

THE LIBRARIAN IN THE ACADEMY:  
EXPLORING THE INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE  
OF LIBRARIANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By

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the requirements for the degree of

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of  
SCOTT LOUIS WALTER find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Chair

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

No project so very long in progress comes to conclusion without the assistance of many friends, colleagues, and teachers. I would like to express my appreciation, especially, to my advisor, Forrest Parkay, who has been a good colleague and an invaluable guide through this process. The other members of my committee, Gail Furman and Don Reed, have likewise been valuable colleagues and teachers since I first arrived at Washington State. Appreciation is also due to the many other members of the WSU faculty with whom I have worked over the years, especially Barbara Gupta, Willie Heggins, Todd Johnson, Judy Mitchell, Dawn Shinew, and Kelly Ward. Each of them helped to make WSU (and especially Cleveland Hall) a wonderful place for me to call home.

It is not uncommon to find recognition in these pages of reference librarians and others who helped an author to locate materials used in the completion of a dissertation. Since I came to WSU as a reference librarian, it is fair to say that I had a leg up in this area. Still, while few of my library colleagues provided me, for example, with the traditional assistance completing my literature review(s), they were invaluable sources of data for the research projects described in the pages that follow. Corey Johnson, Beth Lindsay, Lorena O'English, and others participated in one or more of these studies,

helped me to hone my interpretation of their significance, or collaborated with me to carry out the projects that grew out of what I learned through my research. Our professional relationship has continued since I left Pullman, and I look forward to working with each of them long into the future.

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THE LIBRARIAN IN THE ACADEMY:  
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Abstract

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This dissertation presents three studies around the theme of the role of the librarian as teacher in the higher education environment. The first study explores the development of “teacher identity” among academic librarians through a series of semi-structured interviews with information professionals committed to their work as teachers. Drawing both on the idea of teacher identity from the literature of teacher education and on existing studies of professional stereotypes and professional identity development among academic librarians, this study explores the degree to which academic librarians think of themselves as teachers, the ways in which teaching has become a feature of their professional identity, and the factors that may influence an academic librarian to adopt a “teacher identity” as part of his or her personal understanding of his or her role on campus. The second study explores the role that teaching librarians can play in supporting campus-wide diversity initiatives. It describes the development and delivery of an information needs assessment instrument directed at students affiliated with one of four “minority cultural centers” on a college campus and the opportunities identified through that assessment activity for substantive and sustainable collaborative

instructional programming between the academic library and the Office of Multicultural Student Services. The final study draws on the literature of “instructional improvement” and faculty development to explore the ways in which academic librarians pursue professional development in the area of teaching and learning. This study reports the results of a national survey of professional practices among academic librarians on their efforts to improve their work as teachers. Survey results suggest an active professional development interest among librarians in topics related to teaching and learning, as well as a number of lessons that can be drawn from the literature of higher education for library administrators committed to supporting that interest and to developing formal programs for the assessment of instructional performance among academic librarians. Together, the three essays provide a framework for future action by teaching librarians and by library administrators committed to supporting the professional development of librarians as teachers and to promoting the instructional role of the academic library.

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Kirsten, who never lost hope that I would finish it, and to my daughter, Wendy, who will finally know a father who isn't working on it.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

“When did you decide to stop being a teacher?” The question came to me during a job interview, and struck me as strange. At the time it was asked, I had just completed a one-hour presentation on the evolution of “open access” publishing and its potential impact on accepted models of scholarly communication. The presentation included clear statements regarding learning objectives, opportunities for active learning through discussion, and a brief assessment of what had been learned through a question-and-answer session at the end of the hour. My “students” that day were potential colleagues at a research library whose staff I was hoping to join. Their questions during the presentation had been thoughtful and the comments made as they exited the room complimentary. When did I decide to stop being a teacher? Hadn’t I just been teaching a few minutes ago?

Perhaps the question might have been re-stated: When did you decide to give up the idea of a full-time career among the teaching faculty in order to become a librarian? That would certainly be a reasonable question to ask during a job interview. My professional background includes experience as a K-12 teacher, as a student teaching supervisor, and as an adjunct faculty member in a variety of fields. Clearly, I had once considered a career in the classroom, and now I was a librarian. My answer was simple, though: “I didn’t. I’m a librarian, but I’m still a teacher. All that changed is the subject that I teach.”

Many librarians teach. In fact, if you define teaching in such a way as to include participation in staff training projects, lifelong learning programs, or faculty development

initiatives, most librarians teach. For an increasing number of us employed in colleges and universities, especially, it is a core professional responsibility (Albrecht & Baron 2002; Creth 1995; Lynch & Smith 2001; Task Force on Core Competencies 2004), and an area of our work that is rapidly expanding. As a representative example, librarians at Washington State University taught 411 classes during the 1994-95 academic year, and reached 5,951 students through those classes. By 2002-03, the number of classes taught had increased to 934 (+127%), while the number of students reached through those classes had grown to 13,548 (+128%) (University of Virginia 2003). A summary of the growth of the information literacy instruction program at Washington State University is presented in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Information Literacy Instruction at Washington State University**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Classes Taught</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>Students Taught</b>	<b>Δ</b>
1994-95	411	*	5,951	*
1995-96	355	-13.6%	6,232	+4.7%
1996-97	372	+4.8%	7,439	+19.4%
1997-98	516	+38.7%	9,396	+26.3%
1998-99	578	+12%	9,866	+5%
1999-2000	616	+6.6%	15,863	+60.8%
2000-01	684	+11%	11,364	-28.4%
2001-02	715	+4.5%	11,301	-6%
2002-03	934	+30.6%	13,548	+19.9%

Academic librarians teach (as do many of our counterparts in school, public, and special libraries); what we do not do is teach in the same settings as do the majority of our faculty colleagues.

Rather than teaching one or more credit-bearing classes in a given field each semester, most of us teach through a series of guest lectures, or through scheduled workshops on how to locate information or use a particular software application. We present as part of campus-wide faculty development programs, and we provide a seemingly unending series of one-on-one tutorials through our daily interactions with students, staff, faculty members, and members of the local community at the reference desk (and, increasingly, in the online environment). Information literacy instruction – i.e., instructional programs and materials aimed at helping library users to meet the challenge of accessing, retrieving, evaluating, and managing information from an ever-increasing variety of resources (Breivik, 1998; Breivik & Gee, 1989) – complements other campus-wide instructional initiatives, including General Education (Beck & Manuel 2003; Fenske & Clark 1995; Pastine & Katz 1989; Rockman 2002), first-year-experience programs (Boff & Johnson 2002; Walter 2004), critical thinking instruction (Bodi 1988; Gibson 1995), and Writing-Across-the Curriculum (Sheridan 1995; Elmborg 2003). And, with the rise of “Internet Studies” as a recognized interdisciplinary area of inquiry (Association of Internet Researchers n.d.; Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies 2004), librarians have begun to find that their professional expertise in information access, evaluation, and management, is increasingly well-suited even to traditional forms of college teaching (Burtle & Sugarman 2002).

Professional responsibility for classroom instruction of all kinds has significantly increased among academic librarians over the past decade, but, as Rader (1980), Budd (1982), and Elmborg (2002) have argued, the idea of the librarian as teacher infuses a variety of professional activities even outside the classroom. As one of the participants in the first study presented in this collection noted: “[even] when I’m not in a classroom, I’m always teaching.”

In the earliest days of the library profession, Melvil Dewey (1876) wrote that “the library is a school, and the librarian is in the highest sense a teacher” (6). 125 years later, the ever-increasing amount of information available to library users through print and electronic means and the articulation of well-defined information literacy skills that must be mastered by students and teachers at every academic level have truly made every academic library into a school (or, at the very least, a technologically advanced classroom and resource center). Jayne and Vander Meer (1997), Rader (1995, 1997), and Rapple (1997) have described how the rise of the Internet placed the librarian into an important and interdisciplinary teaching role on campus. Haynes (1996), Smalley (1998), Walter (2000), Raspa and Ward (2000), and Dewey (2001) have described how librarians can collaborate with classroom faculty across campus to integrate discrete information skills into existing coursework in almost any discipline. More recently, Fyffe and Walter (2005; in press) have moved beyond discussions of information skills instruction to show how the emergence of new models for scholarly communication can provide an instructional opportunity for librarians at the center of broader discussions of academic integrity, management of intellectual property, and the introduction of new faculty to their responsibilities as researchers in the electronic environment. If we accept that the



librarian is a teacher (or should be if he or she is to meet the professional challenges and responsibilities that he or she now faces), then it makes sense to explore the instructional role of the librarian in higher education using frameworks provided by broader discussions of teacher education and college teaching.

The essays contained in this collection represent an initial attempt to use the language of teacher education and college teaching in order to articulate questions about professional practices among academic librarians related to their role as teachers. Rather than focus on the role of the librarian in the classroom – about which there is already a rich literature of practice (Rader, 2000, 2002), and about which I have written in the past (Walter 2000) – the essays collected here examine the broader context within which that classroom instruction occurs. How do librarians little trained in pedagogy come to think of themselves as teachers (as opposed to focusing on more traditional professional roles such as information consultant or keeper of collections of information resources)? What venues outside the traditional “library visit” have librarians found fruitful for exploring their instructional work? How does the instructional work of librarians complement broader campus initiatives such as those aimed at supporting increased racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity among the student body? How do librarians faced with an increasing focus on their work as teachers improve their instructional performance? These are the questions that drive the studies that follow.

In the first study, “Librarians as Teachers: A Qualitative Inquiry into Professional Identity,” I explore the development of “teacher identity” among academic librarians through a series of semi-structured interviews with information professionals committed to their work as teachers. Although direct instruction of library users is an increasingly

important part of the work of many academic librarians, few are provided any instruction in how to teach as part of their professional education (Hogan 1980; Larson & Meltzer 1987; Mandernack 1990; Sullivan 1997; Westbrook 1999). As a result, few think of themselves as “teachers” as they adopt their initial professional identity, and many are surprised to find how much time they are expected to spend in the classrooms (physical and virtual) of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century library. Drawing both on the idea of teacher identity from the literature of teacher education (Beijaard, et al. 2000; Mitchell 1997; Swedenburg 2002; Travers 2001) and on existing studies of professional stereotypes (Church 2002; Hernon & Pastine 1977; Ivey 1994; Oberg, Schleiter, & Houten 1989; Wilson 1982) and professional identity development among academic librarians (Watson-Boone 1998), this study explores the degree to which academic librarians think of themselves as teachers, the ways in which teaching has become a feature of their professional identity, and the factors that may influence an academic librarian to adopt a “teacher identity” as part of his or her personal understanding of his or her role on the college campus.

In the second study, “Moving Beyond Collections: Academic Library Outreach to Multicultural Student Centers,” I explore the role that teaching librarians can play in supporting campus-wide diversity initiatives.<sup>1</sup> Building on Kuh’s (1996) idea of a “seamless learning environment,” I argue that there is a vast and largely unrecognized opportunity for academic librarians committed to their work as teachers to provide services directly to the many co-curricular educational programs found on today’s campus. While the librarian’s role in supporting campus-wide programs such as Learning Communities (Pedersen 2003), First-Year-Experience (Boff & Johnson 2002; Walter 2004), and Writing Across the Curriculum (Sheridan 1995; Elmborg 2003; Elmborg &

Hook 2005) has been well documented, there have been few studies of how librarians might build on existing relationships in order to provide instructional services to co-curricular activities such as residence hall education programs, educational programs sponsored by the Greek system, or academic support programs offered to non-traditional students, including first-generation students, adult and returning learners, or students representing racial and ethnic minority groups. This study focuses on the development and delivery of an information needs assessment instrument directed at students affiliated with one of four “minority cultural centers” (Young, Jr. 1991) on a college campus and the opportunities identified through that assessment activity for substantive and sustainable collaborative instructional programming between the academic library and the Office of Multicultural Student Services.

In the final study, “Improving Instruction: What Librarians Can Learn from the Study of College Teaching,” I draw on the literature of “instructional improvement” and faculty development to explore the ways in which academic librarians pursue professional development in the area of teaching and learning.<sup>2</sup> Based on the broader study of professional development programs for teaching faculty (Centra 1976; Erickson 1986; Kurfiss & Boice 1990; Paulsen & Feldman 1995), this study reports the results of a national survey of professional practices among academic librarians on their efforts to improve their work as teachers. Survey results suggest an active professional development interest among librarians in topics related to teaching and learning, as well as a number of lessons that can be drawn from the literature of higher education for library administrators committed to supporting that interest and to developing formal programs for the assessment of instructional performance among academic librarians.

The collection concludes with a discussion of future opportunities for research in the field and sets the current studies within the context of the recently updated “Research Agenda for Library Instruction and Information Literacy” (Research and Scholarship Committee 2005). A series of appendices follow that present the instruments used to collect qualitative and quantitative data from the participants in the individual studies, as well as representative examples of documents gathered from academic libraries across the country as part of the data collection for the final study in the collection.

### Format

This dissertation is presented in a portfolio format, i.e., it presents three related, but independent, studies around the common theme of the instructional role of librarians in higher education. The essays presented in Chapters Two, Three, and Four of this dissertation are in various stages of review, with the study of teacher identity among academic librarians (Chapter Two) currently undergoing the peer review process, the study of library services to multicultural students (Chapter Three) scheduled for publication later this year in *Reference Services Review* (Walter in press), and the study of instructional improvement in academic libraries (Chapter Four) having been published earlier this year as part of the *Proceedings of the Twelfth National Conference of the Association of College & Research Libraries* (Walter 2005b). While each is designed to stand independently, the result for the reader of the collected works is a certain degree of repetition that might not typically be found in a traditional dissertation. The reader is asked for his or her indulgence in this regard.

## Definition of Terms

The most important term used throughout this collection is “information literacy.” *Information literacy* is a term that has encompassed many meanings over the past 30 years (Behrens 1994) and, while debate still lingers over its appropriate use and exact meaning (Snaveley & Cooper 1997), it is most commonly understood to refer to an individual’s ability to “recognize when information is needed and . . . to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information (American Library Association 1989). While this generic definition has guided much of the instructional work of academic librarians over the past 15 years, a set of specific information skills and competencies was recently articulated by the Association of College & Research Libraries. According to these “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education,” an information literate individual is someone who can:

- determine the extent of the information needed (to meet a specific need);
- access the needed information effectively and efficiently;
- evaluate information and its sources critically;
- incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base;
- use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; and
- understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally (ACRL 2000).

Information literacy may also be referred to in the literature as “information skills instruction” (especially in the K-12 context) (Eisenberg & Berkowitz 1990; Research Committee 2001), “information and technology literacy” (ITL), “information and

communications technology literacy” (ICT) (ETS n.d.), or as “fluency with information technology” (FIT) (Committee on Information Technology Literacy 1999). Each term includes some distinctive elements, but all converge around the generic definition of information literacy provided above.

In addition to information literacy, the following terms will be used throughout this collection.

*Academic library* refers to “a library that is an integral part of a college, university, or other institution of post-secondary education, administered to meet the information and research needs of its students, faculty, and staff” (Reitz 2004). One of the most important professional associations of academic libraries in the United States is the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Another is the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL).

*Information literacy instruction* refers to any formal instructional program housed in an academic library designed to foster the development of skills related to the identification, acquisition, evaluation, use, and management of information to meet a specific need. Information literacy instruction may be delivered directly to students by an academic librarian, or may be designed in collaboration with a member of the classroom faculty for delivery as part of the latter’s teaching. Information literacy instruction may also be referred to in the literature as “bibliographic instruction,” “library instruction,” or “user education” (Hinchliffe & Woodard 2001).

*Instructional improvement* refers to continuing education and professional development activities focused on enhancing one’s performance in the classroom or in other instructional venues (e.g., designing instruction for delivery over the World Wide

Web). Common instructional improvement activities include “classroom visits by professional staff, the use of video to analyze teaching styles and techniques, the development of teaching portfolios, and the use of peer review and mentoring” (Lewis 1996, 26). Instructional improvement is often referred to in the literature of college teaching as an aspect of “faculty development.”

*Professional development* refers to any activity pursued by an individual to enhance his or her professional skills, including independent reading, attendance at workshops, seminars, or other formal instructional programs, or discussion with colleagues about issues of concern to the profession.

*Public services librarian* refers to any professional librarian whose primary responsibilities lie in the area of “public services,” i.e., “[activities] and operations of a library that bring the staff into regular direct contact with its users, including circulation, reference, online services, bibliographic instruction, serials assistance, government documents, and interlibrary loan/document delivery” (Reitz 2004). Public services librarians whose work is focused on the design and delivery of instructional services are referred to as “instruction librarians.”

## Notes

1. Walter, S. (in press). Moving beyond collections: Academic library outreach to multicultural student centers. *Reference Services Review*, 33 (4).
2. Walter, S. (2005b). Improving instruction: What librarians can learn from the study of college teaching. In H. A. Thompson (ed.), *Currents and convergence: Navigating the rivers of change: Proceedings of the twelfth national conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries, April 7 – 10, 2005, Minneapolis, Minnesota* (pp. 363-379). Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LIBRARIANS AS TEACHERS: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

#### Introduction

“When did you decide to stop being a teacher?” The question came to me during a job interview, and struck me as strange. At the time it was asked, I had just completed a one-hour presentation on the evolution of “open access” publishing and its potential impact on accepted models of scholarly communication.<sup>1</sup> The presentation included clear statements regarding learning objectives, opportunities for active learning through discussion, and a brief assessment of what had been learned through a question-and-answer session at the end of the hour. My “students” that day were potential colleagues at a research library whose staff I was hoping to join. Their questions during the presentation had been thoughtful and the comments made as they exited the room complimentary. When did I decide to stop being a teacher? Hadn’t I just been teaching a few minutes ago?

What makes a teacher? Does holding an appropriate teaching credential make someone a teacher, or does professional identity as a teacher grow out of a regular responsibility for teaching? Does saying that one is a teacher refer to one’s mastery of an identifiable set of pedagogical skills, or, rather, to the way in which one approaches one’s work (in a classroom or outside of one)? These questions are of obvious interest to pre-service teachers and teacher educators and have been the subject of a number of studies of “teacher identity” over the past 15 years. What is their significance for librarians? How

might answering them for myself help me to respond to that question should I ever hear it again?

Librarianship is a profession in transition, and this is especially true in the case of academic librarians (Budd 2005; Creth 1995; Kaarst-Brown, et al. 2004; Lynch & Smith 2001; Watson-Boone 1998). Changes in scholarly communication, advances in information technology, and new models for professional staffing of academic libraries all present challenges to academic librarians and to the administrators who work to integrate library services into the broader mission(s) of the college or university. As important as any of these issues is the fact that academic librarians are increasingly responsible for a variety of activities directly related to teaching and learning, and that the scope of those responsibilities has expanded in recent years to encompass instruction delivered in the library, across the campus, and in online learning environments (Arp & Woodard 2002; Kassowitz-Scheer & Pasqualoni 2002; Rockman, et al. 2004).

Academic librarians have been responsible for direct instruction of students for well over a century (Hopkins 1982; Salony 1995; Tucker 1980), but changes to the academic curriculum, the demographics of the college student body, and the place of information technology (especially the World Wide Web) in higher education have all contributed to an increasing focus on the role of the librarian as teacher over the past 30 years (Baker & Litzinger 1992; Farber 1999; Rader 1995, 1997; Stoffle, Guskin, & Boisse 1984). Analyses of the professional responsibilities enumerated as part of advertisements for academic library positions posted in leading outlets such as *American Libraries*, *College & Research Libraries News*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* during this time have shown that a commitment to providing direct instruction to faculty,

staff, or students is an increasingly common requirement for appointment (Albrecht & Baron 2002; Lynch & Smith 2001; Patterson & Howell 1990). At least one study has suggested that the ability to demonstrate skill as a teacher can improve one's chances of obtaining a position in an increasingly competitive professional market (Avery & Ketchner 1996), and others have shown that there is a strong interest among many libraries in the formal evaluation of instruction provided by librarians (Adams 1989; Bober, et al. 1995; DeFranco & Bleiler 2003; Knight 2002; Nolan 1991; Walter 2005b). Even work outside of the classroom – e.g., service on the reference desk, participation in scholarly communications initiatives – has increasingly been cast within the context of the librarian's role as teacher (Elmborg 2002; Fyffe & Walter in press). Teaching skills are clearly recognized as important to the professional work of academic librarians, but to what degree do academic librarians think of themselves as teachers when they consider their place on campus, and to what degree is “teacher identity” a recognized aspect of the broader professional identity of academic librarians? In a nutshell, did I stop being a teacher when I decided to become a librarian? Or, am I somehow less a librarian because I think of myself as a teacher?

Drawing on the literature of professional education and professional identity among academic librarians as well as the literature of teacher education, this study will explore the ways in which academic librarians are introduced to teaching as part of their professional work, the degree to which academic librarians think of themselves as teachers, the ways in which being a teacher has become a significant feature of their professional identity, and the factors that may influence an academic librarian to adopt a “teacher identity” as part of his or her understanding of his or her role on campus.

## Methodology

Considerable research has been conducted over the past 30 years on the education of instruction librarians and the ways in which librarians with a responsibility for teaching go about improving their pedagogical skills. For the most part, these studies made use of quantitative research methods, especially the survey method so popular among many fields of social science research. Mandernack (1990), for example, surveyed librarians in Wisconsin to determine the scope of their instructional responsibilities, the ways in which they had been prepared to meet those responsibilities, and their preferences in terms of continuing education opportunities in the field of instruction. Patterson and Howell (1990) reported the results of a national survey of instruction librarians that gathered information on professional responsibilities, previous teaching experience, and job satisfaction. Albrecht and Baron (2002), Larson and Meltzer (1987), and Sullivan (1997) are among several who have surveyed professional education programs to determine the availability of formal coursework on instruction for pre-service librarians. Shonrock and Mulder (1993) used a national survey to identify core competencies for instruction librarians, as well as to identify the ways in which librarians preferred to pursue continuing education to meet those competencies. Finally, Albrecht and Baron (2002) and Lindsay and Baron (2002) used electronic discussion lists to survey instruction librarians on issues such as how pre-service and continuing professional education opportunities helped prepare them for different aspects of their instructional work, the percentage of their professional time now dedicated to that work, and the challenges facing instruction librarians in the contemporary library environment. Rather than draw on that tradition, however, this study will follow the example set by

earlier research on professional identity among teachers (Britzman 1991; Carter & Doyle 1996; Goodson 1992; Swedenburg 2002; Travers 2001) and librarians (Watson-Boone 1998) and rely on qualitative research methods.

Qualitative research methods – e.g., case study (Merriam 1998), interviewing (Seidman 1998; Weiss 1994), focus group analysis (Connaway 1996; Krueger 1994), ethnography (Wolcott 2001), and content analysis (Love 2003) – are a relatively recent addition to the library literature (Bradley & Sutton 1993; Glazier & Powell 1992), but they have quickly become popular among scholars and practitioners in library and information science (Glazier & Powell 1992; Mellon 1990; Westbrook 1997). Because qualitative inquiry is well suited to elicit a range of responses on topics related to personal perceptions, personal motivation, and cultural and contextual factors that may influence library use, a number of studies have been completed over the past 15 years that apply one or more of these methods to questions related to, for example, the use of electronic resources (Brennan, et al. 2002), information-seeking behavior among scholars (Duff & Johnson 2002; Ellis 1993), user satisfaction with library services (Cook & Heath 2001), and assessment of library services (Mendelsohn 1997). Administrative decision-making, too (Sandler 1992), has benefited from the increased availability of qualitative data regarding, for example, perceptions of service quality (Cook & Heath 2001), and usability of institutional Web sites (Campbell 2001). Finally, qualitative inquiry has proven useful for the study of instructional services in academic libraries, with Bruce (1997), Manuel, Beck, and Molloy (in press), and Seamans (2002) all employing qualitative methods to explore perceptions of information literacy and attitudes toward information literacy instruction among college students and faculty. Qualitative research

methods are defined by a number of features that are often contrasted with those defining quantitative approaches such as survey research, but the most significant for this study are their focus on descriptive data and emergent research design (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh 2002).

Unlike earlier studies of the education of instruction librarians, this study will not rely on data collected from a randomly selected group of practitioners using a carefully prepared instrument. Qualitative inquiry “deals with data that are in the form of words, rather than numbers and statistics” (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh 2002, 425), and on developing an interpretation of that data that explores the meaning for participants of the experiences under study (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Rather than focusing on quantifiable data such as the number of professional education programs for librarians that provide access to formal coursework in the field of teaching and learning (Larson & Meltzer 1987; Sullivan 1997; Westbrook 1999), or prevailing opinion regarding the most important professional skills for teaching librarians (Shonrock & Mulder 1993), this study will focus on the lived experience of practicing librarians in order to explore their work as teachers. Equally exploratory is the research design, which, consistent with good practice in qualitative inquiry, emerged from the experience of the interviewing process and was shaped in large part by that process. Like many qualitative research studies, the pool of participants for the current study was small ( $n=6$ ) when compared with those brought together for quantitative analysis. But, while the limited sample size may mean that any conclusions drawn from this study will be preliminary in nature, even initial conclusions may suggest a new area of inquiry for those who are interested in promoting

the instructional role of the academic librarian as part of ongoing discussions about the future of the profession.

### Review of the Literature

Because qualitative research is almost always exploratory in nature, it is not uncommon to find that the context for a given study within the literature may be ill defined (Cresswell 2003). A number of studies relevant to the education of instruction librarians have already been noted above, but these are of limited importance to a study of professional identity among instruction librarians (for reasons that will be discussed below). More important are the studies drawn from the literature of teacher education that provide an interpretive framework that suggests a broader set of questions relevant to the work of librarians as teachers. Among teacher educators, this framework is referred to as “learning to teach” (Carter & Doyle 1996; Travers 2001).

### *Teacher Identity and Learning to Teach*

“There is a distinction,” Britzman (1991) wrote in her seminal ethnographic study of student teachers, “between learning to teach and becoming a teacher” (120). Discussions of learning to teach often focus on mastery of pedagogical skills, instructional design, classroom management, and strategies for the assessment of student learning. While each of these is important, it is equally important to consider how one makes a commitment to one’s professional identity as a teacher. Professional skills and professional identity, Britzman (1991) argues, are complementary aspects of an holistic approach to teacher education. While each aspect is critical to the development of the student teacher as professional, the focus in teacher education programs has historically

been on the development of competencies and skills, and limited attention has been paid to issues of professional identity development (Britzman 1991; Bullough & Gitlin 2001).

Over the past 15 years, a number of studies have challenged this traditional model of teacher education by exploring the ways in which students are socialized into their professional identity as teachers (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt 2000; Britzman 1991; Bullough & Gitlin 2001; Bullough, et al. 1991; Carter & Doyle 1996; Knowles 1992; Travers 2001). Many of these studies explore the need to focus overt attention on the articulation and development of professional identity as part of pre-service teacher education, but others (Mitchell 1997; Swedenburg 2002) suggest the importance of continued attention to professional identity development among experienced practitioners. Common to all of these studies is an appreciation of how important it is to foster the emergence, development, and promotion of “teacher identity” as an integral part of pre-service and continuing professional education for teachers.

Teacher identity may be defined as “the way in which individuals think about themselves as teachers” (Knowles 1992, 99). How one thinks of one’s self as a teacher can affect everything from successful induction into the profession to effectiveness in the classroom to the ability to cope with change and to implement new practices in one’s instructional work (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt 2000; Mitchell 1997; Swedenburg 2002). Renewing one’s commitment to one’s teacher identity (or embracing a new one) can be critical to ongoing growth as a professional (Swedenburg 2002). With this in mind, teacher educators have suggested that direct attention to the development of professional identity is critical to the success of both pre-service professional education



programs for student teachers (Travers 2001) and in-service and continuing education opportunities for active practitioners (Swedenburg 2002).

As important as the definition of teacher identity as a subject both of scholarly inquiry and of practice in teacher education classrooms is the exploration of the factors outside of formal educational opportunities that shape the development of one's professional identity as a teacher. Lortie (1975) referred to early exposure to various models of teacher identity as an "apprenticeship of observation" (61). Quite simply, children, adolescents, and young adults (both in high school and in college) have more exposure to the profession of teaching through their experience as students than they do to any other single profession, i.e., they learn what (they believe) it means to be a teacher through direct observation of professionals at work. Knowles (1992) expands on this idea to conclude that there are three primary influences on a pre-service teacher's image of himself or herself as a professional: (1) experiences with teachers from childhood and adolescence; (2) previous professional role models; and (3) prior teaching experience. Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2000), Swedenburg (2002), and Travers (2001) add additional contextual factors to the biographical influences identified by Knowles (1992), including the community of peers with whom one interacts on a regular basis and the disciplinary community that one joins as a teacher, for example, of chemistry, history, or mathematics. Exposure to standard bodies of knowledge, statements of professional ethics, and the organizational structure of schooling in America are all important aspects of professional education for teachers, these authors argue, but equally important are the life experiences through which one comes to know what it means to be a teacher.

### *Librarians Learning to Teach*

Librarians, like teachers, are introduced to a well-defined body of professional knowledge and skills as part of their pre-service education (American Library Association 2005d). Typically, this might include an introduction to print and electronic reference sources, cataloging and classification systems, basic strategies for information retrieval, and management of library services. This outline is incomplete as there is no national standard for required coursework in the field of library and information science (LIS) education. Moreover, recent years have seen emergent topics such as information architecture, human-computer interaction, and digital content development replace traditional courses in indexing or cataloging as part of the pre-service librarian's program of study. But, while librarians (especially academic librarians) find themselves increasingly called upon to act (and to think of themselves) as teachers, few are provided with any training in how to teach as part of their professional education.

This lacuna in LIS education has been repeatedly noted in a series of studies conducted over the past 25 years (Brundin 1985; Hogan 1980; Larson & Meltzer 1987; Mandernack 1990; Meulemans & Brown 2001; Sullivan 1997; Westbrook 1999) and, were it the goal of the present study to corroborate those findings, we would doubtless find that the place of teacher training as part of the professional education for pre-service librarians remains marginal. But, is the question of the availability of coursework in the field of instruction still the one most worthy of study, or does the framework for inquiry suggested by research on "learning to teach" provide us with a new set of questions about the ways in which academic librarians are (or are not) prepared for their work as teachers?

What do we know about the scope and content of the information literacy and instruction courses currently offered in LIS programs? As importantly, given what the studies cited above tell us about the limited availability of such courses, what do we know about the life experiences through which the vast majority of academic librarians have been introduced to their role as teachers? To provide a foundation for exploring these questions, we must first review what is already known about librarians learning to teach.

Research into the professional education offered to librarians who find themselves required to teach as a regular part of their work has been largely concerned with three questions:

- To what degree is academic coursework focused on instruction available to pre-service librarians as part of their professional education?
- In the absence of such coursework, what other avenues have librarians pursued in order to become proficient in their instructional responsibilities?
- What are the core competencies that should be mastered by a librarian interested in being an effective teacher?

A comprehensive review of this literature is impossible in an essay of this length, but those interested in complementary reviews may consult Lindsay and Baron (2002), Meulemans and Brown (2001), and Walter (2005b).

Regarding the availability of formal coursework on instruction, Hogan (1980), Brundin (1985), Larson and Meltzer (1987), and Lindsay and Baron (2002) provide overviews of studies conducted since the 1970s that demonstrate the lack of well-

articulated programs for providing professional education for instruction librarians through LIS programs. While studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s (Dyer 1978; Galloway 1976; Hogan 1980; Larson & Meltzer 1987; Mandernack 1990; Pastine & Siebert 1980) demonstrated an almost complete absence of formal coursework on instruction in LIS programs, more recent studies (Albrecht & Baron 2002; Sullivan 1997; Westbrook 1999) demonstrate increasing availability of courses for pre-service librarians with an interest in teaching. By the late 1990s, over 50% of accredited LIS programs listed a separate course on instruction as an available elective, and others included an introduction to instructional issues as part of a more broadly focused course (Albrecht & Baron 2002; Westbrook 1999). Thus, while still not as widely available as some advocates might wish, formal coursework on instruction is increasingly part of the curriculum offered to pre-service librarians (albeit often only as an irregularly scheduled elective course, or as a course required only of certain students, e.g., those preparing for a career in school libraries).

Given the inconsistent availability of formal coursework on instruction in LIS programs over the past 30 years, other studies have explored the options that interested practitioners have pursued in the area of continuing education. Hogan (1980) first noted the range of continuing education opportunities available to instruction librarians provided through professional associations such as the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL). Also significant was the emerging network of locally developed opportunities such as workshops and conference programs organized by academic libraries and regional library groups. Carson (1988) and Clark and Jones (1986) further articulated the numerous approaches to

continuing education and “on-the-job training” pursued by instruction librarians who had not been exposed to issues related to teaching and learning as part of their professional education. Mandernack (1990) reported that independent study and participation in workshops and professional conferences were the most common approaches used by Wisconsin librarians with a responsibility for instruction to learn more about this field. Patterson and Howell (1990) reported similar results after a national survey that found that consultation with faculty colleagues, attendance at workshops and professional conferences and independent study were the favored means of continuing education. Finally, Shonrock and Mulder (1993) found that on-the-job training, independent study, and formal education outside the field of library and information science were the primary means by which instruction librarians across the country gained mastery over a wide variety of professional competencies related to teaching and learning and to managing instructional service programs in libraries. Continuing education remains a critical resource for librarians learning to teach (Education Committee n.d.), and experience with seminars, workshops, and conference programs has been brought to the local level through increasingly sophisticated models for in-house orientation and professional development programs for teaching librarians (Walter 2005b; Walter & Hinchliffe 2005).

An array of pre-service and continuing professional education opportunities are available for librarians interested in becoming better teachers, but what are the topics on which such opportunities focus? This is the least well defined area in the library literature, but initial conclusions may be drawn from a review of existing studies of instructional materials and core competencies.

Shonrock and Mulder (1993) identified 84 discrete competencies in areas including instructional design, pedagogy, assessment of student learning, oral and written communication, and program management. The 25 most important competencies enumerated in this study (as identified by survey respondents) are presented in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Core Competencies for Instruction Librarians**

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Perceived Importance (as rated on a scale of 1-5, where “1” equals “of no importance,” and “5” equals “essential”)</b>
Ability to organize and structure ideas logically	4.62
Ability to deliver lectures, vary pace and tone, use eye contact, use appropriate gestures, etc.	4.47
Ability to give clear, logical instructions	4.47
Ability to determine a reasonable amount and level of information to be presented in a lesson plan	4.38
Ability to verbalize search strategy	4.31
Understanding of student assignments and the role of the library in completing those assignments	4.3
Ability to develop a search strategy	4.27

Ability to sequence information in a lesson plan	4.21
Ability to set priorities during planning	4.2
Ability to understand campus curricular needs as part of the planning process	4.19
Ability to stimulate discussion and questions	4.13
Ability to match instructional method to a given academic level	4.11
Ability to distinguish different levels of bibliographic instruction	4.11
Understanding of faculty priorities and value systems in order to promote a bibliographic instruction program	4.11
Understanding of the structure of information within various disciplines and the categories of tools necessary to use the information	4.1
Ability to relate aims of the institution to bibliographic instruction and BI to other library services	4.09
Ability to be persistent and persuasive in “selling” bibliographic instruction to	4.09

administration and faculty	
Ability to explain abstractions by devising analogies, metaphors, etc.	4.08
Ability to find the best paths of communication within the institution and use them to promote bibliographic instruction	4.07
Ability to seek feedback regularly from the librarians offering instruction as part of the evaluation process	4.07
Ability to inspire the confidence and respect of the library director and other supervisors	4.06
Ability to construct assignments which reinforce learning in a lesson plan	4.04
Ability to design the curriculum for the goal	4.01
Ability to identify discrete library skills of relevance to student assignments	4.01
Ability to match instructional method to a given objective	4.0

The majority of these competencies relate to principles of instructional design, pedagogical skills, and basic instruction in information retrieval. Some, however, identify



skills needed for the management of instructional services programs in libraries. Finally, a small number point to the need for an awareness of the broader organizational culture of higher education.

The educational categories suggested Shonrock and Mulder (1993) are reinforced by Larson and Meltzer (1987), who reviewed syllabi from instruction-related courses in LIS programs and reported that the most common topics of study included the history of instructional services in libraries, fundamentals of teaching method, design of instructional materials, and techniques for assessment of student learning. While their data is now 20 years old, a brief review by the author of the course materials currently available online (Education Committee 2005) retrieved similar results. Mandernack (1990), likewise, reported that respondents to his survey of continuing education needs were most interested in topics related to program management, teaching methods, instructional design, and learning theory. Finally, Kilcullen (1998) identified learning theory, instructional design, pedagogical skills, and an understanding of faculty culture as the broad categories of knowledge of greatest importance to instruction librarians in academic libraries. Each of these studies suggests a focus on practical skills that can be applied in the classroom, and each of the areas identified as important for instruction librarians to master is well represented both in the in-house training programs that have remained popular in academic libraries, e.g., at the University of Michigan (University Library, University of Michigan 2002), the University of Texas (General Libraries 2003), and Washington State University (Washington State University Libraries 2005b), and in the “teacher track” of the leading continuing education program for instruction librarians, the ACRL “Immersion” program (Association of College & Research Libraries 2005a).

The education of instruction librarians, thus, has been defined in many ways like the traditional model of teacher education criticized as less than complete by scholars such as Britzman (1991) and Bullough and Gitlin (2001). While librarians were continuing to design research studies aimed at answering very basic questions about the composition and availability of teacher training for librarians, teacher educators were breaking new ground by exploring the importance of teacher identity for those who will be expected to make regular use of those instructional design, pedagogical, and assessment skills introduced as part of teacher training. The final facet of the literature of significance to this study sheds light on professional identity development among librarians and public perceptions of the profession.

### *Professional Identity and the Librarian*

Few professions are as sensitive to issues of professional identity and public perception as that of librarianship (Abbott 1998; Arant & Benefiel 2002). This concern may be warranted, as Wilson (1982) identified a negative stereotype of the librarian found throughout twentieth-century American culture, i.e., someone who is (among other things) introspective, socially conservative, concerned with adherence to rules and regulations, orderly, and submissive to authority (9). During the climax of the film, *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), the horror expressed by George Bailey when told by his guardian angel that his wife had been doomed to life as a spinster librarian by his wish that he had never been born is palpable. As Leigh and Sewny (1960) wrote almost half a century ago, librarians want to be recognized as part of an intellectual profession, but feel that public perception relegates them more often to the role of clerks. Mary Bailey appeared to be a public librarian; the situation for academic librarians is even more complicated.

Martin (1995) referred to librarianship as an “accidental profession,” i.e., a field that one pursued “while detouring from some other planned career” (198). Shifflett (1981) and Atkins (1991) have noted that this perception is particularly problematic for academic librarians, who are surrounded by colleagues following the dominant campus profession of member of the teaching faculty. Atkins (1991) concluded that academic librarians lack a distinct professional identity in that environment, and Wilson (1979) argued that any attempt by academic librarians to define themselves as teachers was doomed to failure owing to the gulf between the professional responsibilities of academic librarians and those of members of the teaching faculty. Creth (1995) and Abbott (1998) have identified changes in the technological environment as helping to drive change in the professional role of librarians, and, more broadly, Watson-Boone (1998) demonstrated how an environment of rapid change within academic libraries, as a whole, contributes to the evolution of new (and sometimes contradictory) professional identities. Finally, White (2003) argued that academic librarians will need to make an informed choice about which identity to embrace if they are to remain relevant within the equally volatile environment of higher education writ large.

Research on professional identity among librarians, i.e., the way that librarians perceive their own work, is actually rather limited (Watson-Boone 1995). A far richer literature revolves around studies like Wilson (1982) of stereotypes and the ways in which others perceive the librarian’s work. Church (2002) provides an historical overview of popular stereotypes about librarians, as well as of related studies of the place of academic librarians in campus culture. More specific studies include Tannebaum (1963), who examined the depiction of librarians in novels set in colleges and

universities, O'Brien and Raish (1993), who examined the depiction of librarians on film, and Highsmith (2002) and Yontz (2002), who examined the depiction of librarians, respectively, in comic books and children's literature. Church (2002) also includes the question of faculty rank and status for academic librarians as part of his discussion, but space will not allow a consideration of that extensive (and complex) literature here. Interested readers will find an effective synthesis of the literature on professionalism and faculty status for academic librarians in Jackson (2000), and a recent overview of issues related specifically to faculty status in Hoggan (2003).

In addition to studies of professional identity and of popular stereotypes of the profession, there have been a small number of studies exploring the perceptions of college students and faculty of their librarian colleagues. Nitecki (1993) examined letters and opinion pieces published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to identify the predominant metaphors used by faculty members, librarians, and administrators to describe libraries. Hernon and Pastine (1977) explored student perceptions of the librarian's role on campus and found that, in general, students have a very limited understanding of the full range of professional responsibilities held by academic librarians and, further, that they do not perceive librarians to be an integral part of the instructional process. Few students understood the educational background of academic librarians, and many perceived the roles of librarians, support staff, and even student assistants as equivalent. Fagan (2002) reported largely similar findings when she updated the Hernon and Pastine survey more than 25 years after the original study. Oberg, Schleiter, and Van Houten (1989) found that many faculty share their students' inability to consistently distinguish between librarians and support staff as well as a similarly

truncated vision of the scope of librarian work. Interestingly for the present study, they also found that relatively few faculty members were aware of the range of instructional responsibilities held by many academic librarians, and that many did not consider teaching to be a significant responsibility for librarians when compared with other responsibilities that they associated with the profession. Similar results were reported in studies of faculty perceptions of librarians by Divay, Ducas, and Michaud-Oystryk (1987), and Ivey (1994). As each of these studies concludes, a lack of understanding across campus of the academic librarian's professional role and responsibilities can have significant implications for issues such as compensation, roles in campus governance, access to resources and support services for librarians, and, most importantly, to the level of budgetary support allocated to libraries by campus administration. Certainly, they can have a direct effect on the degree to which a librarian is able to pursue his or her work as a teacher.

Teaching is an increasingly significant responsibility for academic librarians, but it is a responsibility that has historically been less than fully appreciated by college students, faculty, and administrators. Moreover, it is a role for which few librarians are prepared during their pre-service professional education. Finally, even the introduction to teaching that is made available to librarians through continuing education and other programs focuses primarily on basic instructional skills. Teacher training of this sort provides a critical foundation for librarians who find themselves unceremoniously thrust into the classroom, and the need for it will not diminish. Simple mastery of basic instructional competencies, however, will not help librarians to develop the sort of teacher identity that research in teacher education suggests is important to their ongoing

professional growth. By casting the discussion about the education of instruction librarians as part of the broader discussion of learning to teach and teacher identity, we may learn more about how academic librarians can present a well-defined professional identity to campus colleagues who have historically misunderstood their work.

### Themes in the Study of Teacher Identity Among Academic Librarians

Studies of teacher identity rely strongly on personal narrative in order to help us to understand the biographical events that help to shape teacher identity and a commitment to joining the teaching profession (Carter & Doyle 1996; Goodson 1992). Reflection on teacher identity as part of pre-service teacher education may also help students to develop the habits of personal reflection that contribute to their development as critical and reflective practitioners (Schon 1983; Brookfield 1995). Following this model, the present study made use of semi-structured interviewing (Bogdan & Biklen 1998) in order to elicit personal narratives from a group of academic librarians regarding their experience as teachers and as librarians committed to promoting their instructional role on campus.

Interviews lasting between 45-90 minutes each were conducted during Spring 2004 with six librarians (5 female, 1 male) whose length in professional service ranged from 2 – 32 years. One of the participants had professional experience as a teacher prior to becoming a librarian, while another had professional experience as a public librarian prior to taking her current position. All of the participants were employed together at a research library serving an institution classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as “Doctoral/Research – Extensive.” Data collected through the interviews were reviewed throughout the process using field memos and a research

log, and were then analyzed using a coding process by which discrete ideas emergent from the data were used to identify a small number of themes around which the study of teacher identity among academic librarians might begin. Finally, the initial conclusions enumerated below were validated through member checking during the writing phase (Bogdan & Biklen 1998; Cresswell 2003; Strauss & Corbin 1998).

### *The Centrality of Teaching*

Teaching is a core focus for the work of these academic librarians, both in terms of the amount of time they spend providing instruction in the classroom and the way they approach other aspects of their work. As one participant noted, “the teaching function comes out in everything that you do.” Another saw her instructional role as coloring her approach to work at the reference desk and as a collection manager. “Even when I’m not in the classroom,” she concluded, “I’m always teaching.” While one participant allowed that “there are plenty of people who are in public services librarianship who never really intended to do much teaching and probably don’t see it as a high priority,” each of the participants in this initial study identified strongly with the role of librarian as teacher and sought out positions where that role was valued. For these librarians, questions of whether or not the word “instruction” appeared in their job title (Albrecht & Baron 2002), or whether or not their position descriptions included a formal responsibility for instruction (Patterson & Howell 1990), are immaterial. They took their positions because of the opportunity each provided to contribute to the library and to the university as a teacher. Studies such as Elmborg (2002) that explore the ways in which traditional professional responsibilities are re-cast by a focus on teaching as the core responsibility

for the academic librarian resonate with the ideas expressed by the participants in this study.

### *The Importance of Collegial and Administrative Support*

Support from colleagues, professional role models, and supervisors is critical to the librarian's ability to focus on his or her work as a teacher. As one participant noted:

When I'm in the classroom, I'm not here [in the library], and we have some significant staffing issues here. So, if I'm teaching, support from my supervisor is important because when a faculty member says "I'd like you to teach," I know that my supervisor will say "Great!," instead of "You can't."

The importance of colleagues willing to help provide back-up service on reference desks and in other venues in order to provide teaching librarians with the freedom to be in the classroom or to contribute to campus-wide instructional initiatives was acknowledged almost universally by participants in this study. Also noted was the importance of support among the library administration for the teaching role, as evidenced by the allocation of human resources to the Library Instruction unit and the provision of support for instructional initiatives. Walter (2005b) has reviewed the literature of higher education in regard to the importance of administrative support for college faculty seeking to focus on their work as teachers and the conclusions of that study regarding the importance of administrative support for instructional initiatives in academic libraries are echoed in this study at the level of the individual librarian.



### *The Stress of Multiple Demands*

While each of the participants in this study expressed a strong commitment to his or her role as a teacher, it was clear that more than one felt personal stress as the result of multiple demands on their time. This theme was echoed across many of the interviews with participants noting that time dedicated to teaching was often taken from other responsibilities, e.g., collection development. “You never have enough time,” one participant noted, “I don’t think I know my collection enough; I don’t think I know my resources enough.” Another participant who had experience teaching at the K-12 level identified this as a challenge distinctive of the higher education environment:

One of the things that I’ve found is quite a bit different than teaching at the K-12 level is that there’s just more . . . there seems to be more things, committee work, more things going on that pull you in a lot of different directions as an academic librarian. A lot of different things. You have to strive to, you know, achieve excellence in a number of different areas, and I’m still struggling with the idea of how all of those things fit together as a whole and how to establish priorities amongst those different kinds of pulls. There are times when I’m very frustrated and I feel that I’m giving sort of a half-baked effort to a whole slew of things, rather than really focusing on being . . . on trying to excel in one particular area.

Patterson and Howell (1990) identified the pull of multiple demands on one’s time as a leading cause of stress and burnout among instruction librarians and, while none of the

participants in the current study showed signs of significant burnout, it is clear that this remains an important issue for teaching librarians.

### *The Problems with Professional Education*

“My library school education did not really prepare me for the importance of instruction in the profession.” While the interview schedule (Appendix 2) did not include any questions specific to professional education (which, as noted above, has been an ongoing focus for the literature), several participants introduced the topic independently. Rather than focus on the question of whether or not an instruction-related course was available to them when they completed their pre-service education, however, they identified previously unexplored issues related to their educational program. Westbrook (1999), for example, concludes that the place of instruction in the LIS curriculum is improving based simply on the number of courses now available, but how are those courses conducted and how are they perceived by students? One participant who completed a course on instruction while in library school was critical of its content: “I took the library instruction class, but, based on this library instruction class, I didn’t walk away with an idea that this was such a big thing because the class was not a very well-done class, it was just sort-of slap-dash thrown together.” Another participant concurred about the perception left regarding the importance of instruction for the day-to-day work of an academic librarian while discussing the course that he chose not to take:

Where I went to library school, there was one class on instruction. Of all the different classes, you know, whatever number of offerings, hundreds of offerings, [there was only one] that focused on instruction. Now, there were oodles of classes on different kinds

of reference focuses, and I took a lot of those classes – business reference, medical reference – which obviously helps with teaching, too, but there’s only one that was specifically for [instruction]. So, from that standpoint, I would have concluded: “Oh well, this must not be a significant priority in the profession right now because there’s only one class specifically on this issue.”

A number of studies have explored the simple question of the availability of instruction-related courses in LIS programs, but the responses of these participants suggest that there are a number of more complex questions requiring study. For example, what is taught in the instruction courses that are available and does it provide future librarians with an introduction not only to pedagogical skills, but also to the broader instructional context into which they will be coming as public, school, special, or academic librarians? What is the place of the instruction course in the curriculum, e.g., is it a core course, or required only of future school librarians? Is the instruction course, when offered, taught by a permanent member of the faculty (i.e., tenured or tenure-track), or is it a course populated by adjuncts who have a limited voice on decisions about the curriculum and departmental priorities? There is a rich literature on the education of instruction librarians, but even this initial qualitative inquiry indicates that there are many important questions yet to be explored.

### *Stereotypes and Misperceptions*

A final theme emergent from the data has to do with stereotypes. As noted above, a number of studies of college students and college faculty suggest that the academic

library profession is poorly understood by those outside it (Fagan 2002; Hernon & Pastine 1977; Ivey 1994; Oberg, et al. 1989). This perception was shared by participants in this study, who believed that many of their campus colleagues were either unaware of what they did, or under mistaken impressions fueled by stereotypes in the popular culture. Two comments are especially interesting for the different facets of this complicated problem that they illuminate.

Overall, I think people are pretty much unaware of what we do.

Probably what they perceive that we do is collect, we build the collections, we're collectors is primarily what I think they see us doing.

The people who have negative attitudes about librarians or think that all we do is, you know, that we're secretaries, or that we put stickers on things, or whatever they think we do . . . [what] they don't understand is that organizing all of human knowledge in an easy-to-use way is a really daunting task.

Earlier studies of campus perceptions of academic librarians have identified collections work both as a valuable professional activity that is largely invisible to faculty and students, and as an activity around which faculty and librarians may come into conflict (Oberg, et al. 1989). In the first excerpt, the image of the librarian as keeper of collections is posed as an outmoded image that fails to accommodate the image of librarian as teacher to which this participant was committed. While the second excerpt demonstrates concern about the long-held stereotype of the librarian as clerk, it also echoes conclusions drawn by Abbott (1998), White (2003), and others regarding the need to re-cast ancient

professional responsibilities in a new way. The Google company mission statement is “[to] organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful” (Google 2005); the comments by the second participant suggest a feeling that this mission is more appreciated by campus colleagues when it is espoused by a search engine giant than by local librarians.

### Discussion and Implications for Future Research

As noted throughout this essay, the aim of this study was largely exploratory. The themes identified above as significant to the study of teacher identity among academic librarians were derived from a purposively selected (Johnson & Christensen 2000) sample of academic librarians who the author knew were strongly committed to their role as teachers. Moreover, the limited time available for interviewing did not allow for complete “saturation” (Strauss & Corbin 1998) of the data, i.e., there were ideas expressed by one or two participants that did not rise to the level of “theme” based on the current pool of participants, but that have promise as topics that might be explored with future participants. Finally, a participant pool that represented the full range of opinion among academic librarians regarding the importance of teaching as a professional responsibility would undoubtedly bring to the surface a much more complex set of themes among professionals who, as Watson-Boone (1998) and White (2003) noted, have multiple professional identities from which to choose. Thus, while we cannot conclude that this study provides us with a well-articulated and grounded theory of teacher identity adoption and development among academic librarians, even an exploratory study may provide us with important insight into some of the research questions suggested by the literature of “learning to teach” and of teacher identity.

For example, while previous studies have explored the lack of formal introduction to teaching in professional education programs for librarians, this study suggests that continuing lack of attention to this issue results in a difficult introduction into the profession for new academic librarians. Most of the participants in this study shared the feeling that they were not prepared for the amount of time they would be required to dedicate to instruction in their first professional position by the way in which teaching and learning, as a field of study, was treated in their professional education programs. Their success in those positions, they said, was based in large part on the support of colleagues and, especially, on one or two role models each found who shared their interest in teaching. Patterson and Howell (1990) noted the importance of collegial support for instruction librarians, and Walter (2005b) concluded that a collegial network was critical to instructional improvement among academic librarians. Walter and Hinchliffe (2005), however, found that orientation and mentoring programs focused on the librarian's role as teacher are not yet a common resource in academic libraries. Given that participants in this study suggest that both can be critical to the successful introduction of the academic librarian to his or her role as teacher, future research on orientation and mentoring programs for teaching librarians should inform the development and wider adoption of such programs among academic libraries.

Also in regard to professional and continuing education, this study suggests that there are a number of important questions about the content and conduct of these opportunities for instruction librarians that have not been explored in the literature. An analysis of the content areas actually included as part of formal coursework on instruction in professional education programs, for example, would extend the literature in this area,

as would a study of the impact on professional development among teaching librarians of more focused attention to the idea of teacher identity as an important facet of their broader professional identity as librarians. Studies such as Britzman (1991) and Travers (2001) provide a framework for engaging in such research as part of an instruction course offered in an LIS program, while studies such as Swedenburg (2002) suggest ways in which this issue might be explored with experienced practitioners as part of continuing education opportunities.

Finally, this study suggests that there is an important connection between research on student perceptions of academic librarians, the study of teacher identity, and the future of the profession. Recall the focus in the teacher education literature on what Lortie (1975) called the “apprenticeship of observation.” Like the work of teachers, the work of librarians is observed directly by the students we employ. Studies by Hernon and Pastine (1977) and Fagan (2002), however, suggest that this work is greatly misunderstood and that, in particular, few students understand or appreciate the librarian’s role as teacher in the higher education environment. Recruitment has been identified as one of the most important challenges currently facing the academic library profession (Hisle 2002). Given the conclusion drawn by Lortie (1975), Britzman (1991), Knowles (1992), and others, that decisions about joining a teaching profession may be influenced in very significant ways by how one is introduced to the profession during this “apprenticeship,” it is critical that students be provided with a better opportunity to understand the full range of our professional responsibilities. If Martin (1995) is correct that academic librarianship is often a profession that one embraces on the way to (or from) another field, it is all the more important that those who might have an interest in college teaching

are given an opportunity to appreciate how significant a feature of our work that teaching has become in the contemporary higher education environment.

### Conclusion

Thirty-five years ago, Kenneth Eble (1972) embarked on a national study of college teaching in which he identified, among other things, a conflict between the faculty member's role as teacher and his or her role as researcher. Innumerable studies have been conducted since then that reflect the basic issue of the faculty member's need to balance multiple professional responsibilities as part of his or her identity as a college professor, including, most commonly, responsibilities for teaching, research, and service. How much more complex is the problem for academic librarians, many of whom are likewise responsible for research and service, but for whom even teaching competes with equally important professional responsibilities for the provision of information services, the development and preservation of print and electronic collections, and the creation of information systems that provide access to those resources, services, and collections? White (2003) argued that the academic librarian is now faced with a choice of two professional identities, i.e., the "bookman" or the "knowledge worker," but the situation is hardly so simple.

A wealth of studies of contemporary practice in academic libraries demonstrates that the role of the librarian as teacher is increasingly important. Contrary to what some critics have suggested, this is not the result of academic librarians seeking to enhance their professional status on campus by associating their work with the most visible feature of the work of the college professor, but is, rather, evidence of a far-reaching change in the profession of college teaching itself (Cook-Sather 2001). As Rhoades



(2000) has noted, one of the most significant issues facing the faculty in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the expanding responsibility for direct instruction on campus by student affairs educators, librarians, and other academic professionals drawn from outside the ranks of the traditional teaching faculty. The rise of interdisciplinary instructional initiatives such as General Education, First-Year Experience, and Writing Across the Curriculum, too, have not only provided increasing instructional opportunities for academic librarians, but have all but required academic libraries to focus on teaching as a core service. Lack of a consistent teacher identity among academic librarians may hinder their effectiveness in meeting these expanding instructional responsibilities in a volatile organizational environment.

Watson-Boone (1998) noted that librarian voices are often absent from the literature of academic librarianship (1). It might be more accurate to say that their voices are typically aggregated and presented in an impersonal way through reports of local, regional, and national surveys. Application of qualitative research methods such as interviewing provides an opportunity to restore the voice of individual librarians to the literature while still coming to conclusions that can broadly inform both scholarly inquiry and professional practice. Qualitative inquiry has proven useful in a number of fields already, including the study of user perceptions of the library and assessment of library services, and the framework provided in this study from research in the field of teacher education suggests that there are rich opportunities still available for similarly framed inquiry into the experience of the librarian as teacher.

## Notes

1. “Open access” typically refers to “content that is available on the Internet and can be accessed, read, printed, copied, searched, downloaded, or forwarded free of charge” (Davenport 2004, 1). For additional information, see Fyffe and Walter (2005).

## CHAPTER THREE

### MOVING BEYOND COLLECTIONS: ACADEMIC LIBRARY OUTREACH TO MULTICULTURAL STUDENT CENTERS

#### Introduction

Few issues have stirred as much discussion and debate in the academic community over the past three decades as that of diversity. While its working definition is elastic, “diversity” is an administrative and intellectual construct that typically encompasses concerns about the recruitment and retention of students representing racial and cultural minority groups, the promotion of an inclusive campus climate for students representing diverse cultures, and the development of academic programs that explore the history, language, and culture of a variety of racial and ethnic communities within the United States (Grant & Ladson-Billings 1997; Smith, Wolf, & Levitan 1994). But, while many scholars have examined both the development of academic programs aimed at promoting knowledge about diverse American cultures, and the factors that may contribute to minority student success in college (either in the classroom or as part of the co-curricular activities typically managed by student affairs professionals) (Turner, et al. 1996), there has been little attention in the literature of higher education to the ways in which the academic library can support campus diversity initiatives.

Academic librarians, by contrast, have demonstrated a keen interest both in the ways that their collections can support academic research into racial and ethnic minority group experiences in the United States, and in the ways that they can deliver information and instructional services to diverse campus communities. Academic librarians have developed an extensive literature of practice related to providing services not only to

students of color, who make up the subject of the present study, but also to a number of other groups of students who are typically included in any broadly-conceived discussion of diversity on campus, including: first-generation students, adult and returning students, and Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender (GLBT) students (Instruction for Diverse Populations Committee 2004; Jacobson & Williams 2000). Retaining a focus on those campus diversity initiatives aimed at students of color, and building both on the model for designing and delivering academic library services to diverse populations explored by Downing, MacAdam, and Nichols (1993), and Downing (2000) and on the “instructional outreach” model described in Johnson, McCord, and Walter (2003), this study suggests that one effective approach to improving services to diverse users is to focus on building collaborative programs between the academic library and one of the most common student service programs aimed at communities of color – the multicultural student center.<sup>1</sup>

### Diversity and the Academic Library

Diversity is a key concern both for libraries and for higher education in the United States. Within the broader context of higher education, the call for increased diversity is reflected in efforts to better recruit and retain students representing racial and ethnic minority groups, to hire a greater number of staff and faculty representing racial and ethnic minority groups, to better address multiculturalism in the academic curriculum, and to provide academic and student support services that address the needs of identified groups of students (e.g., Banks & Banks 2001; El-Khawas 2003; Gainen & Boice 1993; Rendon & Hope 1996; Talbot 2003; Turner, et al. 1996; Wilkinson & Rund 2000; Wilson 1999). Within the context of American libraries, diversity is recognized as a “key action

area” for a field committed to “providing the highest quality library and information services for all people.” This commitment is reflected in advocacy at the national level to improve the library services provided to members of racial and ethnic minority groups, to provide greater access to information and research relevant to the experience of diverse communities in the United States, and to more effectively recruit people of color into the library and information services professions (American Library Association 2005b).

Academic libraries are uniquely situated at the intersection of two professional communities – librarianship and higher education – committed to supporting diversity through education, outreach, and advocacy. Even so, academic library support for campus diversity initiatives has been uneven.

A commitment to supporting diversity initiatives across campus is not a deeply-rooted feature of the service profile of many academic libraries. Unlike, for example, the public libraries that have made outreach to underserved communities an important part of their mission for decades (Freeman & Hovde 2003), many academic libraries are faced with the challenge of balancing long-term commitments to core services with a desire to address relatively recent diversity initiatives in higher education. Many academic programs in the broadly-defined area of Ethnic Studies (e.g., African-American Studies), for example, are less than 30 years old, and efforts to address the problems related to recruitment, retention, and persistence of students representing historically underserved groups are of even more recent vintage. The library is an ancient institution, and slow to change. Interest in better serving both these academic programs and broader campus diversity initiatives, however, is strong.

Many academic libraries, for example, have developed “diversity committees” that address the call to increase recruitment of librarians of color into the academic library profession (e.g., Diversity Committee 2005), and others have taken responsibility for providing information and instructional services to students pursuing academic studies in the fields that might be subsumed under the broader rubric of Ethnic Studies (e.g., Munro 2005). Unfortunately, the connections between these efforts and campus diversity initiatives – especially in the area of student services – are often less well defined than connections between the academic library and the students and faculty of traditional disciplines. Simply put, we have done a better job developing structures to support diversity initiatives within our own profession and using existing structures to support academic programs that include diversity-related subjects of study than we have developing structures to support the wide array of student services and co-curricular programs aimed at enhancing diversity among the college student body.

Collection development services and traditional liaison activities (e.g., research consultation, course-integrated instruction) aimed at relevant academic departments are the most well-developed feature of academic library services to diverse users. The University of Oregon (Munro 2005) provides an excellent example of library support for research into topics of interest to students and faculty in the field(s) of Ethnic Studies. The University of California, Berkeley, likewise, provides access to a variety of information resources designed to support academic programs in African-American Studies (2005), Chicano Studies (n.d.), Ethnic Studies (2005), and more. Diaz (1994) and Burns (1995) provide an introduction to collection development issues for librarians supporting academic programs in these areas, as do professional associations of librarians

in these fields (e.g., African American Studies Librarians Section 2005). Finally, Oka, LaGuardia, and Griego (1994) provide an example of how instructional services can be designed to support students in the field of Ethnic Studies. Formal academic programs, however, are only one of many avenues through which librarians might communicate with, and provide services to, students of color, and services related to the acquisition and use of collections are only one way in which the academic library can provide support for campus diversity initiatives.

In an age much concerned with assessment and accountability, Kuharets, Cahalan, and Gitner (2001) argue that one of the most important measures of the worth of any library is “its dedication to serving ethnic populations” (xii). To meet this measure, academic libraries and librarians committed to serving faculty, staff, and students of color must move beyond collections and beyond familiar liaison relationships with academic programs and departments to take advantage of the full range of information and instructional service opportunities that come with outreach to student service programs designed to support the recruitment and retention of students who represent diverse and traditionally underserved groups.

#### Instructional Outreach to Diverse Communities

Downing (2000), Osborne and Poon (1995), Simmons-Welburn (2001), and Simmons-Welburn and Welburn (2001) have identified the importance of coordinated outreach efforts to a variety of minority student groups and minority-serving student service programs for any library committed to effectively meeting the needs of a diverse community of users. Moving beyond the traditional liaison relationship with academic departments, these authors advocate for the development of ongoing relationships with

multicultural student groups, academic and cultural support centers, and recruitment and retention programs that serve many minority (and other first-generation) college students, including Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and McNair Fellows.<sup>2</sup> Downing, MacAdam and Nichols (1993) used “outreach” as a framework for describing their efforts to provide a variety of services to diverse student users. More recently, Johnson, McCord and Walter (2003) described this approach to building relations across campus based on the role of the librarian as teacher as “instructional outreach,” and Albin, et al. (2005) suggested how instructional outreach can form the foundation for developing and sustaining substantive partnerships between academic libraries and student service programs. Before turning to a discussion of how one might apply the idea of instructional outreach to working with diverse users through a multicultural student center, a brief review of existing programs is in order.

The most celebrated model for providing academic library services to students of color is the Peer Information Counseling (PIC) program launched at the University of Michigan and later adopted by the University of Arizona (MacAdam & Nichols 1989; Downing, MacAdam, & Nichols 1993; Winston 1995). In this program, students of color are hired and trained by librarians to help provide direct information services to other students of color in the research library environment. While many libraries do not have the resources available to fund so comprehensive an approach to meeting the need to enhance library services provided to diverse student users, there are important lessons that can be taken from this approach and more widely applied.



While working with the PIC program, for example, Downing (1994) identified a number of barriers that students of color may face in making effective use of the academic library that other students may not, e.g.:

- students of color may come to campus from K-12 schools where libraries were under-funded and library services were limited;
- lack of diversity within the library profession may be reflected on service desks that do not include information professionals of color, which may, in turn, make students of color less likely to approach service desks or to make use of research assistance, consulting services, etc.; and
- changing terminology and standards for collecting and describing information related to topics of interest to students representing diverse communities may make it particularly difficult for students to locate information relevant to chosen research topics.

The rising importance of the Internet in higher education (Jones, et al. 2002) has set an additional hurdle before students of color and other “non-traditional” students, who may be less prepared to make use of this technology for educational purposes owing to the continuing (and increasingly significant) “digital divide” between those who have regular access to the Internet (and, more broadly, to personal computers) during their K-12 years and those who do not (Sax, et al. 2004). Downing and Diaz (1993), Downing (2000), and Jacobson and Williams (2000), among others, have identified strategies for effective instruction of diverse users, and Munro (2005) has provided a primer on how to address the issue of locating library materials on topics related to “diversity research,” but

much work remains to be done in helping students of color overcome these barriers to effective library use.

The PIC program also highlights the significance of using peer educators as a means of providing information services to diverse student users. Peer educators are a familiar feature of many student services programs (Ender & Newton 2000), including new student orientation, academic advising, first-year-experience, and academic support services. Alternately known as peer advisors, peer mentors, peer facilitators, or peer tutors, these students have also long been an important part of the academic support provided on many campuses by writing centers. The PIC experience demonstrates how this model might be applied within an academic library, but more recent experiments in instructional outreach suggest that there is also significant value in bringing together peer educator communities from across campus in such a way that approaches to providing peer support in academic and co-curricular programs can complement developing models of peer information consulting (Currie & Eodice 2005).

Complementing efforts such as the PIC program to bring students of color into the library are those that focus on developing partnerships with programs that support campus diversity initiatives. Perhaps the most common example of this type of outreach is found in services provided to K-12 and incoming first-year students of color through academic enrichment programs such as Upward Bound and “Summer Bridge” (Garcha & Baldwin 1997; Simmons-Welburn 2001).<sup>3</sup> Another popular campus program with which an academic library might collaborate to support the information and instructional needs of students of color is the multicultural student center. As Norlin and Morris (1999) wrote in their study of library outreach to these centers, such efforts demonstrate that “the

library not only embraces diversity but also is proactive in helping [support] the recruitment and retention of minority students” (151). Despite the potential suggested by such a partnership, Norlin and Morris found few collaborative programs had been developed. Of 40 student services administrators responsible for multicultural student centers responding to their survey, only 15% reported any formal contact with their respective libraries. Even those few reported that contact with the library was “minimal,” and none felt that the support provided by their libraries for their academic support programs was sufficient.

In brief, a number of librarians have identified strategies for providing information and instructional services that are sensitive to the needs, interests, and learning styles of diverse student communities. Likewise, several have suggested that outreach to student groups and student service programs meant to serve the academic and social needs of diverse students is the direction that academic libraries must take if they are to effectively support both individual students and campus diversity programs. Few, however, have developed substantive and sustainable partnerships with one of the most common campus diversity initiatives, i.e., the multicultural student center.

#### Diversity and Instructional Outreach at Washington State University

Washington State University (WSU) is one of two comprehensive research universities in the state of Washington. Established in 1890 as the state’s land-grant institution, the university maintains a flagship campus in Pullman, a city in the rural southeastern corner of the state, as well as three “urban campuses” in Spokane, Richland (Tri-Cities), and Vancouver. In addition to these academic campuses, the university supports ten learning centers located around the state, as well as cooperative extension

offices in each of Washington's 39 counties. In 2003-2004, the Pullman campus enrolled approximately 19,000 students, while thousands more participated in undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs housed on the urban campuses, learning centers, and extension offices, or delivered through distance learning options such as teleconferencing and Web-based instruction.

Diversity is a significant concern at WSU, where, for example, out of a student population of 23,241 during the Fall 2004 semester, only 559 (2.4%) were African-American. A complete description of the racial and ethnic composition of the WSU student body as of Fall 2004 (*Washington State University Data Book 2005*) is provided in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Washington State University Enrolled Students, by  
Gender/Race/Ethnicity, Fall 2004**

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Total Student Body (n=23,241)</b>
American Indian/ Alaska Native	114	178	292	1.3
Asian/ Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	601	623	1,224	5.3
Black/ African-American	272	287	559	2.4
Hispanic/Latino/ Spanish Origin	387	507	894	3.8
International	689	541	1,230	5.3
Not Indicated	994	957	1,951	8.4
White	7,833	9,258	17,091	73.5

Given these demographics, it is no surprise that diversity is one of the “core values” embodied in the strategic plan guiding the work of this academic community:

We are committed to a culture of learning that challenges, inspires, liberates, and ultimately transforms the hearts, minds, and actions of individuals, eliminating prejudice. Our differences are expressed in many ways,

including race, sex, age, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, religion, class, philosophy, and culture. Respect for all persons and their contributions is essential to achieving our mission (Washington State University n.d. – a).

Institutional commitment to this core value is represented by the availability of academic programs in the field of Ethnic Studies (Office of Admissions n.d.) and a wide variety of resources for students of color (as well as students representing other groups identified as worthy of attention in the above statement) (Washington State University n.d. – b).

Many of the resources aimed specifically at supporting the social integration and academic success of students of color at WSU are housed in the Office of Multicultural Student Services (n.d.- b). The Office of Multicultural Student Services (MSS) supports a variety of initiatives aimed at the recruitment and retention of students of color, including mentoring programs, leadership education, academic support programs, and four cultural centers: African-American Student Center; Asian American and Pacific Islander Student Center; Chicana/o Latina/o Student Center, and Native American Student Center (Office of Multicultural Student Services n.d. – c). Together, these four cultural centers comprise the Multicultural Student Center, which is housed in a central campus location as part of the student union. While the services and resources provided through MSS are independent of other campus units, they complement services and resources available both through student cultural groups (Campus Involvement n.d.) and more broadly-based student services programs (e.g., Student Advising and Learning Center n.d.).

The Washington State University Libraries provide a full range of collections, services, and electronic resources to the university community through a system of six

libraries on the Pullman campus (Agricultural Sciences, Architecture, Education, Health Sciences, Humanities/Social Sciences, and Science & Engineering), as well as branch libraries on each of the urban campuses. Each Pullman library is supported by one or more subject specialists responsible for reference, collection development, and instruction in relevant disciplines. While these subject specialists are responsible for providing instructional services to liaison departments and programs, they are supported by an independent Library Instruction department that includes four full-time librarians, and two instruction coordinators housed in the largest public service units (Humanities/Social Sciences and Science & Engineering). Of the campus diversity initiatives briefly noted above, the one that has been most consistently supported by the WSU Libraries has been the academic program in Comparative Ethnic Studies.<sup>4</sup>

Traditional liaison services to the faculty, staff, and students associated with the Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies are provided by a subject specialist assigned to that program and to collection areas including African-American Studies, Chicano/Latino Studies, Asian-American Studies, and Native American Studies (Washington State University Libraries 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004e). Individual efforts aimed at students of color have also been extended on an irregular basis by librarians who have served as faculty advisors to one or more student cultural groups. While these efforts were appreciated, they waxed and waned with librarian involvement in student group advising. It has only been within the last few years that a more programmatic approach to developing “instructional outreach liaison assignments” to student services programs such as the Office of Multicultural Student Services has taken hold (Albin, et al. 2005; Cummings 2005; Johnson, McCord, & Walter 2003; Washington

State University Libraries 2004d). The purpose of the present study was to build on this programmatic approach to outreach to student services offices by developing a comprehensive approach to identifying the information and instructional service needs of students affiliated with one or more of the programs housed in the Office of Multicultural Student Services and by delivering services directly to students through these programs.

### Methodology

In order to effectively plan for future collaboration between the Washington State University Libraries and the Office of Multicultural Student Services, an information needs assessment instrument (Appendix 1) was constructed and disseminated to students associated either with one of the four cultural centers on campus – African-American Student Center; Asian American and Pacific Islander Student Center; Chicana/o Latina/o Student Center, and Native American Student Center – or with the Academic Enrichment Center also housed in the Multicultural Student Center (Office of Multicultural Student Services n.d. – a). The instrument was developed by the author in collaboration with the subject specialist for Comparative Ethnic Studies and the instructional outreach liaison to the Office of Multicultural Student Services, and modified and approved by staff members and graduate assistants in the Multicultural Student Center. Once approved by the Institutional Review Board, the instrument was disseminated to students in both print and electronic form through the staff, student advisors, and peer mentors housed in the Office of Multicultural Student Services.

There are many reasons why one might conduct an information needs assessment, but some of the most common include:

- setting priorities among collections, services, and organizational missions;



- positioning the library among its competitors in the local information environment;
- helping staff to develop a new vision for library services;
- marketing the library; and
- providing insight into the decisions made by non-library users (Westbrook 2001).

The aim of this study was to identify the information needs of students of color who took part in academic support programs offered through the Academic Enrichment Center, as well as those of students of color affiliated with one of the cultural centers primarily for social or cultural reasons, and to identify priorities for future outreach efforts and service activities by the Washington State University Libraries. A preliminary list of possible collaborative endeavors was generated through discussion between librarians and staff at the Multicultural Student Center. This list included:

- Orientation to the WSU Libraries for First-Year Students
- Orientation to the WSU Libraries for Transfer Students
- Workshop on Finding Information About Diverse Populations in the Library and on the Web
- Critical Thinking and the World Wide Web
- One-Stop Web Site for Finding Information About Diverse Populations through the WSU Libraries
- Finding Science and Health Information in the Library and on the Web
- Finding Information About Diverse Populations through the State and Federal Government

- Alternative Voices in the Media: Finding Information in Minority-Owned Publications

These options were included as Item 10 of the information needs assessment instrument (Appendix 1). Data collected from respondents was then analyzed to create descriptive statistics that could help to identify high-priority outreach initiatives.<sup>5</sup>

### Results

Distributed to students affiliated either with one of the four cultural centers, or with the Academic Enrichment Center, between October 25 – November 10, 2003, a total of 63 completed surveys were returned for analysis.<sup>6</sup> Students returning the survey represented a useful demographic sample, including students from each of the cultural centers across all levels of the undergraduate experience. Center affiliation for respondents was reported as:

- African-American Student Center (30.2%)
- Asian-American/Pacific Islander Student Center (23.8%)
- Chicano/a/Latino/a Student Center (23.8%)
- Native American Student Center (1.59%)
- Academic Enrichment Program (20.6%).

Academic level of respondents was reported as:

- First-Year Student (12.7%);
- Sophomore (17.5%)
- Junior (46%)
- Senior (22.2%).

Given long-standing difficulties encountered by the WSU Libraries in developing instructional programs for transfer students, it is also worth noting that approximately one-third of respondents reported having transferred to Washington State University from another institution.

Respondents were asked to categorize the frequency of their use of the WSU Libraries and to identify their primary reasons for library use. Responses to these items are summarized in Tables 3.2 and 3.3.

**Table 3.2: Frequency of Library Use**

Daily	14.3%
One or Twice each Week	23.8%
A Few Times each Month	34.9%
Once or Twice each Semester	17.5%
Rarely	6.35%
Never	3.17%

**Table 3.3: Reason(s) for Library Use**

**(Multiple Answers Allowed)**

Find Articles/Books	74.6%
Attend Workshop/Class	9.52%
Group Study Space	47.6%
Use the Internet	58.7%
Research Assistance	20.6%
Pick Up Materials from Other Libraries	23.8%

Respondents were also asked to identify any problems they encountered when using library resources and services, and to identify their personal approach to beginning the research process. Responses to these items are summarized in Tables 3.4 and 3.5.

**Table 3.4: Problems Encountered When Using Library Resources or Services**

None	36.5%
Finding Books/Journals	44.4%
Finding Material for my Research	25.4%
Finding Someone to Help Me with my Research	20.6%
Finding Information on the Web Site	15.9%
Collections Inadequate for my Research Needs	9.52%

**Table 3.5: Starting Points for the Research Process**

Ask a Friend	14.8%
Ask a Professor	9.3%
Surf the Internet	66.7%
Go to the Library	7.4%

Finally, respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point (Likert) scale their degree of interest in a series of potential projects identified by librarians and Multicultural Student Center staff members as potentially useful for students wishing to learn more about the location, evaluation, management, and use of information on topics related to populations and communities of color. Responses to this item are summarized in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6: Desired Library Services**

Workshop on Locating Diverse Voices in the Media	3.84
Develop Library Web Portal to Information on Diverse Populations	3.45
Workshop on Finding Government Information on Diverse Populations	3.24
Workshop on Finding Information on Diverse Populations/Multicultural Topics in the Library and on the Web	3.24
Transfer Student Orientation to the Library	3.06
Workshop on Critical Thinking and Information/Web Resources	2.98
First-Year Student Orientation	2.93
Workshop on Finding Health and Science Information	2.89

Discussion

Several interesting aspects of the information use patterns of students affiliated with the Multicultural Student Center were identified by the information needs assessment. Among these were library use patterns and approaches to beginning the research process.

For example, it is clear from the responses that the students associated with the Multicultural Student Center make regular use of library resources and facilities. Over two-thirds of the respondents reported making use of the library at least “a few times a month” (with almost one-quarter reporting weekly or more frequent use). While the most common reason for visiting the library was to locate books or articles for personal use, access to the Internet was cited almost as regularly as an impetus for entering the library. The professional assistance offered to students by librarians in the areas of information and instructional services, by contrast, were among the least commonly cited reasons for library use. Given that the number of students receiving instruction in the library has doubled in the past five years (with over 13,000 students attending workshops and classes in 2002-2003), the fact that fewer than 10% of the students who responded to this survey cited instruction as a reason for visiting the library bears further study.

The fact that professional services were among the reasons for library use cited least often complements the approaches students described as the typical beginning of their research process. Two-thirds of respondents reported that their first step in the research process was to access the Internet. While further study is required to determine the type of Internet sites being accessed by students who cited this as the first step in their research process, these responses do reinforce the conclusions about the impact of the Internet on student research habits advanced in studies such as Jones et al. (2002) and OCLC (2002). Also noteworthy is the degree to which peers were preferred over professors or librarians as a personal source of information when beginning the research process. For the vast majority of these students, the research process is entirely

unmediated in terms of their use of the experience and expertise of campus professionals in the library and the classroom.

These and other results drawn from the survey allow the following conclusions to be drawn regarding future collaborative efforts between the Washington State University Libraries and the Multicultural Student Center:

- Development of Web-based information resources easily accessible to students of color is critical. If students are four times more likely to begin their research using the Internet (66.7%) than by any other medium, the library must develop and promote Web-based resources on topics of interest to students of color;
- Provision of instruction to peer mentors housed in the Multicultural Student Center has the potential for significant improvement in library services to students of color. If students are more likely to consult a peer for assistance in beginning their research than they are to consult either a librarian or a member of the classroom faculty, the library must provide an opportunity for the peer mentors already in place in the Multicultural Student Center to learn as much about effective use of information as possible; and
- Existing resources and services must be more effectively marketed within the multicultural student community. Responses suggest that students feel unsure about a number of aspects of the research process, but do not regularly consult librarians for assistance. One student suggested that the library should offer a course in how to make effective use of information



resources – a course that has, in fact, been regularly offered for over six years (Washington State University Libraries 2005a).

### Conclusion

A number of opportunities exist for effective collaboration between the Washington State University Libraries and the Multicultural Student Center. The development and implementation of the information needs assessment survey provided an opportunity for detailed discussions between professionals housed in each unit, and the results of the survey reinforced priorities that those discussions had already suggested. Among the projects implemented during the Spring 2004 semester were:

- Inclusion of a library component in the training offered to participants in the Office of Multicultural Student Services mentoring program (Office of Multicultural Student Services n.d. – d). While not the full-blown training program offered to students in the Peer Information Counseling (PIC) program, this program followed a similar approach, i.e., to provide specialized training in information use and library organization to a group of peer educators already in place within the student communities of color at Washington State University;
- Preparation of a section on library and information resources and services to be included in future editions of the Multicultural Student Center Handbook distributed to students of color each Fall. By highlighting existing collections and resources, and promoting services such as reference and instruction, the handbook may direct students of color more effectively to existing resources, while also alerting them to the

professional assistance available to them through the Washington State University Libraries; and

- Development of a set of workshops related to information use and library resources that can be included in the regular series of workshops offered through the Office of Multicultural Student Services' Academic Enrichment Center.

Projects identified as targets for future development included:

- Development of a Web portal directing students to information about populations of color, library materials written by, or about, people of color, pathfinders outlining useful print and electronic resources for academic research into issues of concern to communities of color, and to individuals within the library who can provide personal instruction and assistance for students working in these areas.

The development and delivery of the information needs assessment through the programs housed in the Multicultural Student Center helped the Washington State University Libraries to identify a number of short- and long-term projects that might have a significant impact on information access and use among students of color. At the same time, a number of questions were raised about the information environment at Washington State University. Why, for example, were student respondents at WSU so reticent about consulting librarians for their information needs when earlier studies (e.g., Whitmire 1999) suggest that students of color may be more likely to engage in activities such as asking a librarian for help than their White counterparts? How can the existing credit-bearing information literacy course (General Education 300) be more effectively

marketed to students of color? How can library services be more effectively integrated into existing campus programs such as the federally-supported TRIO programs? Further research is clearly called for, but these projects, and the opportunities for ongoing communication regarding diverse student information needs, suggest that a framework has been constructed for ongoing collaboration that will be more consistent and thoughtful in its development and support than has been the case in the past.

## Notes

1. The term “multicultural student center” will be used throughout this study to refer to the “minority cultural centers” (Young, Jr. 1991) found on many college campuses. An individual campus may have one or more centers focused on providing services to members of an identified ethnic or racial minority group (e.g., African-American Student Center, Native American Student Center), or, as is the case in the institution examined in this study, a “multicultural student center” may be provided to meet the needs of the members of a variety of identified groups. While many campuses also support student centers designed to support the needs of other identified groups, e.g., Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender (GLBT) students, Jewish students, the focus in this study is on student centers designed to reach out to students who identify with specific racial or ethnic minority groups.
2. Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (“McNair Fellows”) programs are all part of the U.S. Department of Education’s TRIO programs. Further information on these and other TRIO programs can be found online at U.S. Department of Education (n.d.).
3. “Summer Bridge” is a generic term used for intensive academic and social orientation programs that offer students of color, first-generation students, and any other student who might be considered “high-risk” an opportunity to succeed in college. Many Summer Bridge programs are only the first step in an academic and social support structure provided to these students throughout their undergraduate experience. For representative examples, see Groups Student Support Services (2005), and Office of Multicultural Services (2004).

4. The Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies was previously known as the Department of Comparative American Cultures. Both names can still be found on the Washington State University Web site, e.g. Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies (n.d.).

5. While research shows that different racial and ethnic groups may face different barriers to effective use of the academic library, the multicultural and multiracial approach taken by the WSU Multicultural Student Center to providing academic support services suggested that an aggregate review of the data collected would be appropriate (as opposed to reporting results on each item by racial/ethnic/cultural affiliation). While this approach was appropriate given the exploratory nature of this research project, it is a limitation that would have to be addressed by any subsequent study.

6. Owing to the broad dissemination method employed, there is no way to determine the number of students who received the survey instrument ( $n$ ), or the overall response rate.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IMPROVING INSTRUCTION: WHAT LIBRARIANS CAN LEARN FROM THE STUDY OF COLLEGE TEACHING

#### Introduction

“I didn’t become a librarian because I wanted to teach. In fact, the thought of teaching scared me to death.” By the time she wrote these words, Sarah Blakeslee (1998, 73) had already overcome her fear of teaching and had successfully led a section of the first-year-experience course, “Introduction to University Life,” at the California State University at Chico. Although she had been trained as a cataloger, and teaching was not part of the work she expected to do as an academic librarian, Blakeslee had learned that the scope of the work expected of a librarian in the contemporary college environment can be fluid and that, in an information age, every librarian may be called upon to become a teacher.

Teaching, in fact, is a hallmark of the library profession today, as more and more people confront the challenges of accessing, retrieving, evaluating, and managing information from an ever-increasing variety of resources (Breivik 1998; Breivik & Gee 1989; Rader 1997; Rockman, et al. 2004). But, while the rapid evolution over the past decade of information technologies such as the World Wide Web has brought greater attention to the librarian’s role as a teacher on the college campus (Jayne & Vander Meer 1997; Rapple 2002; Smalley 1998; Walter 2000), librarians have played an instructional role in higher education for over a century (Hopkins 1982; Salony 1995; Tucker 1980). Despite both the historic professional commitment to teaching among librarians, and the increasing demand for instruction in how to use an ever-changing array of print and

electronic resources, however, few librarians are ever formally prepared to teach as part of their professional education (Brundin 1985; Hogan 1980; Larson & Meltzer 1987; Mandernack 1990; Meulemans & Brown 2001; Shonrock & Mulder 1993; Sullivan 1997; Westbrook 1999). Given the significance of the instructional role for librarians on the 21<sup>st</sup>-century college campus, it is important to identify the ways in which academic librarians with little or no background in pedagogy, instructional design, or assessment of student learning meet the challenge of becoming effective teachers. Likewise, it is important to identify the ways in which academic libraries as organizations help librarians to become more successful in the classroom, and the degree to which classroom performance is evaluated during formal professional reviews.

In short, how do librarians become better teachers, what motivates them to pursue professional development opportunities aimed at helping them to improve their instructional performance, in what ways are they supported in such efforts by their organizations, and in what ways is the instructional effectiveness of librarians formally reviewed and evaluated? This paper will provide some initial answers to these questions through a review of the relevant literature in the study of college teaching and through a brief report of the results of a survey distributed to over 400 public services librarians housed in research libraries across the country. Neither the concerns that librarians have about their teaching effectiveness, nor the mechanisms they have put into place to address those concerns are unique to our profession, and there is much that we can learn in our quest to improve our own work as teachers from the experience of the broader efforts at instructional improvement aimed at the college faculty as a whole.

## Literature Review

A great deal has been written about teaching and learning in academic libraries over the past 30 years (Rader 2000, 2002). Much of this literature reflects the professional concerns of academic librarians struggling to define effective practice for what has been alternately referred to as “bibliographic instruction,” “user education,” or “information literacy instruction” (Grassian & Kaplowitz 2001; Hinchliffe & Woodard 2001; Snavely & Cooper 1997). Related to this concern about effective professional practice is a series of studies that explore the lack of pre-service professional education for librarians in the area of teaching (Hogan 1980; Larson & Meltzer 1987; Mandernack 1990; Meulemans & Brown 2001; Sullivan; 1997; Westbrook 1999). More recently, studies have emerged that examine the formal review of the instructional performance of librarians through programs of student and/or peer evaluation of teaching (Arnold 1998; Arnold & Pearson 1996; DeFranco & Bleiler 2003; Middleton 2002; Ragains 1997). But, while interest among academic librarians in the development of library-based instructional programs is evident in the literature, there is relatively little recognition in that literature of the parallel discussions found over the same time period in the broader study of college teaching. This review of the literature will: (1) present the findings of studies demonstrating the lack of attention to teacher training as part of the professional education of librarians; (2) introduce the concept of “instructional improvement,” as defined in the literature of college teaching; and (3) outline different programs designed to assess instructional effectiveness among academic librarians. Although space will not allow a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, even a brief review should suggest the relationship between the study of instructional improvement activities aimed



at academic librarians and those that have been developed to meet the needs of the broader college faculty.

### *The Education of Instruction Librarians*

Over the past two decades, information literacy instruction has become an established feature of the higher education curriculum. Recognition of the significance of information literacy as a learning outcome for today's college students has resulted not only in increased opportunities for instructional collaboration between librarians and classroom faculty, but also in increased demand for direct instruction of faculty, staff, and students by librarians on issues related to the location, access, evaluation, and use of information (Dewey 2001; Haynes 1996; Kassowitz-Scheer & Pasqualoni 2002; Raspa & Ward 2000; Rockman, et al. 2004; Shiner & Walter 2003). Likewise, there have been new opportunities for librarians to develop and teach credit-bearing courses focusing on generic information literacy skills, information literacy skills as applied to the needs of specific disciplines or programs, or issues related to the changing information environment writ large (Burtle & Sugarman 2002; LOEX Clearinghouse for Library Instruction n.d.; Manuel 2002). Librarians have also taken on leadership roles in developing instructional activities related to broader campus initiatives such as instruction in critical thinking (Bodi 1988; Gibson 1995), first-year-experience programs (Boff & Johnson 2002; Walter 2004), and Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (Elmborg 2003; Sheridan 1995). Given the demand for information literacy instruction in higher education, and the variety of opportunities offered to librarians who wish (or are called upon) to teach, it is important to examine the ways in which academic librarians are prepared for their professional work as teachers.

Although teaching has been recognized as part of the work of academic librarians for over a century, interest in what librarians have to teach has ebbed and flowed. The present “instruction movement” in academic libraries began in the early 1970s when the rising number of college students and the increasing diversity of the student population combined with an increasing sophistication in information technology to create a new interest in direct instruction in library use (Breivik 1977; Budd 1998; Hogan 1980; Salony 1995). Patricia Senn Breivik, one of the early leaders of the instruction movement, noted that the commitment to the instructional mission of the academic library would have an impact on the professional education needed by librarians. As she wrote: “Commitment to the educational functions of libraries will necessitate . . . a corollary commitment to continuing education and libraries will need to provide in-house training for their professional staffs and/or opportunities for them to participate in courses and institutes where they can obtain expertise in teaching methodologies” (Breivik 1977, 80). An early advocate for attention to teacher training as part of the professional education of librarians (Breivik 1974), Breivik focused on the need for continuing education because so few librarians had an opportunity to learn how to teach as part of their formal, pre-service education. Almost 30 years later, this continues to be the case.

In one of the earliest studies of this problem, Hogan (1980) noted that practicing librarians charged with delivering instruction to this new generation of college students consistently voiced the need for specialized training in how to teach, but were required to develop their own programming through professional associations like the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) because so few library and information science (LIS) programs offered coursework in instruction. Little had changed by the 1980s, when

a survey of accredited LIS programs found that fewer than one-third offered a course in library instruction as part of the professional degree (Larson & Meltzer 1987), and a survey of practicing librarians found that only a tiny percentage of the respondents had received formal instructional training as part of their professional education (Mandernack 1990). Even after a decade of focused attention on the importance of information literacy instruction for the profession, surveys conducted in the late 1990s found that barely more than one-half of the LIS programs accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) offered even an elective course on instruction to pre-service librarians (Sullivan 1997; Westbrook 1999). At present, the University of Washington is the only ALA-accredited LIS program that requires all students to complete a course on instruction and training, and the University of Hawaii and the University of Iowa are the only ones providing a structured opportunity for a student teaching experience connected with an elective course on instruction (Forys 2004; Meulemans & Brown 2001).<sup>1</sup> Considering the fact that recent studies have shown that one-half of all academic librarian positions advertised in the late 1990s (and all of the positions for reference librarians in academic libraries advertised throughout the decade) included a required responsibility for direct instruction of students (Albrecht & Baron 2002; Lynch & Smith 2001), this continued lack of attention to teacher training as part of the professional education of librarians is mystifying.

With opportunities for formal study of teaching in pre-service professional education so limited, librarians have turned to self-study, workshops, and short courses offered through state, local, and national professional associations to meet their needs for continuing professional education (Education Committee n.d.). On-the-job training has

been another option for librarians wishing to learn to teach (or to improve their work as teachers) (Albrecht & Baron 2002; Clark & Jones 1986). A survey of Wisconsin librarians conducted in 1986, for example, found that self-study was the most common form of continuing education pursued by librarians hoping to improve their performance as teachers, but that workshops and in-house training programs were preferred (Mandernack 1990). A national survey of instruction librarians conducted in 1988-89 likewise found that on-the-job training and self-study were the most common ways in which librarians achieved competence in professional skills related to teaching (Shonrock & Mulder 1993). Similar results were found in a national survey conducted in 2000, in which over 80% of respondents reported that they learned to teach through on-the-job training, and that they improved their teaching skills most often through self-study (e.g., reviewing relevant literature in the field) (Albrecht & Baron 2002).

Self-study for librarians interested in teaching has been facilitated over the past 15-20 years through the publication of textbooks such as *Library Instruction for Librarians* (Roberts & Blandy 1989) and *Information Literacy Instruction: Theory and Practice* (Grassian & Kaplowitz 2001) and of practitioner-oriented materials such as *Learning to Teach: Workshops on Instruction* (Bibliographic Instruction Section 1993). A wealth of literature has also been published in professional and scholarly journals (Rader 2000, 2002), and interested librarians have been able to turn for over 20 years to *Research Strategies*, a peer-reviewed journal dedicated specifically to examining instructional services in academic libraries. Workshops are provided regularly by professional associations such as the ALA Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT) and the ACRL Instruction Section (IS). Most recently, ACRL invested in the development of

a national “Institute for Information Literacy” aimed at providing basic instruction in learning theory, instructional design, and classroom presentation skills, as well as advanced instruction in program management and assessment of student learning (Education Committee n.d.; Association of College & Research Libraries 2005b). Thus, while instruction as a field of study continues to hold a marginal place in the pre-service professional education of the majority of librarians, there is an active market for continuing education in this area. Given the significance of continuing education opportunities as the primary means by which academic librarians both learn how to teach and improve their teaching skills, and the variety of opportunities currently available to them, it is important to know which opportunities academic librarians are most likely to pursue, the factors that encourage or discourage their pursuit of these opportunities, and the degree to which academic librarians feel supported by their organizations in their pursuit of instructional improvement.

### *Instructional Improvement in Higher Education*

Instructional improvement is a term found in the literature of college teaching to describe the professional development opportunities for college faculty aimed at helping them improve their performance in the classroom (Paulsen & Feldman 1995). Many of the themes addressed in the literature of college teaching also appear regularly in studies of professional development and review programs for academic librarians. Chief among these are: (1) the charge that faculty have not been well prepared for their work as teachers; (2) the fact that instructional work has become the focus of greater attention on the college campus for the past 30 years and that, as a result, faculty have become the audience for a host of professional development programs aimed at improving college

teaching; and (3) the idea that support for a “culture of teaching” on campus is critical to the success of attempts to improve instruction.

For example, while it is undoubtedly true that few librarians receive direct instruction in how to teach as part of their professional education, the same has long been said of our colleagues among the classroom faculty. One of the earliest national studies of college teaching found that graduate education is only “indirectly concerned with teaching” (Eble 1972). Almost two decades later, another student of college teaching likewise concluded that “the graduate training of college professors has been found to be generally ineffective in preparing them for their role as teachers” (Cuseo 1989). As late as the 1990s, leading scholars and practitioners in the faculty development movement repeated these concerns (Gaff & Logan 1998; Seldin, et al. 1990; Tucker 1993; Weimer 1990). The challenge of becoming an effective teacher is most significant for new faculty, many of whom come into their first professional position with “little or no teaching experience” (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders 2000, 76), and whose professional socialization into their instructional role has been haphazard, at best (Tierney & Bensimon 1996). In study after study, teaching is consistently identified as one of the most challenging responsibilities for new members of the college faculty owing to a lack of effective preparation for this role (e.g., Boice 1992; Fink 1984).

Like other college teachers, academic librarians are responsible for a wide variety of professional activities, including teaching, research, and service (not to mention the design and delivery of information services, the development and maintenance of print and electronic collections, the establishment and control of metadata schemes that facilitate access to print and electronic resources, the application of information

technology both to ongoing and emergent service programs, and so on) (e.g., Lynch & Smith 2001). Also like their colleagues, it is often the instructional role for which they are least prepared and, one might argue, least likely to be rewarded.

Like academic librarians, college faculty in all disciplines have found greater attention being paid to their instructional work over the past 20-30 years than had been the case in the past (Eble & McKeachie 1985; Menges & Austin 2001; Paulsen & Feldman 1995).<sup>2</sup> As a result, a second important theme in the literature is that college faculty have become the audience for a variety of professional development activities aimed at improving their performance as classroom teachers (Lewis 1996; Tiberius 2002). A number of surveys of professional development programs for college faculty have been conducted in order to identify precisely which of these mechanisms have been put into place, and which are considered by faculty members to be most effective in motivating them to focus on instructional improvement (Centra 1976; Erickson 1986; Kurfiss & Boice 1990; Wright & O'Neil 1994). Weimer & Lenze (1997) organized this host of instructional improvement activities available to college faculty into five overarching types of "instructional intervention" that can be used as a framework for examining instructional improvement programs on college campuses (and in academic libraries): (1) workshops and seminars; (2) consultation with instructional designers and campus teaching experts; (3) instructional grants (e.g., funding for teaching materials, awards of release time for developing instructional resources or pursuing opportunities to learn more about teaching); (4) distribution of resource materials (e.g., synopses of effective teaching practices drawn from the literature); and (5) programs that allow faculty to offer collegial review and support of each other's instructional activities (e.g.,

discussion groups on instructional issues, mentoring programs focused on orienting new faculty to their teaching responsibilities and on supporting experienced faculty in their instructional improvement efforts). Academic librarians are rarely included in surveys of professional development activities provided for college faculty, but the issues and practices identified in these surveys as significant for understanding instructional improvement on the college campus can also be used to examine instructional improvement in the academic library.

The final major theme that may be drawn out of the literature of college teaching that is of significance to academic librarians is the idea of a “culture of teaching” as critical to any departmental or institutional attempt to improve the quality of instructional performance. Paulsen and Feldman (1995), Feldman and Paulsen (1999), and McKinney (2002) have identified a number of distinctive elements characteristic of a culture of teaching, including:

- senior administrators demonstrate a commitment to supporting instructional activities and faculty attention to instructional improvement;
- faculty are involved in planning and implementing activities and programs aimed at improving teaching;
- faculty interact frequently – formally and informally – to discuss instructional issues;
- professional development resources related to college teaching are available on campus, including a teaching center that houses experts in instructional design and improvement; and



- demonstration of effective teaching is a component of all appointment, promotion, and tenure decisions.

To positively influence professional performance, a culture of teaching must be shared across an academic unit – whether that unit is a department, college, or library. Among the most important facets of a healthy culture of teaching are support from senior administrators and a commitment to documentation of instructional effectiveness as part of annual review processes and other personnel decisions.

Administrative support for instructional improvement is only one facet of a healthy culture of teaching in a department or college, but it is the one around which many others revolve. In a national survey of instructional improvement activities offered to college faculty, Wright and O’Neil (1994) reported widespread support for the belief that administrators “play a pivotal role in improving teaching by creating an environment in which the importance of the teaching function is articulated and supported” (16). Similar conclusions regarding the importance of administrative support for instructional improvement can be found in Bensimon, Ward, and Sanders (2000), Lucas (1989), Seldin and Associates (1990), and Weimer (1990). Owing especially to their ability to reward good teaching and to provide material support for individual faculty efforts aimed at instructional improvement, administrators are able to put into place many of the mechanisms that support a culture of teaching across a department, library, college, or campus.

Also related to the broader notion of a culture of teaching is the increasing importance of evaluation of instructional performance. Peer review of teaching and of instructional materials, the addition of requirements for teaching portfolios as part of

annual review processes, and the establishment of awards for exemplary teaching by individuals and departments have all joined established programs collecting student evaluations as a familiar part of the professional landscape of college teaching over the past decade (Bernstein, Jonson, & Smith 2000; Boyer 1990; Centra 1993; Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff 1997; Murray 1995; Ory 2000; Seldin 1997; Svinicki & Menges 1996; University of Nebraska, Lincoln n.d.). Faculty evaluation programs that include methods such as peer review and the documentation of instructional effectiveness through the use of teaching portfolios have brought new attention to the issue of instructional improvement, and these issues have recently begun to shape initiatives in the formal review and evaluation of the professional performance of academic librarians.

### *Instructional Improvement in Academic Libraries*

Just as college faculty, as a whole, have faced pressure to more effectively document their success in the classroom in recent years, so, too, have academic librarians. Chapman, Pettway, and White (2001) identified three organizational and professional forces shaping the call to document instructional effectiveness among academic librarians: (1) the emergence of new standards for student mastery of information literacy skills; (2) the inclusion of information literacy instruction as part of the accreditation requirements both for academic programs and for institutions of higher education; and (3) the need perceived by library administrators to document the direct contributions of librarians to the instructional mission of the parent institution (294). While evaluation of library instruction may have once been the “weak link” in the overall instructional service program of many academic libraries (Ragains 1997, 160), now it is a central concern. But, while academic libraries across the country are beginning to explore

the development of formal programs for instructional assessment and improvement, there have been relatively few studies of current practice.

Until very recently, in fact, the only formal research in this area came from a survey conducted in the mid-1990s by Ragains (1997). In this electronic-mail survey, Ragains collected responses from 44 librarians across the country to questions about their use of formal instruments designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of library instruction. Ragains identified three primary purposes behind the collection of student evaluations of library instruction: (1) to provide direct feedback to individual librarians; (2) to be used in program evaluation; and (3) to provide evidence of instructional effectiveness that could be used as part of a regular performance review (160).

A more rigorous approach to studying this issue can be found in a 2003 survey of the institutional membership of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) by DeFranco and Bleiler (2003). This survey included a number of questions regarding the composition of assessment instruments and the purposes to which the results of assessments of instructional services were put by individual libraries and librarians. Among the conclusions that might be drawn from the DeFranco and Bleiler study is that, while no longer uncommon, formal assessment of instructional effectiveness remains unevenly pursued even among large research libraries. For example, only 63% of respondents reported that their libraries practiced formal assessment of instruction. Moreover, informal mechanisms for assessment were as likely to be present as formal ones. Finally, consistent with the conclusions drawn by Ragains (1997), DeFranco and Bleiler found that the most common purpose behind conducting assessment of instruction was program improvement rather than staff evaluation, or for use in making personnel

decisions as part of either the annual review or the appointment, promotion, and tenure process. Thus, while DeFranco and Bleiler suggest that librarians are paying an increasing amount of attention to the issue of assessment of instructional performance, the professional practices they document are relatively limited compared with those now routinely applied as part of the assessment of the instructional performance of college teachers, as a whole [a fact noted indirectly by respondents who, according to DeFranco and Bleiler (2003), reported “significant dissatisfaction . . . with the measures by which assessments are conducted (16)].

The remaining literature available on the subject of instructional improvement programs in academic libraries is more anecdotal than analytical, and includes reports of innovative programs for orientation and mentoring of library instructors (Leadley 1998; Litten 2002), peer assessment of library instruction (Levene & Frank 1993; Middleton 2002; Vidmar 2004), the use of teaching portfolios among academic librarians (Arnold & Pearson 1996; Chapman, Pettway, & White 2001; Tuttle 2001), and the development of extensive, in-house training programs focused on the study of teaching and learning (University Library, University of Michigan, 2002, 2003).

Peer coaching is a collegial approach to fostering instructional improvement that has become popular in academic libraries over the past decade (Levene & Frank 1993). A description of a representative program can be found at the Syracuse University Library (2003). The goal of this voluntary program is “to help librarians develop instructional skills in a non-threatening, non-evaluative atmosphere, and to learn new ideas and approaches from their colleagues.” Key to this program is its voluntary nature and its focus on formative assessment of instructional performance. Similar programs have been

established at Dartmouth College (2004), The Ohio State University (2004b), the University of Notre Dame (2005), and the University of Massachusetts – Amherst (Mestre 2003). Representative documentation from the Syracuse University program is included in Appendix 3. Further examples are available in Walter and Hinchliffe (2005).

While each of these programs identifies a number of discrete teaching skills that may serve as the focus for improvement through the peer coaching process, perhaps the most important benefit of participation is the promise such programs hold for increasing regular discussions about teaching among academic librarians. Leadley (1998) and Litten (2002) describe different approaches to fostering discussion through informal meetings and more formal “in-service” programs. Additional examples of a full range of such programs can be found at The Ohio State University Libraries (2004a). Discussion of this sort is a distinguishing feature of a culture of teaching and the “non-threatening” nature of the programs at these institutions promises to foster communication and collaboration among colleagues related to their instructional responsibilities.

As noted above, however, calls for accountability for instructional effectiveness are also a feature of the contemporary professional environment for college teachers, and another recently-developed model for facilitating instructional improvement among academic librarians focuses on summative assessment of teaching through the annual review, promotion, and tenure process. Middleton (2002) describes the evolution of a peer evaluation program at the Oregon State University Libraries aimed at fostering instructional improvement among librarians while also meeting institutional requirements for demonstration of formal review of teaching activities by members of the OSU faculty. While the actual activities associated with the peer evaluation model may be similar to

those found in the peer coaching model (e.g., classroom observations of teaching with written feedback provided to the librarian under observation), the fact that the former is tied to the annual review, promotion, and tenure process raises the stakes for all involved.

Both peer coaching and peer evaluation of teaching are models for instructional improvement that have long been found among members of the classroom faculty at colleges and universities. Likewise familiar to many members of the classroom faculty is another approach to documenting instructional effectiveness currently finding favor among academic librarians – the teaching portfolio. Chapman, Pettway, and White (2001) provide a description of a comprehensive teaching portfolio used at Valdosta State University. This portfolio is used not to demonstrate the effectiveness of individual librarians as teachers, but to demonstrate the effectiveness of the VSU library instruction program. Through the completion of student evaluations, peer evaluations, and self evaluation, librarians document effective teaching strategies, create an archive of useful instructional materials, and contribute to an atmosphere of “reflective practice” (Schon 1983; Vidmar 2004) among teaching librarians. While VSU employs what might be referred to as a “program portfolio,” many academic librarians across the country have demonstrated interest in the use of a teaching portfolio as a means of demonstrating individual instructional effectiveness (Arnold & Pearson 1996; Tuttle 2001).

Finally, a number of academic libraries have worked to meet interest in instructional improvement through in-house workshops and training programs. On-the-job training remains the most common approach to professional development among academic librarians, and a number of studies have demonstrated this to be the case for instructional improvement activities (Albrecht & Baron 2002; Mandernack 1990;

Shonrock & Mulder 1993). Likewise, research on instructional improvement activities among college faculty finds that workshops remain among the most commonly used approaches to program development (Weimer & Lenze 1997). An exemplary model for workshop programming can be found in the “University Library Instructor College” at the University of Michigan (2003). Providing a list of professional literature related to teaching as well as a link to instructional improvement resources on campus, Instructor College has also provided workshops led both by librarians and by faculty drawn from across campus on topics including instructional collaboration, classroom presentation skills, learning theory, instructional design, and assessment of student learning (University Library, University of Michigan 2002). Similar programs of ongoing workshops drawing on instructional expertise found both within the library and across the campus can be found at numerous institutions, and the approach has even migrated to the online environment at the General Libraries at the University of Texas (2003), where librarians have developed a series of Web-based workshop resources related to teaching and learning in academic libraries.

Programs such as these demonstrate the keen interest in instructional improvement among academic librarians, but attempts to identify a national collection of instructional improvement resources for academic librarians or to link these efforts to broader trends in instructional improvement programs for college faculty have been limited. The next logical steps in the study of teaching and learning in academic libraries is to facilitate the identification of these resources, to identify a set of best practices for instructional improvement in academic libraries, and to integrate discussions of librarian-

led instruction into broader discussions of college teaching at the campus and national levels.

### Design of the Study

Following the conclusion drawn above that there is a significant relationship between the study of instructional programs in academic libraries and the broader study of college teaching, the present study made use of a survey instrument similar to those used in earlier studies of support for instructional improvement among the college faculty. Using earlier instruments as models, the author developed a preliminary set of survey items that were reviewed by colleagues at Washington State University in the College of Education and the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology. Comments received on this initial set of items were used to revise the survey instrument and a final draft of the instrument was used in a pilot study during March 2004. Final revisions to the instrument were made following the conclusion of the pilot study, and the survey was disseminated to its target population between June and August 2004.

The population for this study was defined as public services librarians serving in academic libraries in the United States holding membership in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). A random sample of 9 institutions were drawn from the 2004 ARL membership and all public services librarians who could be identified using institutional Web sites received an invitation by electronic mail to complete the survey in June 2004. Four additional institutions were added to the original sample because of their innovations in the field of instructional improvement. Public services librarians at these institutions were likewise invited to complete the survey instrument in June 2004. The final sample comprised 13 institutions housing 461 public services librarians (n=461). A



reminder was sent in July, and a final invitation to complete the survey was sent in August. By the time the survey site was closed at the end of August 2004, a total of 98 usable responses had been collected for a response rate of 21%.

## Results

While space will not allow a complete report of the findings of this study, one can draw a number of initial conclusions related to the core questions identified earlier, i.e.:

1. What activities do academic librarians pursue in order to become more effective teachers?
2. What motivates academic librarians to pursue instructional improvement activities?
3. In what ways are individual librarians supported by their organizations in their pursuit of instructional improvement?
4. In what ways is one's performance as a teacher formally evaluated as part of the professional review process?

Finally, one may draw some conclusions from the survey responses regarding the degree to which a culture of teaching exists in academic libraries.

In order to identify what activities academic librarians pursue in order to become more effective teachers, participants were asked to identify the activities they thought would be most effective in helping them to improve their own teaching, as well as the frequency with which they actually participated in such activities. Table 4.1 shows the instructional improvement activities that respondents suggested would most help them to improve their own teaching. Items are listed in rank order from highest to lowest for

items where the suggested activity was rated likely to be “very helpful” by at least 20% of the respondents.

**Table 4.1: Activities Likely to be Helpful in Improving Your Own Teaching**

Consult colleagues in the library	36%
Attend workshop sponsored by in-house training program	23%
Continuing education in the field of Education/Psychology/Instructional Design	22%
Attend a professional conference that includes programs on information literacy	20%
Talk with campus faculty about teaching	20%

Table 4.2 shows the instructional improvement activities in which respondents reported most frequent participation. Items are listed in rank order from highest to lowest where the suggested activity was reported as being engaged in at least monthly by at least 20% of the respondents.

**Table 4.2: Activities Engaged in Most Frequently**

Read professional literature related to instructional services in libraries	57%
Read professional literature related to college teaching and/or higher education	36%
Consult colleagues in the library	35%
Talk with campus faculty about teaching	25%

Two other activities noted as being perceived as “very helpful” to instructional improvement also received note in this item, but at a lower frequency. For example, 67% of respondents reported that they attended professional conferences that included information literacy programming at least once a year, while 58% reported the same frequency of attendance at programs sponsored by an in-house training program.

In order to identify what motivates academic librarians to pursue instructional improvement activities, participants were asked to identify how influential a given reason might be for their decision to pursue an opportunity for professional development in the area of instruction. Table 4.3 shows the factors most likely to influence an individual librarian to pursue an opportunity for instructional improvement. Items are listed in rank order from highest to lowest where a given factor was deemed by at least 20% of the respondents to be “critically” important to one’s decision to pursue an instructional improvement opportunity.

**Table 4.3: Factors Most Likely to Influence a Decision to Participate in an Instructional Improvement Activity**

Topic is directly applicable to my work	44%
Personal interest in topic	40%
Availability of funding for participation	30%
Opportunity to build on existing interests	22%

In order to identify the ways in which academic libraries support individual librarians in their pursuit of instructional improvement, participants were asked to identify the specific programs or practices provided by their local organizations. Table 4.4 shows opportunities for instructional improvement identified by at least 50% of the respondents as being available locally.

**Table 4.4: Instructional Improvement Practices Most Often Supported in Academic Libraries**

Release time/financial support for attendance at professional conferences	88%
Release time/financial support for attendance at workshops focused on instruction	78%
Feedback from students	72%
Release time/financial support for continuing education courses	70%

In order to determine the ways in which one’s performance as a teacher has become incorporated into formal professional review processes, participants were asked to identify whether or not assessment of teaching was part either of the annual review process or, when applicable, of the promotion and tenure process. Only 46% of respondents reported that assessment of instruction was a part of such review processes. Those who responded that assessment of instruction was part of their review processes were then asked to identify the mechanisms for assessment of instructional performance supported as part of those processes. Table 4.5 shows the complete range of responses received from survey participants (total response rate is greater than 100% owing to multiple mechanisms being in place in individual libraries).

**Table 4.5: Methods of Assessment of Instructional Performance Used in Academic Libraries**

Student evaluation	57%
Self-assessment	49%
Peer coaching/evaluation	49%
Supervisor evaluation	25%
Teaching portfolios	7%

Finally, while virtually all participants reported that issues related to improvement and assessment of the instructional performance of librarians were under discussion in their organizations, and a variety of mechanisms are clearly in place that might help libraries and librarians to address these issues, the question remains to what extent the

existence of such discussions and the implementation of such programs reflect the development of a culture of teaching in academic libraries similar to that which has been identified as critical to the development of instructional improvement programs campus-wide?

In order to begin exploring this complex question of organizational culture, participants were asked to identify the facets identified in the literature of higher education as being representative of a healthy culture of teaching that they thought would be most likely to improve the quality of instruction in their libraries, and then to identify the degree to which they agreed that these actually existed within their libraries. Table 4.6 shows the facets of a culture of teaching that respondents thought would be most important to actually improving the teaching conducted through their libraries. Items are listed in rank order from highest to lowest where a given facet was deemed “very important” to improving local instruction by at least 50% of the respondents.

**Table 4.6: Factors Associated with a Culture of Teaching Most Likely to Improve  
Information Literacy Instruction**

Library administration recognizes the importance of teaching responsibilities	69%
Library administration promotes instruction as a core library service	63%
Teaching is specifically recognized in annual reviews and/or promotion and tenure decisions	62%
Availability of funding for attendance at workshops focused on teaching	52%
Orientation for librarians new to teaching	50%

Table 4.7 shows the facets of a culture of teaching that at least 50% of respondents agreed were currently present in their organizations.

**Table 4.7: Facets of a Culture of Teaching Most Commonly Visible in Academic  
Libraries**

Library administration recognizes the importance of teaching responsibilities	77%
Teaching is specifically recognized in annual review and/or promotion and tenure decisions	70%
Library administration promotes instruction as a core library service in annual reports or other publications	68%
Library administration gives visibility to instructional improvement activities	55%
Hiring practices require demonstration of teaching ability	54%

Discussion and Implications for Future Research

While this survey raises as many questions as it answers (for example, does the fact that a majority of respondents reported that hiring practices in their libraries require a demonstration of teaching skills mean that poor performance in that area has ever actually prevented someone from being hired?), we may draw a number of initial conclusions from its results.



For example, the results of this survey corroborate earlier work conducted on the education and professional development of instruction librarians. Attendance at in-house workshops and conference programs remain among the most preferred methods for improving instruction, and self-study through regular review of the literature of information literacy instruction remains one of the methods most frequently used. This finding also coincides with similar studies of instructional improvement practices among college faculty as a whole.

Also important and worthy of further study is the degree to which consultation with colleagues within the library and, to a lesser extent, across the college teaching community is both seen as a valuable means of improving one's work as a teacher and is actually engaged on a regular basis. It seems likely that the popularity of peer assessment of instruction among academic librarians is rooted in this orientation toward peers as an effective resource for becoming a better teacher (e.g., while 36% of respondents thought that consulting library colleagues would be "very helpful" to them in improving their instructional work, only 17% said the same about consulting with instructional support and design personnel outside the library). The focus on peer interactions also reflects the importance of providing opportunities for substantive discussion among colleagues of teaching and of issues related to instructional performance. Stephen Brookfield (1995), a leading adult educator, wrote that "silence surrounds us as teachers" (247), and faculty development expert Robert A. Armour (1995) noted that establishing programs that foster "good conversations about teaching" (24) is critical to the development of a campus culture of teaching.

An exemplary model for supporting regular discussions of teaching among academic librarians can be found at The Ohio State University, which supports an Instruction and Outreach Committee within the libraries that sponsor both regular “brown-bag” discussions of instruction, as well as a more substantial annual retreat (Ohio State University Libraries 2004a). Ohio State may be unusual in the fine articulation of its program, but several academic libraries have established regular opportunities for discussion of instructional issues, including both formal retreats (Litten 2002) and less formal (but more frequent) meetings for teaching librarians (Leadley 1998; Washington State University Libraries 2005b). Further research is needed on how such opportunities for “good conversation about teaching” in academic libraries complement formal programs for instructional improvement and assessment of instructional performance.

Next, the results of this survey reflect the broader consensus among instructional improvement professionals and scholars in the field of college teaching regarding the critical role of administrative leadership for any instructional improvement initiative (Bensimon, Ward, & Sanders 2000; Centra 1993; Lucas 1989; Paulsen & Feldman 1995; Seldin, et al. 1990, 1999). Administrative leadership has been identified as critical to the development of a culture of teaching and its attendant focus on “taking teaching seriously” as a professional responsibility. Participants in this survey clearly agreed with this point, as they identified administrative support and activities that are best promoted as senior leadership as being the most critical to the establishment of a culture of teaching in their libraries. Recognizing the importance of instructional responsibilities, promoting the library as an instructional center on campus, and providing ongoing support to librarians interested in improving their work as teachers are all commitments that must be

made at the administrative level if a focus on instructional improvement is to become pervasive throughout an academic library. Academic library leaders, however, have a number of roles that they might fruitfully promote for the library on campus, including the traditional role of the library as a gateway to information resources and the emergent role of the library as a hub for thinking about the place of information technology in higher education. It will be important for future research to focus on senior administrators in academic libraries in order to determine how ready and willing they are to serve as instructional leaders for their professional staff and to work to focus attention and resources on the active role of the library and librarians in the teaching and learning process on campus.

The results of this survey and its related literature review also suggest that there are more similarities between the position that academic librarians find themselves in when learning to teach and that of their colleagues among the classroom faculty than we may have appreciated in the past. Both the literature of college teaching and the literature of academic librarianship suggest that many of us are ill-prepared for one of our most important professional responsibilities when we take our first position in academe. While the classroom faculty have been the subject of a variety of instructional improvement programs as part of the focus on faculty development over the past 30 years, academic librarians have built a parallel network of professional development opportunities found primarily through the regular offerings of local, state, and national library associations (Education Committee n.d.). As the instructional work of many academic librarians comes to increasingly resemble that of other college teachers, it would make sense for academic librarians to take greater advantage of instructional improvement programs

offered on their own campuses to other members of the faculty and instructional staff. Further research is needed into the nature of collaborative programming between the academic library and units such as the campus teaching center, and further inquiry should be designed to bring academic librarians more clearly into the fold when instructional improvement initiatives are being promoted across campus.

Finally, as important as bringing together the discussions of instructional improvement for classroom faculty and of professional development for academic librarians engaged in information literacy instruction are the lessons that we can learn from the literature of college teaching about the design of formal assessment of instructional performance. Fewer than half of the respondents to this survey indicated that professional performance as a teacher was evaluated as part of formal review processes, but even this response reflects an upward trend from earlier studies, which suggested that evaluation of instruction, if conducted at all, was designed primarily for program review, rather than for individual review. Regular messages to the ILI-L electronic discussion list over the past 2-3 years on topics such as the development and use of teaching portfolios and the development and implementation of mechanisms for peer review of teaching in libraries also suggest increasing interest in this topic.<sup>3</sup> Again, since there has been so much interest in peer review of teaching and in the development of holistic and appropriate mechanisms for faculty evaluation within the academic community over the past decade, it makes sense for library leaders and senior administrators to apply the lessons learned by scholars such as Peter Seldin (1990, 1999), John A. Centra (1993), and Raoul A. Arreola (1995) to the development of professional evaluation programs for academic librarians.

## Conclusion

Instruction programs in academic libraries are at a crossroads. While instruction has been provided to college students by academic librarians for over a century, changes to both the student population and to the information environment over the past 30 years have resulted in a substantial increase in the scope and prominence of library-based instructional services programs in institutions of higher education across the United States and around the world. Writing about the situation in Australian higher education, Peacock (2000) identified an historic moment for the academic library profession during which broad interest in information literacy skills offers an opportunity for librarians to become “key educators in the teaching and learning environment . . . empowered with an educational competence and professional confidence equal to that of their academic peers.” Studies by academic librarians (Breivik 1998; Rockman 2004), faculty development experts (Lieberman & Guskin 2003), and scholars of the college teaching profession (Rhoads 2000) all suggest that we face a similarly pivotal moment in the academic library profession in the United States.

College teaching is likewise at a crossroads. While many of us are familiar with the debate over the increasing use of graduate students and adjunct faculty in teaching positions, this is only one of many forces seen by experienced observers of college teaching as fundamentally re-shaping that professional environment. The impact of information technology on teaching and learning, the rise of increasingly interdisciplinary approaches to scholarly inquiry, and the emphasis on formal evaluation of instructional effectiveness described briefly above are all part of what Lieberman and Guskin (2003) referred to as “new higher education models.” These new models offer a wealth of

opportunities for academic librarians (and others) to add significant teaching responsibilities to their role on campus, e.g., in first-year-experience programs, and in interdisciplinary programs aimed at supporting instruction in research methods or the use of information technology by current and future faculty members. Rhoads (2000) identified this increasing focus on the teaching role of “non-faculty professionals” on campus as one of the most significant challenges facing the traditional understanding of college teaching and the role of the classroom faculty in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For those of us who embrace a “non-traditional” vision of college teaching, however, this provides an unprecedented opportunity. By seeing our work within the broader context of college teaching, academic librarians will be better prepared to meet the challenges of instructional improvement and better equipped to take advantage of opportunities to bring information professionals closer to the core instructional mission of their institutions.

Academic librarians across the country have started to focus their attention on the improvement and assessment of their own instructional performance and that of their colleagues. By learning from the experiences of the leading programs identified in this study and by building on the ideas and concerns raised by participants in the present survey, we can begin to identify some of the factors – both individual and organizational – that may help to foster a culture of teaching in academic libraries and a focus on instructional improvement. Writing almost a decade ago, Weimer and Lenze (1997) noted that efforts to improve instruction on the college campus were occurring primarily “within the realm of practice” (297), i.e., practice was preceding research. The same has been true of instructional improvement programs in academic libraries. Our bases for establishing effective practices, however, have grown considerably over the past several

years and the time is now ripe for research that can guide (rather than follow) future practice.

## Notes

1. There are currently 56 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada with programs accredited by the American Library Association (American Library Association 2005a). A Master's degree from a program accredited by ALA is the credential required for most professional librarian positions. K-12 school librarians may also receive credentials from programs accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and approved by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) (American Library Association 2005c).
2. For additional evidence of this renewed emphasis on college teaching at the national level, see also the American Association for Higher Education's "Teaching Initiatives" materials (AAHE 2003).
3. ILI-L <<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrlbucket/is/ilil.htm>> is an electronic discussion list sponsored by the Instruction Section of the Association of College & Research Libraries. It provides an international forum for the discussion of instructional services in all library types, but is dominated by discussion of information literacy instruction in academic libraries (Instruction Section n.d.).



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.; 2000) defines “praxis” as the “practical application or exercise of a branch of learning” (Bartelby.com 2005). Each of the essays presented in this collection is an example of praxis, i.e., each is meant to draw lessons from the results of research that may be applied by practitioners and administrators in academic libraries. Each is also meant to address the concern raised by Gatten (1991), who criticized library and information science research for failing to draw upon the literature of other fields, by articulating ways in which research frameworks drawn from fields such as teacher education, student affairs administration, and college teaching can be fruitfully applied to the study of academic libraries and librarians. While suggestions for further research and preliminary conclusions have already been reported in each essay, it is now time to place the studies, as a collection, within the broader context of research and practice in information literacy instruction and the administration of academic libraries.

#### The Librarian as Teacher

Each of the essays included in this collection is based on the assumption that the professional work of academic librarians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century may be understood within the broader context of college teaching, i.e., that the librarian has an increasingly significant professional role as a teacher. While many studies cited throughout this collection support this basic assumption, it is not an assumption that has been universally adopted across the profession. Wilson (1979) argued that the image of librarians as teachers was a

“fiction” that served to hinder the development of a realistic professional identity. Biggs (1981) identified significant differences between the professional socialization of librarians and members of the teaching faculty that (she argued) served to place each group at odds with the other. Peele (1984) argued that librarians “respond” to the academic curriculum, while teachers are the “originators” of curriculum. Each of these rebuttals to the image of the librarian as teacher that informs each of the studies presented in this collection pre-dates both the articulation of “information literacy” as the framework for understanding the role of librarian as teacher and the rise of the Internet as a factor in undergraduate and graduate education, but a small number of critics continue to argue that the instructional work conducted by librarians is not comparable to that conducted by members of the classroom faculty. White (2003), for example, referred to librarians as “pale imitations” of faculty members, both in terms of research and teaching, while Ardis (2005) argued that the instruction provided by librarians is best understood as “guest lecturing,” rather than as teaching. Rather than directly engage this debate by contrasting these minority voices with the more numerous studies that support the basic assumption of the librarian as teacher, it is best to remind the reader that academic librarianship is a profession in flux (Budd 2005; Creth 1995; Lynch & Smith 2001), that multiple perceptions exist among different generations of librarians about their professional roles and responsibilities (Watson-Boone 1998), and that debate over the shape of the profession in the future is inevitable. That debate, however, will be shaped most significantly by the strategic directions taken by leading professional associations and (for academic librarians) by the changing landscape of American higher education.

As regards professional associations, it is worth noting that the largest of these – the American Library Association (ALA) – has included teaching among the core competencies identified for the profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As noted by the ALA Task Force on Core Competencies (2004):

The process of facilitating learning is a continuous one involving both the teacher and the learner in ongoing interaction. In some manner or other, virtually every librarian is involved in this process and it is an increasing role for most positions. Academic, public, school and special librarians frequently train themselves, other staff and our users/customers individually and in group settings. This process requires a new set of skills. The understanding of the entire learning/teaching process influences how we go about that training and how effective we are in its delivery. Therefore, we at ALA believe it is imperative that each professional should have certain basic skills and knowledge base to enable the learning and teaching process. We acknowledge that these skills are improved upon as these skills are utilized. These skills include knowledge of learning theories and methodologies; the ability to assess learning needs; capability to design and develop educational/instructional programs appropriate to meeting these needs including selection of appropriate delivery methods.

The studies presented in this collection contribute to the ongoing discussion of how librarians accept responsibility for teaching as a core professional responsibility and how they achieve mastery over the core competencies in this area identified both by ALA and

by earlier studies (e.g., Bibliographic Instruction Section 1993; Kilcullen 1998; Shonrock & Mulder 1993).

The focus on the librarian as teacher is also supported by trends in American higher education. It was almost 30 years ago that Breivik (1977) first articulated the connection between changing student demographics and evolving information technologies and the rising interest in what we now refer to as information literacy instruction. Over the past decade, a number of scholars of information science and higher education have noted the rise of an “information-age mindset” (Frاند 2000) among the current generation of students, and have enumerated a number of challenges facing those responsible for teaching members of this “Net Generation” (Oblinger & Oblinger 2005). Studies of the current generation of college students (Brown 2000; Coomes & DeBard 2004; Howe & Strauss 2003; Jones 2002; Oblinger 2003) suggest that we once again face a significant period of demographic and technological change in higher education. It is no coincidence that the rise of the Net Generation on our campuses coincides with national (and international) efforts to define information literacy skills as a foundational element of undergraduate education (Bruce 2001; Instruction Section 2003; Julien 2000; Julien & Boon 2002; Peacock 2000; Rader 1996). Studies by Costello, Lenholt, and Stryker (2004), Manuel (2002), and Sheesley (2002) have explored the significance of this generational change for the instruction provided by librarians to today’s students, and it will be important to continue building these connections between research into the design, delivery, and assessment of instructional services provided by librarians (and other information professionals) and broader issues related to changes in the student body

and changes to the place of information technology both in college teaching and in student life (Walter 2005a).

### Recommendations for Future Research

Each of the essays included in this collection presents suggestions for future research, but there are a few overarching themes that tie those discrete suggestions into the framework provided by the recently updated “Research Agenda for Library Instruction and Information Literacy” (Research and Scholarship Committee 2005).

First, the “Research Agenda” includes a number of questions related to the professional education of librarians, including:

- What are the most effective ways for a librarian, who has previously done little or no teaching, to learn fundamental methodologies and pedagogies?
- What educational skills from other teaching professions are relevant for librarians?

The study of instructional improvement programs presented in Chapter Four addresses questions related to professional and continuing education, but there are clearly additional questions that might be answered by future research.

For example, how might existing studies of adult education (Knowles, et al. 1984; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson 1998), especially those that focus on the teacher as adult learner (Brookfield 1995; Lawler 2003; Lawler & King 2000), inform the development and delivery of continuing education programs for librarians in the field of teaching and learning? Likewise, what might we learn from a broader study of librarians “learning to teach” that might take some of the issues identified in the study of professional identity presented in Chapter Two beyond the focus currently found both in the “Research

Agenda” and in the library literature on the acquisition of pedagogical skills and other core competencies (e.g., in the areas of instructional design and assessment of student learning)?

Second, the “Research Agenda” includes a number of questions regarding the organizational context for instructional service programs in academic libraries that address issues related to the place of the library within campus-wide programs. For example:

- How does the perception of the librarian’s status and role in a student’s education affect the success of library instruction initiatives?
- How can we identify and work with courses, academic departments, and other offices providing student and faculty support to ensure that library instruction has a broad impact?

Both the study of collaboration with multicultural student services presented in Chapter Three and the study of instructional improvement programs presented in Chapter Four address issues related to the librarian’s role within student and faculty support programs. Each study, however, could be extended to provide a broader picture of the role of the librarian as teacher.

For example, there has been ongoing discussion over the past decade in the field of student services regarding the importance of developing what Kuh (1996) referred to as a “seamless learning environment” in higher education. In a seamless learning environment, the education that students receive in the classroom is complemented by educational opportunities provided by co-curricular programs including residence hall education programs (Schroeder, et al. 1994), service learning opportunities (Jacoby, et al.

2003), leadership development (Komives, et al. 1998), and other student service programs (Engstrom & Tinto 2000; Kellogg 1999; Kramer, et al. 2003). An example of the seamless nature of the learning environment at Washington State University can be seen in the overlapping educational programs provided for students of color through formal study in the Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies, through academic support services provided through the Multicultural Student Center, and through student-led cultural programming sponsored by groups such as the Association of Pacific and Asian Women, the Native American Alliance, Mujeres Unidas, and others. Instructional outreach initiatives such as the one described in Chapter Three, which bring information literacy instruction into the co-curricular learning environment, exist on many campuses, but have been less widely studied than the information literacy instruction provided to students and faculty associated with academic programs and departments. As importantly, existing literature in the field of higher education focused on building collaborative programs between academic and student services rarely includes any discussion of the academic library as a contributor to the development and delivery of this programming. Academic librarians need to learn more about the full scope of educational opportunities offered to students on the contemporary campus, and student affairs officers and other administrators need to be made more aware of the full range of services that the academic librarian can provide to support instructional programming across campus. The experiment in instructional outreach presented in Chapter Three might serve as one model for librarian engagement with a wide variety of student support and other co-curricular programs.

Finally, there is an important area for further research identified in the study of instructional improvement programs presented in Chapter Four that moves beyond the issues identified in the “Research Agenda,” and this has to do with library leadership and the development of a culture of teaching in academic libraries. Only briefly addressed in the current study, the need for senior leadership among library administrators supporting the development and articulation of the teaching role of librarians is critical. Fowler and Walter (2003) introduced the idea of “instructional leadership” as an emerging responsibility for library leaders, but there is room for considerable further research in this area. For example, how prepared are the front-line and middle management librarians often responsible for coordination of a library instruction program to serve as leaders for library-based instructional initiatives? How prepared are these librarians to effectively articulate the role of the librarian in campus-wide teaching and learning initiatives to audiences made up of their counterparts in academic affairs, student affairs, or university administration? To what degree are librarians introduced to the broader organizational context(s) of institutions of higher education as part of either their pre-service or their continuing professional education? To what degree are senior administrators (typically defined as Associate University Librarians or University Librarians) prepared to promote a professional culture within their libraries that demonstrates the importance of the teaching role and of an ongoing commitment to professional development in this area for librarians? Currently, there is little attention to instructional leadership as a facet of library leadership (the study of which focuses much more clearly on issues such as strategic planning and stewardship of information technology initiatives on campus), but



it is an area in which leadership must proceed from the highest levels if librarians are to commit to a broader definition of their role as college teachers.

### Conclusion

Instructional services programs in academic libraries are at a crossroads. As is the library profession. As is college teaching. The studies collected in this dissertation present a framework for understanding the place of instruction programs in academic libraries (and of teaching as a core subject for professional education of librarians), and for understanding the evolution of the academic library profession within the context of broader changes in higher education (Atkins 1991; Budd 1998). A greater knowledge of the literature of higher education will allow librarians to more effectively position themselves as contributors to the instructional mission of their campuses and will help library leaders to articulate in terms recognizable to faculty, staff, and administrators outside the library world how their librarians and professional staff remain critical to that mission even in a world where, we are often told, everything in the library is now available on the Internet.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX ONE: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Washington State University Libraries  
Survey of Multicultural Student Information Needs

Fall 2003

The purpose of this WSU Libraries survey is to identify the information needs of students and staff making use of the services of the Office of Multicultural Student Services. The information collected will be used to evaluate the current services being offered to multicultural student groups by the Washington State University Libraries and to help establish priorities for future service programs.

**Directions:** Please answer each questions as completely as possible. Please return the completed survey to Shellah Imperio at the Academic Enrichment Center (CUB 51E) by **November 10, 2003**.

#### I Demographic Information

1. Which of the following best describes your role in the Multicultural Center?  
Student                      Mentor                      Staff
2. If you are a student, which of the following best describes your academic level?  
First-Year Student                      Senior  
Sophomore                      Professional Student  
Junior                      Graduate Student
3. If you are an undergraduate student, did you transfer to Washington State University from another institution?  
Yes                      No

#### II Library Experience

4. How often do you use the WSU Libraries during the academic year?  
Daily                      Once or twice a semester  
Once or twice a week                      Rarely  
A few times a month                      Never

5. For what reason(s) do you visit the library (check as many as apply)?

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Find articles/books     | Use the Internet                            |
| Attend a workshop/class | Get help from a librarian with my research  |
| Group study space       | Pick up articles/books from other libraries |

6. If you are going to use the library, are you more likely to:

- Visit a library in person
- Visit the library online through the WSU Libraries' Web site?

7. Have you ever come to the library for instruction with one of your classes? If so, which one?

- Freshman Seminar (Gen Ed 104)
- World Civilizations (Gen Ed 110/111)
- English Composition (ENGL 101/201/301/402)
- Other (please list department and course number)

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8. Have you ever had any problems finding the information you need at the WSU Libraries? (check as many as are applicable)

- No, I haven't had any problems.
- Yes, I have had problems locating books/journals in the library.
- Yes, I have had problems finding books/articles that can help me with my research.
- Yes, I have had problems finding the right person to help me with my research.
- Yes, I have had problems finding information on the WSU Libraries' Web site.
- Yes, the library doesn't seem to collect the books/journals I need for my research.

Any other specific problems that you have encountered?

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9. If you need to do research for a project (or just to find out something you want to know for your own use), are you more likely to start by:
- Asking a friend
  - Asking a professor
  - Surfing the Internet
  - Going to the library
10. Based on your answer to Question 8, what is it about asking a friend or professor/surfing the Internet/going to the library that makes it a good place to start?

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### III Library Services and the Multicultural Center (Academic Enrichment Center)

11. Please rate the following suggestions for library services according to the following scale (circle one of the following number after each suggestion):

1 = "This wouldn't matter to me."  
 3 = "Good idea. I'd try it if I had time."  
 5 = "Great idea! Where can I sign up?"

A) Orientation to the WSU Libraries for First-Year Students (e.g., how to use the Griffin catalog to find books, how to use the Summit catalog to order books for free from other libraries, how to find articles using electronic indexes, how to find electronic books and journals, how to start research on the Web)

1 - - - - > 3 - - - - > 5

B) Orientation to the WSU Libraries for Transfer Students (see above)

1 - - - - > 3 - - - - > 5

C) Workshop on Finding Information About Diverse Populations in the Library and on the Web (e.g., African Americans, Native Americans, Chicano (a)/ Latino (a), Asian Americans)

1 - - - - > 3 - - - - > 5

D) Critical Thinking and the World Wide Web (or, How Do I Know When I've Found a Good Web Site?)

1 - - - - > 3 - - - - > 5

E) One-Stop Web Site for Finding Information About Diverse Populations through the WSU Libraries

1 - - - - > 3 - - - - > 5

F) Finding Science and Health Science Information in the Library and on the Web

1 - - - - > 3 - - - - > 5

G) Finding Information About Diverse Populations through the State and Federal Government

1 - - - - > 3 - - - - > 5

H) Alternative Voices in the Media: Finding Information in Minority-Owned Publications

1 - - - - > 3 - - - - > 5

12. Please use this space to make any suggestions of your own about instructional workshops, information services, or other print or Web-based materials (e.g., handouts, Web pages) that would make it easier for you to use the WSU Libraries in your research.

**Thank you for your time and ideas!**

**Please contact Shellah Imperio [simperio@wsu.edu](mailto:simperio@wsu.edu) or Scott Walter [swalter@wsu.edu](mailto:swalter@wsu.edu) if you have any questions about this survey, or wish to discuss any of the questions further.**

**Note:** The survey instrument used in the instructional improvement research study (Chapter Four) was Web-based. Because the Web version of the instrument does not effectively translate to the printed page, I have reconfigured the original instrument for inclusion in this Appendix. A revised instrument is presented in Walter and Hinchliffe (2005).

\* \* \*

### Instructional Improvement in Academic Libraries:

#### A Survey of Current Practices

Summer 2004

You are invited to participate in a study of instructional improvement activities in academic libraries. The purpose of this study is to collect data on existing programs and to make suggestions for future practice. Please complete the following questions as completely as possible. It should take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete this survey. Responses submitted through this Web-based survey will remain anonymous unless you choose to identify yourself. The identity of all respondents who choose to self-identify will be held in strict confidentiality by the researcher.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Washington State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about the research, you may contact Scott Walter by electronic mail at <swalter@wsu.edu>, or by phone at (509) 335-8881. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the WSU Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-9661.

Your submission of data using the "Send Survey" button below signifies your informed consent to participate in this research study. Please contact Scott Walter

<swalter@wsu.edu> with any questions, or to report any technical problems with the survey.

For the purposes of this survey:

**Professional development** refers to any activities pursued by an individual librarian to enhance his or her professional knowledge or skills. Professional development activities may include independent reading, workshop attendance, completion of advanced coursework, discussion with colleagues, etc.

**Instructional improvement** refers to those professional development activities focused on enhancing one's performance in the classroom or in other instructional venues (e.g., Web-based instruction for distance learners). Instructional improvement activities may include any of the types of professional development identified above, as well as classroom observation, consultation with master teachers, etc.

- 
- 1. Have issues related to the improvement or assessment of librarians' teaching skills been discussed in your library during the past three years?**

Yes  No

If NO, please skip to the end of the survey.

- 2. How important or unimportant do you think each of the following items is in terms of its potential to improve the quality of teaching in your library (where "1" equals "Most Important"?)**

a. Hiring practices require demonstration of teaching ability

1                       2                       3                       4                       5

b. Orientation made available to librarians new to teaching

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

c. Ongoing in-house training program related to teaching skills

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

d. Availability of instructional consultants on campus

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

e. Availability of mentors for teaching among library colleagues

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

f. Library administration recognizes the importance of teaching  
responsibilities

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

g. Library administration promotes instruction as a core library service

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

h. Library administration gives visibility to instructional improvement  
activities in annual reports or other library publications

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

i. Teaching is specifically recognized in annual reviews and/or in tenure and  
promotion decisions (where applicable)

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

j. Availability of funding for attendance at professional conferences

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

k. Availability of funding for attendance at workshops focused on teaching

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

1. Availability of release time/sabbatical/professional development leave for instructional improvement activities

1                     2                     3                     4                     5

**3. Which of the following instructional improvement practices are supported by your library (please check all that apply)?**

My library provides no formal support for instructional improvement by librarians

Orientation to teaching for new librarians

Ongoing in-house training program

Outside speakers on instructional issues

Videotaping of instruction/Microteaching

Consultation with campus instructional designers

Feedback from students

Feedback from library colleagues

Release time/financial support for attendance at professional conferences

Release time/financial support for continuing education courses

Release time/financial support for attendance at workshops focused on instruction-related issues

Temporary workload reduction for instructional improvement/course development

Grants to support instructional improvement/course development

Sabbatical/Professional development leaves for improving teaching/course development

\_\_Readily accessible instructional design/development support

\_\_Readily accessible professional collection of materials related to college teaching or instructional programs in libraries.

\_\_Other (please specify)

**4. To what extent do you think engaging in the following activities would help you to improve your own teaching (where “1” equals “Very Helpful”)?**

a. Participate in an electronic discussion list related to teaching/information literacy

\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5

b. Attend a professional conference that includes programs on information literacy

\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5

c. Read professional literature related to instructional services in libraries

\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5

d. Read professional literature related to college teaching, higher education, etc.

\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5

e. Attend a workshop sponsored by my library’s in-house training program

\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5

f. Attend a workshop sponsored by my campus center for teaching excellence

\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5

g. Attend a workshop on instruction sponsored by a library association

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

h. Attend a workshop on instruction sponsored by an education association

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

i. Continuing education in library and information science

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

j. Continuing education in teaching and learning, educational psychology, or  
instructional design

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

k. Consult instructional support personnel on my campus

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

l. Consult my colleagues in the library

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

m. Talk with campus faculty about teaching

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

**5. How often do you use the following approaches to improve your own teaching (where “1” equals “Daily” and “6” equals “Never”)?**

a. Participate in an electronic discussion list related to teaching/information literacy

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5            \_\_6

b. Attend a professional conference that includes programs on information literacy

\_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5            \_\_6



c. Read professional literature related to instructional services in libraries

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

d. Read professional literature related to college teaching, higher education,  
etc.

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

e. Attend a workshop sponsored by my library's in-house training program

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

f. Attend a workshop sponsored by my campus center for teaching  
excellence

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

g. Attend a workshop on instruction sponsored by a library association

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

h. Attend a workshop on instruction sponsored by an education association

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

i. Continuing education in library and information science

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

j. Continuing education in teaching and learning, educational psychology, or  
instructional design

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

k. Consult instructional support personnel on my campus

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

l. Consult my colleagues in the library

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

m. Talk with campus faculty about teaching

\_\_ 1      \_\_2              \_\_3   \_\_4              \_\_5   \_\_6

**6. How influential is each of the following reasons in your decision to pursue or forgo an opportunity for professional development in the area of instruction (where “1” equals “Critical”)?**

a. Personal interest in learning more about topic

\_\_ 1              \_\_2              \_\_3              \_\_4              \_\_5

b. Availability of funding for participation

\_\_ 1              \_\_2              \_\_3              \_\_4              \_\_5

c. Support for such activities by library administration

\_\_ 1              \_\_2              \_\_3              \_\_4              \_\_5

d. Reputation of presenter(s)

\_\_ 1              \_\_2              \_\_3              \_\_4              \_\_5

e. Topic is directly applicable to my work

\_\_ 1              \_\_2              \_\_3              \_\_4              \_\_5

f. Topic is related to library/university initiatives

\_\_ 1              \_\_2              \_\_3              \_\_4              \_\_5

g. Opportunity to build on existing interests/skills

\_\_ 1              \_\_2              \_\_3              \_\_4              \_\_5

h. Opportunity to share what I learn with my colleagues

\_\_ 1              \_\_2              \_\_3              \_\_4              \_\_5

7. **To what degree would you be interested or not interested in pursuing instructional improvement activities aimed at helping you learn more about each of the areas described below (where “1” equals “Very Interested”)?**
- a. Principles and practice of instructional design  
 \_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5
- b. Instructional techniques/teaching tips  
 \_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5
- c. Instructional techniques focused on the needs of specific groups  
 \_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5
- d. Assessment of student learning  
 \_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5
- e. Techniques for self-assessment of instruction  
 \_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5
- f. Theories/principles of instruction/educational psychology  
 \_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5
- g. Facilitating instructional consultation/collaboration between librarians and classroom faculty  
 \_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5
- h. Principles of Web-based instruction/distance learning  
 \_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5
- i. Coordinating/leading instruction programs in libraries  
 \_\_ 1            \_\_2            \_\_3            \_\_4            \_\_5

j. Issues and trends in higher education related to teaching and learning

1                       2                       3                       4                       5

Are there other instructional improvement activities (or content areas) which you would be very interested in pursuing (please specify)?

**8 Which of the following mechanisms for assessment of librarian teaching does your library support (check all that apply)**

My library does not support any formal mechanism for assessment of librarian teaching

Self-report/reflection

Supervisor evaluation of instruction (e.g., classroom observation)

Student evaluation of instruction (e.g., classroom evaluation form)

Peer evaluation of instruction (e.g., peer coaching/mentoring)

Teaching portfolios

Other (please describe)

**9. Is assessment of teaching part of your formal annual review and/or promotion and tenure process?**

Yes

No

**10. Would you agree or disagree that the following elements of a “culture of teaching” exist in your library (where “1” equals “Strongly Agree”)?**

- a. Hiring practices require demonstration of teaching ability  
\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5
- b. Orientation and mentoring made available to librarians new to teaching  
\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5
- c. Mentoring related to teaching is available on an on-going basis to librarians  
\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5
- d. Library administration recognizes the importance of teaching responsibilities  
\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5
- e. Library administration promotes instruction as a core library service in annual reports or other library publications  
\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5
- f. Library administration promotes climate of trust for classroom observation  
\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5
- g. Library administration gives visibility to instructional improvement activities  
\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5
- h. Teaching is specifically recognized in annual reviews and/or in tenure and promotion decisions (where applicable)  
\_\_ 1                    \_\_2                    \_\_3                    \_\_4                    \_\_5

**11. Please select one of the following options to describe your position.**

- Library Dean/Director
- Assistant or Associate Dean/Director
- Administrative Services/Personnel Librarian
- Head of Library Instruction/Instruction Coordinator
- Head of Reference/Information Services
- Chair of Library Committee Responsible for Professional Development Activities
- Reference Librarian
- Instruction Librarian
- Other (please describe)

**12. How long have you been a professional librarian?**

- 1-4 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21+ years

**13. How long have you been responsible for teaching in a library classroom setting?**

- 1-4 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years

21+ years

I am not currently responsible for any classroom instruction

**14. Is your institution:**

Public

Private

**15. Size of student enrollment (FTEs):**

<1,000

1,001-2,500

2,501-5,000

5,001-10,000

10,001-20,000

20,001-35,000

35,001+

**16. Number of professional librarians (FTE) employed in your library:**

1-4

5-10

11-20

21-35

36-50

51-75

76+

**17. Which of the following best describes the professional status of librarians on your campus?**

- Faculty
- Academic/Administrative Professional
- Mixture of Faculty and Academic/Administrative Professional
- Classified Staff
- Other (please describe)

**18. Which of the following options best describes the organization of instructional services in your library?**

- There is no instruction coordinator in my library
- Instructional services are coordinated by a librarian housed in a more broadly focused unit (e.g., Reference Department)
- Instructional services are coordinated by a Head of Instruction housed in an independent instruction unit
- Instructional services are coordinated at the unit level as part of a campus library system with multiple libraries
- Instructional services are coordinated by an instruction committee
- Other (please describe)

**19. Does your campus support a teaching center (e.g., Center for Teaching Excellence, Center for Teaching & Learning, Instructional Design Support)?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know



**20. Does your library collaborate with your campus teaching center?**

Yes

No

Don't Know

**21. In what ways does your library (or do individual librarians) collaborate with your campus teaching center (please check all that apply)?**

My campus does not support a teaching center

My campus does support a teaching center, but librarians are not involved in the development of programming

Librarians provide workshops on new information resources available to support teaching and research through the teaching center

Librarians provide workshops on how to design effective library assignments through the teaching center

Librarians provide workshops on how to deliver and assess information literacy instruction through the teaching center

Librarians contribute to the design and delivery of faculty development workshops on topics that may be related to information literacy instruction (e.g., Writing Across the Curriculum)

Librarians contribute to the design and delivery of faculty development workshops aimed at helping faculty integrate information technology into their teaching

Librarians participate in campus-wide programs focused on the assessment of teaching and learning

\_\_\_ Other (please describe)

**22. Would you be willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview related to the study of instructional improvement in academic libraries?**

\_\_\_ Yes (e-mail: )

\_\_\_ No

If you would like to participate in the interview stage of this study, but do not wish to reveal your e-mail address through this survey instrument, you may also contact the researcher directly by e-mail at <swalter@wsu.edu>. This will assure that your survey responses remain anonymous.

**23. Comments** (please use this space to make any comments regarding the way you answered specific items, including the number of the relevant item, or to ask any questions you may have about specific items or about the survey):

## APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

**Note:** The following interview schedule was used to structure the interviews used for data collection in the study of professional identity (Chapter Two).

1. How long have you been an academic librarian?
2. How did you decide to become a librarian? What drew you to the work?
3. Why did you choose to become an academic librarian?
4. How would you describe your professional work?
5. How do you think it might be described by someone from outside the profession?
6. In what ways do you contribute, as a professional, to the work of the institution?
7. How important are your teaching responsibilities to your work?
8. Can you describe the sort of teaching you do as part of your work?
9. Did you think you would do this much teaching when you decided to become a librarian?
10. When did you learn that teaching was part of what you would be expected to do?
11. What influences have led you to focus on teaching as an important part of your work as a librarian?
12. What excites you about teaching, or, alternately, what troubles you about teaching or your work as a teacher?
13. How have you felt supported (or not supported) in that work and in your commitment to teaching as part of what you do as a librarian?

14. Is there anything else about your work as a teaching librarian that we have not discussed that you would like to talk about?

## APPENDIX THREE: SAMPLE DOCUMENTS



### Checklist for New Librarians and Others with Teaching Responsibilities: Information Literacy

- Role of Coordinator for Information Literacy Services and Instruction, Office of Services, and the Relationship between Coordinator and Library Units
- User Education Committee (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/committee/usered>)
- Library Instruction Reporting and Unit Annual Reports (<https://www-s2.library.uiuc.edu/bluestem-docs/learn/statistics/sessiontaught.php>)
- Professional Development Opportunities (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/learn/about>)
  - GSLIS-Library Teaching Alliance and Campus Teaching Academies
  - Active Learning Retreat
  - PITA Grants
  - ILI-L Listserv
  - ACRL Instruction Section
  - LOEX Resources
- General Programs (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/learn>)
  - New Student Week Tours
  - Library Fall Festival
  - Virtual Tours
  - Undergraduate Library Programs
- Instructional Materials and Resources
  - Statement on Learning Goals
  - Information Literacy Vision Statement
  - GEN Handouts
  - Library Brochure
  - Information Literacy Website (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/learn>)

- Equipment and Facilities (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/learn/about/facilities.html>)
  - Classrooms
  - Portable Instruction Unit

# Syracuse University Library Instruction Session Observation Evaluation

Observer:  
 Instruction Librarian:  
 Class:                      Instructor Name:  
 Number of Students:  
 Date:  
 Start Time:                      End Time:  
 Location:

## Pre-Session Activities

- Librarian attempted to contact instructor to discuss session goals and objectives.
- Librarian prepared session content and activities according to defined goals and objectives.

Comments

## Session Content

	Strongl y Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Librarian provided a clear overview of objectives.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Content was presented in a clear, logical order .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Content provided was accurate .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The amount of information was appropriate .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Content was appropriate for the level of the class .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Librarian related content to assignment/subject at hand.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Librarian adequately defined new terms/jargon.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Librarian used relevant examples for illustration/clarification .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Librarian summarized major points .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Presentation/Demonstration

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Librarian spoke clearly .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Librarian used appropriate body language and gestures. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Librarian maintained adequate eye contact with students .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Librarian conveyed a positive attitude when speaking.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Pace of session was appropriate .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

**Instructional Materials/Technology**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
1. Print/online materials were appropriate for session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Print/online materials were clear and well-written	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Print/online materials were accurate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Librarian made good use of available technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Librarian demonstrated proficiency in use of technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Librarian appropriately handled technology failures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Presentation materials (PPT, white-board, poster, etc.) were clear and visible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

**Instructional Activities**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Librarian offered adequate time for active learning opportunities ..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Librarian provided feedback to communicate student performance in activities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Activities were appropriate to session.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Students appeared engaged in activities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:



Interaction

	Strongl y Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Librarian offered adequate time for student questions .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Librarian addressed questions clearly .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Interaction with course instructor was cooperative and professional .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Librarian was attentive to student needs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Librarian maintained flexibility in order to tailor session to student reaction when necessary .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Librarian handled disruptions successfully .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

**The main strengths of this session were:**

**Areas for improvement include:**

**Other comments:**

# The Ohio State University Libraries' Teaching Portfolio

Summer Quarter 2003 - Spring Quarter 2004

[Deadline: June 18, 2004]

[NAME]  
[RANK]  
[POSITION]

## 1. Narrative of Your Instructional Accomplishments This Year

### 2. Teaching Participation in Numbered For-Credit Courses *(See FAR section 5)* Summer 2003 – Spring 2004 only

Qtr/Yr	Course	%	Enrollment	Evaluation (y/n)	Developed Curriculum? (y/n)

### 3. Extension and Continuing Education Instruction *(See FAR section 6)* Summer 2003 – Spring 2004 only

Qtr/Yr	Course/Audience/Format	%	Enrollment	Developed Curriculum? (y/n)

### 4. Program and Curriculum Development *(See FAR section 7)* Summer 2003 – Spring 2004 only

### 5. Collaborative Relationships With Departmental Faculty Summer 2003 – Spring 2004 only

**6. Publications Related to Information Literacy and/or Library Instruction**  
(See FAR section 9) Summer 2003 – Spring 2004 only

**7. Professional Development Related to Teaching** (See FAR section 19)  
Summer 2003 – Spring 2004 only

**8. Appendix**

Attach all presentation or course surveys, brochures, screen shots of instructional Web sites, teaching evaluation summaries, notes of thanks from students or faculty, or testimonials from students or faculty related to teaching you were responsible for.

**9. Submit portfolio**

Submit the portfolio and appendix of supporting documents by **June 18, 2004** to:

Fred Roecker, Chair  
Instruction and Outreach Committee  
The Ohio State University  
101E Main Library  
1858 Neil Avenue Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210-1286

**10. Questions**

Questions may be directed to Fred Roecker or any other member of the

Instruction and Outreach Committee:

Marti Alt

Jane Duffy

Betty Hunlock

Chuck Popovich

Karen Diaz

Anne Fields

Travis McDade

Carol Powell

Instruction and Outreach Committee: 2/4/04

## Assessment of Instructional Performance in Academic Libraries

Scott Walter  
University of Kansas

Adapted from:  
Performance Assessment of Teaching  
R. Kirby Barrick, Cleora J. D'Arcy, & Timothy A. Garrow  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Assessment Instrument	Definition	Evidence/Indicators
Self-Assessment of Teaching	Narrative report by library instructor that includes a description of instructional activities and an evaluation both of their quality and their personal or programmatic significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of instructional activities</li> <li>• Description of successes</li> <li>• Description of concerns/areas for improvement</li> <li>• Indicators of how instruction has changed as a result of feedback/experience</li> <li>• Reflection on what worked, or did not, and why</li> </ul>
Student Evaluations of Teaching  Participant Evaluations of Teaching	<p>Summary report of student/participant evaluations of one or more instructional sessions</p> <p>Summary report of course evaluations for librarians teaching credit-bearing courses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student/Participant evaluation forms</li> </ul>
Cooperating Faculty Evaluations of Teaching	Summary of narrative review of the instructional effectiveness of a library instructor by a cooperating faculty member in a course-integrated instructional situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty evaluation form (classroom)</li> <li>• Faculty evaluation form (end of semester)</li> <li>• Faculty assessment of evidence of student learning in targeted areas based on review of course assignments</li> </ul>

Peer Observation of Teaching	Narrative review of the instructional effectiveness of a library instructor by a colleague who has followed the KU Libraries Guidelines for Peer Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer observation reports, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strengths</li> <li>○ Areas for improvement</li> <li>○ Focus for future observations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reflections on peer observation reports, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Plans for improvement</li> <li>○ Focus for future observations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Peer Assessment of Instructional Materials	Narrative review of the completeness and clarity of print and electronic instructional materials prepared by a library instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson plans (complete with learning objectives and assessment activities)</li> <li>• Handouts provided to students/participants</li> <li>• Online materials, including PowerPoint slides, Web pages, or tutorials</li> <li>• Assessment instruments</li> </ul>
Contributions to Instructional Design	<p>Narrative summary by the library instructor of the development of new (or substantially revised) instructional modules, workshops, or credit-bearing courses</p> <p>Narrative review by a colleague of the significance of the instructor's contribution to the development of the new (or revised) instructional content and its significance for the instructional services program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson plans (complete with learning objectives and assessment activities)</li> <li>• Handouts provided to students/participants</li> <li>• Online materials, including PowerPoint slides, Web pages, or tutorials</li> <li>• Assessment instruments</li> <li>• Course syllabus</li> <li>• Student/Participant evaluations</li> </ul>

<p>Contributions to KU Libraries Teaching Environment</p>	<p>Narrative report by the library instructor of participation in activities related to the KU Libraries' Instructional Services Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service as a peer reviewer</li> <li>• Service on instruction-related committees (e.g., Instruction Council)</li> <li>• Leadership of teaching-related committees or activities within the KU Libraries</li> <li>• Library presentations related to teaching or instructional services</li> <li>• Development of credit-bearing courses related to information and technology literacy</li> <li>• Participation in instructional improvement or training programs sponsored by the KU Libraries</li> <li>• Leadership of instructional improvement or training programs sponsored by the KU Libraries</li> </ul>
<p>Contributions to IS/Campus Teaching Environment</p>	<p>Narrative report by the library instructor of participation in activities related to instructional activities provided through the Information Services Division, or to campus-wide instructional improvement or teaching activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IS/Campus presentations related to teaching or instructional services</li> <li>• Participation in instructional improvement or training programs sponsored at the IS/Campus level</li> <li>• Leadership of instructional improvement or training programs sponsored at the IS/Campus level</li> </ul>
<p>Awards, Commendations, or Fellowships Received for Teaching or Instructional Service</p>	<p>Annotated list of awards, commendations, or fellowships received from a department, college, university, student organization or professional organization in recognition of instructional work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of awards or commendations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Source of award</li> <li>○ Criteria for award</li> <li>○ Prestige of award</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Note:** A number of other documents were collected, but are unsuitable for reproduction in this dissertation. For links to electronic resources, see Walter (2005c). For additional materials, see Walter and Hinchliffe (2005).