



Two Cultures, One Faculty

Contradictions of Library and Information Science Education

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Library and information science faculty must live within two competing cultures that have very different values and interests: the academy and the practicing profession. This difference causes these cultures to exert competing expectations and demands upon library and information science education. While the university's value is increasingly judged by its demonstrated utility, its central legitimating value is still intellectual achievement and the creation of knowledge. While the need for a knowledge base is recognized, the central legitimating value of the profession is demonstrated utility in terms of service to users. This is necessarily dominated by technical rather than reflective aspects and the need for immediate solutions to practical problems that include the education and continuing education of professionals. This article addresses the problems that result from the collisions of these two cultures: applied versus pure research, theoretical versus practical education, and competing definitions of service. It explores the applicability of Ernest Boyer's model of higher education as a means of solving problems.

In their papers, Miksa and Day described changing historical conditions that affect library and information science education.¹ Day argued that the central values of library and information science are in danger of becoming irrelevant to postmodern reality, and that the crisis of modernism also describes the crisis of the profession. Miksa argued that the "library," to which library and information science education has devoted its pursuit of knowledge as well as its commitment to teaching, is increasingly irrelevant as a social institution. Changing social priorities and remarkable developments in information technology are driving the emergence of a new "library" that will be organized in new ways in order to deliver new services. This implies a need for change regarding the skills, the

nature of the work and employment, and the social role of the information professional. It also implies changes in the nature of library and information science education.

Clearly the university and the library, as centers of cultural practices, are experiencing the uncertainty associated with change. This is reflected, for example, in the emergence of the changing and contested use of language within these centers. Universities seek to define "niches," while libraries seek to serve "customers." For some, these kinds of words, and the meanings they imply, are taken in stride, as a natural evolution of professional discourse, given changing conditions. For others, however, these words sound strange and are regarded as inappropriately imported from a world whose values are

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fundamentally at odds with the traditional values of the university or the library.

Literally, these are fighting words, words whose contested meanings identify positions and reveal the presence of ideological conflict.² The existence and use of these words within the discourse of library and information science indicate the extent to which the influences described by Day and Miksa have penetrated the culture of the discipline. This situation also reflects the cultural identity crisis of library and information science education, which is wrapped in the contradictions of the collapse of meanings identified by Day and the changing social and technological conditions identified by Miksa.

In order to fully comprehend the nature of this crisis, it is necessary to understand that library and information science education experiences cultural change through the powerful filters of two different framing devices and that this condition is integral to its cultural identity crisis. This condition subjects library and information science education to competing expectations. The problem is both systematic and structural, because library and information science education, taken as a set of cultural practices constituted by research, teaching, and service, must take place within a nexus of defining and dominant cultures—the culture of the university and the culture of the practicing profession.³ The autonomy of library and information science to define itself, its purposes, its research and curricu-

lum agendas, and its relations to its dominating cultures is limited and relative to the autonomy of the university and the profession.⁴

Given this condition, however, library and information science education does have some room to maneuver. There is some space within which to make choices of value and cultural identity. At the least, the cultural differences and conflicts between the university and the profession result in the irresolution and ambiguity needed for existence of this space. The purpose of this essay is to explore the dimensions of this space and the options that exist within it. Our essential point is that both the theory and practice of library and information science are caught between cultures. Probably many cultures are at play, but our focus is on the way in which library and information science education is caught between the university and the profession and on the problems this condition causes.

We also want to suggest a strategy for the effective use of the relative autonomy we can exercise in order to cope with these problems. We believe that Ernest L. Boyer's critical examination of higher education is powerfully suggestive regarding that strategy.⁵ Boyer provides a means by which we might exercise our relative autonomy to define ourselves in terms acceptable to the competing cultures within which we find ourselves. The suggestions we intend to offer do not constitute a delivered identity, but we hope they might initiate a strategic discourse for creating

and defending the boundaries of an identity.

Of the two cultures, the university's is more immediately present given that library and information science education is practiced at and through universities. The history of this institutional link is not long and reveals that the position of library and information science education within the university is not especially secure. Nevertheless, the practice of library and information science at the everyday level of the routine is a subculture of the university. This subculture resonates agreement with university values regarding, for example, the relative value of research compared to teaching. This close but insecure relation is probably to be expected given the academic socialization provided by doctoral programs in library and information science, the personal aspirations of the individuals who pursue careers in this field, and the fear that library and information science might not meet the university's criteria for acceptance as a "discipline." These conditions have historical roots that reveal a model of scholarship that may no longer be appropriate for university faculty. It is also a model that has dominated library and information science education and is perhaps in need of change.

Library and information science education experiences a different yet equally ambivalent relation with the profession. This relation should be close, yet it clearly displays tension, if not on occasion outright hostility. On the one hand, the profession relies on library and information science education to prepare qualified personnel for entry-level positions. The American Library Association-accredited M.L.S. is still essential to the profession in terms of its meaning as a sign of the knowledge and skills it represents and its meaning as a certificate validating the

right to practice. Recently, the profession has expressed its need to more accountably regulate and legitimate its personnel by escalating its demands for continuing education for all levels of personnel. Changing conditions for the profession and the possibilities implied by advances in telecommunications are also motivating practitioners to demand that all professional education be delivered more conveniently.⁶

On the other hand, library and information science educators often cannot escape the feeling that the practicing professional regards as irrelevant what educators must necessarily regard as most important. The research that is the central focus of library and information science as an academic discipline and the task to which the university insists it must be applied are often challenged by the profession and ignored unless they are in direct service to the solution of practical problems. The professional degree, in this view, signs a rite of passage rather than a meaningful educational experience.

Despite these apparently irreconcilable expectations, the difference that separates library and information science education and the profession may be less than it appears, and Boyer's ideas may offer an effective means of negotiating this distance. Implicit in Boyer's argument is the notion that higher education provides a central and crucial forum for professional discourse. Practitioners necessarily bring their own agendas to this discourse, yet they do participate, as both readers and writers. This condition reasonably reflects Haskell's notion of a professional community, sustained by discourse, that integrates research and practice.⁷ The extent of integration may not be such that either practitioners or educators are satisfied, yet enough common ground evidently exists to allow a reconciliation of professional education

and professional practice. Despite its institutional location, library and information science is committed to the same ends as the profession. Regardless of the form technology may dictate, both library and information science education and the profession are committed to better "libraries." Library and information science education shares and reflects divisions within the profession on what this means.

This sharing, like any other, is open to differing interpretations. The practices of library and information science education may be regarded as valuable because they articulate and offer solutions to professional problems and contribute to the kind of discourse that characterizes professionalism. They may also be regarded as an attempt by library and information science educators to dominate the agenda of professional discourse, rendered all the more hopeless by their self-imposed exile from the "real world." The truth of this relation is likely to be found somewhere in between these extremes. The work of library and information science education is based on critique, a practice associated with the university, and this critique often challenges conventional practice. Most library and information science educators, however, were once practitioners of some kind, and their identity, commitments, and values are based in that experience. Such is the myth that sustains the space within which library and information science education negotiates its fragile cultural identity. As with all myth, it is a metaphor based on elements of truth.⁸

Given the role of "practitioners" in our business, and our role in theirs, it is inevitable that the relation between us is intimate yet tense. Our shared cultural ends regarding information, its uses, its control, and the social implications of these phenomena bind library and information science education and

the profession in a relationship of mutual dependence and suspicion. The need to be of meaningful service to the profession, however, aggravates the problems library and information science education has with regard to establishing a credible position within university culture. This credibility gap is due in no small part to the ambiguity inherent in the relationship the university offers to library and information science education. It cannot be denied that library and information science education has an uncertain relationship with its practicing constituency. There are two interpretations of this condition from which the university can choose, depending upon its understanding of its own interests.

As a social institution, the university is based on two kinds of capital, cultural and financial. Its existence depends upon exchanging one form for the other. The university seeks the financial capital it requires to exist by producing knowledge, inventing technology, and educating citizens. It exchanges this cultural capital for appropriations, tuition, grants, endowments and gifts. A university's ability to command and control cultural and financial capital becomes its reputation, and the "better" its reputation, the more secure its competitive advantage regarding other producers of culture.⁹

The intrusion of the practical needs of the library and information science profession can be regarded as a threat to a university's cultural capital. At risk is the intellectual foundation necessary to a university-based discipline. According to this interpretation, this foundation must not be compromised. The legitimacy of the university's mission is at stake, as well as the financial capital this legitimacy is used to acquire. In this context, library and information science education is expected to seek grants, do research, and publish in

order to contribute to the university's goals, enhance the university's reputation, and secure for itself a legitimate position within university culture.

Another interpretation available centers on the doubts the university can raise about the economic viability of library and information science education programs. The issue in this instance is the financial value of such programs. Do they represent a cost or a benefit? Do they promise a reasonable return on investment? Do they threaten the financial security of the university? In this context, the measure of an academic program's contribution to the university's reputation is taken in the form of financial capital that program can attract. The question is whether library and information science education can earn its keep. This condition introduces a different set of stakes. Economic viability may be generated in a variety of ways depending upon market conditions. While such considerations of financial and cultural capital have led to the closing of library and information science education programs, a possibility exists within the new uncertainties facing both the university and the practicing profession for library and information science education to define a new vision of its role.¹⁰

Universities, as well as libraries, find that their legitimacy can no longer be based on an appeal to transcendental values. Contests over the meaning of such values render ambiguous the standards they once set. Social institutions must now be able to demonstrate a viable utility to the society that funds them. While the values of "performativity" that engender this "equation of wealth, efficiency, and truth" may challenge the values that once sustained nineteenth-century visions of libraries and universities, the fact is now that both must prove themselves so useful to

cultural reproduction that both deserve financial support.¹¹

Utility, however, is itself an essentially contested concept whose meaning remains elusive.¹² Even within the context of capital, disagreement often exists about which investment strategy promises the greatest return. Universities are under political pressure to be practically useful. Professions are under political pressure to demonstrate to an increasingly skeptical public that their expertise is well founded. This confluence of doubt represents an opportunity for library and information science education to exercise its autonomy and define itself in a way acceptable to both cultures that frame its identity. It also represents an indeterminacy in which the library and information science educators and practitioners can act together to contribute the social definition of their utility and give evidence of providing it.

We have indicated that the work of Ernest Boyer is relevant to the situation of library and information science education, and we will explore the implications of this work.¹³ In order to understand the dichotomy faced by library and information science educators, however, it is helpful to look at the historical development of the university. Today it is believed that to be a scholar one must be a researcher, and one's success is measured by the number of publications. This is a result of late-nineteenth century trends, but it was not the basis of the development of American higher education.

When Harvard College was founded in 1636, its description stated that one of the goals was to advance learning.¹⁴ This tradition emphasized the student and academy's role in the preparation of a new generation of leaders and persisted into the nineteenth century.¹⁵ With the founding of the nation's first technical school in 1824,

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, the focus of higher education began to shift from the "shaping of young lives to the building of a nation."¹⁶ Higher education was viewed as a means to add to the development of a nation by training people who were capable of literally building a nation.

The Morrill Act of 1862, later known as the Land Grant College Act, allocated federal land to each state for the development of educational programs for the liberal arts, agriculture, and industrial arts. The Hatch Act of 1887 provided funds for the development of "university sponsored agricultural experiment stations that brought learning to the farmer, and the idea of education as a democratic function to serve the common good."¹⁷ With these trends in higher education in the nineteenth century came the inclusion of *service* within the mission of American universities. Service was linked to morality: "The goal was not only to *serve* society, but [to] *reshape* it."¹⁸ By the early 1900s institutions of higher education were touting "the serviceable patriot as their ideal product" and their contribution to democracy and the good of the nation.¹⁹

At this same time, scientific effort was being acknowledged within the universities. The research orientation of German universities began to emerge in American universities in the 1870s with the development of Ph.D. programs. By the late nineteenth century, research was emphasized in American higher education and university appointees were asked "to sign an agreement that promotion in rank and salary would depend chiefly upon research productivity."²⁰

Given changing social conditions as a result of the Great Depression and World War II, the universities volunteered to assist in the research and development of national defense, and

federal grants to assist the funding of this kind of research became widely available. The academic model of research, teaching, and service was born from these circumstances and events. As the university approaches the end of the twentieth century, research seems to dominate the academic model, as teaching and service seem to be deemphasized.

The history of library education closely follows the trends of American higher education. Prior to the initiation of Melvil Dewey's School of Library Economy in 1887, "library education had taken the form of apprenticeship."²¹ It was Dewey's intention to combine practical experience with a theoretical foundation. The development of the University of Chicago Graduate School's Ph.D. program was the beginning of a research-centered academic program within the discipline.

To legitimize library and information science as a discipline and to secure a place within the academy, library and information science schools have closely followed the model that uses scholarly productivity as a benchmark for academic promotion and tenure. This is the same model that is often referred to with disdain by the profession. Since library and information science education must live in both worlds, the academic and the professional, there is a need to develop a model that will allow these worlds to coexist.

Boyer proposes a model that could possibly accommodate the needs of both the academy and the profession.²² The Boyer model incorporates research, teaching, and service, but in a holistic and practical context.

Boyer believes faculty should establish themselves as researchers and should stay in touch with the developments in their fields throughout their

professional careers. He suggests that the dissertation should demonstrate that faculty are capable of studying a problem, doing original research, and presenting and defending the results to colleagues. Boyer questions the validity of the expectation that all faculty are able to engage in research projects and publish the results of research on a time line. Creativity is not a continual, progressive stream for all faculty. Rather, creativity ebbs and peaks in a more fluid manner. Professional and personal changes occur over a lifetime, and this should be reflected in the measures of assessment.²³

The value of service is often ignored. There are very few faculty who could attribute their academic tenure and promotion of service. The Boyer model recognizes applied scholarship. This includes activities that relate directly to the intellectual work of the faculty and is done by consultation, technical assistance, policy development and analysis, and program evaluation.²⁴ Library and information science faculty are often viewed as the experts in certain areas by practicing professionals and are often asked to assist in the development of library and professional association policy statements and in the evaluation of library programs and procedures. Faculty often limit this activity, since it is not usually highly regarded in academic promotion and tenure decisions, yet involvement in these activities enhances the development and understanding of the field and is likely to present a positive image of faculty to the profession.

Journal publication is easily quantified, and a hierarchical ranking of journals within a discipline is often identified. The quality of the journal publications may not be adequately evaluated or addressed in the current model. The Boyer model recognizes writing for the practitioner as a legiti-

mate scholarly endeavor. One must have a thorough understanding of the theories and concepts of the field to effectively write about them for general audiences.²⁵ This type of writing contributes to the practice of the discipline and should be rewarded.

The faculty are also expected to participate in funded research projects. However, research funds are limited, and faculty spend much time and effort developing research proposals that are not funded. All faculty within a university are evaluated by the same standards, yet some disciplines have more options for funded research support than others. Faculty must search for research support, but are assigned to teach classes.²⁶

Faculty are penalized if they fail to do research, yet are not often rewarded for good teaching.²⁷ Faculty believe time spent on teaching and working with students is not seriously considered for academic promotion and tenure. Boyer states, "Teaching, as presently viewed, is like a currency that has value in its own country but can't be converted into other currencies."²⁸ Library and information science faculty play a major role in the development and education of future information professionals. It is imperative that the field has well-qualified decision makers to lead the profession in the changing electronic environment. In this way, faculty influence the development of the practicing profession.

If teaching is to be considered equal to research, it should be evaluated by criteria that are recognized by the academy. Teaching evaluations should include self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and student evaluation. The assessment tools used by students and peers to evaluate faculty should be valid assessment tools. For the self-evaluation, faculty should include course outlines, goals, descriptions of assignments, and

copies of examinations and teaching materials. The faculty should also reflect on the classroom experience. The methods and exercises that contributed successfully to the learning experience and those that did not should be identified, as well as actions that could be taken to improve the course.²⁹ Patricia Clark, of the University of California at Berkeley, has discussed the classroom researcher in terms of the community college. She defines this as one who is involved in the evaluation of his or her own teaching and "collects feedback [from students] . . . to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction."³⁰ This form of scholarship is included in the Boyer model.

Students should be asked to evaluate faculty a year or two after they have taken a class by the faculty. This gives the students time to reflect and evaluate the course in relation to their professional duties and responsibilities.³¹ This seems very appropriate for library and information science courses that include both theory and practice. Often students do not realize or have the opportunity to utilize the knowledge and skills gained from a course until they are practicing professionals. Their comments and suggestions would be beneficial to the improvement and development of library and information science education.

The field of library and information science also lends itself to interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and research. Mass communication, computer science, psychology, sociology, public policy, and law are but a few of the disciplines that could easily be integrated into the curriculum. The boundaries between disciplines are currently much less defined than ever before. It is the opportune time to develop courses and to team teach with faculty from other university departments or campuses. As courses are developed

and literature from the disciplines is shared, collaborative research efforts may soon emerge. This may give the library and information science faculty more visibility and exposure within the university.

Faculty should be encouraged to develop portfolios in order to document their work in a variety of ways. These portfolios should include documentation of work done with and for practitioners, publications, newly developed and/or revised curricula/um, course descriptions, peer reviews, student evaluations and self-evaluations, photographs, exemplar student class work, videotapes, computer software that the faculty developed, etc.³² In this way faculty are able to present a holistic portrait of the scholar.

Professional associations and accrediting bodies, such as the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) and the ALA, "also have a crucial role to play" in the development and incorporation of a new model of scholarship.³³ ALISE has been a leader in promoting teaching through conference themes and programs and by not limiting speakers and programs to research-oriented papers and topics. ALA-accreditation standards have also been revised to evaluate a program on its outcomes as measured against its mission statement and goals and not on a quantitative scale of number of faculty, students, graduates, funded research projects; faculty research; or number of faculty publications. Over the years, ALA has also sponsored workshops and programs that include both library and information science educators and practicing professionals. These associations and accrediting bodies must articulate to the academy the changing definition of scholarship within the profession.

Although the Boyer model may seem logical and obvious, it will be a

challenge to incorporate research, integration, application, and teaching into the more narrow, traditional definition of scholarship.³⁴ The support of the university administration is essential to effectively implement this model, although the primary responsibility for the redefinition of scholarship rests with the faculty. Through faculty senate and university-wide committees and curriculum development and revisions, faculty must "determine the criteria by which their performance will be measured and rewarded."³⁵

The legitimacy of the Boyer model, as well as the possibility of its application in library and information science education, depends upon the organizational culture of the university and the ideologies that contend for dominance within particular universities. These ideologies are expressions of conceived and actual relations between higher education and society. They represent a social and political contest over the meaning and purpose of higher education. The cultural conflicts that characterize postmodern society render these meanings and relations problematic. In this volatile and uncertain discursive environment, some institutions will retreat into tradition while others will display a willingness to consider new meanings.

There is reason to believe that the Boyer model, while not necessarily identified as such, is influencing the direction of higher education. Universities are players in the contest of their definition, and university officials are aware of the competitive advantage that accrues to organizations that can demonstrate "useful performance." They are also keenly aware of the politics that surround the meaning of this idea. Universities may generally seek ways to more directly apply the expertise of their disciplines to society's affairs in order to gain public and financial sup-

port. Under these circumstances, the Boyer model should be quite acceptable.

A more likely outcome, however, is some degree of confusion. Traditional notions of the nature and purpose of research and publication are deeply embedded in university culture, and as Budd explores later in this issue, this culture is not monolithic, and its particular expression varies among universities. At this point, the only secure conclusion is that definitions of a "successful" academic program will probably depend upon contests whose outcomes are unlikely to be long-lasting. Under some circumstances it may be impossible for a library and information science program to advocate the Boyer model, but public demand for faculty accountability is driving all higher education to reconsider the role of the faculty.

The University of Denver (DU) provides an instructive illustration of the Boyer model's integration into university culture. The Daniels College of Business (DCB) found itself caught between the competing cultures of higher education and business, and in response revised its definitions of the role of faculty. Teaching is considered the faculty's primary task, and applied scholarship, including service to the profession, is recognized for promotion and tenure. The DCB is currently developing joint-degree programs and certificates of advanced study and encouraging team teaching and interdisciplinary cooperative research projects. DCB's success with the Boyer model, including the improved financial status of the college, has encouraged other units within DU to explore its implementation.

The initiation of the Library and Information Services (LISV) Department in University College was approved by the graduate Council of DU

in January 1995. The development of the department and its curriculum was greatly influenced by the Boyer model. The LISV Department will hire its own full-time faculty, and this faculty will teach courses that are dedicated to the LISV program, but that are cross-listed with other university programs such as telecommunications, communications, and computer information systems. Faculty from other DU departments will also teach for the LISV Department, and practicing informational professionals will be hired as adjunct faculty.

The LISV curriculum is interdisciplinary. Students may select from several different concentrations, including telecommunications, computer information systems, management of technology, geographic information systems, and leadership. LISV students are enrolled in classes with students from these other disciplines and are exposed to their literature and professional cultures. The students are also required to complete a capstone project that involves working with faculty and professionals from diverse disciplines.

A cooperative research service is being developed with a state agency to support both applied and scientific research. As a result, students will have the opportunity to complete their required capstone projects through an organized research facility, administered by faculty. This allows students to work on research projects that will enhance their professional development and contribute to the knowledge base of library and information science.

Applied research and service are encouraged and explicitly addressed in the contract that outlines faculty responsibilities and evaluation criteria. Teaching, research, and service will be given equal value in faculty evaluations, which will be conducted by peers and students. Faculty will also compile teaching portfolios, and they

will evaluate their own teaching. They are also required by University College to attend workshops and seminars to improve their teaching skills and to assist them in the development of methods to assess student learning outcomes.

Since the LISV model was approved, other departments have been revising their curricula and working to develop interdisciplinary graduate and undergraduate programs. The philosophy of this model is the creation of strong programs that use the strengths of several disciplines to ensure quality higher education. Faculty are encouraged to contribute directly and actively to the knowledge of practicing professions. The Boyer model could be used to redefine the library and information science scholar within the profession and within the university. By incorporating more flexible guidelines in the evaluation of faculty and acknowledging scholarship that enhances practice, library and information science educators could perhaps find a more comfortable place between these two conflicting cultures.

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