

# LIBRARY RESOURCES & TECHNICAL SERVICES

Vol. 23, No. 1

Winter 1979

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Some Practical Observations on the Writing, Implementation, and Revision of Collection Development Policy. <i>Charles B. Osburn</i>	7
Collection Evaluation in Research Libraries: The Search for Quality, Consistency, and System in Collection Development. <i>Paul H. Mosher</i>	16
Selection Methodology in Academic Libraries. <i>Hendrik Edelman</i>	33
The Necessity for a Collection Development Policy Statement. <i>Y. T. Feng</i>	39
Allocation of Funds in Support of Collection Development in Public Libraries. <i>Ann Bender</i>	45
Collection Development: A Summary of Workshop Discussions. <i>Norman Dudley</i>	52
Specificity in Subject Headings. <i>Hilda Steinweg</i>	55
Examining the Library of Congress <i>Subject Catalog</i> . <i>David F. Kohl</i>	69
Resources and Technical Services Division: Annual Reports, 1977/78	75
RTSD Nominees—1979 Election	88

---

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION

And sometimes it may be more appropriate to give up or transfer some responsibilities to other institutions which are better equipped to assume them. One must not be afraid to admit past errors or to change directions when good judgment so indicates; nor should one be trapped in one's own past virtues. We need constantly to use our judgment and exercise our right—indeed, duty—to think, and sometimes having a piece of paper in front of us may make us forget that duty.

To confuse what's good for one library with what's good for another is to be intellectually lazy or socially irresponsible. Many factors come into play. What's adequate for one first-rate library may not be adequate for another. For years I watched with considerable concern some undergraduate libraries dutifully acquiring titles listed in the *Lamont Library Catalog*, thinking perhaps that if they had everything Lamont had, they too would serve their students well. But Lamont has Widener next door, not to mention Houghton and the dozens of other library facilities in the Harvard University system. Often what's unwanted by one library may well be treasured by another. A collection of third-rate novels adds little to the quality of a suburban public library, but the same collection may fit in well in a special collection which makes a large research library great.

And speaking of large libraries, perhaps we should remind ourselves once more that size is not synonymous with excellence, maybe not even eminence. Quantity does not assure quality, although neither does it preclude it. The nineteenth-century pipe dream of acquiring every worthwhile book has long evaporated in the puff of twentieth-century information explosion. True, very large collections of books are necessary to scholars, whether the books are used frequently or not, and indeed many will not be used frequently. And libraries, at least some libraries, are repositories as well as circulating entities and as such need to be both diverse and deep. But just as no newspaper can really print "all the news that's fit to print," neither can any library collect all the books that seem desirable to collect. Indeed, to seek and even to acquire everything is not to have the best. Harvard University Library prizes the preeminence of its collections by their excellence, not their size. Its book collection is always selective. And a well-coordinated smaller collection is indeed much more useful than a topsy-turvy mass of unguided growth. Acquisition requires skill, and book selection requires judgment. Collection development policy statement is a guidepost, not a crutch. A good collection development policy statement does not guarantee a good library collection, but it helps. To decide what to select and what not to select requires the courage to choose—to choose what to have, and what not to have, however tempting. And a sound collection development policy provides both a rationale and a reminder, lest vanity or timidity should lead us astray.

## Allocation of Funds in Support of Collection Development in Public Libraries\*

ANN BENDER  
Branch Librarian  
Walt Whitman Branch  
Brooklyn Public Library

*A discussion of allocation of funds in support of collection development in public libraries based primarily on interviews held with administrative officers of the Brooklyn Public Library and Tompkins County (New York) Public Library is presented. The author concludes that no materials budget, however strong, can be used effectively without quality service at the level where the individual librarian brings material and patron together.*

**T**HIS PAPER is concerned with the allocation of available funds, rather than collection development, in public libraries serving populations of over 50,000. Libraries serving less than 50,000 are excluded because their budgets are generally too small to include allocations for collection development and they must concentrate on the minimum amount of books and materials necessary to stock the library.

Public library collections are divided into adult and juvenile materials, with juvenile materials defined as those for children to age thirteen or fourteen. Present public library standards suggest an allocation of two-thirds of the materials budget for adult and one-third for juvenile.<sup>1</sup>

In some cases a further distinction is made for "young teen" or "young adult" materials, with the standards recommending that "at least 5 percent of the annual additions should be materials of specific interest to young adults."<sup>2</sup> When staffing is available, young adult materials may be housed separately, with an identifying symbol, and serviced by a "young adult" librarian. When staffing is less adequate, this

\*Edited version of a paper presented at the Preconference Institute on Collection Development, sponsored by the Collection Development Committee, Resources Section, RTSD, Detroit, June 1977.

category may be subsumed under either the adult or juvenile collection.

Some libraries budget separately for reference books and materials. Because of increasing loss rates in some areas, some public libraries have put some expensive books in reference, even though they really may be of a circulating nature. Likewise the periodicals which are likely to be stolen because of their popularity may be made reference, even though interest may be in current issues only.

Many of the larger public libraries are organized into a main, or central, library and branches, or system subdivisions. The central library may have a collection which supports research but which also serves as the general reading collection for the whole geographic area that it serves. For example, the Grand Army Plaza central library has become for some a symbol of the Brooklyn library. Sometimes branches are devoted to special collections. Again, in Brooklyn, a special business library is located in the financial-government area, although it is housed in the same building as the neighborhood Brooklyn Heights Branch. Under a special gift, the Donnell Library Center of the New York Public Library provides special collections and services for young adults.

The number and location of branches are based on policy decisions. Brooklyn's policy is to have a branch no farther than a half mile from any point so that everyone can theoretically reach a branch on foot. But economics and politics can influence policy. If a community is organized and its political leadership is committed to public library service, it may be easier to get the requisite capital funding for a branch. Sometimes history is important. A neighborhood branch may be maintained long after the neighborhood has declined in population. Traditional patterns of neighborhood organization may mean continuing an already existing branch, sometimes to the detriment of opening new branches where the population has moved, unless such population becomes vocal and politically visible.

Materials in public libraries can be just as diversified in form as in academic libraries. The ALA *Minimum Standards* lists them as books, periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, pictures, films, slides, filmstrips, music scores, maps, recordings, and various forms of microreproduction.<sup>3</sup> One may also wish to distinguish documents; federal, state, local, and international. With regard to format one must consider whether the material is available in paperback, hardcover, or both, and which to order and when to bind. For periodicals the question may be whether to bind or order in microform. The availability of equipment from separate budgets enters into consideration here. Whether an item is a monograph or a serial may have implications for purchase and certainly for technical processing treatment. Monographs issued serially may be purchased from separate standing order funds, e.g., the various almanacs purchased for reference.

While public libraries may subscribe to Greenaway Plan agreements

with various publishers or on-approval plans from others, blanket ordering is less common than in a university or college setting. Some libraries prefer to order multiple copies through rental plans like the McNaughton Plan or in paperback to avoid filling shelves permanently with multiple copies of best-sellers or other ephemera.

An important aspect of collection development in public libraries is the selection agent. By and large the selectors in public libraries are generalists. Very little selection is done by subject specialists except in subject divisions of very large or central libraries. Selection is usually divided between adult and children's librarians, but some public libraries have found it beneficial to broaden the concept of generalist to include service to all ages.

The book selection process may vary from highly centralized to greatly dispersed. Sometimes the center of power remains with the specialists in adult or children's services in central libraries or larger libraries that service other smaller libraries. In some systems, branches can only select books after they have been selected for the central library.

At Brooklyn, all professional staff share in book selection as a matter of policy. In the golden era of the late 1960s, each book for adults or young adults was reviewed in writing and sometimes orally as well at a central meeting for book selection chaired by the adult services coordinator. The meeting was also attended by the assistant coordinator for young adult services and the Materials Selection Committee, which reviewed the ordering, suggested items for heavier ordering, and called attention to significant titles.

Lists were sent to the branches prior to those meetings to be initialed for preferences by the branch heads and the entire professional staff. Each librarian attended the central meetings in turn. The person whose turn it was to attend the meeting each week had complete responsibility for the titles chosen for his agency that week and reported back to the branch at a book meeting held at the branch level after the weekly central meeting. Later the central book meetings were dispensed with as the library started ordering through Brodart and Bookazine Companies in an attempt to get more books on the shelves faster. Central book order days were still scheduled but without a meeting for oral reviews. Librarians came individually to order the miscellaneous books received on Greenaway Plan or on approval and individual new editions, paperbacks, pamphlets, etc. For the most part these titles lacked written reviews and were ordered on the basis of information on the jackets, knowledge of the author, or inspection of the books.

Under Brodart and Bookazine each branch ordered adult and young adult books in the manner determined by its head. In some agencies all librarians were expected to read reviews and submit suggestions to the branch librarian. In other instances book order lists were divided up among the professional staff. Each librarian searched

reviews in his section, then all came together at a book order meeting or meetings to discuss the monthly order. The first assistant to the branch librarian often had the final authority to coordinate what was suggested for purchase at the meetings with the budget allotments.

In Brooklyn, children's books still receive individual reviews. In addition the Book Evaluation Committee composed of the most experienced and or capable children's librarians go over the reviews and suggest another review where advisable. The assistant children's coordinator and the children's coordinator also see the reviews.<sup>4</sup>

In the Tompkins County Public Library, the assistant director is responsible for the book collection, with input from general staff meetings, regular professional meetings, and regular reference meetings as to what is needed particularly in regard to big sets. All librarians share the reviewing media and are expected to initial choices in their area of competence.<sup>5</sup>

Probably the most heavily used book reviewing sources in public libraries are *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal*, *Publishers' Weekly*, *New York Times Book Review*, *ALA Booklist*, and *Kirkus*.<sup>6</sup> The selection aids for periodicals, audiovisual materials, and other forms have been discussed in Katz and Ford.<sup>7</sup>

The reviewing sources used in public libraries are, as a whole, less scholarly and less specialized than those available to selectors in academic libraries. In addition, it is essential for public librarians to read the newspapers. Often ads, notes of forthcoming author appearances on television, or notices of books or plays to be made into movies provide practical aids for selection of material for popular appeal. Librarians may feel obliged to supply materials in spite of poor critical reviews because of large anticipated demand.<sup>8</sup> While connoisseurs of books and culture may be against this in principle, it is difficult for anyone who works in a public library to be against it in practice.

Some public libraries have written selection policies as advocated by the American Library Association.<sup>9</sup> Many libraries do not. Some libraries have policies that are inadequate or tacitly ignored. Some librarians, e.g., Eric Moon, are skeptical as to how one applies a written policy in practice.<sup>10</sup>

The selection policy issued by the Brooklyn Public Library in 1969, discussed widely in library literature, encompassed adult and juvenile selection, took into consideration newly vocal inner city residents, and included all types of materials, not just books.<sup>11</sup> But as I recall being on the spot, we librarians were not so much influenced by what was written down as by the whole ethos of our communities and the professional milieu in which we worked. Community concerns, sometimes with political implications, formed our mandate. Book selection policies may be, however, a definite asset, even a crucial necessity, in preventing or ameliorating attempts at censorship by some group within the community. If the policies provide a procedure for the re-

view of materials, they can provide a safeguard against the zealots of whatever persuasion who may wish to remove certain materials from the collection.

Henri Veit, assistant division chief of the History Division at Brooklyn's Central Library, shared with me his collection development views. In an academic, special, or subject library one can state confidently that one will collect in a certain area of existing strength, that one will build up an area of present deficiency, or that another area will not be covered at all for a variety of reasons. In most public library situations, however, particularly in branches, the library must be so responsive to the immediate needs of its public, needs which are often fast changing, that collection development statements may become obsolete as soon as they are written. And sometimes the needs of the public are not to be met by the addition of materials to the collection but through the better organization and communication of information, as in information and referral networks or computer-based information networks.

In any case the preparation of a collection development policy involves more than the mere writing down of general principles. It involves:

1. Knowing the community and its needs, actual and projected.
2. Careful analysis of the existing collection and determining its strengths and weaknesses.
3. Establishing a weeding policy.
4. An estimate of possible or likely fluctuations in the materials budget.
5. Considering the rates of inflation in books and materials prices.
6. Considering which items may be deemed part of a core collection, which must be replaced continually, and how much to set aside for new materials.
7. Considering what and how much to purchase in nonprint forms and what the relationship of such materials will be to the existing collection.
8. Considering factors of space, rate of deterioration of materials, optimum size of the collection and its elements, loss rates, etc.
9. Knowing what other library resources are available in the community either through other agencies in the same public system or in private, academic, and nonacademic libraries in the same community and assessing the degree to which cooperation in collection development is possible.

A cursory survey of the budget statistics for some fifty-six public libraries for the period 1974-1976 suggests a range of 9 to 11 percent of public library budgets being spent on materials.<sup>12</sup>

In the Brooklyn Public Library, allocations are made by a committee consisting of the deputy director; the chief, public services; the adult services coordinator; the children's services coordinator; and the chief and the assistant chief, branch administration.<sup>13</sup> The deciding factor

in their consideration for the Central Library is the information provided by the chief of the Central Library as to how active the divisions have been over the past few years as compared to the funds they have received. If one division has received less, it may receive more, or vice versa. Records of figures are kept for six or seven years.

For branch allocations various factors enter into consideration:

1. Circulation.
2. The knowledge of the adult and children's coordinators about the branches based on their visits to the branches.
3. The views of the branch librarian.
4. Noticeable changes in the size and composition of a community.
5. The physical state of the collections. A statistical expert may be consulted for advice on the amount of inventory loss at each agency.
6. Special activities, past and forthcoming.

In the Brooklyn Public Library there is a guideline that 70 percent of the materials budget should go for replacements (including retrospective purchasing) and 30 percent for new titles, but the degree to which this guideline is adhered to in all branches is not known. Audiovisual materials were to have 10 percent of the materials budget, but losses have been so great that the figure has been cut to 5 percent. Funds for expenses like binding, plastic covers for periodicals, pamphlets, micromaterials, standing orders, on approvals are taken off the top of the funds before allocations are made to the branches and the central library. The administration has smaller funds for unanticipated needs. Special programs, e.g., Spanish, Reading Improvement, Homebound, Senior Citizens Office, Job Information Center, Learn Your Way, etc., get small sums for materials.

In Tompkins County for January–December 1977, books were allocated \$35,943, audiovisual materials \$6,600, periodicals \$4,050, and pamphlets \$814. The library conducted two extensive surveys of library use that seemed to indicate that "people do not read what librarians think they read."<sup>14</sup> The circulation of audiovisual items was particularly heavy.

So we see that the ALA *Minimum Standards* may be used as a guideline for collection development in public libraries, but there may be deviations. It is difficult to formulate a model of allocation of funds for collection development because of the variety of considerations, sometimes political, which are involved. Because of the differences in practices in public libraries, predictability is not possible. In the last analysis it is the flexibility and commitment that librarians have that is crucial. For they have the most impact on the use to which materials will be put. No materials budget, however strong, can be used effectively without quality service at the level where the individual librarian brings material and patron together.

## References

1. Public Library Association, Standards Committee, *Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems, 1966* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1967), p.42.
2. *Ibid.*, p.42.
3. *Ibid.*, p.36.
4. Interviews with Marguerite Dodson, children's coordinator; Larry Brandwein, deputy director; Shirley Schickler, assistant superintendent of branches; Roy Miller, adult services coordinator; Carol Wadsworth, member of the Materials Selection Committee; Dorothy Eckhaus, chairperson of the Reference Committee; Henri Veit, assistant chief, History Division; and Elizabeth White, Brooklyn historian; all of the Brooklyn Public Library, April 1, 1977.
5. Interview with Lajos Mezgar, director of the Tompkins County (New York) Public Library, March 25, 1977.
6. For a discussion of these journals consult Mike Phipps, *LJ vs...vs. Choice*, a sixty-minute tape of his speech at the Collection Building Conference of the School of Library Science of the University of Iowa, March 15, 1977.
7. Bill Katz, *Magazine Selection: How to Build a Community Oriented Collection* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1971), p.64–69; and Steven Ford, *The Acquisition of Library Materials* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1973), p.131–44.
8. Lolly Eggers advocates consideration of popular demand and user satisfaction above all. Consult *Collection Building: Problems and Possibilities*, a seventy-minute tape of her speech at the Collection Building Conference of the School of Library Science of the University of Iowa, March 15, 1977.
9. American Library Association, "How Does Your Public Library Stack Up?" (Pamphlet, undated). See also selection statements in Mary D. Carter, et. al., *Building Library Collections*, 4th ed. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1971), appendixes.
10. Eric Moon, ed., *Book Selection and Censorship in the Sixties* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1969), p.4–5.
11. Dorothy Nyren, ed., *Community Service: Innovations in Outreach at the Brooklyn Public Library* (Public Library Reporter, no. 16 [Chicago: American Library Association, 1970]).
12. American Library Association. Library Administration Division. Library Organization and Management Section. Budgeting, Accounting and Costs Committee, "Library Budget Documents from County or Public Libraries and State Libraries for the Budget Years 1974, 1975, and 1976" (Chicago: American Library Association Headquarters Library, 1976). Available on ILL.
13. Interview with Larry Brandwein, deputy director of the Brooklyn Public Library, April 1, 1977.
14. Interview with Lajos Mezger, director of the Tompkins County Public Library, March 25, 1977.