

# The Southwest Texas State College Library Considers "Books for College Libraries"

By DOROTHY P. SNOWDEN

Before a copy of *Books for College Libraries*<sup>1</sup> was received by the Southwest Texas State College Library, reference librarians had searched library literature for reports of library holdings compared with what had become known as "the California list."

It was with interest and enthusiasm that the reference department in November 1967 began checking the SWTSC public catalog against the 53,400 titles on the 897 pages of titles in *Books for College Libraries*.

By the time this task was completed in May, 1968, no comparison between a college library collection outside of California colleges and *BCL* had been nationally published.

The SWTSC Library was found to contain an overall 38.3 per cent of all titles in *Books for College Libraries*. This number, of course, was not the only concern of Mel Jordan, Assistant to the Librarian, who is responsible for the SWTSC book collection. Mr. Jordan; Mrs. Betty Phillips, the Reader Service Librarian, and the Head of the Reference Department began an assessment of strength and weaknesses of the library collection in support of graduate majors offered at SWTSC as indicated by related subject areas in *Books for College Libraries*. The following percentages are the basis for the study:

SWTSC Graduate Major	Percentage of Books in Related Library of Congress Classifications Found in SWTSC Library
Education	62.4
Biology	50.8
Chemistry	30.5
Health and Physical Education	44.2
History	40.7 (Gen. History)
Industrial Arts	33.08
Mathematics	46.8
Special Education	54.2
Agricultural Education	3.13
Music Education	42.8

Overall percentage of SWTSC holdings in support of Master's Degree programs: 45.1 per cent.

The *BCL* project involving five librarians and five student assistants predictably raised questions as well as supplied statistics. Among the most persistent questions are:

- 1) Was the personnel and time involved wisely expended?
- 2) Is *Books for College Libraries* a valid standard for comparing college holdings with a current list?
- 3) Will the 1968-1969 SWTSC Library book budget permit a significant strengthening of subject areas directly relating to curriculum support?

Some immediate observations were:

- 1) The library's book selection committee had a realistic appraisal of
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<sup>2</sup>*Books for College Libraries*, Chicago: American Library Association, 1967.

people in libraries. Generally speaking, libraries want people with a broad educational background who can be trained on the job.<sup>6</sup> A discussion group at a recent Texas conference on library education<sup>7</sup> tended to emphasize this view. In this group, which included administrators of public, academic, and government libraries throughout Texas, there were few who said they would employ a graduate of a technician program. They preferred the graduates of four-year liberal arts colleges.

Library administrators have shown little inclination to distinguish between even basic clerical and professional library work. How would they use the technicians trained for the middle ground between? One fears that many of these technicians would be advanced to positions for which they lack the proper education—particularly when they could be hired for less salary than a professional librarian. This would most likely occur in public and special libraries. Some professional positions in Japan are already being filled by junior college-educated technicians, and in the United States some technicians have already advanced to important positions in special libraries.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Sass, Samuel. "Library Technician: A Caution." *Special Libraries*, LIX (July-August, 1968), 457.

### Conclusion

Let it again be stated that there is a definite need for a middle class of library positions to free the librarian for more professional responsibilities. However, a library technician with two years of vocational education and a limited background of general education is not to be preferred to a broadly-educated college graduate trained on the job. How much more valuable would the latter be to an institution for which knowledge is the very *raison d'être*.

<sup>6</sup>Asheim, Lester. "Manpower—A Call for Action." *Library Journal*, XCII (May 1, 1967), 1795-97.

<sup>7</sup>Graduate School of Library Science, The University of Texas. Conference on Undergraduate Library Science Programs (Austin, 1968).

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SWTSC Library collection. Library holdings in specific areas of curriculum support revealed few surprises to the librarians responsible for book selection.

- 2) Library support of the masters degree programs, if 45.1 per cent is indicated, is not strong enough and this will prove a major book selection concern in the next few years.
- 3) *Books for College Libraries* and *Choice* lists were valuable tools for interpretation of library holdings to the library committees involved in the 1968 National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education Evaluation (or the "Self-Study" Committees).
- 4) Communication between professors, library administrators and reference librarians became more relevant and more inclusive through shared concern with specific subject area collections.
- 5) Results of the *BCL* project served as an avenue of positive communication between library administration and members of the Faculty Library Committee.
- 6) Additional areas of reference service were stimulated:
  - a) Releasing library holdings in curriculum-related subject areas to requesting faculty members;
  - b) Preparation of bibliographies in support of existing courses;
  - c) Assisting a greater number of professors in book selection;
  - d) Preparation of bibliographies in support of courses soon to be offered or presently in the planning stage.