The Monteith Library Project
An Experiment
In Library-College Relationship

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IN THE FALL of 1960 Monteith College, Wayne State University's new college of general education, entered its second academic year with a new element in the picture. In the spring the university had received from the Cooperative Research Branch of the United States Office of Education a grant to conduct "An Experiment in Coordination betweeen the Library and Teaching Staff to Change Student Use of the Library."

The experiment was designed to set up a structure and procedures relating the University Library to Monteith College so that the library might contribute as fully as possible to the educational program of the college. The ultimate goal of the program is to enable students to achieve a fairly sophisticated understanding of the library[1] and a high level of competence in its use. But the first phase of the program, that which is supported by the grant, is concerned primarily with the establishment and evaluation of a relationship planned to facilitate this achievement. The first phase—which we call "The Library Project"—might be described as "action research" in the field of institutional sociology, although the ultimate goal of the program is educational.

At this writing the project has moved through a five-month planning phase and through about half of its fifteen-month operational phase, but the experiment is novel and exploratory, so its pattern has not yet fully crystallized. We

are collecting quantities of data but we have scarcely begun the task of analyzing them. This paper, therefore, presents only the setting in which the experiment is being conducted, its structure and organization, the procedures through which it is being implemented, the sequence of library assignments developed so far, and some of the general insights the project staff has acquired in the process.

THE SETTING

Founded with assistance from the Ford Foundation, Monteith College provides a basic curriculum in natural science, social science, and the humanities which is planned to complement pre-professional and specialized programs offered by other schools and colleges of the university. In addition, the college offers elective courses in general education, usually interdisciplinary in character. By selecting from these and from courses offered by other colleges in the university, a student may develop a coherent program of general studies which will qualify him for a bachelor's degree.

The basic Monteith curriculum differs from other general education programs in that it extends through the full four years of the student's academic career. The Monteith student begins in his freshman year a three-semester course in the social sciences and a four-semester course in the natural sciences. In the middle of his sophomore year he begins

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[1] The term "library" is used broadly to imply not the Wayne State University Library, nor, indeed, any given library, but the world of the library, the vast, complicated network through which society attempts to organize its records.

a three-semester course in the humanities. In his senior year he takes senior colloquiums in the three fields, two colloquiums each semester, and he writes a senior essay in one of the three fields. Thus, the student devotes about half his time during his first two years and about one-third of his time during his last two years to the Monteith courses in general education.

Monteith courses differ from many other general education courses in that they are truly interdisciplinary—staff planned and staff taught. They avoid both the superficiality of the usual survey course and the haphazardness of the series of "introduction-to"s, attempting to find synthesis through integrating themes related to the important discoveries, the characteristic approaches, the significant concepts in each of the three large areas.

Finally, the Monteith program differs from other general educational programs in that it is planned to give the student increasing responsibility for directing his own efforts as he progresses through the four years. The freshman discussion sections are limited to twelve students; contact between students and faculty are frequent; and the work is carefully directed and supervised. As the student progresses through the college, his classes become larger, his contact with the faculty less frequent, his learning less dependent on formal class instruction. By the time he is a senior he is expected to have acquired the initiative, the knowledge, the habits, and the skills which are essential equipment for mature independent study. This degree of stress upon independent study is characteristic of honors study and other such programs for the superior student, but Monteith admits all students who are admissible to Wayne.[2]

[2] A random sample of freshmen applying for admission to the colleges and schools cooperating with Monteith receive an invitation to enroll in Monteith. The rest, and those who decline the invitation, take the "group requirements" from the courses offered by the College of Liberal Arts. Some kind of self-selection may operate, but, at least so far, Monteith students match liberal arts students on the college aptitude tests given by the admissions office.

The project began with certain notions about methods of increasing the contribution of the library to higher education. It would be hard to imagine a setting more appropriate for putting these notions into practice and, hopefully, for testing their effectiveness. Here was a new college, with new faculty and entirely new courses. This, in itself, provided an exceptional opportunity to attempt to plan a program in which student use of the library would be an integral part of his educational experience. Convinced by the evidence that indicates that traditional library instruction in orientation courses or in freshman English courses is largely ineffective and, more, by that indicating that most college students never use the library extensively, we believed that if librarians participated in course planning from the outset they might help to develop a program in which the student's competence in the use of the library broadened as he moved from subject field to subject field, deepened as he moved from class level to class level, and in which the contribution of the library to learning was fully manifest.

The fact that Monteith set up as one of its primary objectives the fostering in students of habits and skills of independent study made the question of library competence obviously relevant. And the fact that this objective was held not just for gifted students but for the full range of college students underlined the necessity for deliberately planning for its achievement. Most will agree that the gifted student has both the motivation and the talent to acquire through his own efforts a reasonable competence in the use of the library. The average or below average student, on the other hand, is likely to avoid the library, having found it a useless if not actually a terrifying place. It is not enough that he be stimulated to use the library, he must be provided with experiences which convince him that using the library is a
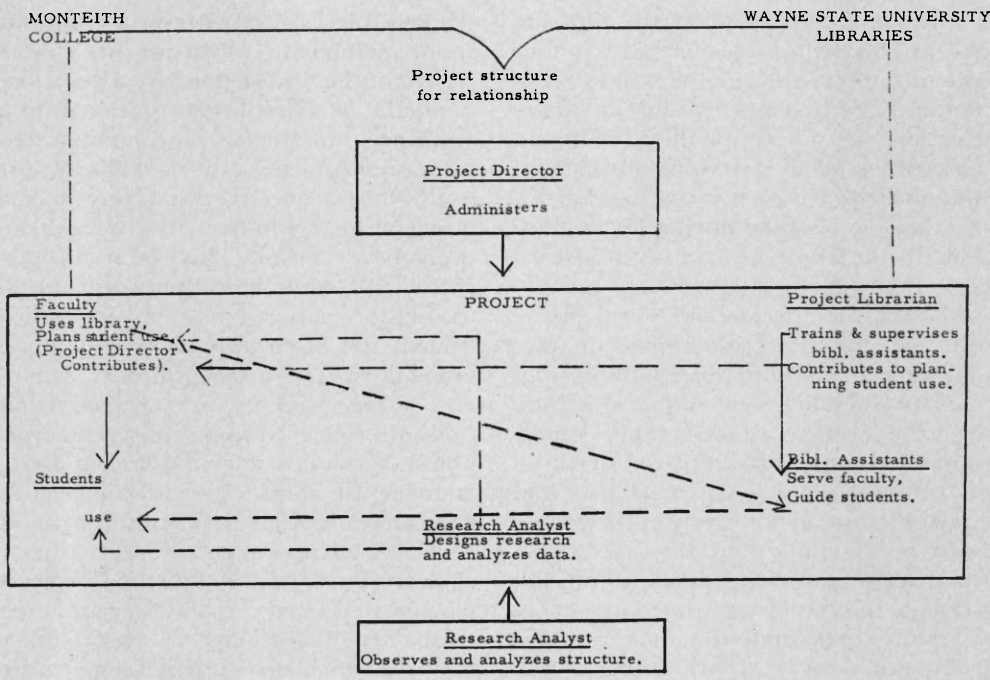
MONTEITH
COLLEGE

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES

Project structure
for relationship

Project Director

Administers

Faculty
Uses library,
Plans student use.
(Project Director
Contributes).

PROJECT

Project Librarian

Trains & supervises
bibl. assistants.
Contributes to plan-
ning student use.

Students

Bibl. Assistants
Serve faculty,
Guide students.

use

Research Analyst
Designs research
and analyzes data.

Research Analyst
Observes and analyzes structure.

Chart of Organizational Relationships

necessary and meaningful part of education.

The advent of Monteith on the Wayne campus, in short, provided a situation in which a new staff would be developing a new four-year curriculum, one of whose principal objectives was the development in students, all students, the capacity for independent study. The library project was designed to capitalize on this opportunity.

THE PROJECT STAFF: ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The normal role of the library on the campus is one of fairly passive service; the library serves as it is called upon to serve. Studies of faculty use of the library, of student use of the library, of the proportion of the collection which is used at all, suggest that the library contributes far less than its potential to the educational enterprise. We assumed, therefore, that the development of li-

brary instructional integration would require the library to play a more active role. The principal members of the project staff are a director, a librarian, a research analyst, and a number of student assistants who serve the faculty as bibliographical assistants. The organization of the staff was deliberately designed to foster a close relationship between the library and the college and to enhance the contribution of the library to the instructional program. This organization is presented in the chart. On the left side of the rectangle we have the Monteith faculty at the top and the Monteith students at the bottom. The direct line between them represents the fact that the faculty have primary responsibility for the educational program of the students. On the right side of the rectangle we have the project librarian at the top and bibliographical assistants at the bottom. The solid line between them represents the direct responsibility of the project

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librarian for training and supervising the bibliographical assistants. The broken line from the faculty to the bibliographical assistants is meant to suggest the faculty member's responsibility for assigning tasks to the bibliographical assistant. The broken line from the project librarian to the faculty and to the Monteith students is meant to suggest the project librarian's participation in course planning for the students and his assistance in the implementing of these plans. The project director, shown above the rectangle, has chief administrative responsibility. The research analyst, shown below the rectangle, has responsibility for observing and analyzing the total social structure.

The project librarian is Gilbert E. Donahue, formerly librarian of the Institute of Industrial and Labor Relations at the University of Illinois. The project research analyst is Carol Ballingall, an experienced social scientist, who, in addition to her project duties, serves half-time as a member of the social sciences faculty of Monteith. My responsibilities are two-fold, also, since I am executive secretary of Monteith College as well as director of the library project. The bibliographical assistants are Wayne students, most of them enrolled in the graduate school. Mrs. Grace Dawson, a graduate student in psychology, assists in the analysis of data, and Mrs. Ruth Hollingsworth is secretary for the project staff. All three of the principal project staff members share in the responsibility for working with the faculty in planning library assignments for the students. The project librarian and the project director share, as well, the responsibility for instructing the students in the use of the library, whether this instruction take the form of written guidesheets, lectures, or informal briefing sessions in discussion sections or in the library. The librarian also provides individual guidance in the library.

Probably the most novel aspect of the project is the provision of bibliographical assistance to the faculty. It is justified, we believe, as part of our general effort to give the library an active role. Textbook teaching is clearly easier and less time consuming than library teaching. Most instructors seem to feel that extensive use of library materials is possible only in small, advanced classes. For these reasons, the provision of bibliographical assistance to the faculty can be considered simply as incentive for cooperation in a fairly difficult undertaking. But in a larger sense, we are convinced that any service which increases the faculty member's awareness of library resources and facilitates his use of them will contribute significantly to his teaching effectiveness.

Each member of the faculty cooperating with the project is provided with nine hours of bibliographical assistance per week. He may assign any bibliographical, as distinguished from clerical or research, task he chooses. Among the tasks which have been assigned by our faculty are the preparation of exhaustive bibliographies, verification of citations, scanning of a prescribed list of journals, preparation of abstracts, etc. Sometimes these tasks are related to the instructor's research interests, sometimes to his future teaching plans, sometimes to his current classroom needs.

The bibliographical assistants have other responsibilities as well. Each assistant is required to submit, each week, a detailed report on the assignments he has received and on the steps through which he undertook to carry them out. With his fellows he attends, every other week, a seminar conducted by the project librarian. These meetings serve as training sessions and provide the opportunity for the assistants to share experiences, compare assignments and searching techniques, learn of new sources of information, etc. Finally, the assistants are, from time to time, perhaps once a semester, withdrawn from their service

to individual faculty members and assigned as a group to work on an assignment planned for Monteith students. They may do some preliminary searching to locate likely sources or identify fruitful procedures and they may be called upon to assist in guiding Monteith students when they, in turn, begin work on the assignment.

The weekly reports from the bibliographical assistants are one category of data the project research analyst is responsible for gathering and analyzing. From this analysis we hope to learn something of the nature and scope of faculty demands upon library resources, the extent to which these demands are related to particular disciplines, personal work habits, or teaching styles. Another category of data to be analyzed is concerned with the attitudes of the faculty toward libraries and librarians, in general, toward the place of the library in higher education, and toward the librarians on the project and the project itself. These data consist of the transcripts of interviews with each participating faculty member and of notes on interaction-process-analysis of the participation of librarians in faculty meetings. Finally, a third category of data to be analyzed is that which results from the library assignments given to Monteith students. In this category we have collected logs of steps in library searching, reports on the contribution of the library to particular assignments, and assigned papers. We have used one standard test of library knowledge and hope to develop an instrument which would reflect attitudes toward the library. We plan also to experiment with interviews and with observation.

This is perhaps the place to repeat a point made earlier. The first phase of our program is concerned with sociological analysis and evaluation of structure and procedures. At this stage we are deliberately avoiding the problem of evaluating the educational effectiveness of our curriculum. We are not sure that it will ever be possible to demonstrate that integrated library instruction is more effective than traditional methods (more effective for what? for learning how to use the library? for achieving course objectives?). We *are* sure that we still have much to learn about the process of developing a truly integrated curriculum before we will be ready to tackle the question of its value.

THE LIBRARY-INTEGRATED CURRICULUM DEVELOPED THIS FAR

The Library program, fitting in with the schedule of Monteith courses, carries from the first semester of the freshman year through all three semesters of the social science sequence. It picks up the natural science sequence at the third semester of the sophomore year and continues with the humanities sequence which begins with the middle of the sophomore year.

The organization of the Monteith social science course avoids the usual demarcations among the several disciplines in the area. Rather it centers on an overall theme of "relation," moving from the less complex to the more complex. Thus the first unit is concerned with man, the second considers the small group, the third develops the process of socialization, and so on, until the final unit considers civilization as a concept. The readings for the course have been selected and edited and published by the staff in a series of seven syllabi. The lectures provide the frame-work for the over-all course but the readings are thoroughly discussed in small discussion sections. In addition the students are given a number of widely varying assignments. Among these are the library assignments.

The first library assignment comes early in the freshman year. In the section on man the student is required to write a paper in which he describes a method for presenting imaginatively and graphically the chronology of the development

of the human species. Library experience in connection with this assignment is intentionally the most elementary. The students is given a list of books by author and title which contain the necessary information and is told that he must cite one of these as his authority. His library experience consists only of finding this book listed in the card catalog and locating it by call number in the library. The assignment is deliberately limited to introducing him to the card catalog, to the general plan of the divisionally organized library and to the arrangement of books on the shelf.

The second assignment comes at the end of the first semester of the freshman year in connection with the section of the course on socialization. The student is required to read an autobiography and to analyze the process of ego identification of its subject in terms of a framework provided in one of the readings in his syllabus. Since no autobiography is likely to be complete and without bias the student is asked to find material in the library to supplement, corroborate, or refute the story he finds in the autobiography. This assignment is an admirable introduction to the subject approach to library materials, because it is concrete. The autobiographer had a name; he lived at a given time in a given place. He had a family and friends. Perhaps he joined organizations; perhaps he espoused causes. The autobiography furnishes concrete clues, clues with names and dates. Usually one clue leads to another. The student may begin to understand that names, the names of people, places, events, and even the names of ideas, provide keys to the library.

In the second semester of the social sciences course the student is assigned a series of tasks related to a semester-long research project. Each member of the social sciences faculty indicates general areas of research which he is interested in supervising. The student enrolls in a discussion section in accordance with his own interest and selects a particular research problem for his semester project. Although the pattern may vary from one project to another we expect that each student will have occasion to use the library for at least three aspects of his research process.

First, he will be expected to use the library for his own orientation to his problem. Second, the library may furnish the primary data for his project. If the data for his project, on the other hand, are gathered in the field by way of interviews, questionnaires, or some other such techniques, he may find it necessary to use the library for information on research methods, the selection of a sample, the formulation of a questionnaire, etc. Third, his final report on his research will be expected to indicate the place of his own small research efforts in the larger context of published social science research.

Since what we are describing here is the work of freshmen, it may be a bit presumptuous to call it "research." Yet while the staff recognizes that in supervising this research it is dealing with neophytes, it applies rigorous standards. The student is prodded and pushed until he is able to define his "problem" in terms of a reasonably close approximation of a "research question." He is required to submit a specific plan for the gathering and analysis of data. He is required to hand in a sample of this analysis. His work is closely supervised, tested, examined through the whole process.

The results of all this with an average freshman class are naturally uneven. But only a few of the students emerge hopelessly baffled by the whole notion of research. Most of the students have acquired a pretty fair notion of the theory and methods of social science research and a few students emerge with quite respectable little products of research.

The contribution of the library experiences to the research project varies

similarly in accordance with the ability of the student. It varies also with the literature on the problem which the student has selected. We are convinced, nevertheless, that the assignment has valuable qualities. It builds upon the student's earlier experiences but moves into a more challenging situation. As before, the student uses the subject approach to the library, but now his topic is likely to be less easily identified, less concrete, less specifically named, less pinned down in time and space. And, most important, his use of the library in this section of the course is clearly identified as an essential part of research—research which is perhaps the activity most highly valued by his faculty, indeed by the whole academic community.

In the final semester of the social sciences course the students are assigned a major paper on a social movement, a movement which occurred any time and any place. The library is the source of information for this paper. Here again the library experience of the student varies not only with the student's ability but even more with the topic. The student who selects the Russian Revolution or the French Revolution for his topic will be faced with the problem of selecting and evaluating from the enormous quantity of available material. The student who selects for his topic the movement for Esperanto may find only meager information. Most difficult of all is the task of the student who decides to work on some general social movement such as nationalism or agrarianism or romanticism, for these are the movements which are not limited in time or space nor, in fact, in the number of definitions which have been applied to them. The experience is culminating in the sense that it poses what is perhaps the most difficult problem in the use of the library—the problem of lack of definition.

Since the project began, we have had some experience with all of these assign-ments. Now, in the second semester, we are working with the natural sciences staff on a term paper on a topic in the philosophy of science, an assignment which will, we hope, have the value of introducing the student to the subject approach to the literature of the sciences. At the same time we are involved with a biographical assignment for the humanities course, which will introduce the student to still another "literature." We hope to persuade the humanities staff to use a fairly exhaustive annotated bibliography as the term assignment for the second semester of that course.

CONCLUSIONS

It was perhaps inevitable that our activities so far should have raised more questions than they have answered. Our major questions have to do with the effectiveness of the structure for implementing student library experiences. We find, for example, that although we are reasonably well satisfied with the plans which have been made, there is disturbing evidence of their lack of implementation in actual teaching. Some instructors have omitted one of the library assignments. Others apparently give no weight to bibliography in their grading of papers. Such omissions make it hard for us to arrive at general analyses of the effect of the students' experiences. But, more important, they suggest that these library experiences are not really valued by some instructors. We suspect that their students are aware of this and therefore slight the library assignments.

Our own diagnosis of the problem at this point is that our concept of "sophisticated understanding of the library and increasing competence in its use" as a goal of general education is not accepted, perhaps not understood, by most of the faculty. (The academic world as a whole, of course, has not achieved anything like consensus about any of the goals of general education.) We conceive of the library as a highly complicated

system, or, better, a network of interrelated systems—which organizes and controls all kinds of communication. A few instructors understand the conception, but we believed that most conceive of sophisticated library understanding and competence as "command of the literature of a field of study." This is what they, themselves, have acquired in their years of training and experience, and this is what they hope to stimulate their students to acquire. Research on student use of the library would indicate that for the average college student such an expectation is naive. Perhaps it is equally naive to expect the average college student to grasp the notion of the library as a system of bibliographical organization. Certainly it is difficult to work for such an objective through faculty members who, themselves, do not understand it.

Assuming, then, that the sequence of student library experiences will be implemented only to the extent that the faculty understands and accepts the objective it is designed to achieve, what relationships in our structure can we use to persuade instructors to understand our concept and accept it as a valid objective?

When we assigned bibliographical assistants we realized that we were introducing a new relationship between the faculty and the library and we briefed the assistants on their responsibility for sensitivity toward the needs of the faculty on the one hand and the exigencies of the library system on the other. We had thought of the bibliographical assistants as personifying a kind of outreach of the library, that we were providing, in effect, the kind of service normally provided by the staff of a special library. We found, however, a tendency on the part of some of the faculty to think of the bibliographical assistants rather as promising students to be taught or, at most, as apprentice research workers to be trained. We arrived at the problem,

therefore, of finding out what factors enter into the development of this relationship. Are there certain subject fields in which the literature is so diffuse that techniques of library use are necessarily haphazard and largely intuitive? Are there styles of research which do not lend themselves to systematic use of the literature? Or, on the other hand, is our problem merely that instructors are not accustomed to the kind of service characteristic of a special library and that they will come to accept it when they have become familiar with it? Experience with the assignment of bibliographical assistants to scientists and humanists may uncover clues which will lead to answers of these questions, but it will undoubtedly raise other questions in their stead.

The most important and, at the same time, the most baffling questions are concerned with the results of our students' library experiences. We are committed to the idea that these experiences should have an honest functional relationship to course work; we are determined to avoid anything that smacks of busy-work. On the other hand, we want the students' library experiences to be extensive enough to convey a sense of the great range of library tools and the varied uses which they serve. We need to know how extensive the experience must be to convey an adequate understanding of the library as a system of bibliographic organization. Indeed, we need to know what degree of such understanding might be considered a reasonable objective for general education as such.

We believe, furthermore, that good teaching capitalizes on the individual capacities and interests of each student. This suggests that assignments should be as individualized as possible. But such individualization not only creates problems for the achievement of common objectives. It also makes measurement of

ance which the librarian gave in answering reference questions obviated much of the need for group instruction. In physics, mathematics, geology, health education, and home economics, little instructional demand presented itself. However, in biology, psychology, and speech, a good deal of individual instruction in the use of bibliographies, abstracts, and indexes was required. In these areas, it would seem more efficient to give group rather than individual instruction.

If, then, the reorganization of the library has associated librarians more closely with subject areas and, thus, more closely with instruction, it is by no means without its limitations. There is, first, the obvious danger inherent in specialization. The subject division librarians can easily, in attempting to cope with the pressures in their own areas, lose touch with resources in areas other than their own. In an undergraduate organization, where students expect each librarian to continue to give general as well as specialized reference service, this may become a serious handicap. (An effective preventive is a regular turn at the general information desk. Service at this point is one of several necessary means to keep one alive to the whole library picture and not merely to one of its segments.)

A second limitation to the subject division organization is the confusion experienced by students who find it necessary to go to several divisions for material for one term paper. On the whole, partly because the new building is much larger than the old, becoming oriented seems more complicated in the reorganization than in the traditional arrangement.

Finally, the subject division organization requires more librarians and is thus more costly. The Brooklyn College Library staff, with the addition of two new professional positions, is still, after a year and a half, performing in an emergency atmosphere in an endeavor to cope with the greater surge of student demand. It is mainly the enthusiasm and elation in finally moving into a new modern building which is carrying it through.

Only the future will tell whether the advantages of the subject division arrangement outweigh the disadvantages. It can at present be said with certainty, however, that the reorganization in the Brooklyn College Library provides one the experience of practicing librarianship with intensity.

The Monteith Library Project

achievement next to impossible. We have purposely postponed facing the problem of evaluating the contribution of library competence to learning, but we cannot avoid recognizing that individualized library assignments add another major variable—the variation among subjects in the amount and organization of materials dealing with them—to a situation already complicated by the individual differences among the students. We hope eventually to be able to make some general statements about what Monteith students have learned as a result of the library's part in their courses. We are certain that we will never be able to say that they might not have learned as much in any of a number of other ways.