Library of Congress Classification: Module 2.1

Library of Congress Classification
Module 2.1
Classification Hierarchies

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In this module, we will explain in detail how to read and understand the hierarchical structure of LCC.

As a quick review from the first module, each schedule contains an entire main class and one or more subclasses. Main classes are indicated with a single capital letter and represent a discipline, such as J, Political Science, or M, Music. The most general resources about the discipline are classified there.

Subclasses may be represented by one, two, or three letters, and represent branches of a discipline. N, Fine Arts, has the subclasses NA, Architecture; NB, Sculpture; NC, Drawing, Design and Illustration, and so on.
The S class – that is, all of the classes and subclasses that start with the letter S – covers agriculture. The various aspects of agriculture all have their own subclasses.

The S subclass is used for agriculture in general, such as farm economics, plant growing, soils and soil science, and so forth.

The other subclasses are each limited to a distinct area of agriculture.

SB covers farming on land, works on pruning, the various types of crops, and so on.

SD is about forestry.

SF is about animal husbandry.

And SH is about aquaculture, fisheries, and angling.
Subarrangement of the Schedules

- Subclasses are divided into number ranges

| SB113.2-118.46 | Seeds. Seed technology |
| SB118.48-.75 | Nurseries. Nursery industry |
| SB119-124 | Propagation |
| SB126.5-.57 | Hydroponics. Soilless culture |

Each subclass is divided into ranges, which are indicated by the addition of numbers to the letters. These numbers may range from 1 to 9999.

Here are some examples from the SB schedule, Plant culture.

Each of these topics – nursery, propagation, and hydroponics – is a subset of the larger topic of plant culture, and each has a distinct number range that does not overlap with the one next to it.

Each of these ranges is divided into smaller ranges and/or individual numbers.
This is the breakdown for nurseries and the nursery industry.

It includes some individual numbers, like the ones that are highlighted on the slide.
Subarrangement of the Schedules

- Breakdown of SB118.48-.75, Nurseries. Nursery industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SB118.48</th>
<th>Periodicals. Societies. Serials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SB118.485-.488</td>
<td>Directories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB118.5</td>
<td>General works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB118.6</td>
<td>Economic aspects. Costs (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB118.7-.75</td>
<td>History and conditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It also includes some ranges, like the two that are highlighted now.

The ranges are broken down further to create more and more specificity.
This is the breakdown for History and conditions of nurseries and the nursery industry, SB118.7 to SB118.75.

As you can see, there are specific numbers

for the history of the nursery industry in general: SB118.7

for the United States in general: SB118.73

for particular states in the United States: SB118.74

and for other regions and countries: SB118.75.

The notation A-Z at two of those numbers indicates an alphabetical sub-arrangement of places within those numbers.
The specificity of a number is shown through the indentations of the captions, not by the notation.

Each line that is indented is subordinate to the line or lines under which it is indented.

Therefore, the degree of specificity can be seen by looking at the hierarchies of the captions.
Here is the hierarchy for Plant culture.

The line Seeds. Seed technology is indented under Plant culture, so seeds and seed technology are part of plant culture.
The captions *Laboratories* and *Seed projects* are indented under *Seeds. Seed technology*, so they are part of seeds and seed technology, which is part of *Plant culture*.

*Laboratories* and *Seed projects* are indented the same amount, so they are considered to be topics of equal specificity.
There is a **General works** caption under **Seed projects**, which is used for the most general resources about seed projects, which is part of **Seeds. Seed technology**, which is in turn part of **Plant culture**.

There is also a **By region or country** caption, which is at the same level of indentation as **General works**, which is again part of **Seed projects**, which is part of **Seeds. Seed technology**, which is part of **Plant culture**.
The next caption is **Nurseries. Nursery industry**. Notice that it is on the same level of hierarchy with **Seeds. Seed technology**.

**Nurseries. Nursery industry** appears after **Seeds. Seed technology** on the list, but it is at the same level of hierarchy as **Seeds. Seed technology**, and is not subordinate to it.

Nurseries and the nursery industry is subordinate to – that is, it is a subtopic of – **Plant culture**.
The next caption is **History and conditions**, which is indented under **Nurseries. Nursery industry**, making it subordinate to nurseries and the nursery industry, which is subordinate to **Plant culture**.
The final caption in this excerpt is **General works**. This time, **General works** is subordinate to **History and conditions**, which itself is subordinate to nurseries and the nursery industry.
See how there are two captions called **General works** on the slide? They are in different hierarchies and therefore have different contexts, so they have different meanings although the wording of the captions is the same. The first one is for general works about seed projects, and the second is for general works about the history and conditions of nurseries and the nursery industry.

It is always important to check the hierarchy of the number you want to assign in order to ensure that it means what you think it means, particularly because captions that are worded the same but have different meanings may appear very close to each other in the schedules.
### Hierarchy and Specificity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD113.05</td>
<td>Laboratories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seed projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB114.5</td>
<td>General works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB114.53.A-Z</td>
<td>By region or country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nurseries. Nursery industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History and conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB118.7</td>
<td>General works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the same excerpt, but this time we have included the numbers and number ranges.
One of the most important things to remember is that the meaning of the numbers is in the captions. In some classification systems, the longer the number is, the more specific the meaning of that number is. That is emphatically not the case with LCC.

When a new concept has to be added to LCC, the placement of the concept is determined first. After the proper place is found, a number is made that allows the concept to fit within the established hierarchy.
Here you can see the results.

All of the numbers in this excerpt from the S schedule are at the same level of hierarchy. They all are subtopics under **Seed handling and postharvest technology**. The numbers however, are different lengths.
The numbers for **General works** and **Storage** have a single decimal digit, while the rest of them have two decimal digits.

The length of the number does not matter. The location and level of indentation of the captions are the significant elements that indicate the levels of hierarchy and specificity.
Here is another example of structure and sub-arrangement.

In LCC, Class H contains the social sciences, which covers a wide range of sub-disciplines. A list of the first six subclasses is on your screen. Notice that each is represented by two letters. HA is for Statistics and HF is for Commerce, for example.

Let’s take a closer look at subclass HB, Economic theory. Demography.
This subclass, like all subclasses, is divided into number ranges. This slide shows the three highest-level divisions of the HB schedule. As you can see, there is a separate range for each division, and the numbers do not overlap:

- **Economic theory** is in HB1-HB846.8,
- **Demography. Population. Vital events** are in HB848-HB3697, and
- **Business cycles. Economic fluctuations** are in HB3711-HB3840.

Let’s take a closer look at the range for **Business cycles. Economic fluctuations** and examine its hierarchy.
Note: This was a live demo. The slides in the handout do not precisely match the slides in the audio-visual lecture.

We are looking at the range for Business cycles. Economic fluctuations. I will click on that line to highlight it. There is no number next to the caption Business cycles. Economic fluctuations because that line is for hierarchy only.

Notice the period in the caption. In this case, the period indicates that business cycles and economic fluctuations are used synonymously in LCC.
The next line, General works, has a number: HB3711.

General works is subordinate to Business cycles. Economic fluctuations, so this line is for the most general resources about business cycles. See how the hierarchies are presented vertically – one hierarchy level to a line? Now look at the hierarchy pane. The hierarchies are the same, but they are presented horizontally. Each separate level of hierarchy is designated by a long dash. (If you know LCSH, you know that it uses dashes to show subdivisions. Here the dashes are used differently. Try not confuse the two!)
Okay, back to the schedule. I’m going to click on the line History of crises. Again, there is no number next to that caption, so it is a hierarchy line only. There are two numbers in this subhierarchy, and their captions are General works and Particular crises. Both are indented under History of crises, so we know that they are subordinate to it.

The resources in HB3716, General works, are different from the resources in HB3711, General works. HB3716 is for general resources about the history of financial crises, which is a subtopic of business cycles. And HB3711 is for resources about business cycles and economic fluctuations.
Let’s look a bit further down the schedule at the subhierarchy **Relation to special topics**. Again, this is a hierarchy line with several subtopics listed under it. HB3719, **Costs, profits, and cycles**, is used for resources that explore how those topics are related to business cycles. Other special topics include the relationships between business cycles and investments, business cycles and inventories, and so on.
Moving out a level, **Long waves. Kondratieff cycles** is not under **Relation to special topics.** It is directly under **Business cycles. Economic fluctuations.** Therefore, long waves and Kondratieff cycles are a direct subtopic of business cycles.

**Economic forecasting** and **Economic stabilization** are also both direct subtopics of business cycles.

**Rational expectations** relates only to forecasting, so it is indented under – that is, subordinate to – **Economic forecasting,** which is in turn subordinate to **Business cycles. Economic fluctuations.**
Economic forecasting and Economic stabilization are also both direct subtopics of business cycles.
Rational expectations relates only to forecasting, so it is indented under – that is, subordinate to – Economic forecasting, which is in turn subordinate to Business cycles. Economic fluctuations.
There is a typical order of sub-arrangement within a discipline or major subtopic.

First come the form divisions like periodicals or encyclopedias, then study and teaching and research.

Next come the general works, and then special topics.

Special topics themselves may have their own form divisions and special topics.

And then there is usually a place for the discipline or major subtopic in a particular geographic place.

Let’s go back to the schedules.
[Note: This was a live demo. The slides in the handout do not precisely match the slides in the audio-visual lecture.]

The range of numbers for Radio broadcasts is a good example because it is compact, and shows many of the possibilities.

The line Radio broadcasts is highlighted, so look at the hierarchy pane. It is under Broadcasting, which is under Drama. Therefore, in LCC Radio broadcasts are considered to be part of Drama.

In the schedule, we can see the form captions indented directly under Radio broadcasts: Periodicals, Yearbooks, and Biography, for example.

This particular topic mixes the form captions with By region or country, A-Z, which is for geographic treatment, and General works. That is a bit unusual.
Now let’s take a look at the **Special topics** section. (Note, in LCC, the word *special* means individual; it does not mean special in the sense of something extraordinary.) Anyway, **Special topics** is also directly indented under **Radio broadcasts**.
One of the special topics is the moral and religious aspects of radio broadcasts.
Another special topic is **Format radio broadcasting**.

**Format radio broadcasting** has a **General works** number, PN1991.66, which is for resources about format radio broadcasting in general. In other words, a resource would have to be about several different kinds of radio stations in order to be classified here.
Right under the General works number is a caption Special format stations, A-Z. Underneath that are the captions College radio stations, Contemporary music stations, Music radio stations, Popular music stations, and Top forty stations. These are individual types of stations. If a resource were about college radio stations, it would be classified in PN1991.67.C64. All of the types of radio stations are on the same hierarchy line, so they are all equivalent to each other.
Let’s move on. Authorship is indented under Special topics, which is under Radio broadcasts. It has a General works number and also a number specifically for Radio plays. Resources about the writing of radio plays are classified in PN1991.73.
Production and direction is also a special topic, but it does not have any subtopics.
The next caption is for Programs and scripts of radio programs. There is a collections number, PN1991.77.A1, and a number for the scripts of individual programs, PN1991.77.A2-Z. We will explain the notation .A-Z in a later module.
Then there are Other special topics, which is an alphabetical list. These are topics that do not lend themselves to hierarchy. There are classification numbers for Children’s programs, Detective and mystery programs, Police, Quiz shows, and more. These individual topics are all equivalent to each other for classification purposes.
If I want to go back to the top of the hierarchy for radio broadcasts, I can just click on **Radio broadcasts** in the hierarchy pane and I am right back to where I started.
Some schedules are arranged differently. For example, the history and law schedules do not start with a topic that is sub-arranged into subtopics.

Instead, they start with the place.

And the literature schedules? They have their own arrangement.
Exercises

Click when you are ready to begin