

Quatrefoil Overlap Analysis Fall 2012

As Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS) students at St. Catherine University, St. Paul, MN, we, Trent Brager, [REDACTED], and [REDACTED], conducted an overlap analysis study of the Quatrefoil Library located in St. Paul, MN. Working with Quatrefoil Library volunteer, [REDACTED], we analyzed the physical book collection as a whole. This study does not represent periodicals, sound recordings, videos or DVDs. Our purpose in this research was to find how unique Quatrefoil's book collection was compared to area libraries. We focused our attention at looking at the overlap between Quatrefoil and the largest library systems in the area: Hennepin County Library, St. Paul Public Library, and the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

We began our research by taking a sample from Quatrefoil's book inventory list. Using a random sample generator, we acquired a list of 500 random titles. We then used OCLC Connexion to look up each title to find out which area libraries, if any, also housed the same title. We also noted the largest number of holdings for each title so we could conclude if the item was truly unique to Quatrefoil.

When analyzing our results in this overlap analysis, we understand that there are certain factors that need to be taken into consideration. Our sample size of 500 titles is small and a larger sample size would be needed to get more conclusive results. Still, we feel that 500 titles does give a relevant idea of the overlap since Quatrefoil's collection is very small when comparing it to the largest collections in Minnesota. Also, it should be noted that when we were looking at the holdings in OCLC we were only looking at the records with the largest holdings attached to that particular record, which could skew the numbers for total holdings for some titles. However, we did search all the records to find the holdings for Hennepin County, St. Paul Public, and the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. We are confident that we found the holdings for libraries that we were comparing for the overlap analysis, but there could be some

error for holdings that are truly unique to Quatrefoil. We would also like to note that not all libraries have holdings that are located in OCLC so some titles may not be as rare as they seem.

Keeping in mind the drawbacks of this study, our research still concluded that Quatrefoil's collection really is quite unique. We found that 192 books out of the sample of 500 (38.4%) were titles that are not found at Hennepin County Libraries, St. Paul Public Libraries, or the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. After speaking with Professor David Lesniaski, we discovered that most library collections are less than 20% unique, which means that Quatrefoil is doing an excellent job keeping their collection diverse and original.

We examined our findings further by breaking down the books into five categories. The first category was children's books. Unfortunately, Quatrefoil's collection is very small in this area so our sample only included two children's books. We did find that one of these books was unique to Quatrefoil, but the sample size is much too small for any conclusive evidence. Historical Erotica provided a sample size of 20 books. This is a very small sample size also, but we did find it interesting that 70%, or 14 books, from the sample was unique to Quatrefoil. While our study can't be conclusive, in this category our results strongly suggested Quatrefoil's collection of this genre is an incredible feature for the library that should be maintained. Literature, any item with a LC call Number in the P's, made up almost a quarter of our sample. Out of 117 books, 41 were unique to Quatrefoil, or about 35%. In the nonfiction category, any item with a LC call number not in the P's (34% of our total sample), 59 out of our 170 book sample were housed only at Quatrefoil Library. The final and largest category from our sample was fiction. We looked at 191 titles and found that 76 were unique to the collection, which was just shy of 40%. Along the same lines as these category examinations, it was interesting to note that across several call number ranges, the percentage of overlap remained relatively equal, meaning that Quatrefoil is doing a good job collecting a broad spectrum of materials rather than focusing on any particular area more than others. Beyond these statistics that

illuminate local overlap, we also discovered that Quatrefoil owns 50 titles from our sample that has only one or no holdings in all of OCLC. This means that 10% of our sample is extremely rare and original to the Quatrefoil collection.

In conclusion, we feel that Quatrefoil is doing an excellent job in maintaining their collection and keeping it original and diverse. The Quatrefoil Library states that their mission “..is to collect, maintain, document and circulate gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer materials and information in a safe and accessible space, in order to promote understanding, an appreciation of diversity and history, and the value of communities.” Our study shows that Quatrefoil is collecting items that other libraries in the area are not collecting. Beyond this, Quatrefoil is providing access to materials that otherwise might not be accessible or even known to exist. It is evident to us in our research that Quatrefoil is following their mission and has a very special collection that is a significant resource to the community.

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