

**LIBRARY SKILLS AS A
PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE**

**AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS
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The ideas expressed in this paper are based largely upon the author's experience introducing library skills to students in grades seven, eight, nine and twelve at Ridgefield, Connecticut, and upon the comments made by the members of one grade twelve who had then completed their first semester in college.

It was found that the classroom teacher (from kindergarten to college) was the factor that determined the use the student made of the library. Those teachers who learned to rely upon the library as a teaching tool, and those teachers who personally considered research techniques a prerequisite to continuing self-education made assignments which demanded extensive student use of the library. Those whose students used the library to a lesser degree used it less, or not at all, themselves.

Inasmuch as libraries are the only source for up-to-date information for citizens in our troubled world, and inasmuch as it is necessary for a person to have certain basic skills if he is to use a library readily and well, it is the responsibility of the school to teach these skills. The college students questioned indicated that scarcely any

training is given in these skills on the college level, and many requested introduction to these skills in the junior high years.

It is necessary for the teacher to receive training in the use of the library as a teaching tool. Too many teachers are graduating without this knowledge, and also without the ability to do personal research easily.

In order to place increased emphasis upon learning library skills in secondary school, it is suggested that:

1. Colleges list facility in library skills as one of their entrance qualifications.
2. Colleges urge that College Board tests include a unit on library research skills.
3. Schools limit the use of book lists and require more individual reference and research work from students.

All teachers have responsibility in helping students practice these basic library skills by making assignments which require the use of library materials. More emphasis needs to be placed upon alphabetizing in the early school years. Facility in alphabetizing is a fundamental library skill. Students need to go forward or backward from any given point with speed.

Among other library skills the author considers the following to be of prime importance:

1. Facility in both word-by-word and letter-by-letter alphabetizing.

2. Ability to recognize sub-divisions and to work with them in the catalog.
3. Understanding of the effects of abbreviations, numerals, apostrophes, and hyphens on card catalog filing.
4. Understanding of the filing of M', Mc, and Mac entries in the card catalog.
5. Knowledge of the possible confusion that can arise over varying systems of catalog filing of forename entries.
6. A working knowledge of the specialized parts of a book and also of specialized reference books.
7. Ability to substitute terms when one's original idea does not yield looked-for information.
8. Ability to use standard indexes such as Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, etc.

The librarian must create in a student awareness of these quirks, but it is the classroom teacher who provides the opportunity for practice using these skills.

The teacher can, and should, expect extensive assistance from the librarian. Serving teachers is one of the biggest parts of the librarian's job. Workshops, assignment-tailored lectures, bibliographical assistance, and prompt information concerning new acquisitions should be routine.

However, everyone in the school should recognize that a good school library places the greatest minds of the past and present on the teaching staff. It is every teacher's duty to bring young minds and great minds together through the library.