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Abstract

The authors describe difficulties pertaining to discipline-specific discourse and identity among collaborators during the process of revising the information literacy component of a first-year writing program. Hardesty's term "faculty culture" offers a frame through which to understand resistance and tension among otherwise engaged faculty and situates this experience within the uncomfortable history between faculty and librarians who may be perceived as "inauthentic" faculty. The authors suggest ways to improve communication between librarians and writing program faculty when collaborating on information literacy instruction.

Keywords: Information Literacy; Collaboration; First-year writing; Academic libraries; Faculty

Introduction

A well-documented concern in the field of library instruction--or as it more commonly known in the 21st century, Information Literacy (IL)--is a lack of faculty interest and cooperation with librarians in course-based instruction. Course-based instruction requires both librarians and faculty to contribute to student learning of research processes and skills in specific, contextualized class assignments. Evan Farber describes this type of instruction as one where "the teacher's objectives and the librarian's objectives are not only achieved, but are mutually reinforcing."[1] Accounts of frustration on the parts of librarians date back to at least 1958 with the work of Patricia Knapp in the Monteith Pilot Project, a highly successful "bibliographic instruction" project that relied on the collaboration of faculty and librarians.[2] Previous to Knapp's innovation, Harvie Branscomb, a forebear of modern library science, had conceded that librarians could serve only a "helpful, yet subordinate role" to faculty.[3]

The view of librarians as subordinate in student learning continued for most of the 20th century, even noted in the hallmark work of Ernest Boyer, who claimed that libraries, while well-supported by universities to purchase materials, were underused in students' educational experiences.[4] However, with the increase of Internet access and use in educational contexts, the 1990s saw a shift in faculty perception about working with librarians. According to Farber, "faculty is increasingly aware of the educational challenge the Internet poses, and also aware that they do not have the time or expertise to keep up with continual changes and improvements."[5] Špiranec and Zorica further elucidate the demands of navigating digital information: "With the introduction and extensive use of electronic information in classrooms … the need for information literacy competencies necessary for the learning process become more than apparent."[6]

Since the 1990s, accounts of successful and mutually respectful IL projects have become more commonplace. Writing and rhetoric studies has emerged as a field particularly well-suited for collaboration on information literacy curricular design. Similarly to IL, writing and rhetoric has been recognized as a cross-disciplinary field relevant to students' educations generally. As Jacobs and Jacobs point out, both disciplines are interested in developing in students a "highly flexible and reflexive research process."[7] Additionally, an article on information literacy and

first year writing program collaboration suggests, "both fields encourage undergraduates to educate themselves through reading, critical thinking, and the effective and ethical use of information; these skills are taught so that they may be integrated into strategies for living, not just strategies for school success."[8]

Taking cues from several recent approaches to IL and first-year writing (FYW) collaborations, the authors of this article, an IL coordinator and a writing program administrator (WPA), facilitated a collaborative project with a group of twelve writing instructors to improve FYW student experiences. This article does not report on results of that project; rather, it describes the process of our collaboration with particular attention paid to rough patches in that process. Specifically, we share three anecdotes that illustrate the unexpected tensions and resistance that arose which helped us understand the differing disciplinary and institutional identities of librarians and faculty. In reflecting on the moments of tension, we understood them in terms of the work of library scholar Larry Hardesty on faculty culture. In our case, Hardesty's work illuminated two key characteristics of faculty culture that help explain the enduring reticence on the part of faculty to collaborate with librarians: disciplinary assumptions about what constitutes "research" and perceived threats to academic freedom. Our aim is to discuss these manifestations of faculty culture and their effects on the collaborative process of IL and FYW in the fields of library science and writing studies.

Models of IL/FYW Collaboration

Despite both Branscomb's and Farber's pessimistic outlooks on the potential of faculty/librarian collaborations, several accounts of successful IL/FYW collaborations provided the foundation for a new approach to information literacy instruction at our small, public liberal arts college. For example, Maid and D'Angelo identify a shared characteristic of the teaching of writing and information literacy: "pedagogically, the conceptualization of research as a process has facilitated identification of information literacy with writing and collaborations with the rhetoric and writing discipline."[9] Process is indeed key to our approach. We are also inspired

by Artman et al., who describe the limits of the traditional "one shot" library instruction session, an option available to (but only occasionally chosen by) writing instructors at our institution.[10] "One shot" describes a single class session in which a librarian visits a section of first-year writing (or vice versa) to "inoculate" the students with research knowledge for their upcoming writing projects.[11] According to Artman et al., this arrangement is problematic for several reasons: it promotes a diminished view of the research process, devoid of rhetorical concern and disciplinary difference; it is too time-constrained to allow students to understand any semblance of the process of academic research; and it promotes a view of research processes isolated from disciplinary rhetorical realities.[12] Jacobs and Jacobs also point out the mild hypocrisy inherent in relying on one-shots in writing classes that purport to value process. They state,

> Our course schedules and assignments revealed an assumption that a single "dose" of library instruction would teach students all they needed to know about research. Even though we constantly challenged the recurrent view that a first-year composition course is a one-stop site at which to "fix" student writing or that composition could be an inoculation for "bad" student writing, we did not apply the same ideas to the teaching of research within composition courses.[13]

Promoting a process view of information literacy instruction that includes the librarian in the planning of the course is key in helping writing instructors appreciate a more integrated approach to information literacy. As Artman and others suggest, "collaboration must not be reserved until students are in the process of conducting or beginning their research, but must be part of instructional planning envisioned by the instructor or writing program administrator."[14] The Artman approach calls for

> mutually supportive, engaged, and collaborative theories of blended IL and writing instruction [requiring] composition specialists to partner with information specialists in order to facilitate initiatives, pedagogies, and linkages that extend beyond disciplinary, physical, and institutional boundaries.[15]

One way to answer this call is to explore mutually beneficial administrative arrangements such as collocating the writing program and information literacy program in the same department.

This is the approach taken at the University of Wisconsin-Superior. Being programmatically linked, we are able to align our approach most closely with the "blended" IL model described by Sult and Mills. This approach solved the challenge at the University of Arizona of reaching over one hundred sections of first-year writing per semester with six IL librarians.[16] Even teaching double sessions, the librarians could reach only half the students. The blended method that solved this problem offers a variety of five- to ten-minute activities inserted into a standard syllabus as in-class activities or homework. It also asks that instructors share the responsibility of IL instruction. This arrangement solved the logistical problem and satisfied the main desire of the librarians—that information literacy activities "seem like a natural part of their course, not an add-on or extra set of assignments."[17]

Further study at North Dakota State University suggests that, rather than relying solely on librarians to teach information literacy, sharing the responsibility with writing instructors is helpful. It was found that when writing instructors also taught IL they gained greater understanding and appreciation of student information needs and skills, and better grasped the distinction between *assigning* research and *teaching* it. The article concludes that "teachers who employed a variety of strategies for teaching information literacy competency were significantly more satisfied with their students' abilities to successfully complete researched projects."[18] Along this line, Sult and Mills' work also affirms the need to offer teachers strategies for successful IL instruction. They state,

> There is growing support within the profession for librarians to refocus their energy from teaching the students to teaching the teachers. This desire to refocus is borne out of the recognition that even if there were enough librarians to reach all of the students on a given campus, the traditional one-shot instructional session could never teach students everything

they need to know about information literacy.[19]

At the University of Wisconsin-Superior two problems were faced for which these models offer solutions: first, the viability of the IL coordinator (the only instruction librarian on campus) co-teaching annually more than forty sections of FYW; and second, the concern of the coordinator to transform one-shots into more meaningful, process-based lessons for twelve other instructors. Building on these studies and borrowing a phrase from Sult and Mills, an "instructor-led, librarian-facilitated"[20] collection of lessons was planned for the university's writing instructors. Both librarians and writing instructors contributed to, compiled, and shared the content for these courses that were ultimately housed in the campus course management system, D2L. This collection now affords instructors customization by way of variety and number of lessons as well as providing options regarding the pace and timing of the courses.

Another dimension of librarian and faculty collaboration concerns the use of instructional technology. Mackey and Jacobson emphasize instructional technology as an essential piece of IL collaboration. "Technology creates a digital environment for sharing a variety of resources electronically; librarians frequently develop research guides, instructional Web pages, and full-fledged information literacy tutorials, which may be used as is or be adapted by faculty."[21] Moreover, Donaldson writes, "making use of an online environment provides librarians with the opportunity to teach information literacy skills, research strategies, and effective evaluation of information to large numbers of students without having to be physically present to do so."[22] Along with housing sets of activities for student engagement, D2L also allows instructors to easily conduct pre- and post-test assessment measures in computer classrooms useful to the IL Coordinator's campus-level assessment. Yet, while certain logistical problems were solved through this technology, the process of actually collaborating on curriculum changes became problematic.

Faculty, "Faculty," and Faculty Culture

Hardesty, in his 1995 article "Faculty Culture and Bibliographic Instruction: An Exploratory Analysis," offers a diagnosis of the problem of faculty resistance to collaboration with librarians, using the term *faculty culture* to describe five key characteristics that constitute someone's identity as faculty:

1. emphasis on research, content, and specialization
2. de-emphasis on teaching, process, and undergraduates
3. professional autonomy and academic freedom
4. lack of time
5. resistance to change

Hardesty claims that while faculty culture may not be hegemonic, understanding these characteristics can shed light on the disconnect between the simultaneous respect for libraries themselves on college campuses and the often dismissive attitude exhibited towards librarians and their potential input into college curricula. As Hardesty observes, "many faculty members expect, even demand, the development of relatively large library collections but often resist efforts by librarians to teach students how to use these collections."[23] Mackey and Jacobson have noted similar roadblocks. They outline additional hurdles that cause faculty members to be reluctant to get involved. These include: lack of time to tackle yet another initiative; lack of awareness of students' IL needs; belief that students learn these skills and gain this knowledge elsewhere, most likely in high school; lack of instructional support for collaboration, information literacy, and/or information technology development; belief that IL instruction is the job of the library. [24]

Hardesty's and Mackey and Jacobson's lists are certainly debatable across people and institutions and some simply don't apply in our local circumstances. For instance, our institution's enrollment policy, one that approaches "open enrollment," amounts to a social justice mission concerning the surrounding economically disadvantaged area. Teaching is a well-known priority for the university. However, some points

noted do apply, in particular, an emphasis on specialization that in some cases limited colleagues' willingness to explore connections between the goals of IL and writing. Also, stereotypical notions of librarians as inferior or unacademic, though not systematically supported by our institution, seem to nevertheless permeate the faculty culture in this instance.

Our first anecdote shows the obstacle posed by faculty members' emphasis on their own specializations. During a routine program meeting, the writing instructors discussed the annual assessment plan. One assessment outcome emphasized student ability to cite sources according to convention. In a brainstorming session, the writing program administrator jotted down the names of prominent citation styles: "MLA/APA." At this point, one instructor held up his hand, stopped the discussion, and asked who was teaching APA and why. It was discovered that about half the group taught both styles and expected students to align their citation style with the discipline in which their chosen research topic is most often discussed. The other half of the writing instructors expressed that they had never used APA in their own writing and did not feel confident enough to teach it.

This incident illustrates how disciplinary specialization can obstruct collaborative process. In this case, one faculty member's training in literary studies informed his perspective on research generally and on citation format in particular. While certainly students are expected to learn about MLA conventions, a preference for humanities research and writing can exclude as many as half of the other first-year writing students and their scholarly experiences. In the ensuing discussion, other instructors shared their approach to writing in the social sciences where students compose literature reviews, conduct primary research such as interviews and surveys, and learn to contribute to scholarly conversations. Tension and resistance to incorporating a social science approach to writing arose because a humanities instructor was surprised that his assumptions about what constituted proper scholarship were not universal.

Another instructor had a similar experience. When this instructor and the IL coordinator met

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to discuss an upcoming library session for a class, the IL coordinator asked where the students were in the research process and whether the students would have research questions prepared by the time of the session. The instructor indicated that the students had already begun the research process; they had come up with thesis statements and now just needed sources to back them up. Similar to the first anecdote, in this case a focus on the humanities limited writing instruction to subject-specific approaches to research, including objects of study, methods, and underlying assumptions about the importance of related research knowledge for students. To the instructor's way of thinking, in the humanities one makes an original assertion about a text and then builds a critical mass of scholarly work to support the view. While these perspectives are legitimate, of course, immersion in the disciplinary discourse and behaviors of the instructors had become implicit and "naturalized" enough to offer students a truncated view of information literacy. As Michelle Simmons has suggested:

> For scholars who have been thoroughly ensconced in their discipline, their primary and secondary discourses may have merged such that their disciplinary discourse (which had been their secondary) has largely become their primary discourse that they use both inside and outside their academic environment… [I]f the scholar does not expose students to the disciplinary discourse as constructed and dialogic and discipline-specific, the seasoned member of the community risks implying to the student that this is *the* academic discourse instead of *an* academic discourse… [F]aculty members cannot do this monumental task; librarians are better positioned to assist students in recognizing the differences in discourses.[25]

Discipline-focused scholarship, while important to faculty, nevertheless should exhibit some flexibility. For instance, a faculty member at the university with an MFA background in creative writing turned out to be a main advocate for the social science approach. In her view, preparing students for their upper level and major classes is more of a priority than imparting her own view or experience of research and writing. Yet,

even though we laud this colleague for thinking outside of her discipline, another tense situation arose that revealed a second characteristic of faculty culture, namely that professional autonomy and academic freedom can also pose a challenge to collaboration and change.

After discussing the writing program's needs in routine meetings and communicating with individual instructors to arrange library sessions, the IL coordinator received a strongly worded, "all-caps" email from another instructor who was seemingly angry about what was perceived as an overload of programmatic requirements. The email came as a surprise and was followed by an in-person confrontation. The instructor felt her classroom was being infiltrated, an experience she had never before encountered in her years of teaching, where another person offered input on one of her class sessions.

In this situation an interesting complication arises in regard to faculty rights in their own classrooms and broader institutional circumstances. Strictly speaking, not all writing instructors, as contingent instructors, are "faculty," that is, tenured or tenure track. In our university, the IL coordinator is a tenure-track assistant professor. Coker, VanDuinkerken, and Bales have noted that this condition is part and parcel of Hardesty's model: despite official rank, views of librarians as "inauthentic" faculty members who should not have bearing on university curriculum persist.[26] For instance, policy statements in support of faculty status for librarians stretch back to 1958, though as of 2001 only an estimated 50% of academic librarians have faculty status.[27] Some institutions have even revoked faculty status for librarians in times of financial crisis, as occurred in Alamo County, Texas in February 2011.[28]

The question of classroom "infiltration" raises the larger question of who has the right and responsibility to provide input regarding a faculty member's class. In particular, what is the status of librarians at an institution: faculty, or not faculty? Doubts about the Master of Library Science (MLS) degree and the nature of duties of librarians are fodder for debate concerning faculty status for librarians. Coker, VanDuinkerken and Bales discuss the common argument that

the MLS, unlike the PhD, does not adequately prepare librarians to perform scholarly research.[29] Shen also discusses what effect a PhD versus an MLS may have on the perception of librarians as scholars.[30] A further complicating factor is that academic appointments are not uniform across institutions. Ruess reports that some library administrations implement a probation period to determine whether librarians should be required to complete scholarship as part of their tenure requirements.[31] And, while some libraries offer traditional tripartite appointments covering teaching, research, and service, others offer bipartite appointments covering only teaching and service.[32] Still, Coker, VanDuinkerken, and Bales argue that regardless of their degrees, many librarians publish extensively.[33] Given these variations, the rights of librarians to offer input on classroom conduct and curriculum content tend to be controversial.

If research training is not at issue, another argument against faculty status for librarians relates to the nature of the field itself. Opponents argue that teaching provided by librarians, often one-on-one and situated in the library, is not comparable to classroom teaching.[34] On the other hand, Hill argues that librarianship must be judged on its unique internal benchmarks, as with other disciplines.[35] As Coker, VanDuinkerken, and Bales assert in their persuasive piece "Seeking Full Citizenship," the discussion continues because few administrators and teaching faculty understand librarianship. They call for librarians to "both *demand* and *prove* your right to academic citizenship" in an environment where there are faculty-level expectations but without the rights and privileges of faculty status awarded them.[36]

Perhaps as librarians more widely gain status as full-fledged faculty members and as faculty culture recognizes the academic contributions librarians offer their institutions, librarian-faculty collaboration in information literacy programs can overcome the prevalent hurdles that exist today.

Conclusion

By reflecting critically on the history of collaboration between librarians and other faculty, pro-

filing the experiment at the University of Wisconsin-Superior to produce a theoretically and logistically sound curriculum, and exploring possibilities for understanding the resistance librarians at the University of Wisconsin-Superior faced throughout these efforts, we hope to help colleagues undertaking similar projects anticipate potential bumps in the road and mitigate their effects. Specifically, librarians need to forge a productive working relationship with writing instructors and other teaching faculty on the information literacy components in courses and programs. Librarians also need to find opportunities to provide input on curriculum design. Enhancing the scholarly output of librarians is key to this and could lead to greater numbers of librarians gaining faculty status and moving forward on a tenure track. Also, adopting a process model of library instruction that integrated information literacy themes and exercises rather than using the traditional "one-shot" instruction session greatly advanced librarian-faculty collaboration at the university.

Of course, initiating and fostering frank and open discussion with writing instructors and teaching faculty was essential for collaboration. While these types of discussions may be resisted at first and challenging over the long haul, they ultimately contributed to an effective information literacy program. These discussions helped provide much-needed insight into ways forward and different perspectives on research and scholarship. Our discussions also expanded and deepened appreciation of the contributions of both faculty and librarians to teaching information literacy. In one such discussion held at our university, a writing instructor, showing appreciation for the contribution of the IL coordinator, declared, "She has a vocabulary I just don't have!"

Faculty culture in an institution may be resistant to librarian input on curriculum design, but the more librarians establish themselves as experts in scholarship and information literacy, the greater will be the opportunities for faculty-librarian collaboration. We hope this collaboration will lead to a wider and more valued vocabulary among educators involved in information literacy.

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