A strong library collection is necessary to support the academic mission of an occupational therapy program. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) recognizes the importance of the library in its standards. In the Essentials and Guidelines for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist, library facilities and holdings constitute an integral and significant component of learning resources (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 1991). Specific reference is made to current books, periodicals, journals, computers, and other reference materials that are related to the curriculum. In fact, the new Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist include reference to online services, interlibrary loan, and resource centers (ACOTE, 1999). As of November 1998, there were 341 programs in the accreditation process that need to consider the adequacy of their learning resources. Yet, there are few guidelines about what constitutes a strong library collection. This article examines the procedures a new program can use to build its occupational therapy collection. We identify the problems encountered and offer suggestions for additional research to determine the best works in occupational therapy and related fields.

The University of Scranton in Pennsylvania initiated plans in 1992 for a program in occupational therapy. These plans included financial support to build a library collection. A designated librarian worked closely with the occupational therapy faculty members to identify books, journals, and videos to supplement the existing library collection and to support the new curriculum. The library had an existing computer network that allowed faculty members and students access to the Internet and to a number of relevant electronic indexes (e.g., Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health, ERIC, FirstSearch, MEDLINE, PsycLit). To select books, journals, and videos, we reviewed bibliographies, publishers’ catalogs, book reviews, and comparisons against other libraries’ collections. In addition, faculty members were encouraged to submit requests for materials to support their classes and research. In the collaborative process, periodic meetings were convened to review the added works and to identify areas needing further development.

From 1992 to 1998, 611 books were added to the collection to support the developing occupational therapy program. In addition to book titles, 119 new videocassettes were added to the media collection. Thirty-three journal subscriptions were initiated, and back issues of two journals, The American Journal of Occupational Therapy (AJOT) and the Occupational Therapy Journal of Research, were acquired. A complete list of these titles can be viewed on the Internet at http://academic.uofs.edu/department/ot/libraryresources.html. Approximately $40,000 was spent between 1992 and 1998 to develop this collection.
As the collection developed, we reached several conclusions:

1. Identification of the best works—the core collection—for occupational therapy is difficult.
2. Comparisons against other library collections to identify important works and to evaluate an existing collection have limitations.
3. An occupational therapy collection should include not only works specific to occupational therapy, but also works from other disciplines.
4. Collaboration between the librarian and faculty members is essential in building the collection.
5. Development of an occupational therapy collection is an ongoing process that must take into consideration not only books, videos, and journals, but also Internet resources.

This article elaborates on these five points.

**Identification of the Core Collection**

Identifying the core collection for occupational therapy proved difficult because little has been written in this area. We found eight resources spanning the past 15 years to assist in the process. During the 1980s, several bibliographic resources appeared that were used to select materials. Before this period there had been few bibliographies or graphic resources appeared that were used to select materials. During the 1980s, several bibliographies specific to occupational therapy, such as the AOTA Commission on Education (COE) and the AOTA Commission on Education Assistant Educators’ Resource List, were produced.

**Table 1**

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<th>Work Cited</th>
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Note: Titles represent the latest edition of work cited.

In addition, we used the “Selected List of Books and Journals in Allied Health” prepared by Brandon and Hill (1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996). The Brandon and Hill list was begun in 1984 and is published every other year in the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*. It is recognized as an important source in selecting allied health materials. Murphy & Buchinger, 1996. The Brandon and Hill list recommended 138 titles specific to occupational therapy. The list also provided 144 more titles related to rehabilitation, and these were considered in the selection process. Because titles may remain on the list for several years or be replaced with a newer edition, of the total 138 occupational therapy titles, only 67 were unique titles. Of the 144 titles in rehabilitation, only 63 were unique titles.

Finally, we examined *AJOT* for the 389 book reviews and video reviews that appeared from 1990 to 1997.

In total, 903 books, 44 journals, and 81 audiovisuals (videocassettes, filmstrips, slides) were identified in these eight resources. Disregarding the edition of the work of the 903 unique book titles, only 11 appeared in four or more of the sources. Three titles appeared in five sources; another three titles appeared in six sources; and no title appeared in all eight sources (see Table 1).

We did not expect that there would be agreement among all eight sources. Although they represent traditional resources for building library collections and provide lists of recommended titles, their recommendations are not represented as being the best works in the field. Of the 903 titles, only 116 (13%) appeared in more than one list. The fact that few titles are repeated indicates the varied emphases of the different lists and the lack of agreement among these resources. Because there is no one list that identifies a core collection for occupational therapy, libraries and programs building a new collection need to rely on additional resources, such as examination of other library collections and input from faculty members.
Comparisons of Library Collections

In December 1996 and January 1997, we conducted comparisons against other library collections. Comparisons are often used to identify titles held at another library that should be added to one’s own library. Comparisons also are used as a means to evaluate one’s collection against other library collections. The assumption is that a title held in a noteworthy library, such as that of Tufts University, or a title that appears frequently at other libraries with a similar program is important to that field. Two methods were used for these comparisons: catalog access via the Internet and the OCLC/Amigos Collection Analysis Compact Disk (CACD).1

The first method compared our holdings against the collection at Tufts University. We chose Tufts University because it has had an occupational therapy program since the early 1900s (Boston School of Occupational Therapy) and is considered a well-respected program. After accessing Tufts University Libraries via the Internet (www.library.tufts.edu/hsl/hsl.html), we conducted a key word search on occupational therapy. This search retrieved all records (452 in total) with “occupational therapy” in the title or subject area, regardless of classification. An examination of these records identified 177 theses and 68 articles on reserve, which were eliminated, leaving 207 titles for comparison against our collection. Of these, 98 titles (47%) were identified as already in the collection of the Weinberg Memorial Library, University of Scranton. The remaining 109 titles were then reviewed for possible acquisition.

The second method we used compared our collection against other similar libraries, using CACD. The CACD has 14 standard peer groups and can create up to 4 custom peer groups. A customized peer group was established with institutions that were similar in number of students, degrees awarded, and size of library collection. Our customized peer group included 10 schools: College of St. Catherine, Elizabethtown College, Kean University, Quinnipiac College, Saginaw Valley State University, St. Ambrose University, Towson University, Tuskegee University, University of Puget Sound, and Worcester State College. Each school offers a baccalaureate degree in occupational therapy. Six of the 10 schools are private. The average student population is approximately 4,000. This profile is similar to that of the University of Scranton, a private institution with 3,871 full-time undergraduate students that offers a bachelor of science degree in occupational therapy.

The CACD produced a peer group bibliography that listed all books held by any member of the group. The evaluator’s holdings are indicated by an asterisk so that it can be determined whether a different edition is held by the comparison libraries. A “gap” bibliography indicates only those titles held by libraries other than that of the evaluator. Compared with the peer group, the same title or a different edition was identified for 63 of the 90 titles classified within the call number range RM735 to RM735.7, the major classification for occupational therapy. In other words, 63 titles from the University of Scranton library could be found in at least 1 of the 10 libraries in the comparison. The remaining 27 titles were then reviewed for appropriateness to our collection.

On the basis of the comparisons with Tufts University and CACD, 136 titles were considered for possible acquisition. Of these, only 14 titles (10%) were selected. Titles were not chosen if they did not support the curriculum or were not readily available. Titles that were no longer in print but identified as important to the collection were acquired through out-of-print resources, electronic postings, and discussion lists available on the Internet.

The frequency of titles held in our collection compared with Tufts University (47%) and the comparison group (70%) indicated the similarities in the holdings. This similarity in holdings was viewed as a positive evaluation of the collection. Again, the assumption is that works held in common are the most important works; not everyone would agree with this assumption, and this needs further evaluation. The other difficulty with the comparisons was that they depended on records retrieved by the phrase occupational therapy or by the classification RM735. As will be shown in the analysis of works added to our own collection, only 20% of the titles added would be retrieved by a key word or call number search on occupational therapy.

An Occupational Therapy Collection Uses Works From Different Disciplines

Upon examination of the lists of recommended titles, book reviews, and publishers’ catalogs, it became evident that building the collection required the addition of works not specific to occupational therapy. Of the 903 book titles identified from the eight resources, only 11% were classified as occupational therapy. Fifty-two percent were classified in medicine; 19% in the social sciences; and the remaining 18% in physiology, technology, sports, accessibility modifications, law, and the humanities.

Although the 611 book titles actually selected fell under similar classifications, there was a larger percentage of occupational therapy titles. Twenty percent (120 titles) were classified in occupational therapy; 53% were classified in medicine, 20% in the social sciences, and 7% in the other classifications.

The library comparisons provided us with commonly held occupational therapy titles. They did not, however, accurately reflect the overall work we did building the collection because titles from other disciplines were often not identified in the comparisons.

1Amigos Library Services, Inc., 14400 Midway Road, Dallas, Texas 75244-3509.
Collaboration Between the Librarian and Faculty Members

The need for a well-balanced collection necessitates a good working relationship between the librarian and the occupational therapy faculty members. During the first 2 years of building the collection, titles for review were primarily selected from resources compiled by the librarian. As these lists were exhausted, building the collection relied more heavily on recommendations from faculty members, who based their selection on professional readings and publishers’ catalogs. Catalogs from 23 publishers, associations, and retailers were used.

Of the many bibliographies, book reviews, and publishers’ catalogs, the individual sources we most heavily used in the selection process were the selected list by Brandon and Hill, book reviews from AJOT, and catalogs from Brookes Publishing and AOTA (see Figure 1). Because of the limited number of formal reviews and recommendations for videos, the selection of audiovisual materials for the collection relied almost exclusively on catalogs. Catalogs from AOTA, Therapy Skill Builders, and Films for Humanities and Sciences generated the largest number of video titles.

We observed that faculty members were more selective than library staff members in identifying titles for acquisition. Although the collection development policy allowed faculty members to select earlier editions of works and works of historical significance, they preferred newer publications. Most books and videos added to the collection were published or produced in the past 10 years. Eighty-three percent of the selected books were published after 1989, 16% between 1980 and 1989, and only 1% before 1980. Of the videos chosen, 60% were produced after 1989, 30% between 1980 and 1989, and 10% before 1980.

In their selection, faculty and staff members of the occupational therapy department often chose works representative of various disciplines and not necessarily specific to their field. On the other hand, the librarian selected titles from recommended lists for occupational therapy collections or new titles that were specific to the field. If the selection process were conducted solely by the library staff, it might possibly overlook important works not specific to occupational therapy.

Ongoing Process of Developing an Occupational Therapy Collection

The development of an occupational therapy library collection, like the program and curriculum, is an ongoing process. At present, we are conducting a citation analysis of leading occupational therapy journals and textbooks. We are expanding Johnson and Leising’s (1986) study by including more years and more journals and concentrating only on book titles. We also are examining the references that appear in two leading occupational therapy textbooks—Willard and Spackman’s Occupational Therapy (9th Edition) (Neistadt & Crepeau, 1998) and Occupational Therapy: Enabling Function and Well-Being (2nd Edition) (Christiansen & Baum, 1997). Citation analysis studies are often used to determine the works most frequently cited and, therefore, considered important to a profession.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The methods used to build an occupational therapy collection offer guidance to developing and accredited occupational therapy programs about library holdings and collection development. We found that the Brandon and Hill list, AJOT book reviews, publishers’ catalogs, and faculty preferences were more helpful in selecting materials than existing bibliographies and library comparisons. Although the library comparisons provided only limited suggestions for new titles, they did provide us with a means to evaluate our collection.

The profession needs a list of the most important works in occupational therapy. One way to identify these works is the citation analysis described here. Another method is to have those persons who teach in and direct occupational therapy programs identify the most important works of the profession. These recommended studies are necessary for libraries to develop stronger collections to support new and existing occupational therapy programs.

References


