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Principles and practice of library and information education

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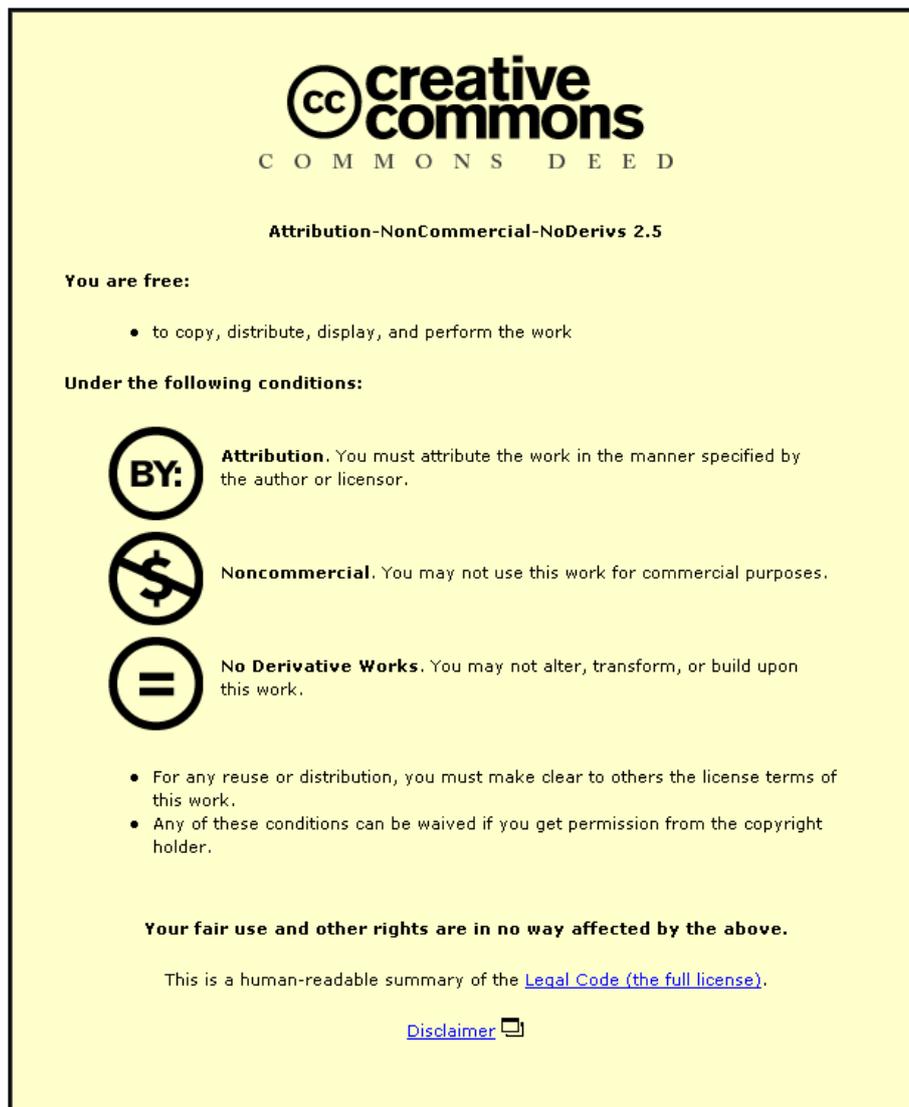
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Introduction

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The basis of this submission was laid in the preparation for the Intergovernmental Conference on the Planning of National Documentation, Library and Archive Infrastructures held in Paris in 1974, and for which the candidate was one of the consultants. The series of papers for this Conference included 'Manpower planning, professional structures and education and training', (p.13) which, with a paper by Dr. Franz on education and training for archives, was published under the general title Planning information manpower. This paper set forth the background for the development of manpower planning and education within the context of national information systems, services or infrastructures, a necessary basis for the generation of worldwide information services for science and technology, as proposed by the Unisist Conference of 1971. The wish for these developments also resulted from a general concern (a) with the elaboration of library systems as evidenced by the symposium organised by Unesco in Vienna in 1958 on the problems of national libraries (1), (b) with the general concern for information provision in national communities indicated both in the 'Natis' Conference of 1974 and the three regional conferences which preceded it (2).

The establishment of two programmes, Unisist and Natis, within the structures of Unesco, led to two institutionalised units respectively under the Communications and Science sectors. This led to an unhealthy rivalry.

To eliminate this, the units were, in 1976, combined within one programme - 'PGI': 'Programme général d'information' or 'General Information Programme' (3). The statement of this programme and its promulgation,

together with its antecedents, had taken some considerable time to become effective at the 'grass roots', in individual countries, national associations, institutions and for individual professionals. This had been particularly true of developing countries. 4000000

In 1983, therefore, Unesco awarded a contract to the Department of Library and Information Studies in association with Audio-Visual Services of Loughborough University to produce an information package to publicise the programme and to provide educational material for use by educators, lecturers and Unesco personnel. This is submitted as a separate item, completed in 1985, and is the most recent exposition available of Unesco's PGI programme.

Within the overall context of the Natis conference the paper on manpower planning, professional structure and education and training saw 'information as an essential thread in the fabric of a technological society' with the perception of the increasing growth of information in science and technology and in social science and community information. For appropriate high level activity, it was seen that, on a world-wide scale, manpower would be scarce, since employers in this relatively new area would be competing more and more for the best talent required by other professions. The training patterns for the profession were also changing from an apprentice-type training to full-time education. Those involved in the education of professionals in developing countries faced further problems, mostly because of inadequate resources and infrastructures. The effort to provide for planning appropriate manpower was seen to be difficult. Examples were given of efforts in manpower planning in Great Britain (an industrialised country) and Nigeria (a developing country).

The structure of the profession would be affected a) because different levels of activity would continue to be more clearly differentiated; (i.e.

junior/senior); b) because the information specialist would need to develop as an interdisciplinary professional and would need to work with 'the communications engineer, the linguistic expert, the logician, the audio-visual technician and the programmer'. Levels of education and training would need to follow the general structure of the profession (and anticipate its needs) with different levels of educational provision. A core curriculum for library, information and archive studies was proposed, and attention given to specialised subjects, continuing education, advanced courses and the nature of the institutions providing professional education. (The establishment of the MA at Loughborough in archive, library and information studies and education was a contribution to this overall concern.)

'Education and training for national and university libraries' (p. 43) and 'Education for university librarians' (p.55) summarized some of the issues in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, and already prefigured some of the proposals in the Unesco paper. The former paper took account of the various British reports (which were themselves stimuli to the Natis Conference). It recognised the development of a three tiered profession, the importance of science and technology, management and the relation of library and information work to surrounding social institutions. 'The future of library qualifications and the public library service' (p.69) applied new modes of thinking in relation to education for the public library system and the need for different levels of education. In a wider context, 'Education for library, information and archive studies' (p.77) related the notion of a total concept of library, information and archive education (based on the 'core' in the Unesco paper) bringing together the coherence and interrelationship of general education, professional education and general training as a 'total package' for the

modern information worker. It also emphasised the recurrent theme of these papers that different levels of performance and education are necessary to the appropriate and viable development of a national information system - an idea still not fully appreciated by many of the professional associations.

'The future of library and information studies' (p.87) carried forward these ideas and related them to the conceptual development of the subject, recognising that future professional education would be in the main postgraduate. It restated the idea of the 'core curriculum' and proposed curricula for a two-years master's course and for a three year PhD (or DLS) course with a strong course content in communication, sociology, psychology, research methods, etc. Departments, it was suggested would need to provide not only for information workers, but also for information users.

These views are applied and related to problems and practice in developing countries, and to the key problems of curricula and manpower planning. A specific programme for postgraduate education in Brazil was proposed in 1975 (p.101) - and the first masters from this course appeared in 1978. A study of education problems and manpower planning was made in Kenya in 1977 (p.154) while a study has also been made, in association with a PhD student of 'Education, training and qualifications of librarians in Nigeria' (p.165). A further short study has been made of conditions in Algeria (p.176).

The general arguments presented in earlier papers have been revised and developed in 'The role of the library schools and manpower training' (p.179), 'Library schools in a management world' (p.182) and 'Professional education: a personal view' (p.195). Different levels of education are again proposed, and a new syllabus was suggested. Attention was also given

to concerns of manpower planning.

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A summary of the situation in the United Kingdom has been given in 'Library and information in Britain' (p.201), 'La formation professionnelle de bibliothécaires et de documentalistes' (p.214), and 'L'Enseignement des professions de bibliothécaires et de documentalistes' (p.220). The contribution of British librarianship overseas, especially Africa (p.235) has been examined. A more recent assessment of the situation in Britain has been made in a series of papers including 'The position of British library education today' (p.250), together with papers in Serbo-Croat and Chinese (p.271). More specific treatment of archive education is found in 'Education and training in archives' (p.320).

Particular topics have been treated in the past five years, and their titles are self-explanatory. These include 'Can financial management be taught by librarians?' (p.326), 'Library education and computers in developing countries' (p.334), 'New technology and the information scene' (p.348), 'Teaching methods in North American library schools' (p.355), 'Information education serving the community of need' (p.405), 'Computer teaching for information retrieval' (p.380), 'Library and information studies: education for conservation' (p.399).

On specific programmes (including issues of education, training and/or manpower planning) articles have appeared on those at Belfast (p.408), Ottawa (p.430), and Loughborough (p.432).

An article on 'Librarianship as a Career' (p.459) perhaps bridges the link between professional education and the organisation of the profession in professional associations, for they have a strong connection with national planning and with policies for professional education. This topic is treated in 'The role of the professional association in the

context of the United Kingdom' (p.466) and its shortened version (p.462) 00000000
These place the Association in Britain in the context of professional
associations in Britain, while the case of Nigeria is dealt with in
'The role of the Library Association in National Library development'
(p.479). The relationship of the British Library Association to
professional education is treated in two short articles (p.457 and p.495)
which nevertheless express concern during a crucial stage of discussion
on professional education in Britain. Lastly, many of the themes related
to the development of national information systems and the integral
relation of professional education are brought together in 'The wider
implications of resource sharing' (p.496).

We are now facing new challenges in library and information science
education but the past twenty years 1966-1986 represents a period in which
a coherent philosophy of provision has arisen: the next chapter awaits
writing.

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