Training Catalogers: a Checklist for Managers and Trainers

The following training outline has been developed by the Committee on Education, Training and Recruitment for Cataloging of the Cataloging and Classification Section of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS) to assist in the training of original catalogers. Libraries, generally, and technical services in particular are rapidly changing for a variety of economic and technological reasons. Cataloging is evolving as the trend toward re-engineering the basic structure of the library organization, including technical services, gains momentum. More than ever, we believe that catalogers will be needed in the electronic era for original cataloging of materials that are unique, esoteric, or in non-English languages, as well as for providing description and organization for electronic resources. This outline provides the essential elements of a training program for catalogers for use within libraries. It is recommended that training begin with LC and PCC copy cataloging before moving to other contributed copy and finally to original cataloging.

This outline is intended for those who have responsibility for training catalogers at any staff level: from nondegree support staff to original catalogers holding master's degrees in library and information science. As each institution is different, and different levels of staff perform various cataloging tasks in each environment, the checklist below should be adapted to the individual library's context and the needs of the cataloger being trained.

1. Context of cataloging position in organization
   a. Orientation to unit/department
      i. Unit/department functions and organization
      ii. Mission/strategic priorities of unit/department
      iii. Tour and staff introductions
      iv. Peers and colleagues as trainers and resource people
      v. Electronic and physical organizational resources (e-mail, telephone directories, departmental Web pages)

   b. Orientation to technical services
      i. Overview of technical services functions and organization
      ii. Tour and staff introductions
      iii. Workflow of materials
      iv. Technical support
c. Orientation to the library
   i. Overview of library organization
   ii. Library's mission/strategic priorities
   iii. Staff/faculty associations, meetings and committees
   iv. Consortia and network memberships
   v. Tour and staff introductions

2. Systems infrastructure
   a. Technical aspects of local online catalog system
      i. Record structure (relationship of catalog records to other records)
      ii. Tutorials/training materials and other documentation
      iii. Searching local OPAC and cataloging modules
      iv. Mechanics of editing and creating records in local system
      v. Character sets (MARC-8, UTF-8)
      vi. Ergonomics
   b. Bibliographic utilities
      i. What is a bibliographic utility?
      ii. Which bibliographic utility/utilities does Library use and why?
      iii. Tutorials/training materials
         1. OCLC Connexion
         2. RLIN21
         3. Other utility or source of records
      iv. User manuals and other documentation
      v. Mechanics of connecting to bibliographic utility
      vi. Searching utility for bibliographic and authority records
      vii. Mechanics of editing and creating records in bibliographic utility
      viii. Exporting records from utility to local system
      ix. Method for indicating local holdings in bibliographic utility
   c. National programs
      i. Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC)
         1. BIBCO
         2. Cooperative Program for Serials Cataloging (CONSER)
      ii. National program standards (e.g., core record)
      iii. Local policies for using national program records
   d. Vendor loads and outsourcing
      i. Searching vendor databases
      ii. Retrieving/manipulating files of vendor records
      iii. Loading record sets

3. Descriptive cataloging
   a. Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records
      i. Work
      ii. Expression
      iii. Manifestation
      iv. Item
      v. Relationships
b. Bibliographic description
   i. Chief source
   ii. Title and statement of Responsibility
   iii. Edition; publication, distribution, area; physical description; series area; notes

c. Access points
   i. Choice of main and added entries
   ii. Personal names
   iii. Corporate names
   iv. Conference names
   v. Uniform titles
   vi. Series tracings

d. MARC format
   i. Leader and directory
   ii. Fixed fields
   iii. Variable fields

e. Descriptive cataloging tools and resources
   i. Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records
   ii. Anglo-American Cataloging Rules and Library of Congress Rule Interpretations
   iii. Joint Steering Committee for Revision of Anglo-American Cataloging Rules
   iv. ISBD documentation
   v. MARC Formats and Code Lists
   vi. BIBCO standards and guidelines
   vii. CONSER manuals and guidelines
   viii. ALA-LC Romanization tables
   ix. Library of Congress Cataloging Service Bulletins
   x. Older cataloging rules
   xi. Local descriptive cataloging practices documentation
   xii. Introductory cataloging texts
   xiii. Professional journals
   xiv. Additional internet resources, as available (e.g., Cataloger’s Desktop, Cataloging Calculator, MARC21 Tutorial, Understanding MARC Bibliographic)

4. Authority control—Names and Titles
   a. Verifying/establishing name headings
   b. Verifying/establishing uniform titles
   c. Verifying/Establishing series headings
   d. Establishing cross references
   e. MARC Authority format
   f. Bibliographic utility authority file
   g. Library of Congress authority file
   h. Other sources of authority records
   i. Local system authority file
   j. Local system heading reports
   k. Name authority component of the PCC (NACO)
l. Authority control tools and resources not introduced previously  
   i. Dictionaries, gazetteers  
   ii. NACO Participants' Manual  
   iii. Local authority control procedures documentation  
   iv. Additional internet resources (e.g., Authority Tutorial, Understanding MARC Authority, Geographic Names Information System, Geographic Names and the World Wide Web)

5. Subject analysis and classification  
   a. General principles of subject analysis  
   b. General principles of subject heading systems (LC, MeSH)  
   c. Structure of subject heading system (pattern headings, free-floating subdivisions, topical, geographical, chronological and form subdivisions)  
   d. Verification of subject headings  
   e. Library of Congress authority file  
   f. MeSH browser  
   g. Subject authority component of the PCC (SACO)  
   h. General principles of classification  
   i. General principles of classification scheme used locally (LC, Dewey, NLM)  
      i. Cuttering  
      ii. Literary classification  
      iii. Classed together series  
   j. Shelflisting  
   k. Subject cataloging tools and resources not introduced previously  
      i. Subject heading lists and manuals  
      ii. Classification schedules, indexes and tables  
      iii. Local subject heading practices documentation  
      iv. Local classification and shelflisting practices documentation  
      v. Additional internet resources (e.g., Classification Web, Library of Congress Classification Outline, Basic Subject Cataloging Using LCSH (2004), SACO Participants' Manual)

6. Holdings  
   a. MARC Holdings format  
   b. Local system holdings records  
   c. Local holdings record coding practices and documentation

7. Special formats and types of materials (resources and local practices documentation)  
   a. Monographs  
   b. Cartographic materials  
   c. Continuing resources (serials and integrating resources)  
   d. Manuscripts  
   e. Music  
   f. Sound recordings  
   g. Visual materials
h. Electronic resources
  i. Remote access electronic resources
  ii. Direct access electronic resources
i. Microforms
j. Rare books
k. Archival/Mixed materials
l. Government documents
m. Locally-produced material (e.g., theses/dissertations)
n. Foreign language and non-Roman script materials

8. Metadata creation: rules and schema
   a. Dublin Core Metadata Element Set
   b. Encoded Archival Description
   c. Metadata Object Description Schema
   d. Metadata Encoding & Transmission Standard
   e. Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH)
   f. Visual Resources Association Core Categories
   g. ONIX
   h. Other
   i. Local documentation

9. Quality control
   a. Balancing quantity and quality
   b. Local cataloging revision practice
   c. Local system and bibliographic utility record validation functionality
   d. Bibliographic maintenance of local catalog
      i. Procedures/responsibility for processing local system and bibliographic utility error reports
      ii. Procedures/responsibility for identifying and processing heading changes
      iii. Procedures/responsibility for other routine record corrections
      iv. Local system global change functionality

10. Special cataloging projects (policies, procedures, staffing and future plans)
    a. Types of projects
       i. Recataloging and reclassification
       ii. Retrospective conversion
       iii. Digital projects
       iv. Other
    b. Sources of funding and support
       i. Grants
       ii. Internal reallocation
    c. Outsourcing options and issues

11. Planning, managing and assessing the work
    a. Setting cataloging priorities (relationship to library’s mission and goals, users, and collection)
    b. Cataloging budget
    c. Personnel/staffing issues
    d. Turn-around time (productivity/efficiency measures)
e. Backlog management
f. Statistics collection and reporting
g. Reports of activities and accomplishments
h. Measuring results
i. Relations with other departments (communications, coordinated responsibilities, etc.)

j. Electronic discussion lists and weblogs
   a. AUTOCAT
   b. Catalogablog
   c. OLAC-List
   d. SERIALST
   e. Others

13. Membership and Participation in Professional Associations
   a. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)
   b. American Library Association (ALA)
      i. Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS)
      ii. Other ALA Divisions and Units
   c. Regional, State and Local Associations

Selected Bibliography


Task Force on an Appendix of Major and Minor Changes, Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access, Cataloging and Classification Section. *Differences between, Changes within: Guidelines on When to Create a New Record*. Association for Library Collections and Technical Services, 2004. (Web publication; requires ALA member login).


