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Hidden Architectures of Information Literacy Programs: Introduction

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Introduction

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Why We Wrote This

Why this book? When I (Carolyn here) got my first job out of library school I was working as an instruction librarian at the University of Wisconsin - Superior (UWS). I was thrilled! I came directly from graduate school at Indiana University Bloomington, a huge, research-intensive university with multiple libraries, where I had been one of many on an instruction team. At UWS I was one of three librarians total, and the "coordinator" of instruction by default as the only librarian who taught. I was ready! I wouldn't call what I stepped into a full-fledged program, but I was excited to build one. Being a new, enthusiastic professional, I started looking for general guidance and information on how to build an information literacy (IL) program. While I could find tons of information on pedagogy, individual lesson plans, instruction statistics, and at the time, the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*, I couldn't find much on holistic program development.[1] I searched for a workbook. I wanted a step-by-step list of what to do. And while I had taken coursework in information literacy instruction, those courses did not include anything on program development. I eventually found the ACRL *Characteristics of Programs of Information Literacy that Illustrate Best Practices*,[2] but I didn't see my one-person program reflected in the 2012 version. It seemed impossible for a one-person program to meet the best practices in the staffing section or have formalized articulation in the curriculum as laid out in the document.

Around the same time, I met my friend, Jamie White-Farnham, a writing program administrator at UWS. Like all good friends, Jamie helped me grow as a person, but uniquely she also helped me grow as a scholar. She introduced me to the world of writing program administrator literature and scholarship—authors such as Barry Maid, Barbara D'Angelo, and Elizabeth Wardle and Linda Adler-Kassner, and organizations like Council of Writing Program Administrators.[3] Years later, Jamie and I have been connected again through "scholarship as a conversation." I read her collection coedited with Bryna Siegel Finer, *Writing Program Architecture: Thirty Cases for Reference and Research* and was awestruck![4] This conversation, which they so expertly facilitated for writing programs, is exactly the type of conversation we need to be having in libraries. Their work exposes

the contextual bureaucracies that shape and develop writing programs. It is useful for program administrators and participants alike in understanding how individual activities and actions come together to form a cohesive program.

Hidden Architectures of Information Literacy Programs is indebted to their scholarship, and all of the contributors in their book as a model for this one you're now reading. Much like the happenstance of friendship that led to reading a book on writing programs, Carolyn and Elizabeth initially met at ACRL Immersion Program Track in 2012. Years later, we all, including Rebecca, worked at University of Southern California Libraries, and our passion for instruction resulted in us staying in touch and relying on each other as a community of practice even as job opportunities led us elsewhere. Carolyn proposed the book idea after a late-night information literacy coordinator rant text chain, and Rebecca and Elizabeth graciously were on board. Much of the impetus for this book came from these informal networks that get built over time to provide support, ask questions, and bounce ideas around. In particular, we want to acknowledge and thank Sofia Leung for the creation of a private Slack channel for information literacy coordinators in April 2017. This channel has been a great source of inspiration and sharing program documents not necessarily accessible on a public-facing web page. This book would not have fully materialized without the channel revealing the need to us to bring this conversation out fully in our publications.

Hidden Architectures of Information Literacy Programs is an attempt to capture some of the tacit knowledge information literacy coordinators accumulate through trial and error and informal conversations with professional networks. It's still not the step-by-step manual I craved as a new professional, because now I know that kind of rigid how-to instruction wouldn't work for the diversity of the programs and institutions that can and do exist. This book attempts to capture the conversations that don't typically make it into our scholarly literature. It details practices of IL programs that aren't just "innovative" but are the core functions of our jobs day in and day out. This book is for the late-night Slack conversations with coordinators on how you respond to a difficult professor over email. This book is for the conference hallway question about if you're read that article about the demise of the one-shot and how would that even work at your library. Our goal is to expose the mechanics of what makes a program in its entirety, including the invisible inner workings. While this book may be most useful for those who coordinate or lead instruction programs in all their forms, we think it also plays an important role in making all information literacy program labor visible, raising its importance, and encouraging more scholarship on what might seem like the "boring" parts of program development—with a critical eye to why program development hasn't been a focus of scholarship. We hope that these program descriptions help to provide inspiration or affirmation for your own instruction program.

Our Process

Because this book is all about uncovering the hidden work and underlying structures of information literacy programs, it seems only fair that we uncover the work of putting a book like this one together. As participants in ACRL's Immersion Program, we were familiar with, and appreciative of the need for, uncovering our own assumptions about information literacy programs. We began by explicitly stating our assumptions about what

makes an information program strategic, successful, and good. One of Elizabeth's was "The people who lead them are usually doing so without explicit authority or supervisory responsibilities." As you will read, this assumption was based on individual experience and that situation is far from common to all institutions. Carolyn, on the other hand, described her assumption that all successful IL programs require similar amounts of enthusiasm and pedagogical knowledge from all librarians. Rebecca noted her assumption that a good IL program should have complete buy-in from campus constituents. We attempted, in the chapter template, to challenge our own assumptions and make room for every kind of program, including for instruction activities that may not be considered a "program" by the librarians involved. We did this because we had a hunch that our assumptions about what makes a program "good" might be commonly shared and that we could use some of those assumptions as the basis of what we'd want our authors to discuss. We also used challenges to our own assumptions to make sure that we created a call for proposals that resonated with all instruction programs, not just those that fit into our preconceived notions.

Individually, we each wrote abstracts for our book-to-be to help us navigate a shared vision. We made connections, looked for commonalities, and sorted out differences to combine our voices into a single abstract. With a clear understanding of the kind of book we wanted to write, we could start building a structure of how each case study would look. Because *Writing Program Architecture* was our original source of inspiration, we borrowed heavily from, and adapted the structure of, those case studies. We drafted descriptions of each chapter section based on what was revealed in our assumption-hunting exercises and in the kinds of conversations our network of program coordinators have. We had a purpose! We had a structure! And, with purpose and structure, we had the foundation for a call for proposals (CFP).

Once the proposal was submitted and accepted, the real work began. We cleaned up our CFP and distributed it as widely as we could via email discussion lists and personal requests from our networks of colleagues. Using the CFP as a guideline, we developed a rubric to help us assess the proposals we received; the rubric included criteria of clarity, completeness, and broad appeal. We evaluated each proposal individually, then came together to as a team to review our evaluations and reach consensus. This sounds easier than it was—we couldn't do this in a single meeting, and choosing proposals based not only on their own merit but also on how each one would fit into the whole of the book was the most difficult part of the entire process. We were extremely pleased to get seventy submissions for the book, 54 percent of which we accepted. We chose the chapters you see here to represent a range of program and institution types. These chapters represent snap-shots in time from a specific group of people—in a few cases, authors changed institutions during the writing process. Some initiatives described are at their very beginning; some authors are dealing with very recent reorganizations. This variety captures the change-able and complicated nature of all programs, and we're so grateful to our authors, who showed vulnerability in talking about all parts of their programs, not just the parts that run smoothly or serve as exemplars. Some authors needed to drop out of the book because of concerns about internal politics. We can imagine that potential authors didn't even submit proposals for the same reason. We want to acknowledge that writing honestly about all parts of the program, including its imperfections, is hard, and not possible for everyone.

After we selected the chapters, we collaboratively drafted emails to inform all submitters of our decisions. In order for the process to be as organized and painless as possible for

those that were accepted, we consulted with our ACRL editor (more than once) to ensure that we were fully aware of the timeline and process so that we could communicate that to our authors. We had to establish the workflow of how to get chapters to us, for how we would edit them, for how we would ensure as much transparency as possible.

Google Docs was the cornerstone of this process. We had the chapter authors draft their chapters in Google Docs. Each chapter manuscript was placed in a shared folder that all three editors had access to, but not the authors of other chapters. We assigned each author a primary editor so that they would have a single point of contact. Each chapter underwent three revisions. Each chapter was reviewed by its primary editor and a second editor. We rotated the second editor on subsequent drafts so all three editors read every chapter at least once. Within the editing team, we used Slack to avoid endless email threads and inbox glut.

We would like to thank Ray Pun for giving us invaluable advice in the proposal process and Erin Nevius for being an excellent guide in the writing and editing of this collection.

What We Asked

To frame our proposal and structure our chapter template, we wanted the answers to the questions we had when we were just starting out and the ones we have as we move into the future. As we stated in our call for proposals, we were "looking for the realities of coordinating a program in its entirety and not just best practices or one shiny project."

Specifically we asked authors to respond to the following:

- *Population served:* What kind of institution do you work at? Who are the students there? How does this shape what your program does?
- *Program scope:* First year, all undergrads, capstone/thesis, something else? What types of instruction do you do? Workshops? Tutorials? Online or in-person?
- *Operations:* What is the staffing of your program like?
- *Marketing:* Are you actively recruiting one-shot instruction? How?
- *Collaboration:* Do you lead workshops on information literacy on your campus? Who are your biggest allies on campus, and how do you work together?
- *Assessment:* How does your program navigate campus assessment processes? Do you have formal assessment or review of your program? How do you assess student learning?
- *Role of the one-shot:* How does program relate to the one-shot? Is it an uneasy tension, your bread and butter, or something in between?
- *Pedagogical highlights:* What do you teach in your program? How do you create a community of practice around teaching? What is the role of IL inside and outside of the curriculum?
- *Administrative highlights:* Is there a way you administer your program that you're particularly proud of? A sweet calendaring system? A jazzy mission statement?
- *Information literacy coordinator profile:* How did you come to coordinate the teaching activities at your library? Is this role formal or informal? Is it in title or practice only?
- *What you wish people knew:* What about coordinating your program surprised you? Is there advice you would give to others? What kind of hidden labor keeps your program running? Are there skills that you had to develop that you didn't necessarily think you would need?

Not every chapter has responded to every set of questions, so while you will see similar headings across chapters, you may not see every heading in every chapter.

Themes in Chapters

These chapters are about what programs really look like. They are filled with making compromises, acknowledging limitations, and doing a lot with a little. Most importantly, they are deeply contextual. Each program is connected to the cultures of its institutions and libraries and to the particular needs of its communities. In the first round of editing, we often found ourselves curious about a term or acronym so ingrained in the author's culture that it seemed obvious and without need for explanation. Like the assumptions we made as editors, authors made assumptions too, and looking at the breadth of chapters and perspectives let us know that we really could not take anything for granted on the part of readers. It was really interesting for us to read about the ways in which local contexts and priorities intersected with pedagogy, best practices, and guiding documents like the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.*[5]

Michael LaMagna, for example, discusses a close alignment with college learning goals at Delaware County Community College, while Don LaPlant connects IL programming with the applied nature of curricula at SUNY Cobleskill. Discussing Wheaton College, Joshua M. Avery and Cathy Troupos detail the process of aligning with a new general education curriculum. And David Vrooman describes a collaboration common to many other chapters, with introductory composition classes, at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Many of these chapters speak to the delicate balancing act of labor distribution. Some coordinators wrote about not placing undue burdens on the librarians they rely on to teach. Jennifer Beach at Longwood University, for example, talks about piloting new approaches and teaching for high-demand departments herself before asking fellow librarians to join in. Sarah H. Mabee and Sarah E. Fancher at Ozarks Technical Community College describe the parameters they have developed for accepting library instruction requests in order to avoid burnout in a small staff and make instruction meaningful. And Veronica Arellano Douglas at the University of Houston describes the clout she has as a coordinator to negotiate with course instructors on behalf of the librarians she supervises. Several chapters, especially those discussing programs with a small number of librarians, describe standardizing or sharing instructional materials to make teaching and learning consistent, but also to reduce individual librarians' instructional planning time. There is a particular emphasis on this in the chapters about the University of Northern Colorado by Lyda Fontes McCartin, Georgia State University by Karen Doster-Greenleaf, Saint Mary's College of California by Gina Kessler Lee and Conrad Woxland, and the University of Nevada, Reno, by Rosalind Bucy, Elsa De Jong, Tati Mesfin, and Rayla E. Tokarz.

Other authors deal with minimal or absent positional authority paired with needing to make decisions and ask people to do things, mentioned earlier by Elizabeth. For some highlighted descriptions of this phenomenon, check out the chapters on the University of New Hampshire by Kathrine C. Aydelott, UNC Greensboro by Jenny Dale, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, by Joanna Gadsby and Katy Sullivan.

Finally, a common theme for our authors was that of emotional labor and other "soft" or interpersonal skills required to successfully coordinate a program. Kaitlin Springmier at

Sonoma State University discusses the need to manage staff, student, and faculty emotions; generate buy-in for programmatic goals and approaches; and maintain positive relationships throughout the organization. Liza Harrington, Tim Dolan, and Claire Lobdell of Greenfield Community College discuss how the process for creating programmatic documents can be more beneficial for creating a shared vision than the documents themselves. Other chapters that discuss the hidden, and often taxing, requirements for emotional intelligence and emotion work are Lafayette College by Lijuan Xu and University of California, Riverside by Dani Brecher Cook.

Who Is This Book For?

This book is for you, new graduate student, learning about information literacy programs, maybe even doing that dreaded observe-a-teaching-librarian assignment where you're seeing the tiniest bit of a program. It's for you, administrator, who maybe have never taught an information literacy session. It's for you, instruction librarian, to understand the breadth and depth of a program that you're a part of. It's for you, non-librarian educator or administrator, to see what is out there in the world of IL programming. We hope that all of these audiences will find something of value in this book.

Alternative Organization of the Book

We want this book to be as useful and accessible as possible but realize that knowing how to compare your program to another's can be fraught and complicated. When trying to decide how to organize our book, we could see the merits in organizing by program type—so, say, for instance, if you have a solo-librarian program, you can see examples of how others in your situation manage things—and by type of institution—so you can see how, for instance, liberal arts colleges run a program. We ultimately couldn't decide, so we chose both. Because this is a practical guide, our primary organization is by program type. But you'll see below that we provide an alternative organization structure by type of institution according to broad Carnegie Classifications—the best of both options. We developed the program type categories after reading through all the chapters and consulting with the authors; each category is then organized alphabetically by institution name. Teaching team models are IL programs where the instruction work is conducted by a team of individuals (formal or informal), unit, or department dedicated to instruction. A subject liaison model describes IL programs where instruction work is distributed primarily through a dedicated subject liaison team. The combination of a teaching team and liaison model describes IL programs where the instruction work is organized by some kind of mix of both options. The programs in the solo librarian model option are IL programs organized and executed by one librarian. Finally, we also have some programs that are organized primarily around a credit-bearing course. We encourage you to pick out and read the ones that speak to you!

Community College

- Delaware County Community College (Public)—chapter 14
- Greenfield Community College (Public)—chapter 4
- Ozarks Technical Community College (Public)—chapter 33
- Saddleback College (Public)—chapter 9

Liberal Arts College

- Augustana College (Private)—chapter 22
- Eastern Connecticut State University (Public)—chapter 24
- Lafayette College (Private)—chapter 5
- Paul Smith's College (Private)—chapter 34
- Sonoma State University (Public)—chapter 17
- Wheaton College (Private - Religious)—chapter 31

Research-Intensive Doctoral Granting

- Michigan State University (Public)—chapter 6
- UNC Greensboro (Public)—chapter 25
- University of California, Riverside (Public)—chapter 10
- University of Houston (Public)—chapter 27
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County (Public)—chapter 39
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas (Public)—chapter 28
- University of Nevada, Reno (Public)—chapter 11
- University of New Hampshire (Public)—chapter 19
- University of Southern California (Private)—chapter 20
- Utah State University (Public)—chapter 12
- Washington University in St. Louis (Private)—chapter 21

Master's Comprehensive

- California State University, Dominguez Hills (Public)—chapter 13
- California State University San Marcos (Public)—chapter 2
- Longwood University (Public)—chapter 15
- Northern Kentucky University (Public)—chapter 7
- Saint Mary's College of California (Private—Religious)—chapter 16
- State University of New York at Plattsburgh (Public)—chapter 37
- University of Dubuque (Private—Religious)—chapter 26
- University of Minnesota Duluth (Public)—chapter 18
- University of Northern Colorado (Public)—chapter 38
- University of Portland (Private)—chapter 29
- Worcester State University (Public)—chapter 32

Consortial Libraries

- Auraria Library (Public)—chapter 1
- The Claremont Colleges Library (Private)—chapter 23

- Georgia State University (Public)—chapter 3
- University of Washington Bothell/Cascadia College (Public)—chapter 30

Specialized

- Mary Baldwin University (Private)—chapter 36
- Oxford College of Emory University (Private)—chapter 8
- State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill (Public)—chapter 35

Notes

1. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000).
2. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Characteristics of Programs of Information Literacy That Illustrate Best Practices* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, June 2003, rev. January 2012).
3. Barry Maid and Barbara D'Angelo, "The WPA Outcomes, Information Literacy, and Challenges of Outcomes-Based Curricular Design," in *Teaching and Assessing Writing: A Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration*, ed. Norbert Elliot and Les Perelman (New York: Hampton Press, 2012), 99–112; Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle, eds., *Naming What We Know* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2015); Council of Writing Program Administrators home page, accessed May 8, 2019, http://wpacouncil.org.
4. Bryna Siegel Finer and Jamie White-Farnham, eds., *Writing Program Architecture* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2017).
5. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016), http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework.

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