

10-1935

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Recommended Citation

McConnell, R. E. (1935). Book Selection for a Teachers College Library. *Educational Administration and Supervision*, 21, 551-554.

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BOOK SELECTION FOR A TEACHERS COLLEGE LIBRARY

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The selection of books and the distribution of library funds are considerations which call for the continuous attention of the college administrator. This is especially so in the case of teachers colleges because they are of recent development and are limited as to funds. Both time and money are essential to the building up of a library of quality and quantity. As compared with the well established liberal arts college, teachers colleges are at a disadvantage in that the former existed fifty years before the latter.

Douglas Waples reported in the National Survey of the Education of Teachers that the liberal arts college libraries are four times as large as the teachers college libraries.¹ The average number of volumes held by the one group was 107,096 and by the other, 26,238. Likewise the expenditures varied, although in not so wide a proportion. The average annual library expenditure per student by liberal arts colleges was \$36.30 while that by the teachers colleges was fourteen dollars.

The difference in the size of the libraries cannot be accounted for entirely by the size of enrollments. The average enrollment in fifty-three teachers colleges and normal schools was nine hundred fourteen, and in twenty-nine liberal arts colleges was one thousand fifty; a difference of only one hundred thirty-six students. The important causes are the relative ages of the institutions and the difference in financial support.

The library is the heart of the college and its most important laboratory. Needless to say it deserves careful nurture. The discrepancy revealed by the National Survey quoted above offers a challenge to the teachers college administrator to put forth strenuous efforts in order to bring that department of his institution up to a high standard. Finances are essential but in the meantime sagacious methods in the selection of the book stocks are essential. With the quantity low, the quality needs to be high.

The College Library Standards issued by the Carnegie Corporation in 1932 carefully outlined recommendations for the selection of books.² The emphasis here is obviously upon quality.

¹ Vol. V, p. 241.

² Advisory Group on College Libraries of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, College Library Standards, pp. 10-11.

- I. The book collection should contain the standard reference books.
- II. The book collection should contain the standard reference books useful in the specific fields covered by the curriculum of the college.
- III. The book collection should further contain:
 - (a) An adequate stock of important general books—that is, books not specific to any one curricular field;
 - (b) An adequate stock, for each curricular field, of books concerning:
 1. The field as a whole.
 2. Those divisions of the field in which courses are offered and members of the teaching staff are interested.
 3. Other significant divisions of the field.
 - (c) An adequate stock of books concerning such important specific fields of interests as may not be treated in the curriculum; and
 - (d) An adequate stock of books appropriated for leisure reading.

These recommendations point the way toward careful selection, and budget limitations determine the quantity. But the most vital factors yet remain and they are the determination of the distribution of the expenditure and the selection for curriculum fields. The objectives of the college play a vital rôle in both cases.

In 1929 the American Association of Teachers Colleges published a set of library standards with emphasis on percentage distributions of book collections. The distributions recommended were based on averages computed from a national survey by Rosenlof who used the Dewey system of classification.¹ Following out the recommendations of that study, the Association suggested that books should be distributed among the various classifications in approximately the following order:

Class	Subject	Percentage
000-099.9	General, library economy bound periodicals.....	7.5
100-199.9	Philosophy and psychology.....	5.0
200-299.9	Religion and Bible stories.....	2.5
300-399.9	Sociology and education.....	20.0
400-499.9	Language and philology.....	2.5
500-599.9	Sciences.....	7.5
600-699.9	Useful arts.....	7.5
700-799.9	Fine arts.....	5.0
800-899.9	Literature.....	20.0
900-999.9	History and geography.....	20.0

¹ Rosenlof, G. W.: American Association of Teachers Colleges, *Eighth Year-book*, 1929, pp. 121-27.

This type of distribution, based on existing averages, possesses value of a general nature but neglects the objectives of a given institution. Standard reference books, general collections and leisure reading stocks may be fairly uniform among colleges. On the other hand, wide variations may exist between institutions in other respects. Curricular emphases, for example, and fields offered present individual college problems.

The striking of a balance between fields and balances within fields are of vital concern. Here the college administrator and the librarian carry heavy responsibilities. How shall the distributions be determined? What techniques shall be used in selecting books and how shall they be evaluated? Flora B. Ludington has aptly pointed out that, "whatever the plan of the distribution of funds, it is important that the needs of the departments be the basis of the division of the money."¹

In an attempt to distribute library funds where they are needed, the advisory library committee of the Washington State Normal School at Ellensburg, following a careful study of the library and the functions of the college, undertook to work out a plan based upon student class hours. It was assumed that each course offered demanded the same amount of library book facilities as the equivalent number of credit hours in any other field of study, an assumption not quite valid but sufficiently so to be considered useful. To determine proportions, student class hours for the autumn, winter and spring terms of 1934-1935 were ascertained and the total class hours for each subject department was divided by the total of all student class hours for the three terms. Thus proportions which indicated curriculum emphases were established. This classification does not conform to that of the American Association of Teachers Colleges. It follows more closely the administrative organization of the college. The resulting distributions in percentages appear in the first column of Table I.

An actual book count was then made and tabulated under the same classification and reduced to percentages. These data are presented in the second column. No serious discrepancies exist. Music and history need careful consideration in the direction of augmenting their quotas. English language and literature have

¹ Ludington, Flora B.: "College Library Book Selection." *The Library Journal*, Vol. LX, Jan. 1, 1935, pp. 8-12.

fared too well in proportion, which is partially due to the fiction collection.

Looking to a five-year program, the library committee through apriori reasoning suggested a quota index which appears in the third column. Here is added a percentage for a general collection which

TABLE I.—COMPARISON OF BOOK DISTRIBUTION BY SUBJECTS WITH CLASS HOURS

	Student clock hours (per cent)	Book count (per cent)	Suggested index (per cent)
1. Education and psychology.....	23.9	24.8	25.0
2. English language and literature.....	17.1	25.3	20.0
3. Fine and applied arts.....	8.5	4.1	5.0
4. Science.....	15.1	13.3	15.0
5. Social science.....	12.4	13.5	12.5
6. History.....	10.8	8.8	10.0
7. Health and physical education.....	6.3	4.5	5.0
8. Music.....	5.9	1.9	2.5
	100.0	100.0	
9. Miscellaneous (general works, foreign language, etc.).....	5.0
			100.0

was not set so high as that recommended by the American Association of Teachers Colleges (7.5 per cent) because the present general collection totals approximately fifteen per cent. The figures in the third column may serve as a guide in allotting purchases to departments.

This approach to the problem of book allotments is more objective and more revealing than allowing the ordinary committee to pass judgment. The institution will look to the faculty members within departments for the selection of books. Discussions of library policies with department heads usually will assure cooperation and care in selection.

The distribution of books according to the needs of the institution judged by the functions and objectives of the curriculum is the main concern here. The clock hours analysis, the standards of the American Association of Teachers Colleges, and the standards of the Carnegie Corporation referred to earlier, are guides to the teachers college administrator in expending library funds and in assuring the wisest development of the most important laboratory in the institution.