The Junior College Library

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A person unfamiliar with the American junior college might expect that library services to music and fine arts programs would be the same as those provided to the four-year college or university. There may be instances, of course, where they are indistinguishable from each other. However, most junior college educators and personnel define their colleges as totally different institutions and accept the viewpoint that their libraries have, or are in the process of developing distinctive or unique characteristics.

In 1972 the Association of College and Research Libraries of the American Library Association, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and the Association for Educational Communication and Technology recognized and agreed upon these differences by issuing a joint set of “Guidelines.” In a sense, the guidelines were an official statement by these three organizations that the two-year college was unique, that junior college instruction depended greatly upon different approaches and technological elements, and that the provision of library and instructional materials went far beyond traditional library services. Calling the agency that administers all these functions a “learning resources unit,” the statement defines the library as one part of a composite organization that administers and supplies all instructional materials to the college. The guidelines do not suggest or recommend a particular administrative organization, and recognize that the structure would differ from college to college. As the services supplied by the learning resources unit to all phases of the curriculum are different in nature and scope, they are, of course, equally so in relationship to the music and fine arts curricula. To examine the role of the junior college in this area, we should note the particular characteristics of the two-year college, the nature of the library and the music and fine arts programs, and the role of the library in providing services to these programs.

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In using the term “junior college” we refer primarily to the two-year public college with open enrollment, comprehensive programs, emphasis upon vocational and remedial education, community service, and other such attributes. It is frequently, perhaps more appropriately, called a “community college.” The actual distinctiveness of the junior college and the effectiveness of its programs provides a subject of minor controversy. Its proponents, much more numerous and vocal than its detractors, zealously point out its distinctive functions of opening opportunities for the disadvantaged and minority groups and for providing highly flexible and broad curricula to serve many otherwise unmet needs. Opponents of the junior college usually reply that by catering to the masses, it becomes a second-rate institution diluting the intellectual quality of higher education. Whatever merit there is in these pro and con arguments, one cannot deny that the extraordinary success of the public junior college is a fact.

The community college is the fastest growing educational institution in the United States. It operates in forty-nine of the fifty states, enrolls over 2 million students, and contains 30 percent of the undergraduate students in the country. Widespread public acceptance, coupled with its large role in the higher education scene, compels one to consider the junior college on its own terms.

The differences one finds in junior college education may be briefly described in often-stated objectives and purposes. These are:

1. **Comprehensive curricula.** The public junior college provides an extremely wide and varied array of courses not only in the liberal arts but also in remedial education, vocational fields, adult education and in other areas usually not offered by four-year liberal arts colleges and universities.

2. **Open-door principle.** The community college offers programs to most segments of the community. Entrance to the college is not restricted by economic consideration, grades, background, intelligence, etc. However, students may be placed only in those programs where their abilities might allow them to succeed.

3. **Community orientation.** The modern junior college reflects the community it serves. The academic program of a junior college in an upper-middle-class suburb will be different from that found in a densely populated working-class area of a large city. A junior college serving a rural area would, of course, offer programs geared to agricultural interests. Current literature reveals that the public junior college serves six major purposes: (1) transfer
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function—preparing students for entry to other colleges and universities, (2) occupational education, (3) general education, (4) remedial education, (5) guidance and counseling—a major activity of the junior college is to direct students into programs appropriate to their abilities, and (6) community services.

With goals and purposes so different from traditional institutions of higher learning it is obvious that students are also different. Diversity is a principal characteristic. Age differentials are very great with large numbers of older students frequently found in evening programs. "Two-year students, as compared with four-year students, represent a much wider range of ability and achievement, come from homes lower in the socio-economic scale, are less likely to be motivated for college work, and are more likely to be employed while attending college." Interest, necessity and counseling frequently direct a large number of junior college students into vocational and technical programs. The public junior college has become the principal institution of higher learning catering to the needs of disadvantaged ethnic groups.

With students so diverse and often less well prepared for college, the junior college has stressed instructional methods to a far greater degree than other colleges. Emphasis upon innovation in curricula and techniques are characteristic everywhere. More than any other institution, even more than the secondary school, the community college has stressed audiovisual usage or what is called in a more comprehensive sense "educational technology." New public junior college buildings invariably contain television studios, dial access systems, communication systems, and other elaborate audiovisual installations with carefully designed provisions to have audiovisual usage easily accessible everywhere.

The administration of library and educational technology services varies widely from college to college. Some of the audiovisual departments and libraries are separate entities, either considered as such, or considered as one department even though they operate separately. In other more recent instances, there is a completely combined and integrated library and audiovisual operation called a learning resources center, complete with production service, electronic communication centers, library services, etc., all integrated in a single unit dealing with all the instructional materials and equipment of the college, no matter what form they might have. Such a unit is closely related to what the guidelines refer to in their descriptions and recommendations for a total "learning resources center program."
There are also infinite numbers of variations in between. The name of the unit also varies widely from learning resources center to library. For purposes of simplicity, we shall use the familiar "library" to refer to the various forms of organization. However, the important factor, characteristic of the junior college, is that the library, in theory and often in practice, plays a central role in the administration of all instructional materials.

Most junior colleges have music and fine arts courses, although the variety of offerings and the extent of concentration varies greatly throughout the country. Very often there is a required course that every student must take as an introduction to music and art. Included in the general education program, it frequently is a part of a humanities course. At other times, courses in music appreciation and art appreciation may be part of the required curricula. Sometimes such courses are elective and the junior college student is offered a combination of required and elective courses in appreciation and history. Traditional college music and art curricula are also found in many junior colleges and sometimes the offerings can be impressive. Although many courses may be similar to those found in the four-year liberal arts college, the distinctive objectives and functions of the junior college and the diverse and different nature of its student body may make the course content and instructional techniques quite different. Disadvantaged students and others with less aptitude can often be more effectively taught by innovative methods. Consequently, less technical or rigidly historical approaches to subject matter often occur in introductory or appreciation courses. Emphasis is strongly placed upon using a wide variety of audiovisual techniques to reach the student. Indeed, some of the greatest successes in educational technology at the junior college level have been in the area of music and art through the use of television, information retrieval, individualized listening and viewing, and other techniques.

Because of its central role in the administration of instructional materials, the community college library is, of course, highly involved in music and fine arts programs. It houses books, periodicals, scores, pictures, art reproductions, etc., that most libraries supply in support of those programs. However, the junior college library frequently acquires unusual amounts of audiovisual materials and often uses the newer media to a greater extent than most four-year colleges or universities. Phonograph records, slides, filmstrips, motion picture film, audiotapes, television, videotapes, audio and video cassettes are frequently supplied in abundance for use in the classroom, for small
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groups, or individual use in the library. Individualized listening and viewing as a form of study in music and art becomes frequently as important as reading. Courses, especially introductory ones, are constructed with such use in mind with classroom instruction, outside preparation and study, and even examinations being partly audio or visual in form. Because it supplies the materials, facilities and professional and technical staff, the library plays a central role in providing the means of communication in music and art courses.

As mentioned above, the diversity of junior college library practice is so great that it is impossible to describe a typical or composite situation of services to music and fine arts programs. Course support ranges from the traditional provision of printed materials only in some colleges to the most elaborate and sophisticated technological arrangements in others. However, there is no question that there is a very great trend in junior colleges today toward the learning resources center concept with the library supplying special materials and services for the particular needs of students and a wide range of nonprint materials with the necessary equipment and staff to administer them.

It might be appropriate to describe briefly one existing community college library, somewhat typical, certainly not traditional, but not as yet the total learning resources center of the guidelines. Certainly there are learning resources centers that provide more service and integration into music and fine arts curricula, and probably many that provide less, but the description might serve useful in illustrating some of the services characteristic of the junior college library.

LOOP COLLEGE

The Loop College is one of seven campuses of the City Colleges of Chicago. The City Colleges have a long history of innovation in audiovisual matters with the library usually being the principle agency of administration. Some of the City Colleges have new campuses with large and modern facilities. However, the Loop College is located in the downtown section of Chicago in an old seventeen-story building. With a full-time equivalent student body of 5,000, the inadequate building is congested and has numerous unsolvable problems. A new, modern and much larger building is scheduled to be built soon in the same area of the city. In its present quarters, however, the Loop library suffers from all the crowding, traffic problems, and other inadequacies of the building as a whole. With the severe limitations of space and physical facilities together with some staff and budget difficulties, the

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range of service provided by the library would probably come as a surprise to those not familiar with junior college libraries or the "learning resources" concept. A brief description of library services to the music and fine arts programs will illustrate the point.

The humanities course, required in the general education curriculum, introduces students to music and fine arts. The music department has courses in music theory, history and instrumental and choral music similar to what one may find in lower, undergraduate levels elsewhere. Art courses of a wide range are also given. As expected, the library provides services to the faculty and students in all these areas. For example, the music section of the humanities course is geared to the types of students one finds in urban community colleges. The purpose of the course is to deal with music by perception rather than to talk about it. Music is played and analyzed in class. Outside assignments include readings, library listening, concerts, and written papers. The tests are primarily listening examinations. Musical materials are as varied as possible and the library provides virtually all of those used in instruction. Printed materials such as books, periodicals, scores, etc., are, of course, housed and circulated as they would be by any library. Phonograph records, audiotapes, film loops, filmstrips, motion picture films, and audio cassettes are heavily used both in classroom instruction and in individual use by students.

The audio cassettes are locally produced and edited in the library, and geared to the specific course matter and to teaching the types of students attending the Loop College. They are played in the classroom but they have also become standard listening for students in the library, being very valuable for providing them with additional exposure to the various forms and types of music.

Television becomes an important medium in instruction and study as off-the-air programs and college-produced programs are transmitted through coaxial cable to the classroom. The local educational television station, with its often excellent programs, is therefore easily used in instruction. Videotapes and video cassettes of the City Colleges of Chicago courses on television are also used in classrooms while color video cassettes in the library permit students to use them individually. The library has a small television and audio-recording studio that is well equipped to produce useful closed-circuit television programs geared to classroom and student needs.

The library similarly provides a wide variety of materials and services to the music department, to the fine arts section of the humanities
course, and to the art department. Ear training tapes were produced by faculty members of the music department and are an important means of individual study by students. Off-the-air television programs are also important in classroom instruction. Another example of innovative production of instruction materials is the use of some of the lectures of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Lyric Opera adult education courses. These courses are held at the Loop College and musicians, soloists, critics, and other experts are involved. The resulting recordings have immense instructional value.

In the fine arts courses, audio and video programs also play an important role. Interviews with artists, critics and others become valuable instructional sources. Television interviews and demonstrations by artists and architects have been incorporated in courses as classroom material or may be required or optional library viewing. All these devices provide educational exposure for the student to supplement the more traditional library materials of books, periodicals, photographs, prints, slides, filmstrips and motion picture film. Extensive photographic and graphic services are also available to the instructor. A photography laboratory is maintained by the library to produce high quality, professional materials.

One should note that this description of an average junior college library providing services to music and art courses occurs under conditions that many other institutions might consider extremely difficult or altogether impossible. But current thinking and practice compels exceptional efforts by the library to meet the needs and goals of present-day instruction. Some community college libraries may not be able to do as much, many may be able to do much more. Given the type of students, their backgrounds, the goals of the junior college, and the objectives of the various courses, librarians are urged to provide a maximum range of materials and services. Though the limits of space, physical facilities, staff and budget may seem to restrict its extent of operations, junior college librarians should view such limitations not as barriers but as opportunities to be ingenious about achieving maximum service situations. Because community colleges continue to play expanding and changing roles in the United States today, their libraries must continually expand and revise their efforts to serve them.
References

3. Ibid., p. 20.
6. Ibid., p. 42.
8. Ibid., pp. 140-67.