The Use of Hamburg University Library Catalogues by Students

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I am glad to speak to an audience who considers "Educating the library user" not only as a subject worth discussing but as one of the urgent needs of both libraries and universities.

When I started working in this field it was more from a student's point of view than from a librarian's. When I was in my second year of "apprenticeship" - if I may describe it thus - as a librarian I had to decide on a theme for my diploma. Looking through those previously worked out by students of the School of Librarianship in Cologne and others I noticed that much had been written about library administration and classification, but very little about those who were to use a library and its resources of information.

On the other hand one of the first experiences I had when passing from the University to the Library was that most of these resources were unknown to me, and those I knew I handled with very little skill. Numerous conversations with former fellow students and with people who were continuing their studies at the University showed rather clearly that they had the same difficulties or rather the same lack of information.

Thus, in my first year at Kiel University Library I came to be quite naturally a sort of "information officer" to the students I knew personally. Very often I noticed that only some hints were necessary to make them handle the University Library more effectively. More often than not I simply told them that certain works of reference which were known to them from the departmental library (Seminarbibliothek) but not easily accessible there, were available on open access in the University Library as well.

My first set of questions was constructed to test the students' ability to handle the different catalogues and general bibliographies at Hamburg University Library where I passed my second year.

After some pre-tests it was clear that my questions were much too sophisticated. Most of the catalogues and works of reference were not even known to the students, to a degree even worse than at Kiel. This is because Kiel University Library is a modern building (constructed in 1966), in which bibliographies, works of reference, catalogues and loan office are on open access in one big hall. On the other hand Hamburg University Library has to struggle with an old building which was not conceived as a library but as a secondary school. Catalogues, bibliographies, loan office and information services are scattered over several floors of the building and very little is done (or was done) to guide the student by plans or indicators.

Thus I was led to set up a questionnaire testing simply which sources of information were known and used regularly.
The University Library of Hamburg has got five card catalogues. The first four are placed on the ground floor and students pass them on the way to the loan office while the fifth is placed on the second floor and is only accessible with the assistance of a librarian.

1) An alphabetical name catalogue, anonymous works included; the titles are arranged in the so-called grammatical word-order (1), ("Prussian instructions").

2) An alphabetical subject catalogue.

3) A classified catalogue.

4) A catalogue of periodical articles beginning in 1960 and covering only certain subjects, such as philologies and some of the natural sciences.

5) A Regional Union Catalogue grouping the most important libraries of Hamburg and surrounding provinces (Norddeutscher Zentralkatalog), which is used in the inter-library loan service. Hamburg students may use it with profit when they want to look up whether a certain book, not available in the University Library, is available elsewhere in Hamburg so that they may go to the other libraries by themselves and not wait for the book to be sent.

The number of persons interviewed is not representative, statistically speaking. I stopped at 30 interviews, 20 to 30 minutes each, all of them tape-recorded.

It was this form of interview that proved to be something of a hindrance to strict statistical results. But it was very useful material for getting to know a student's way of expressing himself when describing his library experiences. Many of the difficulties proved to be linguistic ones: students using library terms with quite different meaning to that given by a librarian, or students misunderstanding library terms occurring in written or spoken information.

A very frequent misunderstanding was the different meaning attributed to the verb "bibliographieren" which, for a librarian means "consulting bibliographies" whereas students use it in a broader sense, meaning "consulting any source of information" including the card catalogues, very often even excluding bibliographies strictly speaking.

Thus a librarian's question "Haben Sie schon zu Ihrem Thema bibliographiert?"* may be answered affirmatively even though the student consulted only the card-catalogues of the library. An information officer who, in such a case, does not ask which were the bibliographical resources consulted will not be able to help the student effectively.

In order to collect material concerning the linguistic side of the problem I introduced only such special terms as "catalogue" or "bibliography" into the questionnaire. Most of the questions were put in a way that obliged the student to express himself in his own words. As a further precaution the interviews were held on the ground floor near the catalogues so that there was the possibility of controlling the answers: very often I had to ask the student to show me the catalogue mentioned because the name of the catalogue was unknown to the student.

As for the structure of the group I can say that selection was haphazard except for the fact that I limited the interviews to students, both undergraduates and postgraduates. The following table indicates the specialities on the vertical

* "Have you already consulted the bibliographies on your theme?"
axis, and the number of semesters (that is, of half-years) on the horizontal axis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialities</th>
<th>Half-years</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>post-gr</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will notice that none of the 30 students interviewed are "younger" (in terms of semesters) than 4 year-years. This must be due to the fact that a student rarely has to write a paper on a given subject before his fourth semester. It seems to be the necessity to work on his own and do his own literature research that causes the student to have a first look at the University Library. Before, the departmental library of his speciality — if any library at all — could be regarded as the main source of information.

Another important semester as regards individual research work, is the 9th semester. Students either have to work for a so-called Hauptseminar (main-seminar) or for their final diploma, if they have been very busy. But as a rule it is some semesters later that they start their preparation for the final examination. The table of interviews reflects this situation better than I had hoped it would.

Except for one student of education science who had chosen Biology as a speciality there are no students of natural sciences in the group of 30. It is a deplorable fact that the University Library has a very bad reputation among students of natural sciences. They know that the stocks of books for their speciality are insufficient, so they rely mainly on their departmental library.

The most numerous users of the University Library seem to be the historians. They are also the cleverest, skillfully exploiting library information sources. As a second subject they generally study one of the modern languages taught at secondary schools. All of them are going to be secondary school teachers. Whereas the other groups have elementary difficulties with the library even at an advanced level of studies, the historians are as a rule very well informed. This seems to be due to the fact that historians in any German university are the only students who during their first semester are instructed in the use of bibliographical tools, libraries and archives. These seminars are compulsory, and are part of their training as historians, the department of history being responsible for them not the University Library.

Those studying education science are going to become teachers in primary schools. They normally finish after their 6th semester. They are as badly informed about the library as the students of social sciences who stay longer at University.
Normally this latter group finish after their 8th or 9th semester.

The group "Others" consists of two students of psychology, one of theology, and one of librarianship.

Turning now to the questionnaire itself the first question was intended to show whether students consider the University Library mainly as a "store-house" of books or whether they are aware of it as a tool of information. The point of view of the library as a store-house of books largely prevails. The one person who used to work in the reading room was moreover an American student; German students during the interview used to complain about the reading room as a nuisance. They prefer to work at home. Very often they come to the University Library because they prefer to take home a book which they are otherwise forced to read in the reading room of the departmental library.

The first question was also very useful as a starting point for an interview because the students generally mentioned the subject of their individual research work. The interview could therefore be based on individual examples.

Questions 2-8 are concerned with the different catalogues.

Question 6b and 6c concerning bibliographies are inserted here because question 6a spontaneously led to bibliographic questions.

Questions 9-16 are concerned with the frequent case that a book is not immediately available either because (a) it is not to be found in the name catalogue, or (b) it is in the catalogue but already on loan.

Questions 17-21 concern bibliographies and printed catalogues of the most important National Libraries.

At the end of the interview the students were asked to indicate how they had been informed about the library.

Perhaps we could now examine the questionnaire in detail:

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Why have you come to the library today?</td>
<td>&quot;looking for some books&quot; 18 = 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;going to the lending-service&quot; 11 = 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;working in the reading room&quot; 1 = 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Which of the catalogues do you use most?</td>
<td>Alph. Name Catalogue 19 = 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name Cat. and Subject Cat. 8 = 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject Cat. 3 = 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** The name-catalogue comes first. This implies that the students get most of their bibliographical information in the departmental library and that they search for a definite book, not a book or an articles on a given subject.
3. Do you know any other catalogues which are available in the library?

(a) Classified Cat.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>8 = 27%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Known, never</td>
<td>8 = 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely made use</td>
<td>11 = 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes made</td>
<td>3 = 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** The classified catalogue is consulted very rarely. The students said they had tried to understand the system but finally found it easier to consult the alphabetical subject catalogue.

(b) Regional Union Cat.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>10 = 33%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Known, never</td>
<td>2 = 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had made use of</td>
<td>14 = 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question omitted</td>
<td>4 = 13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** One third of the students do not know the regional catalogue, and are those who work under the greatest pressure of time: delays for papers in the social sciences are much shorter than delays in history or foreign languages. Therefore these students do not make use of the inter-library-loan service and it is through this service that the students of the other specialities got to know the regional catalogue. For students of social sciences, however, it would be very profitable if they consulted the regional catalogue, for it can lead them to other important libraries within the town of Hamburg.

(c) Alph. Subject Cat.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Often made use of</th>
<th>12 = 40%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes made use of</td>
<td>15 = 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never made use of</td>
<td>3 = 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** Many students prefer the Subject Catalogue to the classified one. Some however, have found that in certain cases the classified catalogue provided a more direct lead-in. One student put it this way: 'If the subject is connected with a name, either personal or geographical, I prefer the alphabetical subject catalogue. If it is not, the classified catalogue is more useful'.

(d) Cat. of Periodical Articles (question added after interviews had commenced)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>8 = 27%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Known, never</td>
<td>5 = 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made use of</td>
<td>8 = 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question omitted</td>
<td>9 = 30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** The catalogue of periodical articles, and especially of research reports is known to relatively few students and those who had noticed it, did not recognise how they could profit from it. Many of them added that they thought they needed some introductory explanation to get along with it.

4. When do you consult which catalogue?

**COMMENT:** This question proved to be useless in most cases as the answer had already been given along with question 3.
5. Do you have any difficulties in consulting the catalogues?

(a) Name-Catalogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No difficulties</th>
<th>Some difficulties</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sumpf</td>
<td>15 = 50%</td>
<td>10 = 33%</td>
<td>5 = 17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENTS:** A tricky question because the following ones are intended to test the opinion students have of their own capacity to handle the catalogues. They could choose any of the catalogues but most of them applied the question to the name catalogue. Those who said they had no difficulties at all, proved to be the less informed eventually, whereas those who remembered difficulties were just about to discover some of the snares of the Prussian instructions.

(b) Alph. Subject Cat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No difficulties</th>
<th>Some difficulties</th>
<th>Never made use of</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sumpf</td>
<td>7 = 23%</td>
<td>3 = 10%</td>
<td>3 = 10%</td>
<td>17 = 57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. (a) Do you immediately find "difficult"

- Periodical titles in the alph. Name-Cat.? (e.g. "Neueren Sprachen")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>'Inversion' understood</th>
<th>Got some experience by trial and error</th>
<th>Never looked for periodicals</th>
<th>Ignoring the principle of 'inversion'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sumpf</td>
<td>12 = 40%</td>
<td>8 = 27%</td>
<td>5 = 17%</td>
<td>5 = 17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** This is one of the test-questions. A very simple example for grammatical word order was given ("Die neueren Sprachen"). Those who knew that they had to look for Sprachen neuer and who, in addition, were able to give a sort of rule were classed in the first group. Those who practised the inversion but gave such misleading explanations as: most important word first, subject heading first, were classed in the second group. In both groups students were reduced to trial and error when I proposed more complicated titles such as 'Allgemeines Zentralblatt fur die innere Medizin', which is transformed into 'Zentralblatt allgemeines Medizin innere'.

(b) How do you get to know whether there exists a periodical article on a certain subject?

**DIFFERENT ANSWERS**

**COMMENT:** This question was part of the bibliographical context but the keyword "Periodicals" automatically brought to light the special difficulties students have when searching for and ordering periodical articles. Only a few students made the mistake of searching under the author's name. They were all students of education science and influenced by the name catalogue of the departmental library which is a catalogue of both monographs and periodical articles combined. They expect to find the same sort of catalogue in the University Library. Most of them added they had difficulties in composing the book number correctly for the order form. The catalogue card indicates the basic number in the upper right corner. In order to get a given volume, the number of the volume and the year must be added. Students were even more helpless when they had to distinguish between different series of one periodical.
6. (c) Do you know the 'Dietrich' (2)?
   Yes 12 = 40%
   No 9 = 30%
   Question omitted 9 = 20%

   (question added after interviews had commenced)

   (d) How do you order periodical articles?
   By title of periodical 12 = 40%
   By author of the article 4 = 13%
   Never come for periodical articles to Univ. Library 4 = 13%
   Question omitted 10 = 33%

   (question added after interviews had commenced)

7. What do you read on the blue cards in alph. subject cat.?
   References to other subject headings 16 = 53%
   Wrong answers 2 = 7%
   Don't know 9 = 30%
   Never made use of subj. cat. 3 = 10%

   COMMENT: The blue cards are reference cards in the subject catalogue. Most students knew that but they had difficulties in distinguishing the indication "see" from "see also". The difficulties mentioned in 5c were of this kind: they had been led in a circle by "see-also" reference-cards.

8. Do you use the University Library more for literature searches in your own special subject, or more for information on fringe subjects?
   Special subject 13 = 43%
   Special & fringe subjects 5 = 16%
   Fringe subjects 4 = 13%
   Never search in the University Library 1 = 3%
   Question omitted 7 = 23%

   (question added after interviews had commenced)

   COMMENT: I had expected many more answers in the "fringe-subject-group" because of the preponderance of departmental libraries where the specialties are concerned. But departmental libraries in Hamburg University have no loan service and books must be read in the reading room. So students who prefer to work at home come to the University Library.

9. What do you do when your searching at the catalogues in vain?
   Ask University Library Information service 18 = 60%
   First ask Univ. Lib. inf. service, then go to other libraries 2 = 7%
   Go to other libraries 5 = 7%
   Stop searching 2 = 7%
   Different answers 3 = 10%

   (question added after interviews had commenced)

   COMMENT: This is another attempt to test the result of question 5. I wanted to know whether not finding a book in the catalogues meant to them "the University Library does not possess it" or whether they supposed they had made a mistake in searching and then asked the library staff for help and control. Two thirds did not want to run the risk of overlooking a book in the catalogues. They were accustomed to asking the information service. Among them were all the students who, in answer to question 5, said that they had difficulties with the name
catalogue. 23% do not ask for help and among them are all those students who said they had no difficulties with the name catalogue. I think this comparison speaks for itself.

10. Do you know the information service?  
   Yes, asked for help 18 = 60%  
   Yes, not yet asked for help 3 = 10%  
   No 9 = 30%  

COMMENT: In the previous question I asked whether the students addressed themselves to anyone in the Library for help. In this question a special room is meant. Very often the question was only understood when I pointed in that direction. Students did not make much difference between the loan office, the place where they get order forms and the information office. The room is very far from the loan office, a bit out of the way. This accounts for the 30% to whom the information service was unknown.

11. Do you know the inter-library loan service?  
   Yes, made use of 18 = 60%  
   No, never made use of 12 = 40%  

COMMENT: The Inter-loan service is generally known but in bad reputation because it is rather slow. That is why 40% did not make use of it.

12. Do you know that none of the catalogues indicates all of the library's books?  
   No 20 = 67%  
   Yes 10 = 33%  

COMMENT: This is a special difficulty at Hamburg University Library. The old name catalogue was lost in 1945 and accessions before that date have not been completely integrated into the new catalogue. This is indicated by yellow tags; in the catalogue but only one third of the students had taken any notice of them.

13. (a) Would you ask the library to buy certain books which you consider as important or which you need?  
   Yes 13 = 43%  
   No 12 = 40%  
   Perhaps 4 = 13%  
   No answer 1 = 3%  

13 (b) Did you know you could recommend books?  
   Unknown in general 21 = 70%  
   Unknown in Hamburg Univ. Lib. 6 = 20%  
   No answer 3 = 10%  

COMMENT: (13a & b) To those who complain about a lack of interest of students in the University Library these figures may indicate that, very often, there is not a lack of interest but a lack of information: half of the students interviewed would like to make suggestions for acquisition of books, but 70% did not know that suggestions are accepted and that it is part of their rights as library users to make suggestions.

14. (a) What do you do when the book you ordered has been lent?  
   Reservation procedure known 28 = 93%  
   Unknown 2 = 7%  

D-8
14. (b) Would you, in any case, put your name on the "waiting list"?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12 = 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on time left</td>
<td>10 = 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, if important</td>
<td>3 = 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different answers</td>
<td>5 = 17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT 14a:** Book-reserve is known to nearly all of them. They know they can ask for the date at which the book will be back and they reserve it only when they have enough time left to read it.

15. Do you expect the library to give you automatically a second copy of another edition if the book you ordered is not available?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students know how to order second copy</td>
<td>18 = 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student does not know</td>
<td>12 = 40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** Second and third copies sometimes get the same book number and are to be found on one catalogue card, sometimes they get separate numbers on separate catalogue cards and few students had noticed this practice. Some of them even expected the library to give them another edition of the same book. They did not know book numbers depended on the date of accession.

16. Do you know the open-access stock?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made use of</td>
<td>21 = 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known</td>
<td>6 = 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3 = 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** The open-access stock is a collection of frequently requested books of which 10 to 20 copies have been bought by the library, a service that is much appreciated by those who know it.

17. In the departmental library, periodicals are in open access. You can look rapidly through several volumes. Can you work in a similar way here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permission to pass into the closed area:</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Known</td>
<td>7 = 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>22 = 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1 = 3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** Very few students know that in special cases they may pass into the closed area (23%).

18. What is the difference between the card catalogues you are used to handling here and a bibliography?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different answers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bibliography</td>
<td>16 = 53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specialised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** Answers to this question showed that a bibliography to most students means a specialised bibliography.

19. Have you consulted the bibliographies on the third floor? (general bibliogr.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consulted</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8 = 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, unknown</td>
<td>22 = 73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENT:** At the time I made the interviews the general bibliographies and the printed catalogues of foreign national libraries were on semi-open access on the 3rd floor, and one had to ask for permission to go there. The result was that only 27% knew of the existence of these bibliographies.
20. Do you know the difference between a specialised bibl. and a general bibliography?  
Yes (Conditional Yes) 2 = 7%  
No 6 = 20%  
22 = 73%  

**COMMENT:** This question completes No. 19: the 6 persons classed together as "conditional yes" had been on the 3rd floor and had consulted general bibliographies but had not taken notice of the characteristics of general bibliography compared with specialised ones.

21. Do you know the printed catalogue of the Library of Congress, of the British Museum or of the Bibliothèque Nationale?  
Yes (Hamburg Univ. Lib.) 3 = 10%  
Yes (other universities) 4 = 13%  
No 23 = 77%  

**COMMENT:** Most of the students replied with the question 'What for? I have no intention of going to London or Paris'. The greater part however, admitted that they found it difficult to indicate one or several editions of a text they wanted to order by inter-library loan service. They were quite astonished to learn that the printed catalogue of a foreign National Library might be helpful.

22. (a) How did you get information about the University Library?  
Guided tour or written information 11 = 37%  
P fellow students 6 = 20%  
Asked for information wherever necessary 8 = 27%  
Tried to find out without asking 2 = 7%  
Had been shown the library by a librarian who was a personal acquaintance 1 = 3%  
No answer 2 = 7%  

**COMMENT:** The percentage of those who had got the written information or had been guided through the library was higher than I expected. Those who had made a library tour were not content with it. Some thought it was too superficial, they had only learnt where to find the different catalogues and services but not how to use them; others complained, on the contrary, that it was too detailed, and when they came to make real use of the library they had forgotten most of what they had seen during that first visit.

(b) Do you think the library notices are sufficient (including sign-posting of enquiry office?)?  
Yes 11 = 37%  
No 7 = 23%  
No need 12 = 40%  

**COMMENT:** I think the answers show once again the lack of awareness of the information problems. It is again those who find no difficulties with the catalogues but can't handle them who think they have been sufficiently informed about the library.
23. Did you see the room and collection indicator near the entrance? (question added after interviews had commenced)

Yes 3 = 10%
No 11 = 37%
Quest. omitted 16 = 53%

COMMENT: The last question was put because students rarely stopped at the entrance to look at the indicator. They simply overlooked it.

So this is a picture of students left mainly to themselves to get acquainted with a University Library, which means to all of them passing from an open-access system in the departmental library to closed access. To most of them the catalogues are a considerable barrier even at such an elementary level as reading catalogue-cards and filling in the right book number on the order form.

I tried to find out where some of the difficulties are to be found. I have come here to collect suggestions for amendment that I can use in persuading my colleagues in Hamburg that something more must be done than offering the traditional library tour and giving lectures for a group of 20 students each semester at a University with as many as 20,000 students.

REFERENCES


DISCUSSION

P. KAEGBEIN: It seems to me that students are greatly influenced by the methods and attitudes of the first library in which they work. It should, I think, be pointed out that in Germany the libraries of the Technical Institutes are not good. It would be a very good thing if Germany Libraries could make a uniform approach to the education of the user.

J.S. DAVEY: Can Dr. Schoch tell us whether the library staff of Hamburg University are worried over the ignorance of students in the use of the catalogues and bibliographies?

G. SCHROCH: They are certainly worried but they need proof of the students' lack of instruction. It is hoped that this survey will convince the library authorities that there is a need for student education in library use.

J. LUBANS: Would Dr. Schoch tell us how she selected the students for interviewing?

G. SCHROCH: Library users in the catalogue area were approached regarding their availability and willingness to be interviewed. Some refused, but others, even under the pressure of examinations, were delighted to take part.

R. GIRDHER: It appears that the students were taken through the questionnaire by Dr. Schoch in person. Are there any reasons why they should not take it away and answer the questions at leisure?

G. SCHROCH: I conducted the interviews near the catalogues, and the answers were recorded directly on tape. Each interview took about 20-30 minutes. There is a linguistic barrier to the correct interpretation of answers to a written questionnaire as many students do not know the right names for the various catalogues.

R. WALL: It would appear that the interview technique is satisfactory and well worth trying; although not economic of the interviewer's time, it is obviously an efficient means of communication, allowing immediate elucidation of questions and replies. It should also result in greater response since the onus of putting pen to paper is removed from the user. It would be interesting to know if the experiment is to be repeated using a larger sample?

G. SCHROCH: Unfortunately the time factor will not allow for a repetition of this work.

J.D. MACK: Can Dr. Schoch tell us whether she has reached any conclusions as to how the library can help students who do not know how to use it?

G. SCHROCH: We ought to sort and analyse the questions dealt with at the information desk. This should show where improvements in signposting will achieve results. It will also isolate those aspects which could better be covered by lectures or leaflets. Obviously some points may need an individual conversation with the enquirer.

P. KAEGBEIN: Participants may be interested to know that at Berlin Technological University Library we have a sociologist on the staff who is constructing questionnaires for users. These will be distributed during the summer and the results may possibly be published in IATUL Proceedings.