COURSE OF TRAINING FOR DOCUMENTALIST

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Outlines a syllabus for the training of a person, with a post-graduate degree, as a documentalist, leading to M Lib Sc degree. The course is spread over instruction in six subjects and two projects to be carried out during the year of training. Points out the confusion caused by a historical accident in some countries and two different connotations of the term 'information service'. Recommends the separation of the courses for documentalist and for information officer, and the placing of the former within the area of Library Science.

0 INTRODUCTION

The subject of Training for Documentalist has been engaging the attention of the FID for a number of years. It is time for some decision to be made. For, the urgency of the problem is increasing in many countries. Consequently, there are diverse irrational practices taking shape. They may become rigid, even if it be for reasons of prestige. The problem, should, therefore, be taken up for detailed discussion at the forthcoming FID Conference, at Rio de Janeiro. As a help towards this, the following course of studies for Training for Documentalist is outlined as a basis for focussing discussion. The duration of this course of study is taken as one year.

01 Number of Papers

For convenience, the details of the course of studies are given in terms of the subjects to be covered. These are as follows:

1. Universe of knowledge, its development and structure;
2. Library classification (Theory);
3. Library classification (Practical);
4. Library catalogue;
5. Documentation;
6. A project in documentation;
7. Business library system; and
8. A survey of trend in current literature in an approved subject.

1 UNIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE ITS DEVELOPMENT & STRUCTURE

1. The various subjects having knowledge as the field of study. Their inter-relation.
5. Positivistic, Speculative, and Authority-centred modes of thinking. Methods of pure
sciences, applied sciences, social sciences, and fine arts.

6 Universal knowledge as mapped in schemes of library classification. Its demarcation into sections and sub-sections. Universe of knowledge as a static continuum.


2 LIBRARY CLASSIFICATION (THEORY)


2 The five fundamental categories and the facets corresponding to them. Rounds and levels of manifestation of the fundamental categories. Postulates for idea plane. Principles for determining the helpful sequence of any two facets.


3 LIBRARY CLASSIFICATION (PRACTICAL)

Classification of books, monographs, and articles, by Colon Classification and Universal Decimal Classification.

4 LIBRARY CATALOGUE

1 Canons for cataloguing. Layout of a catalogue code. Standards for the elements needed in catalogue codes at the international, national, linguistic, and local levels.


3 Choice of heading for main entry and book index entry for simple, multi-volumed, and composite books, periodical publications, and micro-documents.

4 Rendering of personal, geographical corporate, and series names and titles of books in headings of entries.

5 Title section in main entry and in other specific entries.

6 Choice and rendering of headings in subject entries. Chain procedure. List of subject headings.

7 Author analytical. Subject analytical.

8 Class index entry. See and See also subject entries. Cross reference index entry.

9 Comparative study of the latest editions of the Classified catalogue code, the ALA Code, Rules for the dictionary catalogue, and the rules for the dictionary catalogue given in the Classified catalogue code.

11 Layout and additional rules for union catalogue, abstracting and indexing periodicals, and national bibliography.

12 Cataloguing of non-conventional forms of documents.

5 DOCUMENTATION

1 Book versus document; Macro-thought versus Micro-thought: Nascent thought; Generalist and specialist readers. Bibliography and documentation list.


4 Documentation Service: Facet analysis in helping the reader in the exact enunciation of his subject of interest at the moment. Finding the needed document. Finding the needed data. Finding entities having several specified properties or values and mechanical searching aids for the same.

5 Search methods: Conventional methods - classified catalogue using depth classification and subject headings by chain procedure; Mechanical methods - punched cards, electronic machinery and coding for machinery. Relation of depth classification to coding. Comparison of conventional and machine methods. (Note: The engineering and technological aspects are excluded).

8 Translation service: Full time translators. Panel of translators with full time editors. Information about progress towards machine translation. (Note: Excluding engineering aspects).


6 DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

Preparation, during the year of a Documentation List on an approved subject on the basis of an approved set of periodicals for one year.

7 BUSINESS LIBRARY SYSTEM


2 Kinds of business libraries. Libraries of individual institutions. Central libraries at national and regional levels. Inter-library cooperation. Service library. Distributing library.

3 Place of library in business organisation. Correlation with the activities of the departments.
of the parent body. Relation with the staff of the departments of the parent body.


5 Classification and filing of fugitive materials like prospectuses, leaflets and clippings. Help in the classification and arrangement of commodities.

6 Library administration. Selection and acquisition of books and periodical publications. Accession work. Maintenance, circulation, and display of books, periodical publications, patents, standards, specifications, drawings, pamphlets, clippings, microfilms and similar materials.


8 REPORT ON LITERATURE SURVEY

Report on an assigned project carried out during the year in surveying the trends in current literature and the bibliographical tools in an approved subject.

91 REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

Normally, a candidate for admission to a course in Documentation should have as a minimum a primary University Degree in one or other of the Natural Sciences, Applied Sciences or Social Sciences. For the time being, the demand for documentation is only in these areas. Even here, there is less demand in Social Sciences than in the others. In the selection for training as Documentalist, candidates will be drawn from different subject fields in the light of requirements. This may vary from country to country and in the same country from year to year. It is desirable that preference is given to candidates deputed by organisations needing documentation service. This will be particularly important in newly developing countries. In addition to a primary University Degree, a candidate should have also a post-graduate degree. It may be either B. Lib. Sc. (Bachelor of Library Science) or a Master's Degree in some other subject. The course for Training for Documentalist may lead to the degree of M. Lib. Sc. (Master of Library Science).

92 APPRENTICESHIP

It is desirable that a candidate for a course in Documentation should have acquired familiarity with the routine of documentation work and service. For this purpose, he should have been an apprentice for a prescribed period in an approved library doing documentation. It has been found that raw graduates admitted directly to the course do not have the time within one year to gain competence in routine work. It is also found that, without a prior familiarity with routine, a candidate finds it difficult to absorb the instruction in the theoretical aspects of the subject. He does not easily acquire the mental set to appreciate the need for many of the elements taught in the course. Experience of apprenticeship is normally required in every other profession, such as Engineering. The profession of Documentalists cannot be an exception to this practice.

93 FAMILIARITY WITH LITERATURE

A candidate taking a course in documentation should acquire intimate familiarity with the existing literature, reference books, and bibliographies in some areas of knowledge. It is a moot point whether this familiarity should be acquired by the candidate by his own voluntary effort and wide reading, or whether it should be made formal part of the course. Whatever knowledge he may pick up during the course will soon become out-of-date. For, the universe of documents is ever dynamic. He will have to keep himself continuously informed of the new literature taking shape from time to time. Moreover, he cannot escape the impact of new literature in the very process of his work as a documentalist. It will therefore be futile to adopt the camel-theory of education and load the memory of the candidates with titles of books and other publications. On the other hand, the project of literature survey suggested in section 8 will give a good discipline to candi-
dates in comprehending and keeping himself aware of the live documents in the wave front of knowledge. It will also increase his competence in making effective use of the annual reviews of literature in diverse fields. It may also qualify him for the production of annual reviews of literature which is one of the forms of documentation work. Of course, this competence he will acquire only by his specialising in documentation work in a particular subject field for some years. A development along these lines will eventually eliminate the wastage in research potential now being caused by persons engaged in research being themselves obliged to spend their time in preparing reviews of literature. The social pressure today does not allow the dissipation of the research potential of the world in this way.

94 HISTORICAL ACCIDENT

In countries which began to develop even by the nineteenth century, a form of conflict appears to have arisen in the development of the profession of documentalists. These are called 'special librarians' as opposed to librarians. For example, this conflict was highlighted in the Aslib Conference of 1948. Some hours were spent in debating whether 'special librarians' should be treated as librarians or scientists. The latter view won by a narrow majority. A touch-me-not outlook was also witnessed among the 'special librarians' of USA in 1950. The retarded rapprochement between the IFIa and the FID and the proneness of the library associations and the associations of 'special librarians' to continue to be exclusive of one another also bear testimony to this conflict. But it is all due to a historical accident. In the nineteenth century, when the public libraries developed in those countries, their aim was mostly to serve whole books and periodicals. This was considered sufficient by most of the readers. Research scholars needing micro documents were usually self-helpers. The professional librarians practising in public libraries gained greatly in strength and got themselves organised effectively as library associations. Decades later, in the twentieth century, the industries realised the importance of research. They also realised the waste involved in research workers having to spend time in literature search. In other words, they felt the need for documentation work and documentation service to be done and administered to them by others. But the library profession practising in public libraries did not grasp this opportunity to reorient itself in its outlook and service. Consequently the scientists set some members among themselves for this work. In some countries where library associations were controlling or conducting professional examinations, a further complication arose. A few scientist 'special librarians' felt the need for training in certain areas of library science relevant to their purpose. But there was insistence from the library profession on the whole area of library science as developed for public library work with hardly any content needed for documentation. This widened the gulf. Special librarians — documentalists — began to organise their own training. They went to the other extreme of refusing to recognise the extent of overlapping areas. This historical accident in some of the earlier developed countries has coloured the view even in the international plane.

95 A MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Another cause of confusion has come into this field. It originated from the term 'information service'. This term has been used indifferently to denote two different services:

1 Service of nascent micro thought to research workers in order to feed them pointedly and to help them to avoid unintended and unnecessary duplication of research effort in any special field whatever; and

2 "Selling" newly developed ideas, techniques, and production methods to top managers, production engineers in the industries, and industrial workers, written in a language much simpler and more popular than the terse and severely technical language of the original research communications.

This indifferent use of one and the same term to denote these two different ideas has also caused confusion in determining the content of the course of training for documentalist. But it can be seen that the purposes of these two forms of 'information service' are different.
The clientele on whom they are turned are different. The techniques to be employed by the two services have to be different. The training needed for the rendering of the two services has also to be different. Failure to recognise these differences has also led to confused thinking in organising the curriculum and the consequent delay in doing it. The coming of the term 'Documentalist' into increasing use is underlining the distinction between the two kinds of 'information services'. The function of a documentalist can be distinguished from those of 'Information Officer'. The time has therefore become ripe to work out different schemes of training for the personnel for the two different kinds of 'information services'.

The course outlined in this paper is for the documentalist. Naturally, this places a great emphasis on survey of trends in subject fields, organisation of documents with the aid of depth classification, and methods of literature search in the wave front of knowledge.

A different course of study should be designed for the 'information officer' meant for dissemination of information outside those engaged in research. It should be rich in public relations methods and journalistic presentation of such results of research as are ready for exploitation by industries, that is by producers of commodities and providers of services - large and small - and other consumers. This separation should make further work in designing course of studies easier. Documentation technique may not fit in with this course.

96 NEWLY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Today, several countries have recovered from centuries of cultural exhaustion and creative inaction in the sphere of thought. When they wake up, they naturally feel dazed like Rip Van Winkle. Blind imitation of already developed countries is the first impulse. The confusion due to the double connotations of the single term 'information service' confounds them. They are affected by the pressure of what happens in the earlier developed countries. They are prone to take upon themselves all the difficulties caused in the other countries by historical accident or mistaken identity. Such a thoughtless capitulation blesseth neither the newly developing countries nor the already developed countries. On the other hand, the newly developing countries will do a good turn to themselves and to others if they take advantage of the opportunity they have to re-think the whole problem freely and boldly, and to write on a clean slate free from hampering traditions. India is struggling to do so. It seeks to secure the oneness of the profession of librarians and documentalists. The training of the two will have a good deal in common. The difference will be only in the area of specialisation forming final culmination and the particular branches of library service selected for adoption. The common area will be covered in the first year's postgraduate professional course leading to B Lib Sc degree. The second year's course leading to M Lib Sc degree will still have a common core made up of a study of the universe of knowledge and its development and structure, and advanced classification and cataloguing. But the differentiation will be secured by provision for different optional subjects making up half of the second years course. One set of optional subjects will put its weight on the side of public and other traditional kinds of library service. Another set of optional subjects will put its weight on the side of documentation work and service. The course suggested in this paper for documentalist is culled out of such an integrated course for both the wings of the library profession.