

## FRESHMAN LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

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Spring weather is often accused of provoking thoughts which might never come to life if there were but winter, summer, and fall. Spring is certainly the proper time of year for new thoughts concerning student library instruction for the fall semester. Such a program of instruction is now approaching its seventh year at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, but plans in the spring are still a necessity for the program's constant growth and improvement.

The Reference Department of the University Library, under the direction of Miss Georgia H. Faison, first assumed the responsibility for the direction of formal library instruction in 1948. Until that date, this guidance had been undertaken by the English department instructors, with the cooperation of the library personnel. During the six years of development many changes have taken place, both in the actual methods of instruction and in the organization of the classes. The results have been increasingly satisfactory each successive year.

There are several extremely important factors to be considered in undertaking the instruction of the library's use to approximately 1,200 new students each fall. The first factor is that of administrative detail which involves the scheduling of each student for the required lectures and implementing the program in order that each student fulfills this academic requirement.

Secondly, the varying abilities of the freshman student group to use a library effectively must be given some consideration in the light of the students' previous library experiences.

Third, the "Freshman Program in Library Instruction" must be pin-pointed to meet the basic library needs of the students in as brief a period of time as possible.

The problem of registering the students has been handled very satisfactorily to date. All freshmen of the General College are scheduled for a series of two library lectures when they register for their academic courses. Since the lectures are held practically hourly from 8:00 a. m. to 4:00 p. m. during the two weeks allotted, it is comparatively simple to fit each student into this program.

During the period of Freshman Orientation on the campus, before classes commence, small groups of new students tour the library. Each of these groups is led by a representative of the Student Council committee in charge of Orientation. These groups are scheduled at about 15 minute intervals, and a regular "route" is mapped out for the tour leaders. The planning results in an orderly procession of new students, touring the library over a period of two days. At each main desk or room, the group stops, and a library staff member informs the group of the function of that particular department or section of the library. Although the tour is brief, each student has the opportunity to enjoy a sense of surface familiarity with the library.

Announcements at this time are made that any student who desires may take a "screening test" to demonstrate his ability to use the library satisfactorily. These tests are given only to those who feel sufficiently acquainted with the use of the card catalog, periodical indexes, and general reference materials. The problems of this test are brief, but the results readily show the students' knowledge (or lack of knowledge!) of call numbers, subject headings, bibliographic description as it appears on a catalog card, the use of the *Reader's Guide* (including the interpretation of the symbols used), and the procedure for requesting books and bound periodicals from the main Circula-

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tion Desk. Since the stacks are closed to all undergraduates, it is imperative that each student using the library understands the routines.

If a student passes the screening test, he is excused from the scheduled lectures; approximately 12% of the group in September, 1954, qualified in this manner.

Fortunately, for both those who instruct and those who are instructed, the library assembly room on the ground floor has proved to be suited perfectly to these lectures. Groups range in size from fifty to one hundred and twenty-five students. The four staff members of the reference department alternate in delivering the lectures, and the schedule shows that each member delivers approximately 12 to 14 lectures. In both lectures, film slides are used to illustrate the lessons involved, and the revision of these slides and new additions have held the interest and attention of the students. The photoduplication service located in the library has been most cooperative in supplying the needs of the lecturing staff with excellent slides and service.

The first lecture is primarily concerned with the card catalog and its use. Slides are shown which illustrate the relationship of the reference room, the current affairs reading room, and the circulation desk to the public catalog and the serials catalog. But the chief emphasis is on the three methods of approach to the catalog—author, title, and subject—and the information to be obtained from a catalog card.

Call numbers are stressed as the means of identification of books when they are requested at the circulation desk. Collation, publisher, date, and subject headings are pointed out, and the re-reference value of them to the student is also emphasized. Filing rules which will clarify the use of the catalog are also covered in this lecture. The students see a reproduction of a key-sort card and receive instructions in filling it out for service at the main circulation desk.

The second and last lecture covers a general description of the reference room and the location of the chief tools which students need most frequently. The biographical reference section is discussed rather fully, since much of this material is new to the average freshman. The main import of this lecture, however, is the *Reader's Guide* as the sample index to periodical articles. Enlargements of several sections from the *Reader's Guide* are shown on the screen, and each entry is carefully analyzed by the lecturer in order to show the students how this tool may be used effectively. Abbreviated titles, volume references, paging and dates of issue are usually the most confusing to a student who has not used the *Reader's Guide* previously. Through slides, the students learn how to check the title of the periodical in the serials catalog, note its call number, and check the cards to ascertain the library's holdings.

Mimeographed outlines which cover the main points under discussion are distributed at each lecture. At the end of the lecture a mimeographed problem is distributed to each attending student. The first problem necessitates the students' use of the main card catalog; the second problem shows his ability to use the *Reader's Guide* and the serials catalog. The problems are simple to check as students turn them in at the reference desk, and they present the opportunity to the staff members to "follow up" instruction in individual cases where it may seem necessary.

Many of the freshmen from North Carolina show that they have had library training and instruction in their high schools. This valuable aid to future college students can be undertaken even in the smallest schools in the state; it certainly is a means of helping students "hurdle" one of the many different situations they must face as they completely change environments.

The program offered at Chapel Hill involves cooperation with the University administration and library staff, planning, patience, and sheer endurance! But all effort expended is rewarded as the library staff witness each year an ever decreasing number of "bewildered" library users.