

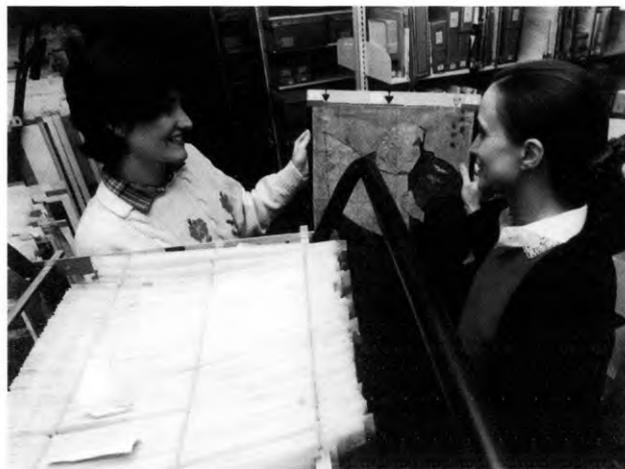
# A positive experience

Penny Martinek and Jenny Clouston

Part of the course work for the Graduate Diploma in Library and Information studies at the Queensland University of Technology is satisfactory completion of two periods of fifteen working days field experience taken. For our first placement we chose the Kelvin Grove campus of the Queensland University of Technology because of the nursing faculty and our backgrounds in physiotherapy and nursing. We started off with one day a week and finished our three-week stint with a week block. The initial days were orientation with a steep learning curve. The week interval between work gave us time to reflect our experience and gain confidence. We were placed at the library from mid-semester until the exam period, so we experienced the rush at the information desk of assignment queries. It also gave us time to get to know the staff and them us.

Our week block passed very quickly. The major project of our field work was to weed the hanging charts of the curriculum collection. The activity brought with it the realisation of the ramifications of any activity within the library. Where would the weeded items be stored? Who was responsible for mending? How much of the collection could be weeded out? Who was responsible for changing the catalogue details? Who would acquisition replacement items?

We are both part-time students so have been studying for eighteen months. The hands on experience brought a lot of concepts together. It was great to do CD-ROM searches that were relevant to



Weeding the charts: Penny Martinek (l) and Jenny Clouston (r)

a real situation rather than an assignment. *Conspectus*, which had previously only been an assignment topic, was brought to life with list checking. Our greatest achievement was to develop a cheat sheet for HealthRom — not the most user friendly of CD-ROMs!

Jess Burke (reference services manager) was our supervisor, but the organisation of our day to day activities was the responsibility of Ann-Maree Graham and Peter Sondergeld (liaison librarians). They had organised a comprehensive list of activities which changed to suit the reality of life in the library. As much as possible we participated in everyday activities. The whole staff made us feel welcome and that our input was worth while. ■

## Focus on variety

Alice Steiner

As part of my Post-Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies at Queensland University of Technology I undertook fieldwork experience at the university library, Kelvin Grove.

My placement, with a fellow library student, was in reference services. Working together enriched the experience, and assisted our supervisors as it facilitated some independent work. Jess Burke, reference services manager was our immediate supervisor. She remains my mentor, and has been greatly supportive of my career development. Reference librarian, Peter Sondergeld, organised orientation and daily activities during the placement.

Our timetable was carefully managed to include the greatest variety of tasks. Not only were we exposed to reference duties, including use of bibliographic tools, providing a reference service and user education, we also spent time in other library departments. This included sessions in cataloguing, document delivery, loans and shelving, to gain an understanding of the spectrum of library procedures and how a full service operates.

Shifts on the reference desk were at first accompanied by a reference librarian. As our familiarity with library resources increased we began to staff the desk alone, relying on the



Alice Steiner

phone connection to liaison librarians to assist difficult queries. This experience put to practice much of what I had learnt during the course, particularly reference and library services subjects.

Other regular duties included assisting reference librarians with *Conspectus* analysis and course accreditation proposals. This involved list checking and compiling lists of Library of Congress subject headings. Studies in collection development provided a basis for these tasks. List checking improved my

knowledge of the collection, and involved me in collection evaluation.

Another component of the program was an introduction to the university's IREL database (industrial relations). A day was spent with the IREL indexer, learning about the project and creating indexed records. I was very appreciative of this unique experience.

At mid-placement, I was delighted to be offered part-time employment, staffing the reference desk and list-checking for *Conspectus* work. This in my final semester enhanced my understanding of librarianship, and improved my career prospects. It was a pleasure to work at the library. The help and encouragement I received during my fieldwork was exceptional. Time and knowledge were offered generously, and emphasis was placed on variety of experience. By no means did I spend my time mastering the photocopier. I was able to relate my study to a real library situation, and was immediately grateful that I had chosen this career path.

Following graduation I gained casual employment at the library, and became Queensland ALIA local presence officer. Six months later I acquired my present position — liaison librarian to the Academy of Arts and Justice Studies. I could not have had a better initiation to the profession. ■