Making a Mark in the First Year: Initiating and Implementing Large-Scale Projects as a New Librarian

Amber Willenborg
Online Learning & Digital Media Librarian
University of Louisville

Teagan Eastman
Online Learning Librarian
Utah State University

Abstract

New librarians are in a position to bring innovative ideas to their organization, but are often unsure of how to go about implementing big projects. This article presents a case study of two online learning librarians in their first year of librarianship, outlining how they initiated and implemented large-scale projects and discussing challenges they faced and lessons they learned.

Article Type: Case study

Introduction

New librarians bring a fresh perspective to the field and have the capacity to share exciting new ideas with their organizations. However, being new to the profession can be daunting for librarians in their first year, and they are often unsure of how to go about initiating large-scale projects. New librarians may feel like they should spend their first year becoming acclimated to their new position or believe that they do not yet have the knowledge or skills to innovate at their library. According to Clark, Vardeman, and Barba's 2014 study on imposter syndrome among college and research librarians, newer librarians experience feelings of anxiety and lack of confidence more often than their experienced colleagues. Although these feelings of inexperience might add to the challenge of initiating and implementing a big project during the first year, new librarians can use such projects to bring positive changes to their library while also developing confidence in their new position.

This article describes the implementation of two large-scale projects by new librarians at two academic libraries in the United States: The University of Louisville's Research DIY website and Utah State University's online learning workflow. Each librarian initiated the project during their first year of librarianship and offers an overview of background, planning, and project implementation. The writers elaborate on tips for new librarians to build confidence as a leader early in their career, including finding a mentor, building departmental buy-in, adapting to overcome challenges, and staying true to the vision of the project.

NMRT your path to ALA

Endnotes: The Journal of the New Members Round Table
Volume 9, Issue 1, 2018
pp. 1-9
Published by the American Library Association

ISSN: 2159-0591

Literature Review

Much of the literature on newly hired academic librarians focuses on acclimating new librarians to the world of academic librarianship. Onboarding and training of new librarians is often discussed: Knight (2013) wrote about the importance of rapid onboarding to bring new librarians quickly up-to-speed in their new environment, while Keisling and Laning (2016) and Libson and Welsh (2017) detailed their respective onboarding processes. The literature surrounding new librarians also focuses on mentoring programs. Kenefic and DeVito (2015) described the mutual benefits of a traditional mentoring relationship between a new librarian and an experienced professional, while Fyn (2013) wrote about peer group mentoring relationships as an alternative to traditional mentoring. Goodset & Walsh (2015) discussed tenure-track librarians' anxieties while dealing with both a new environment and the pressure of meeting tenure requirements. The literature contains abundant examples and best practices for making sure new librarians are supported at the beginning of their career.

Studies discussing onboarding and mentoring also often shed light on the experiences and perceptions of new librarians. Through their interviews with new librarians, Libson and Welsh discovered some of the challenges faced by new academic librarians, including lack of communication and socialization among colleagues. Similarly, Keisling and Laning reported that new librarians at their institution placed value on "learning how to get things done, and who could help them be successful" (387) during their first six months. New librarians participating in Goodset and Walsh's mentoring study described benefits like better time management and the ability to communicate with and get advice from other professionals. These studies highlight the value new librarians place on building relationships and developing important work skills in their new positions.

The research on project management in academic libraries is also plentiful, much of it detailing techniques librarians use to successfully manage projects. Recently, Kachoka and Hoskins (2017) described the use of the Project Management Body of Knowledge to manage a library renovation project; Hackman (2017) presented a case study on the use of John Kotter's eight-stage change process; Yeh and Walter (2016) focused on critical success factors when migrating their integrated library system; and Dulock and Long (2015) conducted a pilot of the Scrum project management framework.

While research on large-scale project management techniques are certainly useful for new librarians, research focused specifically on new librarians implementing such projects in their organizations is lacking. Serrano and Aviles (2016) found that "project management has become part of the everyday work of many academic librarians" but that "this high participation contrasts to the limited training received in their university education" (473). New librarians must often learn to tackle projects and implement change on the job, as in Kozel-Gains' and Stoddart's 2009 case study of newly hired librarians' use of technology to take on the subject liaison responsibilities of their retiring colleagues.

This case study hopes to add to the conversation about how new academic librarians can implement large-scale projects, emphasizing the importance of mentors in helping first-year librarians develop and hone the skills and relationships necessary to implement innovative projects and programs in their libraries. Further, this article strives to begin filling the gap in the scholarly conversation surrounding the challenges new librarians face while implementing large-scale projects at academic libraries and offer tangible takeaways for new librarians initiating such projects.

Research DIY at the University of Louisville

Background

The University of Louisville (UofL) is the second-largest university in the state of Kentucky, serving over 22,000 students and providing a robust online learning program that offers over one thousand online course sections spanning sixty-five disciplines. The University of Louisville Libraries seek to support online learning for students both on- and off-campus, as evident in their strategic plan: "By the year 2020, library services will be provided at the time, place and point of user need" (University of Louisville Libraries Strategic Plan, 2012-2020, 2012). Working towards this goal, UofL Libraries created the position of Online Learning & Digital Media Librarian in 2016, recognizing the evolving role of technology in education as an opportunity to reach a wider array of students.

Planning

The Online Learning & Digital Media (OLDM) Librarian began working at the University of Louisville in July 2016. As a new librarian in a newly created role, she did not come into the position thinking about starting a large-scale project right away and spent the first few weeks learning new software and experimenting with video and module creation. While she was not thinking about the bigger picture yet, her supervisor, the Information Literacy Coordinator, was already brainstorming large-scale online learning projects. At a check-in meeting during the OLDM Librarian's first month on the job, the Information Literacy Coordinator brought up a question that had been asked by many faculty members: "Is there anywhere on the website that can show my students how to do research?" Like many libraries, UofL has videos, tutorials, and research guides on various topics spread throughout the library website; what UofL lacked was a page that housed all of these resources in one place. The Information Literacy Coordinator suggested creating a website similar to Portland State's Library DIY.

The Portland State Library DIY website is a comprehensive collection of help materials covering everything from printing in the library to selecting keywords and using library databases. The code for Library DIY is freely available on GitHub and many libraries have implemented their own version of the site. The OLDM Librarian and her supervisor decided that Library DIY would be used as inspiration, but that they would create a homegrown website tailored to UofL students' needs.

Implementation: Phase One

While creating a new resource for the library was a daunting task, the Online Learning & Digital Media Librarian was not facing it alone; she was also the head of the Online Learning Team, made up of members of the Research Assistance and Instruction department who collaborated on online learning initiatives. At their first meeting, the team provided feedback on the Portland State Library DIY site and made decisions for the UofL version of DIY: the site would focus on research rather than general library inquiries and the content of the site would include short how-to videos and infographics.

After that first meeting, the project gained momentum. The OLDM Librarian had a clearer vision of what the completed site would look like and she wanted to prove herself as an effective leader, so she prepared a sample table of contents as well as a sample video and infographic for the next meeting. The content was received positively by the team, and each team member was assigned a piece of content to complete by the next meeting.

One month later, the OLDM Librarian was excited to see all of the new content that the Online Learning Team members had created. She had made a handful of videos and infographics in the meantime, but was surprised to find that the other team members had not created anything. Chalking it up to the busy time of year, she adjourned the meeting until the next month when everyone could bring in their content to share. Another month came and went, and while some team members brought notes or script drafts to the meeting, no one other than the OLDM Librarian had created any content.

Initially, the Online Learning & Digital Media Librarian felt confused and hurt by this outcome. It seemed like the team members did not feel held accountable for their work because she was a new librarian and had no real authority. While this might have been true to some extent, she realized that she was also not being a very effective leader. She had simply assigned work and expected it to be done with no guidance from her, the person hired to guide the creation of online content. It was also a busy time of year and the team members, most of whom were subject liaisons, had other responsibilities such as teaching classes and conducting research appointments. After discussing the problem with her supervisor, the OLDM Librarian decided to cancel the next month's meeting and instead schedule individual meetings with team members to work together on their content at a time of their choosing.

This decision made all the difference in the success of the Research DIY project. The subject librarians were experts on the content, and the Online Learning & Digital Media Librarian was able to help them envision how to translate their knowledge into a video or infographic. Working together, the team members and OLDM Librarian were able to create content that was both professional-looking and useful to students. By the next Online Learning Team meeting, each team member had content to share.

Implementation: Phase Two

Having buy-in from her department members on the Online Learning Team gave the Online Learning & Digital Media Librarian more confidence to build relationships with other collaborators going forward. It was clear that some content that the team wanted to include in Research DIY would require the expertise of library partners like the Writing Center. The OLDM Librarian reached out to the directors of the Writing Center with information about Research DIY and examples of content from the site, and asked them if they would like to be involved and to what extent. The Writing Center decided on two pieces of content, both infographics, that they would create on their own. The OLDM Librarian was happy to let them create their own content, but it was important that their content matched the vision for the rest of the site. The initial drafts of the Writing Center infographics were text heavy and contained too much information; while she felt a little anxious suggesting that the directors edit their infographics, the OLDM Librarian set up a meeting to discuss changes to the content. The second drafts were much better, and she ended up slightly tweaking them for the final product. It certainly would have been quicker and easier for the OLDM Librarian to create the content herself with a little input from the Writing Center, but by allowing them to create content themselves, the Writing Center had a greater stake in the project. The collaboration helped the OLDM Librarian establish a better relationship with the Writing Center and together they were able to create an end product that satisfied both parties.

In addition to content-creation partners, the Online Learning Team would need help putting together a website and making that website findable through the UofL Libraries homepage. After the team had figured out how they envisioned the site, the Online Learning & Digital Media Librarian invited the libraries' Web Manager to an Online Learning Team meeting to discuss how the site could be included in the new library homepage, which would be unveiled in August 2017. Because the team was able to articulate exactly what would be on the DIY site and how it was important to the libraries' mission, the Web Manager was happy to work with the team to create the site and include Research DIY prominently on the new homepage.

Reflections

Research DIY went live on August 1st, 2017, but the project is not over. The Online Learning & Digital Media Librarian will need to update content as resources change and add new content based on faculty and student suggestions. The Online Learning Team also has plans to make another site with more in-depth research help for graduate students and faculty. Even though the project is ongoing, the OLDM Librarian feels as though she has already accomplished a lot and is more confident in her position going forward. The biggest challenge throughout this project was building that confidence. As a new librarian, it can be difficult to gain buy-in from colleagues and be seen as a leader due to lack of experience. Having a more seasoned mentor or supervisor with whom to discuss confidence and leadership challenges is invaluable for new librarians to maintain momentum and keep moving forward on the project. Through the implementation of this project, the OLDM Librarian learned that leading as a new librarian is not about asserting your authority but about working together so that everyone involved can bring their strengths to the project. A leader's job is to keep the project on track and guide everyone toward the same goal.

Online Learning Workflow at Utah State University

Background

As Utah's only land-grant institution, Utah State University (USU) serves over 16,000 students enrolled in programs through USU Online or at one of over 25 regional campuses and centers. The University Libraries system at USU provides quality service to students enrolled in these programs and according to their strategic mission on the USU Libraries website, the library "removes barriers and provides equal access to information regardless of format or location ("Accreditation," 2010)." To this end, the library created the position of Regional Campus and E-Learning Librarian in order to ensure outreach, marketing and services were provided to regional campus and online students and faculty. However, it became apparent that a more focused approach to providing information literacy instruction to distance students was needed. Therefore, in 2016, USU Libraries created and filled the position of the Online Learning (OL) Librarian to ensure library instruction opportunities were being provided to regional campus and online students, as well as to help create, adapt and maintain online resources.

Planning

As a librarian fresh out of an MLIS program and in her first professional job, the Online Learning Librarian was excited about the opportunity to shape this new position. She was fortunate to be mentored by the Regional Campus and E-Learning Librarian who helped her quickly understand USU's Regional Campus and Online programs, the state of library instruction for online and regional campus courses and establish goals for the first year in her position. In collaboration with her supervisor, the OL Librarian determined the primary objective for the year was to increase instruction to online and regional campus students.

Soon after establishing this goal, her supervisor, the Regional Campus & E-Learning Librarian, provided her with materials from a presentation given by Dominique Turnbow and Amanda Roth at the Library Instruction West Conference held in 2016. Turnbow and Roth created a workflow for the creation of online learning objects at University of California, San Diego that allowed their creation team to incorporate pedagogical design practices, communicate with stakeholders and document their time and processes. The OL Librarian adapted this workflow in order to create a process for collaborating with Subject Librarians (librarians assigned to departments across the university who teach library instruction for that department) to specifically target online and regional campus courses. The online learning workflow provides a design document that requires Subject Librarians (SLs) to collaborate with instructors to identify:

- Delivery method (video, Canvas module, Guide on the Side, etc…)
- Learning outcomes
- Information literacy skills covered
- Assessment
- Timeline

Once SLs identify an online instruction need, the Online Learning Librarian would provide the SL with a timeline for completion, create the object(s) and collaborate with the instructor to have the materials placed in either the course's Canvas (LMS) page or LibGuide. This process allowed SLs to leverage their relationships with instructors in their departments and subject matter expertise while the OL Librarian could focus on best practices in designing online learning and content creation. Throughout the creation of the online learning workflow, the OL

Librarian and her supervisor articulated the importance of this project and gathered feedback and support from the department head and Subject Librarian Advisory Committee. This was an important step in obtaining buy-in.

Implementation: Phase One

The next step was to implement this workflow with the Subject Librarians. The Online Learning librarian presented the workflow at a monthly SL meeting by giving each SL a blank copy of the design document and a sample completed copy. The OL Librarian explained the pedagogical reasoning behind each component of the design document and then walked SLs through an online learning scenario using the example design document.

While not a complete failure, the initial phase of the online learning workflow resulted in only a minimal increase in instruction provided to regional campus and online courses. The majority of the SLs that participated were in the OL Librarian's department, Learning & Engagement Services, and while building these relationships gave her confidence, as a new librarian she struggled to obtain buy-in from SLs across the library unit. At first, this was a hit to her confidence and she began to think she was incapable of managing projects. The OL Librarian took a step back, discussed the challenges with her supervisor and realized she had overlooked some crucial steps in implementation such as failing to articulate the importance of supporting distance education students. Thus the OL Librarian did not receive the necessary buy-in from her fellow SLs to make this project a success. Determining reasons that the first phase of the plan did not succeed helped her grow as a leader and formulate the next phase.

Implementation: Phase Two

An important lesson for first year librarians is learning how to maintain momentum despite setbacks. To overcome the challenges and maintain momentum in the project, the OL Librarian, in collaboration with her supervisor, developed Phase Two which involved the creation of a Subject Librarian Online Learning Worksheet and an additional presentation at a monthly SL meeting to articulate the importance of supporting distance education students. At this presentation, the Online Learning Librarian showed SLs how to identify online and regional campus courses and encouraged them to focus on an online or regional campus section of a course they already support on USU's main campus. Subject Librarians were provided a worksheet in order to identify a course to integrate with, provided a template email for contacting the instructor to identify a research need, and then asked to return the worksheet to the Online Learning Librarian with one course identified to support for the Spring semester.

Phase Two of implementing the online learning workflow resulted in a 20% increase in instruction provided to online and regional campus classes. It also provided SLs with the knowledge of how to identify online and regional campus courses in the future and gave them a mechanism for initiating contact with these instructors. The most important change made with this phase of implementation was the emphasis on the fact that there is no need to recreate the wheel. Phase Two focused on working with SLs to understand their needs and articulating the benefits that collaborating with the OL Librarian could offer them, such as adapting a face-to-face library instruction session into an online setting. This demonstrates to SLs that online learning can save them time and innovate their instruction practices which helped increase buy-in.

Although Phase Two was successful in increasing instruction opportunities for online and regional campus courses, it was not perfect and the missteps were valuable learning opportunities for the Online Learning Librarian. This phase was implemented at the end of the semester during both SLs' and faculty's busiest time of the year. As it was the OL Librarian's first semester in the position she failed to realize the insanity that ensues at the end of the semester. Additionally, Phase Two required SLs to turn in their worksheet to her without an incentive or mandate to do so; as a new employee, she did not have the necessary social capital or authority needed to encourage all her colleagues to complete the assignment. Finally, she realized she did not have a firm grasp on the needs of regional campus and online faculty. She assumed that the majority of regional campus and online instructors would have courses with a research component and would immediately jump at the idea of integrating with the library for instruction. Reflecting upon this phase of the project helped the Online Learning Librarian realize that as a new librarian she was eager to make big changes in her library, but these changes required a foundation of relationships within the library and awareness of library and campus needs which take time to build.

Reflections

This project, with its successes and failures, was a formative experience that greatly shaped how the Online Learning Librarian views her position, her understanding of her role in the library and university, and the goals that she set for the next year. The OL Librarian realizes the importance of developing relationships with mentors in the library; these mentors helped set realistic goals, supported implementation, and provided key institutional knowledge. The OL Librarian also realizes that as both she and her position are new, she must build relationships with her colleagues that will allow them to understand her position and skills but also to understand the strengths her colleagues bring to the table in order to effectively collaborate with them in the future. Finally, the OL Librarian recognizes that large-scale projects are ongoing and failures happen, but they are valuable learning experiences. In order to grow as a librarian, it is important to reflect on what went wrong and formulate strategies for overcoming those challenges in the future.

Conclusions & Discussion

New librarians are in a position to bring new and innovative ideas to their organizations. However, newer academic librarians tend to struggle with imposter syndrome, causing them to experience anxiety and lack of confidence (Clark, Vardeman, and Barba, 2014). As evident in these case studies, anxiety and lack of confidence can cause early career librarians to doubt their ideas and abilities, and make it difficult for them to overcome the challenges inherent in their new positions. Additionally, managing large-scale change is often a process unfamiliar to individuals in their first professional library position as it is not a skill learned in most library and information science degree programs (Serrano and Aviles, 2016). Still, it is possible for new librarians to effect change in their libraries by taking appropriate steps in the planning and implementation of projects. Through these case studies, the authors have curated a set of key takeaways for successfully initiating and implementing a large-scale project as a new librarian:

1. **Find a mentor or other support person to guide your work**, especially at the beginning stages. You might have a great idea but lack the institutional knowledge to make the idea fit well with your organization. Your mentor, supervisor, etc. can help you shape an idea into a project that makes sense for your library's needs. They also have valuable leadership experience that you can tap into.
2. **Build departmental buy-in**. Even though your colleagues want to support you, remember that they have responsibilities of their own; your project will not be the most important thing they have going on. Make sure you can clearly articulate why the project is important and how it will improve your library.
3. **Maintain momentum.** While support from mentors, supervisors, and colleagues is important, remember that it is up to you to push the project forward. You cannot wait around for everyone else to make it happen. Create a timeline, schedule meetings in advance, and set deadlines for yourself and team members.
4. **Mistakes happen, move forward.** Even with scheduled meetings and deadlines, things will go wrong. Do not take "failure" or missteps personally. Adapt to challenges as best as you can and when all else fails, talk to your mentor or supervisor about the best steps to take.

5. **Build relationships with stakeholders outside of your department or library**. Remember that these partners might not understand your vision right away or they might be used to doing things differently. Work *with* outside stakeholders to stay true to your vision of the project while also respecting their needs.
6. **Keep in mind that large-scale projects are ongoing**. Your project might be fully implemented after a year but will require upkeep and updating. Reflect on lessons learned along the way when moving forward.

While these suggestions for implementing projects as a new librarian worked for the authors, this list of key takeaways is not comprehensive; these case studies are limited to just one area of academic librarianship, online learning. Further research is needed to shed light on how first-year librarians across the spectrum of academic librarianship job titles navigate the challenge of implementing large-scale projects.

References

Accreditation. (2014, January 9). Retrieved from https://library.usu.edu/accreditation/strategic_plan.php

Campbell, P. C. (2014). Modifying ADDIE: Incorporating new technologies in library instruction. *Public Services Quarterly*, *10*(2), 138-149.

Clark, M., Vardeman, K., & Barba, S. (2014). Perceived inadequacy: A study of the imposter phenomenon among college and research librarians. *College & Research Libraries, 75*(3), 255-271.

Coleman, J., Mallon, M. N., & Lo, L. (2016). Recent changes to reference services in academic libraries and their relationships to perceived quality: Results of a national survey. *Journal of Library Administration*, *56*(6), 673-696.

Dulock, M., & Long., H. (2015). Digital collections area sprint, not a marathon: Adapting Scrum project management techniques to library digital initiatives. *Information Technology & Libraries, 34*(4), 5-17.

Fyn, A. A. (2013). Peer group mentoring relationships and the role of narrative. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *39*(4), 330-334.

Goodsett, M., & Walsh, A. (2015). Building a strong foundation: Mentoring programs for novice tenure-track librarians in academic libraries. *College & Research Libraries*, *76*(7), 914-933.

Hackman, T. (2017). Leading change in action: Reorganizing an academic library department using Kotter's eight stage change model. *Library Leadership & Management*. *31*(2), 1-27.

Kachoka, N., & Hoskins, R. (2017). Using project management strategy to evaluate the challenges of managing a renovation project at the Chancellor College Library, University of Malawi. *African Journal of Library, Archives & Information Science. 27*(2), 189-200.

Keisling, B., & Laning, M. (2016). We are happy to be here: The onboarding experience in academic libraries. *Journal of Library Administration*, *56*(4), 381-394.

Kenefick, C., & DeVito, J. (2015). From treading water to smooth sailing: Mentoring for new academic librarians. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, *22*(1), 90-96.

Keven, J., Houk, K., Nielsen, J., & Wong-Welch., J. (2017). Digging in the mines: Mining course syllabi in search of the library. *Evidence Based Library & Information Practice. 12*(1), 72-84.

Kozel-Gains, M. A., & Stoddart, R. A. (2009). Experiments and experience in liaison activities: Lessons from new librarians in integrating technology, face-to-face, and follow-up. *Collection Management*, *34*(2), 130-142.

Knight, J. A. (2013). Rapid on-boarding of academic librarians: Good economic sense. *Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances*, *26*(4), 152-160.

Lisbon, A., & Welsh, M. (2017). Building a cloud-based onboarding guide for new academic librarians. *Library Leadership & Management*, *31*(4), 1-15.

Minchew, T. (2015). Who's on first?: License team workflow tracking with Trello. *Serials Review. 41*(3), 165-172.

Serrano, S., & Aviles, R. (2016). Academic librarians and project management: An international study. *Portal: Libraries & the Academy. 16*(3), 465-475.

Turnbow, D, & Roth, A. (June 2016). *Walking the path together: Creating an instructional design team to elevate learning*. Presentation at Library Instruction West Conference, Salt Lake City, UT.

University of Louisville. (2012). *University of Louisville Libraries Strategic Plan, 2012-2020*. Retrieved from https://library.louisville.edu/ld.php?content_id=24731662

Uzwyshyn, R. R., Smith, A. M., Coulter, P., Stevens, C., & Hyland, S. (2013). A virtual, globally dispersed twenty-first century academic library system. *Reference Librarian*, *54*(3), 226-235.

Yeh, S., & Walter, Z. (2016). Critical success factors for integrated library system implementation in academic libraries: A qualitative study. *Information Technology & Libraries. 35*(3), 27-42.

Keeping Current:
Student Employee Recruitment and Training at Syracuse University's Bird Library

Laura Benjamin
Access Services Manager, Syracuse University

Lisa Brigandi
Senior Library Assistant, University of Rochester's Special Collections

Christina Huffaker
Reference Librarian, Utica College

Abstract

At Syracuse University Libraries' Bird Library, a departmental restructuring and change in staffing meant that student workers in the Access & Resource Sharing department needed to take on new roles. These shifts prompted the new team of supervisors to reinvent the existing student training program, in an effort to cross-train students in both stacks and circulation tasks, as well as to increase students' confidence, performance, and investment in their work. Revamping training involved creating a LibGuide, PowerPoint tutorials for all tasks, increased tracking of student progress, and weekly quizzes using LibWizard. Modified hiring strategies were introduced, focusing on the recruitment of graduate student applicants to the MSLIS program on campus, offering a paid position at Bird Library as part of their admission package. Overall, these changes resulted in success, making training more efficient and effective. As evidenced by analysis of the LibWizard quizzes over two semesters, improvements in students' understanding and retention of library processes and procedures were seen.

Article Type: Case study

Introduction

The role of the student library worker is evolving, with students taking on greater responsibility than ever before. In many libraries, staff are required to rely more on student workers to perform tasks previously delegated to full-time staff. Student supervisors are presented with an opportunity to engage with students in new ways, both through initial and ongoing training and communication.

Like many large institutional libraries, Syracuse University Libraries employs over 150 student workers, both graduate and undergraduates. Student staff fill roles within nearly every department in Syracuse University Libraries, across multiple library locations, from administration to archives and special collections. The Access & Resource Sharing (ARS) department at Bird Library, the main library on campus, employs about 15 undergraduates and 6 graduate students every semester. These students represent a wide

Endnotes: The Journal of the New Members Round Table
Volume 9, Issue 1, 2018
pp. 10-22
Published by the American Library Association

ISSN: 2159-0591

variety of majors and degree programs, particularly among the undergraduate employees. In the past, graduate students came from the iSchool, the museum studies program, and the social sciences. An informal hiring practice prioritizing graduate applicants pursuing their M.S. in Library and Information Science had been followed for many semesters.

For many years, the stacks maintenance responsibilities at Syracuse University's Bird Library were a function of a dedicated team, including one stacks supervisor and student employees. These students were solely responsible for shelving, shelf reading, searching for missing books, and shifting projects within the library. At the same time, the library employed a team of full-time staff and student workers to staff the circulation desk and provide assistance to patrons borrowing library materials.

Due to retirements and resignations, the department underwent a restructuring. Stacks and circulation responsibilities were merged, leaving staff and student workers in need of cross-training in both skill sets. Given the reduced workforce of the department, full-time staff were occupied with their daily responsibilities, and dedicated time for student training was elusive. This resulted in stressful conditions for both staff and student employees. As vacancies were filled, the department gained two newly appointed ARS supervisors and an ARS manager; conditions were ideal for the creation and implementation of a new student and staff training program. The newly established ARS leadership team focused on the shared goals of supporting student employees and set out to create a viable, ongoing student training program.

While a number of existing studies, methods, research, and examples are reviewed in the following section, the Bird Library ARS team discovered that the most critical aspect of building a model for student training was first assembling a team of staff leaders. The unified ARS team set an example of the collaborative mindset that they wished to foster within the department, and provided a support system and sounding board for one another throughout the training process. Using this collaboration, the team created training solutions that not only benefited the department, but empowered students to feel confident in their workplace skills. Inspiration and specific ideas can be drawn from the Syracuse University Libraries' ARS team, but their experience began with conversations that led to collaboration. This article aims to prompt similar conversations that will help form strong teams.

Literature Review

With such an established history of libraries' student workforce, it stands to reason that there are many articles citing recommendations for hiring, training, and supervising student employees. For new supervisors, the availability of resources on training student employees is important for their career growth. While the training and mentorship offered by their own supervisors or experienced peers is an invaluable asset, literature on the topic is another important resource that new supervisors should mine. The wide range of perspectives on the issue is reflected in the array of approaches described in the literature, and even on the style of the articles themselves. Existing literature on training student employees is diverse, approaching the subject from a number of perspectives. Some sources provide a practical, hands-on report of training tactics that were employed at a particular institution, while others describe the theories and models that have been tested.

Though student workers' roles are changing, the student workforce has been a strong presence in the library world for almost a century, as noted by Kathman and Kathman (2000) in their well-known article "Training Student Employees for Quality Service". These authors focus on conceptual framework for student training, using a variety of training methods. They hoped to provide an adaptable model that can be customized based on the specific size and atmosphere of an institution. According to Kohler (2016), this is a more typical approach taken in articles written in the 1990s - 2000s time period. He also describes the importance of scalability, pointing out a number of issues that plague smaller institutions. Despite this claim, the issues Kohler mentions are universal.

Because students are increasingly required to perform more specialized tasks, utilizing “evidence-based practices,” is a method sometimes employed to train students. This means that the practices were “researched and tested in a controlled study with the results published in peer-reviewed journals,” according to Martinez (2014, p.552). Taking a more career-focused tack, Maxley-Harris, Cross, and McFarland (2010) surveyed current library employees to discover if there was a recognizable trend in the number of current library professionals who began as student employees. They found no conclusive pattern, but propound encouraging current student workers to pursue library professions. Those students not aiming for a career in the library or information science world can still benefit greatly from student employment opportunities. “Academic libraries are in a unique position to evolve student employment into being more than merely a part-time job and to contribute to students’ academic and personal success” (Melilli, Mitola & Hunsaker, 2016, p.430). The authors of “Contributing to the Library Student Employee Experience: Perceptions of a Student Development Program” found that the professional and personal development workshops hosted by the library received positive responses from student employees in attendance (Melilli, et al., 2016).

Other studies focus on specific training techniques, including the evidence-based methods that Martinez (2014) suggests pairing with close supervision and coaching, along with side-by-side working. She entreats supervisors to patiently “instruct, correct, and layer lessons” (p.560) for the most comprehensive training. Martinez, and Manley, in “Hiring and Training Work-Study Students: A Case Study,” (2014) recommend the use of checklists to track students’ learning. Manley also follows Martinez’s other suggested methods, describing the steps taken at Marygrove Library to attract, hire, and successfully train the best student candidates, all while working within the library’s diminished resources. In “Effective e-Training: Using a Course Management System and e-Learning Tools to Train Library Employees,” by See and Teetor (2014), the authors describe the need for a centralized, efficient training infrastructure. They implemented the use of e-learning software to introduce self-paced tutorials, quizzes, and scenario-based training modules.

As this small sampling of articles shows, many approaches to student training have been planned, implemented, and evaluated in formal reports. Despite an abundance of suggestions and theories, those resources that provide outcome evaluation on the results of particular training techniques may prove most useful for new supervisors. In the following explanation of our process, we hope that the outline of our own student training program development will provide usable techniques that can be adopted in other libraries, regardless of size or demographics.

Approaches and Methods

During the 2016 summer session, the authors put together a working group of day and evening supervisors and a staff member who worked closely with student employees (see Appendix A for timeline). The goal was to brainstorm new ideas for student training, create new training materials, and update any existing materials for continued use. Meeting weekly to share updates, the team realized that students were not as thoroughly trained as they needed to be, and that supervisors had been relying too heavily on one-on-one training with a supervisor. There were few materials students could reference after training had ended and supervisors had no existing tools to evaluate students’ performances until end of the year reviews as mandated by HR.

The ARS group created PowerPoint presentations for:

- *customer service* – how to behave professionally in front of patrons, how to be proactive in offering assistance, how to handle and refer requests, and who to get when patrons were dissatisfied or became angry

- *the Integrated Library System (ILS) software* – how to check in and out materials of all kinds including InterLibrary Loan, technology, and reserves
- *the libraries on campus* – where each was located, what kinds of materials were at each, hours, policies, and contact information
- *the Library of Congress Classification System* – the basics on what the letters and numbers meant, how to read the decimal places
- *reserves* – how to search the ILS and library web site to locate reserves, where to find material on reserve for classes, what the loan periods are for different reserve materials
- *Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) security* – what it is and how it works, how to place and activate an RFID tag in a book, how to deactivate tags at checkout
- *shelf-reading* – how to read a call number and determine if it is in the correct place on the shelf, where to find the current list to work from, how to mark if an item was in the correct spot, missing, or mis-numbered
- *shelving* – how prepare a new cart to be shelved by entering into the ARS shelving database, how to mark that the cart was shelved, where to put carts that were ready to be shelved, which floors have which call number ranges
- *student expectations* – how student employees were expected to behave at work, what the procedures were for calling out, dress code, and the like

Where relevant, the training slides included screenshots of the actual software being used and many included photographs of the actual workspace so students could see exactly where something belonged. This would help the student employees recognize where materials could be found or where library items needed to be routed.

The authors also created a LibGuide to house all these presentations and include other pertinent information like common phone extensions, common departments to transfer calls to, and answers to questions frequently asked at the front desk. This page was bookmarked and opened automatically each time a browser was opened at the desk computer.

A new student orientation became mandatory for all student employees – including returning student employees – in the ARS department. This was a time to go over expectations, policies old and new, and to give students a chance to meet each other and their supervisors, even if the shifts they were going to work didn’t typically overlap. At this orientation, a student employee manual was given to every student employee. The team updated the student employee manual to cover things like cell phone use, the procedure for calling in sick or trading shifts with other students, and what type of side work or homework was acceptable to do if work was slow. Students were required to read it on their first shift and sign that they received and reviewed it with a supervisor.

As students began their training, supervisors explained the task they would be learning and provided time to go through the related PowerPoint presentation. After this, the student was paired with either a staff member, supervisor, or previously trained student employee to work on the task. This would give the new student employee the chance to try the work hands-on and have a knowledgeable person immediately available for questions. In tasks like shelving, this was particularly important since there was a high probability of materials being misplaced while students were still learning.

Each student had a checklist for the tasks they needed to learn and supervisors marked off each with their initials and the date that it had been reviewed. This kept all supervisors in the loop on who had already been trained in which areas. Each student also had a sheet in an Excel workbook that was only accessible to supervisors. Here, the authors could track how many times the students were absent, late, or picked up shifts for other student employees. There were areas for the date, the reason for lateness or absence, and who spoke to the student about it. Since not all supervisors worked all shifts, this was implemented in the hopes that it would help everyone stay informed.

While all students were required to be evaluated at the end of the school year per University policy, there wasn't another system in place to evaluate student employees throughout the year. Deciding to follow the same evaluation format, supervisors began to perform evaluations each semester. For new student employees, there was an additional evaluation after one month of working, then each semester like the other previously trained student employees. Supervisors stressed to the student employees that the evaluations were just a way to communicate; any issues that were discussed during the evaluation would not be surprises and would have been regularly brought up beforehand with attempts to retrain to increase performance or adherence to policy. Though it was not required, student employees were also encouraged to complete a formal evaluation of their experience working in the department and submit it either anonymously or with their names to their supervisor or the library administration office.

Student work was also evaluated throughout the year by using LibWizard's quiz function. Rotating through the three supervisors each week, one supervisor created a brief quiz on policies, locations of items, and frequent questions (see Appendix B.1 for examples). Staff were also expected to complete the quizzes so they could help students if they had questions. Students were allowed to look at their notes, the LibGuide, the PowerPoints, ask staff members and each other to find the answers. ARS supervisors wanted students to be informed and know where to look when these questions arose, not feel stressed. When questions were incorrect, this offered an opportunity to talk with the employee(s) and make sure they understood the correct answer. Questions would be occasionally recycled to see if the information and training was retained.

Even though the entire student training program had been revamped and improved, there were still two remaining problems to solve: hiring the best candidates for the job and getting students hired and trained quickly for the new semester. Diligent undergraduates were often planning ahead and looking for on-campus employment opportunities well in advance. Instead of waiting until the start of the new semester, jobs for undergraduate students were posted the semester before.

Applications were received through the university-wide Human Resources online portal. Here, supervisors could post jobs, send out interview requests, send out rejections, and close jobs that had been filled. Students were required to fill out information like their availability, how much work-study they were allotted, how many hours they wanted to work per week, and what their work history looked like. There was also space to attach resumes, cover letters, and references. For students inquiring at the front desk about work opportunities, the department staff printed small cards with the URL for the online job portal and information about how to apply. Though undergraduates are a crucial part of the workforce during the semester, the department did not actively recruit undergraduates - did not post flyers in buildings on campus or reach out to professors who may have interested students. Nonetheless, the department often received hundreds of applications per job posting. Supervisors were able to select from this pool, interview, and hire undergraduate students before they left campus for the summer.

A partnership with the library school on campus also helped to solve the problems of finding the best candidates and training quickly. By working with the admissions staff at the library school, the department was able offer incoming Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) students a job as part of their acceptance package. This partnership allowed staff to recruit candidates that were enthusiastic about library work and offered the chance for future librarians to put relevant experience on their resumes.

These incoming MLIS students were interviewed before being offered the position. Improvements were made to the interview process to provide supervisors with a more comprehensive view of the applicant. The supervisory team brainstormed new questions that might give more insight into student workers' interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses (see Appendix C). Interviews began with an explanation from supervisors about the position and what kinds of jobs and projects the student would be working on. It was clarified that if students did not have paid work experience, that they could draw from volunteer work, internships, or extracurriculars for examples. Then, the student was interviewed. A small quiz was also given. The student was given printed instructions on basic shelving following the Library of Congress system and a set of cards with basic call numbers printed on them. They were instructed to do their best to place the call numbers in the correct order based on the Library of Congress rules they had just learned. The student was given approximately 5-10 minutes to sort the 30 cards while supervisors left the room. The student was allowed to refer to the instructions, ask for more time, or ask a question of the interviewers. Supervisors then reviewed the sorting and explained the errors, if any. Time at the end of the interview was reserved for the student to ask questions.

Recruiting graduate students from the library school also helped resolve the problem of too little training too close to the start of the semester. Many graduate students were looking for on-campus positions early as they were making decisions in the spring and early summer about where they would attend graduate school in the fall. Fortunately, at Syracuse University, graduate students are paid from a different set of funds and the department is allowed to have graduate students work over breaks and during the summer, while work-study students cannot. As new graduate student employees moved to the area in late July or early August, they were able to start working right away. Having the graduate students start earlier was done in hopes that they would be fully trained by the first day of classes and able to feel confident in their abilities.

Though undergraduate students are generally unable to work during the summer months, they are still a crucial part of the workforce during the semester. Since the many of the recruited graduate students began work in the slower summer months, they were fully trained and able to assist in training of these new undergraduate students.

Outcomes

Many aspects of the revamped training program resulted in success. Hosting a student orientation has been valuable in getting students acquainted with their new role, supervisors and co-workers. Since student schedules change from semester to semester, it is beneficial for them to all come together and meet each other so that they are familiar with everyone in the department instead of just those who happen to work the same shift. The student orientation also serves as an opportunity to provide clear expectations for all students. Supervisors spend less time explaining expectations individually to students later, as all student employees are presented simultaneously with the same guidelines.

With an average of 20 students covering 104 service hours per week, regardless of how much training is done with the students, it is inevitable that some things are forgotten or misinterpreted. Attempting to catch all of our students when problems arise is stressful and not very efficient for the supervisory team. Weekly quizzes have become an effective tool in ensuring that the entire department remains on the same page and everyone receives the same information.

Implementation of weekly quizzes has served both as a training tool itself and as a way of assessing the quality of training students. Scores fall consistently in the 70%-80% range (see Appendix B.2). This is an indication that the quizzes consistently address and clarify policies and procedures about which employees have some degree of uncertainty. Feedback from students has been positive since implementation of the quizzes. Returning student employees - working before implementation of the quizzes - have expressed that the quizzes help them feel more informed. One student stated that when she missed a question on a quiz, it helped her remember the correct procedure the next time it occurred in real life. Periodically during the second semester of this program, the exact quiz from the previous semester was administered. In these cases, the scores of returning students in the second semester were significantly improved indicating that the quizzes helped students retain the information that they learned from the quizzes (see Appendix B.2).

Supervisors have found the quizzes to be incredibly helpful in pinpointing exactly where each student may be struggling. Supervisors are able to clearly see areas that students aren't comprehending policies and address those problems with the individual student rather than sending email reminders to all student employees.

Changes in hiring practices have also significantly contributed to the success of the department. The collaboration with the University's library school benefitted all involved. The iSchool was able to present a competitive and attractive award package to some of their best applicants, making the offer to attend Syracuse University more attractive. The libraries gained excellent graduate student employees who were not only competent and reliable in their jobs, but also possessed a passion for library work and went above and beyond expectations. The MSLIS students gained valuable library experience to supplement and support their coursework.

Additionally, hiring these students during the much calmer months of June and July was invaluable as they could be fully trained while there was plenty of time and staff resources available. When the busy first couple weeks of the semester rolled around, there were experienced students available to work at the desk and expertly answer questions and welcome new students to campus.

The authors expected the new model of using the same students for both desk work and stacks to reduce stress on supervisors in regard to scheduling and training as more students would be available with both skill sets. Through this model, there was an added benefit of ensuring that all students were more invested in the tasks they were completing. Since all students now work in both areas, they have a more comprehensive understanding of the library and how their work in each area impacts the other. Students are able to provide more accurate and detailed information to patrons asking the questions at the desk because they have a thorough understanding of the library.

Future Plans

The group plans to improve orientation sessions to make them more interactive and get the students more involved and engaged rather than just sitting and listening to staff expectations. This is seen as a potential opportunity to make students feel welcome and at ease as they embark on their new role as a student library assistant. Breaking students into small groups to role play common scenarios they will encounter at the desk is one model that is being explored for the future. Students are required to attend the orientation session so this could provide an excellent opportunity for veteran students to share their experiences with new students, quelling any anxieties they might have. Working to make student employees feel comfortable and part of a team, the authors believe that this will in turn give them pride in their work and the desire to put forth greater effort in creating a positive experience for patrons.

Training materials are continually under review and improvement. The creation of videos are in process to document some departmental processes (e.g. emptying the outdoor book drop or shelving a cart of books) from start to finish. Since students have many different strengths and learning styles, providing a variety of clear documentation for students to easily refer back to independently, can empower them to feel confident in their responsibilities. Quizzes can also be utilized to assess the effectiveness of training videos. Using software such as Camtasia, supervisors can pause the training video at appropriate moments to insert a question about what has just been explained.

Though most student workers will not go on to careers in libraries once they've graduated, many students don't realize the transferable skills they are gaining through their job in the library. However, their position with the library can provide them with experience that will be invaluable to future employers, such as customer service skills, attention to detail, problem solving and time management skills. In the future, a goal of the department is to spend more time showing students how their daily tasks in the library are helping them to become top candidates to future employers. As students graduate or move on to other positions, exit interviews will be conducted to talk about the work that they've done in the library and the specifics of how they might present it on their resumes to be most appealing to potential employers in their chosen field.

Additionally, the department will strive to tailor students' work experience to their interests by talking with them more through the hiring and training process about their interests and skills. Student employees come from diverse backgrounds and have a wide variety of skills and interests. By having conversations with them from the time they interview, staff can have a better awareness of projects in which they can apply their expertise to help the department by creating more efficient workflows or improved service for patrons. In turn, students will gain project management skills and an example of a successful completed project to share with potential employers.

Conclusion

At Syracuse University's Bird Library, the revamp of student training was, by observation and the collection of LibWizard quiz data, a success. No single factor led to the improvement of student training, but rather the aggregation of our team's multiple initiatives. It is the authors' hopes that our efforts can inspire fellow supervisors at other institutions to make improvements. The adoption of even small changes to student training makes a positive impact for both the library and its student employees. On the large Syracuse University campus, with over 20, 000 students, certain opportunities existed, such as the presence of an iSchool with a large MSLIS program and additional funding for graduate student employees. The authors are mindful that not every library is situated similarly, however, still encourage readers to expand their thinking about the possibilities for student training, and to use these ideas to start conversations with future collaborators.

References

Bagshaw, M. C. (2006). Keep Your Student Workers. *Library Journal*, 131(19), 44.

Campbell-Meier, J., & Hussey, L. K. (2016). Learning outcomes for student workers? Perceived mentoring and the gap between training and educating library student workers. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 42(6), 745-749. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2016.06.007

Kathman, J., & Kathman, M. (2000). Training student employees for quality service. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 26(3), 176-182. doi:10.1016/S0099-1333(00)000963

Kohler, J. P. (2016). Training engaged student employees: A small college library experience. *College & Undergraduate Librarie*s. 23(4), 363-380. doi:10.1080/10691316.2015.1049316

Manley L. (2014). Hiring and Training Work-Study Students: A Case Study. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*. 21(1), 76-89. doi: 10.1080/10691316.2014.87773

Martinez, S.L.(2014). Training Tech Services' Student Employees Well: Evidence-based Training Techniques in Conjunction with Coaching and Mentoring Strategies. *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly.* 5(5), 551-561. doi:10.1080/01639374.2014.903548

Maxley-Harris, C., Jeanne Cross, Thomas McFarland. (2010). Student Workers: The Untapped Resource for Library Professions. *Library Trends*, 59(1-2), 147-165. http://muse.jhu.edu/article/407811

Melilli, A., Mitola, R., Hunsaker, A. (2016). Contributing to the Library Student Employee Experience: Perceptions of a Student Development Program. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 42,* 430-437. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2016.04.005

See, A., Teetor, T.S. (2014). Effective e-learning: Using a Course Management System and e-Learning Tools to Train Library Employees. *Journal of Access Services, 11*(2), 66-90. doi:10.1080/15367967.2014.896217

Appendices

Appendix A: Timeline

Spring 2015 - Spring 2016	Within Access & Resource Sharing (ARS) department, stacks and circulation responsibilities are merged.
May 2016	Student training team is formed.
June 2016	Training modules are brainstormed and created by team.
June 2016	Student employee handbook is revamped & updated.
July 2016	Team plans mandatory student employee orientation
August 2016	Training modules uploaded to LibGuide
August 2016	Mandatory student employee orientation is held.
August - September 2016	Follow-up training is provided individually to each new student.
Ongoing	Weekly LibWizard quizzes are created. Student answers evaluated by supervisors.
Ongoing	Training materials and LibGuides updated regularly.

Appendix B.1: Sample Score Reports

Refer to the images below for sample score reports of weekly LibWizard quizzes, showing questions and score percentages.

Week 2 Quiz ×

Average Score	Median Score	Std Deviation
70.00	70.00	14.64

Question	Average Correct
Name	0.00%
How long does the new SurfacePro loan for?	100.00%
You are assigned to the desk at a slow time, an...	28.57%
You're checking out a reserve item and noti...	100.00%
Where can patrons pay fines on their library ac...	35.71%
Someone wants to renew their laptop over the ph...	85.71%

Close

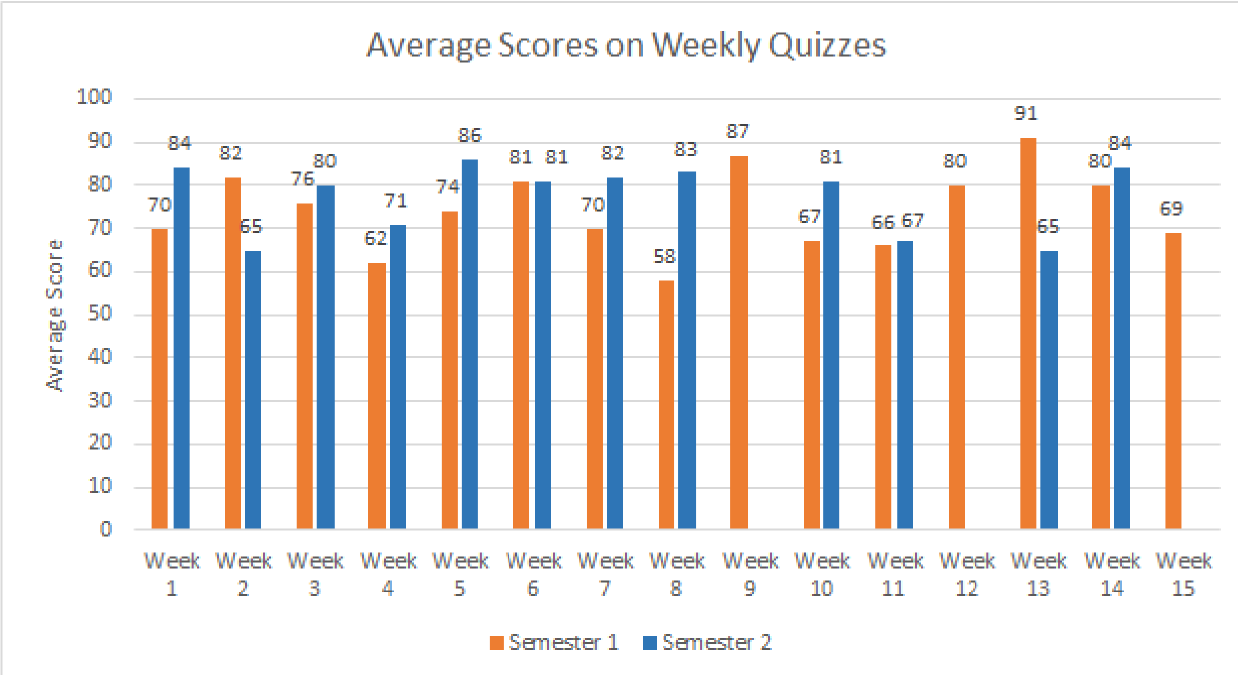
Week 6 Quiz ×

Average Score	Median Score	Std Deviation
82.35	90.00	16.28

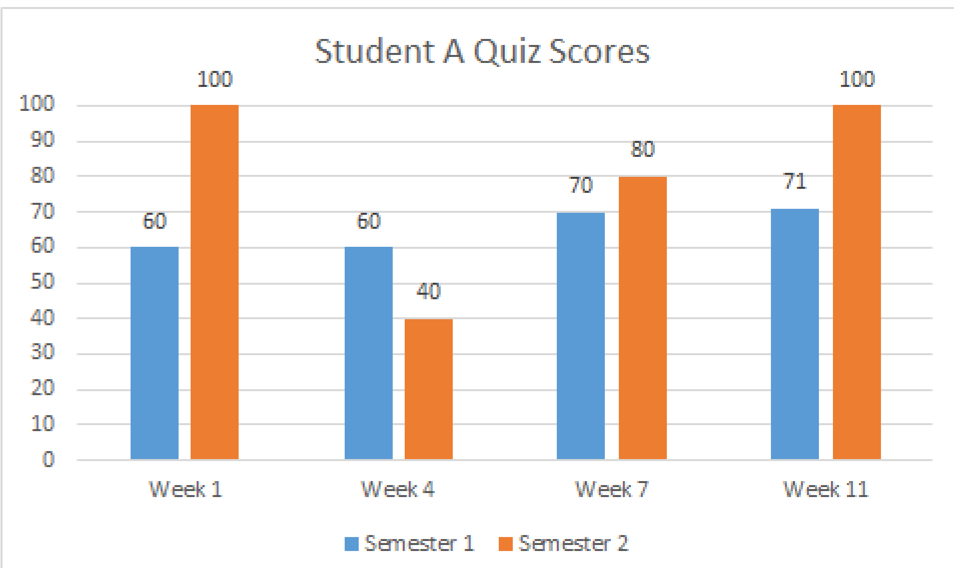
Question	Average Correct
Name:	0.00%
Who is able to check out the Blackstone key?	100.00%
Reserve items with a loan period of only 2 or 3...	82.35%
While you're working in the stacks, you n...	88.24%
A student is having trouble logging in to ...	76.47%
A student comes to the desk and says they have ...	76.47%
When the 3rd Floor Desk is closed, patrons can ...	82.35%
You are shelf reading. When should you pull ite...	88.24%
If you are unable to work your scheduled shift ...	82.35%
Approximately how long does it take an ILL requ...	94.12%
Someone asks at the front desk for the Pearl Sc...	52.94%

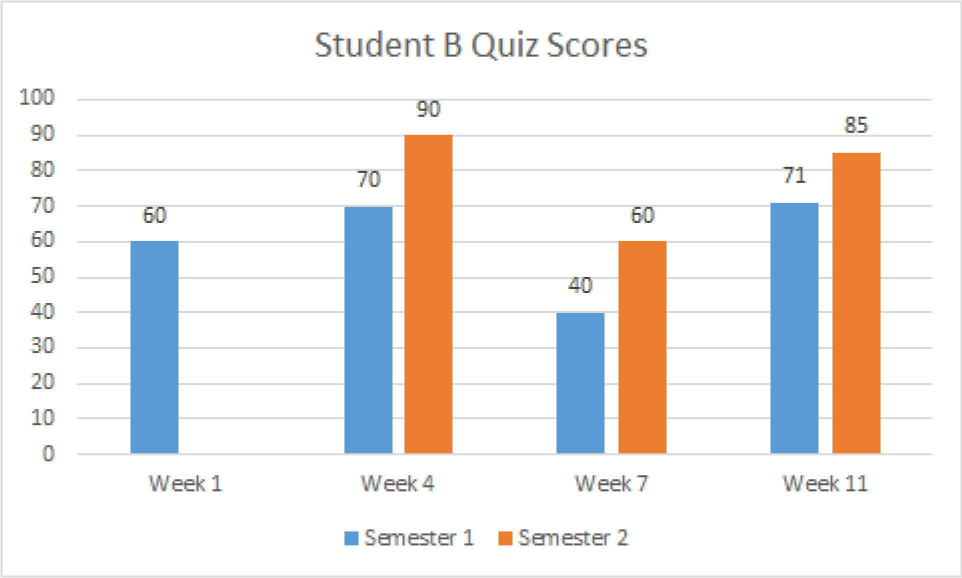
Close

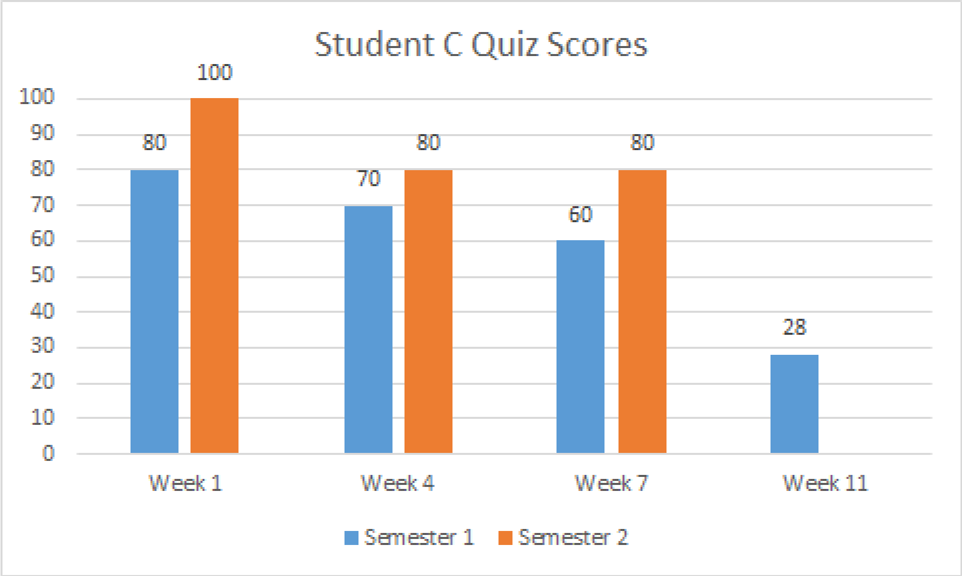
Appendix B.2: Average Scores of Weekly LibWizard Quizzes



When students were administered the same quiz during the second semester, scores consistently improved. Scores for 3 sample students can be seen below.




Student B Quiz Scores
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
60
70
90
40
60
71
85
Week 1
Week 4
Week 7
Week 11
Semester 1
Semester 2


Student C Quiz Scores
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
80
100
70
80
60
80
28
Week 1
Week 4
Week 7
Week 11
Semester 1
Semester 2

Appendix C: Questions

Previous Questions for Student Candidate Interviews:

1. Why are you interested in this position?
2. How has your previous experience prepared you for this position?
3. Can you tell us about a time you showed reliability?
4. Can you talk about a problem you had at work and how you solved it?
5. Can you tell us about a time you went “above and beyond” to help a customer or co-worker?
6. Please tell us about a work or school achievement you are most proud of.
7. Do you have any questions for us?

Current Questions for Student Candidate Interviews:

1. How has your previous experience prepared you for this position?
2. Can you talk about a problem you had at work, and how you solved it?
3. Based on the job description, which of the duties do you feel most comfortable with, and which do you feel may take some time to learn?
4. Some days and times are busier at the library than others. How would you budget your time on a slower day?
5. Describe a situation in which you felt it necessary to be very attentive and vigilant to your environment.
6. Describe a work responsibility or project that required you to work independently. What were your responsibilities? What methods did you use to prioritize your work?
7. What did you have to learn to be effective in your previous job? How long did it take? Which parts were the most challenging?
8. What skills or characteristics do you have that you feel would be especially useful if you were hired for this position?
9. What does bad, adequate, and good customer service look like to you? Feel free to use examples of times you received good/bad/adequate service or gave good/bad/adequate service.
10. Can you tell us about a time you managed an uncomfortable interaction (such as a rude patron, or a time you misunderstood a patron’s request, etc.)? Is there anything you would have done differently?
11. What are some skills you would like to learn or improve on at this position?
12. What parts of your work have given you the most satisfaction or feelings of accomplishment?

The Very Model of a Modern Major-Librarian: The Collaborators of Today's Blogging Libraries

Babak Zarin
The Catholic University of America

Abstract

Information professionals have long been accustomed to helping individuals to access reliable information upon request. Yet the arrival of the internet and social media has caused them to increasingly face the impact of non-professionals sharing views and information directly without engaging information professionals in the process. How then should informational professionals share information today? To begin addressing this question, this paper looks at the evolution of blogging and its use/impact on libraries.

This paper is divided into three parts. Part I describes the evolution of web logging (or blogging.) Part II discusses how libraries and librarians have incorporated blogging into their everyday offerings. Part III reflects on this history in order to offer some brief, initial discussion as to what role information professionals and non-professionals should play in blogging today. Finally, the paper concludes with a brief restatement of key points of Parts I, II, and III.

Article Type: Conceptual paper

Introduction

The rise of social media has had widespread ramifications throughout society. In particular, social media has made it relatively easier for users to create and host websites, which has made people feel freer to share and talk about a wider range of information than they have in the past. This ease of information sharing has meant people have started to use social media to spread personal views and information through personal websites or "blogs" without ever engaging librarians and information science (LIS) professionals in the process. This has consequently changed expectations of service and forced LIS professionals to find ways of answering patrons who now seek better, more accurate information at an almost on-demand rate.

Yet must LIS professionals do this? How should they share information in such an atmosphere? In order to begin addressing these questions, it is helpful to begin with a review of what blogging is exactly.

Part I: The Social Median

According to Dhiman (2008), there is no singular definition of what a blog is. Instead, a blog can be broadly defined as a page or website that contains information presented in the form of diary or journal entries, website links, media listings, etc. Such a broad definition demonstrates a recognized strength of the blog format, namely, its ability to allow users to present information in whatever frame those users wish to present it in.

NMRT your path to ALA
Endnotes: The Journal of the New Members Round Table
Volume 9, Issue 1, 2018
pp. 23-27
Published by the American Library Association

ISSN: 2159-0591

However, the root of the term “blog” is more easily determined. John Barger coined the term “weblog” in December 1997, with the first weblog ever being created by Tim Berners-Lee at CERN (Dhiman, 2008, p. 437.) By 1999 the term had been shortened to “blog” by Peter Merholz, but this early community of blogs was very small: there were only twenty-three entries on the curated list belonging to Jesse James Garrett, the editor of Infosift, which accounted for all known blogs in existence at the time (Blood 2000). Furthermore, as Blood (2000) also notes, “a weblog editor had either taught herself to code HTML for fun, or, after working all day creating commercial websites, spent several off-work hours every day surfing the web and posting to her site. These were web enthusiasts.” This meant that early bloggers knew each other fairly well since, by default, the barrier of needing to develop programming fluency lessened the odds of an average user of the internet experimenting with the medium.

The world of blogging was not to remain so small for long. With the arrival of the World Wide Web, and publishing platforms such as Blogger, many of these barriers were removed and the blogging community soon exploded (Blood 2000). Within a decade there were approximately 63 million blogs (Dhiman, 2008, p. 438.) Today, twenty years later after the term “blog” came into existence, there is no official count for the total number of blogs in existence. Mediakix, a “media influencer” corporation, states that “the total number of blogs on Tumblr, Squarespace, and WordPress alone equals over 440 million. In actuality, the total number of blogs in the world likely greatly exceeds this number.” (Mediakix 2017). While very high, this is also an unsurprising number given how appealing the flexible framework is to users, the ubiquitous presence of the internet, and the removal of programming barriers due to the existence of easy publishing platforms like Tumblr, Wordpress, and Facebook.

Together, all of these changes have created a scenario wherein average internet users that want blogs to present ideas can find the means to make one easily at low cost, and just as easily discover what others have already blogged about. “Blogger, Pitas, and all the rest have given people with little or no knowledge of HTML the ability to publish on the web: to pontificate, remember, dream, and argue in public, as easily as they send an instant message” (Blood 2000). Blogs, therefore, present a mass of free-flowing information that carries with it the reward of freely exchanging information and, consequently, the challenge of filtering information for authoritativeness and accuracy. How individuals interact with and exchange this information, as well as the individuals behind it, can drastically shape their views and ideas.

Yet what does this any of this have to do with information professionals?

Part II: The Librarians Write Back

As it turns out, the answer is “a lot.” Libraries—and the LIS professionals who work within them— are not an exception to this trend. In fact blogging has been well-researched, appearing “steadily since the mid-2000s” in academic literature (Jackson-Brown, 2017, p. 137). Professional literature has discussed using blogs to 1) deliver news and services; 2) help integrate self-reflection projects such as journals into academic work; and 3) develop collaborative work spaces and knowledge management resources for the library itself (Karami 2006). “Literature clearly identifies that two-way communication and the opportunity to build relationships make blogs effective for libraries . . . and that a tool which allows for timely information updates can provide a great addition to existing information sources” (Adams, 2013, p. 365).

This literature has corresponded with practice. Today, libraries and librarians use blogs to 1) create newsletters; 2) reference resources; 3) run book clubs; 4) announce library services and acquisitions, 5) build community engagement, and 6) foster greater awareness of librarians and libraries through fighting negative stereotypes (Karami 2006). Librarians at Purdue University Library, for example, have used blogs for internal trainings and to offer course subject guides, as well as helped faculty and students run blogs as part of their own coursework (Boon 2015). One study of law libraries found that academic law libraries regularly used blogs as a means of informing law students about library operations and to help them find appropriate resources for research (Jackson-Brown 2017).

However, libraries have also had difficulties in utilizing the full potential of blogs. “The main issue with blogs is that they require, by their very nature, regular updates and maintenance and this can have a huge impact on library staff.” (Adams, 2013, p. 667). This need to be regularly communicating also has ramifications in terms of getting buy-in from librarian patrons. “Library blogs that are heavily promoted and then deliver bland content, or that are rarely updated, do reflect badly” (Tebo 2012). To date, ways of countering these issues can be summarized as means of better engaging patrons, including: 1) involving a range of staff to creating regular content; 2) contextualizing posts within library offerings; 3) increasing access through clear categorization; and 4) remaining visible to patrons and other bloggers (Adams 2013).

There are also issues in learning how to blog effectively. Beyond the general learning curve, first-time bloggers often need advice about ethical and legal issues involved in blogging, which has forced librarians to learn more about technology, communication trends, learning pedagogies, and community engagement (Boon 2015). Some of these concerns might be addressed by incoming information professionals that have grown up blogging in other contexts. Yet it would be unwise to rely on this as a solution since at least one study (Ak-Kindi 2017) has found LIS students— while open to blogging— have begun to blog less in the face of stronger emerging technologies and concerns over internet safety/privacy.

This review of literature and practice shows that librarians, and consequently LIS professionals more broadly, have adapted to blogging by becoming bloggers themselves. Much like the early community of bloggers, librarians utilize blogging platforms as way of creating areas for community engagement and information sharing. However, unlike such users though, they seem to do little in the way of actual “journaling” and conversation, as informational professionals still face challenges in learning or implementing best blogging practices due to staff time/budget limits and ethical concerns.

Part III: Of LIS Professionals and Non-Professionals

This high adoption of blogging by LIS professionals clearly shows there is a role for them in the blogging world, if only because it would be strange for information professionals to be totally excluded from such a strong means of sharing and exchanging information. Nevertheless, there are also readily identifiable roles that non-LIS professionals could play that.

First, as noted in Part II, the regular content creation needed to effect community usage is a significant challenge for LIS professionals given time and budget constraints. Having non-professionals, such as members of their communities, involved in posting content could help solve these issues since it would free staff from overly burdensome time investments while ensuring community buy-in. Non-professional posting can also double as a form of community involvement because such posting enables LIS professionals to establish more overall contact and gain greater insight/feedback from members of the community. This contact and community involvement, in turn, can also increase raise overall awareness of the resources and services LIS professionals offer in terms of finding authoritative sources and conducting research, as well as increase the desire to fund and support such offerings.

Second, involving non-professionals might help the library engage with a more diverse pool of individuals. As Decker (2014) notes, “there is very little information about the ways in which a blog can be used to reach diverse and non-traditional groups,” going on to say that even posts about simple things like minority cultural holidays can greatly increase awareness and buy-in from such groups (pgs. 60, 63). Involving non-professionals from underrepresented groups can also help postings avoid issues of misrepresentation or implicit bias, as well as signal to those communities that there is interest by LIS professionals in engaging with them. This can lead to increased usage of the library by members of those communities as they learn more about the LIS services and resources available to them, an act that has a host of positive indirect impacts such as helping members of diverse groups form stronger senses of self-identity.

Finally, non-professionals can help LIS professionals gain greater awareness of how to best use emerging technologies. Mazzocchi (2014) notes that LIS professionals tend to treat blogs and social networks as "one-way communication tools . . . to publish information . . . and to promote services and advertise events; all functions which among other things, should already be carried out by the institutional library website" (p. 1198). The review of literature suggests attempts at avoiding this, but the flat usage suggests non-professionals may be better equipped to help identify and develop individualized— yet complementary— social media identities. This can also lead to better engagement by LIS professionals since seeing what platform non-professionals choose to use could help them better identify the means of engagement their communities prefer (e.g. image vs text.)

These potential roles for non-professionals as content providers and as sources of community engagement also help to define the roles LIS professionals could play. In particular, they suggest that LIS professionals should frame themselves both as sources of authoritative information for such content generation (e.g. in highlighting particular content online) as well as a resource for the community (e.g. by offering services and information about offerings online.) Doing this would allow LIS professionals to keep their place a sources of authority in information sharing while allowing non-professionals to help in creating the frameworks and language needed to share this information, thereby allowing for general members of a community to feel engaged and find the information being shared with them to be relatable while still knowing that they can engage LIS professionals for greater resources and services.

Conclusion

This paper opened with a question that it sought to investigate through utilizing an analysis of blogging as a case study: how should informational professionals share information in today's information world?

As discussed in Part I, blogging has come a long way from its hobbyist days to become one basic way that internet users have to present information and ideas to a broad audience. However, the high adoption of blogging has brought with it challenges regarding filtering and sourcing information as there are now simply too many blogs to track directly.

In a similar fashion, blogging has come a long way in the LIS world. As discussed in Part II, Librarians and information professionals quickly adopted the platform to engage patrons and to share resources. This has brought similar, though separate, challenges in terms of regular content production and effective utilization of the platforms communicative abilities given the ethical and practical constraints of the LIS field.

Combined, these two parts begin to address the opening question. LIS professionals should begin to shift their view and use of blogging from being a platform for static communications such as reference guides to a platform for dynamic communications such as event organizing, publicity, and professional advocacy. As discussed in Part III, this shift would ideally include collaboration with non-professionals as that can aid LIS professionals in 1) creating content, 2) raising awareness and community interest in potential offerings by LIS professionals, and 3) engage better with underserved members of the community. This collaboration would help LIS professionals further establish themselves in the blogging world both as sources of authority and as engaged members of the community, while granting non-professionals a role in shaping the overall framework that information from professionals are being communicated.

Therefore, this paper concludes that LIS professionals should continue to adopt blogging methods and consider collaborating with non-professionals in order to be dynamic community engagers and sources of authoritative information for their communities, without being overburdened by time and monetary constraints.

References

Adams, R. (2013). Blogging in context: reviewing the academic library Blogosphere. *The Electronic Library, Vol. 31 Issue: 5*, 664-677. https://doi.org/10.1108/EL-05-2012-0054

Al kindi, S. S. & Al-Suqri, M. N. (2017). Utilizing Blogs within Library and Information Science Curriculum: A Case Study of the Department of Information Studies, Oman. *International Research: Journal of Library & Information Science. 7. 21-46.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317332727_Utilizing_Blogs_within_Library_and_Information_Science_Curriculum_A_Case_Study_of_the_Department_of_Information_Studies_Oman

Blood, R. (2000, September 7). Weblogs: A History and Perspective. Rebecca's Pocket. http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html

Boon, C. Y. & Cheong, C. F. (2005). It all started with blogs: Developing new roles for librarians in collaborating with faculty on teaching, learning and research. *Proceedings of the IATUL Conferences. Paper 1.* Retrieved from http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/iatul/2015/future/1

Decker, E. N. and Tomlinson, M. (2014). Using Blogs in the Library to Reach Diverse and Non-Traditional Student Groups. *AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library Staff Publications. Paper 2.* Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/libpubs/2

Dhiman, A. K., & Sharma, H. (2008). Blogging and Uses of Blogs in Libraries. *Internal CALIBER-2008, 437-445.* Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/1944/1268

Jackson-Brown, G. M. (2016, November 8). An Exploratory Examination and Critique of Academic Law Librarian Blogs: A Look into an Evolving Reference Communication Practice. *The Reference Librarian, 58:2,* 136-151. https://doi.org/10.1080/02763877.2016.1236714

Karami, T., Oloumi, T., & Naghshineh, N. (2007, December 17). Libraries and Weblogs: The Role Of New Phenomenon Blogs in Library Services, Research and Learning [Unpublished Conference Paper]. *Embedding Libraries in Learning and Research: 27th IATUL Conference, Faculdade de Engenharia, Porto, Portugal, May 22 - 25, 2006.* Retrieved from http://eprints.rclis.org/10824/

Mazzocchi, J. (2014). Blogs and Social Networks in Libraries: Complementary or Antagonistic Tools? *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal).* Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ libphilprac/1191

Mediakix. (2017, September 14). How Many Blogs Are There In The World? Retrieved from http://mediakix.com/2017/09/how-many-blogs-are-there-in-the-world/#gs.b7RPr8E

Tebo, D. (2012, April 30). The Benefits and Drawbacks of Blogs and Wikis as Library 2.0 tools by Diana Tebo. Retrieved from https://dianatebo.wordpress.com/2012/04/30/the-benefits-and-drawbacks-of-blogs-and-wikis-as-library-2-0-tools/

Reaching the Hispanic Community through Bilingual Storytime Outreach

Heather VanDyne
Children's Librarian, Coffeyville Public Library

Abstract

Though the Hispanic population is one of the largest in the United States, the average public library user is a native English-speaker. This is a conceptual paper about increasing awareness to the Hispanic and Latino members of the community though their children, using bilingual storytime in an elementary school setting to increase awareness of library services. By partnering with local schools for regular classroom visits, librarians have a captive audience at their disposal. Showcasing books and reading stories in both Spanish and English, librarians are able to market their Spanish-language collection, promote library services designed for Hispanics, and reach entire families by extension.

Article Type: Conceptual paper

Introduction

It is no secret that Hispanics make up the largest minority group in the United States. According to the Pew Research center, Hispanics account for 18 percent of the nation's population, with a reported 58 million as of 2016 (Flores, 2017). Libraries around the country have noticed, and have responded with acquiring Spanish Language literature and providing services for that particular audience. However, without promotion and marketing, those items will mostly go unnoticed.

Children's services have used story hours, crafts, and other entertaining literacy related activities as a way to bring families into the library. So a seemingly natural solution would be to use the storytime format and offer a bilingual, or if possible, a Spanish-language only storytime for our non-native English speaking members of the community. However, if your target audience is not in the habit of coming into the library, how will they know about such programs available to them?

Just having a bilingual program on its own is unlikely to be enough to bring in families without a strong foundation of outreach (Naidoo & Scherrer, 2016). By leaving the walls of the library and stepping into the community, previously unreached residents are introduced to library staff and educated on the library services and opportunities available to them. This paper seeks to combine all of these problems facing public libraries today regarding the lack of awareness by the Hispanic community through a very specific form of outreach. By collaborating with the local school system and scheduling regular bilingual storytime programming in the classroom, it gives librarians an instant target audience. A bilingual storytime outreach program would allow librarians to share items from their Spanish-language collection, promote any Spanish language services, and help reinforce literacy skills for native Spanish and English speakers alike.

NMRT your path to ALA

Endnotes: The Journal of the New Members Round Table
Volume 9, Issue 1, 2018
pp. 28-32
Published by the American Library Association

ISSN: 2159-0591

Literature Review

Creating a Foundation for Literacy

For children growing up speaking a language other than English at home, early literacy experiences in their home language support what is known as home language acquisition, an integral part of cultural identity and key to successful family communication (Naidoo & Sherrer, 2016). Home language acquisition involves fully forming an early literacy foundation in the language spoken at home. According to an analysis by the American Library Association, story time programming was reported by public libraries as one of the most effective types of programming service developed for non-English speakers (2007). However, just like all children, they are dependent on an older relative to attend such programs since they are unable to transport themselves to the library.

Even though children born into and living in a Spanish-speaking home have come to speak the language, at times their literacy training stops there. Some families believe doing so will make it easier on the child to learn English, but in fact doing so fails to lay the foundation needed to establish reading skills necessary for academic success. Moller (2001) explains in Library Service to Spanish Speaking Patrons that "once one has learned the basics of speaking, reading, and writing in any language, those skills are readily transferable to any other language. Learning one's first language is really about literacy. Otherwise, children may end up illiterate in two languages."

Learning Through Language Immersion

Some schools have taken to this by establishing bilingual instruction and promoting dual-literacy. A study of a dual language/two-way immersion third-grade classroom in a public elementary school in Florida tested both English and Spanish-dominant speaking students through a reading fluency test in their non-dominant language before and after 4 months of dual language instruction (Taub, Sivo & Puyana, 2017). The results of the study and being regularly exposed in both a child's primary and secondary language showed improved literacy for both native English and Spanish speaking students. Of the Spanish dominant students, 96 percent showed positive reading fluency, proving that bilingual instruction does reinforce language development in both the native and secondary languages.

Displaying the Library as a Safe Space

With over 41 million native Spanish speakers and 11 million who are bilingual, there are still those who are underserved. Though they have a positive opinion of public libraries, many do not even realize they are beneficiaries of educational institutions like libraries (Rosales, 2017). Because of this, making contact through outreach programming is what Rosales states is the answer to connecting to the Hispanic community, especially with immigrants that have mixed feelings about entering a public building for services. According to Rosales, "the immigration topic and fear of deportation has many immigrant Hispanics fearful of approaching a library's reference and circulation desk." Their worries of being questioned about their citizenship status may keep them from obtaining the information they need. By going to a neutral location, it shows that not only is the public library aware of the local Hispanic community, but that they see their importance and that the library is doing what it can to address and meet their needs.

If librarians want the Spanish-speaking population to be a part of the library community, the library must be willing to make itself part of the Hispanic community. The service of a bilingual storytime and the use of Spanish reinforces the perception that the library values the language and supports the cognitive and social development of Spanish-speaking children. *In Once Upon A Cuento*, Naidoo writes that Spanish-language stories, or *cuentos*, along with rhymes, poems, and songs "affirm and validate the language and culture of these children and their families."

The young minds of children, however, do not usually concern themselves with such matters. What a child who is in a foreign place does concern themself with is searching for something familiar to identify with. Just like all children, they have a need to see themselves reflected in a story or adventure and see others who are different represented equally (Krueger & Lee, 2016.) This is a desire that any children or youth services librarian can fulfill, and making storytimes racially diverse and inclusive should be a priority. In Moller's (2001) text, she states that it is the responsibility for teachers and librarians to show children how to adapt to a new culture and a new set of expectations without abandoning or devaluing Hispanic family standards. She even goes so far as to claim that not exposing children to diverse programming would be seen to some as "a form of oppression, denying children the opportunity to develop their first language since much of one's identity is wrapped up in their language."

Outreach in Action

In Lexington, South Carolina, the Bilingual Parent Program began in 1998 as part of Lexington School District One's efforts to connect with Spanish speaking families as well as prepare their children for academic success (Naidoo, 2011). Consisting of daily home visits, parent educators would bring bilingual books to share with families, go through curriculum from Parents As Teachers and Parent-Child Home Program groups, serving children up to age three. Over the past 10 years, the program has grown from three Spanish-speaking mothers and their children to a whole community and services ranging from a rolling library (*Libros sobre Ruedas*), an online newsletter and blog, *El Recado*, to collaborative bilingual, bicultural events at the Lexington Public Library. These actions have brought families into the library and prompted parents and children to bond over books and reading in a way that benefits the school system, the county library, and the Spanish-speaking community.

Discussion

Starting a Program

In many ways the mechanics of a bilingual storytime outreach program are secondary to to its purpose, which can vary from cultural awareness to language learning. The purchasing of bilingual books that have the entire text in Spanish and English would benefit both English and Spanish-dominant participants. Research suggests that it may be better to read a bilingual book completely in the home language first, then read the book through again, emphasizing key words and actions (Naidoo & Scherrer, 2016).

The advantage of bilingual storytime outreach is that it gives librarians the opportunity to show off bilingual and Spanish titles in their library's collection, as well as demonstrates the language skills of library staff involved. Naidoo and Scherrer recommend that anyone offering a bilingual storytime be comfortable enough to speak conversational Spanish sufficient for common library transactions. State libraries usually contain language learning resources at no cost, and REFORMA also provides literature on Spanish for librarians as well as other resources to better assist staff members with non-English speaking patrons. Any librarian not used to speaking a secondary language is going to be uncomfortable, and if unable to find a bilingual or Spanish speaking person to partner with, use body language, music, or act out your story to compensate. It will help the story come alive and make any language barriers understandable for all language groups, as well as reinforce print recognition and motivation.

Collaborate with Schools and Educators

Establishing a partnership with a school would be a natural course of collaboration for many children's library programs. Since both have the focus of childhood literacy and lifelong learning, most schools are very receptive in librarians coming to read and participating in joint programming ventures. It is best to meet with school administrators and ESL coordinators at least one semester prior so they can collaborate with their teaching staff to see if such a program will fit their established curriculum. Once interest has been gained, it will be easier to plan. Each school varies in their ESL programming. Some have entire classrooms dedicated to non-English speaking students while others are a mixture of English and Spanish-language dominant children. The one disadvantage of having a bilingual program in a classroom setting is that the presenter is unable to determine the success of the program based on attendance. Fortunately, young children are more forthcoming to share their opinions and give recommendations on what they would like to do and what stories they would enjoy reading together. This provides librarians with insight on patron needs as well as helps develop ideas for future programming.

It is important to remember that librarians are at the mercy of the teacher or administrator in determining the amount of time their curriculum can allow for a bilingual storytime. What normally would be a 30 minute program with books, games and crafts may be reduced to 15 to 20 minutes, which can be a challenge if reading the story twice in both languages.

Selecting Books that Educate and Entertain

Another crucial component of bilingual storytime planning is in book selection. Since students will be hearing a language that may seem somewhat unfamiliar to them, it is best to choose an item that is at a lower reading level than their average grade level. Short picture books consisting of no more than three lines of text per page generally work best for young children, according to Naidoo (2016). One bilingual author recommended is Xavier Garza, who provides both vivid illustrations for younger children and also fully bilingual chapter books for older students that are more reading proficient. Children are not going to give their attention or listen to someone who does not like what they are reading, so a book that both the reader and audience enjoy is important.

While the program focus for this paper is primarily about Spanish language programming, it is beneficial to acquire a selection that displays all aspects of Hispanic and Latino countries and cultures. Libraries can accomplish this by finding books about tales and folklore of various Spanish-speaking countries, choosing titles showing illustrations with characters of color, and getting students involved by asking them to share a song they may know will help spark their curiosity about their own culture. It sends a resounding message that the library cares about Latino and Spanish-speaking families and values the contributions of their cultures to society (Naidoo & Scherrer, 2016).

Conclusion

While going out and promoting dual literacy through a bilingual storytime may seem daunting, it is possible for children and outreach service librarians of all language proficiencies. By simply acknowledging the Hispanic community through library services such as bilingual storytime, it is the first step in bringing more Hispanics in to utilize the library. While the thought of being “the face” of bilingual or Spanish-language services can appear to be intimidating, usually that is what non-library users need. There are some Hispanic homes that usually have one Spanish-speaker who prefers not to use English unless absolutely necessary. Hearing about someone at the library reading books in Spanish instead of just coming to talk to them about their Spanish collection will provide a sense of relief or reassurance that there is someone for them. It might be the motivation needed for first-generation immigrant Hispanics to visit a library for the first time in their lives.

Bilingual storytime outreach has the potential to bring in whole families from a variety of countries to the library. A successful program outside of the library can lead to more interest from teachers to partner with and collaborate on future endeavors. It could even lead to bilingual services being moved to the library on a regular basis, which would give librarians the flexibility to add new components without having to adhere to a limited timeframe.

Finally an important thing to remember, especially for librarians that are not fluent in Spanish, is that Spanish speakers are nervous too. One never knows what it took to bring someone to the library. Even the smallest of phrases in their home language will put a smile on their face that even the best of Spanish-language materials cannot provide.

References

Mei nisl menandri ocurreret ut, eam duis iriure Flores, A. (2017, September 18). How the U.S. Hispanic population is changing. Retrieved February 12, 2018, from pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/18/how-the-u-s-hispanic-population-is-changing/

Krueger, A. H., & Lee, T. (2016). Storytime-palooza! Racial diversity and inclusion in storytime. *Children and Libraries*, 14 (3), 18. doi:10.5860/cal.14n3.18

Moller, S. C. (2001). *Library service to Spanish speaking patrons: a practical guide.* Englewood (Colorado): Libraries Unlimited.

Naidoo, J. C. (2011). *Celebrating cuentos: Promoting Latino children's literature and literacy in classrooms and libraries.* Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

Naidoo, J.C., Scherrer, K. (2016). *Once upon a cuento: Bilingual storytimes in English & Spanish*. American Library Association

Ptacek, B. (2016). Early literacy and the public library: An opportunity of a lifetime (of reading). Public Library Quarterly, 35 (4), 338-343. doi:10.1080/01616846.2016.1245007

Rosales Jr., R. (2016). ¿Cómo puedo ayudarle? Providing the best service to your Hispanic community. *Public Libraries* , 55 (1), 31-33.

"Serving Non-English Speakers", American Library Association, March 25, 2008. ala.org/aboutala/offices/olos/nonenglishspeakers (Accessed February 12, 2018) Document ID: 3cabcf94-1575-3884-79cd-8bd68f0c7e36

Taub, G. g., Sivo, S. A., & Puyana, O. E. (2017). Group Differences Between English andSpanish Speakers' Reading Fluency Growth in Bilingual Immersion Education. *School Psychology Forum*, 11 (2), 45-51.

Book Reviews

Kirsch, Breanne. (2018). *The LITA Guide to No or Low-Cost Technology Tools for Libraries*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kirsch's previous contributions to the library literature include innovative ways to use gaming in libraries, as well as intergenerational cooperation in the library workforce. Here Kirsch focuses her sights on the use of free or low-cost technology tools for library purposes under a rubric of eight key sections divided into two parts. In Part 1, she examines technology tools that help with creating videos, producing screencasts, collaboration, and assessment. The selected categories are timely and relevant. As anyone who has viewed instructional videos with monotone voice-overs can attest, video creation is an art which many are still trying to master, and libraries with limited budgets often cannot afford the pricier video creation options available. In her first chapter, Kirsch sets a pattern that remains constant throughout the book; every section offers an in-depth look regarding at least two technology tools in each category, followed by a broader discussion of alternative tools available. Every section is also equipped with a "real- world examples in libraries" area to give the reader a better idea of the tool's practical applications, as well as a "wrapping up" section to offer key takeaways from a given chapter. Strategically placed screenshots in each chapter provide extra context and guidance for her discussion of each technology tool.

Kirsch stays firmly aware of the differing applicability of tools based on the library type and the library audience. For example, in her chapter on using technology tools for presentations, Kirsch compares a simpler, streamlined tool (Emaze) to a more advanced tool with a steeper learning curve (Academic Presenter). This approach imbues a sense of usefulness for both the novice and the more firmly established librarian technophile looking for new technology tools to add to their belt. Part 2 focuses on technology tools for presenting, marketing, image editing or design, and digital storytelling. Kirsch utilizes her awareness of three key considerations which librarians care about deeply, and which companies creating technology tools do not always take into proper consideration: copyright, accessibility, and privacy. For instance, in illustrating how to use Spark, a graphic design tool for digital storytelling, Kirsch addresses issues of using the tool while maintaining privacy, as well as how to utilize copyright-friendly images. In her chapter on video creation, Kirsch details methods for improving the technology tool's accessibility features, which is particularly relevant as libraries serve an increasing number of individuals with a variety of disabilities.

To sum up, although the world of technology tools is ever-changing, this book provides a way for any librarian to surge back into the fray and continue innovating. The broad array of purposes served in the technology tools chosen for the book offers value across all types of libraries. Too often in the library field it can be difficult to pinpoint promising areas of technology in which to invest finite resources or energy. This book provides a useful tool for doing just that.

Reviewed by Bradley Lola, Public Services Librarian, University of South Carolina Upstate.

Endnotes: The Journal of the New Members Round Table
Volume 9, Issue 1, 2018
pp. 33-35
Published by the American Library Association

ISSN: 2159-0591

Hitchcock, D. (2017). *Patent Searching Made Easy: How to do Patent Searches on the Internet and in the Library,* 7th edition. Berkeley, CA: Nolo

Patent Searching Made Easy is a thorough primer, written without excessive legalese, which has a direct focus on breaking down the patent searching process. This work acts as a guide for the user to evaluate the patentability of an idea. It instructs its users on performing the most effective online patent and prior art searches as well as techniques for navigating several online patent and trademark databases. While *Patent Searching Made Easy* can help readers avoid some of the need for professional patent searching help, particularly at the preliminary stages of searching, it is explicitly NOT a guide for individuals to go through the patent application process themselves. This topic is covered in depth within publisher Nolo's other patent work, *Patent it Yourself (Pressman & Tuytschaevers, 2016)*.

Patent Searching Made Easy is divided into three main sections, The Basics, Simple and Advanced Searching, and Resources. The first part of The Basics provides a helpful general overview about patents and prior art as well as the criteria for the patentability of an invention. It is important to note that this book is written from the perspective of US patent law and may not necessarily be applicable when investigating international patent information. This section provides an adequate and succinct briefing on the nature of patents that should be helpful to anyone new to working with intellectual property. What may be less helpful, particularly for trained librarians, is the second portion of The Basics, which describes in detail the nature of using keywords in a search engine. It includes a lengthy description of Boolean operators and special characters used for substituting letters as well as the seemingly obvious topic of what types of internet connections one can use to access a patent database (any internet connection).

The next section, Simple and Advanced Searching, provides detailed instructions for searching the most popular online patent databases: the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), The European Patent Office (EPO), and Google Patents. It contains text and comprehensive screenshots that describe many aspects of the searching process. While much of this material is freely available through online tutorials and videos (including those found on the USPTO and EPO websites), it may have appeal to learners who prefer moving at their own pace or just having a physical book. The downside to this approach is that new editions of the book must be purchased when changes are made to the underlying resources. Once again it should be noted that the directions are at times remedial for anyone familiar with online database searching.

The book concludes with descriptions of further resources, some of which can be accessed online and others that require a visit to a Patent and Trademark Resource Center (PTRC), as well as forms for practicing patent searching and a glossary of terms. Overall, *Patent Searching Made Easy* is a worthwhile reference work that can be used to provide reliable patent information and search strategies. It provides simple, step by step guidance that would allow even the most novice user to navigate the major online patent databases. The caveat is that advanced search tactics are totally neglected, and portions of the book could be applied to searching any database rather than specialized patent collections. This book should be most useful for librarians new to working with inventors and intellectual property, those unfamiliar with performing prior art searches, and community members who would like to expand their patent knowledge.

References:

Pressman, D., & Tuytschaevers, T. J. (2016). *Patent it Yourself: Your Step-by-Step Guide to Filing at the U.S. Patent Office* (18th ed.). Berkeley, California: Nolo.

Reviewed by Mitch Winterman, Reference and Instruction Librarian, University of Nevada, Reno.

Accardi, M. (2017). *The Feminist Reference Desk: Concepts, Critiques, and Conversations (Gender and sexuality in information studies*: no. 8). Sacramento, California: Library Juice Press.

Edited by Maria T Accardi, *The Feminist Reference Desk* is the most recent book in *The Series on Gender and Sexuality in Information Studies* published by Library Juice Press. Through anecdotes, research papers, and poetry, this book takes a practical and engaging approach on how librarians work with patrons at the reference desk, as well as how we feel about ourselves while doing so. New library professionals will appreciate the quick pace of the writing, the narrative style, and the practical steps given in this book.

Feminist values such as caring, community, empowerment, and the value of lived experience are essential when engaging with patrons at the reference desk. The various authors of this book discuss different values, with an authentic voice, regaling us with what went right, and many instances when things went wrong. Many chapters feature the voices of reference librarians or library school students directly quoted, demonstrating the importance of listening to individuals and placing their experiences at the forefront of scholarly communication. My favorite instance of this was a chapter on training student workers on the reference desk where all the students commented on the chapter in the footnotes. Their insights grounded the chapter with their unique perspective and humor.

While the book is not a course in feminist theory, it is full of wonderful examples of feminist theory put to work. Chapters examine how libraries are upholding the status quo through neutrality, how Libguides and zines can be powerful in subverting the traditional ways of learning, and how the intersectionality of race, gender, class, and social justice all meet at the reference desk. As someone new to feminist theory, I could easily understand this applied study, even without any prior background in it.

One of my favorite quotes from the books is that, “feminist pedagogy pushes us to try new things without a guarantee of success or control” (p. 108). As a new librarian, it is easy to want to stick to tried-and-true methods of reference, instruction, and other aspects of librarianship, holding on to control with everything I have. But when we embrace a beginner’s mindset and look at our roles with fresh eyes, there are many new and exciting ways to approach librarianship. Libraries are changing every day; *The Feminist Reference Desk* illuminates this as something exciting, rather than something to fear.

The book shares these stories of success and failure to encourage more librarians to bring feminist values to the reference desk. When we are talking with a patron, are we having a conversation or engaging in a transaction? Are we seeing each student, community member, or teacher as an individual with a myriad of facets, or as a problem to be solved? For me this book transformed how I see myself as a librarian and has already informed, validated, and encouraged the way I see my daily work at the reference desk. As a new librarian, I am inspired by this work to be a great reference librarian while also being the best and most authentic person I can be.

*Bonus: I counted two Hamilton references in the book, how many can you find?

Reviewed by Jessica Martinez, University of Idaho.