Rural Library Opportunity Zones: Mapping Rural Library Employment Opportunities Using Quantum GIS

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Abstract

This paper uses Quantum Geographic Information System (QGIS) to locate library employment opportunities in Rural Opportunity Zones (ROZ): counties in the state of Kansas that offer student loan repayment and income tax waivers for five years for qualified individuals. Counties are displayed on a QGIS map that includes school district lines, hospitals, public libraries, and population densities. The counties in ROZ are compared using three measures: how many libraries are in the county; the standard of living in the county; and leisure activities that are near or in the county. The rural library opportunities are compared to urban library opportunities in Kansas, to illustrate how comparable the opportunities are at rural and urban libraries, with regard to average annual wages for employees, library use statistics, and collection size. The researcher concluded that many excellent job opportunities exist for library professionals and paraprofessionals in ROZ. The researcher also concluded that QGIS is a helpful and easy-to-use tool for comparing data in a geographical display.

Article Type: Research paper

Introduction

The political climate in United States has been divisive in the last decade, with one instigator being the educational and economic divide between urban and rural communities. In the information age, rural communities feel left behind. Industrial-age jobs are being outsourced to developing countries, and the individuals who held these jobs are left without the education and training they need to adapt to the evolving economy. Left without the time, money, and travel resources to attend a college, these individuals have one place to turn for technical education and job training: libraries. Rural public libraries are the center of their communities. Yet, rural libraries struggle to find qualified librarians to employ (BLS, 2016). Rural libraries tend to pay less than libraries in large cities, and the size and endowment for these libraries is less than that of the big towns, leaving qualified individuals believing that there is no benefit to working at a rural library. The following research illustrates how this lack of benefits is misperceived. Using Quantum Geographic Information System Software, a map is presented that relates library opportunities – in public and school libraries – to rural opportunity zones, which pay off student loans for individuals who relocate to rural communities. Individual counties are identified that meet both criteria. These counties are then compared by number and quality of library opportunities, standard of living measures, and recreation opportunities, using statistical analysis software.
Introduction to QGIS and ROZ

QGIS

Quantum Geographic Information System (QGIS) is an open-source software available for free on the web. Designed for geographers for use in georesource locating and flight mapping, the software has been downloaded millions of times for professional, educational, and personal use (Wilson, 1997). QGIS takes the traditional interactive map to the next level. Users can select from an array of template maps, including Google, Bing, and MapQuest variants, and then add layers of information by downloading packets of data from State and Federal data catalogs. The maps can be manipulated to highlight certain parts of data, and layers can overlap to compare sets of data. Elements on the map are interactive, allowing the user to click on them and see a complete data entry. QGIS can be used to make large sets of geographic data easier to digest; for example, populations of US cities are more easily conceptualized as a map with darkened areas representing population density than as spreadsheets with thousands of entries (as seen in Figure 1 above). QGIS will allow the reader to conceptualize library opportunities in Rural Opportunity Zones, without having to parse through a table of 300+ libraries.

Rural Opportunity Zones

Since 1950, the average population of rural communities has fallen by 60-80%, and recent censuses indicate that this trend will not stop any time soon (Carey Institute, 2008). The political climate of the 1990’s and 2000’s only furthered the divide between rural and urban communities, as businesses had incentives to relocate near large cities or out of the country. Federal laws were passed that eased the burden on the urban lower and middle class, but failed to revive rural communities (Gimpel & Karnes, 2006). There are now calls on all sides of the political
spectrum to find innovative new ways to bring economic opportunity and population growth to rural towns.

Rural Opportunity Zones were originally designated in 2011 as a response to the decline in rural populations by Kansas Governor Sam Brownback and the Kansas Legislature (Kansas Department of Commerce, 2014). Lawmakers believed that, by offering incentives for middle-class, educated individuals and families to move to rural areas of Kansas, this could reinvigorate these communities and bring new businesses, both small and large. With 50% of businesses and factories in small towns sitting dormant, and 60% of rural residents under- or unemployed, there was a lot of potential for growth if the state could just get businesses into these communities (Carey Institute, 2008). 50 counties were originally selected to launch the program, with 27 more added as of 2017 (Office of the Governor of the State of Kansas, 2011). The current map of Rural Opportunity Zones is shown in figure 2 below.

According to the Department of Commerce for the State of Kansas, Rural Opportunity Zones (ROZ) are authorized to offer two financial incentives to new residents: 1. “Kansas income tax waivers for up to five years” and 2. “Student loan repayments up to $15,000 (Kansas Department of Commerce, 2014).” In order to receive these benefits, incoming residents must meet criteria, namely an established residency in a ROZ county and a residency outside the state of Kansas for the five years prior. Kansas’s Rural Opportunity Zones program is unique in its design, but many states have considered similar programs including Pennsylvania, Georgia, Colorado, Nebraska, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Iowa, and Wisconsin (Kansas Department of Revenue, 2016).

Definition of Terms

In this paper, some terms will be used that may have ambiguous definitions. For the sake of clarity, these terms deserve a brief elaboration.

Standard of Living

The term “Standard of Living” can be used broadly to refer to any statistic that measures the “minimum necessities, comforts, or luxuries held essential to maintaining a person (Standard of living, 2012).” For the purpose of this paper, standard of living refers to three specific measures: comparable access to non-critical access hospitals to that of urban communities;

Figure 2: Map of all 77 Rural Opportunity Zones, including all major cities in Kansas. As you can see, the counties in which these cities reside are not included in a Rural Opportunity Zone.
the average per-capita income of individuals in the community; and the percentage of the community under the poverty line. These three measures were selected based off the wide-availability of these data in GIS databases. If a rural community has similar numbers to urban communities, then it will be considered to have a “fair” or “good” standard of living (Wilson, 1997).

Non-Critical Access Hospital

Critical Access Hospitals are common in the rural United States. They must have “no more than 25 beds,” lack “long-term care services,” and “be located more than a 35-mile drive from any hospital (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 2016).” Because critical access hospitals do not provide the same quality and breadth of services as an urban hospital would, they will not be considered sufficient to match an urban standard of living. Only hospitals that provide the same array of services as a larger, urban hospital will satisfy this requirement (Wilson, 1997).

Leisure Activities

While leisure activities can be defined as any activity that is done “free from work or duties” and “without compulsion (leisure, 2012)”, the term is used in this paper to refer to those activities that A) are unique to a certain community, and B) are likely to attract visitors out of pleasure rather than out of necessity. This was done to eliminate leisure activities that are shared by all communities, and put a focus on what makes each community unique. An example of a leisure activity, using this definition, is going to a waterpark, nature trail, museum, having a state-of-the-art internet infrastructure, or original architecture. An example of an activity not included in this definition is shopping at a supermarket, or watching T.V.

Local Funding Sources

Sources of funding that come from “local property taxes, either through a specific mill levy, an appropriation from general funds” or a “special tax” are considered local funding sources (Montana State Library, 2011).

Generally, local funding sources comprise the majority of funding for public libraries, however the amount of financial support can vary from city to city. This figure is used to illustrate the strong local support for libraries that exists in rural Kansas.

Literature Review

Quantum GIS and Geographic Information Systems in general have been used – albeit rarely – in some compelling research in Library and Information Science and related fields. In 2011, Sung Jae Park at Florida State University published a dissertation entitled “The Accessibility of Public Libraries to Users: A GIS Study.” A GIS software called ArcMap was used as part of the quantitative data analysis in the paper. The researcher displayed the daily travel activities of 409 individuals who visited public libraries to conceptualize patterns in their behavior. From this data, the researcher identified four library access patterns: “single-destination, en route, base camp, and trip-chaining trips (Park, 2011).” The researcher concluded that 80% of library trips were a part of multi-destination trips, and were most likely to be coupled with shopping for groceries or at the mall, or eating at a restaurant. The researcher also concluded that travel time, rather than travel distance, is the greater constraint to accessibility; as patrons can find a way to work a library visit into a trip, but are less willing to exhaust a lot of time in the process. This paper was one of few pure LIS research documents to feature GIS as a method for data analysis. It supports the legitimacy of GIS in LIS research, by introducing the field of LIS to GIS and by using qualitative interviews to support conclusions from the data. The researcher’s focus on the number and type of trips, rather than the number of unique users, as a way to show that smaller libraries may still get a higher use-rate than larger libraries, informed the present paper’s approach.

A great introduction to GIS and its use outside the field of geography is “GIS-Based Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences,” a compendium edited by Atsuyuki Okabe (2006). One article in this collection that informed the present study is “Urban Employment Areas:
Defining Japanese Metropolitan Areas and Constructing the Statistical Database for Them (Kanemoto & Kurima).” The researchers used QGIS in this study to propose political boundaries for municipalities based on population density and job opportunities. They rated the municipalities based on a number of factors, including: population size, employees-to-residents ratio, the number of commuters, income, and corporate capital. From their data, they were able to support new definitions for urban areas as Metropolitan Employment Areas (i.e. larger urban areas) and Micropolitan Employment Areas (smaller urban areas), which has since been used by the Japanese Government, individuals, and industry to inform research and decision-making. While this study primarily focuses on Japan, it takes care to mention the United States and how this data can be used to inform research in the States. The present study incorporates the theory of informed decision-making using data from Geographic Information Systems to propose the suitability of library job opportunities in Rural Opportunity Zones. It also takes inspiration from Kanemoto and Kurima’s municipality ratings when defining opportunities in the Zones.

The precedent of using QGIS to document opportunities for rural development is informed by Cano, Garzón, & Sánchez-Soto’s 2013 article, “Historic preservation, GIS, & rural development: The case of Almería province, Spain.” In this article, the researchers use a GIS software to identify historic rural buildings that have been abandoned, and encourage individuals to restore them by bringing new ideas for business and housing. Their reasoning behind this project is that the reuse of rural buildings will save the individual energy, money, and materials, will create jobs and stimulate the rural economy, and will improve the quality of the community and its sense of culture (Cano, Garzón, & Sánchez-Soto, 2013). The present study hypothesizes that similar benefits will be attained from the employment of highly-qualified individuals in libraries in Rural Opportunity Zones. Cano, Garzón, & Sánchez-Soto’s research included the identification of locations on a map, the collection and storage of data about those locations, and the display of rural building locations and their data in a GIS file. A similar approach was taken in the present study: Rural Opportunity Zones were located; data about library opportunities, hospitals, and leisure activities were collected; and the results were displayed in a GIS file.

GIS lends itself to the use of case studies as a part of research. In “Urban form and life-cycle energy consumption: Case studies at the city scale,” the authors use QGIS to model energy consumption in a ten-mile radius around the city of Austin, Texas. From this data, the authors identified trends in energy consumption based on the demographics of a particular neighborhood (Nichols & Kockelman, 2015). They then selected certain neighborhoods that exemplified a trend, and explored these areas in greater detail. This was done to expand on generalized numbers with real examples. Using case studies proved to be an effective model for working with GIS data, as the researchers gathered more information about their communities than they otherwise would have, such as the identification of factors that might contribute to greater energy consumption. This also contributed to the reader having a better conception of the data in what influence it has on the stakeholders in the communities.

Methodology

This project is designed to locate opportunities for library employment within Rural Opportunity Zones. In order to accomplish this goal, the QGIS system was used in conjunction with data acquired from the Kansas data catalog. Four data sets were selected for examination: Rural Opportunity Zones in the State of Kansas, a collection of counties that appear in a user-selected color on the map (Kansas Department of Commerce, 2015); School Districts of Kansas, divisions whose outlines appear as dark lines on the map (Kansas Adjutant General, 2015); Public Libraries of Kansas, that appear as large circles on a QGIS map; and, Hospitals and Medical Centers in the State of Kansas, that also appear as circles on the map. For the sake of clarity, Rural Opportunity Zones were made pink, public
libraries were made purple, and hospitals red. To compare population density across the state of Kansas, a layer was added which adds a small green dot per 100 citizens. Large cities like Wichita, Topeka, and the Kansas City/Lawrence/Overland Park metro areas are distinguishable by the size of their collection of dots; whereas the areas within Rural Opportunity Zones have few collections large enough to be visible. The final map is shown in Figure 3 above.

Once the map was compiled, it allowed the researcher to interact with the individual counties and see the Rural Opportunity Zone status, number of school districts, public libraries and hospitals of each. This data was then transferred to SPSS statistics software for analysis. In addition to identifying those counties with a high number of libraries, the software allowed the researcher to investigate the relationship between rural libraries and use rate, and median income of the town in which the libraries are located.

**Results**

77 counties were identified as Rural Opportunity Zones. The statistics for these counties are shown in figure 4 above. The counties had an average of three public libraries and two school libraries. The median income for library staff at
Public libraries in Rural Opportunity Zones was $38,000; the median income for library staff at school libraries was $46,000 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). These average wages are comparable to average starting wages in Kansas’s urban libraries. Nearly all public libraries in Rural Opportunity Zones received 80% or more of their funding from local sources - which is consistent with larger public libraries in the state of Kansas, such as Wichita and Topeka - even though the user population in Rural Opportunity Zones was often under 1000 (IMLS, 2014). Whereas Wichita had a population of 350,000 and visits of 1,000,000, Jay Johnson Public library in Quinter, KS (described more below) had 11,000 visits for a population of only 900 (Kansas Adjutant General, 2015). While the population and collection size of rural libraries is much smaller, the number of visits per capita is triple that of urban libraries. This shows that rural communities continue to value their libraries, perhaps more so than urban populations.

Several Rural Opportunity Zone counties have at least eight unique library employment opportunities. These are displayed in Figure 5. Those Rural Opportunity Zone counties that have at least one hospital are displayed in Figure 6. While some counties are further along than others, this data shows that Kansas counties have begun to grow and improve their standard of living, and would be suitable for early-career librarians to help that growth.

Figures 5 & 6: Number of School Districts, Public Libraries, and Hospitals in each Rural Opportunity Zone County (4: minimum 1 hospital; 5: minimum 8 library opportunities) Brady Lund 2017
The standard of living in Rural Opportunity Zone counties vary based on geographic region. Nine counties in Rural Opportunity Zones had at least one non-critical access care hospital (with Ness County having two). Access to advanced medical care is a complication for counties in southeastern, southcentral, and far western Kansas. Northcentral and southwestern Kansas, however, have multiple hospitals, most of which are located on highways for quick access. Scott, Ness, and Greeley, located in western Kansas, are three of only four counties in the state that had a per capita income higher than the national average (US Census Bureau, 2016). Conversely, Pawnee and Seward counties, in south central Kansas, had a per capita income under $18,000. Lost Springs, Kansas, located in Marion County, has an average income of $7,000 with an poverty rate over 20%, one of the worst in the country (United States Census Bureau, 2016). Because quality of life measures vary so greatly from region to region, it warrants further research when an individual is considering a library job in a Rural Opportunity Zone.

Leisure activities in rural Kansas are vast, stemming from the rich history of the area. From being a part of the Western Interior Seaway millions of years ago, to more recently being home to nomadic indigenous tribes such as the Osage, Kanza, and Wichita, the entire state is covered with museums sharing their stories and artifacts. Natural rock formations cover the state, from the sloping Flint Hills of the east, to the pillars and mushroom rock formations of the west. There are 25 lakes spread across the state, with plenty of access for water sports, hunting, and fishing. Most of the state is also within a few hours’ drive of a major metropolitan center, such as Wichita, El Dorado, Hays, Salina, or Denver, that offers dining, shopping, and entertainment. While Russell County has the most leisure activities with 13, including the clearest lake in Kansas, wealth of museums, a 20-minute drive to Hays, and location along Interstate 70, no county in a Rural Opportunity Zone has less than six unique leisure opportunities.

While these statistics illustrate that there are good job opportunities for librarians in rural libraries, it is difficult to conceptualize how rural libraries serve their communities, and what kinds of leisure activities and quality of life amenities these communities have, without looking at a few examples. The following brief case studies are valuable examples of the kind of opportunities rural libraries offer to early-professional librarians, including the fact that these rural libraries are valued and frequented by their residents and that there are numerous opportunities for leisure and a good infrastructure for standard of living.

Case Studies

Gove County

Four of the counties in Rural Opportunity Zones had at least 10 library opportunities; of these counties, only one had a non-critical access hospital, Gove County. Gove is located in northwest Kansas, with a total population of 2,700 residents. The county boasts four public libraries. The average collection size of these four libraries is 12,583, with an annual circulation of 20,562 (Kansas Adjutant General, 2015). According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the largest of these libraries, Jay Johnson Public Library in Quinter, Kansas had a total revenue of $102,000 and total expenditures of $67,188 (IMLS, 2014). Nearly $60,000 of that amount was spent on salaries for three employees (one full- and two part-time); $6,000 was spent on collections; and $1,500 for other expenses.

Jay Johnson library has a collection of approximately 17,000 print, audio, and video materials. It logged 11,223 visits with a total circulation of 15,478, a program attendance of 1,294, and 2,500 computer uses on 6 computers, in a city with a population of less than one thousand (Kansas Adjutant General, 2015). These figures demonstrate how vital the library is to the community, with the number of visits being 11x greater than the population, and the circulation 15x greater.
Jay Johnson library is well-funded by the city and residents, with $\frac{3}{4}$ of its revenue coming from local sources. The county has six school districts. The average annual salary for school librarians in this county is $48,000, and the districts serve an average of 150 students — much less than an urban school in the state (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Gove’s standard of living measure is benefited by Gove County Medical Center, which offers short- and long-term care. Gove’s poverty rate is 10%, below the national average (US Census Bureau, 2014). Based on the wages for librarians in Gove, as well as access to medical care and a below average poverty rate, Gove has a “good” standard of living.

Gove also has numerous outlets for leisure. It is a hotbed for fossils and natural structures left behind from the Western Interior Seaway in the Cretaceous Period and nomadic Native Americans 65 million years later (Kansas Sampler Foundation, 2013). It also boasts a number of hiking/biking trails, and is less than an hour from the larger city of Hays, Kansas. Hays is home to Fort Hays State University, a moderately-sized state college with enrollment over 10,000 (and houses a federal depository library), and has a number of museums, shopping centers, and recreation outlets.

From annual pay, to benefits, to lifestyle and culture, Gove county serves as a great example of central Kansas rural library opportunity. The opportunities at libraries like Jay Johnson might just be perfect to propel an early-career librarian into a successful leadership role.

**Marion County**

Marion County has the most combined employment opportunities with 12, including four public libraries and eight school districts within its borders. The population of this county has declined 50% in the last fifty years, epitomizing the increasing urbanization of the last half-century. Its largest city is Marion, with a population of 1900. Its city library has total revenues of $98,500, and expenditures of $88,500 (IMLS, 2014). Staff salaries and benefits account for $62,000 of the expenditures for two employees. Expenditures for collections is $14,000 per year. In 2014, the library had 32,000 materials. It logged 41,000 visits, a program attendance of 4,000, and 2,800 computer uses on eight computers.

Nearly 90% of Marion city library’s funding comes from local sources, showing a strong support in the community for the library. While the county has no non-critical access hospitals of its own, there are five hospitals within an hour’s drive of its limits. Its poverty level is a touch over half that of the nation (8%), and while the per capita income is only $16,000, the median family income is nearly $50,000 (US Census Bureau, 2014). Marion County, therefore, has a “fair-to-good” standard of living.

For leisure, Marion County has a rich history, including the Peabody Historical Library Museum, one of the earliest free libraries in the west built in 1875 and repurposed into a museum after a new Carnegie library was built in 1914 (Kanas Sampler Foundation, 2013). Marion is located less than one hour from four major population centers: Salina, Newton, Emporia, and Wichita. These four cities have a combined population of one-half million and boast four malls, five major event centers, two state colleges, and several large employers including the headquarters for Koch Industries. Marion County exemplifies the opportunities of rural central Kansas. These counties are close to city life, while being just far enough away to reap the benefits of rural opportunity zones and offer administrative opportunities to early-career librarians.

**Sherman County**

Just on the Kansas side of the Kansas-Colorado border is the county of Sherman. Sherman is not the most populous county in Rural Opportunity Zones, nor does it have the most library opportunities; however, Sherman does have one of the largest and most conveniently located towns, Goodland. Goodland Public library is large for a city of 4,500, with total revenues of $237,000. It employs four library staff, with total expenditures on salaries and benefits equaling $140,000 (IMLS, 2014). The library has
collection expenditures of $40,000 per year for a collection of 42,000 materials. In 2014, it logged 58,750 visits, a program attendance of 6,200, and a whopping 32,000 computer uses on 18 computers. These statistics rival that of many small urban libraries (IMLS, 2014).

Like Marion city in the previous section, 90% of the funding for Goodland Public Library is from local sources, and the impressive stats for the library demonstrate that the investment is put to good use. Goodland has one hospital within its city limits that offers both short and long-term care. Sherman County’s poverty levels are on par with the national average, but with fewer households in poverty than the national average (US Census Bureau, 2014). Sherman County’s standard of living is “fair.”

It is the access to leisure activities near Sherman that makes it an impressive county. Goodland is only 20 minutes from the Colorado border and three hours from Denver and Colorado Springs, thus a manageable drive from skiing, hiking, canoeing, among other great outdoor activities. The city itself is home to a small technical college and one of three 24*32 foot reproductions of Van Gogh Paintings around the world, giving it a unique, artistic footprint. Interstate Highway 70 also runs past the town: a four-lane highway that stretches from Utah to Baltimore, and passes through several major metropolitan centers. All this makes Sherman perhaps the best located of all the counties in a Rural Opportunity Zone.

Sherman county highlights the benefits of living in a border county in the state of Kansas. Kansas has 27 border counties that are within a three-hour driving distance of one of five major U.S. metropolitan centers: Denver, Oklahoma City, St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha (Kansas Department of Revenue, 2016). 21 of these counties are a part of the Rural Opportunity Zones program.

Conclusions

Rural libraries are the centerpiece of their communities. They are a place for individuals to educate and inform themselves, and a place for community and culture. However, finding staff willing to leave the urban environment and work at a rural library is challenging. The State of Kansas’s Rural Opportunity Zones program attempts to encourage relocation from urban to rural areas by offering student loan repayment and income tax waivers for five years. Using the Quantum GIS software, the researcher related these zones to opportunities at public and school libraries. Counties that had an optimal combination of opportunities and a high standard of living were discussed in detail. The researcher concluded that rural library employment in Rural Opportunity Zones is an excellent opportunity for paraprofessionals and early professional librarians, based on high enthusiasm for rural libraries, comparable starting wages to urban libraries, and the benefits of student loan payment assistance and income tax waivers.

Quantum GIS proved to be a useful and straightforward software to use for this assessment. The data from GIS websites provide a trove of information about the economic, social, and political characteristics of geographic regions. These data allowed the researcher to identify Rural Opportunity Zones, and locate libraries and hospitals within the zones, without having to compile and search through large spreadsheets. The visual data presented on the map provides additional comparative data regarding geographic location of Rural Opportunity Zones and library resources at rural versus urban libraries. Quantum GIS deserves further exploration by library professionals as a tool for geospatial analysis.

References

QGIS is a free geographic location system available online at http://qgis.org/en/site/

To learn more about Rural Opportunity Zones, and see the most recent list of ROZ counties, visit the State of Kansas Commerce Website at http://www.kansascommerce.com/index.aspx?NID=320


Endnotes 8.1


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Everything Under the Sun: Different Mentoring Pathways in Florida Libraries

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Abstract

This article shares a study done on mentoring in the state of Florida for librarians, library staff, and library science students. Using a survey that gathered both quantitative and qualitative data it imparts the findings on informal vs. formal mentoring, mentoring and retention, and benefits of mentoring. Additionally, the article contains the authors’ perspectives which demonstrate the relevance of mentoring at different stages within the profession. It includes implications on how the information gained from the survey results can be applied to mentoring relationships in libraries and indicates areas for future research.

Article Type: Research paper

Introduction

There is an abundance of literature on mentoring in libraries. Lorenzetti and Powelson's (2015) scoping review of library mentoring programs includes best practices and current trends of formal mentoring programs in academic libraries. One of the strengths of Farmer, Stockham, and Trussell’s (2009) article on revitalizing a mentoring program is its’ extensive bibliography. Shupe and Pung (2011) review the literature from a psychological perspective. What could another article on mentoring in libraries possibly add to the literature? This article is the result of three unique mentoring experiences at an academic library, involving an MLIS minority student, new librarian of Latino descent, and a seasoned professional Gringa\(^1\). The authors’ experiences prompted them to wonder what other institutions were doing to create and foster mentoring relationships to improve opportunities for growth and retention.

The article discusses a survey done in the state of Florida for librarians, library staff, and library science students. It reports the results of the survey developed with the intention that any person working in any kind of library (academic, public, special, or school) could have participated. It includes non-librarian employees,

\(^1\) From the Urban Dictionary, Gringa is a female native speaker of English. [urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=GRINGA](https://urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=GRINGA)
such as library staff or other information professionals, whom are rarely included in mentoring research. Using a mixed-methods approach this article shares insight to mentoring in libraries.

**Literature Review**

**Mentoring Defined**

According to the *Encyclopedia of Counseling*, the origin of mentoring can be traced back to the character Mentor in Homer’s book of *Odyssey* (Black & Zullo, 2008). When Odysseus left home to fight the Trojan Wars he asked his advisor and friend Mentor, to protect his son, Telemachus. Athena, the female goddess of wisdom, incorporated Mentor’s form to guide, teach, and protect Telemachus. In the search for his father Telemachus evolves into a new stronger identity – in today’s parlance, a protégé (Black & Zullo, 2008; Eleanor, Day O’Connor, Ragins, & Kram, 2008).

In 1985 Kram updated the definition of mentoring. She defined it as “a relationship between a senior, more experienced individual—the mentor—and a less experienced, junior protégé (or mentee) from the same organization.” Kram was instrumental in increasing the amount of mentoring research conducted across professions and industries. The majority of research shows that mentoring has a positive impact for the industry (regardless of type) and the mentor and mentee. Overall, mentoring has been shown to increase retention, job satisfaction, and self-esteem (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Kram, 1985; Ragins & Scandura, 1999).

**Formal vs. Informal Mentoring**

Formal and informal mentoring relationships differ in essential ways including initiation, duration, commitment, and structure of the relationship. Formal mentoring is systematic and structured; one-on-one and hierarchical with the mentor being the senior person and the mentee being less experienced (Eleanor, Day O’Connor, Ragins, & Kram, 2008). Formal matching of mentors and mentees happens in a variety of ways from using a calculated formula to setting up “blind dates” where the individuals identify what is needed from the relationship (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2008). Distinct measurable goals may also be set by external sources rather than individuals. Formal programs are usually prescriptive and set a minimum number of meetings and sometimes dictate the content of the meetings (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2008). Conversely, informal mentoring relationships are developed based on need which vary from emotional support, professional training, and general guidance. They are formed by engaging in interaction and relationship building with colleagues and peers. Informal mentoring happens when both parties desire to participate, even if the agreement is unspoken (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2008). Informal mentoring relationships are unconstrained in regards to time, number of meetings, interactions between parties, and formality of meetings.

The evidence is mixed on whether there is greater impact with formal or informal mentoring. Regardless of the type of mentoring, research shows that employees with mentors have higher job satisfaction, stronger commitment to the organization, and better interpersonal relations. Additionally, mentees are challenged and introduced to more opportunities which increase their visibility and the likelihood of being promoted (Eby, et al, 2013). Not only does the protégé benefit from a mentoring relationship but so does the mentor. He or she may feel a sense of higher personal satisfaction and improved attitude towards their work (Allen, Lentz, & Day, 2006). Serving as a mentor may cause a renewed energy to take on new projects and revitalize the energy for day-to-day activities (Eby, et al, 2013).

**Mentoring and Libraries**

Searching for academic articles with librar* AND mentor* in the major library databases results in a plethora of research, case studies, how-to guides, and best practices literature. In reviewing the literature, the researchers found that the majority discussed the positive impact mentoring has on retention, advancement, and improved understanding of organizational culture for the
mentee. Many discussed the positive effects on the mentor too.

Studies have shown that new librarians are interested in mentoring programs when considering positions. The Human Resources in Academic Libraries: White Paper (ACRL, 2002) found that new librarians were not only motivated by salary, job duties, and professional development but also mentoring. Black and Leysen (2002) surveyed new librarians employed at Association of Research Libraries and 76% of the responses rated informal mentoring as important to orienting to a new position. Of those surveyed some noted issues with formal mentoring programs including being paired with someone incompatible, selecting a person to serve as a mentor without knowing him or her, having mentors who were uninterested or too busy to be helpful, and having mentors who gave contradictory advice (Black & Leysen, 2002).

Mentoring and Library School Students

Many studies on mentoring programs focus on student workers, new hires, or tenure track librarians. Rarely are library school students mentioned in the literature. However, Lacy and Copeland (2013) found that library school students greatly benefit from mentoring to help ease the transition from student to professional. Through a formal mentoring program the study showed that student mentees gained information literacy skills, confidence in decision-making, an understanding of the wider role librarians play as liaisons, and an understanding of the professional culture (Lacy & Copeland, 2013). Mentors also valued the experience as some were mentored earlier in their careers and wanted to pay it forward. Mentors were motivated to keep up-to-date with their area of expertise (Lacy & Copeland, 2013).

Burke and Lawrence (2011) discuss informal mentoring calling it, “accidental mentoring”. Accidental mentoring is when a mentor unexpectedly takes on the role of a mentor, whether out of necessity or through small acts such as reviewing a resume or providing the student with an opportunity to learn new skills (Burke & Lawrence, 2011). While seemingly small and ordinary acts, these actions create an environment which allows the student to feel a part of a team, take ownership of their work, and understand the work culture of an organization.

Survey Methodology

A survey was used to gather feedback on mentoring in Florida Libraries. The goal of the survey was to get broad participation. Survey questions included demographic information and perceptions of mentoring programs. Participants were asked to opine on the success or failure of their mentoring program experience. A question was included regarding whether mentoring programs were in place to address retention. The survey (Appendix) was created using Qualtrics. Any questions that were not relevant to the subject were suppressed.

The subjects of this study were employees in Florida Libraries. The survey was sent to various email lists within Florida including the Florida Library Association (FLA) list, the Florida Academic & Colleges Research Libraries list, University of South Florida library school student list, and the Dade County Library Association list. Additionally, the survey was promoted on Facebook and Twitter by the authors and on Twitter by the FLA. The survey was carried out with full Institutional Review Board approval. All of the emails, Facebook messages, and Tweets included an IRB compliance message. The survey consisted of 22 questions including 10 demographic questions. Participants could opt out of any question.

Survey Results

The demographic results of the survey show that there is a lack of diversity in the age, gender, and ethnicity of the participants. Of the 272 participants who took the survey, 81.2% identify
as female and 18.8% as male. The largest percent were between the ages of 31 and 35 (17.9%) followed by 41-45 (16%) and 56-60 (14.4%). Although the target of the survey population was for all types of libraries, the majority of participants (55.4%) were from academic libraries compared to 35.8% from public, 1.6% from special, 1.6% from school, and 5.6% from other.

Participants were asked to describe their current position. The vast majority (54%) were librarians with two-plus years of experience at their current institution. Twenty-five percent of the respondents were library staff, 10.2% newly hired librarians, 9.4% other, and 1.4% library school students or recent library school graduates. The majority (40.8%) have been in their current position between two and five years followed by zero to one year for 19.3% with a close 3rd place of six to ten years.

The survey asked a number of questions about identity. Eighty-nine percent of the participants identified as Americans with 11% identifying as foreign born. In terms of race and ethnicity, 58.9% identified as Caucasian/non-Hispanic, 17.9% Latino/Hispanic, 5.2% African-American, 9.7% European, 2.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.8% American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.4% Middle Eastern and 4.4% other. (fig.1)

Forty-nine percent of the respondents stated that their library did not have mentoring beyond new librarian training (Fig.2). However, 59.4% (139 respondents) have participated in some type of mentoring program. (Fig. 3). It is evident that despite the lack of opportunity within their own libraries, respondents pursue mentoring opportunities through other avenues.

Figure 1 Demographics in Florida Libraries. The survey results indicate that Florida Libraries lack diversity with 58.9% identifying as non-Hispanic Caucasians.

Figure 2 Mentoring program beyond new librarian training. The results of the survey indicated a lack of available mentoring programs aimed at new professionals in the library field (48.9%). The number of participants who were not sure of whether their institution had mentoring programs was 21.3%.

Figure 3 Participation in a formal or informal mentoring program. According to the survey results, more than half of the participants (59.4%) have participated in some form of mentoring, either formal or informal.
Of those who have participated in a mentoring program, 75 were mentees, 42 were mentors, and 21 filled both roles (Fig.4). The survey shows that the most common tools utilized in mentoring programs are email (17.8%) and face-to-face meetings (15.5%). Less popular tools include contracts, evaluations, and assignments or homework, (Fig.5) which are all considered part of formal mentoring.

The role of the mentoring program was closely split between collaborative partnerships/projects, committee work, confidence building, daily job routine, institutional and library culture, leadership development, presentation/professional development, professional involvement, promotion/tenure, publishing, research, retention efforts, and institutional/professional socialization. Most of the mentoring programs focused on professional and leadership development, institutional/professional socialization, and collaborative partnerships. Only five participants noted grant writing. (Fig.6)
The survey included a question on whether the mentoring program attempted to address retention efforts and if so, how, why, and whether it was effective. Comments were general such as “team building and advancement opportunities help retain good employees” to more specific “… the program has had mixed results, some of our new librarians have stayed and flourished, while others have decided to move to other cities or positions …”.

The three most common reasons for a mentee to participate in mentoring were professional development (63.4%), leadership development (57.8%), and confidence building (40.9%), the same areas that most programs attempt to address (Fig.7). Mentees mentioned the strength of mentoring included the ability to self-select a mentor with whom to freely speak with for advice and guidance. The opportunity to pursue professional development opportunities such as collaborating on projects or publishing was also key to the success of the program. Weaknesses included a lack of structure, time, and professional development opportunities. Several noted the preference of face-to-face interactions versus virtual communication.

Orientation was one of the most requested components of an ideal mentoring program. Orienting new hires, explaining the organizational culture and its expectations, and serving as a motivator for promotion all lead to developing confidence in the mentee. Orientation was also noted to help increase the mentees network for collaborative projects/publications in order to acquire promotion/tenure.

Mentors were asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship and what impact it had on them. Overall the theme was that serving as a mentor was “extremely rewarding” resulting in lifelong friendships. Many mentors believe ideal mentoring includes cross-training, professional development, measurable goals, soft-skills building, promotion advice, flexibility, and orientation to the organizational culture. The relationship should be built out of trust and respect. Much of the same was mentioned as the strengths of current mentoring programs in Florida libraries.

**Discussion**

**Formal vs. Informal Mentoring**

The survey results gleaned that formal mentoring programs set for a specified time lacked the opportunity for strong relationship building. However, others noted that the absence of a formal structure was a weakness due to the lack of goals. Regardless of the type of mentoring program, it is necessary to identify goals to avoid the misuse of time, and help the relationship to
grow. The researchers feel that participants should determine what type of mentoring program will work best for them by understanding the fundamentals of each option. Some will be more comfortable with a formal program; others will prefer the flexibility of an informal program.

Having served as a mentor in both a formal and informal capacity, one author sees the advantages of both. In the formal mentoring program, the mentee selected her mentor and since she was taking over some of the duties of the mentor, it seemed like a natural fit. However, the extreme amount of paperwork required and the predetermined timeline prevented a natural evolution of a relationship. The rigidity of the program was set by the facilitator who was more interested in her personal gain than the benefits of the program for the mentor and mentee. As a result, the relationship between the mentor and mentee never reached its natural evolution. The same author has served as a mentor in an informal capacity where the relationship budded into a natural friendship and the two have co-presented and authored publications (including this one) together.

As a mentee, another author was a scholarship recipient of the Project Pipeline. Project Pipeline was an IMLS funded effort to identify, educate, and support library staff (Institute of Museum and Library Services, n.d.). It provided financial assistance, academic advisement, tutoring, test preparation, mentoring, workshops, and certification support. The formal mentoring program was fundamental to achieving the author's goals. It helped transform the mentoring experience into a career opportunity. More recently, informal mentoring has inspired and encouraged her to pursue other possibilities within the library field. Just last year she was selected as a recipient of a preservation grant awarded by the Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation. Formal mentoring provided the author with the tools to get a library degree, while informal mentoring helped her to build confidence as a new professional.

Furthermore, another author has also participated in informal and formal mentorships that have provided insight about organizational culture, current issues and trends in the profession, and helped make the most of conference experiences. Benefits have included publishing and presenting opportunities, along with resume reviewing and other job-seeking advice. Since no formal mentoring program is available at the author's institution, mentoring programs provided by organizations such as the American Library Association, and the Association of Research Libraries became essential for professional growth and networking opportunities. This included both year-long and conference mentoring programs. This echoes survey results indicating that even though some institutions do not offer mentoring programs, participants still find ways to partake in them.

**Mentoring and Retention**

It was purposefully asked whether mentoring programs help with retention efforts. Florida International University (FIU), a large rapidly growing urban public research university, is a majority-minority institution serving a diverse community of students including 65% Hispanic, 13% Black, 15% White Non-Hispanic, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander and 7% other (FIU, 2017). Located in Miami, commonly known as the Gateway to the Americas, individuals not from the city sometimes find it hard to acclimate to the diverse and complex culture. As a result, FIU has an ongoing struggle with retention. The survey comments showed that South Florida survey participants understand the challenges of retention but do not necessarily feel mentoring programs can solve the problem. According to participants, two of the major challenges of retention include: not being used to South Florida culture and salaries not being competitive. The issue of retention shows how essential it is for the profession to incorporate cultural competencies and diversity into the curriculum.

**Mentor Benefits**

Articles in *Psychological Bulletin* (Eby, et. al, 2013) and the *Journal of Career Development* (Allen, Lentz, & Day, 2006) outlined the benefits of mentoring for the mentor. The same themes
of increased personal satisfaction and improved outlook were found in the survey results. For example, one participant mentioned the joy she got from sharing her knowledge and how previous mentors had impacted her. "... So much of what I have learned throughout my career is not taught in a classroom. I was lucky to have a few people who helped me and now I am passing it on."

"Mentors learn as much if not more during the mentoring process about an organization and the people within the organization. It provides an opportunity to engage and interact with colleagues which in turn leads to better relationships..." sums up what a number of participants noted. One participant's comment related directly to the sense of renewal and heightened self-awareness, "Made me more aware of my own skill set...reenergized me to stay involved." Others mentioned the development and improvement of leadership skills and how working with new librarians gave them new perspectives.

**Mentee Benefits**

The comments from the mentees about their mentoring relationship coincide with the literature. One mentee mentioned being offered a librarian position at the end of the program. Others noted making life-long friends and how beneficial it was to have someone outside their department to ask "stupid questions". One comment, "I am learning more about myself through another perspective. I feel encouraged to pursue a leadership role in my library. My confidence has increased so that I want to be a mentor ..." represents the overall theme of mentoring benefits.

Similar to the mentor comments, mentees mentioned time constraints, shortness of the program, lack of structure, and conversely too much structure. A number of mentees mentioned that the mentor was too busy and did not reach out enough. One mentee who lacked concrete goals felt she did not fully benefit from the program. For any mentoring program it is important for the mentee to have specific goals (which can evolve and change) and for the mentor to commit to the time and expectations of the program.

**Conclusions and Future Directions**

Survey respondents mirror nationwide trends in that the majority of respondents are white and female. In addition, although most libraries did not have mentoring programs in their institution, more than half of respondents said they participated in mentoring programs. This suggests that recruitment efforts need to be made to promote library staff and that mentoring programs should be considered. Throughout the development of the survey and from the survey responses, the researchers came across mentoring programs that are currently active or were previously active in the state of Florida. Those mentoring programs should be revived and redesigned to include all library staff.

Mentoring programs such as Project Pipeline need to be reestablished. Project Pipeline was an IMLS funded effort to identify, educate, and support library support staff (Institute of Museum and Library Services, n.d). The existence of these types of programs should be geared to and can significantly help minorities with economic, social, or language barriers. There is a need for programs that offer mentoring on how to succeed as a librarian and provide financial assistance for graduate programs. Furthermore, the Board of Governors in the state of Florida previously extended tuition waivers for state university employees to cover all state universities in the State University System. This provided library workers who worked in state institutions the financial assistance to pursue a library degree from either Florida State University or the University of South Florida, Florida's only in-state MLIS programs. Reinstating that program would be beneficial to state employees who want to move forward in their careers but may not have the funds to do so.

Florida's highly successful Sunshine State Library Leadership Institute, should include opportunities for staff. According to the website, only professional librarians or those in management positions are eligible (Florida Department of State, 2017). Widening the pool of
mentees to include all library workers would help increase retention while supporting promotion and growth. To quote a survey respondent, “Many employees don’t even get to join such a program because they aren’t hand-picked by administration. An ideal program would be open to anyone interested. Everyone can benefit from growing.” This inclusion can also help increase the recruitment, retention, and promotion of library workers from racial and ethnic minorities.

Diversifying our Profession through Mentoring Programs

National statistics show a lack of diversity in our field with 84% of librarians identifying as Non-Hispanics whites (Department for Professional Employees, 2016). Projections show that in 2050 the Latino community will increase by 184%, so it would behoove the profession to increase the number of minorities enrolling in MLIS Programs (Al-Qallaf & Mika, 2013). One possible way to do this is to provide mentoring for currently employed library staff - of which 32,775 are of minority descent (American Library Association, 2012). In our survey, 25% of the respondents (N=62) were library staff. Of those, 38 identified as something other than white Non-Hispanics. Florida Libraries would benefit from initiatives used to recruit members of underrepresented groups.

Efforts could include a residency program, scholarship program, and cultural competency courses. In 2003, the University of South Florida established the Henrietta M. Smith Residency program, which included mentoring, to “counter the apparent problems of recruitment efforts and to ... increase ... library faculty from diverse populations” (Taylor, 2005). The residency encouraged new librarians from diverse ethnic groups to apply for one-on-one mentoring to help develop their careers. Unfortunately, the program was discontinued. However, similar efforts should continue to be made across Florida library systems to help decrease barriers.

Retention

Retention and its relationship to mentoring in Florida Libraries is an area for further research. One reason the researchers were interested in surveying Florida library employees was due to retention issues at their institution. Prior research shows that mentoring often leads to retaining employees (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Kram, 1985; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). However, the survey results showed that retention was not a focus for library mentoring programs in Florida. Future research should examine whether mentoring programs have had an unintended positive impact on retention and whether mentoring programs focused on retention make a difference.

References


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**Appendix**

**Mentoring Survey for Employees in Florida Libraries**

What is your age group?
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
• 46-50
• 51-55
• 56-60
• 61-65
• 66+

How do you most identify?
• Female
• Male
• Other

Where are you from?

To which racial or ethnic group(s) do you most identify? Please check all that apply.
• African-American (non-Hispanic)
• American Indian and Alaska Native
• Asian/Pacific Islanders
• Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
• European
• Latino or Hispanic
• Middle Eastern
• Other (please specify) ____________________

What kind of library are you in?
• Academic
• Public
• School
• Special
• Other (please specify) ____________________

How large is the library staff at your library (please include all library employees regardless of title)?
• 1-10
• 11-20
• 21-30
• 31-40
• 41-50
• 51-60
• 61+

Where is your library located?
• Central Florida
• North Florida (not Panhandle)
• Panhandle
• Southeast Florida
• Southwest Florida
• Other (please explain) ____________________

What best describes your current position?
• library school student
• recent library school graduate
• library staff
- newly hired librarian (first professional library position)
- newly hired librarian (have professional experience at another library)
- librarian with 2 or more years at current institution
- retired librarian
- other (please explain) ____________________

What is your title at the library?

How long have you been in your current position?
- 0-1 year
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26+ years

Does your library currently have a formal or informal mentoring program beyond new librarian training?
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Have you participated in a formal or informal mentoring program? (Either at your current place of employment or at a previous place.)
- Yes
- No

What role did you fill in the mentoring program?
- Mentor
- Mentee
- Facilitator
- Other (please explain) ____________________

What areas does the mentoring program attempt to address? (Either at your current place of employment or at a previous place.) Please check all that apply.
- Collaborative partnerships
- Collaborative projects
- Committee work
- Confidence building
- Daily job routine
- Grant writing
- Institutional culture
- Leadership development
- Library culture
- Presentation development
- Professional development
- Professional organization involvement
- Promotion and/or tenure
- Publishing
- Research
- Retention efforts
• Socialization within the institution/profession
• Other (please explain) ____________________

If the mentoring program attempts to address retention efforts, please explain how, why, and how effective you feel the program has been.

What does/did the mentorship program include? Please check all that apply.
• Concrete measurable goals
• Contract
• Email or other correspondence
• Evaluation of mentee
• Evaluation of mentor
• Face-to-face meeting requirement
• Regular ‘homework’ or assignments
• Regular meetings
• Set time schedule for time of mentoring program
• Suggested/required readings
• Other (please explain) ____________________

As a mentee what is your priority in your mentorship relationship? Please check all that apply.
• Collaborative projects
• Confidence building
• Daily job routine
• Committee work
• Institutional culture
• Leadership development
• Library culture
• Presentation development
• Professional development
• Professional organization involvement
• Promotion and/or tenure
• Publishing
• Research
• Retention efforts
• Socialization within the institution/profession
• Writing skills (journal articles, grants, book chapters, etc.)
• Other (please explain) ____________________

As a mentor, please describe how the mentoring relationship has impacted you.

As a mentor, what are the strengths and weaknesses of your mentoring relationship?

As a mentee, what are the strengths and weaknesses of your mentoring relationship?

As a mentee, please describe how the mentoring relationship has impacted you.

In your opinion, what would the ideal mentoring program for library employees encompass?
Faculty Perceptions of the 
Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education
Grace Kaletski 
Stetson University

Abstract

Applying the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (Framework) to an institutional context can seem like a daunting task, especially for a new librarian. As part of efforts to investigate how these guidelines can best meet student information literacy needs, a librarian at one university surveyed local faculty to learn what role they believe the Framework’s knowledge practices should play in student learning. Faculty read knowledge practices and indicated their beliefs about the importance, timing, and responsibility for each one. Findings are instrumental in updating the information literacy instruction curriculum and communicating with faculty about information literacy. This research may be useful for those interested in gathering faculty input as they determine how the Framework can support the unique needs of students at their own institutions.

Article Type: Research paper

Introduction

Information literacy (IL), defined as the set of abilities related to the discovery of information, understanding how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge, is vital to the success of student learning and research. For most of the 21st century, the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL’s) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (Standards) has provided the foundation for IL research and instruction programs across the United States. By 2011, ACRL decided that advances in the information ecosystem as well as shifts in the higher education environment warranted a reevaluation of the Standards. This led to the development of a document that became known as the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (Framework), which was adopted by the ACRL Board in January 2016.

The Framework heralds a major evolution in the world of information literacy instruction (ILI). The Framework is made up of six central concepts, called frames. These include Authority Is Constructed and Contextual, Information Creation as a Process, Information Has Value, Research as Inquiry, Scholarship as Conversation, and Searching as Strategic Exploration. Each of these frames are associated with knowledge practices and dispositions, which are examples of how learners might develop that frame. As examples, these are not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive. As the introduction to the Framework asserts, “neither the knowledge practices nor the dispositions… are intended to prescribe what local institutions should do in using the Framework; each library and its partners on campus will need to deploy these frames to best fit their own situation… these lists should not be considered exhaustive.” The challenge for librarians is to be selective and creative as to how each frame fits into the
curricula of individual classrooms and institutions.

Stetson University is a private, non-profit university in DeLand, Florida. In the 2015-2016 academic year, approximately 3000 undergraduate students were enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, and School of Music. At Stetson University, IL is a learning outcome of the general education curriculum. Required courses that are tagged with this learning outcome include a first-year seminar and junior seminar. The current learning outcome is closely based on the Standards. It reads, "using technology as appropriate, students know when there is a need for information and are able to locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use that information for the task at hand" (Stetson University, 2015). Responsibility for this learning outcome is not articulated, although the library supports students’ development of it by providing ILI. Librarians deliver ILI at the request of course instructors, and this typically occurs as a one-shot 50 or 75 minute session. As part of ongoing efforts to determine how the Framework can meet Stetson students’ learning needs in this context, a librarian at Stetson surveyed faculty to learn about their perspectives on student IL needs.

**Literature Review**

Faculty perceptions of IL guidelines have made a few appearances in the literature. Gullikson (2006) measured faculty perceptions of the Standards, Dacosta (2010, 2005) examined faculty perceptions of the Society of College, National, and University Libraries’ (SCONUL) Seven Pillars of Wisdom, and Stanger (2012) looked at psychology faculty’s thoughts on ACRL’s Psychology Information Literacy Standards. Overall, faculty generally show high support for the IL skills and concepts described by these guidelines.

More literature examines faculty perceptions of the concept of IL. After noting a failure to seek input from faculty in the development of major IL guidelines, Boon et al. (2007) report findings from interviews with English faculty who were asked to share their own conceptions of IL. The skills noted by respondents were generally similar to those described by major IL guidelines, besides a few discrepancies. Guidelines often note identifying a need for information as an important skill, but at no time did respondents mention it. Furthermore, respondents emphasized the importance of personal development and autonomous learning, which are not addressed by either the Standards or Seven Pillars of Wisdom. Pinto (2016) surveyed faculty the University of Granada on four IL categories. All four were seen as important, although the categories communication and searching were seen as more significant than evaluation and processing. Bury (2016) interviewed faculty at a public research university to discover their conceptions of IL emphasize accessing and evaluating information, and view it as “fundamentally intertwined” with other important academic literacies, such as reading and writing.

Other research describes faculty opinions about ILI without connecting this data to IL guidelines. Meer et al. (2012) found that faculty identify instruction exposing the range of available resources, search strategies, active learning, and instruction tailored to the course as the most beneficial aspects of ILI. Goldenstein and Kearley (2013) describe an interview with faculty who were asked why they had a librarian meet with their classes. Responses reveal that faculty wanted librarians to explain library resources and services as well as search strategies in order to facilitate student success in a research assignment or meet a university requirement, and valued librarian expertise with these topics over their own. Cope and Sanabria (2014) interviewed faculty and discovered that the way they described IL was largely shaped by the college where they taught. This finding is reflected in the Framework’s intent to be a flexible set of guidelines that should be tailored to contextual needs, not a prescriptive mandate. A survey of faculty conducted by McAdoo (2008) revealed that faculty believe IL should be integrated throughout the curriculum.

Faculty perceptions of librarians’ roles in teaching IL are also described in recent
literature. A common finding is that faculty place high value on the role of librarians in ILI, although it is heavily underutilized (Bury 2011; Cannon 1994; Dacosta 2005; Dacosta 2010; Hrycaj & Russo 2007; Leckie & Fullerton 1999; Meer et al. 2012; Saunders 2012; Singh 2005). Indeed, support for formal ILI is not unanimous. McGuinness (2006) asked faculty how students develop IL skills, and respondents overwhelmingly suggested that students are responsible for learning them on their own. Other studies identify faculty beliefs regarding who is responsible for teaching ILI. Cannon (1994) and Leckie and Fullerton (1999) found faculty to believe library research should either be taught by librarians alone or through faculty-librarian collaboration. Saunders (2012) reports that faculty believe ILI should be a responsibility shared by faculty and librarians, and McAdoo (2008) found that faculty believe all faculty should be engaged in the provision of ILI. Gullikson (2006) found that faculty believe librarians should hold primary responsibility for nine of the learning outcomes included in the Standards, while 25 may be shared by faculty and librarians and the remaining 53 are the domain of faculty alone. Similarly, Stanger (2009) argues that librarians’ training is only appropriate for teaching Standard 2 of the Standards, and the remainder are the responsibility of faculty.

The advent of the Framework brings an evolved conception of IL, but no study has yet been published that seeks to understand faculty perceptions of IL in the context of the Framework. Teaching faculty have a perspective on student learning that librarians typically cannot access, such as the nuanced requirements of specific assignments, discipline-specific conventions, or recurring concerns revealed after a review of submitted work. Understanding their perceptions on IL as presented by the Framework is critical for librarians who want to ensure that ILI fulfills student needs.

Methodology

An online survey was created to measure Stetson University faculty’s perspectives on the importance of each knowledge practice documented in the Framework, their beliefs about when students should begin to develop each one, and who holds primary responsibility for facilitating its development. Response options measuring importance included not, somewhat, or very important. Since the IL learning outcome is currently attached to a required first-year seminar and junior seminar, response options for timing included 1st-2nd year of college, 3rd-4th year of college, and later or never. Finally, the options for responsibility included librarians, course instructors, or students. This survey was influenced by Gullikson’s (2006) study that measured faculty perceptions of the Standards. Pilot testing revealed a need to revise the text of the knowledge practices to reduce jargon and split the lengthy 139-item survey into two shorter questionnaires. Survey A measures knowledge practices from the frames Authority is Constructed and Contextual (ACC), Information Creation as a Process (ICP), and Information Has Value (IHV), while Survey B measures those from Research as Inquiry (RI), Scholarship as Conversation (SC), and Searching as Strategic Exploration (SSE). The survey was approved as exempt by Stetson’s Institutional Review Board.

Participant selection was not random. A call for participation with a survey link was distributed to a university listserv. The listserv administrator estimated that between 200 and 215 full-time, adjunct, and retired faculty subscribe to the list. The call for participation was sent during the last week of classes in the Spring 2016 semester. A reminder was sent two weeks later and the survey was live for a total of three weeks.

This study was limited in a number of ways. Although the overall response rate indicates that nearly one third of potential participants completed the survey, because the survey was split into two briefer questionnaires with different items, it was not possible to glean data based on participant demographics such as discipline. Because each variable (importance, timing, and
responsibility) was measured by only three response options, participants were limited as to how they could respond. This was particularly a problem for the responsibility variable. As many participants pointed out in the comments at the end of the survey, responsibility for much IL learning should be shared by multiple stakeholders. Finally, the timing of the survey may have limited the number of participants. At the same time the survey was available, faculty were wrapping up the last week of classes, administering exams, and grading. Selecting a different time of the semester to administer it may have garnered more participation.

**Results**

66 surveys were submitted, including 26 responses to Survey A and 40 responses to Survey B. It is not possible to calculate a precise response rate, since the number of faculty who subscribe to the listserv is unknown. Based on the list administrator’s estimate of between 200 and 215 subscribers, between 30.69% and 33% of listserv subscribers completed a survey. Responses to Survey A represent between 12.09% and 13% of listserv subscribers, and responses to Survey B represent between 18.6% and 20%.

**Importance**

Survey participants ranked each knowledge practice in the version of the survey they received as either very important, somewhat important, or not important. These responses were represented in data analysis by 3.0, 2.0, and 1.0, respectively. All responses for each knowledge practice were used to calculate the mean importance score for that knowledge practice. Thus, knowledge practices with a higher mean score indicate that faculty see them as more important. Out of 45 knowledge practices, all received a mean score between 2.0 and 3.0, indicating that all knowledge practices are considered to be at least “somewhat important” by most respondents. The knowledge practice with the lowest importance received a mean response of 2.08, and the highest received a mean response of 2.93. The top ten knowledge practices of highest average importance and their mean scores, which range from 2.8 to 2.93, and come from five of the six frames, are shown in Table 1. Five of these top ten come from one frame, RI. Two come from SSE, while SC and IHV are represented by one knowledge practice apiece, both of which emphasize the practice of citing sources. ACC is also represented by one knowledge practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Practice</th>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organize information in meaningful ways</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cite the contributing work of others in their own information production</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize ideas gathered from multiple sources</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw reasonable conclusions based on the analysis &amp; interpretation of information</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use various research methods, based on need, circumstance, &amp; type of inquiry</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution &amp; citation</td>
<td>IHV</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match information needs &amp; search strategies to appropriate search tools</td>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize divergent (e.g., brainstorming) &amp; convergent (e.g., selecting the best source) thinking when searching</td>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use research tools &amp; indicators of authority to determine the credibility of sources, understanding the elements that might temper this credibility;</td>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine an appropriate scope of investigation</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1 Knowledge Practices of Highest Average Importance*
The eleven of the 45 knowledge practices that received the lowest average importance are shown in Table 2. An odd number of knowledge practices is reported here because of ties in the mean score. The knowledge practices of lowest average importance, shown in Table 2, represent four frames: IHV, SC, ICP, and ACC. The mean scores of these knowledge practices range from 2.08 to 2.38. Four come from IHV, three come from ICP, and two each come from SC and ACC. Neither RI nor SSE are represented in this list.

### Timing

Respondents also indicated when students should begin to develop each knowledge practice. Three response options were available, including 1st-2nd year of college, 3rd-4th year of college, and later or never. In data analysis, these responses were represented by 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0, respectively, so knowledge practices with a lower mean score indicate that faculty feel most strongly that students should begin developing them in the early years of college. The majority of respondents indicated that all 45 knowledge practices should initially be encountered between the 1st and 4th years of college. 33 knowledge practices received an average response of 1st or 2nd year of college, and 11 received an average response of 3rd or 4th year of college. One knowledge practice received equal response rates for both the 1st-2nd and 3rd-4th years. No knowledge practice was indicated as most appropriate for development later or never by more than 29% of respondents. Responses suggest that students should develop all of the top ten knowledge practices of highest average importance (Table 1) during the 1st-2nd year of college. Of the eleven knowledge practices of lowest average importance (Table 2), respondents indicated that all but four should be encountered in the 1st-2nd year, and the remainder in the 3rd-4th year.

The ten of the 45 knowledge practices with highest support for development in the 1st-2nd years of college are shown in Table 3. Among these, five come from SSE and three come from RI. The knowledge practices concerning citation round out the list.

The ten knowledge practices that most respondents believe students should begin developing in the 3rd-4th years of college are
shown in Table 4. This list includes four knowledge practices from SC, three from IHV, two from ICP, and one from ACC.

**Responsibility**

There was less consensus among respondents regarding who should be responsible for facilitating learning of each knowledge practice. Course instructors were indicated as responsible by the majority of survey respondents for 20 knowledge practices, coming from all frames except SSE. The majority of respondents believed that librarians hold the bulk of responsibility for six knowledge practices. These are shown in Table 5, alongside the percentage of respondents who selected librarian as their response. This list includes two from IHV and four from SSE. Respondents indicated that students should be responsible for facilitating matching needs and search strategies to appropriate search tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Practice</th>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarize the changes in scholarly perspective over time on a particular topic within a specific discipline</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the increasingly social nature of the information ecosystem where authorities actively connect with one another &amp; sources develop over time</td>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide where &amp; how their information is published</td>
<td>IHV</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop, in their own creation processes, a understanding that their choices impact the purposes for which the information product will be used &amp; the message it conveys</td>
<td>ICP</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources</td>
<td>IHV</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify barriers to entering scholarly conversation via various venues</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the contribution that particular articles, books, &amp; other scholarly pieces make to disciplinary knowledge</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically evaluate contributions made by others in participatory information environments</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize that information may be perceived differently based on the format in which it is packaged</td>
<td>ICP</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how &amp; why some individuals or groups of individuals may be underrepresented or systematically marginalized within the systems that produce &amp; disseminate information</td>
<td>IHV</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4 Knowledge Practices with Highest Support for Development in the 3rd-4th Years of College*
Among the most important knowledge practices (Table 1), the majority of respondents said that students were most responsible for their own development of five, course instructors were most responsible for helping students develop three, and one was tied between student and course instructor. Librarians were said to be most responsible for helping students develop “match information needs and search strategies to appropriate search tools.” Among the least important knowledge practices (Table 2), respondents said that students were most responsible for their own development of four and course instructors were responsible for five. Librarians were said to be most responsible for helping students develop “Recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources” and “Articulate the purpose & distinguishing characteristics of copyright, fair use, open access, & the public domain.”

From the ten knowledge practices with highest support for development in the 1st-2nd years of college (Table 3), none were said to be the primary responsibility of course instructors. Most respondents said that five were students’ responsibility and four were librarians’ responsibility. One, “give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation” was tied between student and course instructor. Out of the ten knowledge practices with highest support for development later in college (Table 4), five were said to be course instructors’ responsibility, four were said to be students’ responsibility, and one, “recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources” was said to be librarians’ responsibility.

Among the 18 knowledge practices that most respondents said were students’ responsibility, four also appeared on the list of knowledge practices of highest average importance (Table 1) and the list of knowledge practices with highest support for development in the 1st-2nd years of college (Table 3). These are shown in Table 6, alongside the percentage of respondents who said students should be responsible for each one. “Give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation” (IHV) also appeared on all three lists, but responsibility was tied between

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Practice</th>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate the purpose &amp; distinguishing characteristics of copyright, fair use,</td>
<td>IHV</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open access, &amp; the public domain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how information systems (i.e., collections of recorded information)</td>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are organized in order to access relevant information;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match information needs &amp; search strategies to appropriate search tools</td>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design &amp; refine needs &amp; search strategies as necessary, based on search results</td>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use different types of searching language (e.g., controlled vocabulary, keywords,</td>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural language) appropriately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources</td>
<td>IHV</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Librarian-Responsible Knowledge Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Practice</th>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize ideas gathered from multiple sources</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize information in meaningful ways</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw reasonable conclusions based on the analysis &amp; interpretation of information</td>
<td>RI</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cite the contributing work of others in their own information production</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Student-Responsible Knowledge Practices of Highest Average Importance and with Highest Support for Development in the 1st-2nd Years of College
students and course instructors. In addition, “Utilize divergent (e.g., brainstorming) & convergent (e.g., selecting the best source) thinking when searching” (SSE) appears on Table 1, and another, “Determine the initial scope of the task required to meet their information needs” (SSE) appears on Table 3.

**Discussion**

This data reveals a number of implications regarding Stetson University faculty’s perceptions of the Framework. The overarching finding is that Stetson faculty believe all aspects of IL are important and should be developed by students in the span of a four-year undergraduate education. Each knowledge practice received an average response that fell between “somewhat important” and “very important,” suggesting that all aspects of IL are valued by faculty at Stetson University. Likewise, each knowledge practice received an average response indicating students should learn it between the 1st and 4th years of college, and the majority of these should be developed within the first two years.

Much overlap exists between the list of knowledge practices of highest average importance (Table 1), and those with highest support for development in the 1st-2nd years of college (Table 3), including three knowledge practices from the frame RI, two that emphasize the importance of citation, and one from SSE: “match information needs and search strategies to appropriate search tools.” Four knowledge practices appear among those that should be developed earliest, but not those of highest average importance, and all four of these come from the frame SSE. This suggests that opportunities for students to develop many of the most important knowledge practices, as well as those from SSE, should be emphasized in first-year and sophomore classrooms and reflected in ILI program scaffolding.

The lists of least importance knowledge practices (Table 2) and those with highest support for development in the 3rd-4th years of college (Table 4) also have a number of overlapping knowledge practices. These include “recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources,” “decide where and how their information is published,” “understand how and why some individuals or groups of individuals may be underrepresented…,” “identify barriers to entering scholarly conversation via various venues,” “summarize the changes in scholarly perspective over time on a particular topic within a specific discipline,” and “understand that many disciplines have acknowledged authorities….” Many of these knowledge practices have in common an emphasis on disseminating original work and an understanding of discipline-specific conventions. These findings suggest that these knowledge practices may need less emphasis or later focus in the ILI program.

20 of the knowledge practices were thought to be the primary responsibility of course instructors by the majority of survey participants. If students are getting opportunities to develop these knowledge practices from their course instructors, perhaps there is less of a need for librarians to emphasize them in ILI. The six librarian-responsible knowledge practices were no surprise. All were related to the information search process and access issues, which are topics Stetson faculty already frequently request that librarians focus on during ILI. Four of them also appeared on the list of knowledge practices that students should develop earliest, which is also no surprise given that most ILI at Stetson is requested for first-year courses.

The 18 knowledge practices that respondents said were students’ responsibility is one of the most significant areas of concern for the ILI program. Are most students actually developing these abilities at all, and if so, how? This is especially alarming for the four student-responsible knowledge practices that were also said to be among the most important or earliest developed. Where and how do faculty expect students to be developing these apparently critical and foundational skills? This finding conveys a need for a broader conversation about who should have ownership over these aspects of IL. For librarians, perhaps this finding suggests a need to develop more learning opportunities for these specific knowledge
practices, whether through ILI or services students can seek out on their own such as tutorials, research guides, reference, or research consultations.

Conclusion

The findings described here will be instrumental as librarians work to ensure that ILI meets the unique IL needs of students at Stetson University. This data provided a clearer picture of which aspects of IL faculty think is important for their students, when they think students need them, and who they see as most responsible for helping students develop them. Plans are in place to revise and update the library’s ILI program guidelines in the coming months. These findings will be useful in determining which knowledge practices that faculty thought to be most important and those that they believe most strongly were librarians’ and students’ responsibility, while findings about timing will help determine when to emphasize which knowledge practices.

Although this research project describes the beliefs of faculty at one particular university, this data may be useful for librarians at a variety of higher education institutions who are thinking about how to get faculty input on the Framework as they design or revise ILL programs. This data should not be taken at face value as a definitive statement on faculty beliefs regarding the Framework, but instead be seen as a conversation starter or jumping off point for similar investigations at individual institutions. Future research is necessary to learn more about faculty perceptions of the Framework. Qualitative data with the same population or within specific disciplines may shed more light on this timely topic.

References


A Cross Cultural Framework: Implications for Improving the Academic Library Experience for East Asian Students
Melissa Aaronberg
Briarcliffe College

Abstract

Academic librarians have a unique opportunity to engage with international students and meet their information needs. The purpose of this paper is to explore recent efforts within academic libraries to prepare East Asian international students to utilize library services and develop a comprehensive set of guidelines for improving cross cultural communication in academic libraries. For the purposes of this paper, “East Asian” refers to Chinese (from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan), Japanese, and Korean students. The services provided by academic librarians within East Asian countries often differ from those provided by American university librarians, which can result in East Asian students avoiding the reference desk entirely. Language barriers and cultural differences also make it difficult for librarians to effectively communicate with East Asian students. Librarians can successfully engage these students through the use of cross cultural communication. To date, there is no comprehensive framework related to implementing cross cultural communication within the context of academic libraries.

Article Type: Conceptual paper

Introduction

Applying cross cultural communication within academic libraries has the potential to improve the library experiences of both international students and librarians. Culturally sensitive librarians recognize the way culture and language shape an individual’s behavior, while remaining aware of the context of a situation. Situations that require the skills of culturally sensitive librarians include, but are not limited to, the reference interview and information literacy lectures. An academic librarian’s ability to communicate effectively with individuals from other cultures is essential to increasing student satisfaction with the library and fostering a collaborative work environment amongst library staff.

Although increased cultural sensitivity amongst librarians can be beneficial for all international students, this paper will prioritize the needs of East Asian students for practical and humanitarian purposes. From 2014-2015, students from China, Japan, and Taiwan comprised 36% of all international students studying in the United States (Zong and Batalova, 2016). As the number of East Asian students grow on academic campuses, librarians have a responsibility to meet their educational needs. Centering on the needs of East Asian students is also valid from a social justice perspective. According to Ruble and Zhang, stereotypes of Chinese students range from the benign “smart and hardworking” to the negative “not assimilated and annoying” (2013). Such
stereotypes have the potential to negatively influence the academic and social experiences of Chinese students. Culturally sensitive librarians can play a pivotal role in creating spaces that encourage diversity and tolerance.

The purpose of this paper is to develop a framework for improving cross cultural communication in academic libraries. Building upon the best practices and strategies outlined in the current literature, this framework will emphasize collaboration, cultural education, practical application, and assessment. This paper will explore the studies related to the library use of East Asian students, and how these experiences present both challenges and opportunities. The proposed framework will focus on the following components: collaboration between librarians, other university departments, and students in order to foster cross cultural communication, a cross cultural training program for librarians that includes a variety of formats to optimize learning, empowering librarians to practically apply cultural sensitivity on the job, and the importance of self- and manager-assessments in determining how to utilize cross cultural communication in the long term.

**Literature Review**

**East Asian Students and the Academic Library**

The current body of literature regarding the international student experience in American academic libraries provides a valuable foundation with which to further examine the experiences of East Asian students. Many authors have taken into consideration the differences between East Asian and American university libraries, and have developed suggestions to improve library services for East Asian students. These authors advocated for increased collaboration between library staff and faculty in promoting diversity. Another common recommendation within these studies is to provide resources for using the library in languages other than English. The themes present in the current body of literature evolved from general guidelines relating to international students to a nuanced approach of the experiences of East Asian students.

Early literature regarding international students in academic libraries identified the linguistic and cultural barriers that impacted these students’ library use. In their 1987 seminal article “Foreign students, libraries, and culture”, Ball and Mahoney identified the unique linguistic and cultural struggles international students face when interacting with academic librarians. These range from differences in the perceived acceptability of maintaining eye contact to being unaware of the services reference librarians offer (Ball & Mahoney, 1987, p. 163). Ball and Mahoney also identified possible misconceptions and prejudices academic librarians may have towards international students, and implored academic librarians to be cognizant of cultural differences. The authors also note the differences between American university libraries and international libraries, such as the educational background of librarians and the accessibility of the stacks (Ball & Mahoney, 1987, p. 164). Ziming Liu similarly identified the difficulties Asian students encountered using open stacks and card catalogs (1993). Although the authors’ suggestions on how to implement cross cultural communication in the reference interview are achievable in many academic libraries, both Ball and Mahoney and Liu did not attempt to predict any student population changes or technology trends that may affect how international students interact with librarians in the future.

By the twenty-first century, scholars incorporated the perspectives of academic librarians in their analyses. In “Communication in academic libraries: An East Asian perspective,” Zhang provides a comprehensive set of possible services academic librarians can offer East Asian students. Zhang suggested that libraries give handouts in both English and East Asian languages with a map of the stacks and a list of common library terms with their definitions (Zhang, 2006, p. 172). Zhang emphasized the importance of hiring librarians from multicultural backgrounds and liaising with faculty members to develop programs and workshops on diversity (Zhang, 2006, p. 172). Similarly, Mu suggested
liasing with International Student Services and making the library’s website more user friendly in “Marketing academic library resources and information services to international students from Asia” (Mu, 2007, p. 574). Mu’s work took a holistic approach regarding students from Asia, whereas Zhang focused exclusively on East Asian students.

Another prominent suggestion in the current literature involved hiring librarians who specialize in East Asian culture and languages. After observing the library use of Chinese engineering students at the University of Oklahoma in 2012, Chen and Brown determined that “fostering and promoting an understanding of Chinese culture and Chinese university library systems by recruiting culturally sensitive librarians and continuing education will help provide customized library services that meet Chinese engineering graduate students' information needs and in turn enhance their educational experiences in the United States” (Chen & Brown, 2012, p. 341). According to Shao, Scherlen, Johnson, Xu, and Hu’s “Chinese students in American academic libraries: A survey of Chinese user satisfaction with U.S. library experience," 42% of those students surveyed answered “no” as to whether they were helped by a librarian who specialized in assisting students from China (Shao, et. al, 2013, p.30). Furthermore, 73% of students surveyed answered “no” to questions concerning whether the library’s website was available in Chinese and whether the stacks contained Chinese language materials (Shao, et. al, 2013, p.30). Based on these findings, increased multiculturalism within the library’s staff will greatly benefit the user experiences of East Asian students.

**Academic Expectations and Perceptions of the Library**

Academic libraries within East Asian countries differ from those found in American colleges and universities, and this informs an East Asian student’s understanding of what services the library offers. Confucian values are reflected in many East Asian university curriculums in the form of “observing, rote learning, and imitating,” as opposed to learning by participation and critical thinking within American universities (Zhang, 2006, p. 167). Although the term “Suzhi Jiaoyu,” which refers to a “quality” or holistic education, has made its way into Chinese higher education since the 1990s, many Chinese students entering American universities are familiar with an exam based education as opposed to an education based on critical thinking (Shao, Scherlen, Johnson, Xu, & Hu, 2013). Similarly, Japanese students often misunderstand American assignment guidelines and are unfamiliar with the expectation to use multiple sources rather than one textbook (Ishimura, 2013, p.22). In general, East Asian students are also unfamiliar with the concept of plagiarism and often do not have experience citing sources (Mu, 2007, p. 573). When considering these observations, however, it is necessary not to stereotype East Asian students on an individual level, as Ruble and Zhang warn (2013).

Another key difference separating East Asian academic libraries from those in the United States is the role of the librarian. According to Mu, librarians in many Asian countries do not answer reference questions or provide individual consultations on a specific subject (Mu, 2007, p.573). As a result, East Asian students are unaware that American academic librarians are available to answer reference questions (Mu, 2007, p.573). Although some librarians may provide reference services to students in East Asia, many students do not necessarily use that service as most of their work is based on exams and textbook reading (Mu, 2007, p.573). Furthermore, librarians in East Asia are not required to hold a Masters in Library Science degree (Mu, 2007, p.577). Mu succinctly stated that East Asian students “tend to view the library as a place to study and librarians as bookkeepers rather than information providers” (Mu, 2007, p.573). Open communication between librarians and students is a key step in advertising the credentials and expertise of the library staff.

The experiences of East Asian students in meeting their information needs are an invaluable resource to consider when developing
library services. In Japan, 80% of university libraries provide information literacy courses, but only 10% provide academic support services (Donkai, Toshimori, & Mizoue, 2013). East Asian students studying in the United States often turn to others in their peer group to gain information. According to a study at the University of Maryland, “web searches, online/mobile maps, friends, and online communities were among the top five information sources” for Chinese and Korean students (Oh, Butler, & Lee, 2014, p.1). Freshmen Chinese and Korean students used often their student associations’ social media pages to connect with senior students to share helpful information (Oh, Butler, & Lee, 2014, p.1). Results from the questionnaires and interviews show that the participants valued “information that is essential for their living, navigating, and settling in the unknown environment than information that is helpful for recreation” (Oh, Butler, & Lee, 2014, p.7). Mu argued in favor of developing a comprehensive information literacy curriculum for international students comprised of online tutorials on using the library catalog and website, developing critical thinking skills, and learning research methods (Mu, 2007, p.575). For example, librarians at the main campus of Rutgers University developed library orientation programs and instructional booklets in English, Chinese, and Korean (Liestman and Wu, 1990). This program fulfilled a need for library instruction in East Asian languages. Post-orientation assessments showed that students found the orientation informative. As Lo, Sun, Womack, Wu and Yang observed two decades later, however, these efforts only targeted walk in students and those students who attended library orientation, and was a missed opportunity to reach out to other East Asian students (Lo, et.al, 2009). Information literacy instruction that reflects the technology use of international students has the potential to acclimate East Asian students into an unfamiliar library.

Furthermore, observing the information seeking behavior of international students may be the key to overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers. Allen’s 1993 survey, “International students in academic libraries: A user survey,” assessed how international students perceived and used the library. By examining the computer habits of international students, Allen observed that many students whose first language is not English had difficulty using library terminology. Many terms that are common in American libraries do not have an equivalent in other languages. Allen suggested that librarians must recognize the different information needs of undergraduate vs. graduate students and plan accordingly (Allen, 1993, p.333). According to a 2003 study by Whitmire, international students of color are more likely to use the library to read or study, ask the librarian for help, and use basic reference services than native born white students (Whitmire, 2003, p.150). This research indicates that international students are becoming more aware of the services within American academic libraries, but still require guidance from librarians. Cross cultural communication is a viable tool in providing library services to international students who may have a different cultural understanding of what services the library offers.

Cross Cultural Training Programs in Review

There is a consensus within the current literature regarding the components of a successful cross cultural training program, which includes relevant cultural content and the use of different instruction formats. For many authors, cultural awareness must be at the center of cross cultural training programs. According to Wang and Frank, training programs must first identify that cultural differences exist, and then recognize that although an individual’s behavior is shaped in part by their culture, context is always key (2002). Based on her experiences working with Indigenous collections in Australian libraries, Blackburn argued that the first step in cross cultural communication must be an appreciation for other cultures while also assuming that both sides of the cultural divide are acting in good faith (2009). Brislin and Toshida also argue in favor of teaching cultural awareness. In their view, cultural differences are often taken for granted in everyday life (similarly to breathing), but that reflecting on these differences fosters cross cultural understanding (Brislin & Toshida, 1993).
A cross cultural training program that recognizes the different learning styles of students by utilizing a range of teaching methods and course formats has the potential to increase student learning. Brislin and Toshida recommended that cross cultural training exercises should include role playing, group discussions, tasks dependent on diverse contributions, and “homework assignments” that require students to apply what they learned in their own social circles (1993). Brislin and Toshida also suggested that role playing exercises address the emotional challenges that may be encountered when learning a new way to communicate (1993). Similarly, Rosen, Spatz, Gaaserud, and Abramovitch argued in favor of centering cross cultural training workshops on group discussion (2004). For Putranto, Gustomo, and Ghazali, field trips to culturally relevant destinations were shown to be the most conducive to student learning (2015). According to these authors, a diverse curriculum provides multiple opportunities for student engagement based on post-assessment questionnaires.

Limitations to Cross Cultural Communication

A significant development in the current literature is an examination of the limitations of cross cultural training. In their deconstruction of cultural intelligence, Dutta and Dutta “critique the discursive moves through which CQ is presented as a competitively advantageous tool for global organizations, deconstruct its theorization and measurement, and discuss its role in perpetuating transnational hegemony” (2013). According to Dutta and Dutta, the scholarship surrounding cultural intelligence training does not take into consideration how transnational organizational practices perpetuate unemployment and exploitation abroad (2013). In contrast, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars argued that cross cultural training synthesizes different cultural experiences into a unified whole (2006). One opportunity for further research is examining the correlation between organizations that send employees abroad and any shifts in cultural norms of the local population.

The Benefits of Cross Cultural Communication

In order to provide the best services to students regardless of their cultural backgrounds, academic libraries ideally must become global libraries. A cross cultural communication framework is necessary to aid librarians in dismantling any linguistic and cultural barriers that impede a student’s educational path. Communication styles are often informed by cultural values and mores. According to Zhang, the high context communication style prevalent among East Asians has its roots in the Confucian ideals of respect and conflict avoidance (Zhang, 2006, p. 167). Speakers who use high context communication often rely on implied meanings, and put the burden of understanding upon the listener (Zhang, 2006, p. 167). In contrast, low context speakers (such as those in the United States) rely on clear and explicit messages while placing the burden of communicating effectively on the speaker (Zhang, 2006, p. 167). Consequently, at the reference desk, an East Asian student may nod while a librarian speaks as a gesture of politeness and attentiveness, but may not fully understand what the librarian is explaining (Zhang, 2006, p. 167). High context speakers also focus on unified or circular logic, whereas those from low context cultures prefer analytical thinking (Zhang, 2006, p.168). East Asian students are more likely to start with general questions at the reference desk and then arrive at specific questions, which may be confusing for librarians who are accustomed to speaking in the specific first followed by general supporting statements (Zhang, 2006, p. 168).

Non-verbal communication may also present challenges during the reference interview. Non-verbal communication includes tone of voice, eye contact, facial expressions, and the concept of personal space (Zhang, 2006, p.169). At the reference desk, an East Asian student may avoid direct eye contact with a librarian as a sign of respect, but the librarian may interpret this as disinterest or inattentiveness (Zhang, 2006, p.169). Some forms of non-verbal communication differ between East Asian cultures. Chinese speakers often smile to
express embarrassment or frustration, but Korean speakers only smile during assured instances (Zhang, 2006, p.169). Librarians may interpret not smiling as a sign of hostility, similarly to interpreting a nod of the head as a symbol of understanding. Furthermore, librarians from individualistic cultures, such as the United States, value direct communication, linear thinking, and showing emotions overtly (Zhang, 2006, p.170). In contrast, the collectivist cultures of East Asia value harmony between speakers and avoid the use of direct communication (Zhang, 2006, p.170).

A cross cultural communicative framework has a potential to be a powerful tool in helping librarians navigate confusing situations like those provided above. Such a framework can boost a librarian’s confidence while allowing them to view interacting with East Asian students as a rewarding opportunity, rather than a formidable challenge. Ideally, the framework will provide a strong foundation of communication skills that academic librarians can use throughout their careers.

**Framework for Improving Cross Cultural Communication**

The framework set forth in this paper will build upon universal best practices in the field of cross cultural communication. These authors’ frameworks acclimate well to academic libraries, unlike other training programs that were designed to meet the needs of international businesses specifically. Rather than pursue a holistic framework, this paper will argue in favor of tailor made instruction dependent on student population and library resources.

A pivotal step in facilitating cross cultural communication between international students and academic librarians is to engage in collaboration and active listening. In their seminal study from 2001, Baron and Strout-Dapaz emphasized collaboration between international students and academic librarians. The authors suggest designing focus groups with international students, offering students the opportunity to work part time in the library, and updating the library’s collection development policy to incorporate the needs of non-native English speakers (Baron & Strout, 2001, p.320). Osa, Nyana, and Ogbaa’s training manual for librarians, also emphasized the importance of reaching a common linguistic ground. The authors advised avoiding the use of slang and colloquial humor with which international students may be unfamiliar in favor of open ended questions (Osa, Nyana, & Ogbaa, 2006, p.22). According to Amsberry’s article “Using effective listening skills with international patrons,” the difficulty listeners may have comprehending speakers with foreign accents can be remedied with practice. Amsberry suggested that librarians practice listening to various foreign accents via recordings and listen to the context of words rather than their sounds (Amsberry, 2009, p.15). Bridging the language gap between international students and academic librarians is key to developing mutual understanding.

According to Overall, a framework for cross cultural training can be divided into three domains: the cognitive domain, the interpersonal domain, and the environmental domain (2009). The cognitive domain refers to cultivating self-awareness and knowledge of other cultures (Overall, 2009). The interpersonal domain focuses on building cultural appreciation, an ethic of caring, personal and cultural interaction, and reflecting on institutional values (Overall, 2009). The environmental domain gives credence to the physical space of the library (Overall, 2009). For Littrell and Salas, the three best practices of cross cultural communication are design, delivery, and assessment (2005). Littrell and Salas argue in favor of using multiple methods of delivering culturally relevant material and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of training via various criteria (2005). In these authors’ view, cross cultural training must focus on the cerebral, interpersonal, and physical spheres.

The following framework will emphasize collaboration, cultural education, application, and assessment:
A. Collaboration.

Collaboration between the library and all university departments is critical to fostering cross-cultural communication. As part of this framework, collaboration should take place in the following ways:

- Librarians collaborate with their directors and HR representatives to hold cross-cultural training programs at the beginning of each semester or as needed.
- Librarians collaborate amongst the entire library staff to remain aware of the needs of international students and celebrate the differences among staff members.
- Librarians collaborate with International Student Services to help acclimate international students to a new environment. This can include offering guided tours of the library and translations of library guides with common terms, maps, etc.
- Librarians collaborate with faculty to ensure that international students understand the university’s academic expectations. Librarians can design information literacy instruction specifically for international students, and collaborate with faculty on assessing the challenges international students may have in completing research.
- Librarians can collaborate with international students by encouraging these students to pursue work-study positions in the library. Librarians can also facilitate peer tutoring.

B. Cultural education.

One critical step in improving cross-cultural communication in libraries is offering comprehensive cultural training. Ideally, cross-cultural training will offer instruction related to the following components:

- Cultural education: Librarians should familiarize themselves with the customs and cultural mores of other cultures to facilitate communication with international students. This training should also cover aspects of international librarianship to make librarians aware of the experiences international students may have had with librarians in their home countries. This training can be delivered in a lecture, group discussion, or role playing format.
- Language instruction: Librarians can utilize free language software, such as Pronunciator or Babble, to learn common phrases in other languages that may be helpful in making international students feel welcome. Additionally, this training should include practice with interpreting accents. This can be accomplished with listening to sound recordings, role playing, or working with a qualified ESL teacher.
- Behavior adaptation: In conjunction with cultural and language education, a cross-cultural training program should include instruction on behavior modification. Certain gestures, such as putting one’s hands in one’s pockets, are considered disrespectful in other cultures. Behavior modification training will prepare librarians to be aware of how the tone of their voice, hand gestures, etc. can impact an international student’s level of comfort. Role playing is the ideal format for this type of training.

C. Practical application.

A critical step in ensuring that cross-cultural communication is effectively implemented in academic libraries is to form a strategy with the goal of application. Training should focus on practical scenarios that librarians may encounter often. A strategy for applying cross-cultural communication should include the following components:

- The reference interview: The reference desk is often the first point of contact that students encounter when entering the library. Reference interviews assist the librarian in ascertaining a student’s
information needs. In order to communicate effectively, librarians should apply their cultural knowledge by asking open ended questions. The librarian should not assume any technical knowledge on the student’s part, and pay attention to the context of a student’s words while recognizing cultural differences. In the event of miscommunication, librarians can ask the student to write down their questions.

- **Information literacy instruction**: Information literacy instruction often includes the librarian in the role as lecturer. For international students, however, this format may not be conducive to learning. Applying cross cultural communication in the information literacy classroom may involve increased student participation. Librarians may find it helpful to have a representative from International Student Services or a bilingual librarian act as a teaching assistant. Employing collaboration in the information literacy classroom can facilitate greater cross cultural communication.

D. Assessment.

Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a library’s cross cultural communication efforts on a continuous basis can ensure future success. Self and manager assessments should take place after each cultural training program and at the end of each semester to monitor a library’s growth. The following examples are ways in which library directors can assess the cross cultural competencies of their staff members:

- Librarians can complete self-assessment questionnaires after cross cultural training to determine what they learned, and what future programs should include.
- Librarians can write reports at the end of the semester detailing the ways in which they used cross cultural communication on the job.
- International students can be given questionnaires at the end of an information literacy course rating the teaching style of the librarian. These can also determine what they learned from the course, and what else the course should include.
- Student satisfaction surveys can be kept at the reference desk throughout the year.
- Library directors can formally and informally interview their staff throughout the semester to track their progress.
- Library directors must be prepared for possible opposition from employees, board members, etc. This pressure can be alleviated by acknowledging budgetary restraints while demonstrating how cross cultural education complements the mission statement of the individual library.

Conclusion

Applying cross cultural communication within academic libraries can improve the experiences of both international students and librarians. Meeting the information needs of East Asian international students requires a sensitivity to the linguistic and cultural challenges these students encounter when attempting to use the library. Culturally sensitive librarians have the potential to bridge the gap preventing these students from using all the services available within the academic library. This paper developed a framework for utilizing cross cultural communication in libraries that included a focus on collaboration, cultural education, practical application, and assessment. Employing cross cultural communication in public and digital libraries has the potential to create visibility for the library and enhance user experiences. Consequently, cross cultural communication is a valuable tool for librarians to use when reaching out to diverse communities.

References


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“Language is a virus from outer space.” That line, from Beat author William S. Burroughs, leads off the first chapter of this essay collection and indicates that what follows will not be your typical academic monograph. Libraries are indeed undergoing an invasion: Almost half a million self-published books were released in 2013, according to bibliographic data provider Bowker. They pose yet another challenge to libraries pressed for money and librarians pressed for time.

Although cracks are developing in the traditional walls that have kept self-published books (or “indie books”) out of libraries, exactly how this new species of work will, or should, fit inside remains an open question. Self-Publishing and Collection Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Libraries, edited by Robert P. Holley, is a sprightly, jargon-free introduction to this under-explored topic. Holley claims it is the first monograph to deal with self-publication.

This volume includes unique chapters from library staffers who are also self-published authors, making for an interesting hybrid work. Appealingly informal essays address both the problems (lack of book reviews, lack of discoverability, budget constraints) and possibilities (e-books, local engagement via local authors) of this new facet of the library field. The challenges of getting indie books into public and academic libraries -- the latter being the tougher nut to crack -- are addressed, and valuable, gritty details are provided about vendors, bibliographic control, and metadata for independent books.

A fresh sense of discovery permeates the project, right from the foreword by Mitchell Davis, who, eschewing modesty, describes himself as an “early self-publishing visionary,” which is true -- he spawned Amazon’s CreateSpace and SELF-e. Davis gushes about this book: “I was happy to see the text depart from a strictly academic context to create a mesh of perspectives that let all range of libraries learn from the experiences of others.”

In his chapter one case study from the Los Gatos Library, Henry Bankhead explains that the phrase “self-published” is a little misleading, conjuring up an image of a garage full of unwanted books, unloaded upon an unsuspecting author by a money-grubbing “vanity press.” Today, mature platforms like Amazon CreateSpace and Smashwords are releasing increasingly professional-looking, credible material.

Melissa DeWild and Morgan Jarema bluntly detail the lingering weaknesses of the new format in chapter two, pointing out that “self-published books can be full of typos and have confusing storylines or unappealing covers.” Holley affirmed those flaws in chapter four, flaws that help explain why academic libraries have been slow to embrace self-publishing. He then turns to the potential virtue of indie books as a source of overlooked primary source material, or a way to provide comprehensive collections of less-famous works by significant writers.

Chapters 10 through 13 are penned by self-published authors, who discuss the challenges of getting their work into public libraries, either on a physical shelf or via the ubiquitous e-book format.
OverDrive. Writer Tom Bruno includes helpful hints to authors about formatting your book to appeal to time-stretched librarians. Intriguingly, Bruno dates the impetus to work outside traditional publishing to even before the “self-publishing revolution.” He cites a ubiquitous creature that has long haunted public library circulation desks: “Had Stephen King unwittingly produced a legion of storytelling acolytes with his seminal book On Writing, which demystified the craft of writing to a generation....?”

In the concluding chapter, Joseph D. Grobelny evaluates additional reading in the new field and sums up the item in hand: “This volume will be a step toward an increased understanding of the advantages and pitfalls of self-publishing. Public libraries are starting to deal with this issue because of pressure from patrons who want to read self-published materials. Academic libraries are far behind.”

The burgeoning world of self-publishing turns out to be a surprisingly rich topic, one fraught with potential pitfalls, local angles, and surprising opportunities. This volume is a chatty, quirky way to get caught up.

Reviewed by Clay Waters, Graduate Student, University of Alabama.


Academic librarianship is a constantly evolving field affected by technological innovation, the emergence of new modes of communication, and new forms of knowledge creation. Reimagining the Academic Library could not have been published at a better time given the extent of changes libraries have experienced in recent decades. David W. Lewis presents a holistic picture of the forces that have caused unprecedented disruption to the ways academic libraries function today. The author utilizes Christensen’s theory of disruptive innovation as the foundation for the discussion of the emerging trends current academic libraries are confronting, along with the steps libraries need to take to prosper in the digital age.

Force One, disruption, is rooted in the development of the Internet and subsequent transition of academic content from print to digital format. Lewis argues that the challenge facing academic libraries is to integrate available technologies into new business models. The growth of digital documents, which is Force Two, also makes traditional library practices obsolete. The unique attributes of fungible digital documents necessitate the creation of targeted management strategies to ensure that libraries can appropriately preserve and disseminate digital scholarship. Force Three explains the crisis of the scholarly monograph. While the future of the print book is uncertain, the change in this arena amounts to the need to produce academic output in a way that is cheaper, quicker, and easier. Force Four delineates the consequences of the expansion of the scholarly record for academic libraries. With the shift in the nature of contemporary scholarly records, which now include social media formats, comes the complexity of curating the exploding digital scholarship on the institutional level. Next, Lewis describes the relationship between research libraries and commercial journal publishers in economic and historical terms, implying that digital technologies have the potential to alter the status quo. Lewis is rightfully concerned about this relationship because inflated journal subscription prices place too much financial strain on library budgets. The final force addresses the changing demographics of the academic library workforce. It also illuminates how traditional work patterns give way to the need for more functional expertise in areas like assessment, data management, instructional design, and the creation of digital resources. Lewis posits that staff development is even more crucial than before for academic libraries to succeed.

The latter part of the book offers insightful and practical steps that provide a roadmap for academic libraries moving forward in the changing environment. Librarians should shift focus from building collections to providing
resources and services unavailable from the other segments of the academic enterprise. As centers of academic life on campus, libraries should repurpose their spaces by gradually retiring legacy print collections and creating a wide variety of technology-rich study settings that scaffold student collaborative learning, socialization, and research. Other steps include devising robust digital preservation infrastructure, making good business decisions that entail reforming the existing model of scholarly publishing for open access and purchase-on-demand practices, and, finally, learning how to leverage modern technologies to strengthen collaborations and make our work more effective. The six steps are easy to understand as they highlight the important role libraries play in the ongoing reconfiguration of the academic ecosystem. The key concept in Lewis’ vision of a reimagined library is the shift of focus from collections to student engagement, knowledge sharing, and the entirety of the student college experience.

Lastly, Lewis provides compelling guidance on how to respond to the present-day challenges by listing “ten things to do” in the conclusion. This book makes a noticeable contribution to professional practice as it offers both a vision of the future and a specific action framework that all academic libraries should consider to remain relevant to their service communities.

*Reimagining the Academic Library* is a must-read and can be recommended for a wide range of audiences, including library and information science scholars, academic librarians, and administrators in higher education.

*Reviewed by Liya Deng, Social Sciences Librarian, Eastern Washington University.*

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*Fundamentals of Electronic Resources Management* is the first book-length treatment of e-resources management (ERM) since 2012’s publication of *Managing Electronic Resources: A LITA Guide*, edited by Ryan O. Weir. In those five intervening years, ERM practices, priorities, and technologies, as well as the broader library landscape, have shifted enough to warrant a new general study of ERM. Timely and practical, this monograph tackles standard topics such as acquisitions and licensing but also topics unaddressed in previous surveys, such as vendor relationships and marketing. First-time authors Alana Verminski, collection development librarian at the University of Vermont, and Kelly Marie Blanchat, electronic resources support librarian at Yale University, have distilled the essentials of e-resources management into a reader-friendly, comprehensive, first-rate study.

The book’s purpose is to “provide both new and seasoned professionals with a practical foundation in electronic resources management” (vii). Over ten chapters, it fulfills this mission with aplomb. The first chapter is a brief overview of ERM, outlining the scope and context of the work. Chapter 2 tackles the various e-resource acquisition models: Big Deals, packages, perpetual access, pay-per-view, and more. Chapter 3 looks at evaluation, including e-resource trials and cost per use. Chapter 4 reviews integrating open access e-resources into ERM processes. Chapter 5 itemizes license terms and how to negotiate them. Chapter 6 examines setting up and maintaining access to e-resources, once acquired. Chapter 7 looks at usage data, collection, and interpretation. Chapter 8 consists of tips on how to build relationships with vendors and ask the right questions—an approach that plays to Blanchat’s background as a former Springer account specialist. Chapter 9 is about marketing e-resources. Chapter 10 summarizes trends and changes in the field. Appendices comprise an open access resource rubric and a licensing checklist, both adapted from the University of North Texas, along with a glossary of ERM terms that very helpfully appear in bold font the first time each appears in the text. Ebooks, ejournals, and databases are all electronic resources for the purposes of this book; library systems and tools that support e-resources-management are
addressed only in passing.

Any overview is bound to skip over some points. One such point, is preservation: How do libraries track and ensure ongoing access to e-resources they have purchased in perpetuity? As electronic formats mature and as libraries invest more and more in perpetually owned content, preservation will become a core concern with which every e-resources librarian must wrestle eventually. Blanchat and Verminski take a topic-based approach, rather than a cyclical, lifecycle-driven approach such as Jill Emery and Graham Stone’s Techniques of Electronic Resource Management (TERMS), or a skills-based approach like NASIG’s Core Competencies for Electronic Resources Librarians. This topic-based approach makes for a diffusive quality that gels best if readers arrive with a basic understanding of e-resources management.

New professionals will appreciate Fundamentals. Current and prospective MLIS students can read it to familiarize themselves with a major potential career path once they graduate. New e-resources staff can read this book to understand the full sweep of their daily responsibilities. Librarians who supervise e-resources staff, but who are not experienced e-resources managers themselves, can read this monograph so as to write fully informed personnel evaluations. Librarians not working in ERM can read this book to grasp the complexities of their colleagues’ work fully. Seasoned e-resources managers will find themselves jotting notes to help them refine their practices. There is something here for everyone.

In short, Fundamentals of Electronic Resources Management is a valuable overview. It is, the very first book-length treatment of e-resources management since 2012. This monograph holds broad appeal for anyone who is interested or involved in e-resources management, including graduate students, supervisors, and e-resources staff. Highly recommended.

Reviewed by Michael Rodriguez, Licensing and Acquisitions, University of Connecticut.


Dr. Annie Downey’s book Critical Information Literacy: Foundations, Inspirations, and Ideas arrives at a time in which the importance of information literacy has entered the mainstream cultural conversation. In a hyper-partisan political climate in which the value of fact-based information is regularly attacked or outright denied, Downey’s book is a timely reminder that librarians have a key role to play in teaching students how to problematize, critically examine, and assign value to the information they both consume and produce. Though Downey writes that there is no agreed upon definition of critical information literacy, she uses Accardi, Drabinski, and Kumbier’s definition as a guidepost throughout the book. According to their definition, critical information literacy is “a library instruction praxis that promotes critical engagement with information sources, considers student collaborators in knowledge production practices (and creators in their own right), recognizes the affective dimensions of research, and (in some cases) has liberatory aims” (Downey, p. 42). Critical information literacy’s student-centered approach moves away from the skills-focused, mechanistic aspects of traditional information literacy, and instead works to empower students to recognize, problematize, and disrupt the “cultural, social, and economic structures that underlie all of information production and dissemination” (Downey, p. 18).

As part of a growing body of literature on critical librarianship, one of the book’s primary aims is to empower librarians to practice critical information literacy, both in the classroom and in the community.

Downey begins by outlining the theoretical foundations on which critical information literacy is built, including experiential education theories and practices, especially Paolo Freire’s work on critical pedagogy and Jack Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning. To ground the theory in real-world practice, Downey incorporates interviews with librarians who practice critical
information literacy throughout the book, which proves an effective way to demonstrate how critical information literacy can work in context. She outlines approaches for teaching critically, including creating a student-centered working environment, dialoguing, and problem-posing methods and she provides numerous examples of how to integrate critical content in the classroom, including critical source evaluation, teaching knowledge production and dissemination, and problematizing keyword and subject search terms. Downey’s approach makes critical information literacy seem accessible and practicable, especially to librarians new to critical librarianship and critical pedagogy theory. Downey also outlines some of the barriers faced in teaching critical information literacy and acknowledges that it can be challenging for librarians to implement critical information literacy given the nature of the one-shot library instruction session. She argues for expanding critical information literacy at the institutional level when possible, though she acknowledges the obstacles there too, including insufficient time, lack of administrative support, and turf issues with teaching faculty. She encourages librarians to grow beyond their traditional roles to foster deeper relationships with faculty, especially in disciplines with a natural tie-in to critical information literacy, but also in disciplines such as the sciences and professional disciplines, where critical information literacy might seem less of a natural fit. Building trust with faculty and sharing expertise, she argues, are keys to successfully implementing critical information literacy in the library classroom (Downey, p. 140).

As Downey reminds us in her conclusion, libraries are not neutral, nor should they pretend to be. In an era of information (and disinformation) overload, individuals must have “a strong understanding of how information is created, organized, distributed, and accessed” (Downey, p. 13) to become active, engaged citizens. Her book is an important reminder of librarians' responsibility in helping develop an informed, participatory citizenry. It is an excellent entry point for librarians new to critical librarianship and a welcome addition to the literature for those already familiar with critical librarianship theory and practice.

Reviewed by Emily Deal, Distance Learning & Virtual Services Librarian, University of Louisiana at Lafayette.


Mark Aaron Polger’s and Scott Sheidlower’s Engaging Diverse Learners: Teaching Strategies for Academic Librarians explores how librarians can employ different strategies that engage different types of learners in the library classroom. It does not serve as a “how to teach” guide as much as it offers practical teaching advice and strategies.

Polger and Sheidlower’s book offers a practical approach to teaching, as they explain strategies specifically for the library classroom. After reading this book, the librarian should have a toolbox of techniques, theories, and ideas to make their teaching more engaging in the classroom.

Each chapter of the book covers one of three topics: (1) theories on education and engagement, (2) practical teaching techniques to engage diverse learners, or (3) the research questionnaire that the authors administered and analyzed.

The authors discuss the different learning styles of students and how we can best reach them. Engaging students effectively is much different than it was in the past, and the authors do an effective job at explaining the reasons that are the case. As an educator, it works so much better if you can use the method that best suits the group of students you are teaching.

While many of the ideas in the book focus on
engaging students and understanding their different learning styles, Chapter 6 highlights understanding disengagement. It gives multiple ideas on how to keep students engaged in the library. Also, it covers why students may not feel engaged during library instruction. This chapter would be great for any librarian to read, as we do not always know how to grab and hold student’s attention during a “one-shot” session. One idea that Polger and Sheidlower mentioned was that the more closely the lesson is crafted to the student’s actual assignments, the more closely they will pay attention and be fully engaged. If there is no assignment, then the level of engagement will usually drop. It is a librarian’s hope that students will understand that information literacy is a fundamental part of a learner’s education.

One point the book makes is how librarian’s need to consider how the library is viewed on campus. Is it a place that users want to go? Or do they consider it a place that doesn’t have anything to offer them? An idea that is mentioned as effective is incorporating engagement when marketing an information literacy program. Polger believes that engagement and marketing are interrelated. If the academic library is considered the heart of the campus, it should be a priority for librarians to engage their users, so it feels like another home for them. If students are not engaged, then understanding the value of the library will be lost.

The final chapter of the book illustrates engagement as a set of behaviors and practices used to promote information literacy to classroom faculty. The chapter focuses on how librarians can incorporate engagement as part of their marketing strategy when promoting information literacy as a fundamental part of a learner’s education.

While the ideas in the book may be in use by experienced librarians, the text will still be useful to librarians who are looking to change or develop new strategies for engaging their students. It will be a valuable resource for new instruction librarians, as it lays a solid foundation that can be built upon for years to come. This book serves as a great starting point for instructors when creating ideas for their lessons. There are many tools that any instructor can add to enhance their teaching strategies.

Reviewed by Jessica Spooner, Electronic Resources Librarian, SUNY Canton.

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