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Keeping Pace with Information Literacy Instruction for the Real World: When Will MLS Programs Wake Up and Smell the LILACs?

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ABSTRACT

For over thirty years, numerous studies have discussed the contradiction between the growing importance of information literacy instruction to the Library's core mission and lack of pedagogical training for new librarians. This article reviews the more recent contributions on the topic, presents a survey of New York State MLS curricula and describes initiatives of pedagogy training offered in that region outside of MLS programs. The authors focus on the Library Instruction Leadership Academy (LILAC), an innovative, semester-long training program created in Western New York State to offer instruction in the pedagogical foundation and practical experience essential for teaching information literacy skills effectively. They provide details of the program's content, organization, funding, assessment methods, and learning outcomes. While regional initiatives like LILAC prove to be very valuable to their participants, the authors aim to apply pressure on MLS programs to establish curricular requirements better suited to the demands of today's librarianship.

INTRODUCTION

As our information landscape broadens and grows in complexity, information literacy instruction has become a core mission of the 21st century library. User education is now a standard responsibility of most public service librarians. Lynch and Smith (2001) documented this trend already a decade ago by examining academic reference job advertisements in the 1990s, concluding that all of them included a component of instruction.

At the same time, library literature exposes the fact that new librarians are ill-prepared to fulfill those teaching responsibilities due to a lack of pedagogical training.[1] "Quite simply [...] even after 30 years of discussion and debate, teacher training is still a relatively minor part of the professional education for librarians even as it becomes an increasingly important part of their daily work" (Walter, 2006, p. 10). While librarians may well develop their teaching skills on the job through trial and error, they can only become truly proficient in the classroom if they come into their positions with the necessary foundation in the theory and practice of instruction (Pappert, 2005, p. 3). Thus equipped librarians can move more easily beyond the traditional point-and-click bibliographic instruction and fold information literacy skills into the curriculum. Peacock (2000) argues that academic librarians in particular need such preparation to get involved, in partnership with faculty, in all aspects of the education process.

This article reviews the more recent literature on librarians' pedagogical training and reports data gathered through surveys of current New York State MLS programs. Following the article reviews, the authors present an initiative of a group of Western New York State librarians who responded to needs and frustrations expressed by colleagues in the region. In 2010, they established the Library Instruction Leadership Academy (LILAC)[2] - a semester-long intensive program providing librarians new to instruction the pedagogical foundation and practical experience needed to teach effectively. LILAC creators were recognized with the 2011 ACRL Instruction Section Innovation Award and the program is currently in its second run.

Due to the success of the first LILAC iteration and continued unfulfilled need for pedagogic training, enrollment in Spring 2013 has doubled, with a number of applicants having been put on a waiting list. Of the 21 participants, four are currently enrolled in an MLS program and two others have just received their degrees. With the goal of pressuring MLS programs to graduate students who are well-prepared for their impending job responsibilities, the planning committee for the 2013 Academy collaborated with local MLS faculty and strongly marketed the program on MLS listservs. Our goal in doing so was to take a small step in showcasing the benefits of LILAC if the program components were to be adopted in MLS curricula. Two upstate New York MLS programs, at the University at Buffalo and Syracuse University's iSchool, agreed to grant course credit for matriculated students who were concurrently enrolled in the Academy.

CURRENT TRENDS IN MLS PEDAGOGY EDUCATION

In times when instruction constitutes a core activity for most librarians, library science programs seem to lag in recognizing that trend. Julien (2005), who examined ninety-three such programs around the world,

found that only one school made information literacy instruction a required core course and only about half of all North American schools offered an elective in instruction. Mbabu's more recent study discovered that as of July 2008, 49 MLS programs offered recurrent full-time credit courses dedicated to instruction, three programs offered more than one such course and eight programs did not include any (2009). While the above studies show a notable growth in instruction courses, there are a number of variables that still may restrict the access to and effectiveness of such training:

- minor inclusion in broader courses focused on reference services;
- frequency and timing of course offering, based on semester/ annual schedule;
- delivery format of instruction (online vs. in-person);
- absence of practical teaching experience; and
- lack of requirement for degree completion.

Pappert's study (2005), as well as the personal experience of the authors, suggest that instruction can be briefly addressed in a required general reference course and does not nearly prepare students for the classroom. Authors' recent examination of the seven MLS programs within New York State shows much inconsistency as to when and how frequently courses dedicated to instruction are offered (See Table 1).

Not one of the above courses is required of all MLS students though more than 50 percent are required of school media (SLMS) graduates. The frequency of course offerings has been sometimes difficult to ascertain, but most often it is once a year.

For example, St. John's University, *LIS 304: Librarian as Teacher* is only offered when there is sufficient demand. Recent communication with a current MLS student verified that *LIS 304* was last taught in Summer 2005 with an enrollment of fifteen students. *LIS 271: Special Topics, Information Literacy* was most currently taught in Fall 2009 with nine students. When asked if she enrolled in the last offering of LIS 271, the student replied: "Fall 09 was my first semester, so I took 3 core courses…. [I] didn't feel comfortable branching out into electives before I had a foundation. This is my last semester, so I won't get a chance to take it" (A. Hennig, personal communication, February 24, 2011). The reasons for not being able to take a course devoted to library instruction have not changed since the days of the authors' library school attendance, with their MLS degrees granted between 1989 and 2007. While the situation within New York State may not represent precisely the broader international spectrum, the literature review suggests that this example reflects the overall situation quite accurately.

The lack of requirement and infrequent offering of instruction courses also leads into confusion about the professional competencies expected by so many library employers. This is how one of the librarians interviewed by Walter in his 2008 survey expressed it: "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

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TABLE 1 — INSTRUCTION COURSES OFFERED IN MLS PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK STATE

MLS Program	Course # & Name	Req'd for SLMS	Req'd for all	Format	Frequency	# of Credits
Long Island University	LIS 620: Instructional Design & Leadership	Y	N	Classroom & Online		3
Long Island University	LIS 626: Teaching Methodologies for SLMS	Y	N	Classroom		3
Pratt Institute	LIS 673: Library Use Instruction		N	Classroom		3
Pratt Institute	LIS 680: Instructional Technologies	Y	N	Classroom		3
Queens College	LBSCI 764: Instruction Technologies for Info Lit	Y	N	Classroom		3
St. Johns University	LIS 304: Librarian as Teacher	N	N	Classroom	Upon sufficient demand	1
Syracuse University	IST 663: Motivation in Info Lit	Y	N	Classroom		3
Syracuse University	ICT 840: Practicum in Teaching	Y	N	Classroom		1-2
U at Albany	IST 649: Info Lit Instruction: Theory & Techniques	N	N	Classroom	Once a year	3
U at Albany	IST 673 Technology in School Library Media Centers	N	N	Classroom	Once a year	3
U at Buffalo	LIS 523: User Education	N	N	Online only	Once a year	3

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'" (2008, p. 62).

From an employer's point of view, it is a struggle to find highly competent candidates who have the necessary pedagogical preparation and classroom experience to transition easily into their teaching duties. Instead, precious time needs to be spent familiarizing a newly-hired librarian with the basics of library instruction through classroom observations, team-teaching and a slow progression into the classroom beginning with lessons targeted at lower level skills, e.g. high school visits, pre-collegiate workshops, freshman writing courses. (Ed Rivenburgh, statement at the Annual New York Library Association (NYLA) Conference, November 4, 2010).

The opinion of this library director coincides with the sentiments expressed by librarians. In a study by Johnson and Lindsay (2006) that examined public services librarians' attitudes towards their professional responsibilities, respondents chose teaching as the most challenging part of their job. At the same time, only 3 percent of participating librarians named instruction as the area in which they felt well prepared for based upon their MLS education (p. 22). Studies conducted across higher education institutions both in the US (Westbrock & Fabian, 2010) and in the UK (Bewick & Corrall, 2010) demonstrate that academic librarians develop their teaching skills mostly on the job and through a variety of post-degree training programs, but they would strongly prefer acquiring those skills in a core module of the MLS curriculum.

Even if MLS graduates completed a course on instruction, their comments often suggest

ineffectiveness and a poor quality of the experience, e.g. "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" (Walter, 2008, p. 62). The instruction courses investigated by Mbabu (2009) tended to offer a traditional training in learning theory, instructional design, teaching techniques, and program management, but mostly focused on developing lower-level information literacy skills. Julien (2005) noted lack of coverage of basic information literacy concepts, outcomes evaluation, needs assessment, and Web-based instructional strategies in more than half of the examined courses. Shortage of experiential learning and practical applications of theory were observed by a number of authors, e.g. Stewart Sherratt (1987), Meulemans and Brown (2001), Pappert (2005). "Students who are not able to take a course which combines the theory, as well as the practice of teaching, are losing half of the information necessary to develop and conduct a comprehensive instruction session" (Pappert, 2005, p. 22).

ROAD TO LILAC

With the current state of MLS pedagogy education in mind, the seeds for the LILAC initiative were planted in January 2009. At this time the Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC), State University of New York (SUNY) at Geneseo, and the SUNY Librarians Association (SUNYLA) co-sponsored a one-day workshop called *Library Instruction: Teaching Tips from the Trenches*. The session was aimed at new teaching librarians and designed to promote information literacy instruction.

The workshop organizers tapped a pool of

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local talent representing K-12 schools and higher education institutions, and invited experienced librarians and teachers as mentors. Participants, whose representation reflected a similar mix of institutions, evaluated *Teaching Tips from the Trenches* as a successful event. However, it was clear that a one-day workshop was not enough. As one participant wrote, "This could have been a much longer conference, and I think this conference just touched the tip of the iceberg." Other attendees mentioned the following needs:

- in-class observation of experienced librarians
- development, implementation, and peer-critique of a self-designed lesson
- time management
- use and analysis of assessment data
- development of partnerships with teaching faculty
- techniques for engaging students in the learning process, including social media and other instructional technologies
- best teaching practices in an online environment

A follow-up event took place at the 2009 SUNYLA Conference, where four participants from *Teaching Tips* presented a pre-conference workshop called *Passing the Torch: Instruction Librarians Keeping the Flames of Active Learning Alive*. Like its predecessor, the SUNYLA program proved to be successful, yet still only scraped the surface.

ORGANIZING LILAC

In Spring 2009, the organizers of *Teaching Tips from the Trenches* submitted an application for the Harold Hacker Fund for

the Advancement of Libraries designed to support education and professional development of librarians and library staff and to promote innovative projects in the RRLC member libraries. They were awarded $3,500 and planning began in earnest. The steering committee was formed by instruction librarians and educators from several institutions in the Rochester area and the Assistant Director of RRLC.

A major goal was to provide training that was local and either free or of low cost. The committee hoped to find professional development initiatives that could serve as models. The Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) Information Literacy Immersion program offered an excellent model, especially in its application process and the upfront commitment it requires from the participants and their administrators. The RRLC's Leadership Institute offered another inspiring model - a train-the-trainer type of program, where after each session participants returned to their home institutions and experimented with what they had learned. The final and most important model came from a graduate seminar on pedagogy offered in 2000-2001 at SUNY Geneseo by a professor of education to instruction librarians. The seminar included studying different educational theories, considering their implications for library instruction, brainstorming and developing lesson plans, keeping a reflective journal on in-classroom experiences, and finally teaching a traditional fifty-minute lesson that was videotaped, attended and critiqued by volunteer student workers, peer seminar participants and the professor.[3] The seminar proved to be an experience with long-lasting benefits. The same professor was invited to serve as a consultant for the LILAC program as well as to present the opening session that provided the theoretical

foundation in pedagogy.

Given the variety of topics and needs expressed by participants of previous workshops, it was evident that a full-semester program was the only way to accomplish the desired goals. The steering committee also wanted participants to have time to apply what they would learn at LILAC in their own teaching and then be able to discuss the results with instructors and classmates.

After much deliberation, the steering committee agreed on the following plan:

- The program would run from January to May 2010.
- With an opening event and a graduation ceremony framing the program, participants would attend a full-day workshop once a month.
- Moodle (an open source course management system) was used as the connecting platform between in-person learning and online offerings of the Academy.
- Between workshops, participants would have assigned readings, keep a reflective journal, and participate in an online forum.
- Participants would complete a minimum of three classroom observations in a variety of library settings and would comment on those observations in their journals.
- Participants would be asked to video-record their own teaching (pre and post-Academy), which would receive feedback from peers and mentors.
- The program would culminate with a final project that would apply what was learned at the

Academy to a real challenge at participants' home institutions.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION PROCESS

LILAC organizers wanted to ensure that those attending the Academy would fully understand the program's expectations and would be supported by their administrators. It was decided that participants needed to complete an admission application. The ACRL Immersion application form was adopted and prospective participants were asked to submit an essay explaining why they wanted to attend the Academy and how they would share and apply knowledge gained from the program. To ensure administrative support and adequate release from duties, each applicant had to provide a recommendation letter from a director of his/her institution.

Eleven applicants were accepted into the program from a variety of institutions, including elementary and high schools, two-year and four-year colleges, and a research university. The span of teaching experience ranged from no experience to one year in the classroom, and to nine years as an online instructor. The application essays supported the organizers' belief that although MLS programs introduce the concept of library instruction, the majority of their graduates feel unprepared to teach. Applicants expressed the following sentiments in response to the LILAC opportunity:

> *Since graduating with my MLS in 2004, I have struggled with the 'ins and outs' of library instruction. When I first saw the announcement about the Library Instruction Leadership Academy, I couldn't help think, 'this is it', the answer to my prayers!*

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Library instruction is an essential function of libraries and yet it is an area often neglected in library school programs. After two years of graduate study, my only exposure to library instruction was the two-week unit lumped into the core reference services course. Thus, much of my style and teaching techniques were learned on the job, observing other librarians and doing the best with what knowledge I had.

The letters received from the administrators reinforced those sentiments:

We are sure that the Academy will be an enriching experience for [this candidate] and will also become a learning opportunity for all our librarians as she shares what she has learned with us. But ultimately, the beneficiaries of her learning experience will be hundreds of physicians and nurses who care for the health of our community and have learned how to efficiently and effectively find information for the care of patients.

I would like to see the Library Instruction Leadership Academy become an annual professional development offering for librarians. Presently, formal pedagogical training within an accredited MLS program is limited. This program will help fill that gap.

LILAC COMPONENTS

Workshops

Creation and implementation of the monthly workshops was a major part of the planning process. The workshops provided the foundation and framework for the Academy, and they served as the venue where participants, presenters, organizers and observation librarians could meet face-to-face. The choice of topics was determined by feedback from *Teaching Tips from the Trenches* and *Passing the Torch* as well as by suggestions of potential presenters. The following workshop plan was adopted:

January 2010
Librarian as Educator: From Theory to Practice
A professor of education and a college librarian presented key trends in educational theory and their implications for library instruction. Focusing on lessons from Daniel Willingham's *Why Don't Students Like School?*, participants considered nine general principles of learning and brainstormed potential approaches to teaching within the information literacy context. [4]

February 2010
Morning session: *Learners & Partners: Students*
Complemented by readings and a guided observation completed prior to the workshop, this session explored characteristics of students that influence their in-class behavior and learning.

Afternoon session: *Learners & Partners: Faculty*
A community college librarian and a professor presented scenarios of librarian/faculty partnerships and opportunities for co-teaching. The second half of the workshop, with new presenters, focused on ways in which school librarians can foster collaborative relationships with classroom teachers.

March 2010
Morning session: *Multiple Intelligences &*

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Instructional Strategies

Using Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences framing the workshop, two college librarians introduced creative ways of diversifying the instructional content to match different learning styles.

Afternoon session: *Teacher as Performer*
With guidance from a librarian with operatic experience and a professor of theater, participants gained practical knowledge of the physical body and voice as important tools for teaching.

April 2010
Teaching with Technology
 This workshop combined a presentation delivered online (via Elluminate Live!) by a distantly located instructor, and an on-site demonstration featuring some rising instructional technologies. LILAC students experimented with gaming and small group activities in the online environment.

May 2010
 Morning session: *Classroom Management*
Revisiting Gardner's multiple intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy, a high school social studies teacher demonstrated how to keep students engaged in the course content and foster higher-level thinking skills.

Afternoon session: *Assessment*
Using a panel format with presenters hailing from a variety of institutional settings, this afternoon workshop introduced and modeled tools that gauge learners' instructional needs and learning outcomes.

All sessions were held in the instruction room of the RRLC in Fairport, NY. LILAC organizers strived to create a seamless progression from one workshop to the next. Well ahead of time, the presenters were put in contact with one another to share ideas and to collaborate on the content of their

sessions. The committee was adamant that the presenters model the teaching practices they were discussing and that they include active learning components. Although not a requirement, the committee also recommended that presenters include readings and/or assignments related to their workshops and participate in the students' online discussions. It was important to offer the students a complete course experience with material to supplement what they would learn in the classroom and with peer-to-peer interaction between workshops.

Field Observations
As noted by Peacock (2000), "modeling is a powerful teaching and learning tool, and observation is standard practice in all teacher education courses" (p. 37). Offering a first-hand experience of watching a seasoned librarian in the classroom was a primary consideration in LILAC planning. The steering committee agreed that each participant should observe a minimum of three instruction sessions taught at different institution types. The organizers solicited participation of librarians with substantial teaching experience and availability to answer questions from participants before and after the session. Over twenty librarians from grade schools, higher education institutions and specialized research institutes volunteered to be observed. Participants were given specific guidelines before their first two observations and could choose the focus for the third and/or subsequent sessions. Throughout the semester, participants were expected to keep an online journal of their observations, which was reviewed by committee members and observation librarians.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment

At the planning stage, LILAC organizers established the following goals and learning outcomes for Academy participants:

- Participants will demonstrate an understanding and implementation of best practices in classroom pedagogy.
- Participants will exhibit a growing understanding of the ways an instruction librarian approaches preparation and presentation of classroom materials.
- Participants will demonstrate greater confidence in their teaching methodology, especially as it pertains to risk taking, creativity, and interaction with students.
- Participants and their mentors will create a learning community where they build strong relationships and continue to learn from each other well beyond the timeline of the Academy.
- Participants will be encouraged to disseminate their learning through national, state, and regional conference presentations/ workshops and publications in library and educational journals.

Assessment of participants' progress towards these goals was constant throughout the LILAC program. After each workshop, as well as at the conclusion of the Academy, feedback was gathered through multiple assessment tools, e.g. 3-2-1 response[5], Plus/ Delta[6], participant blogs, and pre- and post-workshop surveys. Another way to observe the participants' learning process was to follow their reflective journal entries. Participants not only reported acquiring new

knowledge about learning and teaching, but they also revealed feelings of confidence and enthusiasm that replaced previously harbored apprehension and a sense of incompetence. One participant stated "… after having taken this course I am so much more confident and passionate about instruction." Another participant wrote "it is a lot of work, but I feel better equipped to be an effective instructional designer/ teacher." Most importantly, early on in the semester, participants began experimenting with the newly learned techniques and strategies in their own teaching. After the first session, one participant wrote:

> *I was so inspired [that] I came to work Monday evening and spent 2 hours brainstorming with my colleague on how we could apply what I learned to our own teaching. The result was an entirely new lesson that encompassed as many of the principles [our presenter] introduced as possible.*

In the final assessment, the great majority of participants reported having implemented concepts or techniques they had learned at the Academy. The recurring themes in those efforts were "the role of teacher as a designer of learning experiences" and "learning by doing." Thus, many participants focused on guiding the learning process rather than lecturing, dedicating more time to hands-on activities, and encouraging students to share findings and communicate with peers during class. Participants also recognized that since the beginning of the program, they had become more reflective practitioners, taking more time to review the instruction sessions they had just conducted to constantly improve their performance. The fruits of those efforts were noted early on in the Academy: "While there certainly is room for improvement, if I were to teach this specific

library instruction session again, overall I think the students learned what they needed to learn in [a] way that was a lot more interesting and enjoyable for them. It was wonderful to have the room all abuzz with them talking to each other, ultimately proudly sharing their searching tips with the class, with each team trying to come up with the most!"

The classroom observations turned out to be a very fruitful component of the Academy. The observations offered opportunities to visit a variety of institutions and become acquainted with diverse student populations, see different instructional settings, meet and exchange ideas with other instructional librarians in the region, and reflect upon different teaching practices. While evaluating their field experiences, participants not only commented on the high quality and effective teaching methods they observed—"...watching [this librarian] teach was an education in itself"—but also noticed the similarities between seemingly different student populations which corroborated one of the principles learned at the first workshop: "Learners are more alike than they are different." A participant wrote, "One of the most intriguing aspects of this experience were [*sic*] the similarities between this sixth grade class and the college-level courses I work with."

The final projects and collaborations that ensued during and after the Academy's conclusion are a testament to developing the learning community the organizers had hoped for. Following are some notable examples:

- Based upon collaborative models used by fellow LILAC participants, two high school librarians (a presenter and a participant) partnered with a

college library to expose their students to college-level research. The experienced colleague also offered guidance on how to establish fruitful relationships with faculty and help prepare assignments that would take full advantage of the library's resources.
- A participant and a steering committee member developed a joined instruction program for dental hygiene students at their respective institutions.
- Two participants set out to create an instruction support community modeled on LILAC in their home organizations to facilitate communication, encourage learning, and exchange ideas and experiences.
- LILAC co-chairs, their library director, and a participant met with New York State's library school deans to discuss the current state of library employment needs, the lack of adequate pedagogical training, and the Academy as a potential model for MLS programs.

The use of a wide range of assessment tools not only allowed the organizers to monitor participants' progress, but also allowed them to ensure the activities were satisfactorily fulfilling their needs and expectations. On more than one occasion, changes were made to the Academy's content and logistical set-up in response to raised issues. The real-life application of those tools in the program also exposed participants to multiple methods of conducting teaching evaluations and adhered to the Academy's goal of modeling best practices. Last but not least, it helped the Academy organizers collect pearls of

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wisdom for future projects.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall response to LILAC was very positive. Participants commented on how thrilled they were to be part of the group: "When I got home on Wednesday night after the Kick-Off event, I was so excited about being a part of this program that it took me a long time to get to sleep, even though I was tired after a long day. I was thinking about how grateful I am for this unique opportunity to be among like-minded individuals from the library community in our region." Many participants found their own voices and styles as teachers: "I gained more confidence and recognized that I was doing some things instinctively. Also, identifying my own teaching theory and philosophy clarified things for me, while opening me to new ideas too." Other frequently mentioned outcomes were the ability to develop a lesson plan that accommodates a variety of learning styles; better classroom management skills; increased number of sessions taught; and greater appreciation for bibliographic instruction as means of empowering library users.

It was evident that the LILAC experience generated a lot of energy and stimulation, and created a great network of colleagues deeply passionate about teaching and interested in sharing their pedagogic knowledge. Since the very beginning, many of the presenters and members of the organizing committee joined the regular participants to attend the Academy's workshops and classroom observations. Exchanges of tips and experiences and collective brainstorming for new ideas soon blurred the differences between mentors and novices. In response to the question about the best aspects of the Academy,

participants agreed on the following points: the variety of subjects and points of view; informality; willingness to share; non-judgmental atmosphere; high level of comfort within the group; and open and honest interactions between participants and presenters.

The development and implementation of LILAC depended on a true team approach by a group of volunteers who believed in the need for the Academy and were highly committed to its success. In the end, LILAC was designed, organized, and delivered by librarians and educators representing eight comprehensive colleges, four community and/or technical colleges, ten K-12 schools, and one regional library consortium. While LILAC was centered in the Rochester area, participants, presenters, and observation librarians came from a geographical area stretching across upstate NY from Buffalo to Albany. The volunteers and their respective institutions contributed generously to the effort with in-kind resources, for example, the meeting spaces or the server for Moodle. Expenses were also kept to a minimum because organizers and instructors generously donated their time. A close estimate of the monies accrued via volunteerism is equivalent to a modest salary of $29,000. Without this level of institutional and personal support, LILAC could not have happened.

LILAC organizers were happy with the variety of library settings and experience levels represented by the Academy's eleven participants. However, public librarians were not among the mix and there were few school librarians. Moving forward, greater consideration will be given to developing a schedule that better accommodates the commitments and limitations of public and K-12 librarians.

CONCLUSION: ARE THE MLS PROGRAMS LISTENING?

Given the success of the Academy, the LILAC co-chairs, together with their library director and a LILAC graduate, were invited to give a presentation at the 2010 NYLA Annual Conference to the deans of New York State library schools about the needs of the library profession that inspired their initiative. The audience showed surprise that library directors are increasingly frustrated by the sparse choice of aspiring librarians who complete their respective MLS programs without all the necessary pedagogical skills. Rarely are new MLS graduates ready to hit the ground running within their most essential job responsibilities.

LILAC co-chairs became optimistic when a seemingly slow-growing understanding of the reality facing prospective library instructors emerged from the conversation. One dean in particular seemed enthusiastic about moving the LILAC initiative forward, first by proposing to jointly apply for nationally-recognized grants so that New York State MLS programs could emulate a LILAC-inspired course within their required curricula and secondly by inviting the co-chairs to speak to students of their *Introduction to LIS* course. In the end, neither initiative progressed beyond the NYLA conference.

On a more positive note, however, LILAC reached an important milestone late in 2012. As of November 15, 2012, both the MLS program at the University at Buffalo and the iSchool at Syracuse University agreed to offer course credit for matriculated students concurrently enrolled in LILAC. A second run of LILAC is taking place in the Spring Semester of 2013 with a goal to pilot the program as a graduate level course to MLS

students enrolled in these programs. Four such students are participating in the Spring Semester 2013 LILAC and will receive course credit. Furthermore, two LILAC organizers were hired as adjunct instructors to teach within the University at Buffalo's LIS program; one currently teaches the User Education course and the other taught the Introductory Reference Sources and Services. In both cases, LILAC-inspired pedagogy and outside collaboration were embedded into the curriculum which further modeled the benefits that stem from the Academy.

Additionally, after consulting with LILAC co-chairs, NYLA, in partnership with the College of St. Rose, offered an adapted version of the program to serve the professional development needs of their constituents. *Teaching Skills for Librarians: A Professional Development Course Offered in Collaboration with the College of St. Rose* was presented in the Fall Semester of 2012 as a one-credit graduate level class that combined online instruction with face-to-face class sessions. Twelve students registered for the class, and it is scheduled again for the Fall Semester 2013.

While one cannot expect the slow-turning wheels of academia to immediately shift course, it is our hope that LILAC's grassroots initiative helps shed some light on the real-life situation increasingly facing libraries in need of professionals who can teach well. Similarly unrealistic, a program that was envisioned to run only one time based on temporary funding and the generous in-kind efforts of many local librarians cannot possibly sustain itself without greater organizational commitment. Recognizing local librarian teaching talent along with adopting a curriculum similar to LILAC's can help MLS programs improve library instructor training, boosting

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librarians' employability in public services. According to the hiring practices survey conducted by *Library Journal*, over 75 percent of responding library executives declared that "they have hired or will hire people with advanced degrees but not the MLS. […] The most common advanced degree is in education." (Oder, 2009, p. 46) Such facts underscore the necessity of keeping pace with the changing nature of the profession and of teaching the essential skills and practices to all who aspire to library and information-related positions. This is not merely a question of educating our users by preparing librarians with skills better matched to teach in this current information landscape, but a strategic movement on the part of MLS programs to remain relevant and competitive in the years to come.

NOTES

1. See Walter (2005) and Albrecht & Baron (2002) for an extensive review of the literature.
2. Although the authors recognize that the LILAC acronym is associated with a well-known information literacy conference, it was difficult to resist the name given the fact that Rochester is locally recognized as the "lilac capital of the world."
3. For a full description of the seminar, see Argentieri, Davies, Farrell and Liles (2003).
4. Willingham's *Why Don't Students Like School?* served as a textbook for this workshop.
5. 3-2-1 response is a quick assessment, in which participants provide responses to three questions: What are the 3 things that you learned today? What are the 2 things that you find confusing? What is the one question that you still have?
6. Plus/Delta is a simple, formative

assessment that provides ideas for improvement. The Plus signifies what is going well, and the Delta signifies what might be changed to improve the process or activity. Participants are asked to identify both characteristics.

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