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Features

Departments

This month's cover features an image of the laboratory and four assistants of Ivan Michurin in Michurinsk, Russia, USSR, ca. 1932–1933, taken by Lotte Jacobi. Jacobi was an acclaimed portrait photographer and photojournalist whose subjects included Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, and J.D. Salinger. A Jewish woman, she fled Germany in 1935 and immigrated to New York, where she lived until moving to Deering, NH, in 1955. This photograph was taken during her travels in Central Asia and the USSR during the early 1930s.

The image is part of the Lotte Jacobi Collection donated to the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Library in 1985. Before her death, Jacobi bequeathed 47,000 negatives, several hundred study and exhibition prints, three portfolios, letters, catalogues, documents, and other printed material to UNH. Learn more at https://library.unh.edu/find/archives/collections/lotte-jacobi-papers-1898-2000.

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Fort Hays State Announces Library Renovations, Renaming

To kick off Homecoming weekend in late September 2025, a seven-figure gift was revealed at a dedication and major gift announcement at Fort Hays State University (FHSU). The transformative donation from Stephen, Tatiana, and the Tebo family will support the renovation of FHSU's on-campus library, which will proudly carry the name Tebo Library moving forward. The renaming of FHSU's library not only honors the Tebo family's extraordinary generosity but also reflects the values they live by—grit, determination, perseverance, vision, and innovation—principles deeply woven into the spirit of FHSU itself. A 1967 FHSU graduate, Stephen Tebo fondly remembers the library as more than a building. It offered him knowledge, connection, and opportunity.

With the current library constructed nearly sixty years ago, the building had begun to show its age. Its spaces and infrastructure couldn't keep up with the way today's students learn, collaborate, and connect. The time had come to strengthen the building's foundation, modernize the facility and its amenities, and infuse the library with natural light to create an inspiring environment for future FHSU students. In May 2024, FHSU embarked on a comprehensive renovation to the then-named Forsyth Library, estimated at nearly $28 million. Learn more about the Tebo Library renovation by visiting foundation.fhsu.edu/library, fhsu.edu/library/renovation.

From left to right: Jason Williby, president and CEO, FHSU Foundation; Mary Hammond, senior director of development, FHSU Foundation; Dr. Tisa Mason, FHSU president; Stephen Tebo; Ginger Williams, FHSU dean of library services; Dr. Jill Arensdorf, FHSU provost and vice president for academic affairs.

New LibGuide for the Experiences with Information Literacy Module of the NSSE

The ACRL National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Information Literacy Module Review Task Force completed a new LibGuide highlighting how you can learn about, advocate for, and use NSSE data at your institution. In addition to documenting the work of the task force, this LibGuide provides practical tips and resources for librarians and library administrators when considering administering the "Experiences with Information Literacy" module of the NSSE. The NSSE is an annual survey of four-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior students' participation in programs and activities. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. The new guide is available at https://acrl.libguides.com/NSSEInfoLit.

Clarivate Releases Pulse of the Library Report

Clarivate has released the Pulse of the Library 2025 report, which examines how libraries globally are adapting to fast-moving opportunities and challenges such as artificial intelligence (AI) adoption, open science, and geopolitical pressures. The findings reveal a steady rise in AI adoption, with 67 percent of libraries exploring or implementing AI tools, an increase from 63 percent in 2024. Although the majority remain at the initial stages of evaluation, early adopters are pressing ahead and reporting greater optimism, particularly as they progress through implementation phases. The report also shows that libraries are more likely to be in the moderate or active implementation phases of AI when AI literacy is part of the formal training or onboarding program (28 percent), librarians have dedicated time/resources (23.3 percent), or managers actively encourage development (24.2 percent).

The Pulse of the Library 2025 report draws on insights from more than 2,000 librarians across 109 countries and regions, representing academic, public, and national libraries. Building on the first report in 2024, it provides actionable insights and recommendations for libraries seeking to maximize the benefits of AI. Explore the Pulse of the Library report at https://clarivate.com/pulse-of-the-library.

ARL Publishes Code of Best Practices Addendum

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) has published an addendum to the 2012 *Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Academic and Research Libraries*, providing updated guidance on making copies of library materials for people with disabilities. The addendum clarifies ambiguities in copyright law referenced in the original code that have since been resolved by case law and statute, particularly *Authors Guild v. HathiTrust* and the 2018 Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act. The addendum offers guidance to libraries on providing accessible materials to print-disabled members of a college or university community; clarifies that "eligible persons" include people with mobility impairments and learning disabilities; and explains that libraries can rely on fair use to create accessible versions of materials beyond literary works and musical works. The code was originally created as a partnership between ARL; the Center for Media and Social Impact (CMSI), School of Communication, American University; and the Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property, Washington College of Law, American University, with input from librarians around the country. Access the code at https://www.arl.org/resources/code-of-best-practices-in-fair-use-for-academic-libraries/.

Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos Now Available Open Access

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's long-standing *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945 (ECG)* is now available in an open-access, digital edition from Project Muse. The *ECG* volumes I–IV are now fully searchable, open-access digital publications and the most comprehensive resource on Nazi persecutory sites. The *ECG* gives users the ability to dynamically engage with empirically grounded research that documents thousands of camps, ghettos, and other sites of persecution operated by the Nazis and their allies. Work on the multivolume encyclopedia stretches back over twenty-five years and involves the work of more than 700 scholars in the fields of history, Holocaust studies, and other related disciplines. To date, this global scholarly collaboration has documented evidence of

thousands of camps and ghettos. Content in the remaining three volumes will be published online as it is available. In addition to the remaining volumes, newly updated content that incorporates previously inaccessible and undiscovered sources will continuously be added to the *ECG*. Learn more about how this project came together with a video of scholars discussing it at https://bit.ly/MUSE_USHMM_Video.

Bloomsbury Video Library Expands with Opera Rara and Wigmore Hall Collections

Bloomsbury Digital Resources recently unveiled two new additions to its Bloomsbury Video Library platform: The Opera Rara collection and the Wigmore Hall Music Performance Collections. These resources bring rare operatic recordings and world-class music performances to students, researchers, and libraries across the globe. Opera Rara on Bloomsbury Video Library is a rich audio and video collection featuring premium, recent performances of rare and forgotten operas—an invaluable resource for opera researchers and students alike. Through Bloomsbury Video Library, these unique materials will be accessible within the global education sector from early 2027. Beginning in 2026, Bloomsbury Video Library will also launch the Wigmore Hall Music Performance Collections. These exclusive streaming collections will feature chamber, instrumental, and vocal recitals from Wigmore Hall, one of the world's leading concert venues. The first collection, covering the 2024–25 season, includes performances from Boris Giltburg, Konstantin Krimmel, Olivier Stankiewicz, and more. New season collections will be added annually. Learn more at https://www.bloomsburyvideolibrary.com/.

Tech Bits . . .

Brought to you by the ACRL ULS Technology in University Libraries Committee

Google's NotebookLM is an AI-powered research and learning tool designed to help users analyze, understand, and generate content based on uploaded documents. After signing in, users can create a new notebook and add various sources including PDFs, Markdown files, Google Docs and Slides, websites, YouTube videos, audio files, and copied text. Once the sources are added, NotebookLM can answer questions, summarize content, create reports and study guides, generate mind maps and timelines, and even produce audio and video overviews from the provided information. This tool can be used by librarians, researchers, and students seeking support with personal and professional tasks. NotebookLM is free to use with a standard Google account with an optional paid pro plan offering higher usage limits and access to premium features.

— Jennifer Long, Troy University

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https://notebooklm.google.com

Jane Hammons

Outdated Notion?

Teaching Plagiarism as Theft

Since 2023, librarians from the University of New Mexico and The Ohio State University have given several presentations on "Outdated Research Notions," which are guidance that is provided to students, or shared understandings about research practices, that are no longer effective. This article, along with the companion piece "Outdated Notion? Teaching Scholarly Articles as the Gold Standard," by Adrienne Warner and Alyssa Russo, provides an overview of an "outdated notion" that has generated significant discussion among presentation participants. We share these as way to generate conversation among librarians about approaches to teaching key information literacy concepts and skills.

The "Plagiarism as Theft" Metaphor

Teaching students about plagiarism is a key focus for many academic librarians.[1] Within the academy, the plagiarism as theft metaphor is commonly used.[2] Plagiarism is often referred to as "stealing" or a "crime." For example, the website of the University of Akron's Office of Student Academic Success Tutoring Services states, "*Just as stealing money or a car is a crime, presenting ideas or words as if they were your own is a crime*" (emphasis added).[3] In this description, plagiarism is not considered to be *similar* to a crime but rather an actual crime. Likewise, investigations into potential cases of plagiarism often mimic the format and language of legal proceedings.[4]

There does not appear to have been a significant discussion of the plagiarism as theft metaphor within the library and information science literature. However, scholars in legal studies and writing studies have raised concerns about the accuracy and harm of describing plagiarism as theft. This article encourages librarians to critically consider these concerns. However, I want to clarify that I am not suggesting that librarians stop teaching students about plagiarism or stop discussing plagiarism as a serious issue. My argument is that shifting our language about plagiarism may encourage more productive conversations with students about why it is important to provide attribution. I would also like to note that this essay is focused on plagiarism, not copyright infringement. Although these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they are not the same.[5]

Key Concerns: Plagiarism as Theft

The first concern I want to highlight is that understandings of plagiarism in the United States are based on a Western, capitalist view that "assumes that everything of value can be

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owned, bought, and sold and that ideas, knowledge, and art are created by individuals who have the rights of ownership."[6] However, students from non-Western backgrounds may have very different understandings. While describing plagiarism as theft is common, this does not mean that it is the only option for characterizing plagiarism.

Second, at least in the United States, it does not appear that the description of plagiarism as "theft" or "crime" is legally accurate. For example, on the website of the Cornell Law School, it is noted that "plagiarism is not illegal in the United States in most situations."[7] Legal scholars, including Stuart P. Green and Bryan L. Frye, have explored whether plagiarism actually fits the legal definition of theft or crime. In a 2002 article, Green stated that "plagiarism never has been, and probably never should be, prosecuted as theft."[8] Likewise, Frye argues that, unlike copyright infringement, "plagiarism is not a legal wrong ... it is neither a tort, nor a crime."[9] Although descriptions of plagiarism often refer to it as the stealing of another's "words" or "ideas," Green argues that plagiarism would meet the legal requirements to be considered theft only if it is recognized that the "property" that is being "stolen" is *credit*, rather than the words themselves. Even then, Green acknowledges that the argument that credit is a type of property that can be stolen is "less than airtight."[10]

More important than the question of whether plagiarism meets the legal standard for theft is the question of whether describing plagiarism as theft makes sense to students. Stefan Senders describes asking students to define plagiarism and getting answers acknowledging plagiarism as "theft" and "stealing."[11] However, Senders argues that, even though most students are familiar with the metaphor of plagiarism as theft, "many of them *don't believe*" (emphasis added).[12] Senders asserts that one reason for this may be that students have grown up in a time in which many people do not consider actions such as illegally downloading music to be wrong. Beyond this, however, Senders states that "even for the students who think stealing is wrong, and I mean *really wrong*, plagiarism doesn't look like *normal theft*" (emphasis added).[13]

Generally, when a thief steals an item, they are taking something that another person wanted to keep and depriving them of the use of that item.[14] However, as Amy Robillard notes, scholars see their works as "*contributions* rather than as objects to be stolen; we *want* others to use our work" (emphasis added).[15] And thieves are generally stealing items that they consider to be of worth, but the words that students plagiarize are ones they "frequently don't want or care about, or even hold onto for long."[16] The idea that stealing someone's "words" is theft does not align with how we typically think about theft. Even if we move beyond the idea of plagiarism as the stealing of "words" and consider it to be the stealing of "credit," as Green has argued, it may still be difficult for students to recognize this as constituting "theft." As Green states, for some, "the rather abstract idea that *X* can 'steal' credit owed to *Y* seems far removed from the familiar notion that *X* can steal *Y's* car or television set."[17]

This is not to say that students do not understand the idea of giving credit. Yet, as Senders notes, in most cases, it is difficult to make a convincing argument that an author is losing credit, or suffering any type of harm, when a student uses their work because "students and 'authors' do not participate in the same economy."[18] The original author is rarely going to ever know that a student has taken their "credit." There are, of course, other types of harm that come from a student committing plagiarism. However, students likely recognize that, in most cases, the original author is not actually losing anything when a student uses their work without citation.

Another criticism centers around the idea that theft does not fully capture what it is that we really consider to be wrong with plagiarism. For example, Frye states in an article, "I explicitly authorize plagiarism of this article."[19] However, in discussions of this article during presentations, many participants indicated that if a student copied from this paper without providing a citation, *it would still be plagiarism*. Compare this to the case of stealing a car. If Kia gives Tucker permission to use her car, and explicitly stated that she had done so when asked by the police, we would think it was wrong if Tucker was prosecuted for theft. However, in the case of the student using Frye's words without attribution—though Frye had explicitly given the student permission to do so—many would still consider it to be a case of plagiarism. Likewise, most librarians would likely agree that if a student copies artificial intelligence (AI)–generated work, this would still be considered plagiarism, even though an AI tool is not a person and cannot be harmed by the student's "theft." Thus, there is a limit to the adequacy of the theft metaphor in capturing what we mean when we are talking plagiarism.

The next concern is that the plagiarism as theft metaphor makes it seem as if identifying plagiarism is as simple as recognizing that taking someone else's car without permission is theft. But this is not true.[20] As Sarah Eaton has noted, "We all think we are talking about the same thing when we say the word, 'plagiarism,' but that isn't necessarily the case."[21] In presentations on plagiarism with experienced instructors and librarians, in which I provide specific scenarios and ask participants to determine whether it is plagiarism, there is always debate. Likewise, descriptions of plagiarism in writing guides or institutional policies often leave room for significant disagreements in interpretation. Frye recalls reading through the plagiarism policy at his institution and thinking that it was "hard to imagine how any student attempting to follow this policy could possibly be anything but 'unsure'" about what constitutes plagiarism.[22] Identifying which actions do and do not constitute plagiarism is simply not as clear as the plagiarism as theft metaphor implies. Is incorporating feedback from a peer, copying the structure of someone else's essay, or reusing your own work for different classes plagiarism? In a 2021 study, Stephanie Crook and Jerome Cranston ask students to indicate which of these actions, and several others, constituted plagiarism, and they found significant uncertainty in the students' responses.[23] And even if something like incorporating feedback from a friend could be considered plagiarism, would we really consider this to be an example of "theft"?

Another issue is the potential for the plagiarism as theft metaphor to contribute to an adversarial relationship between students and instructors. In the metaphor, students are (potential) criminals and instructors must play the role of the "plagiarism police."[24] Or, as Senders notes, the teacher may end up playing the roles of "investigator, police, judge, and finally (perhaps) executioner."[25] If students primarily see instructors in these terms, then it is difficult to imagine how students and instructors can develop positive relationships.

My final, and most important, argument is that the plagiarism as theft metaphor is not supportive of student learning.[26] By treating students as thieves even for first-time "crimes," we prevent students from being able to make mistakes. However, "mistake-making is arguably the very essence of learning."[27] In other areas, students are allowed to get things wrong. In fact, it is understood that they *will* get things wrong. Yet we often expect students to get it right the first time when it comes to the complicated norms of plagiarism. Moreover, by teaching plagiarism only from a punitive perspective, emphasizing theft, it can prevent

students from seeing the value of citations. Students may struggle to see, as Robillard has argued, why we consider it to be important that we "pass on" the work of others, rather than "passing off" someone else's work as our own.[28] Likewise, Barbara Fister has noted that students "don't learn why citations are useful because they associate them almost exclusively with the possibility of making mistakes and the threat of punishment."[29]

Reconsidering Plagiarism as Theft

For all of these reasons, I encourage librarians to reconsider their use of the plagiarism as theft metaphor. Given its prevalence, it does not seem likely that there will be a significant shift in how plagiarism is depicted across the academy in the immediate future, and I certainly do not expect that all librarians will agree with the arguments I have put forth. However, for those that are open to reconsidering the plagiarism as theft metaphor, a first step could be to have conversations exploring the different perspectives among the librarians and staff within a specific institution about the value or harm of the metaphor. This could possibly lead to changes in the descriptions of plagiarism on the library website or in instructional resources. Librarians could also try to start conversations with instructors about the use of the metaphor.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that I am not arguing we no longer teach students about plagiarism. However, we do not have to label our students as criminals in order to teach them the importance of giving credit and accurately representing their own scholarly or creative contributions.

Notes

1. I would like to acknowledge Natalie Hill and Laura Tadena, "Under Pressure: Rethinking How We Tech Plagiarism" (ACRL 2021 virtual conference) as significantly contributing to my beginning to think critically about the ways in which librarians teach and talk about plagiarism.

2. Amy Robillard, "Pass It on: Revising the 'Plagiarism Is Theft' Metaphor," *JAC* 29, no. 1/2 (2009): 412.

3. "Resources About Plagiarism," University of Akron, accessed February 7, 2025, https://www.uakron.edu/tutoring/bwc/resources-for-students/resources-about-plagiarism.dot.

4. Stefan Senders, "Academic Plagiarism and the Limits of Theft," in *Originality, Imitation, and Plagiarism: Teaching Writing in the Digital Age*, ed. Caroline Eisner and Martha Vicinus (University of Michigan Press, 2008): 197–98.

5. Brian L. Frye, "Plagiarize This Paper," *IDEA: The Law Review of the Franklin Pierce Center for Intellectual Property* 60, no. 2 (2020): 294–327.

6. Lea Calvert Evering and Gary Moorman, "Rethinking Plagiarism in the Digital Age," *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 56, no. 1 (2012): 35.

7. "Plagiarism," Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, accessed February 7, 2025, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/plagiarism.

8. Stuart P. Green, "Plagiarism, Norms, and the Limits of Theft Law: Some Observations on the Use of Criminal Sanctions in Enforcing Intellectual Property Rights," *Hastings LJ* 54 (2002): 241.

9. Bryan L. Frye, "Plagiarism Is Not a Crime," *Duquesne Law Review* 54 (2016): 141.
10. Green, "Plagiarism, Norms, and the Limits of Theft Law," 228.
11. Senders, "Academic Plagiarism and the Limits of Theft," 196.
12. Senders, "Academic Plagiarism and the Limits of Theft," 196.
13. Senders, "Academic Plagiarism and the Limits of Theft," 196.
14. Teddi Fishman, "'We Know It When We See It' Is Not Good Enough: Toward a Standard Definition of Plagiarism That Transcends Theft, Fraud, and Copyright" (4th Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity [4APCEI], University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia, September 2009), 2.
15. Robillard, "Pass It on," 407.
16. Senders, "Academic Plagiarism and the Limits of Theft," 197.
17. Green, "Plagiarism, Norms, and the Limits of Theft Law," 235.
18. Senders, "Academic Plagiarism and the Limits of Theft," 197.
19. Frye, "Plagiarize This Paper," 316.
20. Frye, "Plagiarize This Paper," 308; Stephanie Crook and Jerome Cranston, "Punished but Not Prepared: An Exploration of Novice Writers' Experiences of Plagiarism at University," *Canadian Perspectives on Academic Integrity* 4, no. 1 (2021): 40–69.
21. Sarah E. Eaton, "Plagiarism Witch Hunt Causes Harm," accessed March 7, 2025, https://drsaraheaton.com/2024/01/07/plagiarism-witch-hunts-cause-harm/.
22. Frye, "Plagiarism Is Not a Crime," 146.
23. Crook and Cranston, "Punished but Not Prepared," 40–69.
24. Rob Jenkins, "Toward a Rational Response to Plagiarism," *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* August 14, 2011, accessed March 7, 2025, https://www.chronicle.com/article/toward-a-rational-response-to-plagiarism/.
25. Senders, "Academic Plagiarism and the Limits of Theft," 204.
26. Crook and Cranston, "Punished but Not Prepared," 40–69.
27. Crook and Cranston, "Punished but Not Prepared," 43.
28. Robillard, "Pass It On," 426–27.
29. Barbara Fister, "Learning Why, Not How," *Inside Higher Ed*, August 8, 2019, accessed March 7, 2025, https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library-babel-fish/learning-why-not-how.

Adrienne Warner and Alyssa Russo

Outdated Notion?

Teaching Scholarly Articles as the Gold Standard

Since 2023, librarians at The Ohio State University and the University of New Mexico have been collaborating on a project, including "Outdated Research Notions" workshops, to identify information literacy practices that may no longer work as well as we'd like.[1] This article, along with the companion piece "Outdated Notion? Teaching Plagiarism as Theft," by Jane Hammons, provides an overview of an "outdated notion" that has generated significant discussion among our workshop participants. Our piece explores one of the more evocative topics from our series: the use of scholarly articles in teaching undergraduates.[2] We know not everyone will agree with our assertions, but more than consensus we hope to spark discussion.

Background

Scholarly articles[3] play an important role in academia. However, the expectation for undergraduates to engage with them, especially in their first few years of college, often overlooks significant challenges. In this article, we invite librarians and instructors to reconsider the use of scholarly articles in the undergraduate classroom.

Researchers from Project Information Literacy (PiL) studied students transitioning from high school-level to college-level research. One PiL report indicates that students rarely have prior exposure to scholarly formats, so when they get to college, many struggle to read, comprehend, and effectively incorporate meaningful evidence from scholarly articles.[4] Similarly, findings from the Citation Project reveal shallow engagement with sources. In a study of first-year writing students, 94 percent of citations relied on just one or two sentences, and 70 percent of students cited material from the first or second page of a source.[5] These numbers make sense to us—rather than point to what may be perceived as students' shortcomings, we need go further upstream to examine the context and practices that are producing these outcomes.

Undergraduates are stepping into a scholarly landscape that has grown exponentially in the past forty years. Journals are more specialized, and their articles are longer and more complex, as are titles and abstracts.[6] Then there is the issue of just how much content is being published. One estimate suggests close to 2 million peer-reviewed articles are published every year.[7] For a student new to the scholarly scene, stepping into this world can be disorienting.

Compounding these environmental factors, there is a huge difference between the intended utility of scholarly articles and how students use them in reality. Articles tend to be written for experts by experts, so undergraduates do not have the experience, or often support, to

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engage with them meaningfully. This underscores the need to reconsider how research assignments and source requirements are structured to better support undergraduate student learning and foster deeper engagement with information. In the next sections, we'll examine some differences between instructors' intentions for assigning articles and how students actually use them, and we'll offer alternative approaches.

Key Concerns

We outline four key concerns with using scholarly articles in undergraduate classrooms.

Finding scholarly articles is not a straightforward task.

Librarians are often asked to help early undergraduates find scholarly articles, but in focusing on search, we may be skipping too far ahead. Research is a complex, iterative process, yet one-off library workshops often emphasize the procedural: type in keywords, apply filters, retrieve articles. This makes searching seem like a fairly straightforward task.

The structured steps of a database demo don't reflect how experienced researchers engage with the literature. Scholars navigate search socially, attuned to key voices and ongoing debates in their fields. Students, on the other hand, are often dropped into this conversation without an introduction. A keyword search plunges them into an information vortex, where each article is a small, nuanced piece of a discussion they don't yet have the background to follow.

Barbara Fister describes this challenge well: "If the emphasis is on finding, evaluating, and using sources, it can suggest that research is primarily about mining quotes from published sources."[8] Research is reduced to a rote task, rather than engagement in a dynamic, evolving conversation. It's no wonder, then, that many students approach scholarly articles as a box to check—literally. With peer-review filters built into databases, students can locate articles without fully understanding what makes them scholarly. Their reasoning often boils down to circular logic: "It's scholarly because it's from an academic journal."[9]

Instead of treating search as the first step, librarians can focus on building students' understanding of information formats and guiding students toward sources that build background knowledge. Instruction sessions can introduce formats as typified documents with distinct purposes, processes, and products.[10] Reference sources like encyclopedias and handbooks, or accessible secondary sources, like high-quality magazines, can serve as valuable entry points. These sources help students develop strong foundations before they engage with scholarly literature.

Although we encourage course instructors to scaffold research by curating reading lists or providing sources directly, librarians play a distinct role in equipping students with the transferable skills to evaluate and navigate different formats. Teaching students how information is created and circulated, rather than just where to find it, empowers them to engage with research as more than a mechanical task. Learning to search effectively is important—but only when students have the foundation to make sense of what they find. Without that, it's just another hoop to jump through.

Scholarly articles are not a shortcut to credibility.

Scholarly articles are often treated as a shortcut for evaluating sources: Find a peer-reviewed article, and the credibility question is settled. Although peer review provides important quality control, it's not infallible. Issues like retractions, misleading abstracts, and

reproducibility problems remind us that evaluating credibility requires more than checking a box.[11]

To be clear, shortcuts aren't inherently bad. We rely on them to navigate complex information environments. But when scholarly articles are positioned as automatically credible, students may assume research is a binary process; some sources are "good," others are not.[12] This can lead them to overvalue scholarly articles while dismissing other reliable formats, such as newspaper articles, industry reports, or reference sources. Without deeper engagement, students miss opportunities to think critically about how and why different types of information are created.

Without guidance on why certain sources are required or how they fit the purpose of an assignment, students often rely on heuristics. Students may struggle to determine what makes a source useful beyond its label, domain, or publication date, treating credibility as a static quality rather than something dynamic and shaped by context—including their own. It is empowering to center students in this process, prompting them to ask: How much authority do I grant this source?[13]

Rather than present credibility as something inherent to a source, instruction can help students recognize that credibility is constructed through expertise, community, and context. Research becomes a reflective practice that prepares students to critically situate information wherever they encounter it.

We cannot quickly inoculate students to the difficulty of journal articles.

It can be tempting to want to ease the cognitive burden for our students when it comes to journal articles. We might think that if we can quickly expose students to scholarly articles earlier, they will be more equipped to deal with them later on. This is similar to inoculations—the more exposures, however quick and painful, the better. But according to the transfer of learning theory, which encompasses a complex set of processes and is considered "one of the fundamental goals of education,"[14] glancing introductions don't really work. Successful transfer requires a person to connect previous experiences to current settings and problems.[15] Meaningful connection of past and present takes time, especially with new, abstract concepts. With class time at a premium, though, instructors may feel that requiring students to use a scholarly article in a research assignment is a good-enough first encounter.

Early brushes with scholarly articles often leave students feeling frustrated and confused.[16] One researcher found that even after ample class time and scaffolding, students came away from scholarly literature less willing to engage with it.[17] Although it's true that learning often involves the management of difficult feelings, students' negative experiences of journal articles can inhibit future learning. Just as we hope that transfer of learning happens, there can also be no transfer of learning or negative transfer.[18]

Requiring first-year students to read, understand, and synthesize texts that are the pinnacle of disciplinary knowledge may be inappropriate for students completing general education curriculum and not yet ensconced in their disciplines. Instead of using assignment instructions to introduce students to scholarly articles, we should instead employ backward design to understand what we want students to know by the time they complete the assignment. If the outcome of the research project is for students to draw upon several sources to bolster a claim, then students should be able to read and understand the source. Material geared

toward students, not experts, should be the standard. Librarians can work with instructors to identify the specific goals of having students use particular kinds of sources.

Reading scholarly articles may not be worth it.

Even though we know these are difficult texts, it can be tempting to make students struggle through reading them. For some students, the reach is attainable. For many early undergraduates though, we often see the shallow engagement reported by the Citation Project and other researchers.[19] Experts remind us that reading is developmental—and not only in childhood years. They note, "Reading comprehension, *including academic reading*, matures on a continuum" (emphasis added).[20] Developing expert readers is a commendable goal, but it must include working with novice and proficient academic readers first. Further, when we ask students to use an academic journal article in their paper, we are actually asking them to do much more than "just" read. We are asking them to acquire new language, decode complex concepts, and draw conclusions between abstract principles that typically only experts in the subdiscipline are able to do with facility.[21]

One way we can update this notion is to meet students where they are as readers. The first step is to find out whether and how much experience students have with reading scholarly journal articles. Once we have a sense of the starting point, we can help students, especially early undergraduates, develop reading strategies. If we aim to help students progress on a reading continuum, we should use information formats geared toward their current reading level, or slightly beyond it. Librarians and instructors are finding innovative ways to make reading and comprehension a more social activity. From social annotation and instructor modeling to direct instruction in text structure, students benefit from group engagement with one text.

Conclusion

We invite librarians and instructors to reconsider the use of scholarly articles in the undergraduate classroom. The implications for using them to do more than their original purpose of communication among experts are significant, especially when it comes to emerging researchers. The hidden curriculum takes a toll on students, especially those who are unsure about whether they belong in a given community.[22] Real communities exist around journal articles too. As Anne-Marie Deitering and Kate Gronemyer note, "Peer-reviewed articles are produced within a particular knowledge community and intended for other members of that community. For those who are not a part of the community, there are layers and layers of assumptions, revisions, collaboration, synthesis, and argument hidden under the static, polished surface of the published journal article."[23] Asking emerging researchers who are not part of these scholarly communities to enter them and absorb the layers of insider knowledge is requiring a non-member to act as a member. If students cannot cross this substantial divide, they may doubt their fit in the community or the academy more broadly.

As librarians with an ethos of freedom of information, we want to make clear that we are not suggesting a ban on these kinds of texts in the classroom. We know that with the appropriate amount of guidance and motivation, students can interact meaningfully with any information. But we suggest that the time needed to fully engage with journal articles is not usually possible in the undergraduate classroom. Librarians can play an integral role in guiding students and instructors toward more fruitful matches with emerging researchers.

Notes

1. We were initially inspired by the work of Sam Wineburg, Joel Breakstone, Nadav Ziv, and Mark Smith, "Educating for Misunderstanding: How Approaches to Teaching Digital Literacy Make Students Susceptible to Scammers, Rogues, Bad Actors, and Hate Mongers" (working paper, Stanford History Education Group, Stanford University, 2020): 7, https://purl.stanford.edu/mf412bt5333. We began identifying outdated notions from our experiences with undergraduate researchers.

2. We are indebted to Ohio State librarian Jane Hammons, who invited us to participate in her wide-reaching professional development information literacy program.

3. We use the terms *scholarly*, *academic*, and *peer-reviewed articles* interchangeably, recognizing they are different and understanding there is no broad consensus on definitions. Rather than parsing differences among these texts, we are more concerned with addressing information formats that best serve students.

4. Alison J. Head, "Learning the Ropes: How Freshmen Conduct Course Research Once They Enter College," *Project Information Literacy Research Institute* (2012), https://projectinfolit.org/pubs/first-year-experience-study/pil_firstyear-experience_2013-12-04.pdf.

5. Sandra Jamieson, "What the Citation Project Tells Us about Information Literacy in College Composition," in *Information Literacy: Research and Collaboration across Disciplines*, ed. Barbara D'Angelo, Sandra Jamieson, Barry Maid, and Janice R. Walker (WAC Clearing House and University Press of Colorado, 2016): 119–43, https://wac.colostate.edu/books/infolit/chapter6.pdf.

6. Margy MacMillan and Allison MacKenzie, "Strategies for Integrating Information Literacy and Academic Literacy: Helping Undergraduate Students Make the Most of Scholarly Articles," *Library Management* 33, no. 8/9 (2012): 525–35, https://doi.org/10.1108/01435121211279885; Feng Kevin Jiang and Ken Hyland, "Titles in Research Articles: Changes across Time and Discipline," *Learned Publishing* 36, no. 2 (2023): 239–48, https://doi-org.libproxy.unm.edu/10.1002/leap.1498; Feng Kevin Jiang and Ken Hyland, "Changes in Research Abstracts: Past Tense, Third Person, Passive, and Negatives," *Written Communication* 40, no. 1 (2023): 210–37, https://doi.org/10.1177/07410883221128876. Jiang and Hyland have studied academic language across disciplines, finding that regardless of field, titles are longer in word length and more often employ a compound structure. Their research on semantics in abstracts has been a bit more nuanced, with trends changing depending on the discipline; however, they suggest abstracts now seek to claim attention and stand out from the crowd, in addition to the traditional role of summarization.

7. Robert Campbell, Ed Pentz, and Ian Borthwick, *Academic and Professional Publishing* (Chandos Publishing, 2012): chap. 1 O'Reilly.

8. Barbara Fister, "The Social Life of Knowledge: Faculty Epistemologies," in *Not Just Where to Click: Teaching Students How to Think about Information*, ed. T. A. Swanson and H. Jagman (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2015): 99, https://barbarafister.net/SocialLife.pdf.

9. Amy Jankowski, Alyssa Russo, and Lori Townsend, "It Was Information Based: Student Reasoning When Distinguishing between Scholarly and Popular Sources," *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (2018), https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/it-was-information-based/.

10. Amy R. Hofer, Silvia Lin Hanick, and Lori Townsend, *Transforming Information Literacy Instruction: Threshold Concepts in Theory and Practice* (ABC-CLIO, 2019): 79–100.

11. John Bohannon, "Who's Afraid of Peer Review?" *Science* 342, no. 6154 (2013): 60–65, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.2013.342.6154.342_60; Open Science Collaboration, "Estimating the Reproducibility of Psychological Science," *Science* 349, no. 6251 (2015): aac4716, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aac4716.

12. Kevin P. Seeber, "Wiretaps and CRAAP," *Kevin Seeber, MLIS* (blog), March 18, 2017, http://kevinseeber.com/blog/wiretaps-and-craap/.

13. Alyssa Russo, Amy Jankowski, Stephanie Beene, and Lori Townsend, "Strategic Source Evaluation: Addressing the Container Conundrum," *Reference Services Review* 47, no. 3 (2019): 294–313, https://doi-org.libproxy.unm.edu/10.1108/RSR-04-2019-0024.

14. Anne MacKeough, Judy Lee Lupart, and Anthony Marini, ed., *Teaching for Transfer: Fostering Generalization in Learning* (Taylor and Francis, 1995): 1.

15. Daniel L. Schwartz and Na'ilah Nasir, "Learning," in *Encyclopedia of Education* vol. 4, (Macmillan Reference USA, 2003): 3412.

16. Head, "Learning the Ropes."

17. Michael J. Wise, "Traumatic Exposure of College Freshmen to Primary Scientific Literature: How to Avoid Turning Students off from Reading Journal Articles," *Teaching & Teacher Education* 105 (2021): 7, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103422.

18. Leslie S. Keiler, "Students' Explanations of Their Data Handling: Implications for Transfer of Learning," *International Journal of Science Education* 29, no. 2 (2007): 151–72, https://doi.org/10.1080/09500690600560910.

19. Head, "Learning the Ropes."

20. Pamela Howard, Meg Gorzycki, Geoffrey Desa, and Diane D. Allen, "Academic Reading: Comparing Students' and Faculty Perceptions of Its Value, Practice, and Pedagogy," *Journal of College Reading and Learning* 48, no. 3 (2018): 189–209, https://doi.org/10.1080/10790195.2018.1472942.

21. William Nagy, Dianna Townsend, Nonie Lesaux, and Norbert Schmitt, "Words as Tools: Learning Academic Vocabulary as Language Acquisition," *Reading Research Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (2012): 91–108, https://doi.org/10.1002/RRQ.011.

22. Many scholars have studied the hidden curriculum, but this work ties it to the use and creation of documents: Ciaran B. Trace, "Information Creation and the Notion of Membership," *Journal of Documentation* 63, no. 1 (2007): 142–64, https://doi.org/10.1108/00220410710723920.

23. Anne-Marie Deitering and Kate Gronemyer, "Beyond Peer-Reviewed Articles: Using Blogs to Enrich Students' Understanding of Scholarly Work," *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 11, no. 1 (2011): 493, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/409889.

Amy McLay Paterson

Against First-Year Research Papers

A Librarian Perspective on Nurturing Intellectual Curiosity

Last year, Thompson Rivers University librarians partnered with English department faculty to teach a multiweek information literacy tutorial to first-year academic writing classes. The main goal of the program was to advance student research skills to complete major course assignments and was, by most metrics, quite successful.[1]

As the program came to an end, I found myself in the position of providing feedback on more than sixty search strategy and citation mini-assignments. I had thought these assignments would be simple things—that the comments would be straightforward tweaks swapping one keyword for another—rather than the reality: that I was mostly scratching the surface of what would ideally require some focused course correction. I don't know if I'm quite ready to proclaim all first-year writing courses ill-conceived, but unless and until significant changes are made, I no longer believe that first-year students should be writing research papers.

Fostering intellectual curiosity will always be a chicken versus egg sort of problem, whereupon final essays in first-year writing courses are (at least at my institution) commonly assigned with open topics so that students may follow their bliss. But most of these emergent scholars have not yet any bliss to follow, and the course instructor does not have the disciplinary-specific resources to provide inspiration. Both librarians and instructors can tell students what is too broad or what is too narrow, but we can't tell them what's truly interesting and, more importantly, why. No single person can take simultaneous kernels of interest in, say, colony collapse disorder or the housing crisis or the myriad long arms and looming shadows of artificial intelligence and nurture them all so that they sprout equally. Students by and large don't come to higher education because they have deep disciplinary interests to pursue; they come to explore and make connections.

Further, the typical librarian advice to narrow a topic often ends up at cross-purposes to fostering interest in it because big questions always come before small questions. And these big questions need to be answered before any of the smaller, more detailed questions can emerge with clarity. Finding scholarly resources that comprehensively answer big questions about a topic is nigh impossible within a single course; but without strong foundations, any small corner of a topic will end up, at best, vaguely ethereal to a new undergrad or, at worst, actively repellant. Impelling students to engage with scholarly sources when they cannot confidently participate in the conversation only sends the message that they do not belong in their chosen field.

If you invite me (or any librarian) into your course, the reason I am there is generally to coax students into finding and using scholarly sources; but a librarian visiting a classroom once is like a ship passing in the night, assuming there is no other scaffolding in the curriculum

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for this engagement. More importantly, scholarly sources are not written to converse with undergraduates. I have tried to pick apart the reflexive equation of scholarship with reliability and authority, but I don't believe that this is a popular tack to take in our profession. I can tell students that scholarly sources are not written with them in mind, and I can give advice on how to read them, but I cannot change the overall landscape of accessibility in scholarship.

If students are compelled against their will to use scholarly sources that are not written for them on topics where they have a burgeoning interest at best, then what else is to be concluded but that we first make plagiarists and then punish them? We are not setting students up for honest engagement, sending them adrift through a sea of articles on the minutest of topics, all so far removed from their original spark of interest. I tell students they can argue with authors, that they should read things they don't agree with, but this advice doesn't mean much when they have had little guidance or experience finding their voice and few paths to confidence in any opinions that manage to surface. So much of the conversation in librarianship about student engagement with texts is focused on rote citation and antiplagiarism instruction that it's impossible to rescue the notions of relationship building and having meaningful conversations in the space of a single library instruction class.

So, what do we do? Librarians may read this and wonder about the place for library instruction in a first-year course without research. My humble recommendations would start with engaging with select primary sources rather than scholarly ones, which would shift the focus of early information literacy instruction to *using and engaging with sources* rather than finding them. The ways students use sources should be at least as urgent a concern to librarians as their ability to identify them.[2] Overidentification of one-shot instruction sessions with Boolean search practices persists in our profession, despite waning evidence of the usefulness of Boolean to early undergraduates.[3]

Using scholarly sources and writing research papers aren't the first steps to becoming scholars. Instead, we need to prioritize developing perspectives in order to scaffold participation in conversations. Similarly, this would ground citation practice in a few deliberately chosen sources in which the whole class would participate. Primary sources often engage with the grandiosity of ideas in a way that is readable and challenging, which would allow students to take up the thread of the source that interests them and to follow it. Ultimately we need to recognize that students become scholars by developing their curiosity through discussion and exploration within a welcoming academic community.

Notes

1. Amy McLay Paterson, Benjamin Mitchell, Stirling Prentice, and Elizabeth Rennie, "Three Shots Are Better than One: Establishing and Evaluating the English Library Instruction Pilot," *Journal of Information Literacy* 18, no. 2 (2024): 140–68, https://doi.org/10.11645/18.2.651.

2. Stephanie Rosenblatt, "They Can Find It, but They Don't Know What to Do with It: Describing the Use of Scholarly Literature by Undergraduate Students," *Journal of Information Literacy* 4, no. 2 (2010): 50–61, https://doi-org.ezproxy.tru.ca/10.11645/4.2.1486.

3. M. Sarah Lowe, Bronwen K. Maxson, Sean M. Stone, Willie Miller, Eric Snajdr, and Kathleen Hanna, "The Boolean Is Dead, Long Live the Boolean! Natural Language Versus Boolean Searching in Introductory Undergraduate Instruction," *College & Research Libraries* 79, no. 4 (2018), 517–34.

ACRL Candidates for 2026

A Look at Who's Running

Russell Michalak is the Director of Library & Archives at Goldey-Beacom College, a position he has held since 2011. Prior to his current role, Michalak served as the Western Americana Manuscripts Librarian at The Claremont University Consortium Library (2008–2010) and as a Librarian Fellow at Duke University (2005–2007).

During his 21 years of ACRL membership, Michalak has served as a member of the ACRL Conference Scholarships Committee (2025–2027), as co-chair of the ACRL 2025 President's Program Planning Committee (2023–2025), a member of the ACRL Professional Development Committee (2024–2026), chair of the ACRL New Roles & Changing Landscapes Committee (2023–2024), and convener of the ACRL Leadership Discussion Group (2021–present). Michalak also served as chair of the ACRL Membership Committee (2021–2022) and as a member of the ACRL Awards Task Force (2021–2022) and the ACRL Representatives Assembly (Membership Promotion Task Force) (2021–2022), a member of the Leadership and Recruitment Nomination Committee (2019–2021).

Michalak has also held various leadership roles within the ACRL Digital Scholarship Section (DSS) (2021-present), including chairing committees and convening interest and discussion groups, as well as contributing to the broader ACRL leadership structure. Michalak's experience with ALA includes serving as chair of the CORE (ALA) Collection Development Issues for the Practitioner Interest Group (2021–2022) and as co-chair (2020–2021).

Beyond his ACRL and CORE service, Michalak's activity with state, regional, and national associations includes serving as Webmaster, Archivist, and Chapters Council Representative of the ACRL Delaware Valley Chapter (2023–present); co-chair of the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) Collaborative Collections Lifecycle Infrastructure Project (CCLIP) Working Group (2023–2024); executive committee member of the Division of Emerging Learning Technologies (DELT), Association for Educational Communications and Technology (2017–2019); executive committee member of the College & Research Libraries Division (CRLD), Delaware Library Association (2017–2019); board member of the Wilmington Public Library (2019–2022); board member of the Tri-State Library Cooperative (2017–2019); and board member of the Museum of Art and History in Ontario, California (2008–2010).

His leadership emphasizes ethical technology adoption, collaboration across institutions, and mentoring emerging library professionals. Michalak's honors and awards include the ALA Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT) Innovation in Instruction Award (2025); the Americans and the Holocaust: A Traveling Exhibition for Libraries Grant (ALA & USHMM,

2025); regional host for ACRL's OER Roadshow (2024); NISO Plus Scholarship Award (2022); Top 5 Article on "COVID-19 Pandemic: A Year in Review," ACRL DOLS Research & Publications Committee (2021); Charleston Library Conference Up & Comer Award (2018); first place for the Immersive Learning Award—Linear Category, Association for Educational Communications & Technology (2017); ACRL Member of the Week (March 20, 2019); and Featured Collection of the Month for the Billy E. Barnes Collection, CONTENTdm, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2007).

Other notable accomplishments for Michalak include modernizing a specialized academic library at an emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution through data-driven leadership and strategic partnerships. His initiatives expanded digital access, preserved archives through large-scale digitization funded by a $225,000 grant, completed a full reclassification project ahead of schedule, and secured over $825,000 in grants and partnerships to advance technology, collections, and student support.

He co-authored *Toxic Dynamics: Disrupting, Dismantling, and Transforming Academic Library Culture* (ACRL Press, 2024) with Trevor A. Dawes and Jon Cawthorne. His other publications include Russell Michalak, Elias Tzoc, and J. Denice Lewis, "Practical Considerations for Adopting Generative AI Tools in Academic Libraries" (*Journal of Library Administration*, 2025) and Russell Michalak, Monica Rysavy, and Trevor A. Dawes, "What Degree Is Necessary to Lead? ARL Directors' Perceptions" (*College & Research Libraries*, 2019).

Yasmeen Shorish is the Director of Data & Scholarly Communications at James Madison University, a position she has held since 2020. Shorish has held several other positions at James Madison University, including Data Services Coordinator (2016–2020) and Physical and Life Sciences Liaison Librarian (2011–2016). Prior to this, Shorish served as a Production Manager at Frost Lighting Co. of Illinois (2000–2009).

During her 16 years of ACRL membership, Shorish has served as a director-at-large on the ACRL Board of Directors (2021–2025), chair of the ACRL Research and Scholarly Environment Committee (2018–2019) and vice-chair (2017–2018), and chair of the selection committee for the ACRL Research Data Management Road Show Curriculum Designers and the Road Show Presenters (2015–2017). She has also served as chair of the ACRL Digital Scholarship Section Nominating Committee (2017), a mentor for the ACRL Dr. E. J. Josey Spectrum Scholar (2016), and as a member of the ACRL Health Sciences Interest Group Information Literacy Task Force (2011).

Shorish has held various positions within the ACRL Digital Curation Interest Group, including past convener (2014–2015), convener (2013–2014), vice-convener (2012–2013), and recorder (2011–2012).

Shorish's experience with ALA includes being a member of the ALA Spectrum Scholarship Jury (2017) and the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association.

Shorish's activity with state, regional, and other national associations include serving on the SPARC Board of Directors, (secretary, 2025), SPARC Steering Committee (member and interim chair, 2023–2025), Academic Data Science Alliance Leadership Summit, conference planning committee, (session chair, 2020), Digital Library Federation (DLF) Advisory Committee, (member, 2017–2021), Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Fellowship for

Digital and Inclusive Excellence Advisory Group (member, 2017–2020). Shorish also served on the Data Curation Network (DCN) Advisory Panel, (2018–2019), DLF Technologies of Surveillance Working Group, (co-founder and convener, 2017–2018), Research Data Access and Preservation (RDAP) Conference Committee (co-chair, 2017), and the SLA-DBIO Home Page Subcommittee of the Public Relations Committee (member, 2010–2011).

Shorish's honors and awards include the University of Illinois iSchool Alumni Association (ISAA) Leadership Award, (2022), the James Madison University Madison Scholar Award, (2020–2021), the University of Illinois, Health Sciences Information Management Award, (2011) and the Northeastern Illinois University, Award of Merit in Recognition of Outstanding Research, (2009). She was an ARL + DLF Forum Fellow for Underrepresented Groups (2015), ALA Emerging Leader (2013), ARL Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce Scholar (2010), and ALA Spectrum Scholar (2009). Shorish graduated from Northeastern Illinois University, Summa Cum Laude (2009).

Other notable accomplishments for Shorish include her proposed model for research data management professional development for liaison librarians, which was accepted by the ACRL Board of Directors in 2015. While on the ACRL Board of Directors, Shorish advocated for and helped codify the transition of the ACRL EDI Committee to a goal area committee in 2022.

Shorish helped transition SPARC operations to an independent nonprofit organization in 2025. She co-created the Vancouver Statement on Collections as Data; one outcome of the Mellon-funded Collections as Data: Part to Whole grant in 2023. She served on the project team for "Responsible AI in Libraries and Archives," an IMLS grant to support ethical decision-making for AI projects in libraries and archives (2022–2025) and received an IMLS National Forum grant to surface community needs around collective open-access collection development in 2019.

Additionally, Shorish helped gather information and set a strategic vision for the proposed independence and eventual formation of RDAP as a professional association (2017–2018). As chair of the ACRL Research and Scholarly Communications Committee, Shorish participated in the production and promotion of a new scholarly communications research agenda, which was published in 2019.

Her publications include Mannheimer, S., Rossmann, D., Clark, J., Shorish, Y., Bond, N., Scates Kettler, H., Sheehey, B. and Young, S.W.H. "Introduction to the Responsible AI Special Issue." *Journal of eScience Librarianship* 13(1): e860. https://doi.org/10.7191/jeslib.860 (2024); Association of College and Research Libraries. *Open and Equitable Scholarly Communications: Creating a More Inclusive Future*. Prepared by Nancy Maron and Rebecca Kennison with Paul Bracke, Nathan Hall, Isaac Gilman, Kara Malenfant, Charlotte Roh, and Yasmeen Shorish. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries. https://doi.org/10.5860/acrl.1 (2019); and Shorish, Y. Special Issue: The Role of Scholarly Communication in a Democratic Society. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*. 6(2), p.eP2257. DOI: 10.7710/2162-3309.2257 (2018).

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Christi Osterday and Dustin Fife

Motivations and Personal Development

A Year of Exploring Why We Choose Librarianship

Academic Library Workers in Conversation is a *C&RL News* series focused on elevating the everyday conversations of library professionals. The wisdom of the watercooler has long been heralded, but this series hopes to go further by minimizing barriers to traditional publishing with an accessible format. In past issues, the topics were proposed by the authors. However, in 2026, this feature will focus on the authors' stories of librarianship—how they got here, why they stay, and even why they consider leaving or transitioning at times. During this time of great upheaval in higher education, exploring our many "whys" is a worthy venture. — *Dustin Fife, series editor*

Dustin Fife (DF): Christi, as an accidental librarian, I did not "choose" librarianship per se, but I did quickly find my "whys" when I began working in libraries, and so I have chosen to stay. As the series editor for this column, I serve a dual role when I am also one of the writers, and right now, I can admit I am taking a certain prerogative to reinforce my life's decisions.

I am not sure if you have noticed, but higher education had an "interesting" 2025. So during 2026, I want to use this column to have a collection of library professionals explore their "whys"—why they chose to work in libraries, why they keep coming back, and what they hope to accomplish through their labor and careers. Something within me screams that we need these conversations.

So Christi, how did you get where you are today, and why are you choosing to stay? No wrong answers.

Christi Osterday (CO): Dustin, I never tire of talking to other accidental librarians! It reminds me of how I discovered libraries and how unhelpful imposter syndrome truly is. It wasn't until I was a student library employee in grad school that I discovered how interesting libraries could be. Patrons and staff would discuss big life topics in a meaningful way, and after being trained on how to help doctoral students both find and use resources, I was hooked. The possibilities were seemingly endless on how a library could support or even provide community. As a musician and undergrad student, I was taught how to teach myself, but the focus was in music performance and analysis. In a library, I could teach others how to do the same in any field. I don't need all the answers because I discovered a pathway is always possible to find.

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One critical reason I chose to stay, and still do, is that I've seen how damaging poor leadership can be—when someone manages others just to get the paycheck and simply does not care, or for even worse reasons. Everyone deserves better. It not only affects the employees but also patrons' access to material they have a right to find. Again, I don't have all the answers, but I find that having a passion to support others goes a long way.

How did you accidentally end up in libraries, Dustin? Why do you choose to stay?

DF: Christi, I love that "aha" moment you had. Something similar happened to me. When I was in graduate school studying history, I decided that was not the path for me, but I didn't really have a plan. Luckily, my partner did, and I followed her to a remote part of the world where she had gotten an incredible job. Even when we decided to move, I still did not have a plan. While I had some aspirations—in the most White Dude way ever, I was going to walk all the trails and write a great American novel—I still needed to find a job. There were openings at the local public library, and I fell into the work.

It was a small public library system in a very rural part of America, and I could not have found a better job for me. My "aha" came when I recognized two important intrinsic motivators. I got to work with people every day on things that mattered to them, and each day of my life was different in Library Land. I knew quickly that I was motivated by variety at work and by engaging with people. The library was a perfect place to do that work for me. I spent several years doing everything you could in a small public library until I began to wonder if I could bring my newfound passion for libraries together with my previous academic aspirations. I made the shift to academic libraries; I was able to maintain the variety that motivated me and continued to be able to work with people on projects that appealed to them. It worked for me, and I have been in academic libraries ever since.

Christi, I'd love to hear more about how observing management keeps you coming back. What are you seeing out there on them library streets?

CO: I appreciate your round-about journey to get here, as well as the transition to academic libraries. I've seen a fair amount of negative bias between public and academic library worlds, and it's good to see the transition is possible!

My first school was an incredibly conservative institution. Some levels of employment would hire only from within the student population, and others would hire only very specific demographics (men, usually White) who had graduated from within their circle of allied schools.

Though there were many who genuinely respected their roles and influence over others, there were others who didn't. At one point, I was passed over for promotion because it would be "inappropriate for me to lead men." After leaving for another school for a year, I was encouraged to apply for the same role because they couldn't find a candidate who would stay. The same person who encouraged me to look elsewhere fought not only to hire me but at an equitable wage. While confusing, it provided opportunities I wouldn't otherwise have been able to pursue. I also feel that I was able to provide academic services for students and faculty during my time in this role that I hadn't seen regularly delivered in that setting.

Prior to my current position, I've seen leaders spend the majority of their working hours on a doctoral thesis at the expense of work that needed to be done. I've seen another take on an interim director role so they could later land another permanent director role, leaving

their department rudderless. I've also seen student employees be scheduled without care, causing conflict and chaos on any given week. Watching all these practices has motivated me.

Now, I'm grateful to work in a library whose leaders seem to be on the same page, and we all put in the work. Instead of hypervigilance to keep me from repeating the mistakes of others, I get to look to other leaders for inspiration. This gives me space to heal while also propelling me to do better and motivating my continued work in libraries. Everyone deserves committed leadership.

Dustin, where do you look to find inspiration in leadership? What propels you forward?

DF: Christi, I think you have hit on something that resonates deeply with me. Reading your leadership development story and how that motivates you is at the heart of these conversations. What motivates each of us? While I am not an expert on the hierarchy of needs that must be met for each of us to thrive, it is important to recognize that we all have social, emotional, and physical needs. If those can be sufficiently met, we can begin to consider other extrinsic and intrinsic motivators.

I can see how you are motivated to create a profession with committed and empathetic leaders. I share that hope with you. As I wrote earlier, I am also motivated by experiencing variety and creating meaningful connections. To add to those, I think something that many of us might share is being motivated by the opportunity to learn and grow. I stay in librarianship because I am still learning and growing. I am allowed to be curious regularly and try new things. I am motivated to help build a profession that creates that opportunity for others as well.

In the shortest terms possible and in answer to your question, as a library leader, I remain inspired because I feel engaged. Helping others feel engaged is the crux of what I hope to accomplish as a librarian.

So, Christi, what keeps you engaged in libraries?

CO: Dustin, I fully relate with being motivated by the opportunity to learn and grow. And not only have I wanted better for those around me, but even before this I was personally inspired by the research process itself. So, working with faculty and/or students and their unique needs provides me with that human connection. I learn about their topic, and the joy of seeing them move forward with access to resources is life-giving for me. I feel engaged, and their curiosity and energy are contagious. As librarians, we are given both permission and a mandate to remain curious. Even the simple act of showing a new student how to find a book is a bit energizing.

I'm also driven to build community and knowledge by using library space. With events like author or artist talks, general nerding out over a topic with something fun to eat, or some other activity that brings interested people together, I get to witness that same energy and curiosity spread among others. It's this drive to help library patrons form community, as well as gain a little more interest in going to the library, that leads me to find ways to remove intimidation factors for patrons.

I appreciate your mentioning of the hierarchy of needs, and though I'm also not an expert, they deserve recognition in this discussion. I want to provide and cultivate a psychologically safe[1] and respectful space for those around me. This is what grounds my commitment, but my gut motivator is more closely tied to connection and curiosity, which loops me all the

way back to my original "aha" moment and I believe will keep me coming back for years to come.

What now, Dustin? How will your "whys" keep you coming back?

DF: Well, Christi, I think I will keep coming back—at least for now—because I want to help build the library that I needed and, more importantly, the libraries that other people and communities need now. That is my biggest "why"! Ruha Benjamin encouraged folks to "remember to imagine and craft the worlds you cannot live without, just as you dismantle the ones you cannot live within."[2] As so many people have reminded me, the library is one of the last public places on earth where some people can exist without directly spending money or using their time in a directed or mandatory manner. That freedom allows people to imagine and build new dreams and, by extension, new worlds. We can only help in that process as library professionals if we are curious and engaged. These are lofty aspirations; however, I do not think they are impossible for individuals or in communities, especially if we build together.

While I would usually end on an aspirational note, I want to make sure and end with a caveat here. I truly believe people will be more fulfilled if they are engaged with their work, but I do not believe that library professionals owe their lives or their happiness to their work. As Fobazi Ettarh has taught us, vocational awe[3] is the enemy of sustained engagement. And, as Meredith Farkas shows, slow librarianship[4] is actually the friend of curiosity and fulfillment.

Christi, thank you for having this conversation with me. To be completely frank, connections with people like you keep me motivated and keep me coming back. Everyone in librarianship needs colleagues like you.

Notes

1. A. C. Powers and D. Fife, "Psychological Safety in Libraries: It's a Team Sport," *College & Research Libraries News* 86, no. 3 (2025): 104–07, https://crln.acrl.org/index.php/crlnews/article/view/26701/34620.

2. Ruha Benjamin, "Ruha Benjamin Examines the Relationship between Innovation, Inequity and Imagination," *TED* (2023), https://www.ted.com/speakers/ruha_benjamin.

3. Fobazi Ettarh, "Vocational Awe and Librarianship: The Lies We Tell Ourselves," *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (2018), https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/vocational-awe/.

4. Meredith Farkas, "What Is Slow Librarianship?" *Information Wants to Be Free* (blog), October 18, 2021, https://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/2021/10/18/what-is-slow-librarianship/.

Matthew Weirick Johnson

Fixing Work, Not Workers

Burnout as an Organizational Problem

Burnout has proliferated in popular discussion, become legitimized in scholarly discourse, and been ingrained in the context of librarianship, both as a prominent point of conversation and as demonstrated through research. In this process, discussions on the problem of and solutions to burnout have focused on individuals. This individual focus elides structural, organizational, and interpersonal issues that contribute to the problem. In brief, my argument is that burnout is an organizational concern yet is treated as individual, which keeps us from meaningful solutions. More insidiously, perhaps, I argue that library leaders encourage individual self-care to appear magnanimous while not providing the structural resources and organizational leadership needed to radically change the landscape of burnout within libraries and librarianship.

The legitimation of burnout in scholarly and popular discourses, and the integration of thinking about burnout in librarianship, are meaningful developments that signal a growing recognition of systemic issues in the profession.[1] However, this same legitimation contributes to the problem of individualization—through responsibilization and (bio) medicalization. Responsibilization refers to a neoliberal process of shifting responsibility from collective structures (e.g., the state, commercial enterprises) to individuals.[2] In the context of workplace well-being and burnout, responsibility is shifted to the individual through the exhortation to practice self-care. To maintain a level of productivity necessary as an entrepreneurial, autonomous subject within the neoliberal workplace, workers must care for themselves—not truly as a means of maintaining health and well-being but rather of maintaining acceptable levels of productivity (levels that are increasingly measured by or against algorithms).[3] Therein responsibilization becomes a means of social control and self-regulation in the workplace. Similarly, Irving Zola explores how medicine and medicalization are also used for social control. Zola suggests that medicalization can result in "locating both the source and treatment of social problems in an individual," which prevents the proposal of solutions or explanations that might occur at the level of a collective, group, organization, or society.[4]

Take, for example, the fact that the medicalization Zola describes is present in the introduction of burnout into The World Health Organization's *International Classification of Diseases*, 11th edition (ICD-11) in 2019. The ICD-11 defines burnout as "a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed."[5] The inclusion of burnout in the ICD-11 marks an integration of burnout into the institution of medicine—the result of decades of psychological research. In particular, the definition outlines three characteristics of burnout, which are informed by the research

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of Christina Maslach and colleagues: "feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy."[6] The definition concludes by clarifying burnout's context: "Burn-out refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life."[7]

In 2019, Maslach and colleagues anticipated issues with this definition: "Categorizing burnout as a disease was an attempt by the WHO to provide definitions for what is wrong with people,[8] instead of what is wrong with companies. ... When we just look at the person, what that means is, 'Hey we've got to treat that person.' 'You can't work here because you're the problem.' 'We have to get rid of that person.' Then, it becomes that person's problem, not the responsibility of the organization that employs them."[9] Burnout technically isn't classified as a disease in the ICD-11, which Christine Sinsky, then-vice president of professional satisfaction at the American Medical Association (AMA), clarifies in an interview: "In the ICD-11 definition, burnout is identified as an occupational phenomenon and not a medical condition. ... Burnout is primarily related to the environment, such as when there is a mismatch between the workload and the resources needed to do the work in a meaningful way."[10] She argues for a "focus on fixing the workplace rather than focusing on fixing the worker,"[11] reinforcing the need for an organizational rather than individual focus.

Sinsky also importantly reiterates burnout as an occupational phenomenon; however, despite the ICD-11 definition's focus on work contexts—specifically identifying workplace stress as the cause of burnout—proposed solutions continue to be offered at the individual, rather than organizational, level and frequently take place outside of work. Even as we've seen more discussion of burnout in librarianship, the primary solutions circulated continue to approach burnout as an individual problem. We can try getting better sleep, taking a vacation, establishing boundaries, separating work and life, doing yoga at our desks, and so on, but these are frequently treated as ways to manage our own burnout rather than looking at what we can do in solidarity to manage our collective burnout. Additionally, we know that individuals are less able to recover from work when job stressors are high, which Sabine Sonnentag refers to as the "recovery paradox."[12] In these situations, telling people to exercise self-care while providing no support to mitigate job stress not only blames individuals for outcomes they can't control but also fails to address the structural conditions that inhibit recovery and undermine well-being, thereby perpetuating a cycle of burnout.

By framing solutions at the individual level, we also frame the issue as a personal failing—making library workers themselves appear to be the source of the dysfunction. As Sara Ahmed notes, "When you expose a problem, you pose a problem."[13] As library workers bring the issue of burnout to management, and as it gains more traction, management often continues to construct burnout as an individual, rather than collective or organizational, problem. Thus, we are the problem meant to be solved. It's not the root issues within library work, library organizations, or our profession that cause and exacerbate burnout; it's the individual who needs to do more to solve their burnout.

One alternative approach is to consider some of these solutions from a collective perspective. What would it look like to collectively set boundaries? Not only to be aware of one another's boundaries but also to help uphold and enforce them. For example, we can mitigate job demands by setting departmental boundaries around specific services, such as library instruction (e.g., establishing a shared boundary around how many classes a person

will teach in a day or a week). Another approach is to hold management accountable for burnout through collective action such as unionization and organized labor specifically focused on addressing job stressors.[14]

To be clear, self-care is not the problem. Caring for ourselves—and for each other—is important. But self-care alone cannot solve burnout, which, by definition, is a work-related phenomenon. If we want to address burnout meaningfully, we need to stop placing the burden on individuals and start fixing the conditions of work itself. That isn't to say that we can't change things that we're doing individually. Individuals are still parts of collectives, and their choices can affect climate in considerable ways. For example, bullies contribute to toxic work environments and a lack of psychological safety at work that contributes to burnout.[15] But it doesn't seem that these issues of psychological safety, bullying, job stressors, and toxic workplace dynamics are what we're trying to solve when we talk about solving the issue of burnout at the individual (or even interpersonal) level.

Library leaders have the influence and ability to make or work toward organizational change that actually improves burnout. Yet, frustratingly, library leaders' (and others') solutions remain focused on the suggestion of self-care without providing any support or means for practicing it, especially at work. If burnout is caused by work and self-care is the tool necessary to manage burnout, then self-care should be a central part of work.

Immediately moving burnout to the level of the individual obscures its collective and organizational roots and alleviates management of culpability for burnout. If you're burnt out, you're likely not the problem—though burnout can, understandably, ripple outward and affect others. Although caring for ourselves is important, it can't be a substitute for systemic change. Library leaders must instead take responsibility for burnout as an organizational issue and pursue meaningful action to reduce job stressors and cultivate healthier, more sustainable organizational cultures.

Notes

1. For a discussion in this discourse that highlights systemic issues (though some of the solutions are still focused on the individual but extend beyond self-care), see Jennifer A. Dixon, "Feeling the Burnout," *Library Journal*, accessed July 8, 2025, https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/Feeling-the-Burnout.

2. Luc Boltanski, Eve Chiapello, and Gregory Elliott, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (Verso, 2018); Ronen Shamir, "The Age of Responsibilization: On Market-Embedded Morality," *Economy and Society* 37, no. 1 (2008): 1–19, doi:10.1080/03085140701760833; Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Zone Books, 2017).

3. Craig Gent, *Cyberboss: The Rise of Algorithmic Management and the New Struggle for Control at Work*, 1st ed. (Verso, 2024).

4. Irving Kenneth Zola, "Medicine as an Institution of Social Control," *Ekistics* 41, no. 245 (1976): 213.

5. World Health Organization (WHO), "Burnout," in *International Classification of Diseases,* 11th ed. (2019), https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en#/http://id.who.int/icd/entity/129180281.

6. WHO, "Burnout."

7. WHO, "Burnout."

8. Although burnout is undesirable, it should not be romanticized, and should be prevented, framing it as a disease does not imply personal fault, as illness is not a personal fault.

9. Jennifer Moss, "Burnout Is about Your Workplace, Not Your People," *Harvard Business Review*, December 11, 2019, https://hbr.org/2019/12/burnout-is-about-your-workplace-not-your-people.

10. Sara Berg, "WHO Adds Burnout to ICD-11. What It Means for Physicians," *American Medical Association*, July 23, 2019, https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/physician-health/who-adds-burnout-icd-11-what-it-means-physicians.

11. Berg, "WHO Adds Burnout to ICD-11."

12. Sabine Sonnentag, "The Recovery Paradox: Portraying the Complex Interplay between Job Stressors, Lack of Recovery, and Poor Well-Being," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 38 (2018): 169–85, doi:10.1016/j.riob.2018.11.002.

13. Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Duke University Press, 2017): 37. Ahmed goes on to explain: "It might then be assumed that the problem would go away if you would just stop talking about it or if you went away. The charge of sensationalism falls rather quickly onto feminist shoulders: when she talks about sexism and racism, her story is heard as sensationalist, as if she is exaggerating for effect. The feminist killjoy begins as a sensationalist figure. It is as if the point of making her point is to cause trouble, to get in the way of the happiness of others, because of her own unhappiness. ... But note how the feminist killjoy begins her life as an antifeminist figure: we are retooling her for our own purpose."

14. Candice Benjes-Small makes a similar argument in her conference paper from ACRL 2023 where she proposes "sustainable practices." See Candice Benjes-Small, "Beyond Self-Care: Forging Sustainable Practices in Academic Librarianship" (ACRL 2023 Proceedings, 2023), https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/acrl/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2023/BeyondSelfcare.pdf.

15. Ståle Valvatne Einarsen, Stig Berge Matthiesen, and Anders Skogstad, "Bullying, Burnout and Well-Being among Assistant Nurses," *Journal of Occupational Health and Safety - Australia and New Zealand* 14, no. 6 (1998): 563–68; Heather K. Spence Laschinger, Ashley L Grau, Joan Finegan, and Piotr Wilk, "New Graduate Nurses' Experiences of Bullying and Burnout in Hospital Settings," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 66, no. 12 (2010): 2732–42, doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2010.05420.x; Carol Anne Geary and Spencer Acadia, "A Descriptive Study of Workplace Bullying in U.S. Libraries during the COVID-19 Pandemic," in *Libraries as Dysfunctional Organizations and Workplaces* (Routledge, 2022); Maureen F. Dollard, Christian Dormann, Michelle R. Tuckey, and Jordi Escartín, "Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) and Enacted PSC for Workplace Bullying and Psychological Health Problem Reduction," *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 26, no. 6 (2017): 844–57, doi:10.1080/1359432X.2017.1380626.

Marina Lee Narvaez

Junior Achievement

A Perfect Service Opportunity for Business Librarians

Business librarians play an important role in supporting research on companies, industries, markets, and marketing strategies. Entrepreneurship librarians, in particular, take this a step further by leveraging information in these fields to encourage the advancement of new and established businesses.

Although librarians often successfully find ways to connect with our department's faculty, students, and staff, we sometimes struggle with how to become involved with the surrounding community. When entrepreneurship librarians establish relations with local business owners and organizations, we create a dynamic network filled with opportunities for collaboration and synergy. However, should our efforts be limited to adult entrepreneurs? How do we connect with young innovators already finding ways to become active in their local economy? Within my first few months at the University of Utah's Marriott Library, I found a service opportunity at the Utah Financial Empowerment Coalition: 2023 Women in Money Conference. I visited with Junior Achievement (JA)[1] representative Kirstin Park and learned of their need for volunteers to deliver programs to elementary, middle, and high school students that focus on financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and work readiness. As someone who has taught fourth grade in the past and now serves as an entrepreneurship librarian, this volunteer role leverages my various professional obligations.

About Junior Achievement

Founded in 1919, JA is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting student success through volunteers in classrooms and after-school settings. Lessons prepare young people to thrive in a global economy by developing economic reasoning skills, future planning abilities, and an understanding of their academic and economic choices.

For third through fifth graders, the JA Our Region programming focuses on financial literacy lessons as they apply to money management, entrepreneurship, and the understanding of global markets. Fourth grade teachings include learning how economic factors and resources both contribute to and hinder entrepreneurial initiatives.

During the creation of JA Our Region, JA enlisted specialists in areas of social studies, mathematics, literacy, business, and work-readiness to compile teaching kits for volunteers. The lessons help students appreciate the ever-changing workforce and understand how entrepreneurial thinking shapes business operations. Lessons promote active learning to bring real-world situations to life.

JA Our Region is traditionally a five-day program with each session lasting forty-five minutes. Although volunteer kits are filled with well-designed activities, volunteers are

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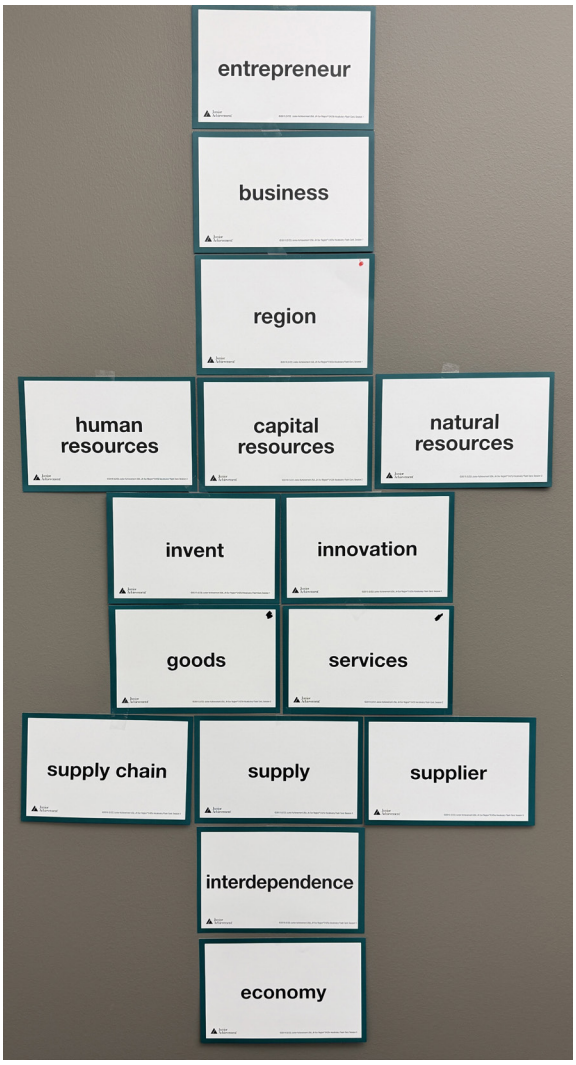
encouraged to make each approach their own. For our program, I reimagined the programming, condensing the five-day structure into a single three-hour-and-forty-five-minute session with fourth graders. Since I've left teaching, technological advances have replaced chalkboards, and many classrooms do not have forward-facing desks. Because every visit is with a different school, I began each session by asking the teacher to help me rearrange the desks to be forward facing and to help me become familiar with their teaching devices. The following sections showcase student reactions and techniques that helped the day run smoothly.



Dynamics of entrepreneurial ventures.

Be an Entrepreneur

After introductions were made, students explored the fourteen traits of entrepreneurs. I presented a poster showcasing these traits, and students were encouraged to connect them to their own personalities. Students shared their personal testimonies and were invited to play a quick game of charades. As a previous fourth grade teacher, I believe building excitement through fast-paced, engaging games is key for maintaining focus. Momentum from the game helped me transition to the next activity: introducing vocabulary. When presenting the vocabulary flash cards, students were encouraged to share their own interpretation of the words' meaning, and their excitement shone through as several called out their perspectives.

The flash cards were used throughout the day to establish terminology for each section. I provided details on how library resources help with research for each concept and placed them in a flowchart sequence to build a foundation for each transition. As sections were introduced, I reviewed previous definitions before new words were added.

Resources: Tools for Entrepreneurs

Posters introducing the entertainment, technology, manufacturing, sports, and food industries were presented as students brainstormed related business names and notable individuals. Then I selected a few examples students most identified with to introduce the next set of vocabulary: human, capital, and natural resources. By tying these terms to familiar businesses and individuals, students recognized how entrepreneurs utilize resources and how each resource is dependent on another to fulfill entrepreneurial operations. For instance, a sports league relies on their team's capabilities (human) to generate a crowd that buys tickets (capital), which in turn funds arenas built from materials (natural). Many students shared their unique perspective on how businesses utilize resources, which provided leeway for a lively discussion.

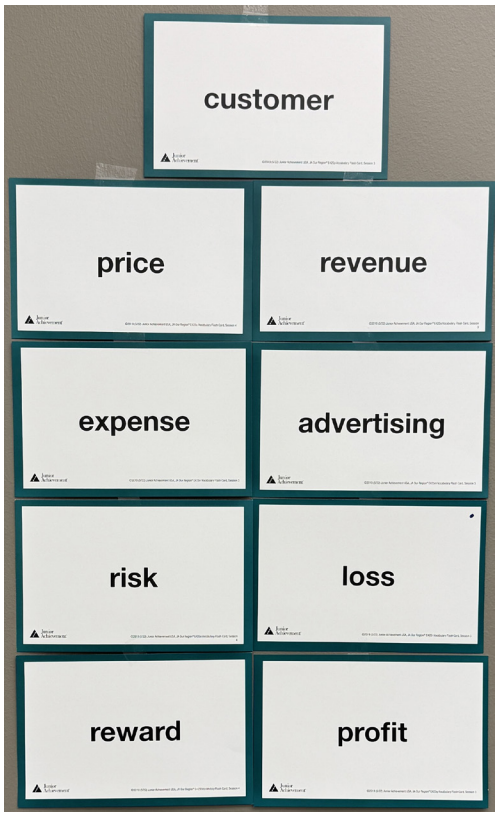
Next, a US map poster was presented, identifying resources within the eleven regions of the country, and we shared ideas on how entrepreneurs might use human, capital, and natural resources to launch new ventures within the regions. Students were then given the JA Our Region Flier, and in pairs, they designed a company by employing the resources of their assigned region. The class, as a whole, seemed less enthusiastic during this activity. Although many had wonderful ideas, they seemed unsure of their decisions. However, after addressing the uniqueness and strengths of each design, students' enthusiasm somewhat increased.

To help transition into the next section and increase the enthusiasm level, students were asked if another round of charades was due, and their excitement was visible as the next set of vocabulary was introduced. A second flowchart was established, and students were selected to act out a word as classmates made their guesses, efficiently blending learning with play.

Entrepreneurs Solve Problems

Utilizing the business designed in the previous exercise, students are asked group by group to identify a potential issue they foresee their business facing. I then encouraged them to apply a vocabulary term introduced in the previous section to work through the issue. For example, a company might boost advertising to generate the revenue needed to cover a loss.

The Problem-Solver Bookmark illustrates a problem-solving process: analyze the problem, evaluate the options, and decide on a plan. Working with their partners, students completed the steps and shared their insights with the class. As expected, many students had not completed all sections of the bookmark, so I asked them to share just one problem, option, and decision. Given that this is an extracurricular activity, I am pleased with their participation.



Entrepreneurial operations and market flow.

Hot Dog Stand Game

In this section, ensuring students understand the directions and feel confident in their mathematical skills is crucial. The game involves adding and subtracting money amounts, so I started by reviewing place value and guided them through practice problems. When introducing the game board, I referred to the vocabulary in the second flowchart to help me discuss the levels of the game.

We played two rounds together, in which the whole class played against me. While playing together, I identified students who excel in both math and game comprehension, appointing them as group leaders. The game calls for groups of four, and the leader's role is to ensure each member takes their turn, follows the directions of each move, and performs the proper arithmetic for each move. The students' enthusiasm level peaked during the game, so employing every classroom management technique was necessary—thankfully, the handy phrase "Eyes on me" still works like a charm! By circulating among groups, I aimed to boost engagement and confirmed that leaders were performing their task. A few students asked to take the lead, and of course I welcomed their enthusiasm.

Entrepreneurs Go Global

At the start of this section, we revisited the vocabulary from the first flow chart, focusing on human, capital, and natural resources. Then I introduced the new term *interdependency* using the example of foreign vehicles. Students understood that though some of these vehicles are assembled in the United States, their parts often originated globally. This sparked their interest, and students readily shared their knowledge of other products that rely on interdependency.

The related activity divides students into nine groups, each representing a country involved in assembling a computer setup. Since this segment is the shortest, it can be slotted at the day's end if time allows.

Service and Outreach

My chance meeting with Park at the Women in Money Conference opened the door to this service opportunity. There is no assessment to gauge my impact, but I rather reflect on the end-of-the-day reactions from the students. They have drawn me pictures and given me stickers and hugs, and I treasure every bit of their gratitude.

I believe any library can partner with JA as part of their community outreach, and business librarians specifically can see it as the perfect service opportunity. In my role as a business librarian, I assist professionals in their field and college and high school students. My involvement with JA extends our academic library's reach to include our community's school-aged children and reinforces the University of Utah's commitment to generating new innovations.

Conclusion

As a previous teacher, I know students cherish opportunities to break up their schedules, and JA does just that while also providing the enrichment of academic programming. With every visit, the teacher in me is reminded of their creativity, adaptability, and tenacity, and the entrepreneurship librarian in me smiles at their natural instincts of becoming innovators.

Note

1. "Junior Achievement USA: Member of JA Worldwide," accessed March 16, 2025, https://jausa.ja.org/about/index.

Megan Sapp-Nelson and Abigail Goben

The Missing Path

Data Librarianship at Mid-Career

As the subdiscipline of data librarianship is navigating the second decade of wide adoption in US academic libraries, many of the librarians who specialize in that discipline are approaching or are firmly mid-career. Data librarianship requires deep knowledge of policy, technology, strategy, and political environments on campus and nationally. Those data librarians are developing skill sets that are highly valued in library administration, regardless of specialization. Due to the lack of support within data librarianship career tracks, the only clear career path forward for many holding those roles is to move into library leadership, either in their own institution or moving elsewhere, thereby gutting the institutional data management knowledge that has been hard won and leaving libraries to functionally restart data services time and again. As a result, in the past three to five years, a significant number of data librarians have transitioned from data roles to library leadership and management. In the process, we are switching our most expert data librarians into roles where those skills are no longer updated. Simultaneously, data librarians who remain in their roles—due to personal preference, economics of health care, geographic or political limitations, or family situations—face career boundary limitations, with an expectation to take on ever more complicated skill sets without recognition, clear career paths, or support.

As noted above, data librarianship builds skill sets that are highly valued for library administrative positions and in industry, leading to pressure for data librarians to move away from their area of specialization. Working collaboratively with campus leadership in multiple disciplines builds name recognition at the campus level, a desirable characteristic for future associate head or dean positions. Focus on policy creation and analysis builds in-depth knowledge of the operations of a given institution. Campus-level discussions to finance support of data repositories build negotiation skills that are valuable for leveraging and communicating the role of the library on campus. This combination of skills, plus extensive knowledge of the liaisons within an institution, makes a data librarian a leading candidate for any middle library management role and, in many cases, creates a compelling dossier for the role of head of the library.

Rapidity of reskilling has been a constant requirement for data librarianship due to the rate of changes in technology, funder and publisher policies, and discipline-driven changes. Job ads that initially described "interest in" certain areas now often have requirements not only for academic librarianship skills in literacy, pedagogy, information organization, and collection development but also data science skills, such as programming, high-performance

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computing, and data visualization. Often still hired as the only person with these responsibilities, data librarians run into the challenges of coordinator syndrome, developing strong networking skills but often ultimately reliant upon the kindness of peers and enthusiastic volunteers to accomplish their work rather than an established structure.[1] As a result, when a data librarian leaves their role, there is often little backfill, creating an environment where the replacement librarian must seemingly start from scratch again, often after an extended period where the position was empty during hiring.

In addition to challenges within the library, data librarians are also likely to be in a continuous phase of rebuilding relationships as frequent campus leadership changes due to retirements, reorganizations, and other transitions, will necessitate significant efforts in justifying the need for strong data management services and advocacy across campus units to incoming administrative hires. Many data librarians build interpersonal relationships with key advocates on campus to accomplish their work. When the advocate holding the position leaves, those relationships must be rebuilt person by person without a straightforward plan or guidance on how to rebuild those relationships. This cycle of relationship building may be supported or challenged if the library administration is unwilling to permit the data librarian to have the authority and autonomy to establish and maintain these relationships.

Further, data librarians are often limited in their ability to change institutions and continue in a data management role due to the conflict between rapidly increasing skill expectations and administrative willingness to pay for expertise. Salaries in academic libraries are, due to the feminized nature of the profession, often significantly lower than would be seen elsewhere in the academy, particularly considering the additional computational skill requirements that have been added to many job ads. A further concerning trend is that hiring committees actively invite experienced professionals to move laterally or take pay cuts to build a new service from the beginning, often coupled with a significant geographic relocation. Even as they recognize that the candidates have successfully implemented a research data service, library administrators' base salary levels upon the nonexistence of the program at their own institution rather than existing skill sets that the data librarian brings to the table. Given the difficulty of implementing a service, and recognizing existing skill sets that have been successful, those data librarians should be hired with a salary that is commensurate with their expertise and the requirement of deep skill sets that a data support service requires.

Despite the constant reskilling and rebuilding requirements, many data librarians are seeking career advancement that does not require them to move away from the roles they enjoy and in which they have expertise and demonstrate excellence. In many cases the traditional hierarchy of libraries does not provide a method of advancement within the same institution for those who have developed expert knowledge of data librarianship, or any other subject matter expertise for that matter. Although some institutions still support librarians holding faculty positions with promotion and tenure, achieving these roles often primarily adds more institutional service work and mentoring obligations as opposed to greater responsibility and support within their area of specialization. Functionally at mid-career, many data librarians may see giving up their data work to move into a management position as the only way to gain a significant salary increase and recognition for their skill. The other evident option being to remain in their role doing work they enjoy but face stagnant wages with a constantly increasing workload that has limited options for a professional trajectory.

If academic libraries are committed to providing data services and wish to expand these critical offerings to campus beyond continuous restarts and rebuilding, efforts must be made to celebrate deep knowledge and expertise while providing a career path that is not predicated strictly on the traditional hierarchy of individual → department head → associate dean → dean.

Note

1. The Library Loon, "Reconsidering the C-Word – Gavia Libraria," accessed February 7, 2025. https://gavialib.com/2011/12/reconsidering-the-c-word/; Megan Sapp-Nelson and Abigail Goben, "Models for Engaging Liaisons in Research Data Services," *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 8, no. 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.2382.

Archives of American Art. *Access:* https://www.aaa.si.edu/.
Seeking a way to understand an artist's process in creating a work of art? Having access to their early sketches; photographs; correspondence with other artists, collectors, and art dealers; oral histories; and archival collection finding aids could help. The Archives of American Art (AAA) provides a dizzying array of such primary sources for researchers to explore the world of American art.

Originally founded in 1954 at the Detroit Institute of Arts to be a microfilm repository, the AAA soon started collecting and preserving original material. In 1970 it joined the Smithsonian Institution and has since become the "world's preeminent and most widely used research center dedicated to collecting, preserving, and providing access to primary sources that document the history of the visual arts in America."

Spanning the past 200 years, the collection holds more than 20 million items related to American art and artists, yet the work of the archives is not static; their collecting specialists continue to seek out new materials to add to the collections. Established in 1958, the Oral Histories Program has recorded more than 2,300 interviews, many including transcripts and some audio excerpts. Since 2005 grants from the Terra Foundation Center for Digital Collections have enabled 270 archival AAA collections containing more than 3 million images to be digitized and posted online.

The real strength of this site is the breadth of digitized items and internal links between them. A search for an artist might yield links to a collection of their papers, oral histories, correspondence, etc., as well as links to items from other collections that relate to the first artist. Comparable art archives have similar search functionality and breadth of material types but fewer items. London's Tate Gallery Archive has more than 1 million items, but only 75,000 are digitized; and of the 130,000 records in the Hong Kong–based Asia Art Archive, 90,000 are digitized.

The homepage has a clean design centered around a search box, above which are pull-down menus for different browsable categories and other features, such as links to archives podcasts, online exhibitions, blogposts, etc. Of course an excellent resource for art historians, the site also offers curricula designed to incorporate the archives resources into higher education courses. The AAA offers a wealth of resources for art scholars and students alike. — *Doreen Simonsen, Willamette University, dsimonse@willamette.edu.*

Stanford Emerging Technology Review. *Access:* https://setr.stanford.edu/.

The Stanford Emerging Technology Review (SETR) is a Stanford initiative that offers accessible analysis of rapidly evolving technologies, helping policymakers and industry leaders understand their potential impacts and implications. SETR makes emerging technological developments understandable to policymakers and the public. For academic librarians, it offers structured, accessible content that can supplement collections in technology, policy, and interdisciplinary studies.

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The homepage prominently features the 2025 report, with direct download access and links to summaries of ten key focus areas. Each focus area is a concise version of the report, featuring key takeaways, an overview, over-the-horizon predictions, policy and regulatory issues, and contributing researchers. This format allows students and faculty to quickly grasp authoritative introductions to emerging technologies while retaining the option to consult the full report. Additional resources include the executive summary, foreword, cross-cutting themes, and applications by policy area, as well as *The Interconnect*, a podcast co-produced by SETR and the Council on Foreign Relations. This multimedia component broadens instructional use cases, especially for libraries curating beyond traditional text-based materials.

Navigation is straightforward, with sections for About, Technology Areas, People, News, and Events, as well as options to subscribe for updates and search. The About section situates the project as a Stanford initiative that supports US innovation leadership, and the People section profiles the leadership, advisory board members, faculty, fellows, and student researchers. The News and Events sections keep the site timely with relevant updates that are filterable by date, author, and focus area.

For libraries, SETR's value lies in its combination of authoritative expertise and easy-to-use presentation. It can serve as a reference tool, an instructional aid, or an entry point for students to learn about the SETR technology topics. Although its framing emphasizes US innovation leadership, its content is broadly relevant for exploring how emerging technologies intersect with policy and society. Overall, the SETR website is a well-structured platform that merits inclusion in academic library resource lists, particularly for research guides, classroom integration, and policy reference collections. — *Ken Fujiuchi, SUNY Buffalo State University, fujiuck@buffalostate.edu.*

United States Geological Survey. *Access:* https://www.usgs.gov/.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) operates under the umbrella of the US Department of Interior to provide public information on scientific research conducted on natural resources and hazards throughout the nation. USGS provides site visitors with detailed maps, articles, statistics, and related materials to educate on natural hazards that impact American waterways, environment, and climate and land changes. This allows users to glean pertinent information on hazards that can impact their lives from a local level to a national level.

The website's featured stories on the landing page highlight pertinent events that users can directly follow, such as an aftershock forecast from a recent earthquake. Event notifications are also included with watches for severe events, displaying appropriate color coding and links to explain what each color alert means. Other prominent features on the landing page include national mineral resource mapping, links to publications and software, and an entire catalog of all USGS maps with search results showing information from 1943 to today. For users interested in learning more about data and its management, USGS offers several training materials and examples for data collection and analysis. The website also has a wealth of multimedia materials including images, videos, audio, and stereograms.

The site is inviting to users from all educational levels with large text, imagery, and clear instructions on accessing materials, indicating that its intended audience is broader than the scientific community. Site headers assist in navigation in several ways. For example, the Science drop-down menu provides visitors with a multitude of directions to aim their

queries—by subject interest, region, or USGS mission. The site further educates users on proper research etiquette in subtle ways. At the top-left corner, a small link displays "An official website of the United States government. Here's how you know." This leads to a small drop-down stating the credibility of a .gov domain and how to tell if a link is legitimate.

Overall, the USGS website is a valuable resource for all users, especially those impacted by recent natural disasters and collectors of natural science data. In academic institutions, this site appeals to those in environmental sciences and sustainability. The live data and up-to-date information on natural events can provide significant information for researchers, students, and faculty for their own projects. — *Tiffany Messer-Bass, Lenoir-Rhyne University, tiffany.messer-bass@lr.edu.*

Charlene K. Mandimutsira has been awarded the Texas Exes iSchool Alumni Scholarship for BIPOC Students at the University of Texas (UT) at Austin. The scholarship fund was established and funded by iSchool alumni in 2022 in response to a need to support BIPOC students at the UT iSchool. An independent panel of reviewers selected Mandimutsira as the third awardee for the scholarship. Mandimutsira anticipates completing her studies at the iSchool in spring 2027.

Sai Deng, metadata librarian and associate librarian at the University of Central Florida (UCF), has been selected as a recipient of the 2025 UCF Research Incentive Award. This university-level award honors faculty members who have demonstrated an impactful record of research, creative activity, or scholarship that advances the mission of UCF. With a research career that has been centered on improving access to knowledge, Deng's contributions to metadata innovation, data integration, and digital scholarship have had a lasting impact across UCF. She has collaborated extensively with Digital Initiatives, Special Collections, and university faculty, helping elevate the visibility and accessibility of institutional collections.

Lauren Reiter has been named head of the William and Joan Schreyer Business Library and appointed the Louis and Virginia Benzak Business Librarian at the Penn State University Libraries. She had served as interim head since March 2024. A business liaison librarian at Penn State from 2012 through 2024, Reiter supported the academic and scholarship success of Penn State's departments of economics, finance, risk management, accounting, and management. Her responsibilities in this role included course instruction sessions, outreach programming, and curation of subject-specific library resources, as well as faculty research activity and service to the scholarly field of librarianship.

Eileen Dewitya has been named the Frank Borden Hanes Curator of the Rare Book Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill University Libraries.

Daniel Fandino is the new digital exploration center librarian at the University of Central Florida Libraries.

Lisa Gregory has been appointed curator of the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill University Libraries.