

# Teachers and Libraries<sup>1</sup>

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AS A PART of commencement exercises a few weeks ago, a high school boy quoted some rules formulated several generations ago for the guidance of the employees of a retail store. The clerks were to open the store at 6:00 A.M., and close it at 8:00 P.M. weekdays and at 10:00 on Saturdays. Many details of their daily duties were given, but of particular interest to a librarian were the specifications of activities for their "leisure" time after the fourteen or fifteen hours of business. These young men were expected to attend church and cultural meetings of the community. They could have one night off each week for "courting"—or two if they attended prayer meeting. To occupy the rest of their "leisure," they were enjoined to read good books.

After quoting these nineteenth-century rules, the speaker commented that "times have changed." Yes, times have changed. We do not expect to trim lamp wicks as part of our daily work, nor do we find many employers attempting to regulate every detail of the lives of their employees. But we are inclined to agree that reading good books is still a very good way to use leisure time. We believe that books can contribute to rich living in more ways than merely as pastime. We can understand the values of reading to ambitious people today as well as to such noted persons as Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln.

We rejoice that we live in a time when books are more plentiful and easier to obtain than in the times of Franklin and Lincoln. We, as librarians, devote our energies to making good books more readily accessible for readers of the present day. The magnitude of the production of reading materials makes it necessary that we select the materials to suit our clientele, and that we organize our holdings in a systematic way so that we can produce what is wanted or needed by our readers.

The systems that have been devised for organizing books and other media of communication into libraries make those materials potentially more useful, but sometimes the complexities of the organization and the machinery for operating it discourage rather than encourage the use of libraries. To clear this hurdle, two approaches are possible: one is to simplify the organization; the other is to help users to understand the system. Even when the system is as simple as is consistent with the requirements of the collections and the clientele, it probably will be expedient to do all that is possible to make the system understood by the users. In this job of enlightenment we should enlist the aid of other people concerned, among whom teachers comprise an important group. Teachers are (or should be) themselves users of libraries, and they have within their power to influence the use of libraries by the rising generation.

Teachers need libraries for themselves and for their students. This is true for teachers and students at practically all levels of education. Both teachers and students

<sup>1</sup> Paper presented at the meeting of the Libraries of Teacher-Training Institutions Section, A.C.R.L., San Francisco, July 2, 1947.

have personal needs for cultural development, for information, for inspiration, and for recreation. These needs can be served by the media of communication which make up the collections of libraries. Libraries can serve teachers in a professional way through supplying materials which help them in mastery of subject matter, consideration of educational theories, understanding of pupils, suggestion of methods and techniques of teaching, and conduct of research. Libraries can also serve teachers by providing materials for their students to use in supplementing textbooks, as sources of facts and ideas for projects, as data in problem-solving. Libraries are indispensable in connection with progressive methods of teaching.

Not only do teachers need libraries, but libraries need teachers. Libraries need teachers as users, as subject-experts to recommend materials for addition to the collection, as stimulators of use on the part of students, and as interpreters to users and potential users of books and libraries.

According to Helen Heffernan,

The teacher will relate her work most effectively to the library to the extent that she:

1. Recognizes the part the library plays in building democratic citizenship
2. Understands the contribution of the library in developing personal and social integration
3. Values the service of the library in helping to build socially desirable specific attitudes and in contributing to the creation of a permanent sense of values
4. Recognizes the place of library experience in building study skills
5. Plans learning experiences as a cooperative enterprise to which teacher and librarian can make mutually valuable professional contributions
6. Provides opportunity for the librarian to observe materials in use by pupils as a basis for evaluating the usefulness of the materials cooperatively selected

7. Keeps informed concerning the availability of new materials

8. Cooperates with the librarian by suggesting interests which might be stimulated through library exhibits

9. Accepts her full responsibility in providing learning experiences in how to use books and libraries

10. Helps the librarian to know the interests, needs, and abilities of each child in order that the librarian may utilize the teacher's information in the guidance of voluntary reading

11. Provides opportunity for children to give expression to interests growing out of their experience with books

12. Gives evidence of her enthusiasm for books as sources of information and as sources of enjoyment and inspiration

13. Utilizes the technical competence of the librarian as a co-worker on curriculum committees

14. Shares with the librarian responsibility for the evaluation and selection of books

15. Recognizes classroom and library as laboratories for learning the principles, ideals, and practices of democracy.<sup>2</sup>

If teachers are to be able most effectively to use libraries themselves, to promote library use by pupils who are soon to become the workers and leaders of the world, and to give intelligent assistance in building up more and better libraries and in providing better and more extensive library service, then teachers must be given adequate library education and experience as part of their pre-service preparation. Library education for teachers is a responsibility which should not be neglected by educational institutions preparing teachers. The desirability of this probably will not be questioned, but, as Ethel M. Feagley states in the forty-second *Yearbook* of the National Society for the Study of Education, "There is discouragingly little evidence that attention is being given to introducing teachers to library ma-

<sup>2</sup> Heffernan, Helen. "The Teacher's Relationship to the Library." *The Library in General Education*. Forty-second *Yearbook* of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 2, 1943, p. 140.

terials and services which will be available in the fields and which will constitute a necessary part of their teaching equipment."

Miss Feagley also states that attempts are being made to prepare college students to use the college library. This general type of library education is an important foundation for teachers-in-training but it is not sufficient. In addition to courses in how to study and how to use books and libraries, prospective teachers need to be taught the possibilities of a well-functioning school library and how to stimulate and guide pupils in an increasingly independent use of library materials to be found in both school and public libraries.

The library education needed by teachers is not the library science intended to prepare librarians, although it is more than the course for college students in how to find things in libraries. The need is for library education especially planned for prospective teachers designed to:

1. Acquaint them with potential resources of libraries of various kinds for themselves and for their pupils, for personal and vocational use

2. Develop skills in using bibliographic tools for themselves and as a basis for teaching suitable skills to their pupils

3. Encourage habits of utilizing library services and of turning to printed matter and other forms of records for facts, opinions, ideas, inspiration, and recreation

4. Teach them methods and techniques of using libraries to good advantage in their teaching of knowledge, habits, skills, and attitudes

5. Prepare them for instructing pupils in the use of books and libraries so that they may do the teaching, or cooperate with the librarian in instruction

6. Give them a clear vision of their opportunities and responsibilities in connection with the school library, and an enthusiasm for developing their pupils into intelligent library users and supporters.

This specialized library education for

teachers should be provided in teacher-preparing institutions. It should be based upon a general library orientation course (or unit) suitable for all college students, accompanied and followed by regular, intelligent use of the library in connection with college courses and personal interests. This instruction should be given by a well-qualified person who has knowledge and skill both in library and teaching techniques and who understands the value of the library to both teachers and pupils. It may be a part of some regular college course such as freshman English, or it may be a separate course on how to use the library. However it is scheduled, it should include practical application of the ideas studied. Real familiarity with the library and its resources should be developed in the prospective teachers as well as in other college students throughout their college days. Students should know the library through using it, stimulated and guided by their instructors, and assisted and advised by members of the library staff.

On the foundation of this basic familiarity with library resources and usage, there should be built for prospective teachers pertinent advanced instruction which will prepare them to direct pupil use of library resources. Miss Feagley suggests four means by which this instruction is offered:

- a. *Courses in literature for children and young people . . .* to enable teachers to become acquainted with children's books, to understand children's interests, and to learn how to bring the two together. . . .

- b. *Integrating library instruction with subject-matter courses . . .* (presenting) the printed materials needed for the study of the subject, as well as detailed methods of using those materials with students. . . .

- c. *Demonstration libraries . . .* (where the prospective teacher) may use with boys and girls the books presented in the literature and subject field courses (and) gain an appreciation of the use of a library as a teach-

ing tool, a knowledge of how to use many books with pupils, and skill in working with a school librarian. . . .

d. *Courses on the school library* . . . (in which) teachers should be given instruction in library standards, simple organization of a classroom library, and methods of teaching library lessons to pupils (and also) the possibilities of community, state, and national library service so that they can use these facilities effectively in the education of the youth coming under their guidance. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Mabel Harris, in her master's thesis on "Nonprofessional Library Instruction in Teachers Colleges" (1934), concludes that "a need for two courses other than the elementary one usually given is indicated: the one, a study of juvenile books, the other an advanced course in bibliography."<sup>4</sup>

In the *Library Quarterly* July 1942, is a report by Frances Henne and Mildred Hawksworth Lowell on an investigation into the practices of 153 teacher-training agencies relative to "the preparation of secondary-school teachers in the use of library materials." Their three recommendations are:

(1) that prospective teachers should have a formal course about materials; (2) that the program of the laboratory-school library . . . should permit direct and active participation in and cooperation with the preparation of teachers; and (3) that the need exists to have regional materials centers where new materials may be examined.<sup>5</sup>

This recommendation of materials centers is a practical means of making it possible for teachers and prospective teachers to become familiar with the wealth of materials produced for children and high school students.

<sup>3</sup> Feagley, Ethel M. "Preparation of Pupils and Staff for Effective Library Use: Teachers." *The Library in General Education*. Forty-second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 2, 1943, p. 306-09.

<sup>4</sup> Harris, Mabel. *Nonprofessional Library Instruction in Teachers Colleges*. Master's thesis. George Peabody College for Teachers, 1934, p. ii.

<sup>5</sup> Henne, Frances and Lowell, Mildred Hawksworth. "The Preparation of Secondary-School Teachers in the Use of Library Materials." *Library Quarterly* 12:554, July 1942.

Another suggestion which might be made here is that much benefit for school libraries might come from a course in library administration for school administrators. This would not need to go into as much detail as the courses for teachers on materials and methods of use. Rather it would stress objectives and standards and general principles of services, collections, organization, personnel, quarters, equipment, and financial support.

To what extent are prospective teachers being provided with library education?

A 1941 study reports that, of thirty colleges,

Twenty-eight provide some kind of instruction, the most common being the orientation week tour or lecture which is conducted in twenty of the colleges. A close second is the course of instruction offered in eighteen colleges, in each case taught by a member of the library staff. A library consultant is the means of instruction in seven colleges, and a printed bulletin, manual, or handbook in six.<sup>6</sup>

Another study in 1942 reports that:

Formal courses for prospective teachers, which relate to books and other materials useful in teaching, adolescent literature, the use of libraries, and similar subjects, are offered by 40.6 per cent of the 153 teacher-training agencies. A total of 104 formal courses are presented, and they occur in this order of frequency: library science, children's and adolescent literature, materials and methods, education, orientation (in the use of libraries and materials), reading, and practice teaching. (Some doubt exists relative to the exact scope and presentation of many of these courses).<sup>7</sup>

These reports do not show much improvement since the 1934 study by Mabel Harris of 114 state teachers colleges revealed "that nearly one-half of the colleges studied offer

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<sup>6</sup> Lancaster, John Herrold. *The Use of the Library by Student Teachers*. New York, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> Henne and Lowell, *op. cit.*, p. 553.

purposes, with a view to increasing its usefulness and perhaps enlarging its territory.

4. Our national union catalog is as strong as ever and is resuming work on certain projects suspended during the war.

5. Regional union catalogs, from which we have had reports, are being maintained.

6. Real thought is being given to a regional center in the Richmond, Va., area.

7. Renewed interest in regional coopera-

tion in California has resulted from the establishment of an Interlibrary Service Department in the University of California Library, and the creation of an active Committee on Regional Cooperation in the state association. Progress is being made toward a survey of the resources of libraries of northern California, and a *Union List of Bibliographies in Libraries of Southern California* is nearing completion.

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some kind of instruction." According to Miss Harris,

The study also indicates that no complete and thoroughly thought-out plan for bibliographic instruction in teachers colleges has yet been made, but that the subject is worthy of serious attention with a view to defining the objectives more clearly and improving the organization of the work.

Attention to the problem has increased in the last fifteen years, but much remains to be done. More has been accomplished, probably, in teaching college students to use the library and in preparing teacher-librarians than in educating prospective teachers concerning library materials and methods to be used in their professional work. We need more leaders with the vision and energy of Louis Round Wilson, who, as early as 1911, pleaded for libraries in every school, training of teachers in the use of books and children's literature, instruction of pupils in the use of books and libraries, and extension of cooperation

between public libraries and schools.

We librarians of institutions educating teachers must take the lead in promoting the development of special library education for teachers. We must clarify worthy objectives and formulate practical course outlines and problems. We must bring the importance of this kind of library education convincingly to the attention of teachers, college administrators, professors, and curriculum-makers, of school superintendents, principals, and supervisors, and of teachers and prospective teachers. We must make the program so helpful that it will have a deserved place in the budget of the college as well as in the curriculum. We must study and discuss, plan and experiment, and strive for continuing improvement in preparing young people to become teachers who know and appreciate libraries and who will do their part in making libraries play the part they can and should in the life-long education of children, young people, and adults.

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