

Cataloging for Curriculum Libraries

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THE curriculum library at Bowling Green State University began like most of its kind; that is, as an adjunct of the department of education and located first in one unused room, then another. I recall dodging steam pipes in a basement hall to get to it in my undergraduate days. When a new library was built, space was allocated for this collection. Of course, it was at this stage a hodgepodge of old books, professors' donations, and so on. At the time of the move a rather simple locator numbering system was abandoned in favor of the Dewey Decimal, and the former Curriculum Lab became the Curriculum Library. However, in most minds this collection continued to have little significance, and the librarian who handled it in its new location for the next three years had to exist with this attitude and with a limited and at times inadequate staff.

My first reaction after only a week as head of this collection was a feeling of being completely overwhelmed. I rather suspected that most curriculum libraries, like Topsy, "just growed," and whoever was with it from its inception had an advantage over a newcomer because he knew where everything was, having put it there himself.

All attempts to acquaint myself with the collection I had inherited were frustrated. A stroll through the stacks revealed a shelver's nightmare: two sets from the same publisher interfiled with each other, workbooks crowded at the end of a series, swaybacked and slip-

ping to the floor, some series scattered because part had been cultered by author and the rest by publisher.

My confusion was compounded further when I was occasionally asked if I had a particular series, and I discovered the card catalog did not identify a series. Also, where we had multiple copies of an item, student assistants often mistakenly carded a book with, for example, a copy 3 card in a copy 2 book.

Another difficult matter was that of shelving. The call number used was so long and involved (location symbol, Dewey number, cutter, grade level, kind of book, edition or date) that shelving was a real chore. Add to this the fact that all our materials, in a library that otherwise is on an automated system, were in the Dark Ages of hand charging. With the ever-increasing use of our facilities by growing numbers of education students, we had no time to catalog a huge backlog of new books. And every curriculum librarian knows that material must reach the shelves as soon as possible, as its usefulness decreases with age. Clearly, something had to be done. The suggestion was made that I devise a way to put our book collection on the automated system. In this way, time spent at our checkout desk could be spent

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keeping abreast of the cataloging. After much thought, I came up with the following conclusions:

1. If each book had its own distinctive number, our books could be handled through the automated charge at the regular university library circulation points.

2. If a certain standard method of marking the kinds of books were adopted, all the related materials for a single grade level within a series would shelve together.

3. If the two foregoing items could be accomplished, then mix-ups in overdues would be virtually eliminated, related materials would shelve together, and books no longer would need to be hand charged.

Adaptation for Use

With the desired outcome in mind, I set to work. For some unexplained reason I was unable at that time to uncover anything that had been written regarding the cataloging of textbook materials, although I later found in a file drawer the *Textbook Classification Scheme* prepared by Lois Belfield Watt and issued by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1967. Several hours and almost as many filled wastebaskets later, the following plan emerged: catalog according to the 17th edition of Dewey, cutter by publisher, and use work letters to indicate a book's place in a series and the purpose of a book.

The Dewey system was used because the rest of the library uses it, and because more patrons would be somewhat familiar with it, having used it in high school and public libraries. Also, I believed it was better to adapt a well-known system rather than create another new system—one that would possibly require a chart to guide the patron. Very simply, then, my system is Dewey/Cutter, which keeps the materials shelved according to subject; within the subject the Cutter number keeps a series together; and within a series the work letters would keep the materials in a grade level together.

Reasoning that work letters were designed to keep an author's works together, I adapted their use in such a way as to keep

a series in proper order and keep materials for each particular grade level within a series in a certain order. Therefore, most books in a series bear two work letters. The first work letter is to designate the book's place in a series, regardless of the grade level involved, and the second work letter indicates the book's intended use.

THE FIRST WORK LETTER:

In some series a book covers only part of a grade level and in others it may encompass more than one grade level; therefore use of the first work letter avoids the complicated configurations seen on some spine labels! In other words, the first work letter *a* denotes the first book in a series, *b* the second, and so on; and the grade levels these first work letters designate will differ from series to series.

Another reason that this method is valuable is that some publishers now issue ungraded series, and do not want a grade level to appear on or in a book. If a patron needs to know a grade level of a book, he will find it by consulting the card catalog. In most cases the cataloger has taken such information from the publisher's catalog; however, in a few instances it became necessary to contact a company representative for the information.

THE SECOND WORK LETTER:

- No second letter—student text
- a—student's workbook
- b—teacher's edition (with text)
- c—teacher's workbook
- d—teacher's guide (without text)
- e—other, such as tests

These work letters constitute a kind of uniform coding system which need not be understood by users of the curriculum library. It is easy to find a book, and materials always shelve in the same order. An example of a typical call number could be:

- 372.35 (elementary science)
- H29bb (publisher, first grade, teacher's edition).

Previously the 16th edition of Dewey had been used for the curriculum library.

with broad category numbers. The change was made to the 17th edition because it provided more numbers for our uses. Also, there were times when I adapted a number for our own specific purposes, such as 372.41 for i.t.a. materials and 372.42 (unused in the 17th) for elementary dictionaries. These dictionaries would otherwise be given a 403 number and be shelved in the high school area, which is contrary to our shelving practices. As it is, all elementary textbooks are in the 372's and shelved in one area. Books about teaching and junior high and high school textbooks are cataloged according to subject and shelved in another area. Special education books are cataloged in the same manner as regular textbooks, except that the symbol SE is added above the Dewey number. These books are shelved separately in a third area for convenience.

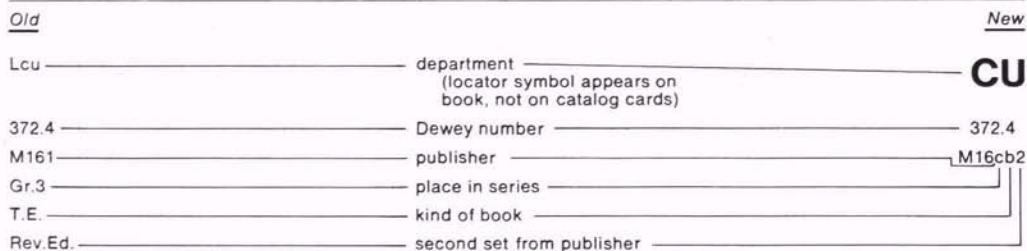
Because there are increasingly more materials on the elementary level for teaching foreign languages, to lump everything under the 372.65 provided by the Dewey 17th edition would mean that elementary foreign language, though segregated by publisher, would be mixed up by language. So editorial license was used, and the appropriate final number for each language was added to the 372.65 making 372.653 for elementary German, 372.654 for elementary French, and 372.656 for elementary Spanish.

In the field of elementary mathematics

I decided to create a number for elementary geometry, since there seem to be some items that fit this category, and 372.75 was chosen. For books in elementary geography, including map and globe study, I use 372.891, even though this separates it from the other social studies materials (372.83). Wherever possible a specific number is used, such as 372.35 for elementary science, 372.357 for nature study, and 372.37 for elementary health rather than 372.3 for a broad category including all these. Supplementary readings in these, and other, areas are cataloged to stay with that subject; for example, a picture book about butterflies would be given a 372.357 number.

In the initial stages of assigning numbers, the Dewey and Cutter are penciled at the head of a series description in the publisher's catalog, and work letters are added beside the items listed in the series. A check mark is added for the items already received. In this way, if a shipment lacks a book and it later arrives after the others are cataloged, a quick check in the publisher's catalog and the shelf list produces the desired call number at a moment's notice. These catalogs thus also provide a quick reference if a bookman comes in.

If a new series is a second series from a publisher (a revision, perhaps, or another series in the same subject) the work letters are followed by a 2. The filing rule of "noth-



Elementary textbooks are all assigned Dewey numbers in the 372 area, as authorized by the 17th edition of Dewey. High school textbooks are assigned numbers according to the subject area; for example, 448 for a basic text in French.

All books bearing a 372 number are shelved in one area, and all other numbers are shelved in a separate area. This is for the convenience of the student teachers using this library, inasmuch as most of them are elementary education majors.

Figure 1. Cataloging System for the Curriculum Library

ing before something" common to both ALA and LC filing procedure assures that materials will shelve as they should. Therefore A51a (student text) files before A51aa (student's workbook), and A51a through A51fa file before A51a2 through A51fa2. Notice that this keeps two editions from the same publisher and in the same subject separate from each other. However, the 2 does not necessarily mean a second edition, it just implies *another* series in that subject from that publisher.

The surprising thing at this point is that although we now had a system whereby each title could have a distinctive call number, we do not charge out by that number. To eliminate all possibility of error which could arise because of multiple copies and more than one series in a subject from a publisher, it was decided to use accession numbers for charge purposes. Thus the Dewey/Cutter number appears on the spine of the book for identification and shelving, but the IBM card is prepared with an accession number. An accession card file is maintained in order that one can immediately find out what book a certain accession number represents.

For a brief analysis of the system, see Figure 1.

Special Problems

In the handling and cataloging of textbooks, special problems present themselves that are not obvious to the average librarian. Preparation of catalog cards is one main difference. Cards must be hand typed, because prepared catalog cards to my knowledge are not available. In our operation, the format of the card differs from the normal card in that an author's birth and death dates are not used (indeed, are not available), and in the collation paragraph only grade level and series note appear. Information for cataloging must be taken from the publisher's catalog instead of the title page because often the catalog lists more exact information regarding price, series title, grade level, and so forth.

Subject headings from Sears or LC are often not suitable. Terms chosen should be

simple and specific ones that patrons will look for: finger plays, flannel boards, spelling, health—elementary, for example. Therefore one needs to set up a file of headings (ours are on 3 x 5 cards) so the cataloger may have a ready file. Additional headings are added as the need arises. Since many textbooks today reflect more than one area, subject headings are invaluable for bringing out other special aspects of a book, aspects that would otherwise go unnoticed.

One of the major problems with most curriculum libraries is the lack of professional assistance. Therefore it became apparent at the outset that I would need to create a system that would be easy to understand, and could be carried on by nonprofessionals with a minimum of supervision by the professional. However, in the beginning stages of cataloging in this "new way," practically all the work was done by the writer. After I became confident that it was indeed a valid system I involved my staff more and more. Eventually, as we began to be faced with having to explain procedures to new personnel, it was thought that we needed some kind of guide to which we could refer. Thus the *Manual of Procedure for the Curriculum Library*, which outlines in detail every facet involved in handling the books, came into existence. All staff members, including student assistants, are required to read the manual carefully in order that they might have a speaking acquaintance with the entire cataloging operation, and thus better understand the reasoning behind the work they are asked to perform.

An efficient work-flow system was set up on one wall of shelving in our work area. Sections of shelves were labeled according to the operation to be performed, with books to be moved to the next stage after an operation is completed. This saves much time because the professional does not need to explain to someone coming on duty what "needs to be done next." Books move through the work-flow in an astonishingly orderly fashion, much as though it were a production line. The professional is now free to spend more time in professional and administrative duties. □

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