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Introduction

User education is often regarded as one of the newer roles of the academic library. The history of the development of user education is short (but well documented) when compared with such traditional functions as acquisition, cataloguing and interlibrary lending. [1-4] Recent years have seen a considerable increase in the practice of orientation and instruction as librarians have become interested in the active exploitation of their library resources. However, resources provided for user education programmes are often very meagre - giving the impression of a luxury function to be conveniently reduced in times of economic need. Lack of tradition, combined with lack of resources, should make this field of librarianship particularly suitable for both national and international cooperation.

The aim of this paper is to examine which areas of user education are particularly suitable for interlibrary cooperation. Examples of a number of cooperative projects will be given, and possible areas for future projects will be discussed.

Goals and objectives for user education

In planning education programmes for library users, it is necessary first to define goals and objectives. After this, course-content and timing of the various stages are decided, together with the teaching methods and media to be used. The result of this planning is then tested in a practical situation, and evaluation is carried out in order to assess the effectiveness of the programme. (See Fig. 1.)

Goals and objectives can be divided into three main groups - cognitive, concerned with understanding, affective, concerned with feelings and attitudes, and psychomotor concerned with coordinated motor activity.

Library use is not part of a separate academic discipline such as zoology, history or sociology. It consists of a number of skills, which can be made use of in connection with
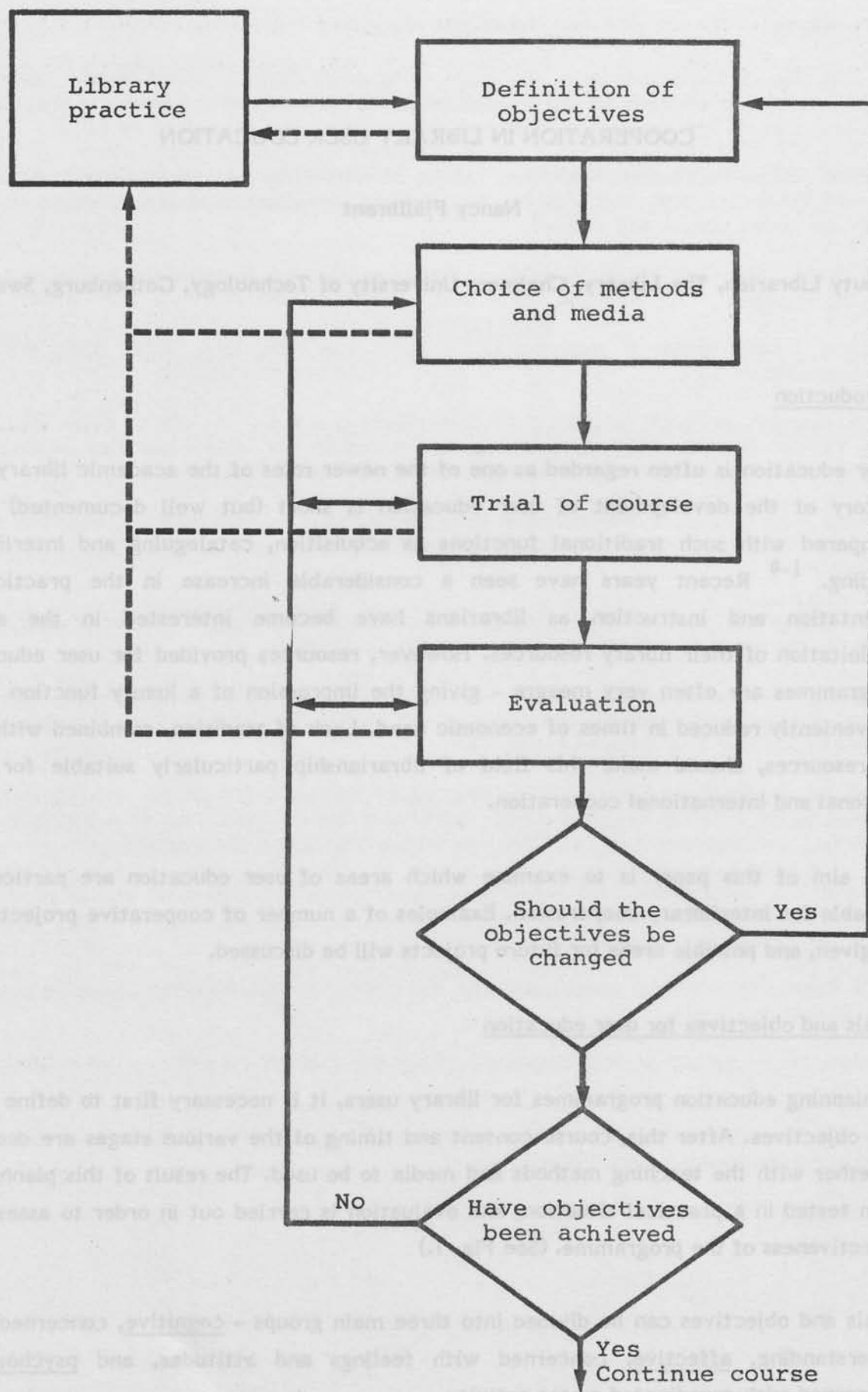
Fig. 1 Development of a course of education in relation to existing practice

other academic studies, so goals and objectives must be in accordance with the needs of students and academic staff. In addition, the objectives for programmes of user education arise, in part, out of existing library practice.

Those parts of library user education that are concerned with cognitive objectives that are similar for any place - such as the use of a particular tool for information retrieval - for example, the use of Biological Abstracts, or information searching in a given discipline - medicine or the social sciences - will be suitable for cooperative projects. Where objectives are concerned with attitudes to the use of a given library, or the use of a particular tool in that library, programmes of user education must be individually designed to meet the needs of the actual user group and the existing library practice. Thus library orientation programmes must be individually produced. Today, there are several examples of cooperative projects in user education. These illustrate the possibilities for cooperation where the objectives are of a generally applicable cognitive nature.

The cooperative production of tape/slide programmes for library instruction : the SCONUL project.

In 1970, SCONUL (Standing Conference on National and University Libraries) set up a Working Group on Tape/Slide Guides to Library Services. The aims of this project were to:

(1) encourage cooperation in the provision of tape/slide guides to library services for higher education and academic research;

(2) sponsor production of such guides as effective teaching packages;

(3) provide a forum for discussion among librarians, educational technologists and others engaged in this work;

(4) provide the dissemination of information on tape/slide guides through publication and other means.

Tape/slide guides are relatively cheap both in terms of production costs and equipment for viewing. Programmes are flexible - suitable for both group and individual teaching, and the guides can easily be updated. Further, the medium, with its cheap use of colour, is suitable for many aspects of library instruction. [5] The SCONUL tape/slide guides were produced on a cooperative basis by a group of three libraries - with one library acting as producer and the other two as consultants giving advice and criticism on the scripts and photographic material. [6]

Standardisation is necessary in any form of cooperative project. The SCONUL Working Group issued recommended standards for the production and mounting of slides, and for the recording, pulsing and editing of audio-tapes.

Equipment was recommended for the playing of the finished products. The finished programmes included a set of slides, a pulsed audio-cassette, script, statement of target population and aims and a copy of any notes or handouts intended for the users. At the beginning of the SCONUL project twenty-one university and two national libraries were involved in the development and production of thirteen programmes. Early SCONUL guides covered such subjects as "Introduction to Information Retrieval", "Guide to the Use of Chemical Abstracts" and "Guide to the Use of Literature in Medicine and Related Subjects" (see Appendix for further examples of SCONUL guides).

In 1973, in an attempt to give the finished programmes some degree of unity, attention was focussed on standard evaluative procedures. Much help was given to producers by a research group working at the Institute for Educational Technology and the University Library at the University of Surrey (financed by an OSTI research grant). The project team did a great deal of work on the formulation of objectives for the second round of tape/slide productions (involving some thirty-five university and polytechnic libraries) and on subsequent evaluation.[7]

The use of the English SCONUL tape/slide guides for library users who do not have English as a native language was studied in Sweden, in collaboration with the Surrey group, in 1973/74. Evaluation showed that, even when the English tape/slide productions were used directly, without any translation, there was a good "immediate learning effect".[8] These studies catalysed widespread use of the SCONUL guides, not only in Sweden, but also in other Scandinavian countries. The SCONUL tape/slide guide project is a good example of a cooperative scheme in user education where, through discussion and standardization, a number of useful teaching aids have been produced, at relatively low cost, for widespread use.

The travelling workshop experiment.

In July 1975, the Travelling Workshop Research Project was started at Newcastle Polytechnic Library on a BLRD three-year research grant. Travelling workshops were to be set up to teach about information handling in three areas: biology, mechanical engineering and social welfare.

The basic concept of the Travelling Workshop, as set out by the British Library Research and Development Department, was as follows:[9]

A Travelling Workshop is envisaged as a "teaching laboratory", which may be set up at the appropriate institutions (generally universities and polytechnics) to provide information, source materials, teaching aids, demonstrations and examples. It should be staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of experts working closely with the institutions' own teaching and library staff, who will be encouraged to follow up the demonstration of principles by the workshop.

Project Objectives

"To implement and run pilot workshops in three different subject areas.
To assess the impact of the workshop on the host institutions and the participating
    individuals.
To make recommendations for further work to educational institutions and national
    bodies with an interest in this area."

The objectives for a Travelling Workshop were set out as:

Objectives of a Travelling Workshop

"To demonstrate to teaching and library staff how various aspects of information
    handling may be taught and incorporated into the student's curriculum.
To encourage a continuing educational programme in the institution and to further
    library-departmental co-operation to this end.
To make students aware of sources of information in their fields and to show how to
    use them effectively.
To outline and illustrate the basic principles of communication and scientific writing
    in the chosen subject."

The original workshops were designed as three-day courses with a fairly high percentage of formal lectures on information sources within the given discipline. Students also took part in practical literature searching sessions. Experience from these early workshops led to the conclusion that changes were necessary; "The overwhelming impression was that the students had not enjoyed the lectures, but had, in contrast, enjoyed the practical work sessions... the content of the lectures had been too detailed and had focussed too much on bibliographic aspects (one student thought that 'this is what library school must be like')".[10] As a result, a new workshop format was designed with the emphasis on a self-instructional handbook to be used in practical exercises, which formed the basis for self-assessed self-paced studies. This kind of self-instructional package can be used for a large number of students. Multiple sets of practical exercises avoid duplication of work by individual students.

It became apparent that there was a demand for packages of materials that could be used by various libraries in their own courses. Self-instructional packages were designed and evaluated. Each package included student handbooks, practical exercises and answers to the exercises, posters and an audiovisual programme relevant to the subject. It is hoped that the experience gained from this project will lead to the production of teaching/learning packages suitable for use in many institutions of higher education. This would reduce unnecessary duplication of effort.

Cooperative development of multi-media programmes for on-line information retrieval.

The last ten years have seen a rapid growth in the availability of computer-based on-line information retrieval systems. There has been a corresponding increase in the production of promotion, training and education courses connected with on-line user education. In a recent survey, Keenan concluded that "there is a great need for rationalisation and cooperation in the training for effective use of on-line services".[11]

During the past year there has been an informal cooperation between a number of organisations in the production of multi-media programmes for education on on-line information retrieval. Use has been made of the MEDIATRON multi-media teaching device developed by the Central Information Service of the University of London. This instrument is based on a stero-casette tape recorder which is capable of simultaneous recording of digital signals to control subsequent display on a Visual Display Unit, audio commentaries, and pulses for triggering photographic slides. [12] A number of packages have been developed at the CIS, University of London, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, and the Department of Library and Information Science, Loughborough University. [13, 14] These packages are designed to cover various aspects of information retrieval such as:

(1) orientation
(2) log-on routines
(3) basic search-language commands
(4) specialized search techniques
(5) database coverage
(6) use of a specific database.

Examples of orientation programmes for on-line retrieval are "The use of wind-power for heating" and "The presence of DDT in seals in the Baltic" (produced at Chalmers Library) and "On-line information retrieval" (CIS, London, and Loughborough University). Search language programmes on DIALOG, RECON, ORBIT IV and ELHILL 3 have been produced by CIS, London, and Chalmers Library. Programmes on searching a range of databases have been made by CIS, London, who have also produced programmes on the use of

specific databases such as "Searching the ERIC database; CIS have also made programmes about searching within a specific subject field: "Searching the mathematical literature online", "Searching the biological literature online".

Some of the programmes have been designed as self-teaching packages. These packages have already been used in a number of institutions and countries throughout the world; Belgium, Brazil, England, Holland, Sweden. This development of MEDIATRON packages provides an example of informal cooperation between a number of organizations, where the members have provided stimuli and ideas to the other participants in the production of user-education teaching material of general applicability.

Clearing houses for information on user-education projects.

If there is to be cooperation in library user education, it is necessary to be able to find out about programmes and material easily. Library instruction clearing houses have been established in a number of countries. Perhaps the best known clearing house is Project LOEX - Library Orientation - Instruction Exchange, Center of Educational Resources at Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan.[15] Project LOEX serves as the national loan centre, for the U.S.A. for libraries interested in user education. A number of state and regional associations in the U.S.A have also established clearing houses for library instructional materials within their geographic areas. The Materials Bank, at Loughborough University of Technology Library, serves as the British national clearing house.[16] This bank invites participation from all types of libraries. There is an Australian clearing house for material on user education - the Data Bank for User Education Materials, at the Caulfield Institute of Technology and a bank of Swedish and Scandinavian material at Chalmers University of Technology Library, Gothenburg. All these clearing houses help to collect material and spread information on user education material to libraries interested in setting up new programmes.

Possible areas for future projects.

There is now a considerable interest in library user education in many countries. It is important to avoid duplication of activities leading to a waste of time and economic resources. Areas that suggest themselves as particularly suitable for cooperation are those where there are cognitive objectives of general applicability.

Examples of user education projects suitable for cooperation are:

1. Education in computerized on-line information retrieval, where use is made of international databases and systems. Education programmes about these information resources are of wide general interest. Cooperative production of textbooks, audio-

visual demonstration programmes, and self-instructional modules would be advantageous. Material suitable for different levels of instruction - for example, for undergraduates, postgraduates and industrial engineers, is required.

2. Self-instruction packages in information retrieval within specific subject areas. Such packages might contain some form of textbook, plus exercises suitable for individual use. In the construction of this kind of package, it would be necessary to take into account national information resources and sources within specific language fields.

3. Library user education material specially geared to the needs of developing countries.

In planning cooperative projects in user education, it is important to consider standardisation, with respect to production and equipment and the distribution of the finished products.

There remains one further area where cooperation in library user education could be very advantageous - in training librarians in the problems and practice of user education. This could include such topics as studies of the needs of the user population, formulation of goals and objectives, teaching methods and media and methods for evaluation. Some library schools offer courses in user education, but, as was pointed out by Stanton in 1978, "there has not been a proliferation of courses that focus on teaching librarians how to teach the use of the library".[17] User education should always be closely geared to the needs of the user. These naturally differ in different types of institutions and their libraries. It seems, therefore, possible that seminars/workshops on user education for librarians working within the same type of library might prove to be an extremely effective method for teaching librarians how to teach. The librarians would possess basic knowledge of the information resources available, and training could then be concentrated on the learning/teaching aspects of user education. Is this perhaps an area suitable for IATUL sponsorship?

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