Editorial

Education in Classification

The Editorial in the very first issue of International Classification 1(1974) deplored the fact that

"Among the people engaged in the application of classification methods ... there are too many who are working independently and in isolation while having no common background, practically no common body of doctrine or principles, no common rules or practices for classing and indexing, no common terminology and no commonly accepted tenets on the contents of classification as a science..."

Later on, after the Augsburg FID/CR Conference in June 1982 many felt that "classification is coming of age" - as *Eric de Grolier* put it in his synthesis of this conference - and that classification science might now be regarded as an autonomous scientific discipline because, by now, several features of such a discipline can be predicated of this field.

Could one say that this discipline grew out of a general need to create order? It is indeed not restricted to books and information, to goods and services, but it encompasses also any items and their units of knowledge (concepts) for purposes connected with the high value of order: namely harmony, beauty, understandability, predictability, easy survey, easy management of things, and easy placing and finding of new knowledge!

Although classification science is taught in some universities, it is still limited - to my knowledge - to the application fields of library science, information science, statistics and the other fields in which systematization plays a role. Should we not work towards establishing a common basis of classification knowledge which could be taught everywhere, and then extended to the various application fields by the addition of the special knowledge required?

The first article in this issue, by *G.Greiner*, gives us the contents of a course on "Subject Analysis" taught at the College of Information Science of the German Documentation Society. The course could also have been named "Classification" or "Indexing" as it covers all the items of concern related to the organization of information for retrievability. We hope that this article might become a challenge for all teachers in our field and might motivate them to comment on the scope outlined and to present in turn their ideas and probably even more comprehensive views of what needs to be taught and learned by their students. Beyond the teachers in our field we would like to invite everybody to take the ideas of Mr.Greiner into consideration and to reflect on the main body of knowledge that makes up the science of classification and its specific applications in various fields. By doing this we can help each other gain a mutual understanding of our field.

Two other articles in this issue provide some good ideas for new features in our field. *A.J.N.Judge* explains

how the functional aspect can play a greater role than heretofore in the establishment of systems and their application. The visualization of hierarchies or - perhaps more to the point - knowledge organization as outlined and illustrated in the article by *R.Wille* can help us comprehend relationships and gain a better over-view of the mostly non-visible relationships between the characteristics evolving from concept analysis. This latter article was - by the way - the most lauded paper at the 8th Annual Conference of the German Society for Classification, April 1984 and we are happy to include it in English in this issue.

At its 7th Annual Conference 1983 the German Society for Classification attempted to deal with the problems of education and training, as mentioned also in the Editorial of Int.Classif. 1983-1. The results will hopefully be published by the end of 1984. The Society is now in the phase of considering measures to conduct a survey on the contents of educational programs in classification and indexing in the different schools for librarians and documentalists as well as of any other application areas in order to compare them and to provide a survey from which later on a common body of knowledge and its further specializations may be derived.

We would like to encourage other countries to work on the same lines and to cooperate with FID/CR which has also taken up these questions in its program of current interest and work.

I would like to point to one more item of general interest. Recently the 2nd volume of the *International Classification and Indexing Bibliography* (ICIB 2) has been published. It lists all the reference works and conferences (with their papers) in our field between 1950 and 1982, altogether some 4000 titles. The conference papers have been classed according to the *Classification Literature Classification* (CLC) also used for the bibliographic sections in this journal. The systematic index of ICIB 2 gives - in my opinion - quite a good survey on the scope of our science as reflected in the conference papers. This scope will become even more obvious in the forthcoming three ICIB volumes of literature on classification which will also be organized according to this CLC system. (See the announcement of this publication in FID/CR News, p.91).

If classification science is indeed an autonomous field of knowledge it should soon become a subject to be independently taught at universities, which means it should be a field for students in every field, besides being taught in a specialized way to its possible specialists. Would you not agree that the knowledge of our field could be very helpful to every scientist in trying to bring order to his thoughts and concepts, to his use of words and terms and to his files and retrieval devices?

For such an aim we need of course to proceed step by step and to outline first of all a syllabus and later on a curriculum for those who will become the teachers of classification science in general. Meanwhile, however, we must also take the necessary steps to bring these ideas to the attention of those who possess the means to realize these ideas on a national and/or university level.

Do these ideas appeal to you? I would be glad to hear your reactions!

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