INFO 665
Fall 2008
Collection Analysis of the Bozeman Public Library

Carmen Gottwald-Clark
Stacey Music
Charisse Rhodes
Charles Wood
The Bozeman Public Library is located in the vibrant downtown district of Bozeman, Montana. It serves the people of Bozeman as well as Gallatin County, an area of 2,532 square miles. Due to rapid growth in the last ten years, the library now serves 47,805 people. (Harvester Census data)

Large population growth and a small space made building a new library a necessity. Two years ago, the Bozeman Public Library more than doubled its space by moving into its new building at 626 E. Main Street. The new building is a 53,000 square foot state of the art “green building”. It has been awarded the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. Many features have been incorporated to make it as environmentally friendly as possible.

The library strives to provide the community with free, open and equal access to general information as well as resources to promote lifelong learning and training to find and use information effectively.

Mission Statement

The Bozeman Public Library provides the community with free, open and equal access to general information on a broad array of topics; resources to promote personal growth and lifelong learning; popular materials to meet cultural and recreational needs; and the training to find, evaluate and use information effectively. (www.bozemanlibrary.org)

Along with the Mission Statement the library has an ongoing activities list, which includes the following objectives:
- Offer weekly story time programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Incorporate emergent literacy skills and information into all story times.
- Participate in the “One Book Montana” project.
Collection Analysis

- Plan and promote a summer reading program for all ages: children, young adult and adult.
- Provide book lists, pathfinders, and book displays of popular, topical, or new books.
- Plan special programs and activities for yearly celebrations, such as Children’s Book Week, National Library Week, Banned Books Week, Teen Read Week, and other annual events.
- Participate in outreach activities, such as Catapoloosa, to promote library services.
- Continue cooperation with Montana Center for International Visitors (MCIV) in resumption of monthly International Speaker series and Great Decisions foreign policy discussion group.

The library’s service community includes the residents of Bozeman as well as the residents of Gallatin County and all of the students enrolled at Montana State University. According to the University, that number was 12,338 for the year 2006. (www.montana.edu)

The library currently has 22,627 individual borrowers (FY 2006) according to the Collection Management Policy. In Bozeman 94.3% of persons 25 years or older have graduated High School and 49.5% have a Bachelor’s degree or higher.

The Bozeman Public Library offers a wide variety of materials for patrons of all ages from preschool through adult. The collection contains a total of 125,515 physical items as well as 235 periodicals (including newspapers). The material comes in various formats: monographs, videos, DVDs, books-on-CD, books-on-tape, music CDs, maps and online databases. The library also offers Internet access to its patrons and visitors.

For the Collection Mapping we have chosen Philosophy and related disciplines (Dewey Classification: 100s) and Religion (Dewey Classification: 200s). Our special emphasis collection is cookbooks.

The Philosophy collection is currently at a minimal level with continued improvement intended to bring the collection up to basic level as titles become available. Coverage of major individual
philosophers is found in the 800s in the *Great Books of the World* series. Major branches of philosophy that are included are:

- Metaphysics
- Epistemology
- Ethics
- Political Philosophy
- Aesthetics
- Logic
- Philosophy of Mind
- Philosophy of Language

The subject area of Religion includes materials on world religions, sects and mythology. Materials are selected to provide a balanced coverage of all faiths. To enrich this area, items have been purchased in reference, videos and magazines. The adult as well as the children’s collection are at basic levels. This is another area where the library is planning on building the collection up as titles become available. Several titles on *Bible* reference and non-Christian religions have recently been added to the reference collection.

Even though the cookbook collection (Dewey Classification: 641.5) has been weeded recently, it is still at an extensive level due to generous donation from the public. The children’s collection is at a minimal level.

The total collection at Bozeman Public Library includes 125,515 items. Since the library serves 47,805 people in Bozeman and Gallatin County, this means that the library has 2.63 items per person. (see Appendix A) By comparison, the Cedar Park Public Library has a service population of 45,360 and a collection totaling 87,302 items. This works out to only 1.92 items per person. (see Appendix B) Cedar Park also has a similar mission statement to the Bozeman Public Library’s:
The Cedar Park Public Library promotes literacy and encourages lifelong learning for all members of the community by providing educational, informational, cultural and recreational resources (Cedar Park Public Library, Mission).

Each of the subject areas we chose for collection mapping, including the special emphasis subject are at a minimal level of development, but as “the Library's collection represents the diverse interests and viewpoints of the clientele it serves” (Bozeman Public Library, 2006, p.24), this is to be expected. Their levels of development are described in the Collection Management Policy as:

- **Out of scope:** library does not collect in this area.
- **Minimal:** have a few good items.
- **Basic:** have an up-to-date collection that will introduce readers to the subject and indicate the varieties of information available elsewhere.
- **Study:** have a collection adequate to support undergraduate instruction and sustained independent study. Includes material at all appropriate reading levels.
- **Research:** includes all the major published source material required for dissertation research.

(Bozeman Public Library, 2006, p.29-30)

Currently, Bozeman Public Library is following a strategic plan that is responding to several service responses, “General Information; Lifelong Learning; Current Topics and Titles; and Information Literacy” (Bozeman Public Library, p.22). Lifelong learning does include, “a variety of topics including…hobbies and crafts” (Bozeman Public Library, p. 23) which could include cookbooks, our chosen special emphasis subject. The ReVision Committee that chose these service responses identified the following community needs, “access to affordable education, open and timely
access to government information, affordable cultural and recreational activities for youth, the preservation of our history and sense of place, the need for a friendly, tolerant and civil community, and varied and better paying jobs and affordable housing” (Bozeman Public Library, 1999).

Previously, in 1992, the Bozeman Public Library’s mission and vision statements “listed its key library roles as: popular materials and the collection; reference service; and young reader development” (Bozeman Public Library).

The Philosophy section at the Bozeman Public Library contains 1,953 items or .04 items per person. (see Appendix A) This section is currently at a minimal level, however, “improvement to basic level is continuing in Logic, Ethics, and Philosophy as titles become available” (Bozeman Public Library, 2006, p.30). Cedar Park’s Philosophy section only includes 48 items, or .001 items per person. (see Appendix B) According to S. Whited, the Technical Services Librarian at Cedar Park, “[w]e also have a subscription to the TexShare databases, so many times when we don't own scholarly books (like philosophy books) then we will refer them to EBSCO or Gale or NetLibrary” (personal communication, November 14, 2008). The Bozeman Public Library has “an informal cooperative collection agreement with Montana State University Libraries: Bozeman Public Library purchases popular fiction and children’s materials; MSU does not. MSU purchases research and technical items; BPL does not” (Bozeman Public Library, p.25). Even so, their Philosophy section is much stronger than Cedar Park’s.

The Religion section at BPL contains 2,426 items, or .05 items per person. (see Appendix A) While this is still a minimal level, “plans are to continue to build the 200s by acquiring new titles as they are published” (Bozeman Public Library, 2006, p.30). Cedar Park’s Religion section contains 1354 items, or .03 items per person (see Appendix B) and Whited states, “[w]e live in a very conservative county, so religion is a big deal here” (personal communication, November 14, 2008). So,
the Bozeman Public library’s Religion section is slightly stronger than Cedar Park’s even though Cedar Park is in a more religious area.

The cookbooks section at BPL contains 1,562 items, or .03 items per person. (see Appendix A) Cedar Park’s cookbooks section contains 892 items, or .02 items per person. (see Appendix B) Whited says of this section at Cedar Park, “much of our patron population is comprised of stay-at-home moms and older women, so cooking is also a popular subject” (2008). BPL’s cookbook section contains almost twice as many items as Cedar Park’s cookbook section. As mentioned earlier, this is largely due to public donations of cookbooks to the Bozeman Public Library and this section has been weeded recently.

Although primarily focused on school library media collections, David Loertscher, in his article “Collection Mapping: An Evaluation Strategy for Collection Development”, recommends this type of segmentation and quantification for the different subject areas of a library: “the idea is to divide a collection into a number of small but manageable segments…Each of these segments can be built, weeded, or maintained as curriculum needs dictate” (Loertscher, 1986, p.11). If we substitute community for curriculum, we can easily translate this method to a public library. Loertscher proposes two scales, one for general emphasis areas and one for special emphasis areas. For the general emphasis areas the scale is as follows: .30 items per person is fair, .60 is good, 1.20 is superior and 7.0 is exemplary. Our two general emphasis subjects, Philosophy and Religion fall well below fair at .04 and .05 items per person, respectively. For the special emphasis areas the scale is as follows: .10 items per person is fair, .15 is good, .25 is superior, and 2.0 is exemplary. Our special emphasis subject, cookbooks, falls below fair at .03 items per person. (see Appendix A) For comparison, the same subject areas for Cedar Park Public Library also fall below his scale; Philosophy at .001 items, Religion at .03 items, and cookbooks at .02 items. (see Appendix B) This comparison is useful to a certain
extent, because it shows that Bozeman Public Library’s collection is a little stronger than Cedar Park’s collection, at least in these areas. However, comparative data must be used with caution as Evans and Saponaro state, “they [comparative data] can be misleading…What, for example, does library A gain by comparing itself with library B, except perhaps, an inferiority complex – or a delusion as to its own status?” (Evans & Saponaro, 2005, p. 316). We can assume that these two libraries are similar due to service population and similar mission statements, but “one should be cautious in interpreting the significance of the findings” (Evans & Saponaro, p. 316). Good point!

In his example, Loertscher uses a school media library with total collection numbering only 9,818 items, which is significantly smaller than the Bozeman Public Library’s 125,515 items. (Loertscher, p.13) That the number of items per person for our subject areas and special emphasis area fall below his scale is unsurprising due to the difference in the size of the collections and the service populations. While most subject areas at the Bozeman Public Library are at a minimal or basic level, according to their scale, the Collection Management Policy states of their future acquisition levels, “Bozeman Public Library is committed to maintaining a balanced Basic level collection in all areas while remaining responsive to new trends” (Bozeman Public Library, 2006, p.34). Since it is the case that the Bozeman Public Library seems happy with this level of service and that the comparison library’s numbers are similar, it may be beneficial to modify Loertscher’s method even further by adjusting the scales. Due to the larger collection and the more diversified goals, .03 items per person can probably be considered fair or slightly above fair. If you look at Loertscher’s example in the general emphasis areas, US history has 234 items and is considered fair at .4208 items per student. (Loertscher, p.13) Taking into account the total collection of 9,818 items, US history accounts for .4% of the collection; the Philosophy section at Bozeman is 1953 items which works out to .6% of the collection. This modification of the scale fits into what Evans and Saponaro suggest for collection
evaluation: “When we serve as consultants on collection evaluation projects, we employ the following steps…1. Develop an individual set of criteria for quality and value” (Evans & Saponaro, 2005, p. 334). So, we can use Loertscher’s method and compare the data to other libraries, but ultimately it comes down to the library staff’s interpretation of the results as long as the evaluation “took place in the context of the library’s goals, objectives and community needs” (Evans & Saponaro, p. 334).

Excellent critique of the Loertscher methodology.
References


Montana State Library Commission, *Collection Development Policy*, 2005, (retrieved 11/14/08 from [http://msl.state.mt.us/About_MSL/CollectionDevelopment05.htm](http://msl.state.mt.us/About_MSL/CollectionDevelopment05.htm))


NCES Global Locator, (retrieved 11/14/08 from [http://nces.ed.gov/globallocator](http://nces.ed.gov/globallocator))


Very good reference list.
Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bozeman Public Library</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population of Legal Service Area:</th>
<th>47,805</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Collection:</td>
<td>125,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Collection Items per Patron:</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Emphasis Areas:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Emphasis Area</th>
<th># of Items</th>
<th># of Items per Patron</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>2426</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Special Emphasis Areas:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Emphasis Area</th>
<th># of Items</th>
<th># of Items per Patron</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cookbooks</td>
<td>1562</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 5941
Per Montana State Library Commission Collection Development Policy, all Dewey Class 100's (Philosophy), 200's (Religion), and 600's (which includes Cookbooks) will be maintained at a minimal level (each class has its exceptions). Minimal is defined as a subject area which is out of scope for the State Library; few selections are made beyond basic reference works.

Total Collection Items per Patron = 2.63
Appendix B

Library Name: Cedar Park Public Library

Population of Legal Service Area: 45360

Total Collection: 87302

Total Collection Items per Patron: 1.92

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Emphasis Areas:</th>
<th># of Items</th>
<th># of Items per Patron</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Philosophy</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Religion</td>
<td>1354</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special Emphasis Areas:

3. Cookbooks 892 .02

TOTAL: 2294

Cedar Park Public Library Collection Map
Per Texas Public Library Standards Task Force, there are three levels of service: basic, enhanced, and comprehensive. All basic service populations contain 10,000 items or 1.5 items per capita (whichever is greater). All enhanced service populations contain 12,500 items or 3 items per capita (whichever is greater). All comprehensive service populations contain 15,000 items or 4 items per capita (whichever is greater).
Summary of Group Activities

This project came together in a straightforward manner. The paper was a result of efficient group decisions and considerable individual efforts. We discussed what needed to be done and then divided up the sections of the paper. Carmen and Charisse led the discussions early on because of their work ethic, and Stacey and Charles contributed later as their schedules allowed. Charles compiled the early discussions for the Collection Development plan and we were off to a good start. We used a wiki to organize the data that was needed for analysis and as a place to list the references for the bibliography.

Carmen led the way by volunteering the Bozeman Public Library as our main focus, and was our person on the ground who talked to librarians to get the numbers of the collections we chose to analyze. She wrote the first 4 pages which covered the background information on Bozeman Public Library and the 3 collections we analyzed.

Charisse researched statistical information for both Bozeman and Cedar Park Public Libraries using the web and by contacting librarians by email. She then compiled the various ratios into tables and created the collection maps for both libraries.

Stacey had the large responsibility of analyzing the collections as they related to the mission of the library. She also compared the two libraries through statistical analysis, writing pages 5-9.

Charles contributed to the collection analysis discussion when Stacey asked for some additional ideas. He wrote this summary of group activities when everything else was done.

Everybody contributed to the discussions and worked together in a way that made this a good experience for all. Everyone helped proofread the project when it was done, by giving each other good suggestions to make the paper better. I am sure that we all learned about collection analysis through
this exercise. It was interesting to use real libraries for this project. We are all one step closer to becoming librarians after completing this important class.

Excellent work! The introductory information about the Bozeman Public Library, its collection development plan, and its user community is extremely good. The choice of subject areas to analyze is good, and your selection of a comparison library very appropriate. The analysis of the collections is also very good, and the critique of the Loertscher methodology is especially good. The collection maps are great and give a wonderful ‘snapshot’ of a library collection that is poised to grow. And, I loved the Bozeman graphic!

A