Collection Development in Joint-Use Libraries:

Research Methodology

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Introduction

A large portion of research in the area of joint-use libraries is based on existing libraries and the effectiveness of service to the community (Aaron, 1980; Amey, 1987; Lankford, n.d.; Liu, 2008). Ruth White's 1963 study noted that the predominant literature was in opposition to joint-use libraries while more recent studies have found that rural areas without public library facilities benefit from joint-use libraries (Amey, 1987; Bundy, 2002; Liu, 2008).

However there appears to be little research in the area of collection development for joint-use libraries. Collection development surveys are rarely used and seem limited to students in middle, junior high, and high schools (Obert, 1988; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999) while community members are rarely consulted even when establishing a standard public library (Vavrek, 1995). A survey of the community as a collection development strategy is a worthwhile component in establishing a viable joint-use library that is often overlooked in the literature, a fact which this study hopes to overcome.

Research Problem

The aim of this study is to determine the collection needs of a joint-use library at West Desert High School. The school serves students in several communities in mid-Western Utah, and the nearest public library is located in Delta, roughly 90 miles away. The goal of this study is to determine the collection needs of these secluded communities, specifically the needs for a joint-use library to be known as West Desert Community Library.

Research Paradigm

This research study is meant to gather and evaluate subjective responses of the West Desert community in order to provide materials in a joint-use library that meet the needs and wants of

its respective patrons. The study, therefore, is strongly interpretive and constructive in its intent

and execution because it does not seek to impose an exterior theory; instead, this study respects

the unique and specific interests of the West Desert community and seeks to derive a collection

development strategy unique to the West Desert. This interpretive mindset is coupled with an

aim at applied research, since the study attempts to solve the collection development problem via

community responses. This is not to say the study will not attempt to couple patterns and

similarities found in the data with outside theories and principles, but the main source for

designing collection development strategies will be derived from the data and analyzed before

such theories are consulted, rather than using a theoretical basis for analysis.

This entire study is underpinned by an assumption that inductive methods will turn diverse

and rich community input into collection development practices for the West Desert Community

Library located at West Desert High School. While the study proposed is technically a hybrid

study employing both qualitative and quantitative measures, we deem it qualitative in nature

because the majority of the questions and the entirety of the group meeting demonstrate a

particularly qualitative slant in this study's research approach, while the questionnaire employs

only a few closed, easily coded questions.

The questionnaire is based upon a collection development survey developed by Highland

City Library Board (n.d.) in order to get a feel of community desires as to the new city library as

well as a collection development survey conducted in a middle school in order to determine

reading preferences (Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). Those elements that would relate

specifically to collection development and demographics were reviewed and modified to fit the

West Desert Community Library survey. Other elements were added with questions relating to

items such as Internet databases and Inter-Library Loan that may be used to extend the onsite

collection. An area is also included for any concerns not already addressed by the questionnaire

to be submitted if so wished. It should be noted that the survey will result in books and other

informational materials related to questions on author(s), titles, and serials that are of current or

popular interest and collection development strategies will, over time, need to evolve with

further surveys or through periodic weeding of the library.

It is important to note that the interpretive/qualitative nature of this study makes it difficult

to generalize any data analysis to larger groups, or even to other rural communities. However,

since this type of generalization is not the intent of the study, it will not hamper the final analysis

and collection development strategies as applied to the West Desert Community Library.

Qualitative Data Collection & Analysis Procedure

The small population in the West Desert area means a survey of every household is

feasible. A survey will be mailed to each of the area's approximately one hundred households.

All research will take place in the small communities that feed into West Desert High School.

Prior approval from the Tintic School District which oversees West Desert High School will be

obtained before research begins (see Appendix A).

Though small in number, the West Desert community is relatively diverse. Currently, the

main patrons of the library are the nine high school students and their parents. While it is not

widely known that the joint-use library exists it is hoped that this survey will allow the

surrounding community to be more informed and participate in collection development for the

library. Therefore, all ages will be represented, from young children and teens to adults and

senior citizens. Education levels of users will vary based on age and socioeconomic status, with

many adults completing at least some higher education. In addition, the library will serve a large

population of migrant farm workers who speak primarily Spanish with English as a second

language.

Due to the limited size of the West Desert community each household in the area will receive one copy of the questionnaire. Both English (see Appendix B) and Spanish (see Appendix C) language copies of a cover letter and questionnaire will be made available to every household. A local directory will be provided by a citizen of the community and research team member. Individual families will determine which member will answer on behalf of the household. This will use purposive sampling. This method was chosen because the population is so small that it is feasible to contact every household, thus ensuring a highly representative sample.

The questionnaire will be anonymous and will be followed by at least one modified focus group at West Desert High School after the initial survey is conducted. This will allow for full data collection and coding. The modified focus group will be presented as a public meeting and will give residents further input, and allow them to make comments that may not fit into a structured questionnaire. It will also serve a dual purpose as advertising for the library, allowing patrons a chance to visit and being able to become familiar with the location. Data collection from the meeting or meetings will help to solidify concepts according to qualitative grounded theory (Bryman, 2008).

Credibility could be an issue, as many West Desert residents do not currently know that a joint-use library is available. The questionnaire will be the first time many of them hear of the issue. However, the community is very tight-knit and supportive of the high school, which serves as a cultural center for the area. The credibility of the high school and the school district should lend credence to the study.

As mentioned briefly above, this study will use two research instruments, a mailed

questionnaire and at least one modified focus group. The questionnaire will be designed by the research team. The public meeting or focus group will be loosely structured and primarily driven by the public, with limited input by the researcher acting as moderator to bring up concerns that may not be addressed in the course of conversation.

The boundaries of this research are limited to the collection development of the proposed joint-use library. It will only address collection needs and excludes factors like operating hours, facilities, technology, and funding. By narrowly defining the scope of the study, the research team hopes to develop a precise portrait of what the West Desert Community Library collection should contain.

Ethical Considerations

This study will involve the use of human participants, and as such requires special ethical considerations. Ethics approval must be granted by the library's governing body, in this case the school district. Participants must also give consent to have their responses used in the study. In the case of the questionnaire, consent is implied by participation. Those who do not wish to be included in the study can simply not respond. The questionnaire is anonymous and will be returned by mail via return postage paid envelopes or dropped off at the West Desert High School Library, thus ensuring no direct contact with researchers.

At the "public meeting," participants will be asked to review a notice that explains that the meeting is public and by participating they are giving consent for their comments and input to be used. The notice will be made available in both English and Spanish (see Appendix D) and may be read at the beginning of the meeting in an effort to make clear that participation indicates consent. These meetings will also be recorded for study and documentation, which will also be indicated. The fact that these meetings will be similar to other such public meetings should

mitigate the effects of participants knowing they are part of this study. The research team does

acknowledge the point that the community and Tintic School District will be deceived in

believing that they are participating in a public meeting and not a focus group in order to gain the

most natural responses from those in attendance.

Limitations and Significance of Research

This research is limited to the small rural community served by West Desert High School

in Utah. The purpose of the survey and modified focus group(s) are in order to gather

information pertaining to collection development of the joint-use library known as West Desert

Community Library. There is no expectation that the research methods used for this study will

be used outside of this particular community however that is not to say that others may not find

benefit from this study. While there is no great effort to expand the research field in this area it

may help to lessen the gap in the present information on collection development of joint-use

libraries, especially in rural areas.

Appendix A
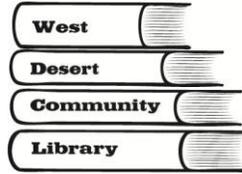
West Desert Community Library
440 Pony Express Rd.
Wendover, UT 84083

Tintic School District
55 East Main St.
Eureka, UT 84628

Tintic School Distric:

In order to serve the communities of the West Desert more fully the West Desert Community Library, a joint-use library currently located at West Desert High School has asked a research team to survey the community as to their thoughts and opinions in order to develop a plan of collection development i.e. books, audio/visual media, and databases. This survey project will come in two parts: an anonymous questionnaire followed by at least one public meeting.

At the public meeting findings of the questionnaire will be shared with the community and then the floor will be opened to discussion on collection development in order to gain more insight as to their opinions on collection development of the West Desert Community Library. As the West Desert Community Library is located on school grounds we are seeking permission to conduct this two part survey from the Tintic School District.

We are especially concerned with the public meetings. It is our hope that we can hold the meetings at the West Desert High School where the community library is located in order to publicize the library. Please let us know of any concerns that you may have as to either portion of the survey and we thank you for your consideration.

West Desert Community Library

Appendix B

West Desert Community Library

The West Desert Community Library is currently located within West Desert High School Library and open to the surrounding community. We are seeking to better accommodate the community by improving upon the current collection. This survey will aid us in finding materials residents are interested in having available at the library. Surveys can be dropped off at West Desert High School Library or returned in the self addressed envelopes. We thank you for your participation. All answers will remain anonymous.

West Desert Community Library Survey

1. What types of materials would you and your family will want to check out or use? Mark all that apply.

Books & Audio Books

__ Adult Fiction

__ Adult Non-Fiction

__ Best Sellers

__ Large Print

__ Religious Fiction

__ Religious Non-Fiction

__ English as Second Language Material

__ Spanish Language Material

__ Animals

__ Biography

__ Business

__ Finance

__ Consumer Information

__ Cooking

__ Arts & Crafts

__ Diet

__ Genealogy

__ Health & Medicine

__ History

__ Language Learning

__ LDS (Mormon)

__ Poetry

__ Self-Help

__ Social Commentary

__ Science

__ Sports

__ Travel

__ Classics

__ Fantasy

__ Mysteries

__ Romance

__ Science Fiction

__ Thriller

__ Westerns

Periodicals

__ Magazines

__ Newspapers

Music

__ Classical

__ Country

__ Folk

__ Gospel

__ Jazz

__ Pop

__ Rock

__ World

__ Soundtrack

DVD

__ Classics (black and white)

__ Current Movies

__ Disney

__ Masterpiece Theater

__ Musicals

__ Animals & Science

__ Cooking

__ Documentary

__ Exercise

__ History

__ LDS (Mormon)

__ Travel

Children & Teens

__ Board Books

__ Picture Books

__ Junior Fiction / Chapter Books & Audio Books

__ Teen Fiction Books & Audio Books

Other_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Who is/are your favorite author(s)?

3. Are there any popular titles or series that you are interested in reading?

4. Would you like to supplement the library collection with other services? Mark all that apply.

__ Inter-Library Loan

__ Language Learning Tutorials

__ Utah State Library's Free Database
(Pioneer)

__ Internet Access

Other _____

5. Is there anything we did not cover that you would like to add?

6. Would you use a community library that was in a school?

No   Maybe   Yes

1   2   3   4   5

7. Please mark the demographic information that applies to you.

Gender: __ Male   __ Female

Age: __ 18-30   __ 31-40   __ 41-50   __ 51-60   __ 61-64   __ 65+

Family:

__ Single No Children or Adult Children

__ Married No Children or Adult Children

__ Single with Young Children

__ Married With Young Children

__ Single with Teens

__ Married with Teens

Appendix C

La Biblioteca de la Comunidad de West Desert

La Biblioteca de la Comunidad de West Desert se encuentra actualmente dentro de la biblioteca de West Desert High School y abierto a la comunidad circundante. Estamos tratando de acomodar mejor a la comunidad mediante la mejora en la captación de corriente. Esta encuesta nos ayudará a descubrir lo que los residentes de los materiales está interesado en disponer en su biblioteca. Las encuestas pueden ser dejadas en la biblioteca de West Desert High School o devueltas en los sobres con su dirección. Le damos las gracias por su participación. Todas las respuestas serán anónimas.

La Biblioteca de la Comunidad de West Desert Encuesta

1. ¿Qué tipos de materiales que usted y su familia tendrá que visita o el uso? Marcar todos los que se aplican.

Libros y Libros de Audio

__ Ficción para Adultos

__ Adultos de No-ficción

__ Los Más Vendidos

__ Religiosas Ficción

__ Religiosos No-ficción

__ Inglés como Segunda Lengua Material

__Material Lengua

__Española

__Animales

__Biografía

__Negocios

__Finanzas

__Información al Consumidor

__Cocina

__Artes y Oficios

__Dieta

__Genealogía

__Salud y Medicina

__Historia

__el Aprendizaje de Idiomas

__SUD (Mormón)

__Poesía

__Esfuerzo Personal

__Comentario Social

__Ciencia

__Deportes

__Viajes

__Clásicos

__Fantasía

__Misterios

__Romántica

__Ciencia Ficción

__Suspense

__Novela del Oeste

Publicaciones Periódicas

__Revistas

__Prensa

Musica

__Clásico

__Country

__Folklórica

__Evangelio

__Jazz

__Pop

__Rock

__Mundo

__Banda Sonora

Cine

__Clásicos (blanco y negro)

__Películas Actuales

__Disney

__Masterpiece Theater

__Musicales

__Animales y la Ciencia

__Cocina

__Documentario

__Ejercicio

__Historia

__SUD (Mormón)

__Viajes

Niños y Adolescentes

__Libros de Cartón

__Libros Ilustrados

__Libros Capítulo y Libros de Audio (Ficción Juvenil)

__Adolescentes Libros de Ficción y Libros de Audio

Otro_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. ¿Quién es /son su autor(s) favorito?

3. ¿Hay títulos populares o serie que está interesado en la lectura?

4. ¿Te gustaría completar la colección de la biblioteca con otros servicios? Marcar todos los que se aplican.

__De Préstamos Entre Bibliotecas   __El Aprendizaje de Idiomas Tutoriales

__Base de datos gratis Biblioteca del Estado
de Utah (Pioneer)   __Acceso a Internet

Otro _____

5. ¿Hay algo que no cubría que le gustaría añadir?

6. ¿Quieres usar una biblioteca de la comunidad que estaba en una escuela?

No   Tal Vez   Sí

1   2   3   4   5

7. Por favor, marque la información demográfica que se aplica a usted.

Género: __ Masculino   __ Femenino

Edad: __ 18-30   __ 31-40   __ 41-50   __51-60   __61-64   __ 65+

Familiar:

__ Casado y no los Niños o Hijos Adultos

__ Solo y no los Niños o Hijos Adultos

__ Casado y con Hijos Pequeños

__ Solteros con Hijos Pequeños

__ Casado y con Adolescentes

__ Individual con los Adolescentes

Appendix D
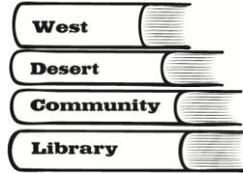
West Desert Community Library Meeting

This meeting is being held in an attempt to determine the best possible collection for the joint-use library located at the West Desert High School and known as the West Desert Community Library. Comments should be limited to collection development only, i.e. the purchase of various fiction and non-fiction books, audio, and video items. Comments and suggestions on Internet databases Inter-Library Loan and other items to supplement the onsite collection are also appreciated. Issues such as operating hours, facilities, technology, and funding will not be discussed at this time. This meeting is public and by participating you are giving consent for your comments and input to be used. The meeting will be recorded for information purposes only.

La Biblioteca de la Comunidad de West Desert Reunión

Esta reunión se celebra en un intento por determinar la mejor colección posible de la biblioteca de uso conjunto situado en West Desert High School conocido como la Biblioteca de la Comunidad de West Desert. Los comentarios deben limitarse al desarrollo de una colección única, es decir, la compra de ficción y varios libros de no ficción, de audio, vídeo y elementos. Comentarios y sugerencias sobre las bases de datos de Internet de préstamos entre bibliotecas y otros elementos para complementar la colección en el sitio también se aprecia. Esta reunión es pública y por los participantes le está dando el consentimiento para sus comentarios y aportaciones que se utilizará. La reunión se registró a título indicativo.

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