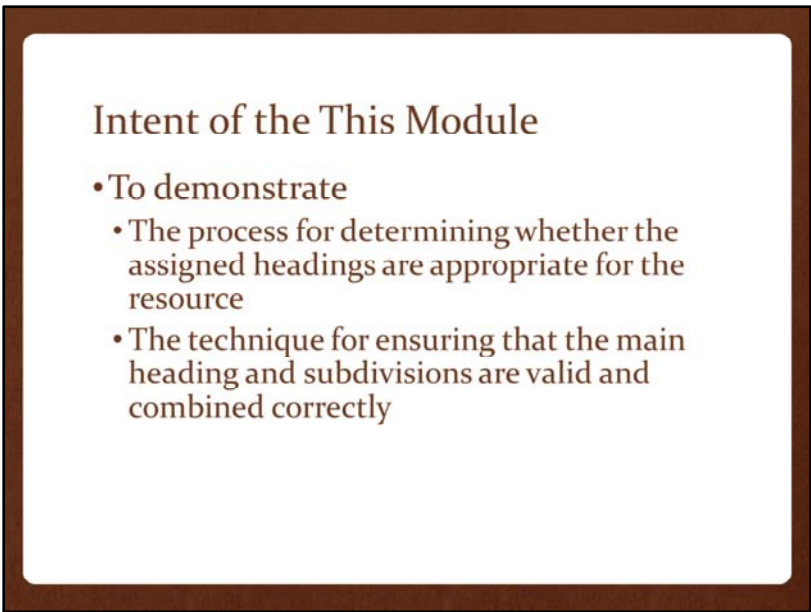Library of Congress Subject Headings

Module 7.3
Evaluating Headings Assigned to Resources 1:
Training Student Assistants

Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division
Library of Congress
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Intent of the This Module

- To demonstrate
  - The process for determining whether the assigned headings are appropriate for the resource
  - The technique for ensuring that the main heading and subdivisions are valid and combined correctly

In the two previous modules we demonstrated the procedures for taking apart headings that have been assigned to bibliographic records, checking them, and putting them back together again, and that is an important aspect of the evaluation of subject headings that have been assigned to resources.

There is one more essential part to evaluating headings that have been assigned: determining what the headings mean, and whether they are appropriate to the resource. That is, do they follow the principles of LC subject heading assignment as described in SHM instruction sheet H 180, as well as the more detailed instructions found elsewhere in the manual?

In this module, we will demonstrate the thought process used in determining whether the headings assigned are appropriate for the resource. If they are, we will correct the headings themselves as necessary to ensure that the main heading and subdivisions are combined correctly.

As always in this training, we are unable to replicate the entire resource, so we will be relying on the publisher's summary to appropriately revise the bibliographic descriptions.

Training Student Assistants

Series: College Library Management

Summary: This series offers the best and most comprehensive guide to training college library staff members on the market today. These step-by-step guides on specific management issues offer comprehensive information in a fun and engrossing format.

Training Student Assistants provides tips and tricks for effective on-the-job training of that most transient of library employee.

We will be reviewing the headings assigned to a resource titled *Training Student Assistants*, which is in the series *College Library Management*. The summary states,

> This series offers the best and most comprehensive guide to training college library staff members on the market today. These step-by-step guides on specific management issues offer comprehensive information in a fun and engrossing format.

> *Training Student Assistants* provides tips and tricks for effective on-the-job training of that most transient of library employee.

Training Student Assistants

Headings assigned
   Student library assistants—Training of.
   Libraries—Training of.
   Libraries—Management.

The headings assigned are:

Student library assistants—Training of;
Libraries—Training of; and
Libraries—Management.
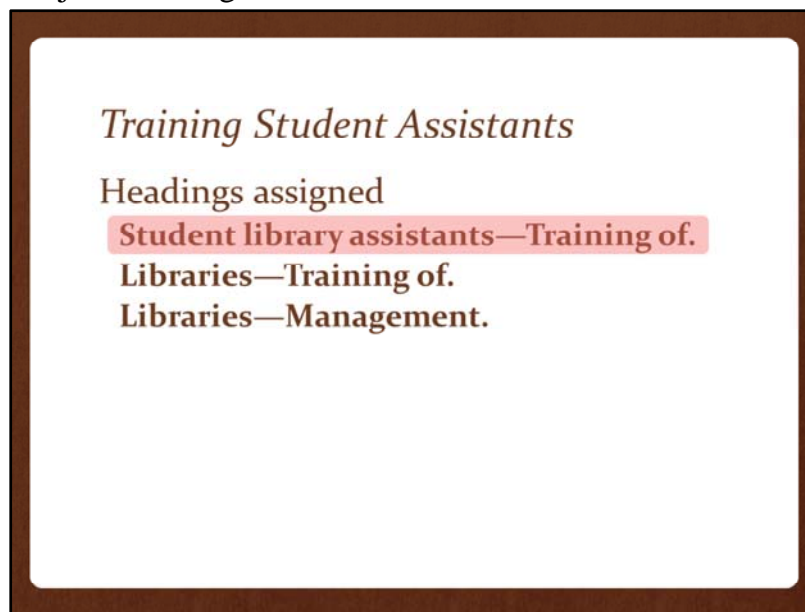
Let's take the headings in the order in which they were assigned.

The first is **Student library assistants—Training of**. The first step is to determine what the heading means, and the best way to do that is to read it backward.

It means: the training of student library assistants. Without looking up the heading and subdivision, does that seem to be appropriate for the resource?

The title is *Training Student Assistants* and the summary indicates that the resource provides step-by-step guidance on training student assistants, so it looks pretty good.

Since it looks appropriate, the next step is to evaluate the heading itself to determine whether it is correctly formulated.

Training Student Assistants

Student library assistants—Training of.

> **Student library assistants** (May Subd Geog)
> UF Student assistants in libraries
> BT Library employees

The main heading is valid.

The subdivision **–Training of** is also valid and can be used under occupational groups and types of employees.

Are student library assistants a type of employee? Yes, they are, so **Student library assistants—Training of** is a valid construction.

Is it the best heading for the resource, though?

One of the NTs of **–Training of** is **–In-service training**.

Would that be better?

We have to look it up to find out.

The subdivision **–In-service training** can also be used under occupational groups and types of employees. Which subdivision is better for this resource?

Note that Classification Web does not indicate the scope of the subdivisions. It provides only the types of headings under which it can be used.

For more information, we will consult the SHM.

By searching the keyword *training*, we find that instruction sheet H 2217 is devoted to explaining how to catalog books about training.

Section 1.a, the general rule, states,

> Assign the free-floating subdivision **–Training of** … under headings for occupational groups and types of employees to works on the history and/or methods of instructing persons to prepare them for their occupation.

Section 2.b says,

> Assign the free-floating subdivision **–In-service training** ... under occupational groups and types of employees to works on the history and/or methods of providing training for these groups on the job, for example, **College teachers—In-service training—United States**.

Training Student Assistants

Student library assistants—Training of.

Training Student Assistants provides tips and tricks for effective on-the-job training of that most transient of library employee.

Recall that the summary of the resource stated, "*Training Student Assistants* provides tips and tricks for effective on-the-job training of that most transient of library employee."

Training Student Assistants

Student library assistants—Training of.

✓ **Student library assistants—In-service training.**

Comparing the intended scope of the two subdivisions, the better heading is **Student library assistants—In-service training.**
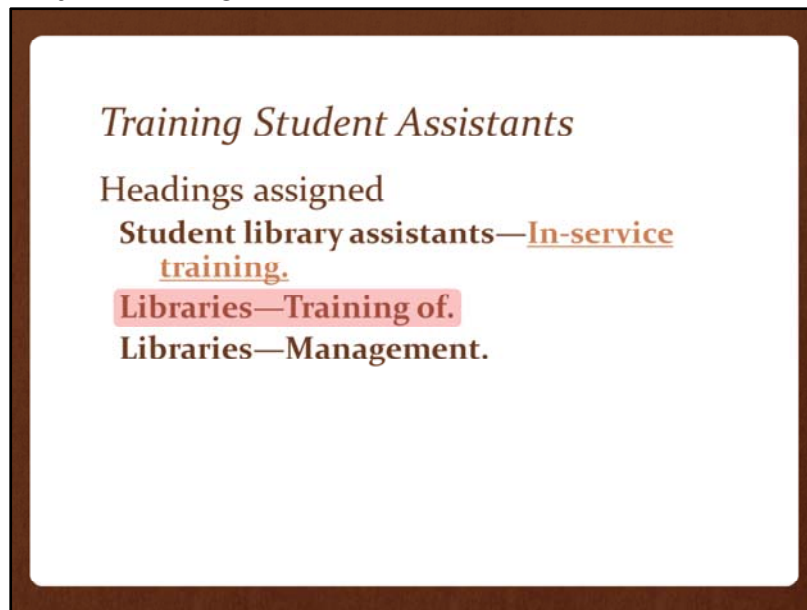
Training Student Assistants

Headings assigned
   Student library assistants—In-service training.
   Libraries—Training of.
   Libraries—Management.

Now let's look at the next heading.

Libraries—Training of, read backwards, means, "the training of libraries."

That's sort of silly! It doesn't make sense.

Recall also that the subdivision **–Training of** may be used only with headings for occupational groups and types of employees. Libraries are neither.

If you want to be very thorough, you can check LCSH because some otherwise free-floating subdivisions are specifically established for use with headings with which they do not free-float.

The heading would appear between the entries for **Libraries—Teletype systems** and **Libraries—Trustees**.

It does not exist.

Training Student Assistants

Headings assigned
Student library assistants—In-service training.
~~Libraries—Training of~~
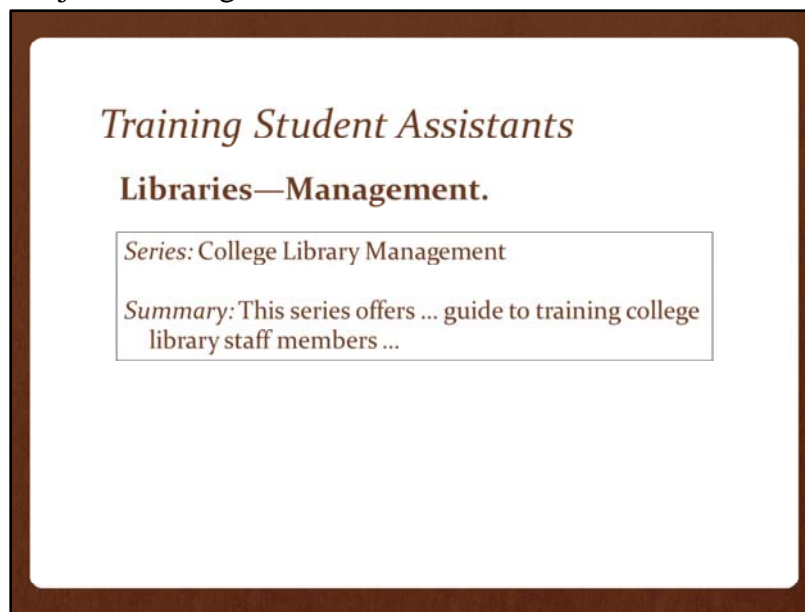Libraries—Management.
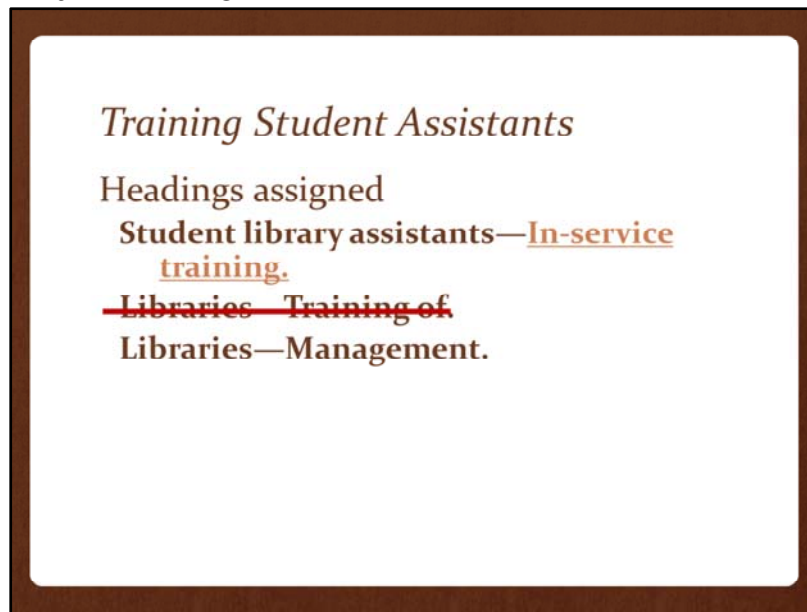
Because the heading itself is nonsensical and it is formulated incorrectly besides, we will delete it.
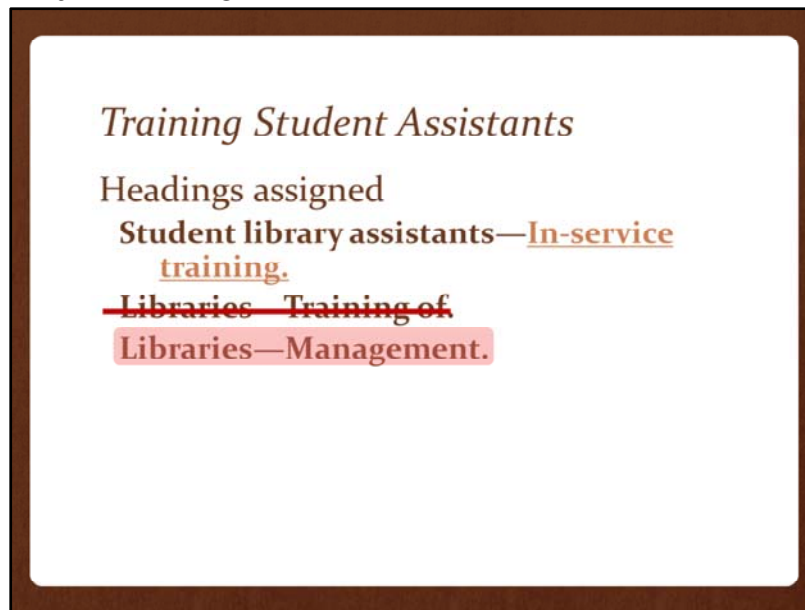
Now let's review the third heading, **Libraries—Management**, which means "the management of libraries."

Unlike *Libraries—Training of*, this one at least makes sense!

But, is it appropriate for the resource?

Training Student Assistants

Libraries—Management.

Series: College Library Management

Summary: This series offers ... guide to training college library staff members ...

Recall that the series is *College Library Management* and that it is intended to help in the training of college library staff members.

The heading assigned, **Libraries—Management**, is too broad for the resource because the heading is about all aspects of the management of all types of libraries.

Training Student Assistants
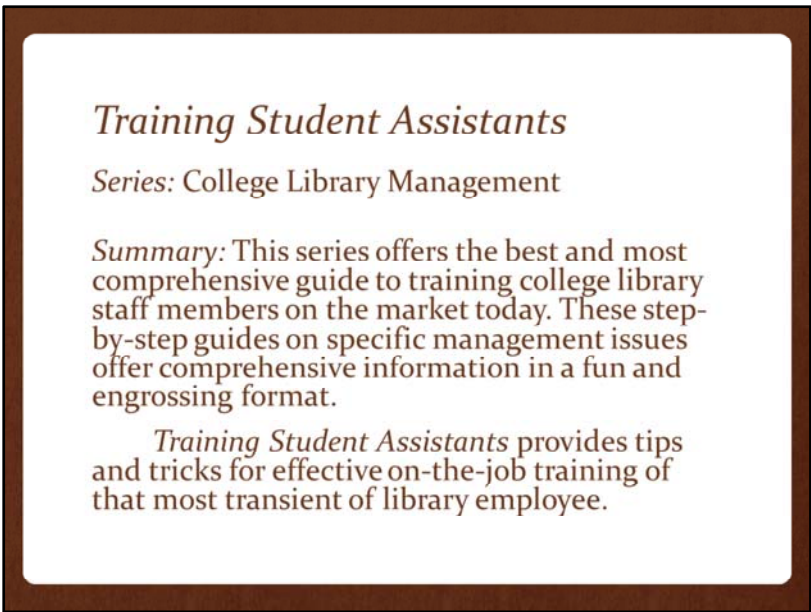
Libraries—Management.

From H 180, Assigning and Constructing Subject Headings

> *4. Specificity.* Assign headings that are as specific as the topics they cover. Specificity is not a property of a given subject heading; instead, it is a relative concept that reflects the relationship between a subject heading and the work to which it is applied.

Recall that the principle of specificity states,

> Assign headings that are as specific as the topics they cover. Specificity is not a property of a given subject heading; instead, it is a relative concept that reflects the relationship between a subject heading and the work to which it is applied.

Should we attempt to create a more specific heading?

Well, here is the summary again.

Notice that the series focuses specifically on the training of employees, and this resource in particular focuses on the training of student assistants.

Is the resource about the management of libraries?

Broadly speaking *yes*, … because training staff is a part of library management, but the heading **Libraries—Management** is way too broad for such a narrowly focused resource.

The heading should be removed.
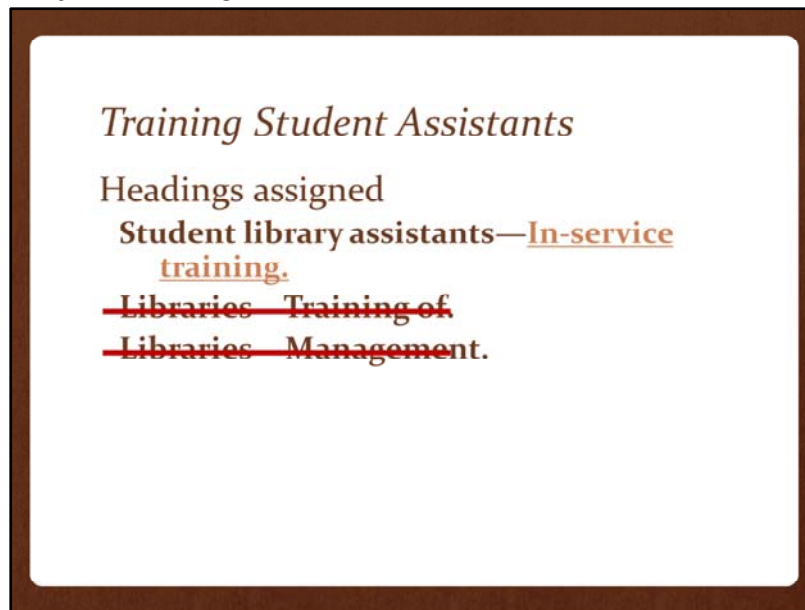
Of the three headings originally assigned to this resource, only one fulfilled the principle of specificity, and even that one needed to be made a little bit more specific to truly match the focus of the resource.