

# Review Articles

## Education for Librarianship

*Education for Librarianship; Criticisms, Dilemmas, and Proposals.* [By] J. Periam Danton. [New York City] Columbia University School of Library Service, 1946. 35p.

It is both satisfying and encouraging to find the number of high-quality publications dealing with education for librarianship steadily, if slowly, increasing. The latest is from the pen of the new dean of the University of California School of Librarianship. It was written while he was a visiting lecturer at Columbia. Its purpose is "to enumerate and examine what appear to be the principal defects, criticisms, and dilemmas—most of them by no means new or original—to examine in some detail causes and effects and, more particularly, to suggest possible remedies and solutions" (p. 6).

Dr. Danton has twelve criticisms of present-day education for librarianship to make. These are first enumerated (p. 6-7) and then discussed in some detail (p. 8-22). Most of the critical remarks have to do with programs of instruction. Library schools, says the author, are trying to do too much in one year. Curricula are overcrowded, partly because of a fantastic attempt on the part of the schools to be all things to all students. Mere techniques are still overemphasized, in spite of recent changes and improvements, and little or no distinction is made between clerical and professional aspects of librarianship. We cannot expect our library schools to turn out graduates who are thoroughly equipped and solidly grounded for any one type of position because the curricula have too great breadth and too little depth. And we cannot expect library school graduates to possess strong subject specialization and real scholarship, even in face of an unfilled demand for such people, because the library schools generally do not develop such characteristics in their students, in part due to the fact that programs of instruction are insufficiently integrated with the offerings of other departments on the campus. All this adds up to the fact that the library schools are not

educating for leadership in the profession nor are they training administrators. Finally, as regards the master's degree in librarianship, Dr. Danton says that the "curriculum has been, in the main, no more than a specialized extension of the B.S. curriculum, rather than a true, graduate-level broadening and deepening of the professional stream" (p. 7).

However valid these criticisms may be, it is not with them that we need to occupy our attention here so much as with the constructive suggestions with which the pamphlet ends. For the last dozen pages have to do with problems which must be thought through if we are to develop a sound program of education for librarianship. So important are the ideas presented in the closing pages that we can only wish the author had described them at considerable length.

Dr. Danton distinguishes three different levels of librarianship and maintains that appropriate educational programs should be developed for each. The lowest of these levels he calls the technical or subprofessional service. Junior colleges are capable of providing the elementary and technical training necessary for this service; and in this connection Dr. Danton points out that there are already 121 of these institutions offering courses in library science. The second level is constituted by the middle service, the members of which are "librarians." Existing Type I and Type II library schools can provide the necessary preparation for people in the middle service, provided they pay more attention to principles of administration and the social implications of the library and less attention to technical routines. The third or highest level of service is called the administrative-specialist. An entirely new educational program for candidates in these two fields should be undertaken by the Type I and perhaps some of the Type II schools. The work would take a year and a half, at the end of which a master's degree would be awarded.

National examinations are proposed for admission to the highest training programs.

For Type II schools to qualify to give instruction in this area, high standards of curriculum, support, and faculty (at least three full-time full professors are specified) would be set for accreditation. Dr. Danton suggests that a number of super-professorships are desirable in our library schools. He says that "the prestige and quality of professional education would be enormously increased by four or five such professorships, at \$10,000 to \$12,000 each" (p. 34).

As part of this program of reform, the Type III library school would cease to exist. This proposal will not please those who have recently been arguing for an increase in their number.

The basic question Dr. Danton has posed for us is whether or not we have a middle service in our libraries. For if we grant this, the educational aims of our library schools can be clarified accordingly and their instructional programs be made so much the more effective. The Germans recognized such a level of service and planned their library school programs with definitely limited aims. But we have left the question unanswered, although we have discussed the matter from time to time, until now it is put before us in a forcible way; and we should not rest content unless we win through with a satisfactory answer.

I believe that Dr. Danton is on right ground entirely when he proposes his three levels of instruction. It makes sense to say that we ought to turn to terminal education to provide trained personnel to take care of the routine operations of our libraries, just as we ought to exploit high schools, manual training schools, and filing schools for clerical workers of various kinds. With the emphasis on routines so removed, existing library schools could then be strengthened and developed to prepare people for the middle ranks. And last but not least, we need to develop new and specialized programs for library administrators and subject specialists. How we are to do this, and where it should be done, are important matters that call for clear thinking and sure action.

We may not agree with Dr. Danton in regard to all the details of the triple program, especially the administrative-specialist part. But at this stage details should be kept in the background so that we may concen-

trate on the broad issues. The author has done education for librarianship a distinct and important service by presenting these fundamental issues for our serious consideration.

The pamphlet should be read and studied carefully by librarians generally, whichever branch of the service they may be in. They will find in it many topics of interest not touched upon in this review, such as, for example, the proposal for national certification of librarians.—*Andrew D. Osborn.*

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The opening paragraph in which Dr. Danton limits his inquiry especially to academic librarianship disturbed me. If this restriction was necessary because the broad scope of training problems required some delimiting I have no questions to raise regarding the author's approach to the subject. If on the other hand it implies that present training is more inadequate for the reference-research services than for the general community educational services, my observations impel me to object quickly. For the Detroit Public Library which operates what is tantamount to two distinct libraries—one for reference and research purposes and the other for the furtherance of mass education—it has been more difficult to recruit and develop a staff competent to appraise the needs of heterogeneous library patrons and to stimulate and guide in a meaningful way the reading of such people than it has been to secure and develop a staff of comparable excellence for reference-research work, except in a few unusual subject fields. The more definitely defined knowledge requirements of the reference staff, the more highly developed tools and methods used in that service, and the *relatively* similar character of the patrons to be served—in short, the intensity of the latter type of work—contrasts sharply the extensity of knowledge of books and of people required for true professional service in the former type of work. I know this point of view will not be readily accepted by many of our professional colleagues, largely I believe, because many leaders high in professional circles are without an understanding of the basic philosophy funda-