

Editorial

Articles in this issue address persistent issues in bibliographic instruction and standards. With respect to the former, librarians, like their faculty colleagues, have long been aware of the need to evaluate instruction, i.e., teaching and learning. Three articles offer different perspectives on evaluation of bibliographic instruction. King compares use of library materials by instructed and noninstructed students. Nagy and Thomas use an experimental design to evaluate mediated bibliographic instruction. Person reports on a longitudinal study of the effects of bibliographic instruction over the four years of a baccalaureate education. What is clear from these and similar articles is that we, again like our faculty brethren, have a long way to go; but evaluate we must, particularly if librarians, who are more lately coming to the teaching fraternity, are to justify, solidify, and improve our position on campus and, not incidentally, the education of our students.

With respect to standards, one observes with interest that the college library standards originally adopted in 1959, and revised and readopted by ACRL in 1975, are now being subjected to scrutiny and perhaps further revision. In the development of standards there is an intrinsic tension between what ought to be and what is. On the one hand, to limit our vision to what is or is likely to soon be is to institutionalize the status quo. On the other hand, "ought to be" may be so far above the "is" or "can be" as to make a standard so improbable of achievement as to be worthless. Carpenter's article is a secondary analysis of 1977 NCES data on college libraries, as reported on the HEGIS instrument, which compares the reality as reported with various quantitative formulae in the college library standards. His analysis illustrates dramatically the difference between the formulae in the standards and the 1977 realities. While it is essential to know where we are relative to where we want to be, a difference in and of itself need not argue for reducing our goals. However, the quantitative goals in the standards must be defensible, that is, there must be some reasonably objective argument for using some percentage instead of some other, this ratio and not that, this number of volumes and not that.

C.J.S.

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