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This review examines the development of effective practical education models of field experiences for library science students through internships and residencies related to health sciences librarianship. A literature review of refereed journal publications was conducted focusing on repeatedly successful criteria utilized for the evaluation of health sciences related practicums and perceived benefits of successful examples. Transferable recommendations for greater productivity and standardization of assessment measures were made in order to suggest the value for a baseline from which to base and by which to compare current and emerging field experience practices for library school students. Findings suggest that through increased collaboration, improved availability, and greater consistency, the resulting assessment products would lead to more successful field experience opportunities that better meet stated objectives and missions.

Headings:

Internship Programs -- Evaluation

Librarians -- Education

Library Schools -- Practice Work

Surveys -- Internship Programs

FIELD EXPERIENCE IN LIBRARY SCIENCE EDUCATION AND
THE HEALTH SCIENCES: A SURVEY

by
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INTRODUCTION

Librarianship in scientific and technological communities continues to grow in importance. However, as students, members of masters programs in library and information science may be either unaware of or intimidated by the idea of entering into the realm of science and technology librarianship. This can be said especially for the health sciences. With its highly specialized vocabulary and educational requirements, the field of medicine can appear daunting to an outsider, such as an individual in library science. As a result, the community of health sciences library professionals remains comparatively small to other areas of social sciences and the humanities.

Whether an interest in health is apparent or remains latent and undiscovered, the health sciences community seeks to bring out and nurture that interest within library students. Particularly at larger health sciences libraries across the country, there are numerous opportunities available for students looking to work hands-on with health sciences information. Some programs are longer or more involved, including assistantships and fellowships that span over a number of years, while others are shorter in nature, such as internships and field experiences that last just a few months. It is predicted that students who take part in these programs and report an experience that is both positive and beneficial will be more likely to contribute to the area of health sciences librarianship during the course of their professional careers.

The purpose of this study is to garner feedback from past and present participants in support of programs available to pursue a practical interest in health sciences

librarianship. Evaluations and observations made by directors and facilitators of experiential learning programs will be analyzed in order to determine the perceived quality and applicability of projects as assigned. Transferable recommendations for improvement to these programs and support for students in library and information science with an interest in the health sciences will be derived from the results.

BACKGROUND

Field experiences come in all shapes and sizes, and throughout varying stages of the library science education process. Although the term "field experience" is used ubiquitously throughout this review of the literature to describe any and all professional or experiential learning programs encountered during or soon after formal library science education, the landscape is otherwise diverse and ill-defined; "internship," "field experience," "field work," "practicum," "assistantship," "mentorship," "co-operative education," and many other similar terms are used somewhat interchangeably across program descriptions and evaluations (Coleman, 1989; Cross, 2005; Holst, 2011; Pings &Cruzat, 1971).

As defined by the Academy of Research Libraries (ARL) in its 1992 Systems and Procedures Exchange Center (SPEC) Kit for *Internship, Residency, and Fellowship Programs in ARL Libraries*, "internships" are described as pre-professional experience completed at any time throughout the process of coursework, but specifically preceding the receipt of the degree; a "residency" is a post-degree experience designed as an entry-level program for professionals who have recently received their degrees and have little to no experience in the field of libraries; fellowships are characterized as mid-career experiences for those with some professional experience who are interested in becoming more specialized in a particular area of librarianship or in increasing and developing skills in management (Association of Research Libraries, 1992). Similarly, the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) has also published

guidelines which more specifically outline the "field experience," defining this as "experiential education" or "learning by experience in a professional work setting" whereby the experience is a "joint undertaking of the student, faculty advisor and work supervisor and is accomplished by their cooperative efforts" and "all facets of the field experience […] are a shared responsibility" (2010).

However, part of the difficulty in performing and establishing formal methods for evaluation is that both inaugural and institutionalized field experience initiatives do not adhere to a standard vocabulary, such as the definitions outlined in the context of the ARL. In some studies, including that conducted by the Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) as discussed by Cross (2005), the term "internship" was used loosely to describe any and all varieties of hands-on professional experience acquired at any point during the course of library school or professional practice. Cross (2005) explained that in the initial survey, discrepancies with regard to the definition of the term "internship" and what exactly it meant in the context of the library led to marked difficulties while conducting the study; as a result of confusion related to the use of this terminology, libraries being surveyed were unsure how to interpret the questions. Likewise, in surveying the literature, it was reported (and experienced) that varied definitions were applied to the word "internship" (Coleman, 1989; Cross, 2005; Holst, 2011). The term "internship"—as with other terms used to describe varying field experiences—was used to describe programs that were part of large universities, small

public libraries, programs that were both paid and unpaid, and programs that occurred both during and after completion of the library science education process (Holst, 2011).

No real distinction could be made among programs based on title or definition, as these terms remain vague and analogous. Often, these wide-ranging circumstances were treated the same. This predicament was cited by multiple sources as proving problematic when trying to determine a baseline for program comparison or investigating and identifying similar evaluative studies that had previously been conducted to serve as a model or framework. Field experiences lack clear operational definitions, as the field of libraries has not widely adopted or agreed upon a professional standard vocabulary for the purposes of conversations, evaluations, or publications. This same predicament was also experienced while conducting the literature review for the purposes of this survey.

METHODS AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

A literature review of refereed journal publications from the last thirty years was conducted focusing on repeatedly successful criteria utilized for the evaluation of health sciences-related practicums and perceived benefits of examples that were deemed effective. Searches attempted to target a variety of field experience models by including multiple examples of terms and definitions used in the published literature (e.g. internship, residency, assistantship, fellowship, practicum, etc.). As discussed above, the vocabulary used to discuss this topic with relation to library science is as numerous as it is nebulous; though the review was aimed at being as exhaustive as possible, due to the nature of the subject, it is likely that some published works available on the topic were missed. Cited evaluation examples were limited to evaluations and assessments conducted within the context of health sciences and academic library-related programs.

For the purposes of this review, "field experience" is used as a generic, inclusive term to describe a professional learning program through which practical experience is gained by performing hands-on tasks specifically within the context of a health sciences library environment. The term "field experience" is used when referring to any program or opportunity, regardless of duration, payment, administration, or appointed time in the library education process during which the experience is undergone. This single term is used to perform a more all-encompassing function, as the only program distinctions relevant to this survey were that—

1. the field experience was conducted within a health sciences library or academic research library environment.

2. the field experience was completed at some point during the library education process, be it during the formal pursuit of the masters degree, or within two years after having received the degree.

3. the field experience site was located in the United States.

When distinction is necessary with relation to a particular study example, terms used to describe the program adhere to the definition standards outlined by the ARL SPEC Kit on *Internship, Residency, and Fellowship Programs in ARL Libraries.*

BENEFITS OF FIELD EXPERIENCE

Arguably the most critical application of field experience programs is providing current students and recent graduates with practical knowledge to supplement an academic education in Library Science. According to Holst (2011), although "Library Schools introduce students to the newer information technologies, but many students are not prepared to apply these technologies in the workplace" (p. 51). More pointedly, Warren (1997) explains that field experiences "expose students to a variety of professional environments and responsibilities and provide an opportunity to meet and learn from professionals, adding a dimension to their education that simply cannot be matched in the classroom" (p. 118). The theoretical principles taught in academia and a grasp of the vocabulary that defines the profession of librarianship can only take students so far. This holds especially true in times such as these, where budgets for libraries are being slashed in the midst of an already competitive job market. It is in this ability to "bridge the gap from theory to practice" (Holst, 2011, p. 52) that field experiences enable students to develop a more pragmatic understanding of the profession than they are able to obtain from library school alone (Lee, 2009). This proves especially true in the health sciences where "two years' experience is often a prerequisite for employment making residency programs highly competitive" (Scherer, 2010, p. 300). Subject knowledge is also a valuable and highly sought-after skill in librarianship, particularly in a specialized field such as medicine. Field experience programs in health sciences environments act as powerful supplements to library science education, even in absence of coursework

targeting medical librarianship (Brewer, 1998; Hanke & Benzer, 1979; Kwasik, Fulda, & Ische, 2006; Pings & Cruzat, 1971). Synthesizing these overarching concepts that provide the framework for professional librarianship ultimately create a pool of better-qualified applicants entering the field.

The question of the effectiveness of field experiences and mentorship programs is one of interest to the library community. Formal studies and other published literature on this topic focus on how to align program elements to improve perceived engagement, quality of work, and level of satisfaction reported by participants. According to Cross (2005), in a comprehensive study conducted by the Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA), fifty-four of the fifty-six institutions accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) provide course listings for internships or practicums. However, all of the institutions provide students with the opportunity to gain some level of hands-on field experience either through prescribed course credit or extracurricular experiential programs. Of those ALA-accredited institutions, only six required some level of field experience prior to graduation at the time of the survey: State University of New York at Albany, Long Island University, University of North Texas, Texas Women's University, University of Missouri, and Université de Montreal (Cross, 2005). While support for and availability of field experience programs varies across masters programs accredited by the ALA, examples from the literature and overwhelming participation from ALA-accredited schools dictates that the implementation of field

experience programs is a beneficial practice for both library school students and professional librarians alike.

In addition to blending an LS-education with practical applications, real life experience exposing students to actual work environments also gives students and recent graduates the chance to learn whether or not a particular area of librarianship is right for them. While a great deal of these learning experiences are task-based, this also relates to aspects of acculturation, especially when dealing with particular areas of librarianship—such as special libraries in the health sciences or science and technology—that are less understood and more intimidating than other more "conventional" library environments. The experience of learning to navigate the workflow and political structure at a particular site is both a valuable and important part of this acculturation process (Brewer & Winston, 2001; Coplen & Regan, 1981). Students can further explore particular areas of librarianship and better determine whether those specialties are right for them as a result of practical experience (Gardner, 2009; Warren, 1997). For example, as a result of her field experience as an intern at California State University at Fullterton, Warren (1997) explained that she found herself more capable of defining what she wanted out of her library education, what type of professional path she might most want to pursue, and what would be expected of her in a professional library environment once she had earned her degree. This vigorous and structured training ultimately made Warren more appealing to potential employers when it came time for graduation. "The combination of

individual instruction and hands-on experience was ideal and […] far superior to what I have received in the classroom setting" (Warren, 1997, p. 119).

Benefits from field experiences and other practical, hands-on programs extend beyond the realm of their participants. Working closely with students in this professional context allows the administrating librarians to gather first-hand insight into next generation student perspectives about the profession and to learn more about the current curricula employed in library school education (Doyle, 2008; Lee, 2009). From a more operative standpoint, library interns and field workers are also an effective addition to a professional staff. Amidst effective training mechanisms, interns can serve as capable team members to "lighten the workload" in areas of the library that prove especially busy, such as the reference desk, tasks that students are more than happy to then be able to put on their résumé for prospective employers upon graduation (Quarton, 2002). Professional libraries and librarians can also harness the capability and dedication often inherent in students enthusiastic about the field to fill gaps in staffing related to daily tasks or special projects resulting from shortages in funding for full-time employees (Gardner, 2009).

This is noted particularly in health sciences libraries, which provide resources specifically to practicing clinicians, nurses, and other medical specialists. Delivering quality information services is therefore not only of consequence to library constituents, but also to the lives and health of their patients. Such supplemental staffing opportunities are especially beneficial in health sciences, where related smaller branch libraries and

hospital libraries are forced to contend with budget cuts that have a visibly negative impact on services that these institutions provide to their surrounding medical communities. For example, Holst (2011) determined through an informal survey of hospital libraries in the Milwaukee area that the establishment of an internship program is a "win-win" and is well worth the costs associated with implementation and development in direct relation to this staffing problem. "At a time when hospitals are merging and downsizing, a library intern can bring great value to the hospital" (Holst, 2011, p. 59). This holds true not only for practicing physicians and medical faculty, but also for the education of medical students, as competencies required to meet standards mandated by organizations such as the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education are heavily focused on evidence-based medicine and the associated skills in the location, appraisal, and application of the literature to more effectively diagnose and treat patients (Bradley, Rana, Lypson, & Hamstra, 2010; Pings & Cruzat, 1971). "The funding and relation of the application of this research make these institutional environments qualitatively separate from academic-research units in other disciplines" (Pings & Cruzat, 1971, p. 3). Continuing to offer the highest quality of content and service in light of funding shortages is therefore specifically critical for health sciences libraries, which makes the support from field experience students especially valuable.

This health sciences example can also be translated across other disciplines. Designing specified field experience programs around existing curricula and implanting participants further into university or organizational activities not only creates a "big

picture" concept for students and recent library school graduates with real-life context, but also increases quality of work and satisfaction reported by participating students. This works twofold to strengthen the profession (Doyle, 2008). For one, this practice equips future librarians with a specified skill-set to directly meet the needs of constituents in their discipline. Library students with direct exposure to liaison-type tasks and the culture surrounding embedded librarianship ultimately become future librarians who are better equipped to assume these emerging professional roles (Bradley et al., 2010; Brewer, 1998). In addition, embedding librarians into faculty and executive workflow to directly meet the needs of these influential constituents provides a more concrete example of the value of librarians to the research process. For example, by addressing requirements with regard to curricula in specialty areas of medicine, participating faculty within those focused areas can better understand how librarians "fit more broadly into [medical residency] programs and recognize that librarian-integrated [medical residency] instruction extends beyond introductions to PubMed or electronic journals" (Bradley et al., 2010). Strengthening the bond between librarians and constituents is critical in order to provide the highest quality public service model and translating that service, in health sciences libraries, to effective patient care.

MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

In order to derive the greatest success from field experience initiatives, the evaluation of these programs must also be taken into consideration. In addition to the benefits of the implementation of these undertakings, much of the literature reviewed describes the need for, importance of, and complications associated with evaluation and assessment. Systematic reviews and assessments are important to the development and maintenance of meaningful programs, as these require a high level of planning and commitment by all involved—not only by participating students and faculty members, but also hosting administrators and librarians. Soliciting feedback from past field experience participants is an important part of this process (Brewer & Winston, 2001; Carle, 1995; Cross, 2005; Warren, 1997). Examples of completed evaluative studies reflect this sentiment and demonstrate the myriad ways in which participant feedback can be successfully collected and implemented to measure field experience program effectiveness.

1. Subsequent Employment in the Specified Field

In the published evaluations completed in the assessment of field experience programs in health sciences librarianship and academic research libraries, trends in measures and criteria for effectiveness were determined. Arguably the most important criterion to be included in assessment included number of participants employed in a related field. Most often, this criterion related closest to the program's overall mission

and goals, and was rated most highly in terms of importance for assessing program effectiveness (Brewer & Winston, 2001; Carle, 1995; Scherer, 2010). This provided the focus for Carle's (1995) longitudinal study of Associates at the National Library of Medicine (NLM), the oldest postgraduate training program for health sciences librarians in the United States. Carle (1995) focused on demographic and geographic information of past Associate from 1957 to 1990. Using this data, Carle (1995) created a baseline by which to compare perceived impact in the field of health sciences made explicitly by NLM Associates through an examination of employment patterns after successfully completing the program. The number of associates still actively participating in the health sciences or within the purview of the NLM after having completed their fellowship was used to determine program effectiveness.

To better quantify the program's effectiveness, Carle (1995) examined the types of libraries in which previous Associates were working at the time of the study, as well as where they had worked in their first professional capacities post-NLM Fellowship. Table 1 below depicts where the author provides a representation of the nature of the positions specifically within health sciences held by Associates just after program completion. Of the 125 Associates from whom employment data was collected, 108 reported that they were working in some type of health sciences library in their first professional position after completing the NLM program, approximately 87%. Sixty-seven, or about 54%, were employed in a health sciences environment at the time of the survey in 1990. Seventy, 56%, of Associates have been employed at the NLM, sixty-seven of those in

their first position directly following the program's completion. This table breaks down these health sciences-related occupations into a variety of categories in order to represent the impact that Associates have had and are having on health sciences librarianship.

Table 1

Table 2: Number of Associates employed in various types of health sciences libraries

Type of health sciences library	First position	Position in August 1990
NLM	67	26
Academic	32	23
Government	4	10
Hospital	3	4
Private	2	4
Total	**108**	**67**

Note. Represents Associates of 125 surveyed employed in health sciences. Reprinted from "A longitudinal study of Associates at the National Library of Medicine, 1957-1990," by D. O. Carle, *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association, 83 (3), p. 277.* Copyright 1995 by the Medical Library Association. Reprinted with permission.

Table 2 shows where Carle (1995) illustrates the current status of the Associates in 1990 at the time of the survey. This table looks at the employment environment of 130 Associate respondents as of 1990. Data depicted below includes positions that are related to the health sciences, as well as those that are not. However, this includes only respondents who identified themselves as working at library institutions; associates holding information-related positions but not affiliated with a formal library organization were not counted for the purposes of the survey. Of particular interest is that nearly half of the responding Associates were employed at either the NLM or an academic library. Numbers of Associates participating in other areas of government and private sector positions had increased since taking their first positions after the program. The category "Other" includes a number of activities, including self-employment, job transition, and child-rearing.

Table 2

Table 4: Status of NLM Associates as of August

1990

Status	No. (%)
Academic library	38 (29)
NLM	26 (20)
Private sector	24 (18)
Other government	16 (12)
Retired	4 (3)
Physician/Lawyer	3 (2)
Graduate student	2 (2)
Public library	2 (2)
Deceased	1 (1)
Other	8 (6)
Unknown	6 (5)
Total	**130 (100)**

Note. Represents Associates of 125 surveyed employed in health sciences. Reprinted from "A longitudinal study of Associates at the National Library of Medicine, 1957-1990," by D. O. Carle, *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association, 83 (3), p. 278.* Copyright 1995 by the Medical Library Association. Reprinted with permission.

These findings positively demonstrate the value of the NLM Associate Fellowship program in recruiting and retaining librarians in the field of health sciences librarianship. While Carle (1995) explicitly points out that previous data on recruitment and retention was not available as a benchmark by which to fully gauge the efficacy of this study, success of the program was exemplified by consistent and continued employment of previous Associates within the field of health sciences.

Similar evaluation criteria were considered by Brewer and Winston (2001) in their evaluation of internship and residency programs in academic and research libraries. Using the ARL Research Library Residency & Internship Programs database available on the web, a target population of twenty-two academic and research libraries known to host internship and residency programs was determined for the study. This population consisted of nineteen college and university libraries, one law library, one archives, and one federal agency. Library administrators, deans, human resources directors, and program coordinators were asked to evaluate factors used to assess their home programs based on a scale of relative importance (i.e. "Very Important," "Somewhat Important," "Not important," etc.). Of the evaluation factors considered for assessment, the greatest importance was placed on "placement in other academic libraries" after completing the field experience program (Brewer & Winston, 2001). 100% of respondents indicated "Placement in other academic libraries" as a "Very Important" or "Somewhat Important" factor for evaluating field experience program success (Brewer & Winston, 2001).

Based on this statistic, Brewer and Winston (2001) concluded that the recruitment and preparation of new librarians in academic librarianship was a primary objective of all field experience programs represented by the study. The authors go on to clarify, pointing out that "[a]lthough former interns/residents may excel in nonacademic library careers after completing their program, this would not be considered successful placement in terms of program objectives" (p. 311). These findings reflect those of Carle's (1995) study, whereby program effectiveness was measured by the number of NLM Associates participating within the purview of health sciences and academic librarianship. In both cases, successful employment within the context of a specified field related to the field experience was considered an important measure of success as dictated by objectives outlined by field experience directors and administrators.

In these instances, evaluating subsequent employment of program participants provided positive feedback. However, critically evaluating field experiences from this perspective also proves as a definitive justification for supporting program improvements. Such was the case in a more recent reevaluation of the Academic Resident Librarian Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Library of the Health Sciences (LHS) after its suspension in 2007 (Scherrer, 2010). Sixteen former residents who had completed at least one year of the program between 1997 and 2007 were given a survey targeting stated LHS goals. The first of those goals was to "increase the pool of qualified academic librarians with an emphasis on traditionally underrepresented groups" (Scherrer, 2010, p. 300). At the time of the survey in 2009,

only four (25%) reported that they were working in academic libraries; one (6%) was employed at a health sciences library. In total, only 5, or 31%, of the residents surveyed were working in the professional field specified in the program's goals, a finding that was deemed "discouraging" (Scherrer, 2010). Although feedback from survey participants indicated that the program had benefited their careers and professional lives in other ways—such as providing professional reference experience and networking opportunities that are especially marketable when finding a first job—the program appeared to fall short in the way of meeting this primary objective (Brewer & Winston, 2001; Carle, 1995; Scherrer, 2010). These findings demonstrate the value of these assessment efforts, in that if the program is to be reinstated, measures should be taken to better meet expectations in order to garner further university support.

2. Career Success

While "career success" can be measured in part by the environment or institution in which a field experience participant is employed after completing the program, another more quantitative measure for assessing effectiveness exemplified by published studies was subsequent participant publications in peer-reviewed journals and playing active roles in professional associations. This criterion for evaluation was used in a number of the assessments to determine field experience effectiveness. Most prominently, in Lanier, Henderson, and Graziano's (1999) evaluation of three library field experience programs, the authors define the fourth objective of their evaluative study as "the role of

the internship in professional recognition and success" (p. 194). Surveys were sent to past participants of three large, long-running field experience programs: the National Library of Medicine Associate Fellowship, the University of Illinois at Chicago Academic Resident Librarian Program, and the Library of Congress Intern Program. While acknowledging the ambiguity of "career success" as an evaluative measure, for the purposes of the study, the authors defined this factor in terms of "number of publications in refereed journals, total number of publications (excluding book reviews), professional activities, and personal satisfaction" (Lanier et al., 1999, p. 197).

By quantifying the idea of "career success" by these means, it was determined that program participants experienced "a good measure of career success" (Lanier et al., 1999, p. 198). For example, in the NLM and UIC programs, approximately 60% of individuals in each program had at least one refereed publication. Moreover, when asked about total publications—any publication with or without peer review but excluding book reviews—76% of all survey respondents reported having published material successfully. In addition, LC program participants were especially active within professional associations. More than 40% of these participants had served on an editorial board for at least two years while 55% of overall respondents served as an elected or appointed official or committee chair (Lanier et al., 1999). The American Library Association (ALA) was the most popular organization supporting the membership of over 57% of survey respondents. Over 36% were members of the Medical Library Association (MLA)—most of them from NLM and UIC—and 11% belonged to the Special Library

Association (SLA). Although this may not be the best measure to define "career

success," enumerating this otherwise ill-defined but important issue using specified

metrics, such as number of publications and professional activities, offers a more

concrete and duplicable operational definition by which to measure professional

accomplishments. This overall positive trend as analyzed by Lanier et al. (1999) offers

evidence of effectual contribution to the profession.

Scherrer's (2010) evaluation of UIC-LHS turned to areas of professional

development as well to determine how well the program was meeting the objective of

"preparing emerging academic library professionals with strong commitment to research"

(p. 301). 73% of respondents reported that they had published their own research since

participating in the UIC-LHS residency. Of these, 40% had published in a peer-reviewed

journal (Scherrer, 2010). Even in spite of the number of librarians who stayed in

academic libraries being relatively low, the number of librarians who were identified as

being "committed to research" by way of subsequent publications was contrariwise quite

high.

What these studies show is that harnessing a concrete statistic, such as the number

of published works or the number of committee seats, can be used to better quantify and

measure a more amorphous topic like "career success" or "commitment to research."

Clear definitions appear to be a consistent issue within the context of evaluating field

experiences, but these studies demonstrate successful examples where the more

qualitative information in question was outlined, defined, and measured by translating it

into terms that could be more easily quantified and, therefore, more easily compared to other similar studies. For example, looking at these two studies based on number of publications alone, it would be reasonable to conclude that the programs under consideration are comparable with relation to career success in research. In both studies, approximately 75% of respondents had published in some format after having completed the field experience. Although an aspect such as "number of publications" may not capture the entire story of a participant's success following the field experience, what it does very well is it creates a baseline by which to compare other evaluations. Exploiting that transferability means the possibility of more direct comparisons among individual programs, which would ultimately lead to more effective field experiences for library school students.

3. Participant Expectations and Satisfaction

Although evaluative data from participant feedback is largely "anecdotal and incomplete," informal input from past participants was considered the most important assessment criterion by nearly 90% of respondents to Brewer & Winston's (2001) survey regarding key factors in assessment of existing internship/residency programs. This is evidenced not only by formal survey data, but also by the nature of the field experience evaluations under review. Each of these assessments is based strictly on the feedback of past participants. The expectations and satisfaction of these participants prior to entering

and after completing their field experience were of particular interest in formal evaluative studies.

Scherrer's (2010) assessment of the UIC-LHS residency provides a sound example. Factors that residents retroactively recalled as being motivating factors for accepting the position, as well as perceived value after leaving the program, were the focus of much of the survey data collected. In both cases, professional experience was rated the highest factor; 87% of respondents rated gaining professional experience as a "Somewhat Important" or "Very Important" motivator for accepting the residency position, with 100% reporting that professional experience was either "Somewhat Important" or "Very Important" in terms of what they valued most after completing the program (Scherrer, 2010). As far as accepting the position, getting experience in health sciences specifically was reported as "Somewhat Important" or "Very Important" by 75% of respondents (Scherrer, 2010). Other valuable takeaways reported by participants included reference experience, rated "Somewhat Important" or "Very Important" by 94% of participants, and networking, which was rated "Somewhat Important" or "Very Important" by 87% of respondents. Additional aspects of the field experience, such as biggest challenges and least valuable program activities were also included in the survey (Scherrer, 2010). Reporting these findings offered other evidentiary support of a successful field experience endeavor. Although the UIC-LHS program performed comparatively poorly when examining its stated internal goals, it succeeded in leaving

participants satisfied by providing them with the professional experience they both expected and later valued later in their careers.

Similarly, Lanier et al. (1999) devoted a portion of their evaluation of three field experience programs to participant expectations pre-field experience and measures of their satisfaction post-field experience with relation to finding a job. A five-point scale of importance was used to rate responses, where "1 = Not at all important," "3 = Important," and "5 = Extremely important." For reporting purposes, ratings of 3 or higher—or displaying any level of importance—were grouped together (Lanier et al., 1999, p. 196). As with Scherrer's (2010) survey, this study asked participants about what motivated them to apply for or accept their field experience position. Survey findings mirror those of Scherrer's (2010) as well, with over 90% of respondents stating that gaining professional experience was an important issue when making the decision to participate. Again, networking and specialization in librarianship were noted equally as important factors, reported by over 80% of survey respondents (Lanier et al., 1999).

In an effort to measure satisfaction after concluding the program, participants were asked to rate the importance of their field experience in finding their subsequent professional position in libraries. Holding the economy and job market at the time of the survey constant, approximately 68% of total respondents indicated that they felt completing their field experience program noticeably and positively impacted obtaining a professional job. However, this varied more greatly by individual program; for instance, fewer than half of UIC participants felt that completing their field experience influenced

their finding a job while more than three quarters of the LC program thought that the

program was an important factor in finding their current positions (Lanier et al., 1999).

Along this same vein and showing slightly greater favor, about 76% of respondents felt

that while perhaps their program completion had been less important in finding their

current position, they viewed it as a positive influence on their position or career

advancement (Lanier, et al., 1999). Other areas for which participant satisfaction was

considered included development and addressing of key competencies, such as

"professional attitudes and socialization" and "teaching methods" and leadership

development (Lanier, et al., 1999). While in many areas, participants agreed across field

experience programs, in some instances, discrepancies came to life as a result of eliciting

anecdotal feedback. These kinds of discrepancies once identified help administrators ask

the appropriate questions in order to better meet participants' needs and perceptions while

also continuing to achieve their own stated objectives.

These results are based solely on participant perceptions and opinions, yet they

play an important role in determining field experience incentives and perceptions from

the participants' perspectives. There is only so much guessing that the administering

librarians can do with regard to the success of their program. Administrators will not

know if participants find value in and are satisfied with the field experience curriculum

unless and until they ask. While it is important to achieve library goals with the structure

of a field experience, finding ways to enhance participant benefits is also critical. Having

this insight allows field experience directors and administrators to improve the quality of

the program for its participants by specifically targeting those elements of the field

experience that are considered the most useful.

DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of a lack of standardization in the area of field experiences, trending

assessment criteria can be found in what formal evaluations have been published. When

comparisons can be drawn between published studies in cases like these, a clearer picture

of how one field experience program stacks up against another begins to develop.

However, with the current ambiguity that exists among not only evaluation endeavors,

but also just how to refer to these practical learning experiences, forming these kinds of

connections proves difficult. Thorough and delineated definitions for the varying field

experience offerings have already been created, as seen in the examples from the ARL

and ALISE, large governing bodies and respected institutions within the library

profession. However, although standards have been created, they have not been widely

adopted or implemented. As a result, confusion and uncertainty continue to stifle the

literature on this topic, making it difficult to define and therefore difficult to search.

This can be addressed first on a more local scale. Libraries should at minimum

define these terms for themselves for the purposes of their own evaluations. Following

best practices for operational definitions with respect to conducting informed and

publishable research should be followed. This will work twofold in clarifying the

evaluation and assessment process for field experience programs. For one, providing

clear definitions of field experience elements makes them easier to evaluate. Currently,

evaluation and assessment of these programs remains intimidating and uncertain. By

setting clear guidelines for assessment agreed upon within the context of a single

institution, evaluation can begin more readily. In addition, setting the minimum of a local standard allows for easier comparison of self-evaluations. Subsequent evaluations following the outlines of the same definitions and procedures would more effectively and accurately demonstrate not only the value of the program, but also the progress of the program in relation to past years. Fostering the start of the evaluation process while also providing mechanisms for more meaningful self-assessment would enable libraries and other sponsoring institutions to begin this process in a more governed and systematic way.

However, to best foster cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary growth and understanding among libraries, collective decisions as a profession to adhere to one of these already-created standards of operational definitions is what needs to be done. This would involve greater involvement and influence from professional organizations. Standards have been set with regard to defining field experience programs for library students already, as exemplified by the ARL and ALISE organizations; rather than reinventing the wheel, librarians should be encouraged to refer to these or other similar designations as provided by professional associations. This can also pave the way toward creating standards within the context of specific disciplines and environments within librarianship. For example, what an appropriate and effective field experience looks like in the context of an academic library is likely dissimilar from that which would be successful in a public or school library. In this way, librarians should feel comfortable with and capable of appealing to their professional organizations and creating standards

that can be widely adopted for the purposes of creating and disseminating evaluative

studies, thereby drawing more meaningful comparisons and ultimately allowing field

experience programs to evolve to provide the best possible experience for students and

professionals.

This concept of standardization goes beyond what to call particular families of

programs. Moreover, it also applies to other equally vague and squishy evaluative terms

used in field experience assessment, such as "career success." Although numbers do not

provide the entire story, and anecdotal participant feedback is considered an important

part of the evaluations process, quantifying these and other similar terms provides

boundaries to otherwise limitless topics, making them more feasible and accessible to

new evaluators. Here again, librarians should appeal to their governing organizations for

large-scale standardization, or at the very least define these terms for themselves. What

does "career success" mean to them, and what is a more specific and measurable way to

define that concept? These are the kinds of questions that librarians should ask

themselves as they embark on this process. Ultimately, offering evaluators a realm of

examination that is clearly defined will make assessment more manageable and foster

further connections across varying studies.

What's more is that if evaluative studies are to adhere to a standard, they need to

be regularly conducted in addition to being thoroughly documented and published. For

the purposes of this review, barring stated limitations, so few published evaluations were

found in the literature. If field experience programs are evaluating their practices—and

though one could make the hopeful assumption that they are, if they are not, they should be—those studies are only living up to so much of their potential if they are not also being made available to the wider professional community. For one, these evaluations serve as models to other institutions that perhaps have not yet performed an assessment of their current field experience program. Having a starting point from which to build would take out some of the mystery and uncertainty that may stand in the way of evaluating field experience programs in libraries. In addition, being able to compare studies across similar disciplines and contexts is an effective way to improve established programs, as well as inform the conception and development of new practical endeavors for students. These evaluative studies are not only valuable to the institutions in which they are conducted, but they can also be useful and transferable in other contexts and environments outside of their home institutions. Thinking in this way of the broader impact of evaluations and assessment would promote greater professional contributions, which would ultimately lead to field experience programs built on a more informed and structured platform.

Standardization and publication therefore work hand-in-hand in the improvement process for evaluation of field experiences. While the adherence to standards is an important part of the process, this can only be done if results of these studies are made available in the literature. Availability, in addition to enhanced discoverability through greater standardization, would offer access to models of field experiences and evaluation methods that would aid in the progression of these programs in order to provide the

maximum benefits to both administering librarians and field experience participants.

What would most benefit the evaluation and improvement of these programs would be

for published studies to adopt and adhere more closely to these classifications. In this

way, searching for appropriate studies related to a particular type of field experience

would be easier to locate, and once found, meaningful associations would be easier to

make. Developing these connections among studies would provide a richer

understanding of the field experience landscape and what it looks like to be successful in

experiential education.

     Just as standards should formalize the language by which field experience

programs are evaluated, so too should institutions develop clear guidelines by which to

assess these programs. The evaluative studies cited in this survey were primarily

successful because of clear objectives and goals that had been set prior to field experience

recruitment. Setting precise parameters related to what defines success in relation to a

particular program is crucial to this process. Examples of learning outcomes and

measures that proved effective for assessment were cited in the studies mentioned in this

survey. Such examples point to the need for greater publication and discoverability

within the evaluation and assessment literature on this topic. Meaningful assessments

and comparisons can only be made in these instances when achievement has been clearly

and succinctly defined. For each individual field experience, what proves most useful for

the purposes of evaluation may differ. What is important is that these factors are outlined

and considered prior to the assessment process. In this way, evaluators will know with greater confidence and certainty how the field experience program has met its goals.

Finally, librarianship is a community of information, sharing, and collaboration. It should be encouraged for those who participate in notable and successful field experience programs to impart their experiences and subsequent wisdom to others. Creativity and innovation in these realms should be integrated into the library science scholarly communications process. Collaborating to find new and inspired ways to address the experiential education needs of library science students will create a pool of new professionals that is as fresh as it is qualified. Developing a stronger profession with better qualified individuals, as a whole will mean better job prospects and better paid opportunities for everyone.

CONCLUSIONS

The practical knowledge and professional confidence promoted by field experience programs for library school students and recent library school graduates are instrumental tools to creating skilled and effective members of the profession. In addition to providing experiential benefits for library students, field experience programs are playing an increasingly important role in filling voids in library public service offerings left in the wake of reduced budgets, resources, and staff. However, although formal evaluations have been conducted and show evidence for the value participants find in these programs, more formal standardization and greater clarity when defining program objectives and assessment outcomes will only improve this field of research. Effective criteria for evaluation, as exhibited by this study, include those that are precise, well defined, and participant-centered. Working toward shaping a more concrete realm in which to evaluate field experiences by increasing standardization of professional vocabulary and more acutely outlining program objectives will provide for more meaningful comparisons between programs. By exercising more thoughtful and consistent forms of assessment, both library school students and library professionals will benefit from a more structured practical learning environment.

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