

Offloading or Staff Development? Team Cataloging at the University of Florida

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ABSTRACT. The team approach to original monograph cataloging and serials CONSER upgrades was explored at the University of Florida. Teams of librarians and library assistants worked together to produce a finished product in an effort to handle problematic materials more efficiently. The initial project led to major reworking of assignments and to increased levels of professionalism and cooperation among all levels of cataloging staff.

As anyone involved in cataloging in America's research library community knows, there is growing pressure from library administrators and patrons to reduce or eliminate cataloging backlogs while at the same time keeping up with current receipts. Unlike Sheila Intner in her thought-provoking articles on bibliographic triage, most library administrators are unwilling to consider the possibility "that there is no way to catalog both the backlog and all current acquisitions, even over time. Triage assumes there are patients who cannot be saved—books and other items that cannot be cataloged. . ."¹ An alternative assumption that many backlog problems could be solved

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merely by joining bibliographic utilities such as OCLC or RLIN and extracting their records for local use has proved to be naive at best. While many libraries increased their cataloging productivity substantially due to increased use of copy from the various utilities, arrearages or backlogs are still the norm, as Agnew, Landram and Richards found in their ARL survey reported on in 1985.² And, as Susan Lazinger noted in her remarks on the impact of shared cataloging a few years ago,³ the remaining materials in our backlogs often tend to be more "esoteric, exotic and obscure—in short, more difficult and time-consuming to catalog."

In addition to making greater use of cataloging copy from bibliographic utilities, many libraries have begun to transfer greater levels of cataloging responsibility from librarian to paraprofessional staff to try to reduce their backlogs, a process that Larry Oberg refers to as "off-loading tasks."⁴ Jack Kranz presents a limited study of this tendency in the area of music cataloging.⁵ However, Patricia Eskoz⁶ discusses this trend in some depth in her July 1990 article in LRTS, noting especially an increasing tendency to assign some portion of original cataloging, long considered the ultimate distinction between professional and paraprofessional catalogers, to library assistants. She further asserts in a later article that "paraprofessionals should be trained to do the more routine aspects of cataloging, including original cataloging under supervision."⁷

Like many others around the country, the Catalog Dept. of the Smathers Libraries of the University of Florida has explored ways both to increase copy cataloging output and also redistribute higher-level cataloging tasks to para-professionals, in an attempt to deal more effectively with our backlog and current receipts. Our goal has been, to quote Michael Gorman, "to make our materials as accessible as possible in as speedy a manner as could be."⁸ The following paper presents a case study of our efforts to address these concerns.

BACKGROUND

The University of Florida Libraries implemented a NOTIS-based online catalog in 1982/83. We use the OCLC database as the source

of our cataloging records and for several years we have had an effective OCLC to NOTIS interface capability for transferring OCLC bibliographic records into our online catalog. We are an OCLC Enhance institution, a CONSER member and a NACO participant. All of our catalogers, both paraprofessionals and librarians, have access to our online catalog via a terminal at their individual workstations.

Our cataloging staff consists of nine professional catalogers who do primarily or exclusively monographic cataloging; one full-time serials catalog librarian who is also a unit head, and another professional cataloger who divides her time about equally between serials, monographs, and machine readable data files. The University of Florida has faculty status for its librarians, with the usual tenure requirements for "achieving distinction" in a number of areas outside the scope of the job itself. In addition, several of our catalog librarians recently assumed collection development responsibilities for specialized subject areas and several others are coordinating the work of grant projects. Both activities take away from the time they have available for cataloging. Our support staff consists of three monographic archivists (our highest paraprofessional level), six senior monographic library technical assistants, two monographic library technical assistants, two data processing operators with half-time monographic cataloging responsibilities, three senior serials library technical assistants, and one serials library technical assistant. There are also staff working on several grant projects and a number of other people whose primary responsibilities are in catalog maintenance, distribution, processing, or administration.

In a typical year, we receive 50-65,000 new monographs to catalog and 2000 to 3000 new serial titles. We are also working off a monographic arrearage that now stands at about 24,000 volumes (down from 50,000 five years ago) and a serials arrearage of about 1600 titles. Since October 1988, we have fulfilled a commitment to catalog within a few months of receipt all newly-received titles that have any kind of OCLC copy available. We place only non-priority monographs lacking OCLC records into the arrearage for later researching, and we put no new serials titles into the serials arrearage.

In the University of Florida Libraries Catalog Dept. for several

years we have made greater use of copy cataloging and expanding the role of our library assistants. Both in serials and monograph cataloging, we have gradually moved our paraprofessionals from cataloging only those materials with Library of Congress (DLC) or Cooperative Online Serials (CONSER) records to handling the bulk of all types of copy cataloging. As the following charts illustrate, the paraprofessional catalogers produce the majority of all our monographic and serials cataloging. A combination of streamlined procedures and five new monographic library assistant positions in the last few years enabled us almost to double monographic cataloging output between 1987 (37,881 titles) and 1989 (72,382 titles). While we experienced a drop in total monographic output for 1990 (60,090 new titles), we cataloged almost 9000 more titles than we received in the same time period. A permanent loss of two of the new positions and a hiring freeze on another (due to state budget problems) will have an impact on future productivity (see Chart 1).

Serials cataloging productivity has followed a similar pattern, with a ten percent increase in productivity between 1987 (2436 titles) and 1989 (2893 titles.) As with monograph cataloging, although we experienced a drop in the total number of new serial titles cataloged in 1990 (2276 titles), due primarily to staff turnover and retrospective conversion projects, we still kept ahead of our new receipts by cataloging 350 more titles than we received. A long-term hiring freeze on one of the serials positions will impact overall serials productivity comparable to that expected in monograph cataloging (see Chart 2).

In spite of these apparent successes, we have a number of concerns. In monographs, the one area so far where we have had only moderate success in increasing our output is in original cataloging. The monographic cataloging arrearage is increasingly composed of titles lacking any kind of OCLC copy, due to routine efforts to research and distribute older materials with copy for cataloging and add to it only titles for which no OCLC bibliographic records exist. Additionally, the University is initiating several new area studies programs and the materials that the bibliographers are selecting to support these programs typically has much less cataloging copy available than materials for well-established fields of study. We are also collecting a wider array of materials in non-standard formats,

CHART 1. Monograph Cataloging Statistics

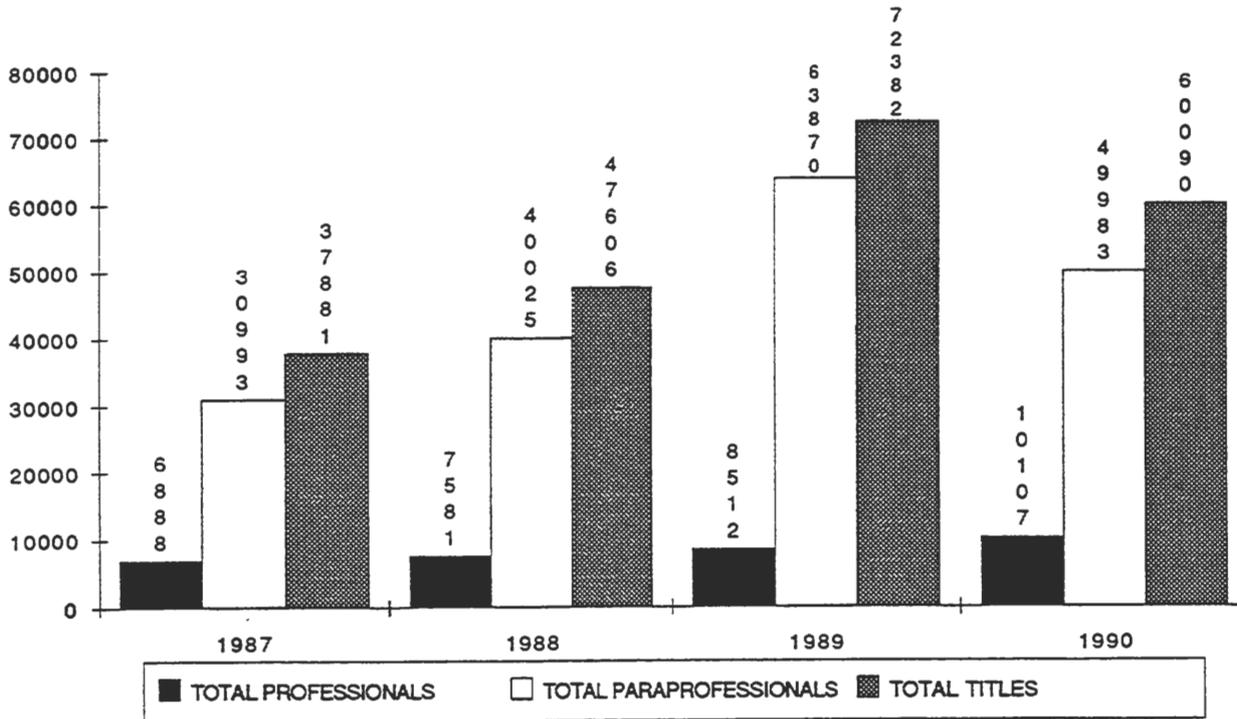
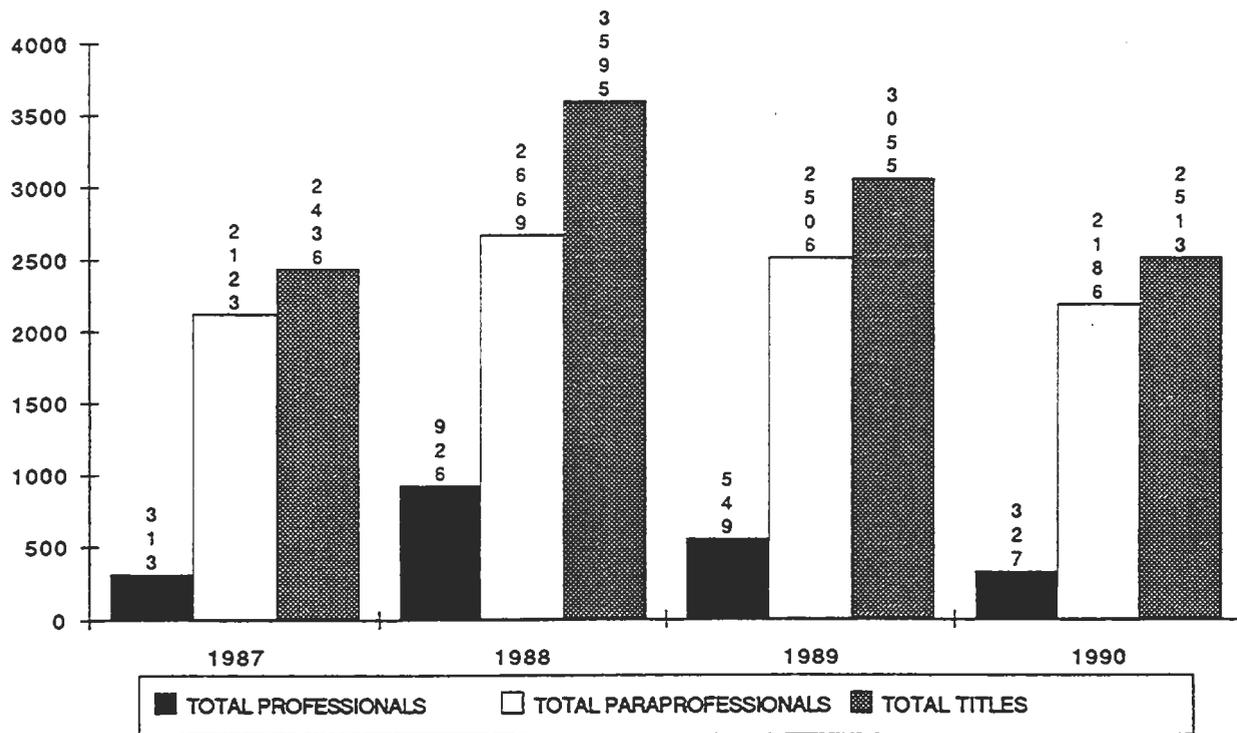


CHART 2. Serials Cataloging Statistics



of which a higher percentage require original cataloging. In 1989 and 1990 we received 18,213 monographs which lacked OCLC copy. In the same time period, we created only 8452 original records—an original cataloging deficit of 9761 for just that two-year period. Although some of those materials will have copy when researched later, past experience has shown us that, due to the uniqueness of much of the material, approximately forty to fifty percent will have no copy until we create the original records.

Our concerns in serials cataloging were somewhat different. At one time, the serials staff consisted of three librarians and three senior library technical assistants who all cataloged and one library technical assistant who handled serial adds. When budget cuts lead to cancelled subscriptions, it was assumed that the serials staff could also be cut. In reality, the majority of our serials cataloging was not for the titles acquired through subscriptions, but for gift, foreign approvals, or government document depository titles. Because they tend to be older, more esoteric or more complex, we found that these gift, document and foreign titles typically either lack cataloging copy or has a poorer quality of copy available. In fact, we found that over sixty percent of these titles required the attention of a professional cataloger. Conversely, we needed to route items acquired through conventional order methods to a librarian only forty-seven percent of the time. The small percentage of titles that we acquired through new subscriptions generally had DLC or other CONSER copy that the library assistants were able to handle. The subscription cancellation project effectively, although inadvertently, targeted the group of materials that were routinely handled by the library assistants, while leaving intact the materials traditionally handled by a serials librarian. Additionally, most of the cancelled serials subscriptions were for titles that we had cataloged years ago. Serial subscription cancellations actually had little impact on the serials cataloging workload, except to decrease the amount of work available for the library assistants at their previously defined level of responsibility.

Prior to the staff reduction, we distributed the work in the serials unit equally among the different levels of staff. The library assistants did all DLC or CONSER copy not requiring a professional cataloger's attention. Professional catalogers did all non-DLC copy

and CONSER copy lacking call numbers, subject headings or required original authority work, as well as all original cataloging. In a typical year with receipts of 2500 titles, following the above criteria, we routed fifty-five percent (1375) to a professional librarian. The librarian either completed the cataloging for these titles or provided enough information to enable the library assistants to finish the process. The library assistants completed only forty-five percent (1125) without any help from a librarian. When the staff composition was changed to one professional librarian (who also performed administrative duties) and three library assistants, the lone professional was no longer able to continue to deal with fifty-five percent of the serial receipts. It became essential to redistribute the work in serials cataloging in order to avoid a logjam and to provide enough work to the paraprofessional staff.

With both serials and monographs, we recognized that we were not going to regain lost professional positions or regain the blocks of time that our catalog librarians are increasingly required to spend on other professional activities. Until recently, catalog librarians spent close to ninety to one hundred percent of their time cataloging. With committee assignments, research, collection development and administrative responsibilities, typical catalog librarians now spend approximately sixty to eighty percent of their time cataloging. Given the changing environment, we realized that we would have to "offload" some responsibilities to the paraprofessional staff if we hoped to handle the same, or even an increased, volume of the type of work previously performed by librarians. In 1989 we began to experiment with the team cataloging concept, utilizing paraprofessional and professional catalogers jointly to create original monographic records and to upgrade non-CONSER serial records to CONSER standards.

MONOGRAPH PROCEDURES

For several years, the monographic cataloging section has had a successful procedure for handling University of Florida theses on a priority basis, with a library assistant providing the descriptive cataloging and a librarian providing the subject analysis and author-

ity work. Using this procedure as a model, we decided in April 1989 to experiment with expanding that procedure to include other monographs. We formed two teams, each consisting of a librarian and a library assistant. Although several people were involved, at no time did total staff involvement exceed twenty hours per week (.5 FTE). All participants were still expected to keep up with their other duties. Due to staff turnover, a total of six people participated in the pilot monographic project. In the first six months, the teams created 250 original monographic records, averaging out to a rate of eighty original records per month per full FTE. We considered this a highly acceptable figure considering that much of the staff time for the project was expended on training and revision.

We experimented with two different team models for the creation of original workforms. In both teams, the library assistants handled the OCLC bibliographic and name and series authority searching and provided the descriptive cataloging (1xx, 245, 250, 260, 300, 5xx, 7xx fields). However, in one of the teams, the library assistant also did preliminary subject analysis and classification. The librarian in that team served primarily as a reviewer and a trainer. On the first team, the librarian handled the subject analysis and classification, as well as reviewing the library assistant's descriptive cataloging.

SERIALS PROCEDURES

In serials cataloging, we began to experiment with team (or cooperative, as we call it locally) cataloging in August 1989. The library assistants received all titles with copy directly, regardless of the type of OCLC copy. The librarian received directly only the titles needing original cataloging. The serials library assistants set the limit themselves on how much of the record they were willing to be responsible for. If a record had a call number and subject headings, they would verify the accuracy of both but would not provide the same to records lacking them, nor would they do original authority work. We contribute all original name authorities from serials cataloging to NACO and we reserve that work for professional staff.

As with monographs, none of the people involved were able to devote more than a few hours a week to the project. Total staffing for the project never exceeded ten hours a week (.25 FTE). In the first five months, the two participating senior serials library assistants and the serials librarian cataloged 125 titles cooperatively, averaging out to 100 upgraded records per month per full FTE.

RESULTS

Our primary concerns with both pilot projects were: (1) to see if a cooperative or team cataloging approach would be more efficient in terms of total time spent to catalog an individual title or if it would allow us to increase our output for certain types of material; (2) to monitor the errors being made by the library assistants to see if they fell within acceptable levels; and (3) to gauge staff response to working in such a team environment. To attempt to evaluate these concerns we: (1) monitored the time spent by the teams; (2) recorded the type and frequency of errors made by the library assistants by reviewing their workforms; and (3) surveyed all cataloging staff (not just the project participants) for their reaction to the concept.

For the time study, we divided up the cataloging process into broad tasks: (1) OCLC bibliographic and authority searching; (2) descriptive cataloging (determining author, title, publisher, pagination, series, 500 notes); (3) the assignment of subject headings and classification; (4) revision; and (5) training. For serials, we added a sixth task which consisted of updating the online holdings and physically processing the pieces, to acknowledge the fact that this work often requires a substantial amount of time and affects the total output of the section.

The following tables show the results of the *monographic* time studies, both for the teams and for a "typical" librarian working alone. These are rough figures collected in a non-scientific fashion and are intended to be a beginning basis for comparison between different approaches to the same type of work. Table 1 reflects the time it took the library assistants, on the average, to perform a certain function. Table 2 shows the time it took the librarians in-

volved in the project to perform their part of the work. It is worth noting that it took a library assistant 21.07 minutes per title to do the preliminary subject analysis and classification. We compiled the figures in the Table 3 for a typical librarian working alone from information collected by four different librarians over a period of several months. On average, we found that it took our librarians fourteen minutes less per title to do the subject analysis and classification than it took an experienced library assistant. We hypothesize that at least some of this difference is due to depth of experience and levels of confidence, although we have found no way to determine absolutely why one individual works more quickly than another.

Our department standards for original monographic cataloging indicate that it takes thirty minutes to one hour to complete one original workform. The 19.59 average minutes per title of the four librarians working independently fall well within those guidelines. The difference between the approaches of the two monographic teams, shown in Table 4, is significant. Team I created an original workform in thirty-three minutes on average. The librarian's part of

Monographic Time Study for Cooperative Cataloging

TABLE 1. Library Assistants*

TASK	NUMBER OF MINUTES PER TITLE	
	Team I	Team II
OCLC searching and authority work	3.7	3.7
Descriptive cataloging	10.14	10.14
Revision of own work	5.89	5.89
Subject analysis/classification		21.07
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Total time	19.73	40.8

*See note on Table 2.

TABLE 2. Librarians Working with Library Assistants*

TASK	NUMBER OF MINUTES PER TITLE	
	Team I	Team II
Training	4.8	4.8
Revision (descriptive only)	1.86	
Revision (descriptive and subject)		24.95
Subject analysis/classification	6.69	

Total time	13.35	31.61

*On the preceding tables, time figures for the tasks that the teams had in common are an average of the time for the participants of both teams. The tasks that only one team performed have time figures only in the column for that team.

TABLE 3. Librarians Working Alone**

TASK	NUMBER OF MINUTES PER TITLE
OCLC searching and authority work	3.65
Descriptive cataloging	7.42
Revision of own work	1.83
Subject analysis/classification	6.69

Completed workform	19.59

**As noted previously, we collected time figures from four different librarians and averaged them together to arrive at a "typical" figure.

TABLE 4. Librarian and Library Assistant Team Totals

TASK	NUMBER OF MINUTES PER TITLE	
	Team I	Team II
OCLC searching and authority work	3.7	3.7
Descriptive cataloging	10.14	10.14
Assistant's revision time	5.89	5.89
Librarian's revision	1.86	24.95
Training	4.8	4.8
Subject analysis/classification	6.69	21.07
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Completed workform	33.08	70.55

that time was 13.35 minutes (see Table 2), saving about six minutes for the librarian per title over the average time of 19.59 minutes (see Table 3) it takes a librarian to do the entire process alone. Team II, where the library assistant handled the preliminary subject analysis and classification, took more than twice as long to complete an original workform (70.55 minutes) and exceeded the Dept. guidelines for this type of work. The librarian's time on Team II averaged 29.75 minutes, taking ten minutes more of the librarian's time per title than the average amount of time spent by a librarian completing the entire workform alone.

In analyzing the results for the two different team approaches, we made no attempt to control for the effect that different subjects might have on average cataloging time nor to measure the time it took for the project librarians to work independently as compared to their work as part of a team with the library assistants. The fact that different individuals worked on the two monographic teams

could have distorted the time studies for the different team approaches. The difference between the two teams might not be as dramatic in a more controlled experiment where the same individuals experimented with the different approaches. However, the project developed over a period of time and problems in the methodology were not always apparent to us initially. One thing is clear. As revealed in comparing the figures in Table 2 for the two teams reveals (6.66 minutes training and revision time for Team I and 29.75 minutes training and revision time for Team II), the time necessary for training and revision in a team environment is substantial and clearly increases as the level of responsibility for the library assistant is raised. We observed that the Team I approach, while it still required more time overall to generate an original workform (33.08 minutes) than the approach of a librarian working alone (19.59 minutes), did save some time at the professional level. The librarian's part of the process for the Team I approach took a total of only 13.35 minutes, compared to 19.59 minutes when completing the entire process.

Results for the serials cooperative cataloging project were similar to the monographs. Table 5 shows the time it took the serials library assistants, on the average, to perform their tasks. Table 6 lists the time spent by the serials librarian completing her part of the cooperative cataloging. The most time-consuming part of the librarian's work on the team was time she spent doing the NACO authority work for the record. Table 7 gives the average time it took the serials librarian to complete a workform by herself. Since the serials project followed only one approach and involved fewer individuals there is less uncertainty with the time figures than with the monographic pilot study.

As with monographs, it took less time for the librarian working alone to complete the entire record (23.8 minutes) than it did using the team approach (49.38 minutes). (See Table 8.) However, only 17.51 minutes of the serials team total was the librarian's time. Even though the total time for a workform completed by the team was more than twice what it would have taken the librarian alone, the team approach freed up 6.29 minutes per title of the librarian's time, enabling her to spend more time on original cataloging and problems. It also provided needed work for the serials library assis-

Serials Time Study for Cooperative Cataloging

TABLE 5. Serials Library Assistants

TASK	NUMBER OF MINUTES PER TITLE
OCLC searching and authority work	7.32
Descriptive cataloging	8.08
Revision of own work	3.57
Verification of subject headings and classification	7.8
Updating holdings	5.1

Total time	31.87

TABLE 6. Librarian Working with Library Assistants

TASK	NUMBER OF MINUTES PER TITLE
Training	2.3
Revision (descriptive, authority, etc.)	15.21
Subject analysis/classification	4.5

Total time	22.01

tants who no longer had sufficient quantities of DLC and other CONSER materials to catalog, for the reasons previously outlined.

We did not attempt to translate the time figures into average dollar costs for either monographs or serials. Salaries of our library assistants are so much less (less than 1/2) than our average librarian

TABLE 7. Librarian Working Alone

TASK	NUMBER OF MINUTES PER TITLE
OCLC searching and authority work	10.0
Descriptive cataloging	2.3
Revision of own work	2.0
Subject analysis/classification	4.5
Updating holdings	5.0

Completed workform	23.8

TABLE 8. Librarian and Library Assistant Team Totals

TASK	NUMBER OF MINUTES PER TITLE
OCLC Searching and authority	7.32
Descriptive cataloging	8.08
Assistant's revision	3.57
Librarian's revision	15.21
Training	2.3
Verification of subject headings and classification	7.8
Updating holdings	5.1

Completed workform	49.38

salaries that it is clearly less expensive to utilize library assistants whenever possible. We assume with this that the amount of time spent on a task will not increase so much a lower level of staff that we would lose any potential salary savings. Another reason we did not look at salary costs was because it was irrelevant to what we were attempting to do. We were responding to an environment where we no longer had sufficient professional level staff (due to changing professional roles and/or staff cuts) to handle work which had previously been performed exclusively by librarians. We wanted to see if we could accomplish as much as or more than we had been able to accomplish before by utilizing a team approach with different levels of staff. The alternative would be not to catalog the materials and allow the backlogs to grow.

In addition to monitoring time spent, we also looked at error rates for the library assistants on the two monographic teams. We did not tabulate error rates for the serials library assistants (although we did provide continual feedback) because we never intended for them to be working completely independently in this category of material. We decided that the librarian would always review the CONSER upgrades to ensure the continued high quality of this work, given that we are one of only a handful of libraries that are permitted to perform these upgrades. With monographs, we hoped to achieve a fairly high degree of independence for the library assistants for the descriptive portion of the record. With a high degree of autonomy desired, it was essential that error rates fall within acceptable levels. We always envisioned some structured feedback for the library assistants and that this feedback would be particularly intensive during the training process.

In tabulating errors for the monograph teams, we followed the strictest standards, even counting minor punctuation problems. We defined errors as deviations from the cataloging rules as represented by AACR2 and the Library of Congress rule interpretations as well as MARC tagging errors. We accepted the librarian's judgement on errors as final. However, in our evaluation of the significance of error rates, we considered errors made in access fields which would affect someone's ability to retrieve the title far more serious than a deviation from AACR2 in matters of punctuation.

The Team I library assistants had an error rate of 2.08 errors per record, while the Team II assistant averaged 2.7 errors per record. Since the Team I library assistants were supplying fewer fields (they were not doing subject headings or classification) they had a smaller total number of errors and the mistakes they made were generally of a less serious nature (i.e., not in access points). The majority of the errors made by the library assistants responsible only for the descriptive part of the cataloging records were minor punctuation errors, such as the lack of brackets around a printing date. Only 7.6% of the mistakes they made were in choice of main entry, and, to quote Michael Gorman, "in the real world of the electronic catalog, there is no practical difference between main and added access points."⁹ For Team II, 39.3% of all errors were in subject headings or classification and 4.9% were in choice of main entry. The remaining 55.8% were minor punctuation errors.

The high error rate for the Team II library assistant, specifically in the assignment of subject headings and call numbers, coupled with the increased time it took this team to produce an original workform, caused us to pull back from this particular approach when we expanded the monographic team cataloging concept following the completion of the pilot project. Overall, we determined that the error rate during the pilot project for the Team I approach was lower than we had anticipated and was acceptable for a training period. We further found that the vast majority of the errors occurred in non-access fields, giving us the confidence to proceed with this level of work for some of our library assistants.

ATTITUDES

Over the years, as we implemented new cataloging procedures which call for a more responsible role for the library assistants, we initially encountered staff resistance. But, like Michael Gorman, "we have seen heresies become dogmas and wild speculations become received opinions"¹⁰ and have seen most resistance evaporate over time. In order to prepare for a change that we believed was necessary, we wanted to know where our staff stood on the issue of cooperative or team cataloging, both those who had experi-

enced it and those who were on the sidelines. In December 1988 we surveyed all of our serials and monographic catalogers.

Twenty-three of twenty-five people surveyed responded, including all but one of the project participants. The responses were generally more positive than we had anticipated, but a number of important concerns surfaced and affected the way we moved from a test environment to a more routine workflow. Ten of the respondents were librarians and the remaining thirteen were library assistants.

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they felt that cooperative or team cataloging was a good or very good idea. One person thought that it was a bad idea to have library assistants performing this level of cataloging and another person was not really sure. Another respondent felt that it depended upon the individual's knowledge of the cataloging rules and the languages of the publications. Interestingly, nine people (thirty-nine percent) felt that it would be necessary to employ such a procedure if we hoped to increase the amount of original monograph or serials upgrade cataloging.

When questioned about training and compensation issues for the library assistants, fifty-seven percent thought that they would need little additional training to handle this new level of responsibility but thirty-nine percent felt that the assistants should be limited to working with materials in languages they knew. Five people (four of them librarians) thought that the assistants would need extensive cataloging experience to do it but no one felt they would need a college education. Thirteen of the respondents (four of whom were librarians) cited additional compensation, promotion or some type of reward as being necessary for library assistants performing this level of work. When we asked them to name problems they could foresee with the process, the respondents identified a number of issues. One concern was that there would be too much time spent discussing and not enough time doing cataloging. Another concern was that there would be a backlog of material awaiting the subject work and that the librarians wouldn't be able to keep up with the volume of work generated by the library assistants. Some staff were concerned that some library assistants might feel exploited, as one person put it, "being dumped on." Other concerns were that it might lower the overall cataloging statistics of the library assistants (which could be considered a contributing factor to the lower vol-

ume of copy cataloging done by the Dept. in 1990) and a fear that there might be arguments when the librarian and library assistant didn't agree.

When asked what reservations they might have about performing such cataloging, several people raised the issue of "who would get to count the statistics." Several librarians voiced concern that their efforts to train and review the library assistants in such work might not be regarded as favorably as their own original cataloging. (We have attempted to respond to this concern in our current team cataloging by splitting the title count between the librarian and the library assistant.) Other respondents felt that it would be one more assignment to an already heavy load for the library assistants. As one person put it, "Let's make more work for the LTA's as if they didn't have enough to do already." Another remark bears repeating and remembering: "I can see a point where an LTA and a librarian's cataloging may not vary as much as their paychecks might."

Twelve of the thirteen responding library assistants indicated that cooperative or team cataloging would be a welcome opportunity to learn and contribute in a new way. They expressed satisfaction at seeing their own work reflected in the OCLC database. Two of the library assistants indicated that they might feel personally exploited, three felt that it would be just another job assignment and two felt that it would be a difficult challenge. The multiple answers given by some respondents to this question point out a certain ambivalence toward the team concept.

We also asked the project participants to evaluate their experience. Nine of the ten participants responded. Three indicated that they very much enjoyed it, four liked it somewhat, and two didn't mind doing it. No one indicated that they disliked the experience. They noted that it helped to reinforce the cataloging rules they had been taught, and they enjoyed the creative aspect that was missing in copy cataloging. The librarians involved (three of the nine respondents) appreciated not having to search OCLC, being able to concentrate on the subject analysis, and working closely with the library assistants and building a sense of a team.

When asked what they didn't like about the process, everyone commented that there was too great a lag time between the library assistant's work and the librarian's follow-up. Both librarians and

library assistants perceived this as a major problem and were frustrated by it. The librarians noted that they didn't like having to explain the same things over and over and "having people question rules that I didn't make up in the first place." The level of satisfaction was split evenly between three people who greatly preferred this type of work to their normal duties, three who preferred it somewhat, and three who didn't have a preference.

Suggestions listed by the library assistants for improving the team concept were: (1) noting that some paraprofessionals would have the potential for doing classification and subject headings and should be allowed to pursue this and (2) a need to structure the process some way in order to reduce the time waiting for completion. As one individual remarked, "I don't want to see our work negated because a cataloger, librarian or inputter sat on the paper-work too long and someone else beat us on OCLC."

The library assistants involved were generally enthusiastic. There were, however, some words of caution, such as: "Idealistically, I believe that if a person's capable and performs a higher level of cataloging, then that person should be financially compensated." Another person noted that "it should always remain a choice. Non participating LTA's may be ostracized or pressured to participate."

TODAY AND TOMORROW

A year and a half has gone by since we concluded our pilot project. We have succeeded in upgrading four of our monographic library assistants to the archivist level in order to compensate them adequately for their routine performance of original cataloging in the team environment. Several other monograph library assistants perform this level of work occasionally and we plan to submit several more reclassification requests. Each archivist began by doing just descriptive cataloging but most soon advanced to doing some preliminary subject analysis and classification. The librarians, however, are responsible for revising any call numbers and subject headings suggested by the para-professionals and are held accountable for the overall quality of the record. We encourage the paraprofessionals to set the upper limits of their cataloging responsibili-

ty; we don't force them to do more than they feel comfortable with on a given title. Many of the librarians and the paraprofessionals involved in team cataloging enjoy it, and we have found that it has fostered greater cooperation and respect among all the catalogers. The one person who initially expressed the greatest reservations about the concept is now the one most likely to brag about the accomplishments of her para-professional partner.

The process has also been a partial statistical success. Our original monograph cataloging output increased by seventy-eight percent in 1990 from 1989 (from 3037 to 5415 titles). Team cataloging efforts accounted for approximately sixty-three percent of that increase. Total monographic titles recorded as cataloged decreased seventeen percent in 1990 from the all-time high in 1989 of 72,382. It is possible that a partial shifting of focus for some of our best library assistants to original cataloging and away from copy cataloging accounts for at least part of the overall decrease in the number of monograph titles cataloged. Other factors, such as especially high staff turnover in 1990, also had an impact on the total volume of cataloged titles recorded. We also counted some titles in 1989 that were cataloged the year before resulting in a somewhat inflated total for 1989. In spite of the apparent decrease in total numbers of monographs cataloged, we believe that we are doing a better job of getting more of the higher-priority material out faster, without sacrificing our commitment to cataloging all new receipts with copy. This is true because much of the time the library assistants previously spent copy cataloging centered on older titles pulled from the cataloging arrearage. They now devote from fifteen to thirty percent of their time to original cataloging and much of their effort goes to cataloging higher-priority new receipts. What we have sacrificed as we expand our cooperative cataloging efforts is the rate at which we are pulling older materials with copy from the arrearage.

Over the past year, the serials library assistants have continued to grow in their cataloging knowledge. They have ventured into assigning subject headings and call numbers as their confidence and expertise increase. They have become much more involved in the daily operation of the Serials Cataloging Unit and have initiated many procedural changes. Although the initial intention was simply to get the work done with the staff available, one of the outcomes

has been a more involved, fulfilled, "professional" staff. All CONSER member libraries have a sample of their work reviewed every month. CONSER reviewers have selected a number of our team or cooperative records for review and have judged them to be error-free in every case. Although we don't foresee a time when these records will not be reviewed by our serials librarian, the team approach, with its redistribution of certain tasks to library assistants, has enabled a staff of four to handle a workload previously handled by six.

Has the team approach to cataloging at the University of Florida blurred distinctions between librarians and library assistants? Is there still a vital role for catalog librarians in such an organization? We believe that the answer to both questions is "yes." Sheila Intner points out that it is increasingly difficult in automated libraries to understand and explain the difference between professional and paraprofessional catalogers. This is particularly true when the paraprofessionals typically have significantly higher statistics.¹¹ Why is this the case? The crux of the matter is not that the catalog librarians are inefficient or engrossed in superfluous details. Rather, as Philip Smith notes, the real "problem in comparing cataloging statistics . . . is the percentage of time the catalogers actually spend cataloging. With committee assignments, professional association activities and pressures to produce research and publications, the time actually devoted to cataloging varies greatly. . ."¹² It is also true that the role librarians play as problem-solvers and resource people for their paraprofessional colleagues, combined with the fact that we reserve the most difficult cataloging for them, both have a significant impact on the total volume they are able to produce.

It is our observation that the roles of both our professionals and paraprofessionals is expanding, albeit in different directions. We believe that one of the key roles of the catalog librarian in today's academic library should be to help determine cataloging priorities and develop strategies for controlling and providing better access to an expanding bibliographic universe. In such an environment, it is no longer appropriate to expect catalog librarians to play the same numbers game that their paraprofessional counterparts play. If more is expected of them that takes them beyond their desks, as Philip Smith and others have noted, then less must be expected of them

as individual producers of cataloging records. The only way that catalog librarians could absorb the new assignments and still meet previous productivity requirements would be to increase substantially the total number of hours they spend at work to try to offset the hours they spend on activities which do not lead to a countable product. The changing role of the paraprofessional catalogers requires greater judgement and creativity than was previously expected of them. With care and planning, the roles for both paraprofessionals and professionals in cataloging can be more challenging and rewarding than in the past.

Team or cooperative cataloging has become an integral part of the University of Florida's strategy to make all of our materials physically and bibliographically accessible as quickly as possible. Like Michael Gorman, it is our ". . . belief and hope that we are in a time of realism in the field of cataloging—a time in which dogma and theory are being forced to yield to the exigencies of the practice of librarianship in the electronic world of today . . . The age of the petty discussion of petty aspects of the lore of cataloging may well have passed, but the age of the creation and maintenance of catalogs that meet the needs of the mass of people—catalogs based on utility rather than dogma—has only just begun."¹³ Our experiment in cooperative cataloging between librarians and paraprofessionals at the University of Florida is one attempt to meet the needs of a greater number of our patrons.

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