

REPORT ON WORK COMPLETED DURING YEAR OF SABBATICAL LEAVE

1965 - 1966

by

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The school year, 1965-1966, I spent in the Graduate School of Library Science of the University of Wisconsin completing work which led to my being granted a Master of Arts Degree in Library Science.

Wisconsin was my choice of several fine library schools for a variety of reasons. Among them was the nationally known reputation of the Director of the Wisconsin Library School. Margaret E. Monroe is one of the outstanding librarians in this country, and I felt that it would be most rewarding to work under her.

My year in Wisconsin was interesting and worthwhile in many ways. The city of Madison is one of the most beautiful in the Middle West, with its lakes, streams and fine old trees. And the capitol building, with its two hundred foot white granite dome has been compared in majesty and beauty to that in Washington, D.C.

The routine of the school year was broken by my attending the Mid-Winter Conference of the American Library Association held in Chicago, the last of January, 1966. And while there I was asked to undertake a study of current practice in giving

library orientation and instruction in American Junior Colleges. This area is of great concern to Junior College librarians at present. In July, I was asked to present a preliminary report at the National Conference of the American Library Association held in New York City. This report was made to the Junior College Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries on July 11, 1966. (The final report of this study is nearing completion and is being prepared for publication. A copy will be placed in the library at Mt. San Antonio College.)

This sabbatical year was one of extremely interesting and educational experiences. The academic achievement was of tremendous value. But the opportunity to attend the two conferences of the American Library Association and to be a participant was also a very thrilling learning experience.

I should like to express here my gratitude to Mt. San Antonio College for making possible this year of study and research.

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON A STUDY OF CURRENT PRACTICE IN LIBRARY
INSTRUCTION AND ORIENTATION IN AMERICAN JUNIOR COLLEGES.

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Over the years citations in library literature referring to articles on library orientation and instruction have continued to accumulate. These writings present a variety of methods and ideas which have been developed for individual situations and which are, therefore, not always generally applicable. However, certain traditional patterns have evolved gradually, and are used in school after school, year after year, despite uneasy speculation about their real benefit to the students.

The traditional approaches employ the library tour with or without the lecture. Carlton Brown, writing in the Library Journal for May 15, 1965, refers to this contemptuously as the "herded tour"--the "student cattle drive" of the usual Freshman Orientation Week. Library handbooks are often handed out at this time. Occasionally students are given a set of elementary library problems to solve at the conclusion of the session. Courses of library instruction may be given in connection with a class--traditionally a freshman English class--or the librarian may be asked to lecture to a particular group on materials which are related to a course.

However, the methods being used to give library instruction are not effective to the degree that the majority of

students are self reliant in the library. And this library ineptitude is a characteristic not only of the high school student and the undergraduate collegian, but also of the graduate student and the instructor. Librarians are convinced of this from daily experience. Library ignorance on the part of teachers and college instructors is particularly deplorable, for this relates to lack of administrative support for libraries, and to meager indoctrination students receive from instructors in the importance of the library in the educational process. This accounts as well, for many misunderstandings between faculty and librarian regarding library resources and services.

However important the lack of, and the poor quality of library instruction may have been in the past, the problem is a compelling one at the present time, and it is engaging the attention of librarians all over the country. For a variety of reasons it is more important now than ever before that people, all kinds of people, know how to locate material in a library.

Within the last ten years educational methodology has undergone a revolution. Stress currently is on independent study, involving use of multiple resources. There has been an increase in respect for academic prowess, and also a concomitant increase in competition for scholarly achievement. The population explosion and the constantly increasing number of students

enrolled in schools, colleges and universities is an important factor for consideration. The tremendous increase in publication and the increasing use of reports, journals, documents, and microforms must be taken into account. Rapidly changing science and technology make continual study mandatory for many vocational and professional careers. The continued shortage of librarians in the face of the great increase of materials and the tremendous volume of use of books and libraries, is not the least urgent aspect of the problem. All the above argue the need for ensuring knowledge and skill in library usage on the part of the library patron.

In an attempt to improve current practice in library instruction and orientation techniques on the junior college level, the Executive Committee of the Junior College Libraries Section of ACRL recently authorized a study of the area. The study will be based, partially, on two questionnaires, one of which was mailed to the 147 junior college libraries all over the United States. The second questionnaire, directed to ten selected junior colleges, 100 copies to each, was designed to measure student opinion of the library orientation and instruction to which they had been exposed.

To the 147 questionnaires sent to junior college libraries, there were 115 replies-a total of 78 per cent. The comments noted on the returned forms were indicative of a genuine interest

in, and a deep concern for this area of library responsibility as shown by this selection:

We have not yet convinced our administrators that the students need more time in the library. They feel that we are there, and can orientate them when they need it. We are in the process of building a \$1,250,000 library, and I have had very little to say on it. We appreciate your asking us to participate, and if a report comes out please see that we get one, for we are working hard to have a wonderful library for our students.

We are in the process of evaluating both the college orientation program and the library instruction program. We are not satisfied with the way we are doing either.

Universal applicability is non-existent and a waste of time. General orientation through synchronized slides and tapes, usable at a student's own convenience in a listening room in the library, is the most successful approach to universality on the survey level. We hope to do this later.

This semester we are making plans to give a formal course in the fall. Entered in the fall catalog as Library resources-their arrangement and use, the course will carry one unit for eighteen class hours. Our present plan is to offer it twice next semester. There are no requirements. We are hoping that this course will be only the beginning of regular, planned library instruction for all our students; the need is great. If you have received any materials which might be useful to us in planning this course, we should be most grateful.

I personally am not sold on the validity of a semester length course of one, two or three hour credit depth for freshmen students. They need a good introduction, and in the junior year another longer orientation in depth after they have gained some experience in basic library techniques.

Some of us hope to televise the whole orientation. We would like to use segments from films, slides, taped music, transparencies, filmstrips, and other A.V. aids which would be applicable and useful. One of my ulterior motives for designing a library orientation course is to acquaint our faculty with library resources.

We would appreciate learning of better ways to orient the students in the library. If you gather any interesting comments I would be pleased to learn of them. We'll have 8000 day students on campus this next year, and well reach only a very small fraction of them through our TV presentation and our class. We have developed a TV filmed orientation presentation. This fifty minute video tape is available at all times. At present it is used primarily by the non-transfer English classes, and also is used in the guidance classes. It is up to the instructors. It is not required, and all students do not receive the orientation presentation.

We have not been happy with the results of our efforts. Motivation begins with the faculty, in many ways, and we feel that too many instructors in the orientation program do not feel, or do not believe that library orientation is of much value. Maybe our job is not to sell the students, but the faculty!"

These remarks made by librarians all over the United States show very clearly how junior college librarians feel about the importance of giving adequate library instruction, and the comments underline several of the traditional problems as well-lack of faculty and administrative understanding in particular.

And what are these people actually accomplishing in the area of presenting library orientation and instruction programs? A tabulation of the questionnaire shows that the 115 junior college libraries responded as follows:

DO YOU HAVE A LIBRARY ORIENTATION PROGRAM?
72 per cent answered "yes."

DO YOU HAVE A LIBRARY INSTRUCTION PROGRAM?
57 per cent answered "yes."

IS THE ORIENTATION OR INSTRUCTION GIVEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH A PARTICULAR CLASS?
74 per cent answered "yes."

IF SO, WHICH ONE?

50 per cent answered "English."

23 per cent answered "Psychology" (college orientation).

Other replies were "Any class, on invitation."

WHEN GIVEN DURING THE SEMESTER?

39 per cent answered "at the beginning of the semester."

Next most frequent reply, "on invitation."

HOW LONG A TIME IS USED FOR THE ORIENTATION?

46 per cent—"one hour."

Other replies ranged from fifteen minutes to five weeks.

HOW LONG A TIME IS USED FOR THE LIBRARY INSTRUCTION?

28 per cent—"one hour."

Other replies ranged from fifteen to twenty minutes to whole semester.

WHAT MATERIALS (METHODS) ARE USED?

Handbooks - 61 per cent

Lectures - 70 per cent

Slides - 23 per cent

Tapes - 13 per cent

Motion pictures - 10 per cent

Television - 4 only

Classroom visits - 37 per cent

IS YOUR ORIENTATION A PART OF THE GENERAL COLLEGE ORIENTATION?

43 per cent replied "yes."

IS YOUR LIBRARY INSTRUCTION GIVEN AS A CREDIT COURSE?

14 per cent replied "yes."

DO YOU GIVE THE SAME INSTRUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO ALL STUDENTS? - BOTH TRANSFER AND TERMINAL?

68 per cent answered "yes."

Others answered variously, usually that instruction was geared to the need of individual groups.

HAVE YOU EVER CONDUCTED A SURVEY TO DETERMINE WHAT COLLEGE STUDENTS NEED IN THE LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AREA?

10 per cent answered "yes."

The student questionnaire also elicited interesting figures and comments. A sampling of 100 of the papers from 9 colleges showed that:

85 per cent feel adequately prepared to use the college library.

27 per cent feel college library orientation has been of most help in learning to use the library.

60 per cent feel previous instruction in elementary or high school has been most helpful.

39 per cent also mention individual help from a librarian as being helpful.

34 per cent mentioned trial and error as providing valuable learning experience.

Asked "WHEN YOU NEED HELP IN USING THE LIBRARY, DO YOU MOST OFTEN ASK A LIBRARIAN OR ANOTHER STUDENT?"

80 per cent replied that they ask a librarian.

Asked "WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE WOULD REALLY HELP YOU LEARN TO USE YOUR LIBRARY MORE EFFECTIVELY?"

55 per cent answered "library instruction in connection with a course of English."

20 per cent felt that a separate course in the use of books and libraries would be most effective.

Other comments in regard to ideas which would help in learning to use the library:

Use of the library more often for school work, as well as for personal use.

A more intensive kind (of library orientation or instruction) than now being given—a student is merely given a list of trivial things to find in the library, and completion of the list is gauged a satisfactory knowledge of the library. The thing missing is the fundamental concepts.

We need frequent use of the library facilities through assignments given in classes other than English, because one should have a working knowledge of the library from elementary and high schools.

Trial and error is the greatest teacher. No matter how often one is shown, there is no substitute for

experience.

If one seeks knowledge or the source of it, a standard library that is well equipped, is all that is needed. Personally, if a student does not know how to use a library before he gets to college, he has more than one problem. (really)

In spite of the above opinions of students which indicate that 85 per cent believe themselves to be competent in library skills, my own experience as a librarian and my reading, lead me to believe that nearly all college students need both orientation and library instruction.

College library orientation programs probably should be required for all new students, freshmen and transfer, to acquaint them with the library in a general way. Such devices as television and motion pictures might be used early each semester, at scheduled intervals, to reach large groups.

For reinforcement and review of library use information, programmed instruction, always available for anyone who wishes to use it, is a means of giving students help with elementary repetitive problems which so harass all librarians. Mount San Antonio College, in California, is using the Videosonic teaching machine in this way. Henry Ford Community College, in Michigan, uses small portable tape recorders with lectures on the card catalog, technical indexes and references tools, for individual students who need review briefing.

Library instruction, I believe, should be a requirement for all college students, and in a junior college, should differ for the terminal and the transfer student. With full faculty cooperation, library instruction should be incorporated into general education courses with content and approach varied according to whether the students are transfer or terminal. The transfer classes could include work with advanced reference materials in addition to a review of the more elementary tools. The terminal classes also should be well grounded in basic materials and skills, and should have an understanding of technical journal use and of reference material in the technical-vocational areas. Both groups should be given assignments which would make various use of the library both necessary and frequent.

The junior college library has a dual obligation to its patrons. On the one hand, transfer students must be prepared to use with ease and skill, the library in the four year college or university. On the other hand, the terminal student should have the library habit ingrained in his very being for life, for here is the means for his continuing education and recreation.