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## Library education: Guiding principles

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I have chosen continuing education for library workers and supporters as the theme for my year as OLA president. After this theme issue of *OLA Quarterly* is published, I will work with OLA's Continuing Education Committee to develop a needs assessment survey for the membership. Based on the results of that survey, a program will be planned for the 1998 Oregon Library Association conference in Eugene. I hope the Continuing Education Committee will present a proposal during that program aimed at developing a structure for and improving the delivery of continuing education activities in the state.

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## Library Education: Guiding Principles

Gary Jensen, President  
Oregon Library Association

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That having been said, it is useful to define what we mean by library education. We have sought to develop as broad a definition as possible:

Library education encompasses formal and informal, technical and non-technical educational and

training experiences intended to help a person be more effective and successful, develop professionally, meet degree, licensure and certification requirements, update knowledge and skills, share experiences and concerns, and become acquainted with colleagues and peers. For some library staff, the focus is more on continuing education opportunities; for others, it means certification or a master's degree in library science; and for others, it means learning specific skills and improving technical abilities.

Educational opportunities span a wide variety of activities:

- participation in professional organizations
- workshops on general or specific topics
- training courses and seminars
- conferences and teleconferences
- degree and certificate programs
- listservs and discussion groups
- videotapes and films
- lectures and panel presentations

The target audience for these library education activities includes all staff who work in libraries and individuals who are associated with libraries, such as trustees, friends, and volunteers. These activities may be aimed at individuals, units, groups, or teams within libraries; entire library staffs; or staff from many libraries.

### PRINCIPLES OF HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT FOR LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS


Professional development works best when it is part of a state-wide collective effort to improve and integrate the recruitment, selection, preparation, certification, induction, and ongoing development and support of library staff. Following is a list of principles that will guide development for library profes-

sionals in Oregon and ensure that we satisfy those criteria.

I have adapted and expanded this list from a 1995 publication of the U.S. Department of Education concerning the professional development of educators: *Building Bridges: The Mission & Principles of Professional Development* (ED 1.2:B 76/2). I have also referred to other resources, including communications from the libsup listserv for library support staff hosted at the University of Washington.

Professional development for library staff in Oregon must adhere to these principles.

- It has as its goal the health and success of Oregon libraries of all types.
- It focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational growth and improvement.
- It respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of librarians, support staff and others in the library community.
- It reflects the best available research and practice in librarianship and information science.
- It promotes the basic tenets of librarianship including the principles of intellectual freedom and the right to inquire, read and view.
- It provides a rich mix of practical and theoretical learning experiences.
- It facilitates the sharing of experience and expertise.
- It promotes the development, maintenance and enhancement of professional contacts with similar organizations and people.
- It maximizes the potential and effectiveness of employees.
- It enables librarians and support staff to develop further skills and expertise in budgeting, customer service, subject content, teaching and learning strategies, collection development, uses of technologies and online resources, management of information, and other essential elements in providing high-quality library collections and services.
- It promotes continuous inquiry and improvement and life-long learning.
- It is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate the developmental activities.
- It requires substantial time and other resources.
- It is driven by a coherent long-term plan.
- It is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on the effectiveness of libraries and those who work in them (and this assessment guides subsequent professional development efforts).

If you are interested in the effort to develop and improve continuing education activities for library workers and supporters, please contact Sue Kopp, chair of the continuing education committee: Sue Kopp, Library, Pacific University, 2043 College Way, Forest Grove, Oregon 97116; telephone: (503) 359-2735; fax: (503) 359-2236; email: [koppcs@pacificu.edu](mailto:koppcs@pacificu.edu) 

## Purposes of the Oregon Library Association and its Continuing Education Committee

The OLA Procedure Manual lists the following statement of purpose:

*The object of the Oregon Library Association shall be to promote and advance library service through public and professional education and cooperation.*

The OLA manual lists the following duties for the nine-member Continuing Education Committee:

- To foster in-service training and continuing education internally
- To evaluate needs for continuing education workshops on a local, state, or regional level
- To correlate continuing education with the Oregon State Library, OLA, interested academic institutions in Oregon, and the Washington Library Association
- To publicize continuing education opportunities for Oregon library staff on the OLA web pages

At the annual Oregon Library Association retreat at Silver Falls Conference Center in August, the executive board approved a list of goals for 1997-98. One of the goals was to provide for library education. The following seven activities were identified as worthy objectives (those responsible for carrying out the activity are identified in the parentheses following each item). During the year, other activities will be identified.

- Preparing an information packet regarding promotion of library legislation and developing a training session to teach all OLA members how to promote library legislation (Legislative Committee)
- Supporting the current Emporia State University Oregon M.L.S. program (Gary Jensen)
- Taking advantage of speakers, consultants, authors, and teachers already in the state and creating library learning opportunities with them (Continuing Education Committee and Gary Jensen)
- Reminding librarians to encourage friends and trustees to attend the annual OLA conference (Continuing Education Committee and Trustees and Friends Division)
- Promoting the statewide distribution of educational programming using a variety of electronic methods (Continuing Education Committee and Gary Jensen)
- Offering programs to raise the knowledge and skill levels of all library staff (Continuing Education Committee)
- Supporting the Trustees and Friends Division's ED-NET series of workshops planned for several sites around the state (Trustees and Friends Division)

## Other Resources for Continuing Education Information and Activities

### WASHINGTON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because the duties of the Continuing Education Committee specifically mention coordination with the Washington Library Association, here is the purpose statement for the Washington Library Association:

*The purpose of the Washington Library Association is to promote library services, continuing education and library advocacy on behalf of the people of Washington State.*

In 1996-97, WLA established a Continuing Education Council and a coordinator of continuing education. For further information on WLA's programs, visit the organization's web site ([www.wla.org/ce.html](http://www.wla.org/ce.html)).

### AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The American Library Association's Continuing Library Education Network and Exchange Round Table (CLENERT) has the following charge:

*(1) To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and concerns among library and information personnel responsible for continuing library education, training, and staff development; (2) to provide learning activities and material to maintain the competencies of those who provide continuing library education; (3) to provide a force for initiating and supporting programs to increase the availability of quality continuing library education; (4) to create an awareness of, and sense of need for, continuing library education on the part of employees and employers.*

CLENERT publishes a quarterly magazine called CLENExchange. For further information, visit the CLENERT web site ([ala1.ala.org:70/00/alagophxiv/alagophxivclen/clenert.hb](http://ala1.ala.org:70/00/alagophxiv/alagophxivclen/clenert.hb)).