The education and training of catalogers are topics of serious concern to both practitioners and educators. The exponential growth of information resources, in particular electronic resources, is placing greater demands on the skills and knowledge of libraries' cataloging personnel. Concurrent with the need to reassess and enhance training practices and to explore the options offered by the schools of library and information science (LIS) is the effect of the anticipated retirement of a significant number of the profession's catalogers within the next decade. Consequently, the roles of degreed catalogers are changing and broadening to include management and training. Paraprofessional personnel and students are assuming responsibility for many of the tasks formerly reserved for professional catalogers, including original cataloging and authority work. This essay summarizes the research published in the literature from 1999 through the beginning of 2004, identifies some of the recent initiatives of professional organizations to address educational and training issues, and suggests some of the directions that future research might take.

The literature reflects the perspectives of catalogers, managers of cataloging and technical services operations, and LIS educators. Many articles are gathered in two issues of *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, edited by Hill (2002) and simultaneously published as a monograph. The authors express opinions about cataloging and cataloging education, report the findings of their research on aspects of cataloging education in LIS schools, and discuss processes of both traditional classroom instruction and distance education (including mentoring) for both new students and practicing catalogers. In one of the articles, Intner (2002) analyzes the recurring educational issues of theory vs. practice, of book and non-book cataloging, and of the best venue for training (in a formal educational setting, on the job, or on a continuing basis). In the final article in the collection, Hopkins (2002) addresses the education and training new catalogers can receive from more experienced colleagues in their own libraries and from catalogers afar via electronic discussion lists such as AUTOCAT. In a later two-part article, Hill (2004) discusses cataloging training from a recent historical perspective, current LIS education, continuing education, and the rationale for cataloging education.

Not only must catalogers be skilled in the complexities of the cataloging tools and standards that have long been in use, but they must also acquire the knowledge of new metadata schema to provide access to new types of materials in electronic and digital form. The curricula of LIS schools include new courses on metadata and electronic resources cataloging (Hsieh-Yee 2000, 2002, and 2004; Saye 2001 and 2002; and Park 2002) and the discussion of requirements of cataloging courses and theory vs. practice continues. Spillane (1999) examines LIS cataloging curricula from the mid-1980s through the late 1990s and finds a decline in required cataloging courses. Joudrey (2002) analyzes the cataloging curricula in 2000 and finds that even though traditional cataloging courses are declining the number of courses overall is increasing with the addition of new courses for non-book and electronic cataloging. Survey studies examine perceptions of three groups about cataloging courses and about the expectations of the knowledge entry-level catalogers should have: cataloging educators (Turvey and Letarte 2002), recent LIS graduates (Kovacs and Dayton 2002), cataloging practitioners (Letarte et al. 2002). All three studies found that most of the participants in the surveys think that the core competencies in the traditional cataloging tools are essential.

New technologies have engendered new methods for instructing cataloging students and a variety of distance educational techniques are in use. Cloete, Snyman, and Cronjé (2003) evaluate a training program that combines both media and the Internet in contact, distance, and in-service environments. Yontz (2002) employs an LIS distance education program, and Koh (2002) has developed an online mentoring process between LIS students and practicing catalogers.

Continuing education for practicing catalogers is a concerted effort among professional groups. Components of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) have for a number of years provided
training for participating libraries. For serials cataloging training, Hirons (2000) describes the Series Cataloging Cooperative Training Program (SCCTP). Aspects of the successful SCCTP program have been examined from several perspectives: the manager's (Bruner 2000), the trainer's (Shetler 2000), and the trainee's (Headlee 2000). Howarth (2000) evaluates the SCCTP as a general continuing education model. Hixson and Garrison (2002) discuss training programs of the PCC, including those for BIBCO, NACO, and SACO, for participating libraries. Catalogers involved in the PCC training programs have joined forces with ALCTS groups to develop workshops and preconferences on subject heading practice and name authority work for catalogers who are not in PCC participating institutions. ALCTS offers other workshops for electronic resources catalogers that have resulted from the work of the ALCTS Continuing Education Task Force (2003).

Within individual libraries, some have reported on their training programs that involve both staff and students. Fain, Brown, and Faix (2004) discuss the implementation and advantages of a cross-training program for public services librarians to perform cataloging operations. Puffer-Rothenberg (2003) describes an “incremental” approach to training cataloging staff for system migration that makes the transition more manageable by introducing new concepts and processes in steps. The ALCTS CCS Catalog Management Discussion Group devoted a session to the use of student assistants for managing the catalog and some methods for training them (Ballinger and Mrkich 2003).

Since 1999, the literature has seen numerous discussions, articles, and reports that have answered some questions about the directions and responsibilities that LIS schools and professional groups are taking. Further studies will help answer other questions: How should the effectiveness of the training programs that have been developed be measured? Are there ways to evaluate the success of the cataloging education provided by the LIS schools? What is the impact of new cataloging standards and evolving formats on cataloging personnel and on the management of personnel and projects? What effect will all the new software developments for cataloging tools and the interfaces to the bibliographic utilities have on training and workflows? What impact do they have on the organization of technical services? What new and innovative ways have cataloging departments developed to cope with all the changes?

Works Cited


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