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Editorial

To begin, could I say what a huge privilege it is to take over from Louise Cooke who has stepped down as Joint Editor of *Library and Information Research* after three years of hard work. It is a great pleasure to join Miggie Pickton as Joint Editor of the journal. Two of the key objectives of *Library and Information Research* are to encourage reporting of research by practitioners and to encourage reflective and evidence based practice (Library and Information Research, 2010). I endorse these objectives whole heartedly and am therefore extremely glad to be joining the team on the journal. One of my own key objectives in my 'day job' as Head of an academic division and research methods lecturer is to encourage students to engage critically, enthusiastically and systematically in their own research. Many of my students are themselves practitioners as I am fortunate enough to do a lot of my teaching on distance learning and work-based learning courses. It never ceases to amaze me how full time practitioners can take on an undergraduate or postgraduate course and dedicate so much time and energy to their learning. All of their courses culminate in a substantial element of independent research which, in most cases, in based in their own working environment. This experience is always challenging but the most common sentiment expressed by my students after the research is complete, is the sense of achievement they feel in having done something that not only contributed in such a significant way to their own award, but also made a difference in their workplace. Many years of having this experience makes me very sure that encouraging practitioners to engage in research brings benefits to the individual, the organisation and the profession.

In this issue we have two research articles that report on studies that both excite and enthuse me, reading these has left me eager to embark on a new research adventure myself and I hope they leave you feeling the same. The theme here is information literacy from different perspectives, one from school students, teachers, and teacher librarians and the other from librarians in higher education. Both research studies take a qualitative approach to the research questions they ask and provide rich and detailed 'mile deep' studies. There has been a call for more research that 'tells the story' (Brophy, 2008) by applying qualitative research methods to extend our understanding of issue and exploring the story behind the action. Practitioners are in an ideal position to embark on this type of research as they are already immersed in a setting and have a great deal of tacit knowledge and understanding to bring to any investigation, as well has been in an ideal position to examine questions over time.

Herring examines school students' attitudes, use and reflections on information retrieval for assignments, using the views of the school students themselves, teachers and teacher librarians. He also examines the extent of transference of the skills acquired during this process to other subjects and over time. The location of the research was rural Australia but the methods of investigation and the discoveries made, have significance for a global audience. Rich data gathered

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from diaries, questionnaires and interviews provides the basis for the constructivist grounded analysis and emerging theory. This constructivist approach is becoming increasingly more popular for providing detailed insight into information behaviour. Both the findings and the method provide a fascinating and compelling picture of the way in which school students perceive information retrieval.

Houtman explores the experiences of academic librarians in their journey towards teaching information literacy. Narrative inquiry is used to uncover and present these experiences in an intimate and highly relevant study of individual stories. This approach is rarely used in LIS research although it is much more to narratives Houtman shares with us from eight academic librarians in Ontario, Canada, explore areas such as; library school education, expectations of librarianship, their own identity as a teacher librarian and many other elements of what it means to deliver information literacy instruction within higher education. Again, the issues identified in this research paper have global significance and identify the many aspects of this element of the role of the academic librarian. The methodology applied in this research is another example of 'mile-deep' exploration that tells the story and provides valuable insight and interpretation.

We have four books reviewed in this issue, two are compilations; the first a collection of chapters first published as an issue of the *Journal of information Science* to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Institute of Information Scientists; the second is a festschrift paying tribute to Peter Brophy. Also reviewed is the work of Paul Pedley, an authoritative text on *Copyright Compliance* and Martin Palmer's text on *Making the most of RFID in libraries*. All four reviews offer valuable overviews of the texts and personal insight from the reviews.

As always, if reading one of the papers in this issue, inspires you to undertake your own research project or write up a project that you have already completed then please do consider submitting your work to *Library and Information Research*. We would love to hear from you, I have thoroughly enjoyed my first experience of the editorial process on LIR and am incredibly grateful to Miggie for all of her support and tolerance as I get used to both the software and the process! I am looking forward to working with her and the Editorial Board on the journal.

Alison Jane Pickard

Reference:

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Open access and copyright

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School students, information retrieval and transfer

James Edward Herring

Abstract

This study sought to examine the views of students, teachers and teacher librarians on students' attitudes to, use of, and reflections on, information retrieval, when completing curricular assignments. A second element of the research was to investigate the views of students, teachers and teacher librarians on the extent to which students might transfer information retrieval skills across time and across subjects. The research was carried out in three rural Australian schools. A constructivist grounded theory approach was taken in the study, and data was collected in the form of student diaries and questionnaires, and interviews with students and staff. Constructivist grounded analysis was used to analyse and interpret data. Findings from the study indicated that a minority of students both valued and would transfer information retrieval skills; the majority of students valued information retrieval skills but were unlikely to transfer skills without prompting; and a very small minority of students could not understand the concepts of information retrieval and transfer. The study also found that the schools lacked a culture of transfer.

1   Introduction

In today's secondary/high schools, there is much anecdotal evidence, and some research evidence, that, while students are *experienced* users of the web, they are not necessarily *effective* users. There is also anecdotal evidence that teachers assume that students, for example because of their age, will be effective users of the web. This anecdotal evidence also shows that both teachers and teacher librarians assume that, if students are taught how to be effective web searchers, students will transfer both attitudes to web searching and information retrieval skills across time and subjects. This study sought to explore the issues relating to this apparent contradiction i.e. that teachers' assumptions did not match the reality of student use of the web. The context of this paper is a wider study by the author of the use of information literacy skills by year seven (first year high/secondary school) students in three rural Australian schools. The paper will also draw on previous research conducted by the author of year seven and eight students' use of

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information retrieval in UK secondary schools. While the wider study examined students' views on and use of a range of information literacy skills (e.g. students' definition of purpose, question formulation, concept mapping, information evaluation, note taking and assignment writing), this paper focuses on students' approaches to information retrieval, particularly from the web, as well as issues relating to the transfer of information retrieval skills.

2   Literature Review

Information literacy

There are many definitions of information literacy and the questions posed by Langford (1998) are still relevant today. Langford's (1998) questions are "Is it [information literacy] a concept or a process? … Or is it a new literacy that has been transformed from existing literacies to complement the emerging technologies for which the Information Age students must be skilled?" The present author defines information literacy as a critical and reflective ability to exploit the current information environment, and to adapt to new information environments; and as a practice. This definition views information literacy as an ability and a practice, as opposed to a set of skills (e.g. information retrieval skills) which students will use both in and outside school. If information literacy is seen as a critical and reflective ability, then students who engage, for example, in web searching, will have the ability use a set of skills they have learned. However, these skills will not be used mechanically and students will engage in critical thinking about which skills to use and will reflect on why they might use particular skills i.e. they will be effective practitioners. Williams' (2001) criticism of some definitions of information literacy also remains relevant today, in that she questioned the connection between what was described as information literacy and student learning.

Information literacy has been one of the most widely discussed topics in the literature of teacher librarianship. While much of this literature is related to practice in schools, there is a growing body of research related to information literacy with key authors including Kuhlthau (2004), Todd (2007), Farmer (2005), Barranoik (2004), Author (2006), Wolf (2007) and Woolls and Loertscher (2002). These authors have examined cognitive as well as affective aspects of information literacy, information literacy models and their use in schools. They have also focused on students' use of information literacy skills and techniques, such as defining purpose, concept mapping, question formulation, information seeking and evaluation of sources and content, note taking strategies, and the planning and writing of curricular assignments. Loertscher (2008) noted that despite the wide range of research and publications, a number of issues relating to information literacy remain unresolved. The issue of students' transferring information literacy skills across time and subjects, has been largely ignored in the literature, where there are assumptions about students transferring information literacy skills, but little empirical evidence of transfer taking place. The study by Author and Hurst (2006) examined students' attitudes to transfer in a primary school and identified some evidence of the transfer of skills from one term to another. This study was limited in size as only one class was studied, and the methodology was also limited.

Information retrieval

An examination of student views on information retrieval was part of research by Author, Tarter and Naylor (2002), Author (2006), Author and Hurst (2006) and Author and Tarter (2007). These studies, which evaluated aspects of students use of Author's (1996 and 2004) PLUS (Purpose, Location Use and Self evaluation) model showed that, while a minority of students used relatively sophisticated information retrieval skills, for both digital and print resources, most students had a very limited approach to information retrieval, especially when using search engines. Kuhlthau (2004) reported on a range of studies into information retrieval, including the development of the Information Search Process (ISP). Kuhlthau's (2004, p. 37) research introduced a new focus on factors affecting students' information retrieval, by studying the affective aspects such as 'thoughts, feelings, actions, strategies and mood'. Bilal, Sarangthem and Bachir (2008) focused on information seeking in digital libraries and their conclusions include a reaffirmation of Kuhlthau's (2004) findings on uncertainty and satisfaction in relation to information retrieval. . Chung and Neuman (2007) studied high school students' approaches to information retrieval, finding that 11th grade students' understanding of topics increased during information seeking. Myers, Nathan and Saxton (2006) examined barriers to information seeking in school libraries, and these barriers included insufficient collaboration between students and a lack of focus on students' previous information retrieval activities. Chelton and Cool (2004) presented a range of research studies, mainly from North America, on how children and adolescents seek information in a variety of contexts. Gross (2004) examined how primary school children coped with finding information for school assignments, and argued that more emphasis should be put on students framing their own questions prior to information retrieval. Some of these studies focused narrowly on one school or group of students and some lacked a clear theoretical perspective. None of the studies cited here focused on the potential transfer of information retrieval skills across time and across the curriculum. In these studies, as in schools in general, there is often an assumption that students will transfer the skills they have been taught, with some studies predicting that students will, once they learn how to retrieve information effectively, use these new skills in the future. The present study shows this assumption to be false.

Transfer

While there has been much research on information seeking and retrieval in schools, these studies have not focused on information retrieval in relation to transfer in any depth. There is much *implied* attention given to the concept of transfer in relation to information retrieval, but there is little coverage of this issue in the literature. Detterman (1993), Haskell (2001), Royer, Mestre and Dufresne (2005) and Hakel and Halpern (2005) discussed definitions, theories and types of transfer in educational settings. These authors present a range of findings about the transfer of knowledge and skills in schools, and conclusions range from the mainly negative views of Detterman (1993) to the more positive views of Royer et al (2005). The more recent studies of transfer have taken a wider sociocultural view of transfer than earlier studies. Royer et al (2005) argued that transfer should be viewed as how learning in one situation has an influence on subsequent learning, and that a variety of factors need to be considered when studying

transfer. The present study takes a sociocultural perspective on factors influencing information literacy skills. One element identified by Haskell (2001) is the importance of having a culture of transfer in schools. In the context of this study, a culture of transfer would imply that teachers, teacher librarians and students were committed to focusing on the transfer of information retrieval skills as a key aspect of information literacy development in the school.

3   Methodology

A constructivist grounded theory approach was taken to the study, and constructivist grounded analysis was used to analyse and interpret the gathered data. Constructivist researchers (Philips 1995 and Pidgeon and Henwood 2004) regard knowledge as well as data collection and analysis, as being constructed by individuals, and take the view that researchers interpret the constructions of reality which research participants offer. Grounded theory has progressed from the early work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) to Strauss and Corbin (1998), and constructivist grounded theory has been most influenced by Charmaz (2006). The key elements of constructivist grounded theory are that the researcher is viewed as an interpreter of the observed world and that data, such as student interviews, is viewed as construction of reality by participants in the study. The researcher examines what emerges from the data and does not approach the study with a preconceived hypothesis. According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theorists seek to explain studied phenomena but do not seek to generalise from their findings.

The data for this study, part of a larger study as noted above, was gathered using student diaries, student questionnaires and interviews with students, teachers and teacher librarians in three rural Australian schools. The data relevant to information retrieval and transfer has been selected from the larger study. Students completed structured diaries when completing a history assignment in term three of the school year. Students completed the questionnaires after finishing a term four assignment in English, Japanese or Science, depending on their school. Students were interviewed at the end of term four. Teachers and teacher librarians were interviewed at the start of term three. Following grounded theory (Charmaz 2006) methods, the author engaged in theoretical sampling and interviewed staff and students in term two of the following year. Theoretical sampling seeks to test the categories identified by the researcher by going back into the research field.

Data was analysed using grounded theory methods (Charmaz 2006 and Pidgeon and Henwood 2004). All data was coded, and categories were identified and tested using both initial and focused coding of diary, questionnaire and interview data. Categories were then re-tested, using theoretical sampling interviews. Coding of these interviews produced the final categories (e.g. students valuing information retrieval skills) which are discussed below. In the larger study, a grounded theory relating to information literacy skills and transfer was developed, and elements of that theory are included in the discussion section of this paper.

4   Findings

The findings of the study are presented as follows: student diaries and information retrieval; student questionnaires and information retrieval; student interviews and information retrieval and transfer; and staff interviews and information retrieval and transfer.

Student diaries – information retrieval

In relation to finding information sources, student responses were fairly general about how they found books to use for their assignment. Some students in each school used books which had been found by other students and comments included 'We found a book about knights and talked about it in our group', while other students, a minority, asked the teacher or teacher librarian. Students were also fairly general in their comments about finding websites. For example, while some students used a search engine ("It was easy – just typing in what you wanted to find out for your topic"), many others were less specific ("I looked at different websites").

Students' diary comments on finding information relevant to their topic were more specific. Some students used specific keywords ('I Googled to find out about food and clothes in the medieval village' and phrases ('I put in the cruellest dictator as I thought that would give me good stuff'). Other students' searches were more generalised and most students appeared to do limited searches and then browse though websites. Students were asked to comment on how successful they thought their searching had been. Most students stated that they had been successful in finding the right information for their topic, but it was unclear how the students might have interpreted the term *successful*.

Student questionnaires – information retrieval

Students were asked how they found the right information for their term four assignment. This question was phrased with an emphasis on *right*, as there was some misinterpretation of this issue in the student diaries. Results showed that students' strategies, in rank order of number selected, were:

Finding a book which covered the topic (33 students)

Searching the web using topic keywords (28)

Using the school library OPAC (21)

Talking to other students and finding better information from them (10)

When students were asked to identify how they selected relevant information from websites, the results were:

Browsing through the website (27 students)

Using keywords (24)

Looking at the title of the site (23)

Ignoring information that wasn't relevant to their topic (14)

Referring to their mind map or questions (5)

In the questionnaire, students were asked to comment on whether they had used the information literacy skills which they had been taught in term three and 70% of students responded positively, 26% responded negatively and 4% responded 'I don't know'. When asked to provide examples of skills which they had transferred, the highest ranked skill was information seeking and retrieval. Comments included 'I learned different ways to find information in websites', and 'I'm now much better at finding good information for my assignments'.

While there was some evidence of the transfer of information retrieval skills, the questionnaire responses lacked depth and issues raised by the questionnaire data were followed up in the student interviews.

Student interviews – information retrieval and transfer

In the first set of interviews, in terms of searching for information, students mainly referred to searching *within* books, but searching *for* and *within* websites. Despite the claims in the questionnaires about the use of the library catalogue, none of the students interviewed referred to the OPAC, but it may be possible that these students were not a representative sample of OPAC users. In all three schools, students referred to using keywords, both to search for information in books and in websites, and comments included 'Well, you think about what you want to find and you use your keywords – like you'll try to find your keywords in the site'. Students stated that they used keywords when searching for information on the web, and almost all students who cited a search engine, named *Google* although one student cited *Dogpile*. The students interviewed mostly appeared to be aware of the importance of searching under more than one keyword e.g.:

[First student] If you only put in one word, it's not really a good idea as it might not come up with the right information or the right websites. If you only put in tyrants – well, anything can come up because it's all around the world. [Second student] You need to put in more than one word if you really want to get good results.

The less articulate students in the groups tended to use a one word approach e.g. "You just put your topic into Google and that's all you need".

Students also discussed their strategies for identifying relevant information in a website and, in particular, skimming and scanning skills – although the students tended to use these terms interchangeably. A School C student explained "You read through the site and think about whether it's got to do with your questions – because sometimes it looks like it will be good, but then it turns out to be something different".

The students interviewed appeared to be confident about using information retrieval skills, but an interesting development in the first student interviews was that the students in all three schools referred to a lack of information retrieval skills in *other* students. This issue emerged when discussing the transfer of skills. For example, most of the students interviewed argued that they had transferred skills, such as information retrieval skills, and that teachers would not need to reinforce such skills. In relation to other students, however, most of the students interviewed that for many students in their class, reinforcement was necessary. A typical comment was 'Some people – mainly boys – they just want to get into the

work right away, so they rush into it. So it would better for them to be told by the teacher to think about how they can best find information – to slow them down'.

In the theoretical sampling interviews, where the researcher sought to test the categories identified from the coded data, one of the categories discussed was *Thinking about information retrieval*. The students argued that some of their fellow students were adept at thinking about information retrieval in order to get the most relevant information, and one School B student summed this up, stating:

> *Well, if you don't think about it, you won't get what you need, will you? Some students are really good at this and find it really easy to get the right information but sometimes it can be hard – but, like if you think about it and don't rush it, you'll get there.*

All three groups argued that there were some students – there was no attempt to identify numbers of students – who did not approach information retrieval with sufficient thought or planning. This is illustrated by two School C students who discussed this:

> *[First student] Yeah, some do but there are some that just want to get it over and done with, so they don't think about getting the best information. They just plagiarise and take stuff off the internet and write it into their assignments. [Second student] Yeah, I agree – they just take things from books and stuff and want to get it over and done with quickly. [First student] Yeah and get on with other things – like, not work. [Second student] Yeah, maybe some of them - they think about getting the best information but they don't go through with it because they think it's going to be harder.*

Other students in the groups concurred with this view, and used phrases such as "they rush in", or "they want to get it over quickly", and agreed with the School C group above that this led to some students to selecting the first websites which appeared when they did a search. In relation to a second category, *Valuing information literacy skills*, students made the same distinction between student who valued information retrieval skills, and put them into practice, and those who valued information retrieval skills, but did not put them into practice.

When students discussed the transfer of skills, they reiterated the distinction between students who were motivated to transfer information retrieval skills and students who needed to be reminded by teachers and teacher librarians about information strategies. The students emphasised that it was the *teachers'* and *teacher librarians'* responsibility to motivate more students, for example by developing more interesting assignments and reinforcing skills. One student summed up the views of students, stating 'So if you could do revision on what we're talking about here [information retrieval skills], just like we get revision after we've done certain things in maths – so you could get revision after we've done an assignment'.

Staff interviews – information retrieval and transfer

In the first interviews with teachers, all but one of the teachers expressed confidence in the students' ability to effectively search for information using Google. The teachers did not define 'effectively' but assumed a high level of

ability. Only the science teacher in School A took a less optimistic view, stating 'There are some students who can use the internet very competently and even to the point of knowing what are good sites and what aren't. There are others who can't do that and have to be given very specific instructions'. Five of the nine teachers interviewed expressed the view that they assumed that students would come to secondary school equipped with sound information retrieval skills, although their views were not based on empirical evidence. The other teachers were less certain about what skills students might be taught in primary school.

In terms of students transferring information retrieval skills, the teachers took a uniform view that most students would not transfer skills without prompting. Most teachers saw some students as being capable of transfer and identified these students as the most able. Teachers were divided in their reasons for lack of transfer. Some teachers argued that, for many year seven students, transfer was a difficult concept, while others argued that students took a very compartmentalized view of school subjects and that this restricted transfer.

The interviews with the teacher librarians showed that they had more knowledge of students' experience of information retrieval skills in primary schools. This was mainly because it was the teacher librarians who were seen as responsible for teaching information retrieval skills to year seven students in these schools. The view of all the teacher librarians was that students' experience of information retrieval depended on which primary school students had attended. The teacher librarians expressed much less confidence than the teachers in the level students' information retrieval skills. The School A teacher librarian summed this up, stating that while students were good at finding books, 'most students still search Google with single keywords – and pick the first site they find'.

The teacher librarians agreed with the teachers that few students were likely to transfer information retrieval skills, despite being taught these skills in sessions in the library. The School B teacher librarian, for example, stated 'Most of the students seem to forget what I've told them before, say about using the OPAC or using keywords when searching the web'. The teacher librarians agreed with the teachers that students tended to view information skills as discrete and not to be transferred unless told to do so.

In the theoretical sampling interviews, the teachers and teacher librarians were interviewed together. The groups were firstly asked about whether students made connections, especially between concept mapping and information retrieval, and information retrieval and assignment writing. The staff were divided on the extent to which students made connections, with some teachers and teacher librarians arguing that most students did make connections, for example in using concept map keywords when searching for information. Other staff agreed, but argued that only a minority made effective connections, and that only this minority understood the full value of making connections. The groups were agreed that all but a small minority of students valued information retrieval skills, but they were also agreed that most students did not translate this value into action, particularly in relation to transfer.

Where the teachers and teacher librarians differed from their students was in relation to who was responsible for encouraging students to transfer information

retrieval skills. Staff were divided into those who thought that students should take responsibility for transferring skills and those who thought that staff should be responsible. A School B teacher summed up the views of those focusing on students, stating 'They are too product orientated. They want to rush to get assignments done and they see information retrieval skills – say like doing a proper search on Google – as time wasting'. Staff taking this view argued that even if information retrieval skills were reinforced, students' attitudes would prevent transfer. Other staff disagreed, arguing that it was the teachers' and teacher librarians' responsibility to reinforce information retrieval skills, and other skills, across the curriculum. One of the teacher librarians argued that 'We need to get students to break down the barriers they see between subjects'. All staff were agreed that there was no culture of transfer in any of the schools and that this could be a hindrance to the transfer of skills.

5   Discussion

The interpretation of the data by the researcher focused on: students valuing information retrieval skills; students making connections between information retrieval skills and other information literacy skills; factors affecting the transfer of information retrieval skills; and culture of transfer

Students valuing information retrieval skills

This author defines value in terms of students recognising the importance of information retrieval skills and identifying benefits from having such skills. This could be contrasted with a more practical approach to information retrieval skills, in that students might well make use of such skills, but would not value them e.g. by reflecting on importance of using such skills. The students who valued information retrieval skills, did so in different ways. The evidence from this study showed that a minority of students valued information retrieval skills, in that they reflected on the use of these skills and how they might improve their use of such skills in the future. This group of students put these skills into practice and were able to evaluate the effectiveness of different search strategies when using search engines. These students had acquired information retrieval as an ability and a reflective practice.

The majority of students in these schools valued information retrieval skills, but in a narrower, more utilitarian manner. These students recognised how effective information retrieval benefitted them in finding relevant information for their assignments, but they did not reflect on their use of searching skills. This large group of students may be seen as viewing information retrieval skills as a means to an end i.e. finding information for a particular assignment. These students had acquired information retrieval more as a set of skills than an ability. While this group put their skills into practice, it was not a reflective practice.

A third group of students – a very small minority – did not value information retrieval skills, as they failed to understand what benefits might be gained from using these skills. The evidence showed that this very small group of students found the concept of effective information retrieval very difficult. For example,

while they understood the mechanics of searching on Google, they were unable to reflect on what effective searching might be. This group merely acquired some mechanical aspects of information retrieval, but they can be seen as not acquiring information retrieval either as a reflective skills or practice.

While there has been much attention to examining students' information retrieval skills in the literature (Kuhlthau 2004, Chung and Neuman 2007, Myers et al 2006, and Chelton and Cool 2004), little attention has been paid to the question of whether students value these skills. It is clear from this study that teaching students to value information retrieval skills, as well as to implement these skills effectively, will have an effect on how students find and use information, concepts and ideas for their assignments.

Students making connections between information retrieval skills and other information literacy skills

One of the distinguishing features between the three groups of students identified from this study was the ability of some students to think about information retrieval skills in a reflective manner, and to make connections between information retrieval skills and other information literacy skills. The students who most valued information retrieval skills engaged in critical thinking about these skills, in that they evaluated different searching techniques and strategies, and they also made connections between information retrieval skills and other skills. These students can be seen as taking a much more holistic view of their use of information literacy skills than other students. This holistic view can be seen where this small group of students made clear connections between using either question formulation or concept mapping, and information retrieval. These students reflected on the importance of developing their search strategies based on their concept map or their self-generated questions. These students also reflected on the importance of effective information retrieval not only for finding information on their topic, but for finding relevant information and ideas which suited the structure of their assignment. Making connections for these students fitted into their acquired ability and reflective practice.

The second and larger group of students did make connections but in a much narrower sense. While some of this group connected the concept map or questions to searching for relevant information, the group as a whole did not tend to make connections beyond the information retrieval stage. The limited connection made by this group reflects their use of information retrieval more as a skill than an ability and reflective practice. The third group of students did not make connections as they failed to understand why they should make such connections, and this was influenced by their failure to understand the concept of effective information retrieval.

In the literature on information literacy in schools, Moore (2002), Kuhlthau (2004), Barranoik (2004), Ryan and Hudson (2003) and Author (2006) discuss aspects of students' reflecting on the skills they use, and the critical and reflective group of students referred to above fall into the same category as those students identified by Wolf (2003) who demonstrated metacognitive attributes amongst some students. The literature tends not to focus directly on the value of making connections, but rather implies that students might make such connections.

Factors affecting the transfer of information retrieval skills

In relation to transfer, this study found that students could be grouped in a similar way to value. The minority of students who extensively valued information retrieval skills were most likely to transfer these skills across time and subjects, without intervention by teachers or teacher librarians. This group may be seen as actual transferrers, in that they were able to take a metacognitive view of how information retrieval skills fitted in with their own learning, and how transferring these skills would be of benefit to them. This group may also be seen as reflective transferrers. By acquiring information retrieval as an ability and reflective practice, transferring what they had learned about information retrieval fitted into the approach of these students.

The majority of students were identified as propositional transferrers of information retrieval skills. The evidence showed that these students recognised value in information retrieval skills and agreed that, *in theory*, these skills should be transferred. In practice, this group of students was unlikely to transfer information retrieval skills without being prompted to do so by teachers or teacher librarians. The reasons for this lack of transfer appeared to be complex, but included student motivation as well as what students viewed as received practice. The propositional transferrer group's concept of received practice included the view that unless teachers or teacher librarians specifically told them to transfer information retrieval skills, then they had no need to do so, and this attitude made these students less motivated to transfer skills. These students may be seen as skills oriented rather than ability oriented, in that they lacked the reflective ability to judge the value of transfer.

The third group can be viewed as non-transferrers, as these students lacked the ability to understand the concept of transfer, and saw no value in transferring information retrieval skills. Unlike the propositional transferrers, these students lacked the ability to judge whether the transfer of information retrieval skills would benefit them. While there is a range of literature on transfer in schools (Royer et al 2005), and while research done by Kuhlthau (2004) and Bilal et al (2008) imply that transfer may be important, there has been a distinct lack of focus on the transfer of information retrieval skills, apart from Author and Hurst (2006).

Culture of transfer

It was clear that there was little evidence of a culture of transfer in these schools. Where schools have a culture of transfer, teachers and teacher librarians would recognise the importance of transfer, and actively promote the transfer of skills across the school, both formally and informally. In the theoretical sampling interviews with staff, it was acknowledged that a culture of transfer did not exist in any of the schools, despite widespread belief in transfer as a key educational skill. Staff acknowledged, for example, that the concept of transfer was never discussed with students. These schools assumed that the transfer of knowledge and skills such as information retrieval skills would take place, but took no action to ensure that transfer would occur. In these schools, there was a lack of any formal policy or overall commitment to the transfer of information retrieval skills, and other information literacy skills, and it was clear that without such a policy or

commitment, only a minority of students were likely to transfer. The sociocultural view of transfer taken in this study implies that there needs to be more than a formal policy on the transfer of skills in these schools, and that attitudes of staff and students to transfer will play a key factor in developing students who view the transfer of skills as important. Haskell (2001) argued strongly for schools to establish a culture of transfer, and a culture of transfer is implied, rather than stated, by Royer et al (2005). There appears to be no references to a culture of transfer in the information literacy in schools literature.

Implications for teacher librarians and teachers in schools

There is a range of implications for teacher librarians and teachers from this research and these include:

- The need for more attention to be paid to encouraging students to value information retrieval skills before they implement them, and this suggests that teacher librarians consider revising the way they teach information retrieval skills

- The need for teacher librarians and teachers to evaluate the extent to which information retrieval skills are taught and reinforced across the curriculum, and this suggests that teacher librarians may need to explore the extent to which teachers value and can effectively use information retrieval skills

- The need for schools to develop a culture of transfer for information retrieval skills (and other information literacy skills), and this suggest that schools try to develop a commitment to transfer by both staff and students

- The need for more research in relation to information retrieval skills, which takes a wider view of the relationship of these skills to aspects of student learning in schools.

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"Trying to figure it out": Academic librarians talk about learning to teach

Eveline Houtman

Abstract

Information literacy instruction is a core function in academic librarianship, yet librarians may feel unprepared for teaching. This qualitative research study explores, through the experiences of eight academic librarians in Ontario, Canada, how librarians learn to teach in the classroom. It uses narrative inquiry to study and share these experiences, an approach that is in the mainstream of teacher research, although little used in the library and information literature. Areas explored include the librarians' expectations of librarianship; what they learned at library school; teaching as learning; support from colleagues; continuing education; teacher identity; talking about teaching.

1 Introduction

Rob (2000)[i]: *I get one hour to connect with them. And if I don't deliver, I'll never see any of those students again. Where I say, I'm giving you all this information, it's too much information to take in, and even though it's too much information, it's not comprehensive. How do you structure it? Yeah, the structuring is really hard. How much weight do you give to the catalogue? Should I put all my emphasis on journal articles? How do you figure that out? To know how to develop a class, a lesson plan. To know how to engage your audience. To know how to control a class – classroom management is a big, big issue. How do you do it, when you've got one hour? For a bunch of people, where maybe a quarter don't want to be there. Of course, for some of that you only get with experience. Teaching's hard. I don't think people appreciate how hard it is.*

Danielle (2009): *[The part of teaching I don't like is] not being prepared. I was never taught how to target a presentation for 300 people versus a workshop for 12. I've learned this on the go. I guess it's that feeling of inadequate preparation for giving a workshop or presentation. That's my least favorite part of it. It varies from very basic*

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to very specialized seminars using the specific software that I even had to teach myself a few more times because I wasn't that familiar with it. I wasn't prepared for the level of teaching I would be doing.

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to explore, through the experiences of eight college and university librarians in Ontario, Canada, how academic librarians learn to teach in the classroom, how they "try to figure it out" (a phrase, with its variants, used by almost all the participants). I use narrative inquiry to study and share these experiences.

The changing and increasing role of information literacy instruction in the work of academic librarians has been well documented (Rader, 1999; Rader, 2002; Avery and Ketchner, 1996; Lynch and Smith, 2001; Albrecht and Baron, 2002; Clyde, 2002; Walter, 2008). It has become one of our core functions. As Albrecht and Baron write (p. 72), "librarians are no longer keepers of information, but teachers of information."

In practice, there can be considerable variation in librarians' teaching. Different librarians may draw on different "skill lists, standards and models…relating to information literacy" (Johnston and Webber, 2003, 340). They may use different techniques and strategies; position themselves within different learning paradigms; address different kinds of audiences on different subjects; employ different and always changing technologies. Librarians may be more or less intentional in their teaching.

Michael (1988): *We don't have an agreed upon approach to teaching information.*

Despite this, as Cardiff University's *Handbook for Information Literacy Teaching* (2009) points out, "the quality of teaching of information literacy must be excellent by everyone involved" (p. i) if we are to promote such instruction in our institutions. Arnold (1998) questions what makes librarians' instruction effective:

> What makes some classrooms come alive, with students actively engaged in the learning, while in others students sit passive and bored? What accounts for good teaching? Often teaching excellence is a combination of professional competence and personality traits that mesh in an indescribable mixture that is obvious when one witnesses it and frequently characterized by the response, 'I don't know what it is, but I know it when I see it.'" (p. 1-2)

With all this, how *do* librarians go about learning to teach? This question arose in my own practice as, relatively late in my career, I moved into classroom teaching. Since getting my MLS in 1986, I had been music cataloguer, reference librarian, government publications specialist, department head. I had been involved in staff training. I had always viewed reference work as teaching. Yet to my chagrin, I found that all my experience did not automatically translate into effective classroom teaching. I often felt incompetent and frustrated. I looked for ways to learn more about teaching.

How do librarians learn to teach? Studies have examined library school curricula to discover what librarians might learn about teaching there. Recently, Julien (2005) has found that worldwide, 51.6% of library schools still offer no course in information literacy instruction (p. 213). Sproles, Johnson, and Farison (2008), looking at North America, find that 85.2% of schools have an elective instruction class (p. 203). They also find that two-thirds of students are at least exposed to the topic of instruction in a required reference class (p. 202).

Studies have also surveyed librarians to find out how and where they learned to teach. The latest of these (Westbrock and Fabian, 2009) finds that librarians largely learn on the job, with some self-teaching also involved, although the respondents said they would have preferred learning many of the skills at library school.

These studies all approach the question at a high, generalized level. To date, no study has focused on an in-depth exploration of how individuals on the ground experience learning to teach. The present study, then, fills a gap in the literature.

2 Methodology

2.1 Narrative inquiry

As an approach to qualitative research, narrative inquiry is "the study of experience as story, [which] offers researchers a way to think about and share experience" (Hamilton, Smith and Worthington, 2008, 19). It is a way to study experience that is "the closest we can come to experience" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, 188). It brings research to life.

Narrative is well-established in the social sciences (Chase, 2005, 651; Riessman, 2008, 17). Creswell (2007) includes it as one of his five approaches to qualitative inquiry. In the field of education, it is part of the "teacher research mainstream" (Hamilton, Smith and Worthington, 2008, 18); it "often appeals to teachers and teacher educators who share and learn from one another through exchanges about knowledge, skills, practices, and evolving understandings" (p. 19). It is also seen as a reflective tool, with "reflection on practice … required of any teacher and any researcher" (p. 24).

It is no coincidence that the very few instances of narrative inquiry in the library and information science literature come in the area of librarian teaching. Walter (2008), in his study of librarians' teacher identity, uses interviews to "elicit personal narratives from a group of academic librarians regarding their experience as teachers" (p.60). Gronemyer and Deitering (2010) analyze stories that instruction librarians tell about their work. Whyte (2008) offers up her personal narrative of learning to teach in the context of reflection through story.

One of the goals of qualitative research is "to empower individuals to share their stories, [to] hear their voices" (Creswell, 2007, 40). Narrative is the approach that goes the furthest in this direction. As Walter (2008) notes, librarian voices are often

absent in the librarian literature, or are present only in an aggregated, impersonal form in the reports of surveys. In the following pages, however, to a large extent I let my participants do the talking.

2.2 Recruitment and sampling

I recruited my participants using a listserv at the University of Toronto Libraries and also the listserv of the Ontario College and University Library Association. My email invited any academic librarian engaged in classroom instruction to students to participate, with all levels of experience welcome. The potential benefits I touted were the chance to reflect on their teaching practice and the chance to voice their views.

Because narrative inquiry takes an expansive approach to presenting data, it generally focuses on a very small number of individuals or even a single individual. Choosing narrative inquiry thus constrained the total number of participants I could accept. I was also constrained by various practical considerations. One example of this is the restriction I placed on potential participants outside Toronto: I could only accept those planning to travel to Toronto for the Ontario Library Association conference.

Within these constraints, I chose my participants out of the larger pool of volunteers for maximum variation. My most important criterion was their graduation date from library school, as a marker for the length of their experience in the profession. Other criteria included the librarians' subject area; the size of their library; their position; other teaching experience. I was aware of the need to take into account the gender ratio of my participants, although in the event gender did not play into my decisions at all.

Taking all these factors into consideration, I eventually chose eight participants, five women and three men. I was previously acquainted with three of the participants. As is true for most qualitative research, the small sample size does not allow the findings to be generalized to the larger population.

2.3 Data collection and analysis

I conducted individual interviews with each of the participants in January-February, 2010, using a semi-structured interview format that focused on their teaching practice and particularly their learning-to-teach stories. The interviews lasted 40 to 85 minutes and generated approximately 150 single-spaced pages of raw data.

Narrative data can be analyzed in several different ways. I took a thematic approach to analyzing the data, "where primary attention is on 'what' is said, rather than 'how', 'to whom', or 'for what purposes'" (Riessman, 2008, 54). Even more than this, however, I analysed for story (Creswell, 2007, 55), looking for both the broad outline and the telling detail. Clandenin and Connolly (2006, 142-143) speak of the tension, in creating a narrative research text, between story and theme, between creating a rich, complex narrative and working in a more reductionist way that focuses on generalisable themes, with the participants fading into "support roles". They conclude

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that anyone whose main concern is generalisable themes should be doing another kind of study in the first place.

I pieced together and constructed narratives for all the participants, restorying them (Creswell, 2007, 55) into a framework based on common elements of the narratives. I decided to create a group narrative, a polyphony (Czarniawska, 2004, 121), where the individual voices would still stand out. During the interviews I occasionally had the sense that one participant was talking back to another, point, counter point. In the group narrative, although the participants have never met, they may seem to play off one another.

The participants had the opportunity to review and respond to this group narrative in a wiki.

3   The participants

The eight participants work at college and university libraries in Ontario, Canada. They studied at three different Canadian library schools, with graduation dates ranging from 1988 to 2009. I have tagged each participant with their graduation date as a marker for what they might have studied in library school and as a marker for their experience. It is an imperfect marker, however: one participant in effect worked as a librarian for 12 years *before* receiving her degree; two others had extensive (10 or more years) previous careers. Note also that tagging the participants with their graduation dates does not mean they should be considered as representatives of their graduation year.

Their library settings range from large libraries to a one-person department library. Job titles run from library Director to [Subject] Librarian to variations on Reference and Instruction Librarian. There are three science librarians, four social science/humanities librarians, and one whose work runs the gamut.

The amount of teaching they do ranges from a high of 50% of the job (spread unevenly through the year, so that September-November and January-March are virtually 100% teaching) to a low of 3%. The librarians at the lower end either previously taught considerably more and/or supervise other instruction librarians. One also teaches a course at a library school.

All of them said they enjoy teaching. By way of introduction, here are some of their reasons.

Blackdog (1991): *Well, most days I like teaching. The thing I probably like most about it is seeing that somebody's got it. You explain something, you walk around, and you see them doing three-word searches, or you see them using the resource you just showed them. And you say, "So, what do you think of this?" And "Oh, this is great. I can't believe what's here." Just that kind of feedback that people have discovered things. The interaction. I like talking about finding information, I kind of like the topic. I can get pretty wound up about it. You know, show what happens when*

you don't do a very good job of it. Most of it is being able to engage with the students.

Danielle (2009): *I have a passion for the library, and using the library resources. So I want to instill that in someone else. It's letting them know that the library isn't their enemy, that they can still maybe go to Wikipedia and Google, but maybe as a reference point, a starting point, and getting them excited about resources that can actually enhance their education, or get them that A, that makes me excited. So that's what I like about teaching. And especially within my specialty, imparting a bit of that knowledge onto someone else who has no idea of what they're doing, I like doing that. Getting them excited about [subject A], using an entirely different tool, it's what makes me really excited about teaching.*

Laura (2005): *I do like teaching. I have to say, every September when I teach my first course I'm so nervous. I can't eat, I can't sleep. But then, as soon as I'm talking, I really like it. It's when the students say "I never knew how to do this, I wish I'd known how to do this [earlier]", or "This is going to be really helpful" or if they've been struggling and then I can show them how to do it, it just makes me feel very good. I like the classroom teaching – sometimes I like to hear myself speak, I like when they laugh at my jokes. I like that I am teaching them, they're learning something that's going to help them with their jobs, make them better at what they do. And I don't like – I was going to say if the students are being juvenile, but I kind of like that 'cos it's a challenge, and it lets you be a bit of a jerk. Or not a jerk, but you can be* that *teacher: "Sorry, do you have a question?"*

Rob (2000): *I do [really like it] actually. Well, it depends. I have some tough faculties. The [faculty A students] can be really tough. It's a lot of work to try and get them on board. [Faculty B] I used to find really tough and they're great now, they really are. I've gotten a better handle on the resources, and I've spent a lot of time getting to know them and really adding value to the program and adding a whole bunch of things to the collection that they didn't have before, that are making their lives easier, making the library relevant. And then I have the [faculty C] students, which are just the best classes ever.*

Claire (2002): *I do enjoy – I got more comfortable with it as time went on. When I came into it I didn't have much background in it, so it took a while to find my feet with it. So yeah, I do enjoy it. I prefer it if it's a smaller group. When it's getting upwards of 20 students – it depends on the circumstances, but when you're in a lab and if you don't have any back-up, it can be hard to keep the pacing right. It can be tricky, if some people are a little bit less inclined technically. But for the most part, I enjoy it. It's a way of getting to know the students, and engaging with them.*

David (2004): *I definitely enjoy it. I get very nervous beforehand. Although it's gotten a lot better. But I do enjoy it, it's nice having a captive audience, it's nice if I can make people laugh - I'm not always able to do that, sometimes it's kind of boring. And I like meeting the students. Certainly when I started out, I'd think in the back of my mind, "You don't really know this, you don't really know this." Though probably*

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I knew it better than I thought I did. But that sort of problem is certainly gone pretty much. Once you know everything on a topic pretty well because you've done it many times, then it makes it a lot easier to talk. I'm a kind of introverted type, although I like sitting in my office making something and then showing it to people. And that's sort of what happens in a class, right? So I like doing that with handouts, with little activities, or with the tutorials or anything like that. It's a chance to show something. And so sometimes, if something works, if there's an image that expresses something clearly, or a little activity that makes people laugh – that feels great. I'm really exhausted afterwards. Especially if it's been a long class, I'm kind of jittery for the rest of the day.

Da Vinci (1998): *I love it. I enjoy teaching. I have no fear of getting up in front of people, especially if I know more than they do. I love just making sure they get the information that they need, you know, that I know they should be able to go off and get the information. I don't expect them to be experts by the time they finish, and I tend to not do hands-on. I tend to do just lecturing.*

Michael (1988): *I enjoy it. I enjoy it because I don't do that much of it. I would find it very draining if – I couldn't be an instruction librarian. For me it's an occasional thing, it's something different, something exciting. But I find the performance aspect of it exhausting. You're on, and you do have to perform and be entertaining.*

4   Personal expectations of librarianship

Michael (1988): *Certainly I knew there would be presentations on occasion, but I was trained to work with one individual at a time in a reference interview. That was the norm. It was always one-on-one, what does this person want. There was never dealing with a whole bunch of patrons.*

Blackdog (1991): *There'd always been an interest in teaching. In this library setting, there appeared to be the opportunities for teaching. So I guess I did expect it. I don't think I got so specific [as to think of classroom teaching].*

Da Vinci (1998): *I love doing reference work, interacting with people. So I just took [instruction] as an extension of that. So instead of teaching one person, I'm just doing exactly the same sort of thing I would do with one person with a group.*

Rob (2000): *If anyone had ever told me I would spend 50% of my day teaching, I would never… I don't mind that, because I like it, but for a lot of people this is a shock. This is really, really tough. And they never expect it. I don't know anyone who came out of library school and thought they would teach. One of the things I kept asking while doing my degree was, "but what does the day look like?" None of it prepared me for what the day would be like. [My current practicum student from library school] said exactly the same thing, that she had no idea there would be so much teaching.*

David (2004): *When I thought of library school, teaching wasn't the first thing that jumped into my head when I thought about what it would involve, being a librarian. I was aware that librarians taught things like how to use the catalogue and all that stuff. I don't think I really did [see teaching as part of the job]. I really thought I'd probably be a reference librarian – the limited experience that I had was that and I enjoyed it. Certainly I had no real sense of [teaching's] importance. I don't mean that so much objectively, in terms of its objective importance, but its importance in terms of how librarians rank it.*

Laura (2005): *When I was in library school, this wasn't the job I thought I would have. I wanted to be a public librarian. I saw myself at the reference desk in a public library, doing readers' advisory.*

Danielle (2009): *I didn't want to be a teacher because I don't like public speaking, yet here I am. After doing my own research I realized it's inevitable. During my Masters I did a content analysis of [librarian] job postings. Not all, but a vast majority needed teaching experience. From public library to academic library, wherever I [would] end up, I was going to be in some form teaching. It was in my last semester that this became more evident. It wasn't evident coming into library school. I didn't realize that it would be so heavily pronounced.*

Da Vinci (1998): *I always say that what you do in librarianship is a self-selecting thing. So if you're not good at teaching and presenting and stuff like that, you end up working in the backroom stuff. You're probably the cataloguer, the serials person, the collection development type person. And if you're an outgoing person who is comfortable talking, then you end up at the reference desk and doing the courses.*

Blackdog (1991): *All [our] professional cataloguers were removed from cataloguing and put on the reference desk [and asked to teach].*

The narrative of the profession as documented in the introduction is one where teaching has played an increasingly central role in the work of academic librarians. The comments here seem to indicate something of a blind spot to this narrative. It is not possible, of course, to generalize from the experience of such a small sample of participants, though it is possible to say that not all library school students or even librarians are aware of the changes that have taken place in librarianship. However a large Canadian study (8Rs Research Team, 2005) also observes that would-be librarians hold misperceptions about the work in the profession, and suggests that marketing for the profession should highlight actual job functions.

5   What they learned about teaching in library school

Michael (1988): *Zippo. I remember we made classroom presentations, we certainly got instruction in the reference interview, but I don't remember any instruction in how to teach.*

Blackdog (1991): *We didn't have a [Bibliographic Instruction] course. It was prior to that. I know one was in the works by the time I graduated. And it took about five years for them to pull it together. [Library school] was pretty much presentations by students. So I learned a lot by observing what other people did. Both [good and bad]. You know, "I'll never do that." Or, "that was interesting."*

Da Vinci (1998): *We had to do a lot of presentations. One of the goals was to get people very familiar standing up in front. It was an explicit goal. That training was more effective for doing a presentation at a conference. It didn't really transfer over to teaching. We didn't do pedagogy.*

Rob (2000): *Zero. Teaching wasn't even mentioned, it wasn't even a component. I didn't hear the term "information literacy" until I started to work. It wasn't there. We had a lot of student presentations on – the big thing at the time was the serials crisis. It was all about the serials crisis. There was the closest to teaching, where we'd sit through all these, for the most part, really lousy student presentations on various things. You weren't really learning anything. You were practicing your very best "pretend this person is saying something interesting" expression. And there was no component like how do you - you just have to present. For a lot of people it was just torture. Total. Standing up in front of people talking about really dry subjects.*

Claire (2002): *When I went through [library school] there was nothing on information literacy. Absolutely nothing.*

David (2004): *There was no course that I took on it.*

Laura (2005): *There was a class on instruction and information literacy, but I didn't take it. We'd have presentations. But not, "This is how to search this", they were "This is mystery writers."*

Danielle (2009): *It was in my last semester that [the importance of teaching] became more evident. And by that point I could no longer sign into classes I should have been taking. They had one Instruction Methods course – overbooked, with a waiting list of 30 people. So I jumped into Professional Communication, which didn't necessarily answer [the teaching] skill sets, but it did get me presenting. [It] was an asset because they filmed you. And this is the first instance I've ever seen what I looked like. I come out of there all the time thinking I must have been red in the face, I must have been stammering, I must have been shaking. I feel that way inside, I wonder how's it portrayed to the people. That class gave me tricks of how to hide your fear. So that was a great asset. I practiced enough just because I realize, okay, I've got to be comfortable with myself. If I can't do it, fake it. So that class was helpful in terms of presenting in a larger group.*

As it happens, none of the participants took an instruction course at library school, although four of the eight had the opportunity (I checked with the library schools in question): Rob and Da Vinci, as well as Laura and Danielle. Rob and Da Vinci seem oblivious to the fact that such a course existed in their time at library school – another

blind spot – although Rob speaks passionately about the need for such classes. Sproles, Johnson and Farison (2008, 206) also observe a dissonance between what librarians believe was offered on instruction at library school and the greater amount their study found was actually offered. I suggest that such instruction at library school does not register with students who do not yet see the importance of instruction.

The group's non-participation in instruction courses runs counter to the assumption that library school now prepares librarians for teaching. I saw this assumption in the group: when asked if librarians were prepared for teaching some of the participants immediately mentioned library school courses in instruction. Blackdog expressed surprise that library school students might feel unprepared for teaching. Danielle was still clearly upset that she had not taken the course. Rob imagined the course he wished he'd taken.

Claire (2002) took a six-week online continuing education course on teaching for librarians from a library school:

That helped, because it was talking about learning objectives, and trying to align your teaching with having some – don't just go in there and dump on them, have some idea of why you're there in the first place. [I didn't apply it] as much as I would like, to be honest, but it did focus what I was trying to do with teaching. So that helped.

In other words, this class was helpful but not sufficient: it did not fully prepare her for teaching. However no one in the group questioned the idea that how to teach could be taught in one six- or twelve-week course (although Rob did feel some kind of practical teaching experience should also be built in at library school).

The latest survey to examine where librarians learn to teach echoes these findings. Westbrock and Fabian (2009) started with ACRL's list (2008) of 41 proficiencies for instruction librarians. None of their participants said they learned any of the proficiencies primarily at library school, although some percentage of them must surely have taken an instruction class (Westbrock and Fabian did not actually ask). This again counters the idea that library school coursework can prepare librarians for teaching. Their participants did feel that library school *should* be the primary place to acquire two-thirds of the proficiencies. Westbrock and Fabian talk of a disconnect between professional education and professional responsibilities. I suggest there is also a disconnect between librarians' expectations of library school instruction courses and how much coursework alone can actually teach about teaching.

It is also worth noting how much presentation skills were emphasized in the participants' accounts of what they learned at library school, although the concept of teaching as presentation provides only a very stunted view of teaching. For example, this is only one category out of twelve in ACRL's list of instruction proficiencies.

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6 First teaching experiences

Michael (1988 ; non-science librarian): *I got there about September 15ᵗʰ, and the first week I think I taught 12 classes. It was like, okay, you're scheduled to teach this class tomorrow, it's on nursing resources. It was flying by the seat of my pants. I'm not sure how much the students learned. I learned a lot. There wasn't a lot to build on. I learnt by trial and error. The hardest part there, I think, was teaching where I didn't have an understanding of the discipline.*

Danielle (2009): *I'm actually in a contract position. I've been there since September. I'm taking over someone's position. When I first got to my job, within three days I gave an entire day [off-site] workshop based on her [PowerPoint] slides. So arrived on the Monday, left the Thursday. And here you go.*

[For another class] of over 200 people, generally it's about an hour to 45 minutes, and it's all pre-scripted – more of an outline. But it's been a learning experience. I was given this script, walk into a classroom and do this. "Oh, it's all self-explanatory, you'll be fine." Okay. I walked in there and my employee information didn't work on the computer, and I didn't know how to use the terminals, it was different than in the library.

[Before teaching this class again,] the one thing I took upon myself, I asked one of the librarians if I could shadow one of her presentations so that I wasn't going in blind. [I saw] one class. Out of everything. And here you go. I just watched. And then afterwards I followed her back to her office and thanked her and then -- she was really busy. She goes back to work, I go back to work. And I just jotted down a lot of notes, oh yes, don't forget to mention this, go here… And then I went home and practiced the script on my own.

Walking into my first 200 class in a university, when I'm not that much older than they were, was intimidating. And so a trick I kept telling myself was okay, you don't need to know everything, but you know a bit more than them. You can tell them that much. Faking it.

Rob (2000): *When I started, my first real teaching in libraries was – I worked in [a] Public Library for a year. Which was really one of the best jobs I ever had. Because I was children's librarian, you have to do story time. And story time is super tough. It is a really scary thing. I sat through a couple of story times with other people and got an idea. And we had a full story time archive, which I've never seen anywhere else. So all the children's librarians would just pool, send in their lesson plans. And they were all arranged by theme. So when you're starting off and you have no idea, you can go, "Okay, we're doing 'Farm'. What are good farm books? What are good farm songs?" So you start, you would build that up, that was hugely beneficial. Hugely beneficial. And then, after that, then you build up your own archives, and you start coming up with your plans, and you just pull it together. And so you just figure it out. But starting off with that archive was great. And having good colleagues. The*

children's librarians were great and people really helped each other a lot, it's a real sense of team and that made a huge difference.

[In his present academic job:] *You're just thrown out there and you're told this is what you're going to do. I started, and I sat in on two different classes, with two different colleagues. And that was it. I took really good notes for what everyone did for their classes, and then I just had to go with it. That was it. Thrown in. And I just had to figure it out. And that is really difficult. To do an hour on stuff you've never done before. My first [subject X] classes were total disasters. I didn't know what they wanted. It was just the biggest waste of time. There was nothing of value for them, and it was miserable for everyone involved.*

David (2004): *I was encouraged to sit in on some classes that were being taught here before I taught any. To see how [my supervisor] did it, for example, because he was quite experienced. I think I saw two or three. I probably should have seen more. But I probably could have seen more if I wanted to. Probably I was eager just to do it myself.*

There were some existing materials. Certainly I would talk to [my supervisor] a lot. He would show me the kinds of things that he did. And what he thought was important. And I watched him teach, so I saw how he did it. And we had certainly some handouts ready or – I personally like to do everything my own way. So I would sort of customize – end up doing everything my own – because I discovered pretty quick that I like PowerPoint.

I think at first I felt I was very boring. I know I was. Because I didn't really know how to make it interesting. I would just sort of show them, you click here, and then you go here, and then you go here, and then you go here.

Claire (2002): *I was lucky that I had [X] that I was able to use as a mentor. I had absolutely no background. I went to some of her sessions and watched what she did, and learned from her, used her handouts, then co-teaching with her. So definitely she was my guide to start with. It was scary having to teach – I'm supposed to get up there and pretend I know what I'm doing? The first few times were – yeah, they were pretty alarming, I've got to say. In terms of my personality, I'm not real big on presentations. I'll do them, and I've got much better at them as time goes by.*

Laura (2005): *I was assigned a mentor, who's an excellent teacher. So I watched [her] a couple of times, she's just got a really great style. Very confident, and very present. And then other instructors that I watched. When I first started [my boss] recommended classes to sit in on, taught by other librarians, who she thought would be good to see. Just different personalities and different styles, different content. I started [teaching] within two months. The first class I taught was a lecture, one of the lectures in [subject A] that somebody else had written the script. And it was awful. Awful! My boss was there at the back of the room, and I was teaching these students, and I had such a dry mouth that I lost my voice, and my eyes were watering, and it was awful. My voice got shrill… and my boss was there. I think it was just me being*

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so nervous. And just too much pressure. And so then I taught a few times when [my boss] wasn't in the room and just got my sea-legs. And then I guess I started planning my own stuff in [subject B]. It was really when I started teaching classes that I had organized, so I felt ownership over the content, that I kind of picked it up.

One of the narratives in the profession is the increased support for teaching both locally and nationally through various programs, committees, and conferences (see for example, Rader, 1999; also Walter, 2006), a support that was not available in the past.

Claire (2002): *"My general sense is that [the institutional support] is there, that you get support if you need it. Generally, I feel like the infrastructure's in place."*

Clearly in some of the more recent stories the participants did receive more support. Yet the most recent story is not that different in outline from the oldest story, nor from Rob's story in the middle. The narrative of support does appear to have taken hold with these librarians. This can be seen in their expectations. The three librarians with the longest experience all said they did not expect or look for support when they started. Danielle and Rob, on the other hand, expressed outrage at the lack of support; they clearly hoped and looked for it.

How *students* experience the teaching of new librarians is not part of the library literature. We can catch a glimpse in the stories here. Michael (1988): "I'm not sure how much the students learned." Rob (2000): "It was just the biggest waste of time. There was nothing of value for [the students]." He also emphasizes the importance of teaching well: "I get one hour to connect. If don't deliver, I'll never see any of those students again."

7 Teaching as learning

Rob (2000): *You remember what went wrong. After classes I'll look at my lesson plans and I'll just rip stuff out. All that stuff that just totally flopped. You look at your timing. You think, oh, I really rushed this. I sounded like I really didn't know what I was talking about, why you would go to this website. Why* would *you go? Well, I thought, I didn't really explain that. I could hear myself talking, and go, you're rambling. You're not being coherent with that. So you need to be really aware, take that on board for what's not working. It's always ongoing. Because classes that went really well last week could just bomb. But it's really hard to have that level of self-awareness, as to what's not working and how you can change.*

Laura (2005): *As far as instructional techniques, you really have to be present and observant of your group. Seeing how engaged they are, and adjust your volume or your body language, add a joke or whatever. So speed it up or slow it down and have a dialogue with them, which is hard, often you'll ask a question and nobody will answer. Finding out what they need to know, putting yourself in their shoes. It's always hopefully getting better. And it will never stop changing. And sometimes, if I think this class has way too much going on, simplify, simplify, and then I miss something, I was too brutal. Sometimes you make a change and it doesn't work. But it*

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is always tinkering. There's what you know you should do, and then there's how much time you have. I feel like my classes aren't as good as they could be, but sometimes you don't have time to make it as good.

Danielle (2009): *I'm still really new at this. So it's always refining my presentations later. I've taken presentations that I thought were solid and realized maybe I didn't get this point across. When students do come up and meet me, then they start giving me more one-on-one feedback. So it's like, "Where exactly are the databases located on the library page again?" Oh, I took for granted that you would know where that is. I had students come up to me afterwards with everyone giving me almost the same question. I knew what to emphasize at a later presentation. Which wasn't passed down to me from anyone else. This has all been self-taught, learned on the job.*

Blackdog (1991): *I think, "Oh yeah, last year it was probably pretty good" and then I have a hard time not touching it and doing it again. So sometimes I'm working really late the night before. And I'm a little hazy on what I'm doing. But usually I'm pretty good at winging it. Sometimes it's [based on] my own feeling of, wow, I had a hard time getting this out in this way, how else could I present it that makes more sense to me. Or, oh, gee, I didn't realize they were missing this step before, I thought they kind of understood that, I have to introduce that somehow. So it's a combination of both what I felt and what I get from the students. Sometimes I have – when I'm really organized – I will have [my own] feedback form. And I will ask as much about the content as the way it came across. It's just free comments-based, basically. "What did you like? What didn't you like? What would you recommend? What else would you like to tell me about the session?" [I'm always trying to] make it better. I'm a perfectionist.*

This kind of personal grappling with the material is probably unavoidable for anyone who aspires to teach well. There has lately been an increased awareness in the profession of reflection as a tool for improving instruction (for example, Tompkins, 2009). This is not to say that courses and support do not make the process easier. As described here, it is a very solitary activity; ideally, it does not have to be that way.

Several of the participants describe colleagues who seem to avoid this grappling, who appear to have no self-critical awareness of their teaching: they read from scripts exactly as prepared by someone else; they use nothing but text-heavy PowerPoint slides, for hours; they remain oblivious to their students.

The narrative of teaching in the profession is generally one of accomplishment and success. Bad teaching – what it is and why it happens and what effect it has on students – has no place in the narrative. It may be that these librarians have no interest in teaching, let alone teaching well. Or it may be that they have no other model, that they are self-taught and working in isolation. There are real drawbacks to learning only on your own.

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8   Support from colleagues

Stress and anxiety around teaching are elements in several of the librarians' accounts. Support through collaboration and teamwork with colleagues is seen to have a positive effect on the experience. Rob (2000): "Good colleagues … made a huge difference." Danielle (2009): "I would seriously hope [in my next job] there'd be a peer support network."

Laura (2005): *It's very collaborative. [X] and I do most of the planning [for one area]. Theoretically it could be anybody who's involved in the planning, but I oversee it. Some classes I would have a partner to work with. Some classes were really a committee to plan. Even though I oversaw it, I'd pull in other people to go over things. The people I work with are fantastic. I have had a very positive experience.*

Such a collaborative environment is far from universal in this group however.

Blackdog (1991): *We don't really talk about our teaching, right? No different from faculty. I honestly, unless I ask someone point blank, or I happen to have been helping with a particularly large class, I have no idea exactly what someone else has been doing. We tried to get the equivalent of a journal club going, where people would choose an article related to instruction. Go and read it, then get together and talk about it. Well, we've done it once. And it's, here we are, side by side in our little offices, and we have so little interaction. Sad. But we're all tied to that screen. It's a sort of inertia.*

Rob (2000): *It's really not a good team environment here for working with other colleagues. People are very protective of what they do, they don't share information, and it's too bad. And I find that a real challenge, not having colleagues you can easily talk to. Because that helps with the teaching, if you can talk to people, and really get their feedback. Teamwork is a real skill that some people have a real problem with. It's one of the things I really notice here, that the librarians, there isn't that collegiality. That people know what they're doing is right. I think some people can really suck the life out of a classroom. And God, you've been doing this for 30 years. You're still doing exactly the same thing. And you're coming to me and saying, "Why are my class requests going down? Why is nobody asking me for a class?" Well, what do you say? I say, "You know, well, it could be that you don't have so many first year students. You know, maybe the requirements have changed." And if you say to a colleague who you already know isn't going to take it well, going to be really upset if you say, "Have you looked at the way you teach?" I'll quietly give – if I think people really are interested in feedback – and some people aren't. Feedback's hard.*

Michael (1988): *People are hesitant to be honest. Because if people are honest, we'll hurt each others' feelings. If one of my colleagues has actually been a rover in one of my classes, I'll say, "What do you think worked?" And I actually don't get much of a response. People tend to be very nice: "Oh, that was just great." Thank you, I wasn't actually looking for a pat on the head. Collegiality is hard, because it requires a*

certain level of trust between people. I wish that we actually could say to each other, "That really wasn't very good. That didn't work." And I'm much more willing to do that with somebody who is hierarchically beneath me - early in their career, reports to me directly - whereas somebody who has been around longer and is of comparable rank, I'm just much less willing to say anything.

Danielle (2009): [Of her two closest colleagues] *It's been a hard time connecting together, to network, in a teaching capacity. I go to them a lot more for other help, like collection development, cataloguing, and all that. There's not that support centre for presentations. I don't know what [the others] do, I don't know if it's just presentations, or if they do it on the catalogue – I don't know. I did have a base of what the librarian before me did, and it was a lot of presentations. My presentations this semester are definitely improved. It's always a building strategy, and there's no way then to pass that knowledge along.*

At issue here is not just how librarians experience learning to teach, it is *what we learn* about being an effective teacher. If we do not talk to one another, how can we help each other to improve our teaching? How can we "pass that knowledge along"?

One idea that has taken hold with several in the group is mentoring. Blackdog (1991): "I think there's a bigger role for mentoring." Da Vinci (1998): "Mentors are a good thing." Danielle (2009): "I would take [a new librarian] under my wing." There is a little doubt that a new librarian could benefit from this kind of support and attention, though the precise role of a mentor has not been fleshed out. Da Vinci: "Just to ask those little questions." But there are bigger questions too, and as shown above, we do not necessarily know how to talk about them. It may be the mentors would need instruction in this first. It may be we all need assistance.

Creating mentors does not address the needs of librarians in various stages of their careers who still want to learn more about teaching. Laura (2005) suggests a library instruction consultant with pedagogical and subject expertise, who could look at her teaching and make suggestions. My own belief is that teamwork and collaboration need to take on a much larger role. In the absence of such an expert, I suggest we need to try to figure it out together.

9 Continuing education

Or course, we do look, in varying degrees, for expertise outside the local setting.

Blackdog (1991): *I read, a fair bit. The library literature. But I also read in higher ed literature as well. The library literature has been how to create collaboration with faculty, that end of things, down to "Here's a really great assignment we gave in a [subject] class". I have a Google alert set up for "graduate students information literacy." Because people tend to put things up on websites they don't necessarily publish. So I get stuff that way. I've always tried to go to the two main instruction conferences, WILU and LOEX. Or it could be a workshop at the [faculty teaching centre], I go to lots of theirs. If anything comes up through an ACRL online course,*

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I've done those in the past. Or rebroadcasting a session from ALA. There is a budget for that kind of development. I've done one of the ACRL Immersion courses.

Claire (2002): *I did take an [online] course on the information professional as educator. [It took] six weeks. So that helped. Some [local workshops] have been good days and I've taken away a few things. And there's also been a few through the [faculty teaching centre]. They had a couple of sessions that were useful – learning objectives again, and just planning out your class.*

David (2004): *Some of those [local instruction] events were useful. I picked up [an exercise] about how to teach Boolean searching in an engaging way, a physical, active, humourous way. I've done that many times now and it was a great idea. I've never used [any other exercise I saw in a session] in a class, but in the back of my mind that's a useful thing I could do. I always think how can I fit them into a template I've already got. And sometimes that's the tricky thing.*

Laura (2005): *I go to the [local instruction] workshops and that sort of thing, but [they're] right before the holidays and by the time you come back you've forgotten [them]. I really enjoy them every time I go, but the application – I never get to it.*

Michael (1988): *Hey, I'm a librarian, I could find a book on the topic, couldn't I? Maybe not the best resource. I don't want to do some fly-by-night continuing ed thing. I guess there probably are things out there and I just haven't taken advantage of them. I get busy with all kinds of other things in life.*

Da Vinci (1998): *I don't do continuing ed. I guess the only thing I've done, I've taken Captivate, for creating video type tutorials.*

Danielle (2009): *I bring [teaching preparation] home with me a lot. I haven't had the time yet to take out a, maybe a resource guide for librarians, or book – not that I've found one yet. That might be useful. I've seen a few books for information literacy and how to connect to the students. But I quite frankly don't have the time. I would love to actually take an online course. I've looked for help. I've seen what resources are [at my institution] and it's geared towards faculty and T.A.s. They have a lot of training seminars over the summer for incoming T.A.s.*

Rob (2000): *There's a session arranged for the [faculty teaching centre] to work with librarians to work on their teaching skills. But I'm not going to go to it. This is a generic teaching workshop for any teaching faculty. And I don't believe that you can transpose a regular classroom teaching model on a librarian teaching model. I get one hour to connect. If I have a bad day in a regular classroom, I've got 14 other weeks in term that I can make up, that I can connect with these students. And that's a totally different ballpark than having only one hour. And any time that I've gone to any [faculty teaching centre] workshops, I haven't found them that good. That might be harsh. You know, it's great that [they're] going to do this and are reaching out, but they really need to come in and sit in one of our classes. And see what are we doing. What are our needs. Talk to us about what we see are the challenges. Talk to*

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us. What are the problems we face. You can't just put this generic model on and say, yay, we're reaching out to the librarians to teach them how to teach. I really don't believe that works.

The narrative in the profession is one of support for learning to teach through an array of professional development opportunities (again, see Rader, 1999). Blackdog perhaps exemplifies the librarian of this narrative. The narrative is not wrong, but it is incomplete. A number of participants in the group chose not to participate, for different reasons. Those who did participate, did not always apply what they learned – a common problem with one-shot workshops, as librarians, who frequently teach one-shots, can attest. Thus availability did not necessarily mean participation, not did participation necessarily mean application. The main barrier cited was time.

10 Where does the responsibility for learning to teach lie?

Michael (1988): *Well, I think if you're hired to do something, you're meant to do it. There is a presumption that you're already trained to do it. I don't want to baby professionals – there should be an expectation on the individual to figure it out. If you don't know, then do something about it. Which is not an unusual presumption in the academy. We presume the same thing of Ph.D. students, that they will be able to teach. And no recognition that there might be particular skills to teaching. [Though] I think that is changing. Even with faculty. People are recognizing this is a specific skill. But I don't want to put too much blame on management – I'll blame management in libraries for lots of things, but I think it's not unreasonable for management to say people should already know their jobs.*

Blackdog (1991): *I don't think I expected to have any more support. One of the things that sticks in my head is talking with a senior librarian just before I was hired. Her comment was, "As a professional you should know within six months of starting a new job what you don't know, and how you're going to find out." I didn't realize how much it's etched on my brain. [Professional development] is made available and it's up to you to take it or not. I think there's a bigger role for mentoring.*

Da Vinci (1998): *I was quite happy having [the teaching] become organically clear. Just I wonder whether, if there was some more support, I could do better. I think [responsibility] lies with the individual and, if anything, more with the employer. Mentors are a good thing.*

Rob (2000): *[When I started] it was just an expectation that you would know how to do it. I do think there is [a responsibility at library school]. It doesn't have to be for everyone, but if you're seriously interested in going into the academic stream, you need proper teacher training. And I don't know if you can build practicums... We can't have [library students] teach a class, obviously, because if they screw it up and we've only got one chance, that's it. But we can give a tremendous amount of modeling. And lesson plans. Mentoring I think is huge. We need more mentors.*

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Claire (2002): *Hey, if it's part of your job, you better learn how to do it. So I took the course, I did it on my own time, 'cos I felt if I needed to know this it was something I was going to have to do. But I certainly felt supported, the cost was covered and [my mentor] was always very approachable and available. But I felt that it was her responsibility to help me, 'cos I didn't know. Outside of the education for incoming librarians, we certainly need institutional support. My general sense is that it is there, that you get support if you need it. Generally I feel like the infrastructure's in place.*

David (2004): *There was support. It might be good to take a required course. If it were part of the work day to take the course, I would certainly take it. Because it would be a great help in the classroom.*

Laura (2005): *By accepting the job, I committed to doing it. And if I did feel unprepared, I sort of see it as, that's your own problem, right? 'Cos that's your job, to do it. But I think the institution has a responsibility to give you what you need. And I think [here], they do a lot. There's a lot available to us, but you sort of need to plan it yourself, or with your supervisor. I want to know theory, and I could know, but I just don't. That's my own fault, right? I could totally learn it and I probably have time, but there's always – when I have free time there's something else I could be doing.*

Danielle (2009): *I find the institution expects you to have those skills. Job ads are, "You must have these skills", not "You will need to learn these skills". And so where do you develop those skills? Your first job? I think we're supposed to miraculously know it. That's been my experience. And it may have been different with someone else. It may be the [area of the library] I'm in. Or because I'm contract. Maybe if I was there more long-term they would have invested – it's hard to say. But then again, I'm rather resourceful and my boss has make that clear, that's why he's like, "You're good, you figure it out, I don't have to walk you by the hand." Maybe it's their lack of preparation. If it's expected of us as librarians, it should be put in place as a system to help us. And it goes back to library school. Because it goes back down to our core. What are we as librarians? Where's our future? We're taking a stronger emphasis on teaching. That's not reflected in our curriculum.*

The narrative of individual responsibility for learning their job clearly has a strong grip on many of the individuals in the group, bound up with a sense of librarians as professionals and academics. This narrative is in tension with one in which there is an expectation of support for learning the job. The narrative of individual responsibility may at times be one of convenience. Danielle speculates that "Maybe it's *their* lack of preparation" (italics mine). It may be that individuals who had no support themselves do not know how to provide support.

To Albrecht and Baron (2002), library schools and employers both are giving librarians the impression that taking on more intense instruction duties requires little preparation or experience, leaving librarians to play catch up on their own (p. 91). In fact, teaching well requires lifelong learning in multiple sites and situations. Librarians need a broad infrastructure to support this learning, one that may include

formal training at library school, modeling and mentoring, support from colleagues, institutional support, continuing education, and self-study. ARCL (2003) has a list of best practices in programs of information literacy that can serve as a guide for support. Walter (2006) draws on the literature of instructional improvement in higher education to provide further ideas, particularly focusing on the role of library leaders.

The experiences of the participants in this study suggest that at present the infrastructure is still patchy. There is a real cost to the lack of adequate support for learning to teach in the profession. "Trying to figure it out" is a phrase (with variants) used by almost all the participants. I use it myself. It seems embedded in our identities as teachers. This may simply represent the ongoing learning process – I suspect librarians as teachers will always be trying to figure it out. But I sense it also captures an underlying attitude of uncertainty, maybe even insecurity, about teaching.

Teaching anxiety is a feature of several of the participants' stories. Davis's study of librarian teacher anxiety (2007) found that a majority (62%) of librarians felt nervous before teaching (p. 87). Fear of public speaking was the cause in 22% of cases - however 19% was simply from lack of training (p. 92).

The cost of inadequate support and preparation goes beyond the individual librarian teacher however. Their teaching is inevitably affected as well. And if their teaching is affected, so is the learning of their students. Turning the focus outwards to learners in this way can help us reframe the question of responsibility for learning to teach. The tension between individual and institutional responsibility is irrelevant to our students. The question then becomes how we, as individuals, as a group, as a profession can focus on improving our support for instruction, for learning to teach, in ways that will positively impact our students' learning.

11   Talking about teaching

The librarians in this study chose to participate because, for whatever reason, they wanted to talk about teaching and learning to teach. Opportunities for such talk in our day-to-day work lives are hard to find. We may be held back from talking about teaching by isolation or reticence or insecurity or lack of vocabulary. Yet discussion of teaching is a "distinguishing feature of a culture of teaching" (Walter, 2005, 368).

Narrative, the telling of stories, can give us a way to open the discussion, a way to share and reflect on our experience and knowledge and understanding, a way to improve our practice.

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[i] All participant names are pseudonyms, followed by the person's date of graduation from library school. Any identifying details have been omitted.

Eveline Houtman

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GILCHRIST, Alan (ed.) *Information science in transition*. **London: Facet Publishing. 2009.**
401 pages. ISBN 978 1 85604 693 0. Price £49.95 (£39.96 to CILIP members).

This book was previously published in 2008 as a special issue of the *Journal of Information Science (JIS)* to commemorate the founding of the UK Institute of Information Scientists (IIS) 50 years earlier.

In 2002 the Institute of Information Scientists (IIS) merged with the Library Association (LA) to create the Chartered Institute of Information Professionals (CILIP). Not everyone was happy about this. Sometimes the book reads as a lament for the passing of the IIS. In a guest editorial, Brian Vickery reflects: 'The IIS has now disappeared within CILIP and Jason [Farradane] would have been very dismayed at this development'.

Jack Meadows traces 50 years of UK research in information science. He introduces two main areas – information retrieval and information seeking (both covered in later chapters) – as well as the parallel growth of research into communication studies. He also discusses the funding of information science research, especially the role of the British Library Research and Development Department (BLRDD). He points out that "information science has matured to the stage where even the study of its history has become a legitimate topic for research".

Other chapters on research are by Tom Wilson and Elisabeth Davenport. Tom Wilson's contribution on the information user documents the growth of information behaviour as a subject of academic research. He notes a current disconnection between research and practice – formerly researchers were practitioners, today they are academics. Elisabeth Davenport explores the connections between two historical lines of research: social informatics in the United States and sociotechnical studies in the UK, and focuses on UK research at Manchester, Edinburgh and the London School of Economics.

David Bawden provides an overview of developments in information science and illuminates the philosophical basis of the subject from 1979, when *JIS* was first published. Discussing 'the information science discipline' and its foundations, he covers Farradane's ideas of information science as a science in its own right as well as Brookes' arguments for basing information science on Popper's World III of objective knowledge. He also writes on the relations between discipline and profession as well as education for information science.

While David Bawden approaches information science from the perspective of a scientist, Blaise Cronin looks at the influence of social scientific thinking on the development of the field's intellectual base. In a chapter entitled 'The sociological turn in information science', he touches on linguistics, analytical philosophy, critical theory, structuralism and social constructivism.

Steven Robertson describes the history of evaluation in information retrieval. He covers key experiments at Cranfield, followed by SMART and Medlars in the USA, and the current domination of TREC (the Text REtrieval Conference). In a fascinating aside, he considers the disputes between Cyril Cleverdon and Jason Farradane.

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The book includes subject approaches such as chemical documentation (Peter Willett) and health informatics (Peter Bath), as well as chapters on knowledge organisation (Stella Dextre Clarke), visual information retrieval (Peter Enser), information policies (Elizabeth Orna) and the role(s) of information professionals (Barry Mahon). There is also a personal contribution from Eugene Garfield: "How I learned to love the Brits", an account of his dealings with British information science. He notes that the name of the IIS stimulated a name change for the American Documentation Institute, which became the American Society for Information Science (ASIS).

Several contributors point to the significance of J D Bernal on the development of information science: Eugene Garfield on the key role he played at the 1948 Royal Society Scientific Information Conference; Tom Wilson on a paper he presented at this meeting – to determine what scientists read, why they read it and what use they made of the information (an example of early research on information use); and Elizabeth Orna on his vision of information policy.

Although the editor states that the book "does not purport to be a history of information science", many of the chapters are of great historical interest. The "transition" part of the title is more evident in contributions covering areas that did not exist when the IIS was founded: electronic scholarly publishing and open access (Charles Oppenheim), social software (Wendy Warr) and webometrics (Mike Thelwall).

The historical aspect of the book is particularly important because much archival material relating to the IIS was pulped when the Institute merged with the LA. Written by some of the most eminent figures in information science, the book makes for an intelligent and entertaining read.

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Open access and copyright

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PALMER, Martin. *Making the most of RFID in libraries*. London: Facet, 2009. 154 pages. ISBN 978-1-85604-634-3. Price £44.95.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is being adopted by libraries around the world at a very rapid rate. It is becoming seen as a tool to enable library managers to transform and modernize their services in a way that meets the needs of their 21st century customers – not just as a replacement for barcodes but allowing greater access, more staff time for assisting readers, freeing up space, better stock control, etc.

This would be a most useful book for anyone who is considering introducing RFID in their library. It is easy to read, with the key questions at the beginning of each chapter and a concise summary at the end. It is also very practical with checklists, sample tables for evaluation of systems, risk assessment and calculating savings and a list of RFID system suppliers at the end. It covers a wide range of issues including standards, privacy, health and safety, library design, building a business case, staffing efficiencies, project management and choosing a supplier. As a systems manager I was somewhat disappointed on the shortage of technical detail – there is just one paragraph on SIP which gives little idea of how it works – but no doubt this is generally left to the LMS and RFID suppliers to sort out. I would also have liked more about the use of RFID for shelf checking, as this could be one of the main benefits of retagging stock already fitted with electromagnetic tags.

The book is not really aimed at the research community but there are many areas that could usefully receive investigation. The author often mentions that this is a relatively new technology for libraries and there are various issues still to be resolved. Some of these are technical, such as how to tag audiovisual material, how to interface RFID systems with LMS systems (and ideally integrate them into one), standards covering what data to include on the tag. (ISO 28560 was agreed by having two mutually exclusive sections for the approach used by the UK and USA on one hand and north-European countries on the other!) Other issues are in the management area: how to make better use of floor space once the issue desk is no longer needed, how to sell the idea to staff who fear that their jobs are threatened. But perhaps the most interesting - and to me rather unexpected - area is allaying readers' fears about invasion of privacy. Apparently an American (allegedly "Christian") website has over sixty video clips devoted to demonstrating links between DFID and the devil, related to the 'mark of the beast' in the Book of Revelation. There has been markedly less concern in Europe, but as RFID tags become able to carry more data and perhaps readable over greater distances privacy needs to be kept under review.

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Open access and copyright

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Griffiths, Jillian R. & Craven, Jenny (eds.). *Access, Delivery, Performance: the Future of Libraries without Walls.* **London: Facet, 238 pages. ISBN: 978-1-85604-647-3. £44.95.**

This book is different from others in the Libraries Without Walls series in that it is a Festschrift. Just to pause for a moment, I always believe in being honest with readers of my reviews and I must confess that I had never heard of a festschrift. (What! He has never heard of a Festschrift?!) So just in case there is a rare reader of this review who, like me, has also never heard of a Festschrift, the Merriam-Webster's online dictionary states that it is from the German (I guessed that!) and it refers to a volume of writings by different authors presented as a tribute or memorial especially to a scholar. So, it is important to bear in mind that in a book of this nature the objective is to praise Caesar and not to bury him!

This Festschrift celebrates and commemorates the work and career of Professor Peter Brophy who retired in 2008 as the Director, Centre for Research in Library and Information Management (CRLIM), Department of Information and Communications at Manchester Metropolitan University. The book identifies and honours his contribution and acknowledges his distinguished career over more than 30 years in the field of libraries, information management and information science.

Allen F. MacDougall has written the introduction of the book and observes that, in the requirements to reflect on Peter Brophy's career and achievements there is the risk that it may unwittingly appear to be more like an obituary, or Gedenkschrift, rather than a Festschrift. Happily, he states, Peter retires from his post at the zenith of his career.

In chapter 2, Professor Emeritus, Michael Buckland of the University of California, Berkeley, writes what he describes as a memoir covering Peter's early career at the Library Research Unit at the University of Lancaster from 1967 to 1972.

Beyond the second chapter, the book is divided into the four key themes that have preoccupied Peter during his career and still remain of enormous importance for the future of the library profession and, indeed, libraries themselves. The themes are Libraries, Learning and Distance Learning; Widening Access to Information; Changing Directions of Information Delivery; and Performance, Quality and Leadership.

Under Theme one, Gill Needham and Nicky Whitsed reflect on 10 years since 1998 on change and challenge in the provision of library services to distance education students as seen from the experience of the Open University library. David Baker puts the 'e' into libraries and learning and reflects on study, pedagogy, content and services in the digital age.

Theme Two - Widening Access - begins with the view of library services for visually impaired people with a UK perspective from Jenny Craven. John Dolan explains how the career of Peter Brophy spans some of the most interesting decades in the history of public libraries, and, that, in Peter's early career, the emergence of new librarians wanting a library to be an active participant in community life met with a mixture of both enthusiasm and apprehension. The chapter goes on to examine how the library has evolved to meet the challenge as

well as planning its sustainable future. Juliet Eve continues the public library debate in dealing with social networking technologies in public libraries, but the chapter title is preceded with 'Sceptic 2.0?' She points out that one of the things public libraries do best is Baby Rhyme Time, Story Time to Under Fives, Book Groups, Bibliotherapy, etc., and she goes on to say that she attended an author reading event in a small library in West Sussex where a local author talked about her book, answer questions, sign copies and chatted amicably with the locals. Juliet Eve makes a point that this was a thoroughly and typically "library 1.0 experience". However, she says that it struck her that it was still a library doing what it does best and that is serving a local community; making best of the physical space; using all of the library resources (it being a multimedia event where the audience were helped to vote online for the author in a national competition after the reading event). Eve uses this to look at Web 2.0 from a library perspective and then contrast it with Library 2.0 and asking 'is it really something new?' and considering how libraries are currently using Web 2.0 technologies.

In Theme Three - Changing Directions of Information Delivery - begins with a lengthy chapter by Rowena Cullen and Brenda Chawner on Assess, Delivery and Performance in Institutional Repositories in Tertiary Institutions which considers the experience of some other countries including Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Richard J. Hartley looks at how Peter Brophy has, in his distinguished career as both practitioner and researcher, been concerned with the effective delivery of information resources to users and potential users and amusingly entitles the chapter Folksonomies to Ontologies: The changing nature of controlled vocabularies. He reminds the reader that Peter Brophy was the creator of the conference series 'Libraries Without Walls'. The chapter looks at both the declining role of controlled vocabularies and then there resurgence as a result of developments in technology, and most particularly in search engines.

Under Theme Four - Performance, Quality and Leadership - Charles R. McClure and John T. Snead discuss an evaluation decision-making system, being the development and implementation of a web-based evaluation learning and instructional tool. The authors observe that existing public library evaluation strategies may continue to be of use for many public libraries, but evaluation approaches that incorporate social networked and participatory techniques may be rapidly changing and evolving, dependent on a range of library factors such as staff skills and available information technology infrastructure, and situational factors and skills of individual users. Thus, they say, the public library community may find it useful to move from a static to a dynamic evaluation mentality and incorporate a range of Web 2.0 techniques into library evaluation.

Jillian R. Griffiths examines measuring the quality of academic library electronic services, but concludes that further work is needed to explore the meaning of perceived quality and the interpretation of user responses to this area of inquiry. She observes that fundamentally different understandings of information quality could otherwise lead to questionable conclusions being drawn by researches and service providers and that it is important to take into account measurements of impact.

Jennifer Rowley and Sue Roberts, in the final chapter of the book, consider influential leadership for academic libraries particularly within their changing context. They ask the question 'what is leadership?' and attempts to answer this most difficult of questions by examining the leadership diamond as well as new theories and politics and power. They conclude that the information landscape is changing beyond all recognition as a result of broader trends that require a change in thinking in terms of the role of libraries, and they draw attention to the additional challenge which is the sense of an unknown and fragmented future. They make the important point that academic library and information professionals must work and thrive within the context of a disruptive and uncertain future, but, that if sufficient attention is paid and energy given to leadership development for ourselves and for others, we have the potential to influence across boundaries and to 'create a more assertive vision of the way in which academic libraries will shape future learning environments'.

Each chapter ends with useful references and the book concludes with a selected bibliography of Peter Brophy's work. There is also a useful and comprehensive index. Whilst I have not commented on this earlier, I am sure that many of the names of authors and chapters in this book will require no introduction to members of the library community as they are, themselves, acknowledged leaders in their fields.

The book is sparse on illustrations - there are a few tables and one photograph of Alexis Dimyan at work with young families. I do think that if there was provision to include a single photograph, then that photograph really ought to have been of Peter Brophy - after all it is his Festschrift! The book is nicely laid out with plenty of white space and headings are clear and black, which is more than can be said for the general text. However, what I perceive as a greyish font may simply be a reflection of my aging eyesight and something that, in my younger days, I would not have even noticed. Or possibly it is a modern styling that has passed me by. However, Peter Brophy admirers will not be put off! The book has covered four themes of vital importance in today's library world within the context of a Festschrift to Peter Brophy and will be of interest to the wider library community not just Peter's friends, colleagues, and admirers.

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Open access and copyright

PEDLEY, Paul. *Copyright Compliance: Practical Steps to Stay Within the Law*.
London: Facet Publishing. 2008.
151 pages. ISBN-10 1856046400. £39.95

It is one thing to know the letter of the law, the challenge for any professional is to be able to interpret that on a daily basis. Copyright is one of the key legal areas that library and information professionals are faced with interpreting regularly, and this book aims to help information professionals and organisations understand the practical realties of copyright law.

Pedley's bona fides in the area are strong, with several well-regarded texts on the subject already in print. Therefore the reader can be assured that the author knows the topic very well indeed.

After the early introductory chapters the book is then divided into two logical sections; the first deals with the notion of what copyright infringement actually is in reality, while the second offers practical advice about staying within the law.

In the first section two chapters especially stood out for me; chapter four deals with the risk of copyright breach in an organisation, discussing risk management and the levels of risk that exist within organisations. Chapter five discusses a series of actual copyright cases, very well selected for their relevance to library and information work. I can envisage using several of them in teaching as perfect examples of some of the issues. Section one closes with good discussions on how copyright is actually enforced, and how disputes between parties are resolved.

Section two focuses on the practical; issues dealt with include the process of copyright clearance, and advice on how you can be sure any copying your organisation does is actually authorised. Other chapters deal with the copyright issues related to freedom of information legislation, and the section finishes with some very useful advice on how to develop an organisational copyright policy.

Overall this is an excellent book, making an ordinarily dense topic understandable and more importantly practical. It is a book that would be excellent recommended reading for any university course dealing with information law, but would be an equally useful book on the shelves of information professionals who have ever wondered exactly how they should be managing copyright compliance within their organisation. Highly recommended.

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