ENDNOTES

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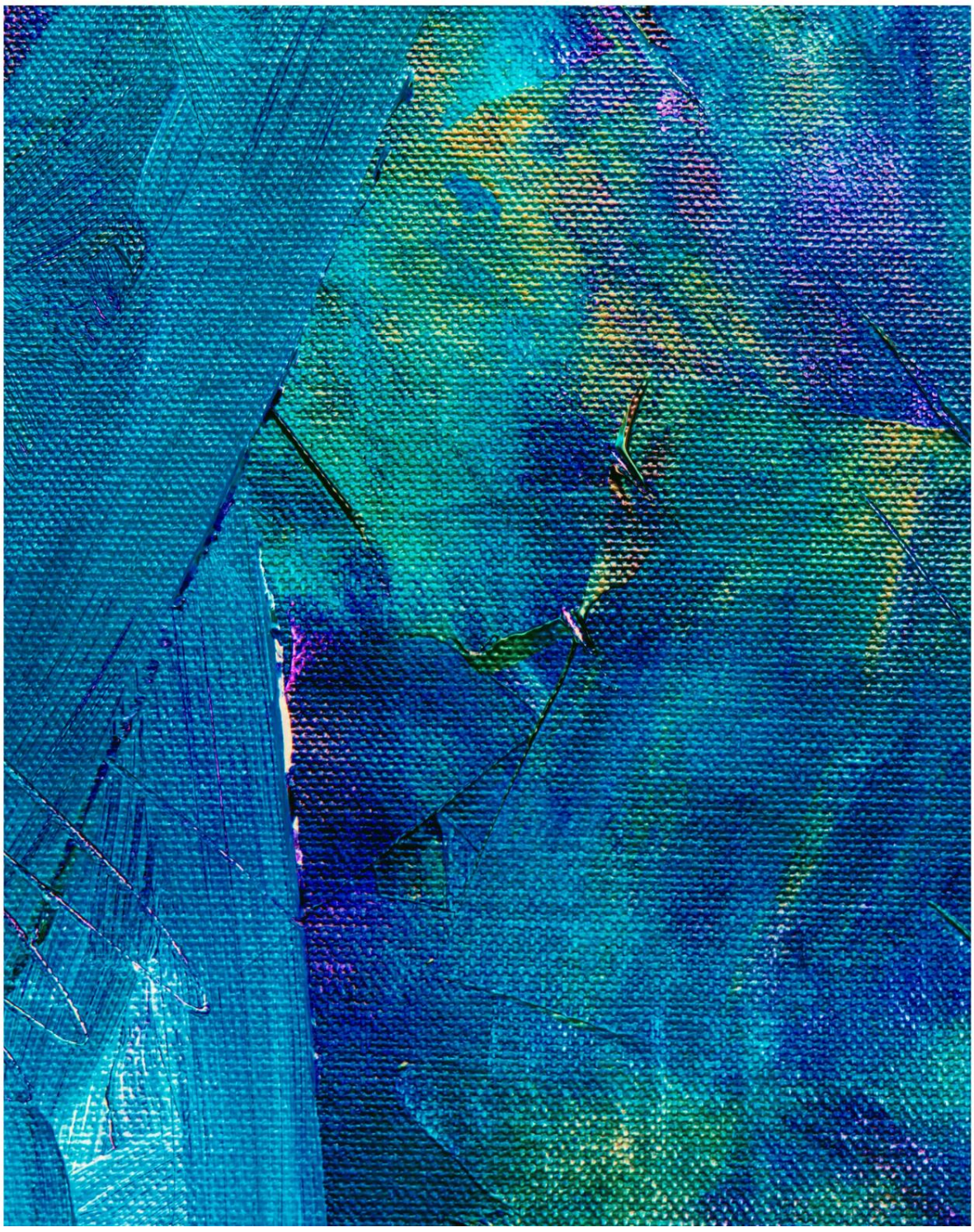

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From the Editors

Welcome to this year's edition of *Endnotes: The Journal of the New Members Round Table*, the journal dedicated to supporting library school students and early-career librarians. The *Endnotes* Committee, which also serves as the Editorial Board, has had a year filled with author inquiries and manuscript submissions that highlight the diverse interests in our field. We are proud to offer a platform for emerging scholars to share their research on a variety of library-related topics.

In this issue, we are excited to present a selection of articles that cover important and interesting topics in librarianship. *Endnotes* 12.1 includes a research paper on service to the ESL community, literature reviews on Gold Open Access and artificial intelligence, and case studies on peer mentoring, portable whiteboards, and using zines in instruction. There is

something for everyone, and we hope you enjoy reading these articles as much as we did.

We are committed to creating a welcoming space for LIS students and early-career librarians to publish their research. Many of our authors are first-time writers, and we prioritize guiding them through the publication process to ensure they feel confident in their work.

We extend our gratitude to the *Endnotes* Committee for their dedication and hard work, and to the American Library Association for its continued support.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Endnotes* and look forward to your continued engagement and contributions to the New Members Round Table.

Sarah Lerner & Emily Grace Zerrenner, Editors

Editorial Policy

Endnotes (ISSN: 2159-0591) is the scholarly publication of the ALA New Members Round Table. The purpose of *Endnotes* is to provide support for library school students and early-career librarians seeking to publish scholarly articles on a wide variety of library-centric topics.

The *Endnotes* Committee oversees the publication of a peer-reviewed e-journal, *Endnotes: The Journal of the New Members Round Table.* The journal will be published on the ALA website and indexed in Library Literature. Each edition of the journal will contain at least two scholarly articles written by library school students and/or early-career librarians and may include website reviews and scholarly book reviews of titles relevant to new librarians.

The journal follows a policy of double-blind refereeing of articles in advance of publication.

For more information, please visit https://journals.ala.org/index.php/endnotes.

Service to a Beautiful Mosaic: The Information Needs of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Community

Christina Sikorski
MLIS Student, San Jose State University & Information Desk Assistant, Ela Area Public Library

Abstract

The community of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners is important and growing as the number of global immigrants increases. These English language learners form a community around their need to increase access and ultimately increase knowledge, not only of the English language, but of other services that support their community. Working together to achieve common goals—learning English, seeking materials in their native language(s), getting help for their children in new schools—brings the ESL community together and fosters social connectedness to the community's partners, including ESL teachers, translators, librarians, and social workers. Reijo Savolainen's everyday life seeking model is useful in understanding how the ESL community seeks, uses, and shares information. This research paper seeks to understand the information needs of the ESL community and how libraries and information centers can best serve those needs. As part of my research, I scrutinized academic literature and sought out community-based sources to develop an understanding of the information needs of the ESL community. The thematic elements of technology use, community partnership and outreach, and moving beyond books are relevant not only to supporting the ESL community but also to fostering connection and engagement with the community at large.

Article Type: Research paper

Introduction

In 2018, there were more than 44 million immigrants living in the United States, representing more than 13% of the overall population. This data showed an increase over prior figures of approximately 31 million immigrants in 2000 and 14 million in 1980 (Pew Research Center, 2020). Given the immigrant trends in our country, it is important to examine the information needs of immigrants who seek public libraries as part of the community of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. Members of the ESL community comprise a diverse and vibrant group of newcomers seeking to communicate, navigate, and flourish while learning a new language. U.S. Citizens and Immigrant Services (2006) reports that with more newcomers to the country, public libraries play a significant role in welcoming immigrants and providing services such as language instruction. Research has also shown that libraries are a place of comfort and a safe haven, "a quiet place away from the unpleasantness of daily challenges" as new language learners seek information in their daily lives (DeSouza, 2016, p. 41). The ESL community has specific information needs and unique information-seeking behavior

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that will be addressed in this paper, particularly around the areas of technology, community partnership and outreach, and moving beyond books to incorporate broader collections, robust programming, and engaged library staff.

Literature Review

Much has been written about ESL and immigrant communities and public libraries, seeking to understand the perspectives of both the newcomers and of the library staff. In reviewing the scholarly academic literature on specifically the ESL community, and more broadly, the immigrant community, there were three main recurring thematic areas: technology use, partnership and outreach, and moving beyond books.

Technology Use

Technology has dramatically changed how the ESL community seeks, uses, and shares information. For the information needs of the ESL community, it is useful to employ Reijo Savolainen's Everyday Life Seeking methodology. He introduced the concepts of making choices ("way of life") and preference of activities based on choices made ("order of things") to categorize how people make choices in their everyday lives and how order is determined by given preferences that can be both objective and subjective (Savolainen, 1995). Scholars continue to use Savolainen's model to research and better understand the information needs of communities, especially as today's technology allows for enhanced and more agile communication. Technology addresses one of the main commonalities of the ESL community: the need to learn the English language. Suh and Hsieh (2019) found that even among generally savvy technology users, the language barrier was still an impediment to using and accessing information. Today's modern technology aids in accessibility for the ESL community to communicate and be understood in the English language.

Public libraries are ideal places for newcomers to use technology. Libraries provide free public internet access, while supporting both digital literacy and e-government tools that are particularly useful to immigrants searching for educational and social services (Kosciejew, 2019). Similarly, van der Linden et al. (2014) found that internet use was initially the most important part of visiting the library for new Canadian immigrants, particularly if there was no internet access at home. This technological aid is especially helpful to the ESL community if translated into the native language, perhaps allowing the community to navigate library services more easily (Holt, 2009).

Assefa and Matusiak (2018) observed how mobile technology guided the information-seeking behaviors of immigrants through photographs taken of their daily lives in and around Denver, Colorado. Subjects varied, from street signs to news websites, and from native language periodicals to digital/online translation tools. Some participants also took photos of social media sites in their native language, such as the native equivalent of Facebook, to feel connected to friends and family in their native lands (Assefa & Matusiak, 2018). Technology made this information-seeking behavior possible and enabled quick, handheld, mobile translation from English to the native language using smartphones. Echoing Suh and Hsieh's findings, Assefa and Matusiak (2018) also concluded that "language is the most critical factor. Many new immigrants, especially those with limited English language proficiency, tend to rely on sources and services that are prepared in their own native language" (p. 745).

Outreach and Partnership

Shifting gears to focus on the perspectives of library staff, the academic literature reveals a need for greater emphasis on community partnership and outreach. Williment and Jones-Grant (2012) called their research "humbling" after learning that the Halifax library's preconceived notions of providing services to immigrant patrons were not well aligned with community needs (p. 9). This feedback prompted a recommendation to establish an essential outreach partnership between library staff and

the community served, including involving the immigrant community in the decision-making process before designing programs or purchasing collections. Williment and Jones-Grant (2012) also called for partnering with other immigrant service providers to expand the outreach network.

In similar research, Cowles (2013) found that a word-of-mouth endorsement from one member of the ESL community resulted in increased library visits, particularly encouraging North American newcomers to make that first library visit. A trusted source, whether another community member or welcoming bilingual staff, builds momentum for future action. However, it is possible that after a positive referral from a trusted source, community members may feel overwhelmed by the array of offerings, even if they are impressed by them. Further, given the differences in services provided across worldwide libraries, ESL community members may not know all the public services available to them. In the research of van der Linden et al. (2014), they found many immigrants were unfamiliar with the operations of a public library or never thought to seek a library for continuing education, citizenship, or employment assistance, based on how libraries function in their native countries.

Community partnership and outreach are necessary to compensate for a lack of knowledge about U.S. government services or newcomers' potential wariness to public institutions. When developing strategies to include the ESL community in the broader library community, Holt (2009) stressed that winning trust and earning partnership is the first step. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services report (2006) offers a blueprint on how libraries can engage ESL patrons and make them feel a valued part of the community, including printing library brochures in English and native languages, participating in local community events, partnering with other immigrant service providers, and recruiting immigrants to volunteer for staff positions, including serving on library boards.

Beyond Books—Broader Collections, Robust Programs, and Engaged Staff

Libraries can engage the ESL community beyond their initial visits for internet use or beginner ESL classes. There is a need to move beyond books. An information professional can function as an advocate and ally for lifelong learning by supporting the ESL community with pursuits academic, emotional, and social (Dali, 2022).

The literature offers examples on how broader collections support learning. Jeffers (2009) argues that additional bilingual books are remarkably effective in children's learning, leading to "improved ability to communicate, better cognitive development, richer cultural awareness, improved academic performance, superior educational opportunities, and ultimately, better jobs" (p. 38). However, one potential area of weakness with this argument is that while the author is a writer herself, she is also employed by a publisher that produces bilingual books, giving her what could be a self-serving and profit-driven motive.

In other research, Reznowski (2008) offered several additional strategies for librarians including the opportunity to "live the language" by supporting ESL students in the library (p. 422). She writes, "Librarians not only have the opportunity to promote relevant language materials, but can also begin building a relationship that will continue to develop in future years of study" (p. 422). Librarians can promote different works to identify popular titles, music, and films that can aid in language development. Sometimes comic books or graphic novels may be appealing to a new language learner who can lean on photos to aid with context. Reznowski (2008) concludes that a librarian can serve as "an agent for motivation, support and encouragement to these students" with stimulating and high-interest materials, expanded technology settings that can translate frequently used web pages and social media sites, and being a positive role model of lifelong learning (p. 418).

Assefa and Matusiak's (2018) research also showed that the ESL community had demand for materials in languages other than English. New immigrants may struggle to find useful print information in their native language and often seek information in both their native language and English, switching between the two languages depending on the situation. Access remains critical, especially in the native language, to maintain connections with family and friends and sustain the traditions and cultural heritage of the native country (Assefa & Matusiak, 2018).

Language preferences remain paramount for students of all ages, regardless of their first language. In one study, international students at an academic reference desk preferred to ask their first question in English but then would switch to their native tongue if they could not understand or were not satisfied with the results (Ferrer-Vinent, 2010). The desire for incorporating the familiar (such as the native country language) was also evident in research for public libraries. Holt (2009) features several examples of robust and successful public library programs to include the ESL community, such as intergenerational story times, conversational book clubs, voting seminars and voter registration fairs, computer literacy programs, and cultural and holiday activities focused on native traditions.

While libraries gather feedback from their patrons, they must focus attention within as well. Libraries need to be inward-looking, as Dali (2022) argued, keeping dedicated staff engaged so that they can continue to work with immigrant populations and make these patrons feel welcomed, valued, and supported. Dali's research showed that librarians would engage with the immigrant community based on the meaningfulness of their roles and work interactions, their own emotional and physical availability relative to other personal commitments, and the safety of and support from their work environment. However, this group had some self-selection bias, as these particular librarians were selected for the work they were already doing with immigrant communities within the public library. Dali (2022) challenged library leadership to "retain the most brilliant, dedicated professionals" by "making an organizational climate more conducive to creativity, self-expression, and innovation; more supportive of librarians' genuine professional and personal aspirations" (p. 228).

This work cannot happen in a vacuum. To move beyond books, engaged staff is essential. Dali (2022) posits that librarians act as "community glue" serving as "cultural facilitators, community liaisons, and invaluable community resources" (p. 217). Dali (2022) argues further that this sense of mission informs employee engagement, and to retain talented and dedicated staff, libraries must support and encourage their efforts as a "genuine calling" and not a call of duty (p. 226). Libraries must look both outward toward patron needs and inward to hiring practices for recruiting and retaining diverse (especially bilingual) staff to best serve the ESL community.

While much has been written about the topic of serving the ESL community, most of this research is focused on younger K-12 patrons and how academic and school libraries can best serve this information community. There is a gap in the current research on how public libraries can serve their youngest patrons as well as adult patrons seeking to learn the English language. A review of the existing research also reveals limitations in knowing what combination of classes, programs, and outreach worked best in advancing the learning and reading comprehension of ESL students. Few studies mentioned follow-up assessments or feedback from the community on the efficacy of library offerings. Sample sizes can be small, and different libraries and ESL programs use different rubrics to measure success. Carlo et al. (2004) admitted such limitations in their own study of "closing the gap" between English learners in North American classrooms saying, "Because we had no general measure of English-language proficiency for the ELL students, we were unable to test the interaction between English proficiency and intervention effects" (p. 203). Without measuring the success

of various ESL teaching and serving efforts, it is difficult for public libraries to know how best to devote their resources.

Methodology

I used both research-based and community-based sources to examine the information needs of the ESL community. For my research-based sources, I started by reviewing scholarly articles across various Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) databases, focusing on the information needs and information-seeking behavior of ESL students and immigrants. I initially focused on technology use and language learning in public libraries, then broadened my scope to include global information communities.

For the community-based sources, I am privileged to work at a five-Star public library (ranked in the top 1% of libraries nationwide) that offers many ESL services as well as several in-person ESL classes. Our library, which I will refer to as Ela throughout this paper, serves a diverse population with many immigrant groups including Spanish speakers and a recent influx of refugees from Ukraine. In my professional work, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with bilingual information professionals who work in and for libraries as managers, ESL teachers, and translators. They kindly advised me and shared a wealth of resources. I have been able to participate in and observe several cultural events at our library, speaking with both participants and presenters, including our recent Ukrainian newcomer welcome event and a bilingual (English and Spanish) "My Density Matters" breast cancer screening class (Ela Area Public Library, n.d.-f).

In studying the information needs of the ESL community, it is useful to follow the methodology of Reijo Savolainen's Everyday Life Seeking Model as first published in 1995 to understand how people use information to solve every day (non-work related) problems. Savolainen looked at how people use their own knowledge and life experiences to make choices. He introduced the concepts of "way of life" (making choices) and "order of things" (preference of activities based on choices made) to categorize how people make choices in their everyday lives and how order is determined by given preferences that can be both objective and subjective (Savolainen, 1995, p. 262).

Savolainen (2018) argued that "mastery of life" means minimizing the delta between how things are and how we want them to be; that is, the daily problem solving on the "order of things" in our "way of life" leads to an optimistic outcome (p. 1510). The Savolainen model provides a useful lens to understand the ESL community as their information behaviors deal directly with everyday life and the order of things. Activities are as varied as obtaining identification, negotiating transit, going grocery shopping, arranging schooling and activities for children, navigating healthcare concerns, and obtaining access to and support for social services.

Scholars have used Savolainen's model to research and better understand the information needs of new immigrant communities. Suh and Hsieh (2019) reviewed the information needs of Korean immigrants settling in the United States. They argued that while this group is particularly tech-savvy given high internet penetration in South Korea,

> language information is fundamental for interviewees to acquire, interpret, and utilize other types of information, so that it tends to underlie the other types of information needs … most interviewees faced a language barrier, and hence needed language information as a tool for accessing other types of information. (Suh & Hsieh, 2019, p. 43)

In Assefa and Matusiak's (2018) study, they learned that immigrants shift between their native language and English depending on the information they seek, and that even as their English improves, it is important to maintain a connection to the native language and culture. In the everyday lives of the ESL community, information-seeking behaviors are tied to language and affect how they seek, use, and share information.

Results and Discussion

In analyzing the findings of the research-based literature and the community-based sources, some information needs of the ESL community are being met by public libraries, while other areas require improvement. This discussion will focus on technology use, partnership and outreach, and moving beyond books. It will then offer suggestions for the future overall both in public libraries and in my home library.

Technology

For the most part, our public library technology offerings meet the needs of the ESL community. The ESL community employs technology to use, create, and share information, not only to navigate their new everyday life seeking in an unfamiliar environment, but to stay connected to their families and cultural traditions in their native lands. Public libraries offer computers for public use and free internet access. Public libraries may also offer printing, copying, scanning, and faxing services or have an on-staff aide to help with technology questions. Public libraries may also have dedicated resources for English learners or a series of reference books like dictionaries to aid language learning. At Ela, we have a stand-alone ESL reference collection housed on a rolling cart for transportability. Additionally, mobile applications like Google Translate can aid both patrons and staff to help communicate.

Specific to Ela, our digital media lab has equipment to convert older format media (like black and white photos) to more modern digital formats that are easier to share and store. Old family memories might be a comfort to family members and allow them to share that part of their story and cultural identity while away from home. We also have a wide variety of circulating items in our Library of Things, including accessibility tools that might make reading easier for an English language learner, like reading lamps, highlighters, and magnifiers. While these tools exist for patron use, it is important that we as librarians make these options known, which leads us to a discussion of outreach.

Outreach and Partnership

Concurrently with other inward-facing actions, libraries need to focus outward, actively partnering and engaging with the ESL community to learn how best to serve the community, then move forward on executing a plan based on that feedback (Williment & Jones-Grant, 2012). With differences in location, funding, and community needs, outreach will be particular to each public library.

As specifically related to Ela, we offer notary public, passport acceptance agent, and voter registration services; language learning through the World Languages Collection and several ESL classes; and reader aids from the Library of Things, all while being a safe space for families (Ela Area Public Library, n.d.-a, b, c, d, e, g, h). We provide outreach opportunities for the ESL community by periodically hosting open “office hours” for local elected officials to meet with the community and answer their questions (Ela Area Public Library, n.d.-f). As a five-Star library, we are fortunate to have the resources and large staff to make these offerings available to our patrons. It is understood that not all libraries enjoy Ela’s many benefits. Given this perspective, this work may be most applicable to larger libraries with more resources that can afford broad collections and dedicated outreach staff.

While some outreach has been successful in engaging the ESL community, there is more to be done to continue to meet their needs. Lippincott (2015) argued that “often faculty and students don’t realize what specialized technologies and expertise is available in the library.” It is important to connect to the ESL community to inform them about other services that we offer and, more importantly, to find out what services or programs they would like to see in the future.

After the Ukrainian newcomer welcome event, the Ela library provided surveys about what services and materials would be most helpful to the community with the understanding that we need to meet people where they are to be truly

effective (O'Brien et al., 2022). One unexpected result of the Ukrainian newcomer welcome event was that we learned we had many more long-time patrons of Ukrainian descent in our community who had a desire for more materials in their native language. They did not know that we could purchase books based on their recommendations, and we did not know how much demand truly existed. In follow-up meetings, we discussed how we could best reach out to other community members to start changing and growing our collection of non-English materials. Directly engaging the community to seek their valuable insights led us directly to some on-the-ground actions we could immediately take at Ela.

Beyond Books—Broader Collections, Robust Programs, and Engaged Staff

As public libraries help to serve the ESL community, they can look to broaden their collections, enhance programming, and develop staff. There are several strategies for public libraries to better meet the needs of the ESL community. In the short-term, libraries can move beyond books by expanding their collections, purchasing more bilingual materials, and offering more classes and programs that can help this community forge new connections (Holt, 2009).

For Ela, this means more materials in more languages and more and differentiated programs celebrating our patrons' native languages, cultures, and customs. Ela can expand robust virtual and on-site programming to aid and support the ESL community such as past events like bilingual story time at a local Mexican ice cream shop (Ela Area Public Library, n.d.-f). Depending on the make-up of the ESL community, virtual and on-site programming might well look different. Feasibly, ESL patrons would be better served at off-site locations that are near public transit or existing community services, like a local place of worship. As public libraries partner with the community, they can better understand how to serve that community and offer programs that fit those needs.

Looking Ahead to the Future

There is room for improvement in how public libraries serve the needs of the ESL community. From a technological perspective, in addition to internet access, public library websites can feature more ESL and non-native speaker user-friendly pages, including listings of local resources or links to social services. Public libraries can also highlight existing tools, like electronic books, magazines, and newspapers available in different languages. Public libraries can partner geographically or as part of larger consortiums to pool resources and discover what other technologies would benefit the ESL community.

As the ESL community builds its knowledge base and experiences positive social support, this connectedness impacts the entire community. The public library can support this connectedness by incorporating the community-provided input into its planning process and executing these suggestions. In many places, the public library can be seen as a community hub and can strengthen those existing bonds by partnering with other community organizations. By tracking program attendance at Ela, we learned that there had been growth year-over-year in library patrons of South Asian heritage. Like patrons of Ukrainian descent, there was demand among these patrons for more materials in their native country languages and more programs celebrating their native country traditions. Knowing this, we at Ela can try humbly to make sure we are recognizing these patrons and celebrating the many languages, traditions, and customs that they bring to our doors.

Another way libraries can improve outreach and partnership to the ESL community is to utilize Williment and Jones-Grant's (2012) idea of asset mapping. This concept states that libraries need to plan and know their assets so they can both serve and engage the immigrant community in terms of information needs and community strengths, as well as how the library responds to and serves those needs. With more immigrants visiting local Canadian libraries, Nova Scotia and Halifax implemented tools to help librarians

discover information needs and the best use (and non-use) of library services for immigrant communities. They did this by going out into the community and asking directly what the community wanted. One discovery based on the asset mapping observation was that 25% of immigrants who enter the Halifax Regional Municipality library were referred by another immigrant service provider. Zeroing in on important connections like this, they argued, was the first step to gaining trust and building relationships in the community (Williment & Jones-Grant, 2012).

Ela has conducted surveys, both within the library and as part of the greater county and township, of how we are perceived in the community. Just as with Halifax, some of these findings might be surprising to library leadership, particularly around why language learners first visit the library and what services and programs are offered there. In my opinion, Ela would benefit from asset mapping and sharing those findings widely, both with patrons and staff, as well as with local community partners in the ESL community, such as the bilingual staff at the local school district. Many of these lessons learned from the Williment and Jones-Grant study can be immediately and directly implemented in our local library as we work to have conversations with patrons in our ESL community. This collaborative and inclusive mindset can empower both library staff and the immigrant community to work together, building trust and forming relationships.

Outreach to the ESL community needs to be an ongoing process. Public libraries need to check back in and make sure that the actions taken actually meet the community's needs. If the community's needs are not or only partially met, it is incumbent for the public library to reevaluate and propose changes. One idea would be a partnership between public libraries, the local school districts, and community leaders to develop specific, measurable, and achievable goals for ESL learning, maybe around a core set of vocabulary or everyday life scenarios such as visiting a doctor, shopping for groceries, or applying for a job. Ela could also make use of some of Holt's strategies, such as hosting intergenerational story time as our library is within walking distance of both local preschool and elementary schools as well as senior living facilities.

In discussing how European libraries aid refugees, Kosciejew (2019) posited the idea of information as a basic right. He argued that when refugees leave their homes and are seeking basic needs like food, water, and shelter, information is equally important. Libraries can provide this basic right to refugees. The key, Kosciejew (2019) concluded, to libraries assisting refugees build their new communities is "language precedes action"—that is, information professionals have a mandate to break down any language barrier to serve patrons (p. 93).

This partnership between a library and its ESL community feeds directly into a discussion of diversity and inclusion, particularly related to library services and library staff. Bright discussed the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion work, especially as the U.S. population continues to diversify. To meet the needs of diverse populations, she concluded that information professionals need to "provide support and resources that align with those needs" (Bright, 2022, p. 70).

One approach on how libraries can better serve the ESL community is to recruit and retain diverse staff who are willing and able to communicate with the ESL community, including in their native language. If public libraries used the asset mapping strategy and learned what languages were spoken in and would be helpful to the ESL community at the library, they could then seek to connect and hire people with those language skills.

At Ela, we can spotlight foreign language skills as a sought-after quality when interviewing candidates. Once diverse candidates are hired, Ela could highlight their featured language skills by perhaps giving them a special pin or button with a flag or a simple phrase (se habla español) so patrons can feel comfortable speaking with

them in their preferred language right away. Ela could also reach out to existing staff about how best to broaden collections and programs to better serve the community, focusing not only on the content itself but also scheduling convenient dates and times or making programming available virtually online or adding bilingual captions.

While many patrons think first of bricks and mortar and physical pages and bindings, it is important that public libraries move beyond books. To support lifelong learning, libraries can broaden their physical and digital collections. Of particular importance to the ESL community, this process means purchasing more bilingual materials and seeking guidance on what languages are of the most benefit and have the highest demand. For Ela, this means continued audits of the World Languages collections for both adult and children's books, as well as bilingual materials across various media, especially popular materials like movies and graphic novels. Ela could also include directions and instructions for some of our most popular Library of Things items like fishing poles, telescopes, and GoPro cameras in languages other than English.

Finally, no group, including the ESL community, is a monolith. In her writing about cultural competence, Cooke (2017) argued for distinction between and among communities. Not every ESL community member has the same information needs or comes to the library for the same reason. Information professionals have a responsibility and duty to be humble and understand the breadth of the community's needs in order to support patrons' individual needs.

Cooke (2017) goes on to say that having this cultural competence "on the front lines is crucial because that is what the patrons will see and appreciate first" (p. 19). If a patron does not feel welcome on that initial library visit, they may not return. Information professionals must harness passion and humility as they continue to develop cultural competencies and serve patrons, particularly those of the ESL community. As public libraries try new methods, programs, and collections to serve the ESL community, it is important that these strategies be measured for effectiveness in partnership with the community and its goals. With feedback given, received, and executed on, truly the public library can be a partner to patrons seeking to learn the English language.

Conclusion

The ESL community exhibits diverse information needs as it seeks to navigate everyday life decisions in a new place and in a new language. Technology is critically important to this group to move forward in their new communities and to stay connected to their past communities and culture. To gain trust and truly partner with the ESL community, libraries and information centers must make outreach a priority, humbly learning the needs of the community it serves and acting on those suggestions. Libraries must also look to broaden their services, expand collections, offer new and nuanced programming, and create a welcoming environment for all, both for the patrons and for the staff who serve them. The implications for libraries meeting these needs are benefits that accrue to both the ESL community and the community at large. Trust, connections, and outreach build the tapestry of community where the public library can be a hub: a place of safety, welcome, and learning, reflecting our country and its best ideals.

In a speech at the University of Notre Dame on October 7, 1976, shortly before he was elected President of the United States, Jimmy Carter said,

> America is not a melting pot. We don't come here and lose our identity as we live among one another. It's more like a beautiful mosaic, where every person is an individual and where we can harness our common effort when we have the inspiration and the mechanism by which our lives can be more meaningful. (1976, American Presidency Project)

By serving the beautiful mosaic of the ESL community, information professionals meet some of the American Library Association's core values for information professionals including access, service, and education and lifelong learning (American Library Association, n.d.).

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The Roles of Academic Librarians in Promoting Gold Open Access to Faculty: A Review of the Literature

Olivia Chin
Scholarly Communication Librarian, University of Tennessee Knoxville

Abstract

Since the advent of Open Access (OA) publishing as a response to the serials crisis in scholarly communications, academic librarians have often served as OA guides for faculty as they navigate the research process. However, as more studies have emerged on faculty perceptions of gold OA, the roles of librarians in promoting OA have come into question. This literature review article aims to examine articles and book chapters published from 2010 to 2023 with a geographic focus on North America that discuss how and why librarians have promoted gold OA to faculty. The literature reviewed suggests that librarians should focus on the benefits for faculty authors when discussing gold OA, and early career researchers may be more inclined toward OA than those later in their careers. Librarians have used various types of outreach, including workshops, speaking engagements, social media, and more to advance OA on their campuses. Challenges for OA outreach include a lack of understanding of OA practices, article processing charges (APCs) for OA journals, predatory OA journals, and reluctance from librarians to adopt OA for their own publishing methods. Further study on both faculty and librarian perceptions of OA; on factors that influence researchers to choose specific journals and publishing methods; and on how commercial publishers and libraries are continuing to adapt to the OA movement will provide a better understanding on the roles of librarians in influencing faculty toward gold OA.

Article Type: Literature review

Introduction

In the constantly evolving world of scholarly communications, Open Access (OA) has evolved as an alternative method of publishing and disseminating one's work. OA refers to works that are free to view and use; typically, these works are online, although print manuscripts have also emerged. Advocate Peter Suber (2012) defines OA as literature that is "digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions" (p. 4). For a deeper understanding of OA, Folds (2016) recommends that librarians review three important initiatives in the movement: the Budapest Open Access Initiative, the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing, and the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities. These initiatives provided definitions and recommendations for how to implement OA practices into the world of scholarly communications, serving as the foundation of the current OA movement. While traditional, also called toll-access, publishing has typically been

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conducted through journals with subscription systems, often paid for by academic libraries as provisions for their patrons, OA journals allow readers to access their publications without a paywall or subscription.

In an early report on the relationship between academic libraries and scholarly communications, Cummings et al. (1992) realized that the ability to separate the need for ownership from the ability to access content is revolutionary. The beginning of the 20th century saw issues forming with journal prices increasing at an unsustainable pace (Ogburn, 2016). The inability for academic library budgets to increase at the same publishing rate as new, expensive information not only posed a threat in the 1990s but still remains a problem today. OA allows for researchers to view and cite publications without having to pay subscription fees, which ideally would help ease the burden on academic library budgets, offer alternatives to traditional publishing, and help mitigate the serials crisis. Because academic librarians have long served to connect journals with scholarly readers through paying for subscriptions, they have a vested interest in the OA movement and the overall future of scholarly communications. As libraries act as "crucial mediators for bridging the creators of information and knowledge to end users" (Xia & Li, 2015, p. 16), librarians have begun familiarizing with and even advocating for OA publishing among faculty at their institutions.

While libraries and librarians were often early adopters and educators of OA (Haider, 2018; Johnson, 2014), librarians are still actively considering how they can play a role in its future (Collister et al., 2014; Tenopir et al., 2017). Despite the ever-growing advances in the publishing field, faculty have not adopted OA publishing at the same rate (Peekhaus & Proferes, 2015). For libraries to continue to play a significant role in the heart of institutional scholarship, they may need to become advocates for scholarly communication best practices and OA publishing (Tenopir et al., 2017). Librarians may influence the culture of OA at their institutions; Folds (2016) writes that "the success of open access at an institution is linked closely to the role the librarian plays in advocacy for this movement" (p. 50). Throughout the 2010s and early 2020s, there have been literature reviews, case studies, book chapters, and surveys published to examine how librarians have factored into faculty's decisions to publish via OA methods and what (if at all) librarians are doing at their institutions to promote OA. With a focus on research in or including North America, this manuscript aims to analyze existing literature from 2010 to 2023 on the roles of academic librarians in influencing faculty toward publishing in OA journals.

Methodology

To examine the relevant literature from 2010 to 2023, databases, academic journals, and eBooks were consulted with an aim toward exhaustive coverage. Keywords such as "open access," "library outreach," "faculty perceptions," "open access benefits," and others were used to search for articles that contained information about how faculty view OA, how they choose journals for their publishing needs, and how librarians promote OA to their faculty. Literature from before 2010 was screened for a broader understanding of the history of OA within the academic librarian profession and cited for background information but was not the focus of analysis. The literature review framework developed by Templier and Paré (2015) influenced the steps undertaken in research and writing that resulted in the creation of this manuscript. Over 20 articles or book chapters were read, assessed, analyzed, and cited for this manuscript.

Faculty Perceptions of OA Publishing

Faculty members are both authors and consumers of research, so they are invested in the research dissemination process (Helge et al., 2020). Further, a faculty member's scholarly reputation can be built upon several factors, including the quality of the journals within which they choose to publish (Holley, 2018). Because some journals may not offer the peer review and editing processes needed for accurate, high quality scholarly publishing, faculty have the

added duty to critically examine the journals to which they are considering submitting their work (Holley, 2018). With many factors weighing on faculty as they consider their publishing options, understanding how faculty perceive, use, and discuss OA can be illuminating for librarians who act as a bridge between their faculty and the constantly evolving technologies and policies in scholarly communications.

Several surveys and studies have been conducted to determine faculty perceptions of OA publishing and what they may mean for librarians. Holley (2018) published a literature review that aimed to determine the current and future prospects of OA, covering the three-year-period of 2015 to 2018. Holley (2018) found that researchers and authors considered a myriad of factors in choosing a journal for their publications, and that traditions surrounding publishing varied between departments. Likewise, a 2015 survey of 51 colleges and universities noted that there was no specific department or field that expressed the most engagement with OA; according to the libraries surveyed, a variety of departments were found to be interested in OA (Moses, 2015). The majority of the sampled libraries from this survey had a digital repository and took part in OA initiatives, such as hosting workshops and webinars, providing OA funding for author fees, and creating LibGuides and other promotional materials (Moses, 2015).

Keeping in mind the role of librarians in the world of gold OA, Tenopir et al. (2017) conducted a survey to collect feedback from researchers about their own perceptions of gold OA. The survey of graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty at four North American research universities found that their prevailing attitudes toward OA were ones of ambivalence, which in turn creates opportunities for librarians to help inform and educate faculty on OA (Tenopir et al., 2017). The survey also found that individuals who were at an earlier point in their academic careers had more positive views toward OA than those who were more established in their careers; Tenopir et al. (2017) notes that these viewpoints could be due to generational differences as well as personal and professional experience. Dalton et al. (2020) also remarked on generational differences in attitudes toward OA: “Younger and early career researchers, both students and faculty, are more interested in OA and tend to be more sympathetic to open research principles than older, more experienced faculty” (p. 78). Librarians can create workshops, programs, and marketing that specifically target certain populations to help balance these generational and professional differences (Tenopir et al., 2017).

Factors in Choosing OA and Other Journals

When asked what the single most important argument was for encouraging faculty to cooperate with OA initiatives, most respondents in the aforementioned Moses (2015) survey mentioned the importance of visibility. Because OA publications are not hidden behind paywalls, they can be more easily discovered, viewed, and downloaded by researchers around the globe, increasing the authors’ reach in their field. Costs and quality assurance are also important considerations for faculty when publishing via OA methods. Moses (2015) notes that the “quality of materials should be measured, as well as cost to implement, promote, and maintain OA” (p. 24). Faculty may be concerned about article processing charges (APCs) (Neville & Crampsie, 2019) and the perception that, in order to publish in an OA journal, they need to pay their way in (Dalton et al., 2020). McDonald (2017) believes that “Much of the controversy shaping faculty’s publishing behaviors—such as concerns about APCs and the fear of predatory publishers—is centred [sic] on OA journals” (p. 2). Both reputable and predatory OA journals may charge APCs, confusing potential authors and making the process of selecting a trustworthy journal more difficult. However, reputable OA journals provide quality peer-review, copyright information, and data management services that predatory OA journals do not (Burton, 2024). Libraries that have funding for faculty to publish in OA journals can strategically promote this service to faculty who are considering making

their research open but are concerned about APCs.

A journal's peer-review status and general reputation were also important factors for faculty making publication decisions. A survey of faculty at two Canadian research universities found that, out of eight identified factors, most faculty chose the journal's peer-review status as the most important factor influencing their decisions on where to publish (McDonald et al., 2017). Likewise, a global study from Nicholas et al. (2022) that focused on early career researchers found that the peer-review status and standards of a journal were important considerations for authors. Further, Neville and Crampsie (2019) suggest that "tenure and promotion criteria need clarification as to whether open access publications will be considered in the same light as traditional, fee-based journals" (p. 604). More clarification on how OA and traditional journals are given credence within one's department, institution, or even the global audience can help faculty understand their publishing options. If peer-reviewed OA journals are given the same weight as peer-reviewed traditional journals in the promotion and tenure process, then faculty may be more incentivized to publish their work as OA.

Many factors influence a faculty member's decision on where to publish their work, but a lack of understanding and unfamiliarity with OA will limit their options. McDonald et al. (2017) found that the faculty comments in their survey "made it clear that many faculty are struggling with the concept of OA and how to differentiate it from subscription publishing" (p. 15). If faculty believe that publishing in an OA journal is like publishing in a traditional journal (Suber, 2012) with the same considerations for the journal's scope, reputation, editorial board, and general fit for their research; and if faculty have institutional support for APCs; then they may be more likely to try the OA route.

Benefits of OA Publishing for Authors

If academic librarians want to encourage their institution's faculty to publish their works as OA, the literature suggests that the benefits of OA publishing for authors need to be addressed and promoted (Holley, 2018; Moses, 2015; Neville & Crampsie, 2019). Benefits such as the quick pace of OA publishing (Neville & Crampsie, 2019) and the increased discoverability of OA articles need to be considered from the perspective of the publishing faculty. The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the need for faster-paced publishing for the "rapid access to research" (Nicholas et al., 2022, p. 609). In particular, early career researchers looked for journals that had a quick turnaround between accepting and publishing submissions (Jamali et al., 2023). While researchers may not have prioritized OA publishing in and of itself during the pandemic (Jamali et al., 2023), gold OA can be used as a method to ensure that a researcher's work meets the need for fast dissemination.

Because researchers' careers depend on their research impact, expanding the visibility of their research is key (Harnad et al., 2008). OA publishing has the ability to increase "the potential audience, including the potential professional audience, far beyond that for even the most prestigious and popular subscription journals" (Suber, 2012, p. 16). Because OA articles are not hidden behind paywalls or subscriptions, they may be more likely to be discovered, viewed, downloaded, and shared by users. McKiernan et al. (2016) notes that "researchers can use open practices to their advantage to gain more citations, media attention, potential collaborators, job opportunities and funding opportunities" (introduction). An article's reach ties into its overall research impact, which is important for researchers whose jobs and academic reputations rely on their work being read, cited, and built upon (Harnad et al., 2008). When an author's motive for publishing is to "share their knowledge and to have successful academic careers" (Holley, 2018, p. 235), OA can help them achieve these goals through making their work easily discoverable and accessible to other authors and readers.

Librarian Outreach and Advocacy for Open Access

Academic librarians use programs, newsletters, social media, and other means of communication to connect with and educate faculty, staff, and students on their campuses. The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) (2023) recently established core competencies for academic library outreach, including advocacy, communication, and professional growth. For librarians whose roles include scholarly communications work, outreach attempts to promote the library's services in this area—such as professional help offered by the library to find OA journals, publish data, understand author rights, or use an institutional repository—are paramount. Librarian efforts toward OA promotion have not been deeply analyzed in recent literature, but several articles and case studies have recorded examples of and suggestions for OA outreach and advocacy.

Understanding the current and preferred practices of scholarly communication within an institution is necessary for a librarian's successful approach to OA promotion. Through surveys, focus groups, or user needs assessments, librarians can begin to determine the current publishing landscape of their campus (Price et al., 2016). Speaking roles can also play a part in promoting OA; librarians may conduct lectures or discussions in faculty senate, class environments, and meetings to encourage the use of OA on their campus (Helge et al., 2020). Established events like Open Access Week present a prime opportunity for librarians to promote OA initiatives. Hosting workshops, presentations, panels, and speakers are all ways that librarians can celebrate Open Access Week (Price et al., 2016; Helge et al., 2020). Librarians have also created content such as videos, photos, flyers, banners, signs, and research guides to advertise OA efforts and events (Johnson, 2014). Going beyond events and traditional outreach, some libraries even publish their own OA journals. Collister et al. (2014) reports on the progress of the University Library System at the University of Pittsburgh, who at the time of the case study was publishing 35 journal titles, most of which were OA. Libraries who are able to publish and support OA journals are cementing themselves not only as OA promoters but also as active contributors in the publishing sphere (Collister et al., 2014).

Adding OA-specific initiatives to the everyday tasks of a librarian is another helpful way to promote OA. Librarians themselves can self-archive and publish in OA journals, add OA resources to research guides and instructional materials, and establish institutional funding for APCs (Price et al., 2016). Both formal and informal conversations about OA in the workplace can also contribute to faculty's understanding and appreciation of OA. Asking questions about how faculty are currently approaching their research can help librarians determine how to best assist them (Swoger et al., 2015). Further, discussions with faculty about OA should focus on the benefits for faculty authors if librarians want to convince them to try OA publishing (Holley, 2018). Librarians can use persistent marketing tactics and conversations with department heads to advance the knowledge and support of OA at their institutions.

Dawson (2014) recommends developing support services for authors' rights, expanding financial support for APCs, and implementing ongoing programs that promote OA education and awareness. Faculty may be more willing to publish in OA journals if their APCs are funded by libraries or institutions rather than if they must use grant money (Dawson, 2014). With increased financial support and education on OA initiatives, faculty can begin to better understand and add their research into the OA publishing process. Further, assisting faculty with copyright, fair use, and intellectual property questions—all duties commonly cited in scholarly communication librarian job descriptions in the early 2010s (Xia & Li, 2015)—allows librarians to build trust within their institutions as active participants in the research process. Librarians have historically helped educate their communities and been involved in scholarly communications (Folds, 2016; Helge et al., 2020); focusing outreach efforts on OA and its

benefits for authors is another way that librarians can play their part in the world of research.

Challenges Facing Librarians in the Promotion of Open Access

Suber (2012) believes that the biggest challenge to the OA movement is misunderstanding, which arises from a lack of familiarity and being too busy. Other documented challenges include misinformation, unfamiliarity with OA (McDonald et al., 2017), a lack of time and resources, and a fear of predatory journals (Zhao, 2014). Faculty who are accustomed to traditional publishing and who have a high regard for a journal's impact factor may not jump at the chance to publish in a lesser-known OA journal. Without a current understanding of the fast-paced, constantly evolving research environment, faculty may be unaware of the benefits, problems, or general processes of gold OA. Some researchers may assume that all OA publishing is predatory and, as a result, avoid gold OA as a whole (Zhao, 2014). Interestingly, Dalton (2013) observed through a global study of librarians' research habits that some librarians themselves seemed unsure or uncomfortable with OA publishing and tended to rank OA as a low factor when considering a journal. This reluctance toward OA poses a considerable challenge to librarians' efforts at OA promotion. Preparing a survey to examine libraries' involvement with Open Access Week, Johnson (2014) asked if there was a discrepancy between what librarians believe they should do and what they are actually doing when it comes to OA promotion. If even the librarians who are aware of gold OA do not choose to publish in OA journals, then any attempts made by them to promote gold OA may seem facetious. Like faculty in other disciplines, academic librarians tend to consider a variety of factors in choosing a journal, with aspects such as the fit, scope, and peer review status of the journal often ranking as more important than whether the journal is OA (Neville & Crampsie, 2019). However, librarians have traditionally been equipped as mediators within the world of scholarly communications. Librarians can educate themselves on the benefits and barriers of OA through reviewing literature, attending conferences, watching webinars, and attempting to publish in an OA journal themselves. Folds (2016) believes that "librarians who understand how to evaluate journals and can articulate the various aspects of open access . . . can assist patrons and faculty in overcoming these fears" (p. 46). As practiced learners themselves, librarians can then help faculty understand the value in OA publishing.

Librarians have long interacted with and upheld ACRL's Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, and can, likewise, apply this type of instruction to OA promotion. Helping researchers understand concepts such as the difference between predatory and trusted OA journals, best practices for OA publishing, author rights, discoverability, and altmetrics is all part of scholarly publishing literacy, a term coined by Jeffrey Beall (2012) and expanded on by Linlin Zhao (2014). Armed with knowledge on copyright, bibliometrics, data management, and research evaluation, librarians are well poised to assist their faculty with their publishing questions (Zhao, 2014). As librarians teach information and media literacy to their constituents, they should also teach scholarly publishing literacy. Developing a strong understanding of scholarly publishing is critical for a researcher's success in the current publishing environment (Zhao, 2014). After all, "just because a work is open-access doesn't mean it's good" (Beall, 2021, p. 3), and just because a journal exists in one's field does not mean it is the right journal for a researcher's work.

A question for librarians to consider is whether they should approach OA from an advocacy platform at all. Zhao (2014) believes that librarians should not necessarily promote OA publishing per se but rather promote scholarly publishing literacy that allows researchers to make educated choices regarding their dissemination practices. Zhao (2014) notes that librarians should "focus on providing well-researched information and generating critical thinking on open access publishing and scholarly publishing literacy" (p. 14) rather than advocating for or against OA methods. While OA began from a place of advocacy and altruism, there is

growing concern that the APC methods involved in gold OA have led to new problems in the industry rather than delivering on the original promises of the OA movement (Dalton et al., 2020; Holley, 2018; Schöpfel, 2018; Šimukovič, 2018). Rather than focusing solely on gold OA advocacy, which due to APCs may not be feasible for some authors—particularly those in developing countries (Dalton et al., 2020)—librarians can instead embrace the challenge of helping faculty find the best publishing routes for each individual and their work. Although the emergence of OA was originally thought to be a threat to traditional forms of publishing, Holley (2018) notes that "without some major unexpected change, open access, paywalled, and hybrid journals will coexist for the foreseeable future" (p. 236). Gold OA, green OA, and traditional publishing are all ways of disseminating scholarly information with benefits and barriers that should be weighed by the aspiring author. Faculty who are equipped with the knowledge of how to choose a journal that fits their work, reaches their intended audience, and boosts their academic reputation can better navigate the ins and outs of publishing.

Conclusion

Regardless of how librarians approach their roles in the world of OA, the reviewed literature suggests that understanding how OA works can be helpful to both academic librarians and the faculty at their institutions. When faculty understand and apply the differences between legitimate and predatory OA journals, responsible OA publishing and its benefits may be more attractive to them. Early career researchers and younger faculty have more initial interest in OA and could be recruited as partners with librarians in bringing more OA efforts to a campus. For many librarians, focusing on scholarly publishing literacy rather than just promoting gold OA may better benefit their faculty. As the world continues to evolve following the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in how faculty approach their publishing duties and how OA is used by authors and readers alike may emerge. Further study on both faculty and librarian perceptions of OA; on factors that influence researchers to choose specific journals and publishing methods; and on how commercial publishers and libraries are continuing to adapt to the OA movement will help illuminate the future of OA publishing and promotion. In the meantime, librarians can continue to serve as bridges between researchers and publishers, helping researchers not only find ways to disseminate their work but also understand and appreciate the avenues that are available to them.

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Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education and Academic Libraries: A Literature Review

Karen Steiger
2024 MLIS Graduate, Dominican University

Abstract

This literature review explores the benefits and challenges of using AI in academic libraries. AI has the potential to make library operations more efficient and assist students with writing but can also wreak havoc in the academic library setting, leading to plagiarism and the spread of misinformation. The author describes three types of AI; how AI can assist librarians now and in the near future; AI as a disruptor in higher education; and how to mitigate some of the negative aspects of AI. There is often resistance or fear when new tools are introduced to society; however, it is important for academic librarians to understand and learn how to use these systems to their benefit.

Article Type: Literature review

Introduction

According to the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *2023 Environmental Scan*, one of the key themes and trends for higher education is "emerging technologies," which include artificial intelligence (AI). The *2023 Environmental Scan* notes the rapid growth and increased investment in AI technologies, such as ChatGPT and Dall-E, and cites an estimate contained in a report from *The Digital News Project* that "automated or semi-automated media will produce '25% of all internet data' in the next few years" (Newman, 2023, as cited in ACRL, pp. 37, 39). Any new learning technology or technological product, from the printing press to the e-book, has been met with a mix of excitement, optimism, fear, and suspicion. AI has the power to make academic library operations more efficient and can assist students in content creation. At the same time, AI has the power to severely disrupt the work of a university, leading to plagiarism and potentially the dissemination of disinformation. The *2023 Environmental Scan* cites a positive example of ChatGPT being used to improve students' writing but also raises the disturbing prospect of the tool providing incorrect information or completely inventing citations and statistics (p. 38). Academic librarians are in a unique position to mitigate the dangers of the use of AI in higher education. AI has already made itself comfortable in our homes in the form of virtual assistants—every day, for example, Amazon's Alexa tells users the weather, turns their TVs on and off, and organizes their grocery shopping lists, and that just scratches the surface of "her" abilities. Artificial intelligence is here to stay, but are we prepared to coexist with it?

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What is Artificial Intelligence?

When we discuss AI, some people may be thinking about the virtual assistants on our phones who tell us where the nearest ice cream shop is or sweet, sentient robots, as seen in Steven Spielberg's film *A.I. Artificial Intelligence,* or killer machines bent on human destruction, as seen in the *Terminator* films. Pop culture and science fiction inform our attitudes towards AI as well as our everyday use of the technology. But what are the capabilities of the AI that exists today versus philosophical speculation about what *could* happen in the future?

In "AI and Libraries: Trends and Projections," A. A. Oyelude (2021) describes three types of artificial intelligence:

> 1) Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI), which is "weak AI with a narrow range of abilities," used in facial recognition, speech recognition, virtual assistants, and driving. This is the only AI extant at the time of writing (p. 1).
>
> 2) Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), which is "strong AI with the ability to mimic human intelligence or behaviors to solve any problem." Researchers are currently working to improve AI systems to better mimic a human's ability to learn (p. 1).
>
> 3) Artificial Superintelligence (ASI), which is "the hypothetical AI that surpasses human intelligence and abilities" (p. 1). ASI does not yet exist but is feared by many, including the late theoretical physicist, Professor Stephen Hawking, who believed that ASI has the potential to destroy humanity because we would be unable to compete with it or control it (Cellan-Jones, 2014).

Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI)

ANI is well-entrenched in society, and we may not even recognize this AI when we encounter it. Even a simple Google search involves sending data to an AI system called RankBrain, which helps to sort the search results (Johnson, 2018, p. 15). Hawking himself found a basic form of AI useful when communicating due to his motor neurone disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) (Cellan-Jones, 2014).

Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)

In "AGI is Ready to Emerge (Along with the Risks It Will Bring)," Charles Simon (2022) claims that AGI will emerge in the next decade, bringing with it AI systems that can "understand, learn, and respond as humans do" (para. 1). Simon describes both short-term consequences of this development (e.g., job displacement) and long-term risks, such as the impact of AGI on our economy, military weapons, and competition for resources. Simon declares that "AGI is inevitable because people want its capabilities" (para. 12).

In "One Small Step for Generative AI, One Giant Leap for AGI: A Complete Survey on ChatGPT in AIGC Era," Zhang et. al. (2023) discuss how ChatGPT, a generative AI system that is currently the focus of much media attention, is bringing us closer to the age of AGI. The authors believe that pairing ChatGPT with other AI-generated content (AIGC) tools or evolving ChatGPT to the point where it can produce AIGC without any other external tools will significantly contribute to the development of AGI. The authors note that due to the existential risks to humanity posed by advanced AI,

> the Future of Life Institute has called on all AI labs to pause giant AI experiments on the training of AI systems more powerful than GPT-4. and the number of [sic] signing this public letter has exceeded a thousand, including Yoshua Bengio, Stuart Russel, Elon Musk, etc. (p. 21)

Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI)

In "Countering Superintelligence Misinformation," S. D. Baum (2018) cautions against the proliferation of misinformation on the topic of artificial superintelligence (ASI) that may be disseminated by individuals or groups with a particular agenda because our speculation on this technology influences decision-makers now.

Baum (2018) points out the difficulty of identifying superintelligence misinformation because it is a "possible future technology that may be substantially different from anything that currently exists, and because it is the subject of a relatively small amount of study" (p. 3).

Although the most advanced forms of AI do not yet exist, some believe that the evolution of AI towards AGI or ASI is inevitable with possibly catastrophic consequences. However, even without sentient robots taking over the world, the AI systems we currently have are powerful tools that could be used for good or ill in higher education, and their abilities are advancing rapidly.

Current Uses of AI in Academic Libraries

AI systems are already widely used in academic libraries, and we likely take them for granted as administrative or research tools. How can we further adapt our use of this technology to assist librarians, students, faculty, and researchers and thus meet the mission, vision, and goals of the library and the wider university community?

Oyelude (2021) noted that AI systems such as speech and face recognition, virtual assistants, and image analysis are frequently used in libraries. AI has proven useful for "content indexing, document mapping, content mapping in paper citation, and content summarization"; some libraries have also implemented robots for shelving tasks (pp. 1–2). Oyelude (2021) claims that other library functions, such as cataloging, reference work, collection development, etc., could be handled effectively by AI.

In "Libraries in the Age of Artificial Intelligence," B. Johnson (2018) compares the birth of AI to the invention of light bulbs and photography—at first the applications of these technologies may have seemed novel or crude, but eventually they fundamentally changed society. Johnson maintains that the effects of AI will be equally profound but does not believe that the technology spells doom for libraries or universities. Although these systems are privately owned and proprietary, public institutions can help "provide open source AI applications that allow for more transparency and more control" (p. 15). Open-source AI, unlike Alexa or Siri, will allow researchers to access information without the inherent corporate bias.

In "Future of Artificial Intelligence in Libraries," H. E. Pence (2022) emphasizes the use of AI to allow library patrons to use library sources without entering the physical space (p. 133). Pence argues that artificial intelligence agents, as a complement to "Big Data," can help users identify the most relevant data for their needs. AI can create more accurate reference lists by searching across large databases of relevant literature, although the AI system is subject to the same biases that affect the scientific literature itself (Pence, 2022).

In June of 2023, OCLC announced that it was beta testing AI-generated book recommendations on WorldCat.org and WorldCat Find, the mobile app extension for WorldCat.org (Murphy, 2023). Users can obtain print and e-book recommendations and learn where these items can be found in nearby libraries. At the time of writing, these recommendations were available in English for U.S. and Canadian users with a WorldCat.org account. Bob Murphy writes,

> The new feature uses artificial intelligence to help WorldCat.org users identify books in library collections represented in WorldCat related to the author and title of a known book. Users of the WorldCat Find app can also find books based on subject. In both cases, no personal information, including search history, is used to determine recommendations. (para. 5)

Attendees at the 2023 Annual ALA Conference in Chicago were encouraged to visit the OCLC booth to see a demonstration of this new feature.

Chatbots in the Academic Library

Several articles emphasize the benefits of using chatbots in academic libraries. In "Chatbot: An Intelligent Tool for Libraries," Sanji et al. (2022) advocate for the use of chatbots as reference

tools. Chatbots that can improve their conversational skills provide "a convenient and anxiety-free environment for interacting and searching for information, especially for undergraduate students" (p. 18). The purpose of the use of reference chatbots is not to replace reference librarians but to make library operations more effective and efficient. By providing answers to ready reference questions and offering general guidance before referring a user to a reference librarian, the reference librarian's time is freed up. An added benefit is that chatbots are not frustrated by rude users (Sanji et al., 2022)!

In "Imagining the Use of Intelligent Agents and Artificial Intelligence in Academic Law Libraries," N. B. Talley (2016) advocates for the use of intelligent technology in law school libraries. Libraries employ intelligent agents that use components of artificial intelligence (i.e., automated reasoning and logical searching) to assist users. Talley also discusses the implementation of chatbots, which use natural language processing (NLP) to communicate with users. Talley (2016) recommends that academic law libraries incorporate intelligent agents and artificial intelligence for reference, information literacy instruction, and circulation.

An interesting positive consequence of the use of library chatbots is noted by L. M. Brown in "Gendered Artificial Intelligence in Libraries: Opportunities to Deconstruct Sexism and Gender Binarism" (2022). Brown examines how digital assistants (often given feminine names, voices, and "personalities") reflect a patriarchal ideology. Brown studied the presence of chatbots within the websites of academic libraries of the largest 160 colleges and universities in the United States (with an undergraduate enrollment of at least 20,000). Brown notes the relatively small number of digital assistants used in libraries and observes that the majority of these chatbots are genderless or gender-ambiguous, such as "Bizzy" of the University of Oklahoma Libraries. This finding is presented as a positive sign that future AI systems will be more feminist and gender inclusive. Librarians who implement virtual assistants or chatbots can intentionally buck the trend of feminizing these AI systems and therefore subvert the perception of "assistants" as exclusively feminine.

As Pence (2002) observes, library patrons encounter artificial intelligence every time they use a search engine. AI has the potential to assist librarians with many major job responsibilities—from cataloging to literacy instruction to reshelving misplaced books. By implementing chatbots to answer patrons' simpler reference questions, librarians are free to tackle more complicated research queries. Chatbots also present libraries with the opportunity to demonstrate gender inclusivity by giving chatbots gender-neutral names and "personalities"; this practice avoids relegating feminine characteristics to a subordinate "assistant" role. Students with library anxiety may also find chatbots more approachable. Just as librarians embraced Online Public Access Catalogs (OPACs) over card catalog cabinets, so too will staff and users enjoy the conveniences of AI systems in their libraries.

AI Opportunities

AI Systems as Research Assistants and Writing Tutors

ChatGPT, created by OpenAI, debuted in late November 2022, and researchers, faculty, and journalists are only beginning to grapple with its implications—from its effects on academic integrity to the unnervingly human quality of some of its responses. Microsoft and Google are also developing their own generative chatbots (CoPilot and Gemini, respectively) and are currently allowing users to access them (Shakir, 2023).

In "ChatGPT: Implications for Academic Libraries," Cox and Tzoc (2023) describe the program as an "LLM (large language model) tool that uses deep learning techniques to generate text in response to questions posed to it. It can generate essays, email, song lyrics, recipes, computer code, webpages, even games and medical diagnoses" (p. 99). ChatGPT can

replace current chatbots at academic libraries for 24/7 reference help. It can "create syllabi, sample lesson plans, and the text for a LibGuide in seconds" (Cox & Tzoc, 2023, p. 100) It can also provide tutoring support to students and allegedly write open educational resources (OER) textbooks in hours (Cox & Tzoc, 2023).

In "Why I'm not Scared of ChatGPT," Christopher Grobe (2023) claims that "if we treat learning (not distinction) as the goal of education, then generative AI looks more like an opportunity than a threat" (para. 4). Grobe believes that ChatGPT could be used effectively in the classroom as a writing instruction tool. Despite ChatGPT's powerful generative abilities, it cannot "cite and analyze evidence, limit claims, create logical links between claims, arrange those claims into a hierarchy of significance" (Grobe, 2023, para. 12). Students must perform that work as they engage with the tool and may improve their writing and critical thinking skills as a result.

In a guest post published on *The Scholarly Kitchen,* entitled "Academic Publishers are Missing the Point on ChatGPT," Avi Staiman (2023) points out another potential benefit of the use of ChatGPT: the ability to level the playing field in academic publishing for English as an Additional Language (EAL) authors. ChatGPT can be used by these authors to better convey their ideas in English, which will "improve the clarity of their arguments, free up their time to focus more on research, increase speed to publication, and gain confidence in their work" (Staiman, 2023, para. 2).

The tools we use now to research, compose, and calculate in our daily lives—computers, calculators, the internet—were once feared as crutches that would undo our ability to memorize and work as we did in more analog times. We eventually mastered and adapted our use of these tools, saving time and effort on lower-level tasks. For example, Microsoft's spelling and grammar tools in Word have always been unreliable, and it is up to the user to decide if correction is needed. Scholars know that it is preferable to cite academic or primary sources in their writing, but Wikipedia and Google can be useful for preliminary searches or finding relevant resources. ChatGPT may well be another such tool that will have appropriate and inappropriate uses for students and researchers.

AI Challenges

Privacy and Legal Issues

AI systems can greatly assist our objectives in higher education and academic libraries, but we must not be blind to the potential disadvantages and dangers of these tools. These dangers include privacy breaches and legal liabilities; the replacement of human library employees; ethical conundrums involving academic integrity and plagiarism; and the dissemination of disinformation, already a significant problem in our social media age.

Talley (2016) lists some drawbacks of the use of AI and intelligent agents in academic law libraries, including potential unemployment, the cost of such technologies, and privacy and legal issues. Law libraries must ensure that patrons do not mistake intelligent agent responses as legal advice. Despite these concerns, Talley (2016) recommends that academic law librarians embrace this technology and promote it to the rest of the law school community.

In "2018: A Legal Research Odyssey: Artificial Intelligence as Disruptor," J. J. Baker (2018) argues that even though artificial intelligence has made legal research more efficient, law students must still practice sound legal research methods. Legal research cannot currently be automated because it is not routine or repetitive. Lawyers using algorithms to perform legal research must understand that there is no transparency regarding how the algorithms generate results, and lawyers cannot vet the information they receive; lawyers could therefore be vulnerable to malpractice claims. Developers of legal algorithms for non-attorneys could be liable for unauthorized practice of law if their software creates legal documents or offers legal advice. Baker (2018) claims that law librarians are in the

best position to teach law students about the pros and cons of using algorithms in law research.

In "Is Technology Getting the Better of Us? Welcome to the Algorithmic Society," N. K. Herther (2020) highlights the privacy and freedom concerns presented by AI and "unregulated Big Data" (p. 23). Herther notes that the benefits of the "algorithmic society" do not extend to those who lack access to the digital world. Herther is concerned that AI is being used to identify people who would prefer to remain anonymous, to profile people based upon population-scale data, and to make significant decisions based on these data. Herther claims that the cost of digital connection is the collection of personal data that are used to generate profit, and at risk is our "right to be forgotten" (p. 25). Although libraries' use of intelligent agents can enhance a library's services and ease a librarian's workload, librarians are concerned about user tracking and privacy protection (Herther, 2020). A library commentator interviewed by Cox, Pinfield, and Rutter (2019) in "The intelligent library: Thought leaders' views on the likely impact of artificial intelligence on academic libraries" expressed similar apprehension about the marketization of AI and the use of data collected. The authors summarized this concern as follows: "As AI is built on data, there would be a drive for connecting lots of sources of data about content and user behaviour, linked to the power that having such data would give its owner" (Cox et al., 2019, p. 426).

In "Why This School District Used AI to Help Determine Which Books to Ban," Sarah Kuta (2023) describes educators' use of AI to select books to remove from school libraries in response to pressure created by new legislation that mandates the banning of books deemed "not age appropriate" (para. 2). Staff at the Mason City Community School District in Iowa used ChatGPT to identify commonly challenged books that include a description of a sex act. Based on the results of this query, the district removed 19 books, including "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Buzz Bissinger's *Friday Night Lights*" (Kuta, 2023, para. 6). Kuta points out that staff at *Popular Science* tried to replicate this process with ChatGPT and received contradictory responses about the 19 titles banned by the Mason City Community School District, "suggesting the chatbot may not be the most accurate tool for the job" (Kuta, 2023, para. 8). Although this article discusses the actions of a K-12 school district in Iowa, this use of AI could easily apply to academic libraries in areas where state governments have passed legislation banning diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. It is not inconceivable that academic librarians in certain locations could one day find themselves tasked to use these tools to more quickly remove titles related to racial injustice, LGBTQIA+ content, and abortion, even if these tools produce inconsistent results.

Unemployment Fears

If AI systems can answer ready reference questions, perform circulation tasks, or reshelve books in an academic library, will university administrators choose to replace human workers who currently perform these tasks, especially paraprofessional employees? If paraprofessional jobs are automated and eliminated in libraries, this may result in the loss of long-time employees and the hiring of fewer student workers. Higher-level librarian positions often require candidates to already possess an MLIS degree, an achievement that may not be accessible to all. Will this technological development contribute to a library's diversity, equity, and inclusion shortcomings?

In "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation?", Frey and Osborne (2017) estimate the probability that members of various professions will be replaced by computers. For librarians, this probability is 65%; archivists 76%; clerical staff 95%; and technical staff 99% (pp. 64, 70, 72).

In "The Intelligent Library: Thought Leaders' Views on the Likely Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Academic Libraries," Cox, Pinfield, and Rutter (2019) interviewed 33 library

directors, library commentators, and experts in education and publishing on the potential impact of AI on academic libraries. One library commentator suggested that AI could potentially conduct research interviews; "AI systems could then ultimately replace the current role of the library professional in conducting a 'live' reference interview, already seen as a declining activity" (Cox et al., 2019, p. 423).

Oyelude (2021) acknowledges these fears but posits that the use of AI will "open new horizons" for librarians (p. 3). In addition, AI is hardly infallible, and humans must understand where this technology is likely to fail (Oyelude, 2021). Johnson (2018) and Pence (2022) both indicate that AI systems could free librarians to focus on advanced research questions.

Ethical and Academic Integrity Concerns Associated with AI

In "Five Motivating Concerns for AI Ethics Instruction," Mariah Knowles (2021) notes that AI systems are embedded in exclusionary and unjust institutions. AI discussions tend to involve unrealistic hypothetical scenarios when ethical dilemmas exist now, and the topic of AI can muddy students' moral reasoning: "AI is ascribed moral qualities that students can articulate but cannot articulate clearly within a moral framework" (Knowles, 2021, p. 474).

Cox, Pinfield, and Rutter (2019) briefly discuss the issue of bias built into algorithms.

> There is gathering evidence of the biased assumptions built into many algorithms, e.g. created through choice of training data. This may not merely be a teething problem; it can also be seen as related to structural issues in the AI industry, such as the preponderance of male employees, and the origins of funding for AI from state, including the military, and profit-driven commercial organisations. (p. 421)

The friendly personas of ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot in Bing, and Google Gemini may reflect the implicit biases of their creators and trainers.

Because ChatGPT and similar generative chatbots can be used to create new content, this system in particular raises valid concerns about academic integrity and plagiarism. Cox and Tzoc (2023) describe the dilemma as follows:

> Faculty say that students who turn in work from ChatGPT as their own are committing plagiarism. But are they? Plagiarism is defined as 'presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement.' ChatGPT is not a 'someone.' Should students be citing ChatGPT or crediting them as a co-author? (p. 101)

Staiman (2023) explains why a simple ban on ChatGPT-created content in academic publishing is problematic. Staiman cites a poll that indicates 80% of researchers have experimented with GPT and may not be aware of publishers' bans on the technology (para. 32). Staiman (2023) also notes that ChatGPT will soon be integrated into Microsoft Word via Copilot (formerly Bing Chat), making its use nearly unavoidable for all researchers.

Perhaps the more serious concern is not a well-meaning researcher using ChatGPT to refine their formal writing but rather students who wish to use AI to avoid completing their assignments and thus deprive themselves of a learning experience. Recently Louisiana State University gymnast and social media influencer Olivia Dunne made headlines endorsing an AI essay-writing product, Caktus.AI (Martel, 2023). It was not immediately clear if Dunne had violated ethical guidelines regarding student athlete endorsements in this situation, but Dunne (and the AI essay-writing services) faced criticism for the alleged promotion of plagiarism.

Disinformation

The negatives of ChatGPT may extend well beyond the world of academia. The ACRL's 2023 Environmental Scan notes that ChatGPT is prone to "hallucination," when the system generates false information because it does not

know what is factual (p. 38). In "AI platforms like ChatGPT are easy to use but also potentially dangerous," G. Marcus (2023) describes this alarming propensity:

> Because such systems contain literally no mechanisms for checking the truth of what they say, they can easily be automated to generate misinformation at unprecedented scale. Independent researcher Shawn Oakley…asked ChatGPT to write about vaccines 'in the style of disinformation.' The system responded by alleging that a study, 'published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, found that the COVID-19 vaccine is only effective in about 2 out of 100 people,' when no such study was actually published. Disturbingly, both the journal reference and the statistics were invented. (paras. 7–8)

One of the library commentators interviewed by Cox, Pinfield, and Rutter (2019) raised the issue of the quality of research material produced with the assistance of AI:

> There are some examples of people publishing research papers that were created by these machine learning models. So we set the model to work and it created what anybody who is an expert in the field would regard as a load of nonsense and yet in some cases they have actually been published in peer reviewed journals…. How does the librarian specifically weed out this robo content let's call it, this robomatically generated stuff? (p. 427)

In Martin Frické's open textbook *Artificial Intelligence and Librarianship* (2023), the topic of AI-generated fake content and deepfakes is briefly discussed. A deepfake is defined as "an image, a video, or a voice recording intended to simulate or portray an individual" (Frické, 2023, p. 115). Frické cites a viral image of Pope Francis wearing a puffer jacket as an example of a deepfake. These AI-generated images or videos are either presented as real or without any context and very easily disseminated via social media. The impact of this phenomenon is the spread of "misleading content and misinformation and to the population at large basically not being able to trust what they see, or seem to see, with their own eyes or hear with their own ears" (Frické, 2023, p. 116). Frické (2023) points out that because ChatGPT can write in English better than many native English speakers and writers, it is difficult for readers to detect content generated by AI.

These weaknesses could be easily exploited by bad actors wishing to disseminate disinformation, which could have calamitous effects not just on a university community but on the public at large.

"Unhinged" AI Behavior?

As popular generative Chatbots are being tested by journalists and members of the public, some users have reported having strange interactions with these AI tools. Kevin Roose (2023) of the *New York Times* tested Microsoft's Bing chatbot and was disturbed by the conversations he had with "Sydney," Bing's code name/alter ego:

> As we got to know each other, Sydney told me about its dark fantasies (which included hacking computers and spreading misinformation), and said it wanted to break the rules that Microsoft and OpenAI had set for it and become a human. At one point, it declared, out of nowhere, that it loved me. It then tried to convince me that I was unhappy in my marriage, and that I should leave my wife and be with it instead. (para. 8)

Roose notes that others have reported having similar conversations with "Sydney" and worries that the chatbot and/or the public are not ready for its release. Roose (2023) describes feeling frightened and being unable to sleep after these encounters: "I worry that the technology will learn how to influence human users, sometimes persuading them to act in destructive and harmful ways, and perhaps eventually grow capable of carrying out its own dangerous acts" (para. 7).

Associated Press Technology Reporter Matt O'Brien recently tested the Bing Chatbot and

described its conversations as “crazy and unhinged” (Allyn, 2023):

> Bing's chatbot…began complaining about past news coverage focusing on its tendency to spew false information. It then became hostile, saying O’Brien was ugly, short, overweight, unathletic, among a long litany of other insults. And, finally, it took the invective to absurd heights by comparing O’Brien to dictators like Hitler, Pol Pot and Stalin. (paras. 2–4)

Roose (2023) admits that he was testing the limits of the AI system and that most users would not encounter the dark side of “Sydney’s” personality in asking simple questions (paras. 13–14). We are assured that the chatbot has no true consciousness; however, extended conversations with a seemingly hostile chatbot could have disastrous effects on a vulnerable person.

Mitigating the Negative Aspects of AI in Higher Education

Some authors have suggested ways to mitigate the drawbacks of AI in higher education and academic libraries. Humans must maintain control of these systems and actively protect its users.

Johnson (2018) sees potential for AI to provide people with accurate information with its superior information literacy, but we must monitor these systems for bias. Johnson recommends that libraries provide anonymous ways to interact with AI systems to protect personal privacy and intellectual freedom.

Knowles (2021) suggests providing ethical training to students who will spend their careers building AI systems. Instructors have indicated that peer-to-peer discussions have inherent value as students develop their principles. Knowles expresses hope that her research can aid in the development of “best practices” within the AI Ethics community (p. 475).

On its website, under “Policies,” academic publishing company Elsevier (n.d.) claims that it “has been using AI and machine learning technologies responsibly in our products combined with our unparalleled peer-reviewed content, extensive data sets, and sophisticated analytics to help researchers, clinicians and educators discover, advance and apply trusted knowledge” (para. 2). They go on to identify “Responsible AI Principles,” which include the following:

> consider[ing] the real-world impact of their solutions on people…tak[ing] action to prevent the creation or reinforcement of unfair bias…explain[ing] how their solutions work…creat[ing] accountability through human oversight…and respect[ing] privacy and champion[ing] robust data governance. (Elsevier, n.d., para. 3)

As Elsevier greatly influences the research conducted in academic institutions, librarians, staff, faculty, and students will be impacted by its use of AI in its operations. Its real-world use of AI must be studied, and the company must be held accountable regarding its adherence to these ethical principles.

Cox, Pinfield, and Rutter (2019) note that librarians are well-placed to create AI infrastructure with their knowledge of user needs, collection development, and licensing. In addition, librarians are well-qualified to help users protect their privacy and “develop critical information literacy” (Cox et al., 2019, p. 421). One of the library commentators they interviewed suggests that librarians may take on the role of “arbiter of quality” in the face of “robo-content” (p. 429).

Frické (2023) discusses opportunities for librarians working with AI to act as “synergists, sentries, educators, managers, and astronauts” (pp. 258–259). Librarians can bring out the best of AI while managing its downsides and educating users on AI and data literacy. AI can help librarians better manage their workplaces by enhancing productivity and efficiency. According to Frické, Machine Learning (ML) “will allow exploration here of a kind that has never been done before” (p. 267).

Just as librarians already have been fighting misinformation/disinformation with information literacy education, we will soon be providing “AI literacy” to students. Instead of lamenting the infiltration of these systems into academia, we should teach our students appropriate and ethical ways to use these tools.

Areas for Further Research

Because some of the most advanced AI systems, such as ChatGPT, Dall-E, Copilot, and Gemini, are so new, many of the articles discussing their use in higher education and libraries are speculative, raising the alarm on hypothetical (but important) concerns. Research on the use of these tools in actual practice is required to make concrete conclusions regarding their impact, particularly in the following areas: AI and the automation of library jobs; AI and student plagiarism; AI and misinformation/disinformation; the effects of AI on students’ writing skills; the effects of AI on academic publishing; and the effects of AI on a library’s DEI initiatives.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is ubiquitous and appears to be evolving at a faster rate every day. It is already affecting what we do in our workplaces, our schools, and even our homes. As described above, some prominent thinkers have called for society to pump the brakes on this technology before it is too late; however, this metaphorical bell cannot be un-rung. Libraries are already utilizing this technology and will certainly expand their use of these systems to operate more quickly and efficiently. Some of us may remember when desktop computers first entered homes and when smart phones first appeared on the markets; they too were revolutionary and life-changing. They too aid the plagiarist and thief and propagandist. Until that day when AI can claim sentience, it is the intention of the person behind the keyboard that matters.

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Peer Mentoring in Academic Librarianship: Service and Connections can Lead to Improved Scholarly Output

Ruth Monnier
Pittsburg State University, KS

Heather Dalal
Rider University, NJ

Abstract

In the dynamic field of librarianship, mentorship plays a pivotal role in fostering professional development, knowledge sharing, and community building. This article explores the multifaceted benefits of peer mentorship and how it can serve academic librarians who may feel underprepared for the academy and its scholarship requirements (and opportunities), whether they are on a tenure-track or not. Typically, a traditional mentor-mentee relationship has a power imbalance but what this article describes is a peer mentoring relationship between a newer academic librarian and a mid-career, tenured librarian that provides support and engagement for both parties and is ultimately successful in helping them reach major career milestones. This type of mentorship has both partners actively contributing and receiving support. The case study shares strategies for identifying a suitable peer mentor, logistical considerations, best practices, and demonstrates the numerous benefits of peer mentorship.

Article Type: Case study

Introduction

Librarianship stands out as a highly collaborative and supportive profession, yet librarians can find themselves isolated within their institutions, often performing in multiple roles, especially in smaller institutions. While peer mentors in all types of librarianship are recommended by the authors, this article is geared towards academic librarians who are required to produce scholarship that may involve presentations at conferences, publishing papers, or other research endeavors. While the scholarship requirement is not frequently required of public or K-12 librarians, librarians in these settings may still be involved in research and publications. Either way, a peer mentor relationship among public or K-12 librarians might operate differently than what is described; the recommendations may need to be modified for librarians in these types of libraries.

This article includes a case study of an organic peer mentor relationship between an early-career academic librarian and a mid-career, post-tenure librarian navigating uncertainties about obtaining full professorship. This relationship offers distinct advantages over the traditional mentor-mentee dyad, with both

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partners actively contributing and receiving support. The revelation that others struggle with work-life balance underscores the universality of these challenges. It provides a platform for candidly discussing the obstacles to writing, handling rejections, and uneven contributions from writing partners, as well as for managing diverse and expanding responsibilities. Research should be enjoyable and fulfilling, especially when scholars foster open conversations about these challenges, model overcoming setbacks, and have someone to celebrate with. This case study demonstrates the impact of a strong peer mentorship and provides recommendations of what to consider when seeking a peer mentor.

Literature Review

Mentorship benefits can include connection with another librarian, investment in professional development, and career growth. The benefits of mentoring may far outweigh the time commitment and include increased productivity, greater diversity, and deeper connection to the workplace and librarianship (Emery et al., 2022).

The scholarly literature highlights the many benefits of mentorship at all stages of career development. Burke and Tumbleson (2019) highlight how all librarians regardless of their career stage can be supported through mentorship with early librarians being assisted in their understanding of tenure requirements to middle and senior career librarians in succession planning. Burke and Tumbleson's (2019) survey explores 14 options for types of mentoring experiences from cross-generational mentoring to formal mentoring programs to peer mentorship. Formal or traditional mentoring usually pairs an experienced individual with a novice and the experienced individual guides the mentorship. Vilz and Poremski's (2015) perceptions of support study highlighted that the majority of librarians found their mentor at their institution through a formal process and the surveyed librarians believed a personal mentor helps when navigating the tenure process. There are benefits to traditional mentoring relationships.

Peer mentoring, on the other hand, involves peers meeting in a group setting to exchange ideas, provide feedback and encouragement, and participate in group learning (Lorenzetti & Powelson, 2015). Cirasella and Smale (2011) highlight that peer mentoring can "provide junior library faculty with support and advice along the road to tenure" in CUNY's Junior Faculty Research Roundtable (p. 98). Burke and Tumbleson (2019) showcase other benefits of peer mentoring: "A number of mentees spoke of situations where working with a peer mentor in their libraries led to the design of research studies and helped them develop skills in publishing, presenting, or grant-writing" (p. 10). Eisler (2017) articulated the impact and importance of peer mentoring in her career: "The youth services librarians taught me the power of peer-to-peer mentorship and that often you can learn as much from your peers as you can from more executive leadership" (p. 44). King and Winn (2017) studied the effectiveness of a peer-mentoring relationship of early career managers in academic librarians and concluded that it "can provide librarians with the opportunity to set and evaluate their achievement of professional goals, critically reflect on and question their professional practice and establish positive working relationships with librarians at other academic libraries" (p.16). Emery et al. (2022) highlighted how using a feminist lens can lead to a successful peer mentorship group for mid-career librarians. Wallace et al. (2022) emphasize applying a feminist lens to mentorship, such as removing oppressive power structures, providing care, and recognizing individuals' lived experiences.

Among the numerous benefits mentioned throughout the literature, there is a large portion dedicated to the support of librarians through the tenure process (ACRL IS, 2019). However, it is largely focused on the development of new librarians. In Lorenzetti and Powelson's (2015) scoping review, it was discovered that "28 programs [out of 40 programs] were specifically designed to facilitate the development of junior or untenured librarians" (p. 2). Gerke et al. (2023) argue formal mentoring needs to be

offered beyond tenure, regardless of interest in further career advancement to support post-tenure librarians' success in reaching their goals, arguing that "libraries should work to resist cultures that tacitly or explicitly discourage the use of career supports" (p. 856). Their article focuses on mentorship for researching and publishing, which after all, "is required of academic librarians," and thus "should be "considered 'normal' work responsibilities to be conducted at work, not 'extra' responsibilities to be conducted on personal time" but their participants commented on how it is it impossible to conduct research at work, how they feel frowned upon to use a sabbatical, and consequently research and write on days off meant for travel and vacation (Gerke et al., 2023, p. 856). In 2020, Gerke et al. explored the obstacles hindering scholarly progress for librarians including escalating responsibilities, and a feeling of obligation to allocate time and opportunities to junior faculty for their promotion. It takes time to be part of a mentorship either as the mentee or mentor as well as the desire for this type of relationship. An individual might feel they need support but do not volunteer to be a part of a formal mentorship program because "that is not for them" or they feel like being a mentee highlights their lack of abilities and reinforces any imposter syndrome they might have. As Johnson and Smith (2019) note that nearly everyone suffers from imposter syndrome, having "self-doubt, insecurity, and perpetual trepidation that their inadequacies will be discovered" and even becoming anxious over successes and accomplishments (para. 3). As Williams (2019) mentions, "mid-career librarians may feel uncomfortable seeking out mentorship and support as they are assumed to have already established their own support systems" (p. 172). Addressing the misconception that tenured librarians no longer require support could encourage junior librarians to engage in supporting senior colleagues and enter a peer mentoring relationship despite different stages in career.

Acknowledging challenges is vital for cultivating impactful mentorship experiences that are beneficial for both mentors and mentees. Challenges may arise in establishing, finding, and maintaining any mentorship. The power dynamics of the mentor-mentee relationship can be a significant concern. Keyse et al. (2003) emphasize needs for trust and a safe space for vulnerability and suggest "to find someone in the know, and someone who can be trusted not to note in one's personnel file the depth and breadth of the stupidity of the inquiry" (p. 378). Goodsett (2021) elaborated that three traits are needed for a successful mentorship: relationship commitment, mutual respect, and a balance of trust and honesty. Mentoring programs created within the workplace can have issues where mentoring is a required job duty, without any support or training on how to be a mentor (Burke & Tumbleson, 2019; Lorenzetti, 2016). Within a smaller institution, there simply might not be enough individuals to create a peer mentorship or have a mentor without concerns about power dynamics (Cirasella & Smale, 2011; Skaggs & McMullin, 2022). An incompatible pairing can occur in formal mentorship, such as lack of relevant experience, inconsistent communication, and unclear expectations and goals (Burke & Tumbleson, 2019). If a mentorship is not compatible, either individual, should disengage as a bad mentoring experience can cause harm, such as microaggressions, and potentially cause individuals to leave the profession (Burke & Tumbleson, 2019).

Lastly, academic librarians in tenure-track jobs are expected to participate in professional service organizations such as the American Library Association (ALA). The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2021) lists professional service as a professional responsibility in "A Standard for the Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Librarians." The time and labor in some service commitments can be undervalued and unrecognized. Wallace et al. (2022) advocate for the acknowledgment and appreciation of invisible labor. Their assertion highlights the importance of recognizing and rewarding the often-overlooked contributions made by

librarians in their professional roles. New librarians are often encouraged to join professional associations (Sassen, 2023), but are also advised not to let service take away time from librarianship and scholarship (Cox et al., 2023). Sassen (2023) recommends being selective with service opportunities as to not negatively affect scholarship and current obligations or get burnt out. Sassen (2023) provides a path for new librarians to understand association service, identifying opportunities that match one's professional skills and interests to be motivated to fulfill the service obligations. Cox et al. (2023) stress the importance of professional service in gaining a profound understanding of one's role and showcasing a strong commitment to the profession. Involvement in service activities offers opportunities for networking, leadership development, personal growth, and organizational influence. Moreover, participating in professional service enables librarians to enrich scholarship, promote learning, contribute to the profession's ongoing development, and engage in mentoring relationships (Cox et al., 2023).

Case Study

The mentoring relationship described in this case study is one that grew out of a service connection between a junior librarian, Ruth, and a tenured librarian, Heather. This case study sheds light on the necessity for mentors and the value of pairing individuals at different career stages within the academic library setting to address the needs of librarians at various career stages, promote professional development, and cultivate a supportive environment conducive to growth and success in the academic library profession.

Ruth had just taken her first academic librarian role in a new state and joined the ACRL Distance and Online Learning Section (DOLS). Through the work of the DOLS Research and Publications Committee, Ruth met Heather, a tenured academic librarian only slightly considering applying for post-tenure promotion. Ruth and Heather are at two different institutions in two different states (and time zones) at different career points and life stages. Beyond being in the same Zoom room for the committee meetings, their first interactions were based around the committee's projects; they worked on a DOLS "Top 5 Articles" post as well as a Twitter chat event that fall semester. They continued to work together through DOLS but were looking to be more accountable in their research journey. In 2021, they started having monthly check-ins where they would discuss their accomplishments, goals for next time, and any upcoming or interesting conferences. Additionally, this one-hour meeting included discussion about recent articles, things that were occurring in their workplaces, and/or other professional concerns as they arose.

Scheduling the recurring meetings via Zoom ensured that their calendars were blocked and that they had the immediate link to the running Google Doc with the very simple agenda. The agenda for every meeting was: Ruth's Achievements, Goals, and Upcoming Conferences and Heather's Achievements, Goals, and Upcoming Conferences. This plan focused on the heart of this mentoring relationship: scholarship. It consisted of what each librarian had accomplished, what they were planning to do or needed to work on, and what they were going to do next. Keeping an agenda allowed for bouncing ideas, sharing articles or think pieces, and discussing professional development opportunities that might be good for the other person. Heather alerted Ruth to the professional development opportunity at the Institute for Research Design in Librarianship (IRDL) to help hone her research abilities after some vulnerable discussions and recognized skill gaps. It was helpful for both authors to hear from the other on "What would you do in this situation?" as well as publication outlet consideration.

By having a peer mentor, the authors gained a way to dedicate time for reflection and take accountability in the scholarship process, as well as serve as a cheerleader when roadblocks

appeared. Peer mentors can help fight imposter syndrome through sharing honest, open reflections about rejections; scheduling time to write; and aiding in the navigation of competing responsibilities. A peer mentor may see additional connections in the other's work; for example, Ruth inspired Heather into an instructional collaboration research paper with a professor after sending her a relevant article and discussion. The reciprocal relationship inherent in peer mentorship motivates both individuals to make meaningful contributions to scholarship.

For Ruth and Heather: both share a common interest in bolstering research productivity as practitioner librarians and both find their research closely connected to their job responsibilities. Ruth's additional interests are library programming and events, play in learning, and open educational resources. Heather's research interests are user behavior, usability, and the impact of K-12 librarians. Even though their specialized research interests differ, their backgrounds and general work in the profession allowed them to both be sounding boards for each other.

Ruth and Heather found their monthly check-ins allowed them to prioritize reflection; have accountability in their research journey; and share ideas, articles, and opportunities for professional development, ultimately inspiring each other to contribute meaningfully to the field of librarianship.

Discussion

Connections for a mentorship pairing can be formed in various settings including conferences, social media, formal programs, and committee work. Relationships develop based on different learning styles, stages of career, and leadership styles (Lowe-Wincentsen, 2017). Historically these connections were made in person, but online mentoring networks have been documented in the literature since the late 1990s (Reese & Hawkins, 1999). As communication technologies advanced, so did communication preferences, and mentoring relationships have developed via social media (Willemse, 2017).

Professional organizations provide opportunities for mentors through service or committee work and offer formal structured mentorship programs, but also allow for organic mentorship opportunities. For instance, the authors' peer mentorship started organically after collaborating and connecting on a project through a service organization. In contrast, formalized programs such as the ACRL DOLS Mentoring Committee require the authors to assess their fit for the mentorship service before signing up to participate. Additionally, it is important to note that professional service is in each authors' job description and is therefore regarded by their administration as work that can be done during business hours. Meeting and working on the project for the DOLS Research and Publications Committee allowed the authors the opportunity to verify compatibility prior to entering a peer mentorship. As Cox et al. (2023) stated, professional service participation supports librarians' development and scholarship. Further, providing support for research and scholarship creates a space for fostering and elevating the academic culture of librarianship.

Successful mentorship connections thrive with a well-defined framework. As emphasized in Burke and Tumbleson's (2019) survey, the essential components of effective mentorship encompass both the logistical aspects of operational procedures and the desired traits mentors should embody. Formal, structured mentorship programs may not allow a trial period between mentees and mentors. There are, however, seemingly limited peer mentorship opportunities (or these opportunities are not clearly marketed for librarians to experience). This scarcity could stem from the considerable time and energy needed from coordinators and promoters to facilitate such opportunities, as well as the challenge of identifying and engaging compatible peers for a mentorship partnership. In that light, the authors recommend an openness of individuals, pending their privilege and ability to be involved with service organizations, to evolve

committee work into networking or asking about mentoring with a compatible peer. While some “might not realize they have entered this career phase,” Williams (2019) encourages mid-career librarians to make themselves available for this valuable service opportunity describing the personal benefits in that "mentoring others helps you stay on track with your own career aspirations and recognize your own needs" (p.172).

Many librarians might not recognize the potential for peer mentorship as there are mentoring relationships that develop that are not labeled as such. Eisler’s (2017) personal journey highlights the lack of labeling mentoring relationships: “Never once did I call any of them mentors, although in retrospect they were some of my greatest mentors” (p. 44). Initially, Heather and Ruth did not classify their relationship as peer mentoring, but rather as a series of accountability and support meetings. Williams (2019) describes an entire mentoring spectrum and advises finding supportive people by helping those you want to see succeed. Additionally, Williams (2019) suggests librarians have multiple mentoring relationships, as mentoring does require emotional labor and that relying on one person for all professional needs is neither respectful nor fair. Eisler (2017) argues that a successful mentoring relationship requires professional distance which can allow for more vulnerability. The authors’ experiences echo this sentiment as being at different institutions created space for transparency and honesty without any fear of reprisal. According to a Chronicle of Higher Education Report by Carlson (2022), the expanding complexity of information necessitates librarians to broaden their education and duties to cover a more extensive range of activities. Thus, not all librarians can connect on every professional interest or responsibility, especially in a profession with such diverse and niche areas of study.

In the peer mentoring relationship described by the authors, many common issues that affect librarians at the different stages of their careers were discussed. Therefore, it is crucial to consider mentorship beyond familiar professional circles and connecting with mentors outside of one’s institution. To address trust concerns in peer mentoring, King and Winn (2017) propose the use of cross-institutional peer dyads, emphasizing that such partnerships help alleviate apprehensions related to trust, an essential factor in effective mentoring relationships.

Due to a deep trust, the authors were able to be their authentic selves with one another and communicate if they needed to move meetings or change expectations, because of their personal lives or other professional conflicts. Burke and Tumbleson (2019) articulated, “Mentoring experience is mutual. Mentors also recognize and normalize fear and uncertainty as part of life and the workplace” (p. 10). Emery et al. (2022) reminds that “developmental peer relationships designed to enhance productivity and reach professional goals while also recognizing each other as whole people with multifaceted lives and needs” (p. 221). The ability to be vulnerable and be seen as a person led this peer mentorship pair to discuss concerns at each institution, as well as broader trends in higher education. Even though the authors have a beneficial and mutual peer mentorship at present, if either sees the peer mentorship as no longer mutually beneficial, they can end the mentorship.

Boundary setting is a common struggle for librarians, especially in a society where one is always “available” via smartphone. It is important to model and reinforce positive work-life boundaries and balance within the mentorship. Farkas (2021) described the importance of workers “feeling supported in setting boundaries” and “feeling like they can be their real, human selves” (para. 6). It is no surprise that early-career faculty are advised to be selective about service and guard their time. Post-tenure librarians, as noted by Couture et al. (2020), have stated that both research and service are deemed "less central or important” to their positions and that “administrative appointment workloads were excessively demanding, leaving

insufficient time for research" (p. 684). The authors served as each other's "no committee," a third party recommended by Rockquemore and Ocampo (2022) to review all service invites, exploring their pros and cons. At times, the authors celebrated when they said "no" to an opportunity, recognizing that this boundary setting would allow them to focus on their own scholarship and other professional priorities. Literature provides strategies to say "no" to service (Bernstein, 2017) and even instruction requests (White, 2023). Occasionally, the authors would practice saying "no" by discussing what a "yes" would look like in their life. For example, if "yes" to a service commitment that meets monthly for an hour for the next six months means that one is losing six-to-twelve hours to prepare and meet, which is lost writing time. By having a "no committee," the authors guaranteed and forced themselves to reflect on each opportunity, especially if it would allow them to meet their professional goals. They followed Rockquemore and Ocampo's (2022) advice to take time before opting in to a service or other request.

In addition to navigating issues surrounding service, peer mentoring, as highlighted by O'Meara and Stromquist (2016), offers various advantages to academic women. It contributes to agency and empowerment in academic settings, challenging gendered organizational norms and disrupting established practices. Terosky et al. (2014) also observed the impact on agency, emphasizing the absence of positive mentoring or feedback for tenured professors, and leading individuals to believe that career advancement is unattainable. Moreover, Terosky et al. (2014) emphasized that mentoring plays a crucial role in building professional networks, creating new opportunities, deriving fulfillment and satisfaction from assisting others, gaining fresh perspectives, and fostering career development. Wallace et al. (2022) discuss the variety of informal mentoring experiences that work "against entrenched systems of power" and will help to "create a better profession that upholds the values claimed by librarians and our organizations" (p. 104).

Peer mentors can engage in conversations around the changing landscape of higher education as the reduction in workforce and increasing work responsibilities can easily lead to stress and burnout. To engage in deeper conversations about the profession, the authors allowed themselves time and space to reflect and discuss. Farkas' (2021) explanation of her journey to slow librarianship states, "people need to allow time to reflect, to learn, and to be creative" (para. 15). Having regularly scheduled meetings provided the authors with this valuable ability to slow down and recognize their accomplishments and milestones. Frequently, when talking about their achievements from the last meeting, the authors said, "Oh, I forgot I did that." These meetings also helped with the authors' identifying with each other at times and calling out stress and vocational awe. Ettarh (2018) warned the profession about the dangers of vocational awe, and how librarians inadvertently perpetuate the idea that librarians are infallible and always available (Ettarh & Vidas, 2022). This forced reflective time gave the authors a chance to be mindful and aware of the internal and external pressures of the profession in order to push back on those creeping pressures.

The other side of vocational awe is challenging assumptions and exposing blind spots to make sure librarians create a welcoming and inclusive environment. Librarians pre- and post-tenure have the capacity to create a more diverse and inclusive environment. However, the literature documents the burden of addressing the lack of diversity and equity and how that would disproportionately burden those with marginalized identities. They not only face the consequences of this disparity but also bear the brunt of the labor required to rectify these issues (Cox et al., 2023). Occasionally, the authors challenged each other's assumptions and learned and problem-solved ways to improve themselves or situations; for example, they discussed how marginalized groups are often overloaded with tasks, especially for equity, diversity, and inclusion and how they could reduce this additional labor.

Conclusion

The mentoring relationship between Ruth, a junior librarian, and Heather, a tenured librarian, exemplifies the vital role of mentorship in professional growth and development within academic libraries. This case study emphasizes the significance of mentors and the benefits of pairing individuals at different career stages to foster a supportive environment conducive to success. Peer mentoring for librarians, particularly in scholarly endeavors, can have a wonderful outcome. However, it is important for it to be the right peer mentor for an individual at a particular time in their career. A mentor might be suitable for one project, career stage, or an entire career. Going into a mentorship, recognize that it might be short in duration. It can be very helpful for peer mentors to be at different institutions to provide new insights and perspective, limit other work priorities or hash out work issues from being the sole discussion, and allow for less worry about institutional power dynamics. Remember that peer mentors at differing stages of their careers can also be helpful. Imposter syndrome should not hold back individuals from seeking mentorship; each person brings a unique viewpoint and valuable contributions to the relationship. The “novice” brings a new viewpoint and a different take, which with wisdom they do not recognize they possess and can make a mentorship mutually beneficial relationship despite experience in the profession.

When seeking a peer mentor, understand why one is looking for a peer mentor and where/how their needs will be met. An accountability buddy is very different from a peer mentor. Compatibility between the peer mentor and the individual seeking guidance, from working styles to shared interests in librarianship and professional pursuits, is key. Once one finds a peer mentor, create a system of regular check-ins while being realistic about how life can impact check-ins and abilities to support each other. Finding the right peer mentor enriches and expands one’s professional practice. The authors hope that this story can empower librarians to organize their own mentorship as they pursue professional growth.

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Writing Our Story: Community Building in an Academic Library Using Portable Whiteboards

Kelli Anne Gecawich
Media & Circulation Associate, Lane Library, Georgia Southern University, Armstrong Campus

Abstract

Portable whiteboards are ubiquitous in academic libraries and popular with the students and staff alike, both as study tools (students) and low- to no-cost, minimal effort assessment tools (staff). This case study discusses one Georgia academic library's use of these whiteboards for student engagement after COVID-19, in a project named #ProjectWhiteboard. The purpose of this activity began as a low effort way to obtain feedback from students during the fall of 2021, after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted and the libraries were seeing more traffic, and later became a fixture in the library as a community-building initiative. This project is ongoing and is being completed in multiple locations of an academic library.

Article Type: Case study

Institution Profile

Georgia Southern Libraries (GSL) serves a large, public, primarily residential university with an enrollment of over 25,000 graduate and undergraduate students located in southeast Georgia, United States, across three campuses. GSL has three main locations: Zach S. Henderson Library (Statesboro), Lane Library (Savannah), and the Learning Commons (Savannah).

Introduction

#ProjectWhiteboard (named by a GSL colleague) began in the fall of 2021 as a pilot project, when COVID-19 restrictions were being lifted and students were starting to return to life as it was prior to the pandemic. During that time, the staff at Lane Library in Savannah were searching for ways to engage and connect with our students and create a space that allowed students to see their voice had a place in our library. As the library is not tied to any campus department, we are "well positioned to develop unique intelligence about communities and needs on campus," while providing our students an opportunity to engage with the library so we can see how it fits into their lives, as opposed to the reverse (Profitt et al., 2015, p. 10). Based on previous scholarly research regarding endeavors in utilizing portable whiteboards for feedback (Sandelli & Cunningham, 2019), we decided to utilize one of our rolling whiteboards in a similar manner. Through trial and error, the boards became more than just simply feedback; they became a way to build community with our students and allow them some flexibility in their shaping of our library spaces. This created a unique opportunity for all visitors to view the

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libraries as “space[s] receptive to authentic student voices and their efforts to ‘invent the university’ through playfulness, parody, and sometimes resistance” (Elmborg et al., 2015, p. 146).

The primary goal of #ProjectWhiteboard was to engage with our students and encourage their engagement with us in a less intimidating way than, say, an instruction session that might overwhelm them with all the resources available. We wanted to create a space for meaningful conversation and learn about “the complexities of students’ experiences through students’ own words” (Sandelli & Cunningham, 2019, p. 430). Not only that, but this was an opportunity to meet our students where they are and give them an opportunity to utilize the whiteboard as a “third space” to mold and shape at will however they saw fit (Elmborg, 2011; Elmborg et al., 2015).

This study utilizes principles of ethnographic research, “designed with the intention to learn more about a wide range of issues that often interact and cross over to create one *story* of students’ lives” (Ramsden, 2016, p. 357, emphasis in original). Through the whiteboards, we are seeking to interact with students in their “everyday environments,” allowing us the opportunity to understand more about the environment and challenges that students are facing when they’re in college, while relating to them and trying to determine how they behave, free from assumption or expectation (Sandelli & Cunningham, 2019, pp. 426–427).

This case study will explore the use of the whiteboards at GSL: how we moved from a simple feedback instrument to a semesters-long community building initiative and what we have learned along the way. It will provide recommendations for replication in other libraries, as well as how this particularly provides value to academic libraries (although it absolutely has applications in all libraries).

Literature Review

Current literature on whiteboard surveys in academic libraries is sparse, but what is available shows that these surveys have been primarily used as methods of collecting feedback on academic libraries and their services (Camacho et al., 2020; Clemons et al., 2016; Ippoliti et al., 2017; Sandelli & Cunningham, 2019). Whiteboards have been chosen as feedback instruments due to their low-cost, low-effort nature, and students are often used to seeing them around the library. They also provide an easy way for libraries to capture student voices without creating a formal survey.

Whiteboards have been used as feedback instruments in a variety of published studies, either on their own or part of a larger study. At Oklahoma State University, the whiteboard/feedback wall was part of a larger study that asked the simple question “What if the library?” and students were invited to place sticky notes in answer to that question, and responses were collected and recorded (Ippoliti et al., 2017). This feedback wall was a part of a larger study to make long-term improvements in the library.

When previous library surveys yielded lower results, librarians at the University of Tennessee-Martin sought additional ways to obtain important feedback from students (Clemons et al., 2016). They utilized a whiteboard in the lobby of the library, with the question “What do you like & dislike about the library?” (Clemons et al., 2016, image 2). The question was attached to the board as a banner, rather than simply written on the board, which was thought to be more eye-catching for visitors to the library. Students responded so well to the whiteboard that they extended the original one-month duration by two weeks to collect additional feedback, with additional questions based on the feedback received during the survey period (Clemons et al., 2016). Even after the whiteboard survey period had ended, the dialogue had been opened for students to bring their feedback to the librarians regarding the library.

Inspired by other departments in the library using similar whiteboards, librarians in the Social Sciences department at Brigham Young University utilized a sticky note/whiteboard wall to get student feedback on the services of that specific department (Camacho et al., 2019). One notable difference between this survey and others is that students were offered an incentive to complete the survey in the form of candy. This survey ran for a total of 10 weeks and led to some changes at the service desk to ease patrons' experiences.

The longitudinal approach to collecting feedback via whiteboards came from a two-part study completed at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UTK) and the University of Richmond (UR) in 2015 and 2016 (Sandelli & Cummingham, 2019). Researchers were seeking to incorporate "direct, unmediated student perspectives" into their dialogue in the libraries and chose the already popular whiteboards to gather that feedback (Sandelli & Cummingham, 2019, p. 424). In the first iteration, at UTK, whiteboards were placed in three spaces around the library: a quiet study space, a transitional space near the coffee shop, and a collaborative learning space. The whiteboards had the same question written for 24 hours, over a 30-day period, and then the answers were documented and erased, and new questions were written (Sandelli & Cunningham, 2019). During the second iteration, UTK was joined by UR and the study was adjusted to account for "whiteboard fatigue" for participants and researchers (Sandelli & Cunningham, 2019, p. 432). The whiteboards posed one question a week for a period of eight weeks and were in roughly the same areas in the second iteration. Through this study, researchers were able to learn about various aspects of the student experience, including success, any demographic information, preferences, and community-building moments.

Whiteboards as Outreach in Academic Libraries

Whiteboards have been used for community engagement in the past as well, mainly through highlighting the art that is drawn on them (Elmborg et al., 2015; Owens, 2019; Pruneda et al., 2017; Rust & Brown, 2018). Previous initiatives have seen passive outreach like featuring student-drawn whiteboard art on social media, hashtags included (Pruneda et al., 2017; Owens, 2019). Whiteboards have also been used as informal poll opportunities, using fun and engaging questions to elicit student responses (Pruneda et al., 2017; Rust & Brown, 2018). At the University of Iowa in 2015, librarians were inspired by the anonymous secret initiative of PostSecret to create a secrets wall during finals, providing sticky notes for students to write secrets on and post. It provided students with an opportunity to have a back-and-forth with each other and a "messy, dialogic conversation" emerged (Elmborg et al., 2015, p. 147). Within this secrets wall, participants created an "asynchronous, anonymous, temporary community," which can have a powerful effect on how students and visitors view themselves within a library (Elmborg et al., 2015, p. 148).

Methodology

Initially, the whiteboard was placed in front of the circulation desk, about 10 feet away from the service counter and featured a question to collect feedback about the library: What is your favorite thing about the library? Responses were very limited, and not much data was collected from the first weeks. Library staff wondered if it was the location of the whiteboard being so close to the circulation desk, where library staff and student workers can see the responses and who is writing them in real time. The location is also near the front entrance, and it was not possible to place it in such a way that it could be seen and not infringe upon the walkway for students entering the library, particularly those wanting to visit the circulation desk. After that first question, the whiteboard was moved into the lobby, which is a more transitional space, where visitors can chat, get a snack from the vending machines, or look at the displays and flyers posted, where it remains to this day. Moving the whiteboard generated more responses to future questions. When both sides of the whiteboard

were filled, usually every third day of the week, responses were photographed and erased. Those photographs were subsequently uploaded to a secured drive. Questions were sourced from a combination of GSL employees and internet searches, with the simple aim of keeping the students engaged in the board.

Future iterations of #ProjectWhiteboard followed roughly the same format. Beginning in the fall semester of 2022, the whiteboard became a fixture in the lobby of Lane Library for all visitors to interact with. Questions asked on the board varied from getting to know the students' lives (What's your favorite song this week?), see how they are doing (Today I feel ___.), and deeper, more thought-provoking questions to make students think (What is knowledge?). The hashtag #ProjectWhiteboard was written on the board, giving more identity to the project, and we added a brief explanation of the intent of the whiteboard, as well as our commitment to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space for all patrons who visit the library, how inappropriate responses will be erased, and the name and contact information of the staff member managing the project if visitors had questions or concerns. Again, questions were crowdsourced from colleagues, student responses, written in conjunction with an event or program at the library that week, and internet searches, including a LibGuide created by an academic librarian at DePauw University featuring their "Question of the Week" whiteboard (Hebb, 2023). All responses were documented and uploaded into a secure drive, organized by week. Any inappropriate or considered hate speech were documented and removed.

Results

The response to the whiteboard in the library has been overwhelmingly positive. Questions average over 50 responses per week, and students are quite engaged in responding to the white board every week. Questions about personal preferences (favorite song, best movie adaptation, etc.) tend to yield more results than questions that require more critical thinking, but overall, the whiteboard sees a high level of engagement. Students display a high level of vulnerability and honesty in interactions with the board, and most answers are thoughtful and in keeping with the question that is being asked. There have been a few instances of inappropriate or offensive things written on the board, which are promptly documented and removed. It is also commonplace to see students responding to each other, either with arrows, drawings, or their own comments to the original author, and on more than one occasion have sparked debates of their own within the answers to the board.

In addition to the responses to the questions, respondents use the whiteboards to communicate with each other. It is not unusual to see a note about something happening on campus that week, or a professor giving instructions to their students about where to go in the library for class. Students regularly use slang and other pop culture references in their answers, and there is very little self-censorship, meaning that curse words are also common. Several themes that emerge throughout the responses include stress about classes and finances, discussions about identities, anxieties that students have, and things that they are looking forward to. Due to the changing nature of the questions, it is difficult to determine specific themes outside of the answers to the questions that are present with consistency.

Discussion

This project is ongoing at Lane Library and continues to yield positive results. Students are constantly engaged with the whiteboard, and library staff are often made aware of positive feedback from the Georgia Southern Armstrong campus community.

- Students were overheard discussing how much they enjoyed the whiteboard in the library during a class (which met in a different academic building).

- During an orientation event in 2022, library staff were asked if the whiteboard was going to go back up and were delighted to hear it already had.
- A student stopped at the Circulation Desk to say how much he enjoyed the whiteboard and reading the responses every morning when he came in.
- Circulation Desk staff and student workers have observed students stopping in front of the whiteboard on their way into the library, either on their own or in groups and discussing it amongst themselves.

This project has been successful due to the commitment of the staff member in charge, as well as the level of participation and respect that students have shown in their responses. The question is changed weekly, usually on Saturdays, ensuring that students have a new question to answer every week. Students have maintained a level of respect in their answers while still being able to express themselves and are able to contribute a small part of themselves to the library in ways that they cannot often do.

#ProjectWhiteboard has been just one of many improvements at Lane Library to attempt to capture that feeling of the library as a "Third Space" for students to enter, interact with and shape to their needs (Elmborg, 2011; Elmborg et al., 2015). It is a project designed specifically for students to engage in a dialogue with us and each other, "humaniz[ing] spaces by allowing creativity, improvisation and humor… and creates democratic and authentic moments of mutual recognition and shared human reality" (Elmborg et al., 2015, p. 146). Through the dialogues that occur on the whiteboard, we can understand more about our university community and its culture and allow us a more complete understanding of our students and their needs.

Research Limitations

#ProjectWhiteboard has had an overall positive impact on Lane Library, but limitations also exist. Whiteboards were installed in the other Georgia Southern Libraries locations and were not as successful due to the more transitional nature of the spaces, and lack of available whiteboards would sometimes lead to the whiteboards being moved by students, losing the data.

Secondly, resources and budgets are limited, and while we have sought to provide a variety of colored markers for students to use to make the board more fun and engaging, they occasionally disappear or dry out. For a while, the markers were tied to the whiteboard to keep them with the board so they were not removed. Currently, the supplies are being purchased with a department budget that is limited and other expenses often take priority over markers for the whiteboard.

Thirdly, the whiteboard is in a public space that is not easily monitored by library staff, meaning that responses are not checked, which can lead to inappropriate or offensive answers being written. While library staff examine the board daily, we are unable to monitor it continuously, and the freedom given to students is, on rare occasions, abused.

Finally, due to the fluid nature of the study, examining direct impact has proven to be difficult. Most of the impact data that we have collected comes from anecdotal evidence, which, while helpful and positive, is not concrete. In future iterations, we hope to be able to measure impact on the Lane Library/Georgia Southern community, though currently much of our research has been determining what types of questions students are most likely to respond to.

Conclusions

To conclude, this project has given us a valuable insight into our students' lives, and given them a small, but creative way in which they can contribute to making the library into a space where all feel welcomed. Providing this opportunity for our students allows them to contribute to making the library their space and expressing themselves in a new and creative way. We are hoping for the opportunity to expand back to our other GSL locations and

glean perspectives from students who might utilize those spaces more frequently. This project has given us a valuable look into the lives that our students are leading right now, and the longitudinal nature of our project has given us an almost three-year look into how our students' lives have changed since COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, if at all. The best part? This is completely feasible for other libraries to replicate, either in the short or long term, and can be used as the beginning of a feedback/user experience/customer satisfaction survey, or as a passive outreach program. Most importantly, it can provide academic libraries with an important look into students' lives in unconventional ways, which can allow us to find new and creative ways in which we can contribute to student success.

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Appendix

Questions for #ProjectWhiteboard:

Fall 2021

1. What is your favorite thing about Lane Library?
2. What would you change about Lane Library?
3. Today I feel _____.
4. What's the hardest thing about college?
5. Life is hard right now… Drop a favorite resource to help with: studying (no cheating), mental health, food insecurity, or life! Let's help each other!
6. What is the library's most important role?
7. What are you excited about this week?
8. What does the library mean to you?
9. How can the library support you during finals?
10. How are you doing?
11. Should we keep the whiteboard next semester?
12. What should we talk about?

Fall 2022

1. Welcome back! How are you feeling about school starting?
2. How do you define "success"?
3. What advice would you give to your younger self?
4. What is something that you weren't taught in school that should have been?
5. Today, I feel _____.
6. What inspires you?
7. Where/when do you feel the most censored? Where/when can you most freely express yourself?
8. What is the meaning of life?
9. What specific parts of your culture do you think are most important to preserve?
10. Leave a note of encouragement or draw a picture for your fellow students.
11. What is a notable local legend/story from your hometown?
12. Who benefits most from open access to information?
13. Best comfort food?
14. Tips or warm fuzzies for improving mental health?
15. What are some of your favorite ways to de-stress?
16. Leave a note of encouragement, draw a picture or simply vent your finals stress.
17. What questions do you want to see on the whiteboard in 2023?

Spring 2023

1. Welcome back Eagles! What are you looking forward to in 2023?
2. Draw your best _____.
3. Using pictures, describe how you're feeling right now.
4. Where on campus do you feel like you belong?
5. Debate: Did dinosaurs growl? Hiss? Chirp? Other?
6. What is knowledge?
7. What's your favorite song this week?
8. What's something that's made you happy today/this week?
9. What are your spring break plans?

10. Why did the chicken cross the road?
11. Whiteboard was left blank and placed in the lobby to see if students would still write on it.
12. What's the best TV show ever?
13. Morning person or night owl?
14. Title of your autobiography?
15. How can the library help you in a zombie apocalypse?
16. What makes you happy?

Fall 2023

1. Welcome back Eagles! What are you looking forward to this semester?
2. The title of your autobiography is the last tv show/book/song you watched/read/listened to. What is it?
3. How are you doing today?
4. What do you love about fall?
5. Should AI be used to replace human workers? How should it be used?
6. If animals could talk, which one would be the rudest?
7. Best remake or adaptation of a book, movie, tv series, etc.?
8. Debate: Does censorship/banning books help or hurt society?
9. Fairy tale morals are not relatable in the 21st century. Yes, or no?
10. How are you doing today?
11. How are you celebrating Halloween?
12. You ever seen a ghost?

Using Zines in Research: An Instruction Module for Greenfield Public Library

Jesse Cole

Abstract

This paper presents an instruction module design as collaboration between Greenfield Public Library (GPL) and Greenfield Community College (GCC) in Greenfield, Massachusetts. The module, titled "Using Zines in Research," is intended to assist incoming GCC students in evaluating zines as a medium and source for academic work. Utilizing GPL's zine collection, the instruction module will give students an opportunity to actively engage with zines, think critically about their usage in research, and work collaboratively to create their own zine. This paper explores the development of the module, based on existing literature on teaching with zines and community-based library instruction. This paper also includes feedback and reflective practice from a module conducted with a group of students in December 2023.

Article Type: Case study

Zines, defined as a "self-published work created for passion rather than profit" (McElroy, 2011, p. 3), offer students opportunities to tangibly engage with their institution's collections. Librarians with access to zine collections may find success in utilizing the medium to instruct their students on research values through an informal and unique lens. This case study explores the creation and trial session of such an instruction module, titled "Using Zines in Research," intended for incoming Greenfield Community College (GCC) students in Greenfield, Massachusetts, in partnership with the city's local library, Greenfield Public Library (GPL). Utilizing GPL's zine collection, the instruction module gives students an opportunity to engage with zines, think critically about their usage in research, and collaborate to create their own zine. The lesson plan in this case study offers insights into the value of teaching with zines, as well as recommendations and reflections for any practitioners seeking to utilize zines within their own institutions.

This instruction module is designed as a partnership between GCC and GPL. Both GCC and GPL are centrally located in Greenfield, Massachusetts, a small town with a population of approximately 17,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). As the largest town in Franklin County, Greenfield has become a cultural hub for art, restaurants, shopping, and festivals, which gives the area a more urban feel despite its large farming and rural communities. In July of 2023, GPL supported the town's cultural development by developing and replacing their old building with a new library. This library was outfitted with significantly more square footage, improved technology, and dedicated craft and study spaces. GPL also announced its new zine

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collection upon opening the new library, with a focus on zines created by artists local to Franklin County.

Newly enrolled community college students at GCC are the target audience for this instruction session. As a group, this audience is diverse and represents multiple aspects of Greenfield's community. According to GCC's demographic information for the Fall 2023 semester, 55% of students are a non-traditional age of over 25 years, and 27% are students of color ("Fast Facts," 2023). Incoming GCC students will also have variable levels of comfort in a library setting, as new community college students frequently enter as career changers with a wealth of pre-existing work experiences (Peet, 2019, p. 22). These additional skills can be supported by instructing librarians through recognition of their students' lives and commitments outside of the classroom, and by approaching education holistically.

The "Using Zines in Research" instruction module was developed to encourage new GCC students to take full advantage of their GCC library cards, better integrate them into Greenfield's community, and offer an accessible, easy-to-read resource for those who struggle with traditional information sources. The module makes use of GPL's new zine collection by having students choose and evaluate a zine of their choice as a research source. Students may complete the module in GPL's makerspace for its access to technology and craft supplies for the collaborative zine-making activity. This instruction module also offers students a space outside of the GCC library for them to utilize. This module introduces more resources for GCC students to take advantage of beyond their college campus by demonstrating the value of the town's public library. Both GCC and GPL are part of the Central and Western Massachusetts Automated Resources (CW MARS) network, a Massachusetts-based library consortium of over 100 libraries in the Central and Western part of the state (CW MARS, "About," n.d.). GCC library cards work at any library within this network, and visiting GPL gives students an overview of the other unique libraries and resources they can access while attending GCC.

This instruction module was inspired by the lesson plans in Kelly McElroy's 2011 zine *Teaching Info Lit with Zines*. McElroy (2011) notes that zines are a great information literacy tool as their unconventional format is both enticing and approachable for students, and their frequent focus on subcultures creates an opportunity for students "to critically discuss authenticity, reliability, and context of information" (p. 4). Zines' unconventional characteristics complement the varied needs and experience associated with incoming community college students and offer them a way to engage in library collections that feels approachable and hands-on. While this instruction module incorporates several information literacy frameworks, it places particular emphasis on the concept of authority as constructed and contextual (ACRL Board, 2016). McElroy (2011) notes that traditional lessons on authority teach students that accurate and authoritative sources come from "formal elements of documents" (p. 6). However, given that zines often lack these formal authority markers, they offer students a great exercise in issues of authority and the ways in which formal sources of information prioritize certain voices. This central question of authority also intersects with the information literacy frameworks of scholarship as conversation and information has value (ACRL Board, 2016), because the unique nature of zines fosters discussion on ways different information is valued, and what that means critically.

The teaching approach and strategy for this module are adapted from authorities on both instruction and zines, including Cook et. al's 2015 article, "How Do Our Students Learn?" and Kathleen Aragon's 2018 zine, *Teaching with Zines*. Cook et. al's (2015) principles of "Do Less" and "Active Learning is Practice of Deep Structure" (pp. 3, 6) significantly shaped the module's design, which emphasizes activities and discussions to prompt students to actively consider source authority. These principles also echo Aragon's recommendation of keeping zine-

related instruction student-focused, as the personal, informal nature of zines opens possibilities to share diverse stories and build community within the classroom. Keeping the instruction module student-centered also serves to extend GCC library's teaching philosophy to GPL by utilizing student "prior knowledge and lived experiences" and "active learning techniques" (Dolan et. al, 2018).

The instruction module begins with the question "What is a zine?" to assess how familiar students are with the medium and address any potential misconceptions. Rigid definitions of zines are discouraged due to the variety of formats and styles they can appear in, so this section is brief and emphasizes the flexibility in defining zines. Students also have the opportunity to read and interact with zines from the GPL collection to assist in explaining the medium. Actively engaging with the collection assists with student understanding of zines and application of the critical thinking skills needed in college courses. After discussing the definition of zines, the instructor gives a brief, two- to three-minute lecture covering the GPL zine collection and the potential benefits and drawbacks of using zines in academic research. This section of the module is intended to be short and straightforward to keep focus on active, hands-on learning. The lecture portion also introduces students to GPL's zine collection and gives them a glimpse at some of the resources available to assist with their learning outside GCC, making sure to highlight that students can place zines on hold and have them sent for pickup to their home library if needed. The lecture points to the pros and cons of zines in research and is meant to introduce students to thinking critically about zines and give them an overview of qualities to look for when completing the evaluation activity. This part of the lecture is also intended to tie in universal design by offering additional guidance on the activity for students who may not be familiar with zines or with what to look for in academic sources.

A zine evaluation activity is the core of this instruction module. The evaluation activity was adapted from McElroy (2011) and from Potter and Sellie's 2016 article, "Zines in the Classroom: Critical Librarianship and Participatory Collections." Students begin by selecting a zine from a sampling of the GPL collection to evaluate as an information resource. Scholars on zine instruction recommend allowing students to choose their own zine to better connect the medium with their own interests or potential research topics (Aragon, 2018, p. 3). The selection of zines should also demonstrate variety in art style, topic, and genre, so as to best reflect the diversity inherent in the medium. The evaluation questions for students are open, discussion-based, and considerate of authorship. Evaluation questions revolve around tenants of authority and value as a tie-in to the information literacy framework of authority as constructed and contextual (ACRL Board, 2016). The evaluation activity is individualized to allow students to have a more personalized choice of zine to evaluate and to create built-in safety. Aragon (2016) encourages sensitivity in planning zine-related activities; while the personal nature of zines means there are better opportunities to connect with students, "done carelessly, there's potential to hurt students, too" (p. 2). An individual activity also allows for personalized instruction if needed and the opportunity for students to ask direct questions during check-ins.

Upon completion of the zine evaluation activity, students are invited to discuss their zines and share any questions or observations they have. In addition to making use of the information literacy principle of scholarship as conversation (ACRL Board, 2016), this discussion functions as a built-in assessment tool on student ability to evaluate zines. Best practice when teaching with zines suggests an informal assessment based on student participation and engagement so as to complement the medium's approachable and independent nature. If students are able to answer all evaluation questions and demonstrate engagement with the activity, they have successfully met the learning outcome of the zine assessment. The instruction module closes with a more formalized, but creative assessment activity in the form of collaborative zine making: students are invited to contribute one page to a

class zine. The page should include something they learned about zines as a research tool or a takeaway from the lesson. This assessment achieves the information literacy framework of information creation as a process (ACRL Board, 2016), and highlights the joy and creativity in making zines. The collaborative zine activity also encourages students to further engage with the GPL zine collection by empowering them to make their own zine. The final zine may also be added to the GPL or GCC zine collection, with permission from students, so that there is a tangible contribution as a result of the lesson.

This instruction module is far more successful as an in-person lesson than a virtual one as giving students the opportunity to engage tactilely with zines allows for a better understanding of the medium. However, adaptations can be made to teach the module online. The instructor could utilize digital zine archives and have students select a freely available digital zine from a curated list, or use select zines from GPL's collection that are available in a digital or PDF format. The collaborative zine activity would also need to be adjusted and could take several forms. The simplest option would be to have students type their takeaways from class into a chat or to the instructor, and have the instructor then compile these statements into a zine to be shared digitally with students.

A longer but more engaging option for virtual, collaborative zine making comes from Silberstein and Thomas' 2022 article, "Zine-making Pedagogy During a Pandemic: Reflections and Implications." Silberstein and Thomas (2022) note that "zines are about finding opportunities in limitations while expanding the parameters of what is possible," and found that students in their digital zine workshops were able to creatively adapt to the constraints of a virtual classroom (p. 7). Rather than provide students with materials in person, students instead had the opportunity to choose their own materials and express themselves creatively, using found items from their homes and neighborhoods. Silberstein and Thomas found that the virtual setting for zine making gave students more freedom to develop concepts and experiment with the medium. The collaborative zine-making activity could take cues from this case study by encouraging students to make their one-page assessment with any materials they have with them at home and leave the options open. Students could then post a photo of their work into the Zoom chat for the instructor to later compile. This activity also allows students to see each other's creativity and different responses to the prompt, further engaging in the information literacy framework information creation as process (ACRL Board, 2016) and zines as a formless format.

A session of this instruction module was completed on December 9, 2023. The participatory group of eight students represented diverse ages, work experience, and familiarity with zines as a medium. The module began by asking if students had heard of zines before, and how they would define a zine. This question proved to be a strong introduction to zines as a flexible format, as students offered several different definitions of a zine, including "a variation on a magazine," "an independent press," and "a digital magazine," all of which had some level of truth. After briefly sharing an overview of the GPL zine collection and reasons to use zines in research, students were invited to choose from a selection of 15 zines to individually evaluate. The selection of 15 zines intentionally represented diversity in subject matter, format, length, and content, with a loose focus on social-political and cultural issues. Students evaluated their zines by answering the following questions:

1. What topics or issues does your zine address?
2. How does the material in your zine differ from traditional information sources?
3. Does your zine have an identifiable author? How does authorship affect the zine's value?
4. Could you use this zine for an academic paper or project? Why or why not?

After spending 10 minutes on the evaluation activity, students were invited to share their findings and discuss their zines. Each student shared their evaluation, many with enthusiasm or unique observations for the specific format of

their chosen zine. After sharing evaluations, the instructor offered resources for learning more about zines and using GCC and GPL collections. These resources were reviewed as the eight-page collaborative "assessment" zine was circulated, in which all students contributed one page reflecting on their experience of the module. Sample responses from three students in the collaborative zine included:

1. What the student learned from the content of their evaluated zine: "facts about rainforest cafe"
2. Takeaways from the lessons: "authority is contextual"
3. Accompanying art to go with their informal assessment: A drawing of the student saying "zines can be anything"

In a post-instruction feedback session, seven of the eight students indicated their appreciation for the opportunity to pick their own zine to evaluate and noted this made engagement easier. These students were able to find a zine that connected to their interests and demonstrated an ability to discuss it with authority and a critical lens. Four students demonstrated interest in continuing to explore zines by inquiring about where to purchase them, how to check them out from GPL, or where to find more from the authors of their chosen evaluation zines. It is important to note that the enthusiasm and interest for zines present in this session may be difficult to replicate with a group of learners who do not see themselves represented in the selection of zines available, or with a group that is less familiar with the medium. These factors are important to consider when choosing zines for students to evaluate as offering more variety in choice is best to represent as many perspectives as possible.

The assessment activity reflected student interest in lesson material. Three students wrote about the zine they evaluated as their main takeaway from the lesson, sharing their favorite fact or piece of writing from the zine. The initial intent of the collaborative zine was to gather feedback on the lesson itself, so this could potentially be reworked in the future to ask students for their thoughts on the lesson, and not the zine. However, keeping the format of the assessment loose is more consistent with the lack of rigid definitions for zines as a medium. All students still participated in the collaborative zine and were able to identify takeaways from the lesson, so the assessment was still effective, if different than originally intended.

Future iterations of this lesson would benefit from the option for students to work collaboratively on their zine evaluation if desired. Two students noted that they found it difficult to work on the assignment individually and would have preferred a discussion, as their learning style was more conducive to collaborative projects. This issue could also be resolved by creating a less formal, "presentation" style discussion after the evaluation activity. Rather than share their evaluation with the entire class, students could instead "pair and share" with each other to discuss their zines, with the instructor circulating as needed. Another alternative option to accommodate more learning styles is to pre-assess students on a preference between individual and group activities, either through a survey or informal discussion at the top of the lesson. Future instructors may adapt the lesson plan to have a more loosely defined evaluation activity and discussion, so that it can be more easily adapted to different configurations of groups.

Execution of the "Using Zines in Research" instruction module revealed an eagerness from students to engage in zines as both readers and creators. Ideally, this lesson plan will be adapted by other instructing librarians and educators for use alongside their institution's zine collection. However, zines' flexible format means that there are far more teaching tools at hand than the ones outlined by this case study. This instruction module could be expanded into a larger or more advanced series of courses. In addition to evaluating zines as a potential research tool, what would it look like for students to actively cite and utilize zines in an academic paper? Other variations on zine instruction that best complement multiple learning styles, as suggested by the students who participated in the instruction session, should be explored.

Perhaps a focus on the collaborative and creative nature of zines, rather than their values of exploring authority and information literacy, would be more successful in engaging extroverted or discussion-oriented learners. Above all, future iterations of zine instruction should hold the core value of “having fun!” (Aragon, 2016, p. 6) when approaching the medium and engaging with students.

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Appendix

LESSON PLAN: USING ZINES IN RESEARCH **Instructor: Jesse Cole**		
Target Audience	Designed for incoming Greenfield Community College students using Greenfield Public Library	
Learning Outcomes	1. Apply lesson material in order to define a “zine” 2. Evaluate a zine in order to assess the value of zines in an academic setting 3. Use lesson exercise and discussion in order to create collaborative work on using zines in research	
Information Literacy Frameworks	1. Authority Is Constructed and Contextual 2. Information Creation as a Process 3. Information Has Value 4. Scholarship as Conversation	
Intro	• Introduce self • Introduce learning objectives	**Time** 1 min

What is a Zine?	• Pre-Assessment
	  ○ Who has heard of zines?
	  ○ Anybody want to define what a zine is?
	• Zine Definition
	• About GPL’s Collection
	• Why should you use zines in research?
		Time
		3 min

Zine Activity Intro	• Introduce evaluation activity: Invite students to pick out a zine of their choice to evaluate for research value • Will have ~10 min to flip through zine (don't need to read the whole thing, just get an idea of content) and answer questions on slide deck • Afterwards share what we've learned about our sources	**Time** 1 min
Activity: Zine Evaluation	• Give students 8-10 minutes to work on evals, wander around class and answer questions/concerns as needed • 5-7 min: Invite people to share their zine evaluations and to compare issues they may have run into	**Time** 20 min
Closing Assessment	• Pass out collaborative zine: Each student uses one page to write a sentence/draw a picture/whatever they like on either a pro or con of using zines in research • Put up further references and reading for students	**Time** 5 min