

The Junior College Library—An Opportunity for the Administrator*

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TYPICALLY THE literature of educational administration and the literature of librarianship treat the *responsibilities* of the administrator for the school or college library. The emphasis given by many writers is on the administrative *obligation* or *duty*. Too seldom do they discuss the *opportunity* which the library offers for vitalizing the educational program. The administrator who takes advantage of the *opportunity* not only provides adequate facilities, budget, and staff, but typically he also:

1. Makes the position of the librarian one of major importance on the instructional staff.
2. Makes the library the resource center of instructional materials—including not only books, magazines, and other printed materials, but also motion pictures, recordings, slides, film strips, and other audio-visual materials.
3. Uses the library as an avenue of instructional supervision.

1. *Make Position of Librarian of Major Importance on Instructional Staff.* Few, if any, members of the faculty have an opportunity to know instruction, instructors, and students as well as does the alert librarian. The objectivity of the librarian's viewpoint is enhanced by the fact that he is not a day-by-day participant in classroom

routine. If, however, students come to the library with enthusiasm, with purpose, and with understanding, the librarian observes this as they work on their assignments. On the other hand, if they come with vague and indefinite assignments or with assignments which to them appear to be purposeless, the librarian knows it. He is with students when they meet problems and when they discover interests. He can, therefore, also be a valued member of the guidance and counseling staff. He acquires incalculably valuable information regarding teaching and its results; regarding students, their abilities, their successes, their frustrations, and particularly their learning problems. The librarian is perhaps in the best position of all on the campus to know the range of a teacher's interests, his grasp of ideas, his competence in the use of materials of instruction, and his methods of teaching.

Visits to California junior colleges reveal a number in which the librarian is an active member of curriculum and instructional committees and contributes his observations and insights to the definition of goals, planning the program, its operation, and evaluation. During this Study, as general education conferences were held on various campuses, and particularly at meetings with curriculum committees or department staffs, it was observed that more frequently than formerly librarians are now serving on committees and meeting with various departments.

Monterey, Harbor, Mount San Antonio, Pierce, Pasadena and Contra Costa are

* This article is adapted from Chapter IV of B. Lamar Johnson, *General Education in Action, A Report of the California Study of General Education in the Junior College*, to be published by the American Council on Education in the spring of 1952.

among the California junior colleges which single out the librarian for particular service in curriculum building and in planning instruction. At Shasta he serves not only on the faculty general education committee but is its chairman. In one institution, Los Angeles City College, the administration has recognized the function of the librarian by promoting her to be Assistant Dean, Library Services.

If the library is to make its optimum contribution to general education, the role of the librarian must, in most colleges, be upgraded and the librarian's contribution to curriculum planning given increased recognition. General education demands that the attention of the entire instructional staff, including the librarian, be centered upon the needs and abilities of each individual student. The librarian is in a position duplicated nowhere else on the campus to aid in realizing many of the subtle areas of such a program.

2. *Make Library Resource Center of Instructional Materials.* Under the vigorous leadership of the State Department of Education and with the stimulation of pioneering developments in the larger cities of the State, audio-visual materials are generally available and are extensively used by the junior colleges of California. In some the widely-recommended practice of making the library the center for all such materials is followed. In others an audio-visual agency has been set up outside the library and sometimes fully independent of it. If machinery for the effective administration of these aids has already been provided outside of the library, steps made to change may cause more problems and difficulties than values. If, however, a college has freedom in choosing its plan for administering audio-visual materials, the library provides a natural and economical center for such service, though staff, facili-

ties, and space must be provided.

If a librarian is fulfilling his functions, he will be studying the curriculum, getting acquainted with teaching, and working with teachers on building new courses and revising old ones. He must also, of course, perform the tasks of his profession and order, receive, organize, and distribute books and other printed materials. These identical functions must be served for audio-visual materials. To have another agency on campus duplicate these functions of knowing instruction, working on curriculum building, and ordering and administering materials would ordinarily seem to be economically wasteful and educationally unsound.

With the library recognized as an essential part of the instructional program and with the library as the resource center of instructional materials of all types, the stage is set for using the library as a vital force in improving teaching and in strengthening the general education program.

3. *Use Library as Avenue of Instructional Supervision.* Because the librarian knows students, instructors, and instruction, his background should be utilized by putting him in a situation in which he can share with faculty colleagues his knowledge, observations, insights, and ideas for improvement.

As a leader, the junior college administrator must know the instructional program of his college—its strengths and its weaknesses, its successes, and its failures. He holds conferences with instructors regarding their plans and their hopes, their problems and their worries. He attends and participates in faculty and department meetings and workshops. He may visit and participate in classes. In this phase of his operation, he can make use of the library as an aid to knowing, understanding, and helping improve the teaching program of his college.

By conferring with the librarian, by visits to the library, by sometimes working there, he can extend his acquaintance with the teaching program, gain insights otherwise difficult to achieve, and acquire a growing understanding of the potential contribution of the library to all aspects of instruction.

As a part of the California Study of General Education in the Junior College, the Director invited California junior college administrators to work for at least three hours in their college libraries and then to report to the Study on a one-sheet inquiry form the results of their observations. It was hoped that such observations would lead to an understanding of the library as an avenue to instructional supervision.

Thirty-two administrators in twenty different junior colleges participated in this survey. The positions of those cooperating were:

<i>Position</i>	<i>Number</i>
Administrative heads of colleges	11
Deans	11
Department chairmen	7
Directors of adult programs	2
Registrars	1

Administrators spent from one to five hours working in their college libraries prior to filling out the inquiry form. The median time reported was three hours.

The president of one of the larger junior colleges said of this project, "I am happy to participate in this Study because it brings forcefully to my attention a unit of our educational program which I have really neglected."

Activities typically engaged in by administrators during their stint in the library included, (a) accompanying the librarian as she helped students, (b) walking around the library to aid students, and (c) working at the circulation or reference desk. Less frequently the administrators reported they observed library activities, visited with the

librarian about his work and problems, asked students what they were doing and why, asked students for suggestions for improving the library, made a three-period survey of the use of library materials, and interviewed several teachers about their use of library materials.

The first question which administrators in the Study were asked was, "What new light did your work in the library throw upon the strengths and successes of individual teachers?" Their answers revealed that they had observed with approval the following activities of instructors, in the order of the frequency with which they occurred:

- Assign library work regularly.
- Make clear and definite assignments
- Make varied assignments adapted to the interests and abilities of individual students
- Make certain that library materials are available in sufficient quantity before assigning them
- Inform librarian regarding assignments which will require the use of library materials
- Know what is in the library
- Teach students how to select and evaluate reading materials
- Take library materials to their classrooms
- Use the library as their textbook
- Stimulate the enthusiasm of their students
- Meet with their classes in the college library for periods of work
- Schedule some of their office hours in the library

In addition to these general reports, several administrators referred to specific projects and teaching methods about which they have learned for the first time.

A Bakersfield administrator stated, "I learned of several ingenious methods which instructors employ in using the library. For example, one in radio and one in English arranged to have their classes meet and work together in the library. Following this a panel discussion was held at a joint meeting of the two classes."

An administrator at San Diego Junior College singled out instructors in political science for special comment:

These instructors have developed clearly defined, sequential units. Before making assignments in the library they have apparently answered the following questions:

1. What is the real need upon which this unit is based?
2. What does this unit aim to accomplish? Is it merely an exercise? Does it contribute to the objectives of the course?
3. Does it make allowance for individual differences?
4. Are its objectives clear and attainable?
5. Does this unit relate to the student's previous experience?

Administrators reported not only on the successes but also on the problems and difficulties of instructors. Those most often reported show a failure to use the library and an ignorance of how to use it. These are listed in the order of their frequency:

- Assign no library work
- Do not use the library
- Make assignments which are not clear
- Make assignments to materials which the library does not have
- Do not know how to use the library themselves
- Make the same assignments year after year
- Do not know what the library has in their fields
- Have difficulty providing reading materials for students of low academic ability

Administrators report observing successful teaching on the part of those instructors who were found to: Know the resources of the library; make assignments which are purposeful and clear; and keep the librarian informed regarding assignments. On the other hand, problems were found to arise when teachers: Do not know the library and how to use it; make assignments not purposeful and clear; and fail to keep the librarian informed regarding assignments.

Additional observations made on these periods of work in the library included comments on the large number of students

who do not know how to use the library. Wrote one dean, "I was amazed to learn how many of our students don't seem to know even the rudiments of library usage." On the other hand, several commented on their pleasure in observing the facility which students showed in locating materials and in going about their assignments. Other comments were made on what is undoubtedly a wide-spread problem: Many students are unable to spend sufficient time in the college library because of job or family responsibilities.

Among plans reported by the administrators for improving library instructional relationship are the following:

- Send list of new library materials to all faculty members.
- Send individual notes to faculty members regarding books, magazine articles, or other library material.
- Prepare bibliographies for instructors.
- Invite teachers to bring their classes to the library for library work periods.
- Encourage instructors regularly to schedule periods in the library during which they can consult with and help students.
- Encourage faculty members to take library materials to their classrooms.
- Have librarian serve as member of faculty committees responsible for instruction, curriculum, guidance.
- Invite librarian to attend and participate in department and division meetings—particularly when courses are being planned or revised.
- Invite librarian to visit classes when library assignments are being planned or developed.

Two colleges report college-wide surveys as aids to improving library instructional relations. As a result of participation in this study, Ventura Junior College initiated and completed such a college-wide survey. Faculty and student judgment reported on inquiry forms were supplemented by analyses of data of library use. From these have developed suggestions regarding such matters as teaching procedures, availability

of materials, hours of keeping open, materials needed, and instruction in the use of the library. Plans for following up the results of the survey are being developed.

Bakersfield College reports plans for a college-wide library survey during the opening semester of the 1951-52 school year. The purpose of this survey is to determine how the library may be used more effectively in teaching.

It is impossible here to report all of the comments and observations made by the administrators following their venture in observing library processes and filling out the inquiry form. Of special interest, however, is their judgment regarding its value. Accordingly this question was asked: "Do you believe the value of the time you worked in the library is sufficient to warrant your spending in the library, some time you ordinarily devote to other duties?" Their answers were:

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Believe value is sufficient to warrant my spending time in the library, some time which I ordinarily devote to other duties	20
Do not believe value is sufficient to warrant my spending in the library some time which I ordinarily devote to other duties	5
Am not certain	4
No response	3

The twenty who answered affirmatively were asked:

How much time per month do you believe should be spent this way—in your situation and considering other demands upon your time?

The answers ranged from one-half hour to twelve hours monthly. The median number of hours suggested was three.

It is clear that the experience of the administrators cooperating in this survey suggests that the library offers them an opportunity to gain an increasing insight into the instructional program of their junior colleges; the problems and successes of teachers; the achievements and interests, the abilities and problems of students. Knowing instruction and student achievement is, however, only one step in the improvement of teaching. Knowledge and understanding locked up in the mind of an administrator is of little, if any, more value than that which is secreted in the mind of a librarian. Such knowledge and understanding becomes significant only as the basis for a program of action. The action process will vary from college to college and from administrator to administrator. Each must use that which best suits his particular situation. Essential, however, to any effective program of instructional improvement is a recognition by administrators, instructors, librarians, and counselors that the junior college library is a vital instrument to serve the instructional needs of faculty members, the learning requirements of students, and the policy-making of administrators. Acceptance of this view makes it mandatory for the library, its organization, its administration, and its routines—to be adapted to the needs of teachers in their particular classroom situations and to those of students in their learning.

Changes in Editorial Staff

Walter W. Wright, University of Pennsylvania Library, has replaced John H. Berthel, Columbia University Libraries, as editorial staff member in charge of "News from the Field." *C&RL* is grateful to Mr. Berthel who has handled this feature ably since 1946. Carlyle J. Frarey, of the School of Library Service, Columbia University, has been added to the staff to handle the "Book Notes" section.