

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 349 985

IR 054 164

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 TITLE Rebuilding a Test Collection.
 PUB DATE [90]
 NOTE 28p.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Reports -
 Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation
 Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Cataloging; *College Libraries; Databases; Higher
 Education; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Library
 Circulation; *Library Collection Development;
 Surveys; *Tests

IDENTIFIERS Library Policy; Library Procedures; *Special
 Collections (Library); *Western Oregon State
 College

ABSTRACT

Two librarians at Western Oregon State College, a small liberal arts institution serving 4,000 students, rebuilt the library's test collection in 1990 and, in the process, broadened it beyond its traditional education and psychology emphasis into an interdisciplinary collection. At the outset, the project received generous funding and an annual line item slot for test materials was assured. With input from key education faculty members, the librarians reviewed the existing collection, which was largely the result of random donations from faculty. Faculty from the Departments of Education, Psychology, Physical Education, Criminal Justice, Sociology, Business, English as a Second Language, Special Education, Clinical Child and Youth Work, Teaching Research, and Student Development were surveyed and met together to provide input into new test selection. The librarians developed a collection database to facilitate cataloging, test processing procedures, and new test collection and circulation policies and procedures. The timeframe was less than six months. This report provides background information on the college, detailed descriptions of the rebuilding process, and recommendations for maintaining the collection. Appendices include the faculty survey form; the database format used in cataloging tests; and test collection circulation policies, procedures and forms. (Contains 52 references.) (KRN)

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ED349985

REBUILDING A TEST COLLECTION

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Rebuilding a Test Collection

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REBUILDING A TEST COLLECTION

Evaluation instruments are a frequent adjunct to the fields of education and psychology. This paper recounts the salvaging operation performed on a moribund test collection. Generating faculty involvement in the enterprise, creating a database to provide bibliographic control and efficient collection maintenance, and distributing responsibility for the collection between two library departments were key elements of the procedure. Appointment of a separate line-item in the library budget for test acquisitions, rapid completion of the project (less than six months), and development of a test database were the most notable results of this project.

Rebuilding a Test Collection

INTRODUCTION

In May of 1990, the two authors--as collection development librarians for Education and Psychology¹--were charged with evaluating and upgrading the library's test collection. A sum of \$5000 was earmarked for this purpose.^{2,3} The potential for interdisciplinarity of the collection was explored, and courses that might involve the use of tests were identified, and appropriate faculty contacted. With faculty assistance, outdated tests were weeded and new and/or revised tests were acquired. Policies and procedures for test acquisition, processing, and maintenance were developed, and a test database was constructed to assist with processing and report information. The time frame--less than six months--of the rebuilding process was extremely important in providing continuing faculty support by displaying tangible results in a meaningful and useful period for the faculty.

Unlike many other institutions, where the test collection is underfunded, we were provided a generous materials allocation,* and assurance of an annual line item slot for test materials.⁴ The history of neglect inspired the director to jump-start this reclamation project with a separate infusion of money, as we did not wish to rebuild on a one-time basis. Therefore, a line item

*We were fortunate in having a good collection of test evaluation and review sources; thus, it was not necessary to use the initial funds to purchase supportive material for the collection.

1

Rebuilding a Test Collection

in the budget was established to ensure continued support for the collection (which had not previously enjoyed continuous funding), providing greater fiscal control and freeing any one discipline from being unduly burdened financially. This approach blended well with the reorganization of budget allocations based on discipline rather than format, which was already under way.

BACKGROUND

Western Oregon State College is a small liberal arts college with an average annual enrollment of 4000 students. Like many institutions that evolved from state teacher's colleges and normal schools, it maintained a curriculum library as an integral part of the teaching resources. Responsibility for the curriculum library has often shuttled between the education department and the library, as Clark has noted.⁵

Although the curriculum library at Western remains a responsibility of the Education Department, the test collection came under the aegis of the library in the fall of 1987. The collection of 341 standardized tests (unique titles, not including duplicates), was transferred to the library when the Learning Activities Resource Center (LARC) moved from the education building to its current location in the Instructional Technology Center.

The main body of the collection included tests that were received in a random fashion as gifts from education faculty, with a minuscule number purchased upon faculty request. No

additional tests were added to the collection between 1987 and 1990, and no manuals or policy statements existed to provide guidance for circulation procedures or guidelines for collection development.

The test collection was removed to the library for several reasons, including space and budgetary limitations.⁶ Not only had the collection never been evaluated or inventoried, but many of the tests were either duplicated, outdated, or incomplete.

The only bibliographic control of the collection was a list kept at the reference desk arranged by title, author, call number and acronym. Dewey Decimal numbers had been assigned to the tests by staff in the Learning Activities Resource Center (LARC); however, these tests were never integrated into the library's card catalog.

METHODOLOGY

Our first task was a review of the existing collection. We compiled a list, including information on incomplete sets and duplicate sets of instruments, and then identified and contacted key faculty in education to advise on retention or discard of items in the existing collection.*

*Due to space limitations, we decided not to retain multiple copies of items, previous editions of items, or little-used items. There is no remote storage facility available in our area, so that was not a consideration, either.

We decided to explore expansion of the education/psychology focus of the collection to include instruments whose use was taught by faculty in other departments. By reviewing the college catalog,^{7,8} we identified twenty faculty members who we felt might be interested in teaching about tests in the areas of: Education, Psychology, Physical Education, Criminal Justice, Sociology, Business, English as a Second Language, Special Education, Clinical Child & Youth Work, Teaching Research, and Student Development. We subsequently sent them: (1) a photocopy of our current test holdings list for suggestions for removal or retention; (2) a photocopy of test titles from the subject index of the latest volume (VII) of Test Critiques⁹; (3) a survey^{10,11} to elicit their specific needs for test materials (see Appendix I); and (4) a bibliography of library holdings on the topic of tests and testing.

While waiting for faculty members to respond to the questionnaire, we compiled a bibliography of all books held by the library relating to tests. This list was distributed to the participating faculty. We then invited all faculty who planned to use and expressed interest in the test collection to attend a meeting held in July to discuss new acquisitions, collecting levels, and collection access.¹² One of the critical outcomes of

this meeting was the decision to order specimen sets when available,¹³⁻¹⁶ which enhanced the buying power of the allotted funds.*

Following this meeting, we reviewed faculty responses to the Survey Questionnaire and faculty recommendations for retention or deletion that were noted on copies of the current holdings list. Based on faculty recommendations, we discarded approximately 85% of the tests which were either dated, irrelevant, or incomplete.

By the latter part of July, a list of items to be purchased was compiled, comprising new titles and later editions of items already in the collection. Test publishers were identified through use of Tests,¹⁷ and current catalogs with price and availability information were requested, as Simmons recommends.¹⁸ These catalogs were retained for future use. Prices were added to the list of items requested for purchase, and the list was then evaluated, establishing criteria for purchase and priority of items to be ordered, as suggested by McGiverin.¹⁹

Criteria for purchase were as follows:

- 1) Items requested by more than one faculty member in two or more departments.²⁰

*One example is the Cattells' Cultural Fair Intelligence Tests which costs \$38.25 for the introductory kit and \$7.75 for the specimen set; this represents a savings of \$30.50.

- 2) Items requested by more than one faculty member in the same department.
- 3) Items costing less than \$100.

RESULTS

Ordering

During the last week of August, an initial set of 95 tests were ordered. Although most institutions seem not to have a line item in their budgets for the test collection,^{21,22} at Western a separate budget code was established for the test collection in order to facilitate fund accounting. Orders were generated through the library book-vendor's automated ordering system. Many publishers required authorization forms from both teaching faculty and the library²³ guaranteeing that tests would be used in compliance with the publishers' regulations.

Receiving and Processing

After initial receipt in technical services, items were deleted from the vendor database. The order slip and item were then routed to one of us for verification of receipt of complete order and invoice approval.

Since the tests were not cataloged, it was necessary to provide bibliographic control of the collection. A test collection database, using a D-Base compatible program, was established. (See Appendix II for an example of a test entry and menu options.) This database performs the following functions:

- 1) Generates labels to be placed on each test envelope or case.²⁴

The label contains the following information:

- a) Accession number
 - b) Test title
 - c) Edition
 - d) Acronym
 - e) Publisher
 - f) Publication date
 - g) Author
 - h) Number of items in packet
- 2) Generates alphabetical holdings lists of the test collection
 - a) by author
 - b) by title
 - c) by acronym

From this database, current lists of tests in the Library's collection were generated, arranged alphabetically by author, by title, and by acronym. These lists were then placed in looseleaf binders along with the following collateral material:

- 1) A copy of the test collection circulation policies and procedures;
- 2) A memo to faculty informing them of procedures they are required to follow to enable their students to utilize the test collection (Appendix III);

- 3) A faculty approval form (see Appendix IV);
- 4) A bibliography of the library's monographic holdings related to tests; and
- 5) A test purchase request form (see Appendix V).

Binders are located at the Reference Desk and the Circulation Desk in the Library. In addition, binders were sent to all departments utilizing the test collection.

Processing of a large quantity of new materials required assignment of additional personnel to this task. From September through December, as the items were received, a student worker was assigned to this project intermittently.

Additional supplies the Test Collection were purchased, costing approximately \$250, and consisting of: two sizes of file folders (1 plain, 1 accordion style); property stamp; and labels for a) file folders, and b) test materials. Processing included the following tasks:

- 1) entering the test into the Test database;
- 2) generating labels for the folders from the database;
- 3) counting the number of items* in each test packet (to ensure return of all materials when item circulated), and affixing a label with a sequential number to each test item.²⁵ The total number of items is entered into

*In order to expedite the project, we did not initially itemize contents, but are now doing so.

the database, and displays on the label generated for the test folder;

- 4) affixing pockets for circulation cards to each folder;
- 5) typing test title on each circulation card;
- 6) creating a separate folder for duplicate materials to be filed behind the main folder;
- 7) inserting a copy of the circulation policies and procedures in each folder;^{26,27}
- 8) affixing a label stating copyright restrictions;²⁸
- 9) filing folders of tests alphabetically by test title;^{29,30}
- 10) placing dummies in the test file for oversize items shelved separately.³¹

Circulation Policies and Procedures

Due to the sensitive nature of test materials, it was essential to develop a circulation policy that would enable the materials to be used without jeopardizing the agreements made with the publishers. The following policies were established for test collection usage at WOSC Library:

- + Faculty members will supply the Circulation Unit of the Library with class lists for each course that requires use of the test collection.³²

For special or individual studies, the supervising faculty member must provide written approval for the individual or persons using test materials.³³

A form was developed for faculty to use (see Appendix IV), and was distributed to all relevant faculty members.

9

Rebuilding a Test Collection

- + Only those students whose names appear on the class lists will be allowed to use tests and test materials.
- + Current student I. D. is required to check out materials from the collection.³⁴
- + Tests are kept on reserve at the circulation desk and are for use in the library only. They may be checked out for two hours with one two-hour renewal if no one else is waiting for the item.³⁵⁻³⁸
- + The contents of the test container must be reviewed with a library staff member immediately after it is returned to the reserve desk. The patron is responsible for the replacement cost of damaged or missing elements. The minimum charge is \$10.00; the maximum charge is the full replacement cost of the test, which ranges from \$10-\$500.^{39,40}

At the WOSC Library, tests are not cataloged, are not a part of either the circulating collection or the reserve collection, and have special circulation requirements; therefore, a separate check-out procedure was established. This procedure emphasizes the elements of test security and patron accountability (see appendix VI).⁴¹⁻⁴³

Location

The test collection is housed in two 4-drawer legal size file cabinets located in the staff work area and accessible to the circulation area.⁴⁴⁻⁴⁸ Oversized material is kept in shelves

located between the circulation area the test collection files,⁴⁹ and dummies within the file drawers enable rapid retrieval of these materials. The circulation personnel are responsible for retrieving and refiling the tests, and having the test files arranged alphabetically by title expedites retrieval and refiling.

CONCLUSIONS

Six features emerged that seem atypical according to the supporting literature on test collections:

- 1) Two bibliographers were equally responsible for all elements of the test collection enterprise;
- 2) The elapsed time from start to conclusion was comparatively short, unlike many library projects; the time period was seven months, from May to December;
- 3) An in-house database was developed. We plan to modify the database to increase access points to the materials, and to generate administrative reports.
- 4) The scope of the collection and the faculty involved were unusually multi-disciplinary, drawing on more than the usual Education/Psychology combination, and including disciplines less commonly represented in test collections, such as Physical Education, Criminal Justice and Sociology;

- 5) The literature indicates that we may be the only academic library with a line-item for tests in our budget. This provided the added and unanticipated benefit of insuring continuous financial support.⁵⁰
- 6) Faculty enthusiasm was so great that several members donated items from their personal collections.⁵¹

Our existential approach to redeveloping the test collection has had some advantages as well as some disadvantages. The two disadvantages to our free-form method of collection development have been 1) a lack of clearly defined procedures for some portions of the acquisition process, and 2) fewer access points in the database than might be desired.

On the positive side, by not following the traditional Education/Psychology pattern, we have expanded the possible clientele to additional academic disciplines and departments. Our lack of a rigid, preconceived collection development philosophy allowed for an open-ended dialogue with faculty, and resulted in a high level of faculty input and their resultant "ownership" in the collection. This same degree of flexibility allowed us to complete the project in a relatively brief period of time. We were able to develop written guidelines that met the needs of the collection, rather than developing a collection that met the preestablished guidelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow are based on two common denominators for many of us: naivete and hindsight. We are incorporating these recommendations in our own procedures.

1. Establish a line item in the budget for the test collection; this ensures continuing financial support.
2. Establish written documentation of acquisitions and receipt procedures specific to tests with all relevant departments within the library, and complete this step prior to ordering test materials.⁵²
3. File tests alphabetically by title rather than by subject to minimize training time and filing errors.
4. Share responsibility for the test collection; this distributes the workload more evenly, increases the knowledge base, and adds to the number of personnel available to assist in maintenance (see our earlier comments on staffing patterns (pp. 1, 8 & 11)).
5. Review materials in the collection annually, involving both faculty and librarians, to ensure a relevant and well-rounded collection.
6. Involve faculty in the selection of materials, and provide them with information on the collection, such as lists of holdings and use statistics.
7. Initiate a test collection database, which will aid in processing materials and provide greater bibliographic control.

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Rebuilding a Test Collection

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22. Guide for the Development and Management of Test Collections, p. 23.
23. Simmons, Organizing and Servicing a Collection, p. 16-17.
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Rebuilding a Test Collection

30. Guide for the Development and Management of Test Collections, p. 16.
31. Simmons, Organizing and Servicing a Collection, p. 16.
32. Guide for the Development and Management of Test Collections, p. 25.
33. McGiverin, "Educational and Psychological Tests," p. 7.
34. Ibid.
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36. Ginn and O'Brien, "Selected Test Collections," p. 11.
37. Clark, Managing Curriculum Materials, p. 155.
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40. Guide for the Development and Management of Test Collections, p. 14.
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42. Simmons, "Standardized Test Collection Management," p. 70.
43. Guide for the Development and Management of Test Collections, p. 14.
44. Simmons, Organizing and Servicing a Collection, p. 17.
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46. Ginn and O'Brien, "Selected Test Collections," p. 11.
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Rebuilding a Test Collection

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Rebuilding a Test Collection

APPENDIX I

TO: Faculty

FROM: Western Library
Peggy Cooper Collins
Stephanie Weiner

DATE: May 21, 1990

SUBJECT: Test Collection

In 1987, the College Library acquired the test collection, comprising 341 tests, that had been housed in the campus Curriculum Laboratory.

Since that time, little has been done with or to the collection other than to circulate them when requested. We are now in the process of reviewing the collection, and attempting to make it more functional and reflective of the needs of our patrons.

There is much that we don't know about how the tests are used, either by faculty or students. Some of the questions we have regarding use are as follows:

1. Which test(s) is/are used as part of a course:

2. Are all or only part of these tests used?

3. Are manuals, score sheets, or supplementary books needed?
If supplementary books are needed, which ones?

4. What materials, if any, are needed to provide reliability and validity information?

5. What, if any, restrictions on access do you recommend?

WESTERN

COLLEGE LIBRARY

MEMORANDUM

DATE:

TO:

FROM: Library
 Peggy Cooper Collins
 Stephanie Weiner

SUBJECT: Test collection

Attached is a list of the tests in the current collection. We will greatly appreciate any recommendations you may have for additions or deletions to this list.

Please respond to these questions by June 1, 1990, so that we may update our materials over the summer. If you have any questions or comments you wish to make in person, please contact either Peggy Cooper Collins or Stephanie Weiner.

This memo has been sent to the instructors listed below. Please advise us of any additional faculty you feel would be likely to use the test collection.

Thank you for your assistance.

06/24/91

Test List Main Menu

07:21:23

- A - Add new tests
- U - Update, Edit, Scan, Find tests
- L - Print Labels from your test list
- R - Print Reports from your test list
- D - Delete marked records from your test list
- Q - Quit to DOS

or and press ...]

Or press appropriate menu letter

WOSC LIBRARY TEST DATABASE

TITLE :
EDITION :
ACRONYM :

PRICE : \$ 0.00
AUTHOR :
PUBLISHER :

PUB. DATE :
ACQUISITION DATE :

REQUESTING FACULTY :

ACCESSION NUMBER :

COPIES : 0
NUMBER OF ITEMS IN PACKET : 0

LABEL PRINTED YET? : N
CARD PRINTED YET? : N

Next Prev Top Bot Quit Edit Set List Find Help Del

139/162

WESTERN

COLLEGE LIBRARY

MEMORANDUM

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT: Test Collection Check-out Policies and Procedures

Test publishers have permitted the College Library to purchase tests and test materials only upon the assurance that they be kept in a secure location, and be accessible only to faculty, authorized graduate students under appropriate faculty supervision, or persons using tests in professional practice or research. These assurances were submitted in writing to the publishers by several of your colleagues and by the Library staff.

In order to ensure compliance with these regulations, we would appreciate your providing the Library with your class list for each course that requires the use of the tests in the collection. Materials will not be checked out to students whose names do not appear on those lists. If one of your students is engaged in a special project or individual study for you, please provide the Library with a note authorizing use of the collection (see form on following page).

Due to the special restrictions placed on the Library by the test publishers, we have had to develop very stringent check-out policies and procedures. The Library's statement on policies and procedures for use of the Test Collection is stated on the preceding page.

Please alert your students to these restrictions when your assignments require use of the Test Collection.

WESTERN

COLLEGE LIBRARY

TO: Circulation

FROM:

(faculty name)

RE: Test Collection use

_____ is enrolled in an independent study
(student's name)
course or is engaged in a special project for _____ Term,
19___ and has my permission to use the Test Collection, subject to the
Library's policies and procedures.

faculty signature

date

=====

WESTERN

COLLEGE LIBRARY

TO: Circulation

FROM:

(faculty name)

RE: Test Collection use

_____ is enrolled in an independent study
(student's name)
course or is engaged in a special project for _____ Term,
19___ and has my permission to use the Test Collection, subject to the
Library's policies and procedures.

faculty signature

date

pcc/colldev/testuser.frm

11/21/91

COLLEGE LIBRARY

TEST COLLECTION

Check-out Policies and Procedures

POLICIES

Faculty members will supply the Circulation Unit of the Library with class lists for each course that requires use of the test collection.

For special or individual studies, the supervising faculty member must provide written approval for the individual or persons using the test materials.

Only those students whose names appear on the class lists or who have special permission will be allowed to use tests and test materials.

Current student I.D. is required to check out materials from the collection.

Tests are kept on reserve at the Circulation Desk and are for use in the Library only. A test may be checked out for two hours with one two-hour renewal if no one else is waiting for that item.

The contents of the test container must be reviewed with a Library staff member immediately after it is returned to the Reserve Desk. The patron is responsible for the replacement cost of damaged or missing elements. The minimum charge is \$10.00; the maximum charge is the full replacement cost of the test (range \$10 - \$500).

THESE MATERIALS MAY NOT BE PHOTOCOPIED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!**PROCEDURES**

- ☛ Patron requests tests at the Reserve Desk.
- ☛ Patron fills out check-out card with name, address, social security number, and course number for which the test use is required.
- ☛ Patron shows current student I.D.
- ☛ Staff member initials check-out card next to time due.
- ☛ Check-out card is filed with the other reserve cards by title of the test.
- ☛ When the test is returned, contents are reviewed by the patron and a Library staff member, and any damaged or missing elements are noted for billing. A written note is made of any problems and attached to the test container.
- ☛ Staff member initials and dates check-out card if all parts of the test have been returned in good condition.
- ☛ Check-out card is returned to card pocket and test is refilled.