ffects of increasing entry level education, such as increased political activism, research skills, and credibility, do not outweigh the negative effects such as a decline in minority representation and the increased costs.

I believe that professionalism is more than just the acquisition of an advanced degree, as the authors seem to indicate. In my work experience I have met many occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants who were well respected by health care professionals, patients, and the community not because of the degree they held, but because they represented their profession with skill, pride, and compassion.

Mark M. O’Brien, COTA
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Update on Medical Libraries
Marian Hall’s article, “Unlocking Information Technology” (November 1987, pp. 722–725), addressed several important issues related to computerized data bases. Medical personnel and medical libraries have been leaders in the development and acceptance of computer applications for information retrieval. I hope this article will serve as an incentive for rehabilitation professionals to become more actively involved in using computerized data bases.

However, as a librarian, I am concerned about some of the statements presented. Medical libraries are having little trouble implementing automated information systems. These libraries, from large academic medical centers to small hospitals, are automating daily. This is largely due to the push from our public health care providers.

As medical libraries have automated, there has been a strong emphasis on user education. Most medical center libraries and many hospital libraries offer training to end user, that is, health provider, searching. The courses are designed by information professionals and taught on a routine basis. The actual courses and contents vary from institution to institution; however, the basic objective is to help health providers become familiar with user-friendly systems. Individual assistance with specific systems is also frequently available.

Therefore, I suggest that those interested in learning to use one of these systems contact their nearest medical librarian rather than trying to teach themselves. If a training program is not readily available, the librarian can help locate one that is appropriate for the individual’s needs.

My last concern is the implication that computerized data bases provide immediate access to comprehensive rehabilitation information. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Although the number of full text data bases, those that have complete articles or textbooks, is growing, most data bases currently available require that the information be retrieved from bibliographies. This means that the information must still be obtained from a library or other retrieval source. Some, but not all, on-line systems offer ordering services. I am sure that this problem will soon be overcome, but the information will be costly.

I hope your journal will continue to inform readers about the numerous information resources available via computers.

Julia Shaw
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

Author’s Response
Although most data bases that librarians use are bibliographic, ABLEDATA is not. ABLEDATA requires familiarity with technology and adaptive equipment terminology.

Marian Hall, OTR
Newington, Connecticut

Likes the Issue on Technology
I would like to express my appreciation for the November 1987 issue of the American Journal of Occupational Therapy, the Special Issue on Technology. Technological applications in occupational therapy are a special interest of mine, and I found the articles timely, comprehensive, and valuable to those of us working with physically challenged students.

In addition, the In Focus, Letters to the Editor, and Book Reviews departments made this issue very complete indeed.

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