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Theatre Arts Resources for a Small College

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Abstract

In this paper, a theatre arts subject area is developed for the fictional Dick Smith Memorial Library at Centerville University. First, the library is defined in demographic characteristics, then the users of the library are discussed. A materials selection policy is discussed and developed, a budget set, and a list of materials is compiled. The paper concludes with the author's reflections on the exercise.

Library Profile

The library I will be using for this collection development project is a fictional academic library at a small, private university. The library and user demographics are based on a combination of several actual small private university libraries in Kansas. For the purposes of this paper, the fictional library is named the Dick Smith Memorial (DSM) Library at Centerville University. A survey of libraries at colleges similar to Centerville University lends a basic profile as discussed below.

To define the DSM Library, I have chosen to look at Briner Library at Central Christian College of Kansas (n.d.), Mantz Library at Bethel College (2007), Wallerstedt Library at Bethany College (2005), Tabor College Library at Tabor College (n.d.), Mabee Library at Sterling College (2007), and the De Paul Library at the University of St. Mary (2007). These libraries had from 2-5 full time equivalent (FTE) employees, and each had some specific focus for its community, such as a cultural archive or special video lending collection. Searches in library catalogs available online from these institutions gave mixed results. With the term “theatre” used as a keyword or simple search, numbers of results varied from 92-502 materials, with 5-24 of these materials being videos. From these profiles, I have determined several defining characteristics for the DSM Library. The DSM Library has three FTE librarians, and a current collection of about 30,000 print volumes, a video/DVD collection, and a subscription to Ebsco that provides approximately 30 journal titles, as well as access to several online journal databases.

Small colleges and universities of this type are continually looking for ways to be unique and marketable to their demographic. Currently Centerville University boasts

excellent pre-med and teacher education programs, as well as solid theological studies and business studies departments. Centerville University has recently received a sizeable endowment to improve and expand their theatre studies from an academic minor to a bachelor's degree program. The library is to receive a portion of these monies to develop its theatre arts section to support this emerging program.

User Profile

The users of the DSM Library are the students and faculty of Centerville University. More specifically, the collection of theatre arts materials will be targeted for use by theatre undergraduate majors, and be overseen and advised by the theatre arts faculty as well. Demographically, college students in Kansas are 51% men and 49% women; primarily white (70% - 87%) with the next largest racial group being Latino or Hispanic (2.2% - 6.%) (Education Portal, 2007). Characteristically, undergraduate college students tend to be between the ages of 18 and 22, have a high school diploma or equivalent, and live on campus and therefore very near the library. Their need for theatre resources is primarily academic as opposed to entertainment, although that delineation is negotiable.

Centerville University has an enrollment of 850 undergraduate students with a 5% growth rate, and follows demographic norms in racial and gender characteristics. There will be an estimated 30 students in the new theatre degree program, and 3 faculty for the program initially. Developing a collection at DSM Library for these students will be important for their educational development and legitimacy as an academic program at

Centerville University. As well, the faculty will find a collection devoted to theatre to be of use in their professional development and efforts to grow the theatre program.

Materials Selection

Selection criteria

Selection of materials for this new part of DSM Library's collection will be based on several criteria. The faculty will be consulted for their recommendations at the beginning of building the collection, and input from the faculty will be continually and actively sought as long as the theatre undergraduate program remains at Centerville University. The librarian will also survey institutions with similar well-established theatre undergraduate programs to have a general view of materials both common to the area of study, well-respected and generally regarded as accurate and authoritative, and geared for and popular with undergraduates. Purchased materials will be added on a librarian-approved basis with the goal of selecting materials that are of the most value for their price. Gifts to the library will also be accepted on a librarian-approved basis. Online selection tools will also be consulted for a survey of new material being published on the subject. Every attempt will be made to continually develop this new collection and keep the information up-to-date.

Selection tools

As Centerville University is fictional, it is impossible to consult the faculty as a selection tool. However hypothetical they are, faculty are still a valuable selection tool. Other real selection tools used for this project include online bookstores such as Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com, online textbook distribution companies such as

Baker & Taylor and Blackwell's, and bibliographies compiled by other librarians working in the subject area, such as Gee Library at Texas A&M University's Marsha Keenan (2000), and Olin and Uris Library at Cornell University's Fred Muratori's (2007) bibliographies. While not strictly a selection tool, suggestions and purchase requests from students studying theatre and faculty outside the subject area will be accepted for review.

Material formats

In order to make the best use of the monies given to develop the collection, primarily traditional print materials will be pursued with this first endowment. These print materials can be further divided by the sub-area of theatre they address, such as acting, set, lighting and sound, costumes, directing, playwriting, and so on. As well, print materials collected can be scripts or anthologies of plays, as well as scores to musicals, and other printed visual materials such as posters or photographs. Non-print materials collected will be DVDs and CDs. DVDs will be confined to recordings of performances and other instructional DVDs that address some aspect of theatre. CDs may be recordings of performances, soundtracks to musicals, and sound effects for use in performances. No attempt will be made to collect electronic formats of materials until a legitimate need arises.

Incorporation into the larger collection

These materials fill a largely new section of the collection; however, purchase of scripts also benefits drama studies conducted by the English and Literature departments, and some materials touch on aspects of psychology and sociology. As well, certain sound recordings are of use to the music department, and some DVDs of plays can be considered as general entertainment for the college community.

Use of Materials

These materials are directly linked to the user's needs. No attempt will be made to duplicate textbooks that the faculty requires for the theatre classes; however, materials in the library will supplement and enhance the information that is presented in classes. As well, the library materials will have a focus of immediate practicability to enhance and support college theatre productions. Materials will also cover subjects in the theatre program that are directly addressed, and topics that may be of interest to faculty wishing to pursue personal academic improvement.

Budget

The initial endowment allocated to the library to develop a theatre materials subject area is in the amount of \$2,000. The total spent was \$1,970

As is expected, it is not very hard to spend money. The hard part is determining if a resource is a good general resource. With the budget set at \$2,000 the kinds of resources are limited to general resources, rather than any more specific area (drama anthology vs. American Indian drama anthology).

Materials List

Author	Title	Year	Publisher	ISBN/ASIN	Price
	The Columbia Encyclopedia of Modern Drama.	2007	Columbia University Press	9780231140324	450.00
	60 Seconds to Shine	2008	Smith and Kraus, Inc	9781575255323	19.95
	Modern Drama: Plays, Criticism, Theory	1997	Heinle & Heinle Publishers	9780155011915	35.00
	The American Film Theatre: Collection One (DVD)	1973	Kino Video	B00008HCAK	120.00
	The American Film Theatre: Collection Two	1973	Kino Video	B00009MEJL	120.00

	(DVD)				
	Basic Vocabulary for the Theatre (DVD)	2004	Educational Video Network, Inc	B0006951NG	60.00
	The Elements of Theatre (DVD)	2004		B00066D1IG	60.00
Auguste, Racinete	Complete Costume History	2006	Taschen	9783822850954	50.00
Baldwin, Chris	Stage Directing: a practical guide	2003	Crowood Press	9781861266033	35.00
Banham, Martin	The Cambridge Guide to Theatre	1995	Cambridge University Press	9780521434379	50.00
Bloom, Ken	Broadway: its History, People, and Places: an Encyclopedia	2007	Routledge	9780415937047	150.00
Boleslavsky, Richard	Acting: the first six lessons	1987	Theatre Arts	0878300007	25.00
Brockett, Oscar	The Essential Theatre	2007	Wadsworth Publishing	9780495090373	99.00
Brockett, Oscar	History of the Theatre	2007	Allyn & Bacon	9780205511860	120.00
Brockett, Oscar	Plays for the Theatre: A Drama Anthology	1995	Harcourt	9780155015814	25.00
Cole, Toby	Playwrights on Playwriting	2001	Cooper Square Press	9780815411413	20.00
Garrison, Gary	Kennedy Center Presents: Award-Winning Plays from the American College Theater Festival	2006	Back Stage Books	9780823083909	17.00
Hatcher, Jeffery	The art and craft of playwriting	2000	Story Press Books	9781884910463	15.00
Larmann, Ralph	Stage Design	2007	daab	9783866540323	65.00
Leonard, John	The art and technique of theatre sound	2008	Methuen Drama, UK	9780713677607	40.00
Marowitz, Charles	Directing the Action: Acting and Directing in the contemporary theatre	2000	Applause Books	978-1557830722	15.00
Mitchell, Katie	Directing for the stage : a practical guide	2007	Routledge	9780415404396	30.00
Pavis, Patrice	Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis	1999	University of Toronto Press	9780802081636	43.00
Shelley, Stephen Louis	A Practical Guide to Stage Lighting	1999	Focal Press	9780240803531	52.00
Stanislavski, Constantin	An Actor's Handbook	2004	Theatre Arts	9780878301812	22.00
Swinfield, Rosemarie	Period Make-Up for the Stage	1997	A & C Black Publishers Ltd	9780713647129	50.00

Thomas, David	Theatre censorship : from Walpole to Wilson	2007	Oxford University Press Inc	9780199260287	100.00
Thorne, Gary and William Gaskill	Designing Stage Costumes	2001	Crowood Press	9781861264169	35.00
Wilson, Edwin and Alvin Goldfarb	Anthology of Living Theatre	2000	McGraw-Hill	9780072317299	47.00
Younger, Alison	Drama : text and performance	2007	Edinburg University Press	9780748624768	90.00

Lessons Learned

The first thing I would say I learned is that it is hard to set boundaries when everything is hypothetical! While not surprising, an important concept that was reinforced to me through this exercise was collaboration. In the academic world as a collection development librarian, I would rely on the input of the scholars in the field as much as I would rely on my collection development tools. Another aspect of collection development that was reinforced to me is the variety of materials available for a library collection. I found it very difficult to expand my thinking about collection development only in terms of books. However, when I started thinking about all the resources I would want in the subject area I chose if I was a student, I realized that I would want more than just books; I would want the option of visual and aural mediums; DVDs and CDs.

Overall, I found the exercise enjoyable. In many ways, it combines two activities I enjoy: research and shopping. However, I found it all too easy to include my own likes and dislikes in the selection of materials. If something had a title that caught my fancy, or spoke to a subject or viewpoint that appealed to me, I found myself more willing to chose the piece, regardless of other factors such as price and suitability for my library's particular collection.

Resources

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