

EDITORIAL

In a recent article [1], Michael Gorman suggested the following ways of improving library education:

- (1) We should eschew collectively the ‘information’ heresy.
- (2) We should understand and define the totality of the profession of librarianship.
- (3) Library schools, no matter how they are structured, should stress the *content* of librarianship (bibliographic control, reference skills, collection development) rather than librarianship as a process.
- (4) Integrate schools and working libraries.

It would be interesting to know whether other areas of vocational education – medicine, engineering, accountancy, etc. – have been so subject to critical examination as librarianship, and if so, whether the examinations have been equally inconclusive. In the first article to be published in *Education for information*, Denis Grogan began with the apt comment that “As education for librarianship approaches its centenary it is curious to note how many of the issues debated over the course of the last hundred years still remain unresolved today” [2].

Other articles published so far in *Education for information* have been concerned with fundamental revisions of the library school curriculum, and how many schools can have avoided such heart-searchings in the past few years? It may be, of course, that the debate has intensified recently with the emergence of information technology and information management as powerful rivals to traditional librarianship. Library schools which are not taking on board these new areas, or at least claiming to do so, may have futures little brighter than that of the dinosaur. Many fear that unless the library schools stake their claim in these new fields, other university departments will encroach, leaving the library schools to struggle with an increasingly out-moded and irrelevant librarianship core. Equally, of course, many others would agree with Gorman that the pursuit of an elusive ‘information’ target is distracting, perhaps disastrously, the library schools from their primary area of concern. Should library schools integrate more closely with libraries, as the future employers of their product, or should they be cutting through the Gordian knot which is binding them to institutions which have a dubious future in an electronic information world? One thing is certain: the debate will continue.

Gorman concludes his short critique with a plea “for library education to stress the importance of good and clear English” in order to produce “colleagues who can write a decent English sentence and can compose essays that do not make us wince”. With this, at any rate, the editors most heartily concur.

References

1. Michael Gorman. Library education: myths and unrealities. *Journal of academic librarianship* 10 (1984) 195–196.
2. D.J. Grogan. Education for librarianship: some persistent issues. *Education for information* 1 (1983) 3–23.

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