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ABSTRACT

The University of Southern California Norris Medical Library uses audiovisual methods for shelver training and detailed work assignment sheets in conjunction with shelver supervision. The slide/script training series serves both as a time-saving device for the shelver supervisor and as an effective and interesting instructional device. The work assignment sheets, with the aid of shelving calculation chart, enable the supervisor to give realistic assignments without having to give instructions orally.  
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# Training and Supervision of Library Shelves

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## ABSTRACT

This paper describes a program, prepared at the University of Southern California Norris Medical Library, which utilizes audiovisual methods for shelver training and detailed work assignment sheets in conjunction with shelver supervision. The slide/script training series serves both as a time-saving device for the shelver supervisor and as an effective and interesting instructional device. The work assignment sheets, with the aid of a shelving calculation chart, enable the supervisor to give realistic assignments without having to give instructions orally.

THE fast and accurate return of material to library shelves is clearly an important aspect of good library service, but little attention has been devoted in the literature to the training and supervision of shelves. It is the purpose of this article to describe a program, prepared and utilized at the Norris Medical Library, which employs audiovisual methods for shelver training and detailed work assignment sheets in conjunction with shelver supervision.

The library's Loan Services section employs five to six part-time students (2.77 FTE); they devote 90% of their time to shelving activities and work at the loan desk 10% of the time. The Loan Services librarian oversees the activities of the other members of the department, but the immediate supervision of the shelves is handled by the Loan Services supervisor. Under her direction, approximately 12,400 books and journals are shelved each month.

## SHELVER RECRUITMENT

In recruiting shelves, the supervisor seeks bright, conscientious individuals who have flexible schedules and are willing to work in the evenings and on weekends. Although these re-

quirements are most often met by college students, the library is rarely able to hire students from the health sciences campus upon which it is located. These health sciences students are generally unable to take on part-time employment because of the heavy demands made by their academic studies and their training at the neighboring Los Angeles County/University of Southern California Medical Center.

The library therefore fills most of its shelving positions with students attending the University of Southern California main campus, located seven miles from the health sciences campus, and with students from other nearby colleges. The effects of commuting to work or changing class schedules frequently require students to terminate after short periods of employment. Consequently, the Loan Services supervisor is forced to train approximately twenty shelves each year.

## SHELVER TRAINING

The supervisor is faced with the problem of repeating a considerable amount of information regarding the location and arrangement of library materials when training each shelver. To reduce this time-consuming repetition and to present basic information in an interesting manner, the supervisor developed an audiovisual program for the training of shelves.

The instructional program consists of colored 35 mm. slides accompanied by a written script. This format was chosen over audiotape, film-strip, or another medium because of the ease with which the program may be updated and altered. As the location or arrangement of the library's material changes, it is necessary only to rewrite portions of the script and replace any outdated slides.

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Before a shelver begins to view the training program, he is given a tour of the library. Once he is somewhat familiar with its layout, the slides dealing with the location of various library materials become more meaningful to him.

The training program may be viewed by one student or, when more than one person is being trained, by a group. When the program is used by only one person, he reads the script to himself while viewing the slides and advances

the projector to the next slide when the script so indicates. During group viewing, one person acts as moderator, reading the script aloud and advancing the slides.

Cartoon illustrations have been integrated into the slide portion of the program. These cartoons add variety and humor while stressing points discussed in the script.

This slide/script presentation is followed by a series of overhead projector transparencies which are usually shown by the supervisor. Using a grease pencil, she is able to demonstrate the proper use of assignment sheet forms described in the script. Other transparencies emphasize some of the more complex shelving rules and give the supervisor a basis for discussing and clarifying these principles.

#### TRAINING PROGRAM CONTENT

The slide script program is divided into six sections. Usually the first two segments are viewed at one sitting; the remaining four sections are viewed one at a time. It takes no more than ten minutes to view each section.

The first part of the program, entitled "Welcome," includes nineteen slides and is a general introduction to the library and to shelving. Slides and background information on the li-

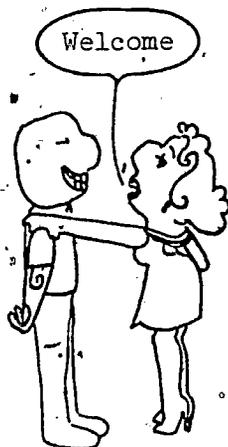


FIG. 1.—Welcome to Norris Library.

WO CLASS LETTERS  
 100 CLASS NUMBER (ALWAYS WHOLE)  
 E84d CUTTER NUMBER (ALWAYS DECIMAL)  
 1970 COPYRIGHT DATE

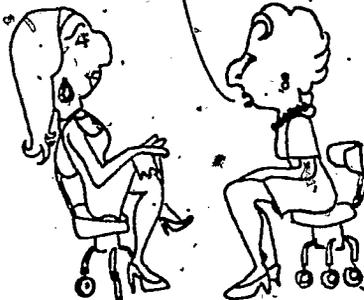


FIG. 2.—Typical National Library of Medicine and Library of Congress call numbers have these four components.

## TRAINING AND SUPERVISION OF LIBRARY SHELVERS

### CUTTER NUMBERS ARE DECIMAL NUMBERS

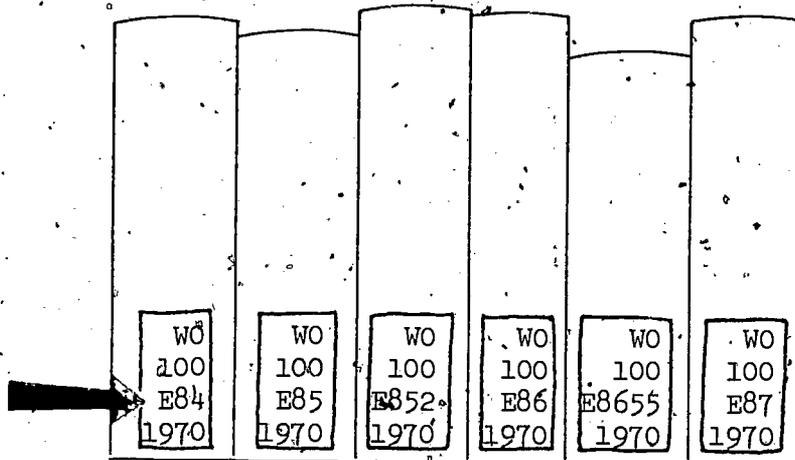


Fig. 3.—Let's examine the order of these call numbers.



Fig. 4.—Bring materials in need of repair to your supervisor's attention.

brary are combined with cartoons and script to acquaint the new employee with work scheduling, assignment of duties, and payroll procedures (see Fig. 1).

Section two, "Shelving Unbound Journals," describes the location of current medical periodicals and their alphabetical arrangement by title. The eleven slides included in this portion illustrate the various rules described in the script. After the trainee has viewed this part of the program, he is asked to arrange a sample of unbound journals in the manner he has just seen described. His work is then checked and any mistakes he has made are discussed with him. The same type of follow-up procedure is used to reinforce the other portions of the program as well.

TABLE I  
SHELVING TIME CALCULATION CHART

|                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Books                                                                              |
| Volume number equations                                                            |
| 1 book truck shelf (3 feet) equals 30 books                                        |
| 1 book truck side (3 shelves) equals 90 books                                      |
| 1 sorting shelf equals 25 books                                                    |
| Sorting time                                                                       |
| 1 book truck side equals 20 minutes                                                |
| Shelving time                                                                      |
| 105 books equals 60 minutes                                                        |
| Bound Journals                                                                     |
| Volume number equations                                                            |
| 1 book truck shelf (3 feet) equals 20 volumes                                      |
| 1 book truck side (3 shelves) equals 60 volumes                                    |
| 1 sorting shelf equals 20 volumes                                                  |
| Sorting time                                                                       |
| 1 book truck side equals 15 minutes                                                |
| Shelving time                                                                      |
| 200 volumes equals 60 minutes                                                      |
| Unbound Journals                                                                   |
| Sorting time                                                                       |
| 110 issues equals 15 minutes                                                       |
| Shelving time                                                                      |
| 150 issues equals 40 minutes                                                       |
| Allow approximately 30 minutes for cleanup in each area before and after shelving. |

"Shelving Bound Journals" is the third portion of the program and combines fifteen slides of the bound journal area with script instructions on the arrangement of these volumes. As in section two, the slides highlight information essential for shelving in the location described.

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Norris Medical Library  
Health Sciences Campus  
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SHELVING  
ASSIGNMENT SHEET

Shelver's Name Jge  
Date 3/6/75 8 hrs

1. Unbound journals (no. and amount of time includes cleaning, sorting, and shelving)
  - a. Approx. no. 75
  - b. Approx. time allotted 30 min
2. Reference (no. and amount of time includes cleaning, sorting, and shelving)
  - a. Approx. no. 70
  - b. Approx. time allotted 60 min
  - c. Amount of time for shelf-reading Chemical Abstracts, Biological Abstracts, Science Citation Index, Index Medicus 30 min
3. Bound journals and lower level books (no. and amount of time includes cleaning, sorting, and shelving)
  - a. Approx. no. 100
  - b. Approx. time allotted 40 min
  - c. Amount of time to shelf-read and arrange lower level Index Medicus 5 min
4. Books (humanities books, magazines, Webb, history of medicine books and journals, regular collection) (no. and amount of time includes cleaning, sorting, and shelving)
  - a. Approx. no. 100
  - b. Approx. time allotted 80 min
  - c. Amount of time to clean up humanities magazines 10 min
5. Desk time 6.00 - 7.00
6. Breaks and dinner 15 + 30 + 15 min
7. Odd Jobs:
  - a. Fill coin & xerox machines 4-4:30 p.m.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Shelf-reading: Amount of time 30 min, Range? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Last 45 minutes of day: Clean all areas. Leave materials on trucks by sorting shelves. Take items which do not belong in those areas to their proper areas or to the Loan Desk trucks. 45 min

SHELVER COMMENTS

FIG. 5. Sample shelving assignment sheet.

Section four of the program, entitled "Shelving Books," contains twenty-four slides illustrating the location of the current medical texts, and other collections such as humanities, history of medicine, and reference. The trainee learns how to determine in which area a book belongs. As a follow-up to this section, the shelver is sometimes taken on a second tour of

the library and once again the various locations discussed in the training program are pointed out to him.

Section five, dealing with "Call Numbers," is the most complicated portion of the series. This section presents a concise explanation of each line of the National Library of Medicine and Library of Congress classification numbers.

## TRAINING AND SUPERVISION OF LIBRARY SHELVERS

Emphasis is placed upon instructing the shelvee in the decimal nature of the Cutter number (see Fig. 2).

Transparenciee of two of these slidee are an important aspect of the follow-up to this segment of the program. These picture a series of correctly arranged call numbers and provide examples which the supervisor and shelvee review in detail (see Fig. 3).

After viewing the transparenciee, the shelvee is asked to arrange a set of booke on the monograph sorting shelvee. He must separate them according to the part of the Norris collection to which they belong and then arrange the booke of each section in call number order.

Two additional means are used for testing the shelvee's understanding of call number order. One tool is a set of flash carde, each with a different call number, which the shelvee arranges alphanumerically and givee to the supervisor for correction. As another exercise, the trainee shelf-reade several rowe of booke in the open stacke with the supervisor checking the resulte.

"Finishing Touches," the last part of the program, usee twenty-three slidee to review the information presented in the preceding portione. This section also offere suggestione for waye in which the shelvee can demonstrate initiative and become an enthusiastic member of the library staff (see Fig. 4).

### SHELVING SUPERVISION

A work assignment sheet devised by the Loan Servicee supervisor is the basis for supervising the shelving staff. This method servee two important purposee. Whether or not the supervisor is present to give instructione, it is a means of communicating assignmente to the shelvee. In addition, it enablee the supervisor to evaluate the amount of work the shelvee accomplish.

The shelving assignment sheet is divided into categorye for bound and unbound journale, monographe, and reference iteme. It also includee the time allotted for breake, cleanup or

clearing of tablee and carrelle, and miscellaneous taske such as shelf-reading.

The supervisor recorde on this sheet exactly which taske the shelvee should perform during his work period and the approximate amount of time to be devoted to each activity.

The supervisor checke the various areae of the library each day before the shelvee's arrival and notee the number of iteme to be shelved in each location. She then computee the amount of time the shelvee should devote to each section by consulting a special shelving time calculation chart devised by the library. This chart includee a number of equatione relating booke and journale to book trucke and sorting shelvee. These equatione allow the supervisor to quickly approximate the number of iteme to be shelved in each section of the library (see Table 1). Another portion of the chart relatee the number of book trucke and sorting shelvee to shelving time. The chart thus enablee the supervisor to quickly prepare the assignment sheet. A sample assignment sheet is shown in Figure 5.

The slide/script training program has served as an educational tool and a time-saving device for the Loan Servicee supervisor. Feedback received from employeee trained by this technique has been positive and shelvee report the program is both informative and interesting. The shelving time calculation chart has aided the supervisor in giving realistic shelving assignmente, and the work assignment sheet has enablee her to give the shelvee a clear understanding of their taske without having to give shelving instructione orally. These methode for the training and supervision of shelvee have proved to be both effective and efficient. Similar training and supervisory devicee may have application for other librarye of all sizee.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Figuree 1, 2, and 4, adapted from illustratione by Susan Kirkland, were published in Alice E. Wright's *Library Clerical Worker and Pagee*. © 1973. They are reproduced by permission of the publisher, Linnet Booke. The Shoe String Press, Inc., Hamden, Connecticut 06514.