profession. Enrollment of minorities went from 529 in 1986 to 1,138 in 1996, more than doubling during the decade.

The ratio of women to men has stayed about the same, slightly more than three females to every male.

Preparing students:

- The environment that students find themselves in is vastly more complicated work environment.
- They must organize huge quantities of information resources within and outside the library.
- They must adapt quickly to new technologies.
- They must educate and reeducate their clientele about new technologies: innovations involving computers-laptops, local area and national networks, integrated systems, sophisticated online retrieval, cd-rom databases, interactive audiovisual systems (DVC).

In addition to traditional university, public and school library settings, students are finding jobs in government, corporations and as independent brokers and "knowledge managers." A growing number are going to work outside traditional library settings. Many are becoming web masters and data base and network managers. Administrators at top library schools report that 30-40% of their graduates went into non-traditional jobs. Because of this new and crucial role librarians are able to play in this complex information age, there is a new bent to the age old stereotypical image.

According to the director of distance learning at Emporia State University „They know what is important and what's not and they know what to do with it when they find it. Corporations are really waking up to the importance of knowledge management.“

All of this continues to transform the curriculum related to library information search, acquisition, retrieval, processing and storage to an extent unimaginable twenty-five years ago.

About the Faculty/Schools

Despite the changing population of LIS schools and the growing number of graduates, the number of full-time faculty has remained stable, increasing only slightly. In 1986 the number of full-time faculty was 561; by 1996 it was 601, an increase of 7% (Dalrymple, 1997, s. 31).

Like most of higher education, LIS programs are doing more with less. Universities, like corporations and government, are reinventing and restructuring themselves. One way of doing this is, as I mentioned earlier, merging two or more degree programs into one administrative unit. Of the 56 accredited programs today, many are partnered with other disciplinary or professional programs and more are anticipated. Typical partners include: communications, computer science and education. These interdisciplinary arrangements with other departments broaden students' perspective and stimulate various joint-degree programs.

Many programs use part-time adjunct faculty to teach additional courses creating partnerships between the school and the professionals in the field. As enrollments have risen and the field's scope has enlarged, the number of part-time faculty has increased: 23% over the last decade, from 609 in 1986 to 752 in 1996.

Schools offering a doctoral program generally have larger faculty. Of the 56 accredited programs, 24 offer doctoral degrees. These schools have faculties ranging from 15 to 30 members. The typical program has a full-time faculty of 11. A decade ago, the typical size was 10.

Schools vary substantially in the number of students they enroll. In 1996, the largest program enrolled 638 students, the smallest enrolled only 71. More than half the schools have enrollments of 150-400.

Distance Learning

Distance education has done much in the last decade to increase access to a degree in underserved areas. Some use traditional teaching methods at the extension sites. However, many more are taking a high-tech approach using two-way interactive video (DVCs), multimedia Internet conferencing, and videotapes.

Emporia State University has offered a Masters in Library Science degree in Denver since 1989 through its distance education program. Students attend classes in Denver once a month on Friday evenings, all day Saturday and Sunday morning, and complete the rest of their studies from home, communicating with faculty and classmates over the Internet. Some classes are offered completely over the Internet. This facilitates learning and earning a degree for those who work full-time and/or do not live near a degree granting University. The program is geared toward working adults and takes about three years to complete. The program is accredited by ALA. Forty-five of the fifty-six accredited schools now offer distance learning opportunities.

Trends

- Advisory boards and focus groups of employers, faculty, and students to keep programs vital and responsive to society's needs.
- Grants, outside government funding, and increased revenues from entrepreneurial initiatives enable schools to deliver high-quality education:
 - THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION: 50 million dollars a year for the next 20 years, full tuition, the student must maintain 3.3 or better, must come from a low-income family, must show leadership or community activities. The student can pursue any undergraduate pro-

gram that they choose. They can also have a full scholarship to graduate school if they choose to study math, science, engineering, computer technology, **library science**, or teaching (Jackson, 1999, s.A23).

o Pamela Samuelson, a leading cyberlaw expert and intellectual-property scholar at the University of Berkeley (and a joint appointment at Berkeley's School of Information Management and Systems as well as in the School of Law) has donated \$2 million to set up public interest law clinics The Electronic Privacy Information Center, an advocacy group based in Washington which campaigns for Internet privacy and civil liberties and a recipient of \$1 million, has announced they will use the money to set up a summer internship for law students interested in high-tech public-interest law. The idea is to promote the public interest in the Internet legal battles now being waged in courts, legislatures and administrative agencies across the United States (Kaplan, 2001, s.15).

Other trends

- Major curriculum reform continues.
- Instruction is no longer confined to the lecture method; other methods include electronic classrooms and modular, self-paced, computer-based instruction, and distance learning are on the rise.
- Students are undertaking group and community outreach projects.

Solutions

One of the positive results of library school closings is a focused interest on the future directions for library education.

Curriculum reform is only part of the solution. Improved mechanisms for verifying the quality of library education programs and the competence and integrity of librarians are needed.

Some think that in order to establish a home for our discipline, we need to identify ourselves as part of the information industry and show others in this field that we contribute importantly to the whole.

Many maintain that we must improve public relations.

Conclusions

Finally, I would like to leave you with a few final thoughts that seem to sum up the environment that library educators as well as practitioners find themselves in:

On technology

"Indeed it is ludicrous to imagine one voice without the other. Technology enables service and service gives purpose to technology. And neither 'information' nor 'library' is a dirty word. Really, these two cultures are not mutually exclusive, but that does not mean that we are homogeneous either. It means that we are not two-dimensional, but far richer than that. To recognize and promote our richness, we must value a diversity of views (Bertram, 1996, s.36)."

On education

"No library school can prepare students for universal library operations, because there are none anymore. Implementing the basic tenets of librarianship in a practical sense, with integrity and understanding, means lifelong self-education and the ability to adapt to change, because change is constant" (Miller, 1996, s.45).

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