

Association Typographique Internationale

Educators Discussion Summary

Subject:

Type and typography Textbooks required by educators on the ATypI Educators List

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Commentators

Peter Bain

Peter Bilak

Tom Briggs

Deb Hall

Lance Hidy

Will Hill

Patrick Hogan

Will Powers

Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFarès

Jürgen Weltin

Mandy Wright

Discussion summary prepared by
Cynthia Batty, Executive Director, ATypI

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Statement of subject

In November 2003, ATypI Executive Director Cynthia Batty sent a note to the Educator's list asking questions about the type textbooks used by the discussion participants. Fifteen educators responded in some level of detail, and the results in this paper are based on these responses. The complete list of recommended books from the participating educators is attached.

It is understood that the number of respondents is not statistically significant, but the overall message of the book selection is still of interest.

Executive summary of results

The objective of this query was to try to discover the most popular textbooks being used internationally to teach type and typography. While the respondents are statistically not significant, the results show relatively consistent results. A total of 56 books were noted by the respondents. Of the fifteen respondents, six indicated they required or suggested Robert Bringhurst's *The Elements of Typographic Style*, 2nd edition (or higher). In second place with five is James Craig & William Bevington, *Designing with Type, A Basic Course in Typography*. And tied for third at four each are Erik Spiekerman & E.M. Ginger's *Stop Stealing Sheep* and Phil Baines & Andrew Haslam's *Type and Typography*.

Required = students are required to purchase the books for the class
Suggested = part of a group of books the educator suggested – often in the library or from the educator's personal collection

If only the books that were required (i.e., students had to purchase them) were considered, the leading book with five votes is James Craig & William Bevington, *Designing with Type, A Basic Course in Typography*, followed closely by Robert Bringhurst's *The Elements of Typographic Style*, 2nd edition (or higher) with four. Tied for third place with two votes each are Erik Spiekerman & E.M. Ginger's *Stop Stealing Sheep* and Phil Baines & Andrew Haslam's *Type and Typography* and Philip Meggs' *Type and Image*. A total of 20 books were noted in the "required" category.

Charts showing the complete list and ranking of both the required and the total books category are located after the book list at the end of this document.

From there the two lists became very diverse and in many cases personal in nature.

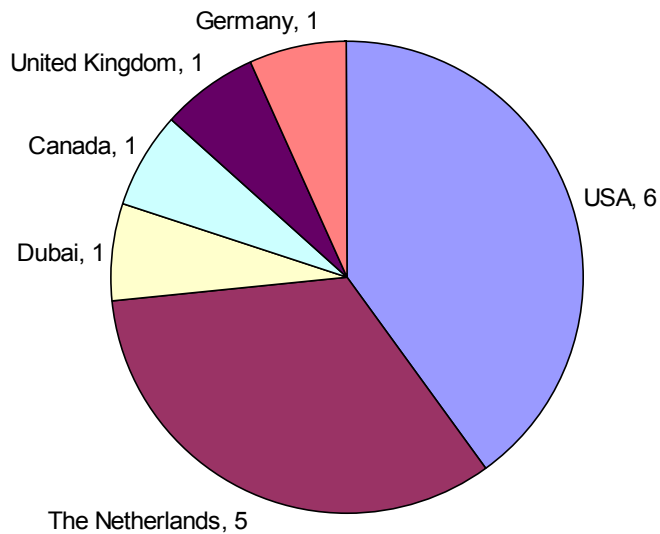
Of the limited response, between 33% and 40% of the respondents selected the leading two titles for their students. Nearly all the educators supplemented these with between 3 and 50+ additional options, and in many cases supplemented with parts of books as they found necessary to meet their requirements.

The respondents represented 6 countries, though it should be noted that the Netherlands was represented by a book list shared by five educators (one of whom is from the Czech Republic originally). The USA had 40%, the Netherlands 33%, and the remaining countries 6% each (a statistical oddity – there were only one responded from each of Canada, United Kingdom, and Germany).

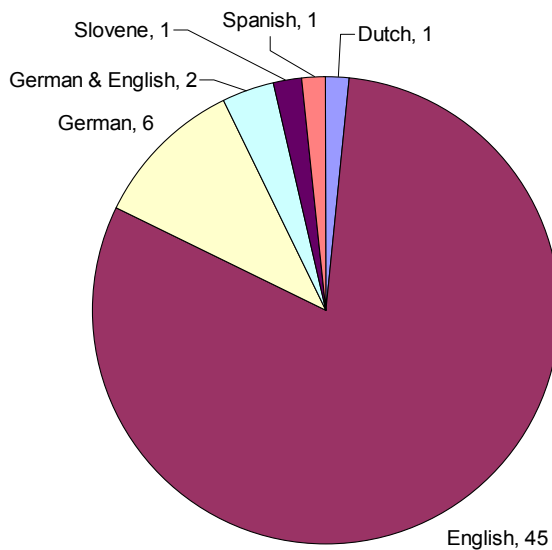
The international nature of the respondents makes it difficult to state that they are from “just one” country

The books cited were in five languages with English predominating at over 80% of the titles. German was second with 14%, and the remaining languages Dutch, Spanish and Slovene represented less than 2% each (with only one title each identified).

Countries of respondents



Languages of texts



The discussion

The question sent in November was:

I am interested in which books are being used the most as textbooks to teach type and typography. It would be interesting to be able to publish a list of the most commonly used books on the website, as well as why some books are better than others.

Over time I have heard that some people use manufacturer texts (like some of the Adobe books) as well as books by independents. Are you using those too?

And as a second question, how do you deal with the fact that there are "accepted" type terms, which are not used in current page makeup programs?

Educators who responded reported relative freedom in the selection of their textbooks and the suggested additional texts. While some required the texts (that is, the students had to purchase the book being used as the textbook) this was by no means universal; in some cases the educators recommended books that were long out of print and could only be used from library copies. Some educators used parts of books, even to the extent of individual pages copied from books. One noted that there might be a difference between the approaches in a two-year community college to that of a four-year school.¹ At least one of the educators was teaching a post-graduate course in typography, and to supplement their list they held "reading seminars" of some titles (*Ways of Seeing*, John Berger, and *What is a Designer*, Norman Potter).²

Many worried about the ability of students to purchase books because of both the high cost of the books and the student's limited budgets. Many noted that the school library had the books.

Lesetypographie and *Detail-Typographie* for instance are heavy duty, not only in size but also in price. I recommend them strongly; they are a life investment if you are seriously interested in typographic design. As not every student is, especially not in the beginning (at a 'normal' graphic design school), I leave it up to them to require them. They will be confronted with those books sooner or later anyway, because I choose examples from these to make typographic exercises with my students³.

[I] recommend rather than require; our library holds multiple copies⁴.

¹ Lance Hidy

² Peter Bilak

³ Jürgen Weltin

⁴ Will Hill

Sometimes I will copy a page or two from a book and hand them around in class in order to discuss a particular concept. I am very conscious of the fact that students have limited budgets and that type and design books are very expensive. I employ more of a doing approach with my students than a reading approach so texts become more a source for further discovery than a primary learning tool⁵.

Many reported concern that in general, their students were not receiving acceptable levels of exposure and training in typography, which they felt responsible to attempt to address in their classes. Noted one, "I teach in a fine art department in a liberal arts college where I am often the first one to expose students to typography⁶." Courses ranged from typographic elective classes to typography for communication design⁷ to introductory typography, history of typography, and type design⁸.

One was unique in that she is the author of a book that she uses for her classes⁹. Among the respondents only one noted that she produced her own teaching materials¹⁰. Another noted that he and his colleagues maintained a Wiki website that would allow both themselves and their students to grow their list of recommendations, which included titles in all aspects of letter arts, not just typography.¹¹ Others handed out multiple-page lists of additional texts for inspiration and study.¹²

Educators try new things:

. . . I use Bringhurst, and one other text for Type 2 at College of Visual Arts here in Saint Paul [Minnesota]. Type 2 is the second of 3 required 1-semester courses required of Visual Communications students. The first time I taught Type 2 at College of Visual Arts, I used "Stop Stealing Sheep." Then for several years I used Richard Hendel's "On Book Design." This term I am trying out James Felici's "Complete Manual of Typography."

My class concentrates on design & composition of trade & scholarly books, which is why I went with Hendel for a while. I may go back to that book; I have to assess Felici at semester's end. I like the idea of having a book such as Felici's, for I take the class pretty deep into some technical understandings (still in Quark).

I dropped "Sheep" because I would hope that all my Type 2 students would have been exposed to that material in Type 1 and some general graphic design classes. I'm not always finding that to be true. But I will not use it again in Type 2; I want something more serious¹³.

Most educators use multiple books in their courses

⁵ Mandy Wright

⁶ Deb Hall

⁷ Peter Bain

⁸ Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFares

⁹ Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFares, *Arabic Typography, A Comprehensive Sourcebook*

¹⁰ Mandy Wright

¹¹ Peter Bilak

¹² Peter Bain

¹³ Will Powers

They use different texts to teach different ideas. Notes one, "I am thinking of changing my required list, if only because no single title covers a first semester the way I would like."¹⁴

I use different texts at different times - rarely do I use a whole text - and because my classes are relatively small, I have the flexibility of assigning individual books to particular students, and then we share. In this case I often just lend my books out (currently I am missing a copy of Sheep!).

Additionally, the typographic approach in our program is not print but time-based and the scope is introductory and broad, so some of the more in-depth "book-related" typographic principles are not focused upon. However, I often have students who wish to know more in which case I lend those students particular books (as mentioned) on the basis of individual interest.

I do photocopy most of the Design Papers and give them to students on a cost recovery basis. I have received word-of-mouth permission to do so as these "books" (they are not so much books as published papers) are no longer being published (I wish they were!). They are dense yet simple and as such make a good "thinking" resource for students to keep. I use these over both "Media Design I" and "Media Design II" but mostly in "Media Design II".

I also make my own materials. Besides avoiding copyright issues they have the advantage of being specific to what I am teaching. Overall I feel a chorus of voices on the subject is preferable to only a select few viewpoints. This also seems to encourage students to develop their own considered philosophic standpoints and helps engender some very good discussions. I think of type as an evolving discipline so I feel I've done my job if this is the result of these classes.¹⁵

Another point of view on multiple texts:

A new book that I highly recommend for an introductory typography course is *A Type Primer* by John Kane, Prentice Hall. It has a simple, uncluttered format in which he presents the basics of most of the issues that I want my students to become familiar with in this level course (and some that presage the next level i.e., proportional concepts or building pages with more complex type hierarchies). Paired with a book like *Typographic Design* by Carter, Day, Meggs where the discussion of more subtle concepts of page layout and designing with type are discussed and cases of student assignments and professional practice are illustrated, I think Kane's book is an excellent resource.¹⁶

Several educators used web resources for type learning:

I also direct students to many type-oriented web sites. I particularly like studio motivo's counterspace site and especially that they have a time line <http://counterspace.motivo.com/>. We look at a lot of titling work in movies and multimedia pieces too¹⁷.

The "standard works" were sometimes perceived as inadequate.

¹⁴ Peter Bain

¹⁵ Mandy Wright

¹⁶ Tom Briggs

¹⁷ Mandy Wright

Designing with Type by James Craig . . . is one of the few that are suitable for two-year colleges, thanks to its brevity. I fault its over-simplification of type classification. Beginning students should be taught the sub-categories for sans serif – humanist, grotesque, and geometric – preferably not featuring Helvetica. I would also like my students to see more accurate revivals such as ITC Bodoni and Adobe Garamond in the specimen pages.”¹⁸

Some educators are concerned that typography is taught with only “type” as the content. “I’d also like to see more sample assignments requiring pen and brush¹⁹.”

Of the educators who responded, none used the texts for teaching software programs such as Quark or InDesign in their classes. Whether this was because the texts were not suitable for teaching typography, or it was expected that a student already knew how to use these programs, was not clear from the responses.

The problem of type terms in the history of type differing from those used in the composition programs was not discussed much; those who mentioned it noted that they just pointed out the differences. “I ignore the fact that page makeup programs don’t use the word linespacing. I try and sneak it into conversation whenever I’m talking about the appearance of leading²⁰” noted one.

Manufacturer’s texts for teaching typography in a program are not a resource for these respondents

The disconnect between type terminology in history and in programs was not perceived as a problem by these respondents

Conclusion

Because of the limited number of respondents in this study, it is not possible to draw sweeping conclusions, other than those stated in the executive summary. However, these results indicate that it would be worthwhile to expand the study, in part to identify the unmet needs of educators worldwide for teaching textbooks for type and typography.

¹⁸ Lance Hidy

¹⁹ Lance Hidy

²⁰ Peter Bain

Additional comments by discussion contributors

Jürgen Weltin

Just a quick proof correction regarding some book titles:

- Lesetypographie is by the authors *Hans Peter Willberg & Friedrich Forssman*
- Kompendium für Alphabeten is by *Karl Gerstner*

The Slovene book is just called *Knjizna Tipografija*. 'Univerza v Ljubljana' is the publisher's name.

I'd like to add two more books:

A very good book displaying students' work, not a text book (just a tiny bit) but very inspiring from Hans-Rudolf Lutz' years as a teacher in Zurich and at other colleges. Author: Hans-Rudolf Lutz

Book title: Ausbildung in typographischer Gestaltung

The first edition was published by Lutz himself. Not sure if it's available through a publisher today.

Another very valuable book on typographic design is *Typography* by Emil Ruder (another Swiss). Niggli, ISBN 3-7212-0043-8

I use both books for basic typographic design exercises mainly with first year students.

+++++

Will Powers: First comment is that I don't see the Hendel book I use in the lists. Maybe because I am the only who mentioned it, and that makes it, as you say, "statistically insignificant."

if you wish to add it for others' reference, here's some data copied from Amazon.

Hendel, Richard "On Book Design" Hardcover: 224 pages ; Dimensions (in inches): 0.90 x 11.34 x 7.52, Publisher: Yale Univ Pr; (November 1998) ISBN: 0300075707

Addendum 1: Contributor information

Tom Briggs
Assist. Professor of Graphic Design
Massachusetts College of Art
Boston

Jürgen Weltin
I teach at a small private design school in Ravensburg in Southern Germany, somewhere between Ulm and Switzerland, about a two hours drive from Stuttgart

Peter Bilak, submitting list used by himself and:

Peter Verheul

Erik van Blokland

Just van Rossum

Petr van Blokland

<http://www.peterb.sk>

<http://www.dot-dot-dot.org>

<http://www.typotheque.com>

We have a collaborative Wiki website to list the books so the list is slowly expanding - <http://just.letterror.com/ltrwiki/TypeMediaBooks>

Deb Hall
Assistant Professor of Art
Communication Design
Skidmore College
518-580-5048
518-854-3583

Peter Bain
City University of New York, Pratt Institute and Parsons School of Design

Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFarès
Chair - Associate Professor
Visual Communication Program
American University in Dubai

Mandy Wright
Instructor, Multimedia Studies
Faculty of Arts
University of New Brunswick
Eaton Multimedia Centre

Will Hill

Cambridge School of Art
BA (hons) Graphic design programme

Lance Hidy
Instructor in Graphic Design and Illustration, Northern Essex Community
College, Haverhill, Mass.

Will Powers
Design & Production Manager
Minnesota Historical Society Press / Borealis Books
College of Visual Arts

Patrick Hogan
Adjunct at three colleges
Pratt Manhattan, Marymount Manhattan, and New Jersey City University

Addendum 2: The list of titles

Editor's note: These titles are listed with as much bibliographic information as was provided with them, together with the editor's knowledge of the books to add additional detail if possible. Several are incomplete.

Baines, Phil and Haslam, A. *Type and Typography*, Laurence King Publishing, London 2002

Baseline and *Eye* magazine articles

Berger, J. *Ways of seeing*, Penguin, London, 1972

Binns, Betty (an out-of-print North American author)

Blackwell, Lewis *20th Century Type* (remix)

Bosshard, Hans Rudolf: - Technische Grundlagen zur Satzherstellung. Verlag bst, Bern, Schweiz, 1980

Bringhurst, Robert: *The Elements of Typographic Style*, 2nd edition (or higher)

Carter *Twentieth century type designers*

Clair, Kate *A typographic workbook*

Craig, James & Bevington, William *Designing with Type, A Basic Course in Typography*

Ehses, Hanno and Lupton, Ellen: *The Rhetorical Handbook: An Illustrated Manual for Graphic Designers* (#5 of the Design Papers Series published by the Design Division of The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design as a joint project with the Herb Lubalin Study Centre of Design and Typography, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art)

Ehses, Hanno: *Design and Rhetoric: An analysis of Theatre Posters* (This is #4 of the Design Papers Series published by the Design Division of The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design)

Fairbank, Alfred *A Handwriting Manual*, Faber and Faber

Felici, James *Complete Manual of Typography*

Forssman & de Jong - *Detail-Typographie*. Verlag Hermann Schmidt, Mainz, 2002

Fosburg, Hans Peter; Forssman, Friedrich *Lesetypographie*. Verlag Hermann Schmidt, Mainz, 1997

Friedl, Friedrich; Ott, Nicolaus; and Stein, Bernard *Typography, An Encyclopedic Survey of Type Design and Techniques Throughout History*

Frutiger, Adrian *Signs and Symbols*. Studio Editions, London, 1989

Gertner, K *Kompendium für Alphabeten*, Teufen: Niggli, 1972 (in English as: *Designing programmes*, Tiranti, 1968)

Gill, Eric *An essay on typography*, 2nd edition, Dent 1936

Gordon *Making digital type look good*

Gürtler, André *Experiments with Letterform and Calligraphy*. Verlag Niggli AG, Basel, 1997

Heller (ed) *Looking Closer* (series)

Heller/Meggs (eds) *texts on type*

Hollis, R *Graphic design: a concise history*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1994

Jean, Georges *Writing: The Story of Alphabets and Scripts*. Abrams Discoveries Series

Johnston, Edward *Writing, and Illuminating, and Lettering*, Dover, 1995.

Jury *About face*

Kane, John A *Type Primer*, Prentice Hall

Kapr, Albert *Schriftkunst*. Verlag der Kunst, Dresden, 1971

Kinross, R., *Modern typography: an essay in critical history*. HyphenPress, London, 1992

Klementina Mozina *Knjižna Tipografija Univerza v Ljubljani*. Ljubljana, 2003 (only in Slovene)

Kunz, Willi *Typography: Macro- and Microaesthetics* by Verlag Niggli AG and Willi Kunz Associates, 1998

Luidl, Philipp *Grundsetzliches*. SchumacherGebler, München, 1994

Lupton, Ellen and Miller J.A. *Design Writing Research*, Kiosk, New York 1996

McLuhan, Marshall *The Gutenberg galaxy: making of typographic man*, Toronto University Press, Toronto, 1962

McLuhan, Marshall, *The medium is the message*, Bantam books, NYC, 1967

Mediavilla, Claude *Calligraphie* Imprimerie Nationale Editions, 1993

Meggs, Philip *Type and Image*

Muller-Brockmann, J. *The graphic designer and his design problems*. Niggli, Teufen AR, 1983

Perfect, Christopher and Austen, J.: *The Complete Typographer*.

Potter, Norman, *What is a designer*, Hyphen Press, London, 1989

Rodgers, Bruce, *Paragraphs on Printing*. Dover Publications, 1980; ISBN: 0486238172

Smeijers, Fred *The Counterpunch*. Hyphen Press, London 2002

Smitshuijzen AbiFarés, Huda *Arabic Typography, a Comprehensive Sourcebook*

Spiekermann, Erik & Ginger, E.M. *Stop stealing sheep and find out how type works*. Adobe Press, USA, 1993

Swann, Cal *Language and Typography*

Ten Duis, L. & Haase, A. (eds) *De Wereld moest anders / The world must change*. Sandberg Instituut/Rietveld Akademie, Amsterdam, 1997

Treacy, Walter *Letters of Credit*

Triggs *The typographic experiment*

Tschichold, Jan *Die Neue Typographie* Berlin: Bildungsverband der Deutschen Buchdrucker, 1928, facsimilie edition, Berlin: Brinkmann & Bose, 1987

Tschichold, Jan *Typographische Gestaltung*, Basel: Schwabe, 1935; in English as *Asymmetric typography*, Faber & Faber, 1967

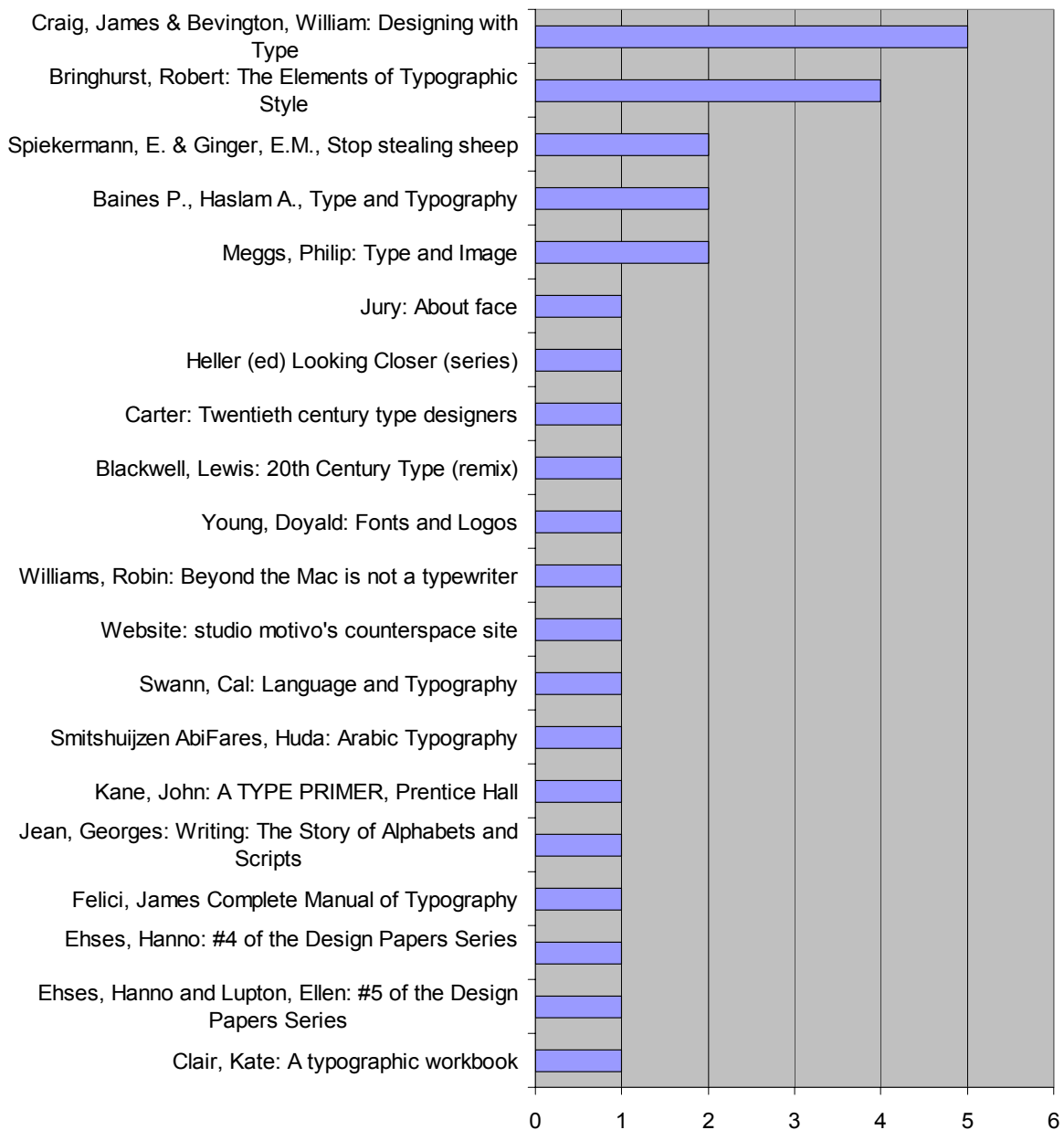
Updike, Daniel Berkeley *Printing Types Their History Forms and Use: A Study in Survivals*. Dover Publications, 1980

Website: studio motivo's counterspace site and especially that they have a time line <http://counterspace.motivo.com>

Williams, Robin *Beyond the Mac is not a typewriter*

Young, Doyald *Fonts and Logos*

Addendum 3: Required Texts



Addendum 4: All Texts

