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Real-World Research: A Qualitative Study of Faculty Perceptions of the Library's Role in Service-Learning

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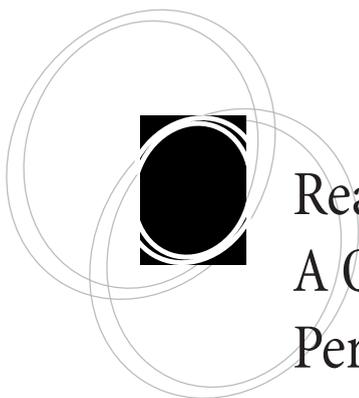*University of Northern Iowa*

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Real-World Research: A Qualitative Study of Faculty Perceptions of the Library's Role in Service-Learning

Anne Marie Gruber

abstract: Service-learning, a growing pedagogy in higher education, provides opportunities for students to contribute to communities and to reflect upon experiences ranging from direct service to advocacy. Librarians have an important but underutilized role in supporting service-learning as they contribute to institutional missions and the public purposes of academia. However, there is a gap in the literature related to faculty perceptions of information literacy instruction and skills related to service-learning. The researcher used semi-structured in-depth interviews, investigating these perceptions among 12 faculty across 10 disciplines. Findings support the role of library instruction in service-learning, with a focus on helping students engage with non-scholarly sources. Conclusions also suggest a need for additional marketing of library services to faculty who may have misconceptions about librarians' scope of practice. The article also discusses implications relative to student success and ongoing articulation of academic library value.

Introduction

Nationwide, many higher education institutions are increasing emphasis on service-learning within the college curriculum. It is considered a high-impact educational practice by accrediting agencies and by organizations such as Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Additionally, service-learning, and community engagement more broadly, are part of ongoing conversations about the public purposes of higher education. A widely accepted definition of service-learning comes from Robert Bringle and Julie Hatcher. They consider it a

> course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on

the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.[1]

Service-learning (SL) contributes to both students' development and the public good. It can help students develop skills that will translate to their chosen career fields and provide opportunities to improve broad-based abilities, such as writing, speaking, critical thinking, and intercultural competency. As part of an enriching educational environment and a pedagogical approach to learning "real-world" skills, SL can demonstrate added value for investments in education by families and the public, and can enable institutions to advocate for additional support.

The library has an important but often underutilized role to play in supporting SL. Librarians are well-positioned to help students prepare for service-learning opportunities by gathering evidence-based information about the communities in which such learning takes place. Collaborations between teaching faculty and librarians are key to this endeavor, and current information literacy (IL) theories and pedagogies support librarians collaborating with faculty. However, many faculty fail to seek library support for SL for a variety of reasons; often they simply may not have considered how IL instruction or other library services can contribute to the learning objectives of SL projects. Effective partnerships can help students develop information-seeking and evaluation skills. In addition, IL instruction can empower them to develop critical questions, create new information, investigate information processes and power structures, and engage with research as part of an ongoing conversation. This study investigates faculty perceptions of the library's role in service-learning courses.

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Literature Review

Civic Engagement and Service-Learning

Civic engagement and service-learning are not new concepts in higher education, but they have received increased attention of late. Service-learning is positively associated with student learning, retention, and success; as a high-impact practice, SL is one of several "enriching educational experiences that can be life-changing" for students.[2] Theresa Yeh found that SL opportunities, both cocurricular and course-integrated, enhanced low-income, first-generation college students' "knowledge and learning in the classroom, enabled them to further develop academic skills, and linked them to new educational opportunities."[3] While the benefits of service-learning are well-documented, a 2012 AAC&U report indicated that "more evidence on civic learning is urgently needed," especially as related to impacts on student success and underserved students.[4]

Results of a survey conducted on behalf of AAC&U showed that employers value graduates demonstrating skills that are often developed through service-learning.[5] For

example, they indicated interest in having new employees who can think critically and engage with the community. A significant majority of respondents suggested colleges should place more emphasis on critical thinking and analytical reasoning (82 percent), the ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings (78 percent), and teamwork or the ability to

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collaborate with others in diverse settings (67 percent). In the same survey, 72 percent of employers indicated more attention should be paid to teaching college students "the location, organization, and evaluation of information from multiple sources."[6]

Graduates themselves find challenges keeping up with information and learning new information for personal and professional needs. A report by Project Information Literacy, a national study of how young adults find and use information during and after college, suggested that graduates are "specialized, employable, and relatively proficient information seekers" but also "reveal a failure of higher education to prepare lifelong learners who leave college experienced at framing and asking their own questions rather than responding to questions that had been assigned to them."[7]

Service-Learning and Information Literacy

Christopher Sweet contends, "Information literacy is critical for getting students to understand the 'why' and 'how' that should ground all service-learning projects."[8] He adds, "Service learning, combined with information literacy, adds value to each and transforms both."[9] Sweet also suggests best practices that include connecting these skill sets within higher education, articulating SL within institutional and library goals, and focusing on information literacy's implications for students' contextual learning in service-learning courses. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education"[10] is a powerful tool that can inform collaborations supporting SL. It includes dispositions empowering learners to "see themselves as contributors to the information marketplace rather than only consumers of it" and enabling them to "examine their own information privilege."[11]

Authors have called for more explicit inclusion of social justice concepts in the Framework. Lisa Hinchliffe and Laura Saunders, for example, propose two additional Framework concepts, including Information Social Justice.[12] Heidi Jacobs suggests that ideally "the dialogues we have surrounding information literacy instruction strive to find a balance in the daily and the visionary, the local and the global, the practices and the theories, the ideal and the possible."[13] Jacobs draws upon James Elmborg's argument that "to be educators, librarians must focus less on information transfer and more on developing critical consciousness in students."[14] Evidence-based SL may be one way to work toward this pedagogy.

Interest in the role of information literacy in service-learning has surged recently. Jennifer Nutefall and John Riddle provide basic overviews of ways to connect the two pedagogies.[15] To date, the Colloquium on Libraries & Service Learning has been held three times. First convened in 2014,[16] it took place again in 2016 in conjunction with the bian-

nual national conference sponsored by Campus Compact, "a national coalition of nearly 1,100 colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education."[17] The colloquium was held a third time in 2017 and will now be held annually.[18] A 2016 book draws upon the colloquium and serves as the first monograph to gather research about information literacy and service-learning.[19] Forthcoming publications focus on the library's role in service-learning as well as community engagement more broadly.

Most existing publications on information literacy for service-learning provide case studies rather than a research-based focus. Additionally, there is no current research about faculty perceptions of information literacy instruction as it relates specifically to service-learning. Much of the published research focused on faculty attitudes toward IL relies on a survey methodology, which may provide a limited understanding of faculty experiences and perceptions. Although effective IL-SL collaborations already take place at many institutions, and there is strong potential for even more, the message about library support may not yet have reached the SL community as a whole. A review of programs from annual service-learning and community engagement conferences shows little library representation, defined as zero to two sessions per year mentioning libraries in their titles or presenters' titles.[20] One notable exception to this silo effect is a list of resources titled "The Role of Libraries in Engagement," compiled by librarian Sarah Goodwin Thiel for Campus Compact.[21]

Faculty Perceptions of Information Literacy

Several studies of faculty perceptions and attitudes toward information literacy have primarily focused on how faculty view students' skills in this area. A key publication regarding this topic categorized faculty perceptions into seven "conceptions" of IL.[22] Stuart Boon, Bill Johnston, and Sheila Webber studied English faculty, took a phenomenographic approach, and found that faculty view IL skills as vital for students in the discipline.[23] Jonathan Cope and Jesús Sanabria used a similar approach to investigate how academic disciplines may influence how faculty view IL.[24] They found, however, that "institutional and curricular requirements and the needs of specific students overshadowed disciplinary training in the interviewees' responses."[25] Christina Nilsen conducted a broader study using survey results from across Canada. She found that a small majority of faculty (54 percent) identified IL as very important for lower-level undergraduates.[26] Some questions were library-centric, potentially lowering responses. For example, one asked, "How important are *library* research skills?" (emphasis added). Over 72 percent of respondents ranked lower-level undergraduates' IL skills as either fair or poor. Other studies confirmed that faculty place importance on IL skills and generally perceive students' skills as lacking.[27] A 2015 survey of faculty at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls supported this finding, albeit with disciplinary differences. Approximately 70 percent of arts and sciences faculty rated undergraduates' IL skills poor, while respondents in business and other professions agreed approximately 30 percent and 25 percent of the time, respectively.[28]

Patricia Vander Meer, Maria Perez-Stable, and Dianna Sachs found that some barriers to IL include lack of faculty awareness of library services, perceived lack of time in the curriculum, and the perception that IL concepts should be taught in other courses.[29] Larry

Hardesty's faculty culture model can offer some rationales for these barriers, including that faculty may value knowledge over teaching.[30] Sharon Weiner found that faculty often teach IL concepts themselves without collaboration.[31] However, Sophie Bury indicated that, among faculty at a large research university, 78.7 percent considered faculty-librarian collaboration optimal for teaching IL, while only 52.9 percent incorporated IL instruction into their courses.[32] Of those who collaborated with librarians to provide IL instruction, 85 percent perceived some or substantial impact on student IL learning objectives. Laura Saunders determined, as previous researchers had, that "the onus is still on the librarians to initiate and sustain discussions with faculty" regarding IL.[33] She found a general openness to collaboration with librarians but a need for librarians to be, as one faculty respondent said, "aggressive in a good way" to share information about library services. Time and awareness barriers may be exacerbated with service-learning units that require significant planning and class time.

Faculty Perceptions of Library Support for Service-Learning

While a growing body of literature relates to faculty perceptions of IL[34] as well as to the intersections between IL and service-learning,[35] little has been written about faculty perceptions of the library as it relates to course-integrated service. This reflects the broader challenge of libraries being largely absent from community engagement literature. One article coauthored by a librarian and a sociology professor serves to "draw attention to the limited contribution of librarians to ES [engaged scholarship]," which integrates academic knowledge with community-based know-how.[36] The authors' thorough literature review covering 20 years of engaged scholarship in a variety of disciplines found only a single article with a library focus.

Results of the 2015 National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement (NASCE) as reported by Mathew Johnson and Donald Levy demonstrate that opportunities exist locally to assist students in preparing for course-integrated service projects.[37] The desire on the part of higher education leaders nationwide to provide students with impactful community engagement experiences will only increase these opportunities. Incorporating SL into the curriculum is a major challenge for many faculty, and professional development and

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networking opportunities are needed to assist them.[38] Librarians can play an important role by serving as a resource for faculty selecting nonprofit organizations and students preparing for service-learning projects.

The current study further addresses the lack of connection between librarianship and community engagement, filling current gaps in understanding the roles of academic libraries in service-learning. Exploring this topic from the perspective of teaching faculty in a variety of disciplines will bring to light ways academic libraries can leverage their existing resources and services to support campus needs and priorities.

Methodology

This study explores how faculty perceive the role of IL skills and instruction in academic SL courses. There were two main objectives: to describe faculty expectations and perceptions of students' IL skills in academic SL courses, and to understand how faculty perceive IL instruction as part of such courses.

Setting

This study took place at University of Northern Iowa (UNI), a mid-sized public comprehensive university in Cedar Falls with a total enrollment of approximately 12,000.[39] The institution has a strong history of service-learning. UNI is one of 361 institutions nationwide to be awarded the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement,[40] and it has been named to the President's National Community Service Honor Roll six times.[41] The 2015 NASCE survey indicated 50 percent of UNI students engaged in community service and, of those, 20 percent participated as part of a course or other academic program.[42] There is strong administrative support, including funding, for increasing community engagement. The current UNI Strategic Plan includes a goal to elevate community engagement, specifically to "create opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to build external relationships that enhance local and global learning experiences and contribute to the cultural and economic vitality of the Cedar Valley and Iowa."[43] Community engagement is the focus of the institution's Quality Initiative Project for upcoming Higher Learning Commission accreditation, and a team of university and community representatives recently created a Civic Action Plan for the campus. An annual faculty Service-Learning Institute has been offered since 2016 in collaboration with Iowa Campus Compact; in this selective opportunity, faculty learn about best practices and partner with a community organization to create projects for a course.

Participants

This Institutional Review Board-approved study included UNI faculty from a broad range of disciplines, with primary emphasis in the social and behavioral sciences. The researcher used purposive sampling with a target sample size of 12 to 15 individuals, consistent with the recommendation from Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce, and Laura Johnson that data saturation can be reached with as few as six interview participants.[44] Both pre-tenure and tenured faculty across disciplines were included, as well as both full- and part-time faculty at any rank.

Eligibility criteria include having one or more courses integrating service-learning within one academic year prior to interview. This could include any experience meeting the Bringle and Hatcher definition of service-learning.[45] Courses could include one or more such experiences, and community projects ranged among direct service (such as serving at a meal center for the homeless), indirect service (gathering extra produce from restaurants to bring to the meal center), and advocacy (contacting legislators to change laws about reclaiming extra food from restaurants).

The campus Office of Community Engagement provided a list of UNI service-learning faculty. Due to the small size of the list, all such faculty were invited to participate in the study. However, a complete tally for all UNI service-learning faculty was

not available because the university's list relies on faculty to self-report projects and likely underrepresents the true number of faculty who include service-learning in their courses. Nonetheless, it was a useful starting point. Recruitment took place via e-mail over several weeks. Additionally, announcements appeared in the university's electronic newsletter and in the library's newsletter. Twelve faculty were invited to participate, and all did so, representing 10 different disciplines and a variety of ranks, as listed in Table 1. Half the sample (six faculty) included information literacy instruction in one or more service-learning courses, and the remainder taught using service-learning but did not include IL instruction (also indicated in Table 1).

Data Collection and Instrument

For this exploratory study, the author conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews in late 2016, within two semesters of each participant's service-learning course or courses. Interviews were scheduled after both the information literacy session (if applicable) and the service-learning project were complete or nearly complete. The interview guides (available in Appendices A and B), with similar questions for each group, were domain-organized and sequential, focusing on the following four domains:

1. Faculty expectations/experiences with student research in SL
2. Faculty awareness of IL services (overall and for SL specifically)
3. Faculty expectations/responses to IL session (only for faculty participants who scheduled an information literacy session)
4. Faculty perceptions of students' engagement/motivation.

Each participant received the appropriate guide prior to the service-learning project. The researcher tested a draft interview guide through a sample interview with a colleague and made small changes to improve the questions prior to data collection. Interviews lasted between 38 minutes and 1 hour 48 minutes, averaging 1 hour 10 minutes.

Data Analysis

Interviews were audio recorded with participant permission and transcribed by an external vendor using institutional grant funds. Transcripts were coded using NVivo software to identify trends. Using a process of applied thematic analysis,[46] the researcher determined themes using an inductive approach focusing on emerging ideas related to the four topical domains described earlier. As themes emerged, the researcher developed a codebook to define when to apply themes to relevant text. To ensure coding reliability, an external researcher coded two of the interview transcripts using the primary researcher's codebook. Initial intercoder agreement was determined to be 79 percent and 69 percent respectively, demonstrating a fair level of consistency in how codes were interpreted and providing a check on any potential researcher bias. Following the external coding review and discussion to rectify discrepancies, the researcher revised the codebook, combining some codes and defining several codes in more detail. The researcher recoded relevant transcript sections according to the revised codebook and analyzed coded results by theme to gain an overall sense of how participants described each topic, as well as to gauge any similarities and differences among participant responses.

Table 1.
Summary of study participants

Participant number	Participant rank at time of study	Participant discipline or department	Information literacy session (s) in service-learning course? (Y/N)
1	Instructor	Teacher Education	N
2	Assistant professor	Languages and Literatures	N
3	Instructor	Art	Y
4	Associate professor	Leisure, Youth, and Human Services	N
5	Instructor	Languages and Literatures	Y
6	Professor	Business (Marketing)	Y
7	Assistant professor	Philosophy and World Religions	N
8	Associate professor	Leisure, Youth, and Human Services	N
9	Instructor	Social Work	N (LibGuide only)
10	Assistant professor	Family Services	Y
11	Professor	Physical Education	Y
12	Associate professor	Business (Management)	Y

Results

Several main themes emerged from participant responses, with only a few contradictions among participants. Overall, faculty reported common concerns, such as lack of time and awareness when it comes to incorporating library services as well as perceived deficiencies in student research skills. Specifically related to service-learning course and assignments, instructors placed greater emphasis on non-scholarly information for hands-on projects. In some cases, faculty lacked understanding that teaching about non-scholarly sources falls within the scope of librarianship. Some faculty reported that "real-world" research enabled traditionally underprepared students to succeed. Each of the main themes that emerged upon data analysis is discussed in detail in the following sections.

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Lack of Time and Awareness as Barriers to Library Use

Barriers that Vander Meer, Perez-Stable, and Sachs identified still hinder student and faculty use of library resources and services when it comes to service-learning courses.[47] Several participants, especially those previously unfamiliar with the researcher, admitted that they know less about library services than they would like and described a similar lack of awareness among students. Some expressed interest in finding ways to incorporate the library more often or more deeply into courses and assignments. One faculty member in the Family Services program explained: "I haven't done a good job of knowing what all is out there, like resources and services, or if the information just hasn't gotten to me in a way that . . . I'm sure that there is more things [*sic*] that the library does or can do that I just am not aware of."

Library instruction and liaison services, in particular, are areas where faculty expressed a need for more information, as described by one participant in the Division of Leisure, Youth, and Human Services: "This whole idea that librarians are assigned to certain areas, I don't even know if I knew that until you told me . . . The library is for people to go do research. It's not for me to lean on the people who work there to help me teach my class."

However, this sentiment contradicts the experience of those faculty who *had* collaborated with librarians for service-learning courses. Several instructors who had attended a prior presentation and simulation about the library's role in service-learning mentioned that it helped open their eyes to the potential for incorporating library instruction in their course: "In part because of the presentation . . . I was like, 'Oh, my gosh, this is library resources, and library research days could be so beneficial.'" Even among faculty aware of library services, incorporating them may look different in service-learning courses. One faculty member from the Department of Philosophy and World Religions made an intentional choice to exclude library instruction, afraid of upsetting the balance she had endeavored to create in her course between traditional classroom work and community service: "I was worried that if we had research-specific days, that it created an imbalance where they would be focused more on the inside the classroom stuff that we know they're already biased to do."

Some instructors indicated service-learning projects were so time-intensive that research assignments and library instruction would not fit into the course schedule. Faculty sometimes compensate for the lack of time by doing research themselves and providing information directly to students. One from the Department of Languages and Literatures shared an example: "So I said okay, here's the percentage of Latinos in Iowa, here is Black Hawk County, here is the United States. Can you tell how many people speak Spanish in these different areas?"

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Lack of Student Research Skills

Not surprisingly, most faculty reported student research skills lacking; in fact, 11 of 12 participants mentioned student research skills in some way, and it was the most commonly discussed theme. Half the participants specifically listed source evaluation as particularly challenging for students, and moving away from traditional scholarly research, as often required in service-learning courses, only makes this concept more complex. One art faculty member described students' reaction during an SL-IL session and connected this to students' previous research experiences: "They were so excited about *Control F* or any kind of methods of research . . . I'm kind of always surprised that they haven't done more of that when they were in high school." Another participant, from Philosophy and World Religions, described a sense of irony that students have easy access to information yet struggle to cope:

> for as much access to technology the students have, just a misunderstanding or not even necessarily a misunderstanding, but ignorance of what is actually at their fingertips, and an inability to manage all that is available even if they do know how to access things that are available, which is why I see a clear benefit to incorporating [library instruction].

Some faculty, especially those who did not include a librarian in their course, report addressing source evaluation skills themselves through lectures or class activities. One marketing faculty member shared: "I do spend about 20 minutes. I've got a little chart that I show, and I give examples, and I go through, and here I do follow the textbook closely. So, they give like eight or nine terms, and they do make a differentiation, let's say, between *bias* and *purpose*."

While faculty want students to develop information literacy skills, and several indicated their own efforts to target these concepts, many reported little or no department-level plan to address IL skills. Often this is due to strong expectations to cover particular topics within the subject area, such as in physical education: "We haven't made room for this coherence across our curriculum in terms of maybe critical thinking skills, writing, synthesis, those sorts of things because we're all focused on our little content area." In discussing future directions for their service-learning courses, several faculty indicated they would increase the amount of library instruction, further emphasize information-related skills in their own teaching, or both. One representative comment came from a Languages and Literatures participant: "I would have a longer check-in after the library session. I spent about half a class when we were kind of evaluating sources. I would love to maybe come back to the library and do that with a librarian." The same instructor went on to share: "I always underestimate how much explicit instruction I need to do about how to find a source, how to read the source."

"Real-World" Non-Scholarly Information in Service-Learning

Faculty from some disciplines, particularly those in business departments, mentioned valuing real-world information more than scholarly information at times for service-learning projects. A marketing professor, when discussing students' legitimate use of blog sources for a project, indicated some selection criteria: "What we're going for is what can be used. So even if it is someone's biased opinion, if it seems to have worked

for that person, it might work in this situation." A management faculty member discussed students' research process: "They Google something, and it comes up, and they go, 'Oh, this is what we're using.' You can then start to sometimes second-guess them and say, 'Well is this really appropriate for this particular question?' But lots of times it's good enough." Real-world sources such as government information and newspaper articles helped students engage with information in new ways, as reported by one faculty member from the Family Services program when describing students' reactions during an information literacy session: "I remember them saying, 'Wow! I didn't know that . . . I never heard of a food desert.'"

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The two members of the business faculty echoed each other when each discussing how students may struggle to understand that real-world sources, including experts in the community, are often acceptable and may even be more important than scholarly sources for some purposes: "To figure out that the best source of information is probably your own boss and not some book, they don't get it," stated the management professor. A colleague in marketing commented, "It could come out of Google. Wikipedia at times is perfectly fine. And this is—I mean, I go totally against everything they've been taught."

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The hands-on nature of the service-learning projects seemed to provide opportunities for students to succeed who may have struggled with a more traditional scholarly assignment. In a sentiment echoed by several participants, a Languages and Literatures faculty member observed:

> I had one of my students . . . she was a very weak academic student and one of those with a really low GPA and had to retake a lot of classes in college, but she was so at ease in the community sessions, she went extra times. She didn't have to go. She just felt comfortable. She felt like she was doing something good. She liked the work, and she really excelled. She did very well in that, and if she hadn't done so well in that, she probably wouldn't have passed the class because she didn't do as well on the academic side.

Paralleling this, several faculty mentioned that an emphasis on real-world sources also provided an advantage to students who may have struggled with traditional research assignments, including this example from a participant in business:

> It's funny because my "C" students, they dive in. This is fun. They get to use any source they want? . . . It's my "A" students that are the ones that are just like, "Are you sure

about this?" I'll have people come up and say, "Do you need so many journal articles?" Because in the past, they've been told you have to have five journal articles and no later than 2014 and cited by so-and-so and use MLA . . . I still get that. "Do you have restrictions?" There's a website I found, it's a blog, but it's got some really good ideas. If it's got good ideas, do you think your manager could use it? Use the blog. I mean, we're going to break away from this whole entire structure that you've been involved with for the past 15 years, and so for some of the students that is a struggle.

Combining Community Engagement with Research

Some faculty participants, such as those in business, already require ample research in service-learning projects. Others, such as one in Leisure, Youth, and Human Services, indicated they wanted to incorporate research more: "I think I need to do more work about figuring out how to combine research and community work." Some faculty thought about secondary research to increase rigor in their course. When asked about incorporating library instruction in the future, one faculty member in Philosophy and World Religions responded: "One direction as a potential weakness of the class, and that might need to be addressed, is that students didn't do a whole lot of academic work or output. *Academic outcomes* maybe is a good way to put it for this class." Several faculty, including one in Languages and Literatures, expressed a desire to incorporate more real-world information into their courses: "Students I think are very interested in doing things related to current events, and we don't often have those kinds of projects embedded into our courses."

While some participants indicated an elevated importance of non-scholarly sources in service-learning projects and appeared to need support for incorporating research in this context, some faculty had not considered the scope of librarians to include helping students find and evaluate real-world sources. Several faculty reported collaborating with librarians in supporting traditional research, yet not when asking students to use the non-scholarly sources that are often a part of SL projects. One faculty member in physical education expressed a perception that the library does not serve a role in information evaluation: "I think the library can serve as a piece of that unpacking scholarship. However, I think that there's this bigger issue of being able to evaluate information as it comes in, and to me that is going to be a much more important skill than being able to dissect scholarship." The same faculty member, who only recently began incorporating library instruction in her courses, indicated a past perception that teaching information literacy was her responsibility alone: "It never really occurred to me to lean on librarians or others . . . I felt like the job was mine and not somebody else's."

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Faculty Role in Student Perceptions of Research

Faculty take varied approaches when discussing research with students, often helping them realize they research constantly in their everyday lives and that research often

involves more than finding a single correct answer. Some indicated students' levels may influence these understandings. The Languages and Literatures instructor described earlier, who teaches primarily a first-year composition and communication course, commented that it is "hard for students to understand is research is asking more questions. So, it's looking at something. It's asking more questions. Your typical freshman student might think research is finding an answer." An art instructor who also teaches many first-year students shares her perspective on research: "Research is different types of things; research doesn't always mean a paper, but experimenting with materials, like going and looking for just the right material and then taking it back to your studio and trying different things out with it." A faculty member in the Department of Social Work took an evidence-based practice approach when describing her conceptualization of research, saying that in the field, students "need to be doing practice with purposeful, planned supported practices with our client base. We don't just pull things out of our back pocket."

Like several participants, the Social Work faculty member discussed the word *research* itself as problematic for students:

> I think they hear *research*, and they do think it's steeped in the library with having to read article after article, and understanding, and looking at methodology, and all of those are a result of not really understanding what that really means. So that's why we want to move to away from using the word *research* and just really embrace the evidence-based practices. And that comes in many different forms.

One Languages and Literatures faculty member talks with first-year students about real-world research they already do to help them broaden their definition: "I tell students, if you were looking at what time a movie starts on a phone, do you consider that research? Are you looking up something? We do this more than we think."

The art instructor described her perception of how students think about research as something separate from their major or content area, indicating that students "automatically think, 'That's in the library, I do that in the library, I think about that in the library, and then I go back to the art building, okay now I'm thinking about art.'" The same instructor went on to describe how the physical space of the library as distinct from a disciplinary or classroom building may impact students' perceptions:

> Even the distance that it takes to walk from the library back to the art building is enough time for their brain to make the switch. And I never really thought about it in that particular way before, but I'm certain that that's what happened. And so, then they walk away from the library physically, and then that information also kind of leaves.

While many faculty incorporate reflection activities into service-learning projects, asking students to reflect on their research does not tend to be part of the project requirements. One business faculty member wishes to change this in the future: "I'm going to have them start doing reflections on their research skills as well. So, I think that that'll make a big step forward."

Developing Social Issue Knowledge and Critical Thinking Skills

Participants reported that library instruction helped students develop more nuanced understandings of social issues. The Languages and Literatures faculty member whose first-year students researched food insecurity—the lack of reliable access to affordable, nutritious food—in preparation for partnering with a regional food bank shared that the IL session

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gave them a bigger picture. I think it gave them context to understand. In a complex issue like food insecurity, like poverty, they understand it's not just one thing, that there's a lot of moving pieces into this. Well maybe they'd never considered ethnicity as a reason why or seen a graph that talked about the gender gap in wage earnings. They haven't seen that sort of thing, and so what it does is I think it provides an understanding and takes away a lot of stereotypes.

The same instructor indicated that critical thinking was evident in students' responses to evidence-based data, especially data that challenged their assumptions: "Critical thinking, it's always . . . probably the most difficult of our learning outcomes to achieve and to assess, but I saw that enacted when students would find something and kind of react to that information. They would be shocked or have another question or wonder why that was true." This feedback supports the researcher's own experiences facilitating research and reflection in service-learning courses. All six faculty who incorporated library instruction in their course were pleased with the outcomes, though some still grapple with how to help students understand the importance of research to community-based work.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the small sample size and single institution sample. While the results may not be generalizable within the campus studied or to other institutions, this study may shed some light on a nascent area of research in academic librarianship. Questions focused on information literacy rather than space, materials, and other library resources, so findings involve related topics. Some participants (8 of 12) were already familiar with the researcher in some way, and 2 of the 12 had attended a presentation the researcher gave on the library's role in service-learning by the time of the study; these existing relationships indicate there was potential for participant bias.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Faculty awareness and time remain barriers to using library services, including information literacy instruction. While there are no quick fixes, several arguments for incorporating instruction that may advance the marketing of library services came from faculty themselves. Some faculty may see secondary research as a way to increase academic rigor in service-learning courses, and some desire support for more intentionally combining research and community work. Many departments need assistance with

thinking about information literacy skills in a programmatic way for students within each major. These findings may lend credibility and relevance to librarians' discussions with faculty and administrators about the library's role in service-learning and more generally in the curriculum.

Librarians need to help faculty develop a stronger understanding that the scope of instruction librarians includes source evaluation and the use of free, non-scholarly information. That some faculty reported not considering librarians able to support students' use of non-scholarly sources has implications for both service-learning and beyond, particularly considering current conversations about news and media literacy. Some libraries are already capitalizing on discussions of "fake news" to further publicize instructional services focused on source evalu-

> **Librarians need to help faculty develop a stronger understanding that the scope of instruction librarians includes source evaluation and the use of free, non-scholarly information.**

ation. Librarians should continue discussing students' information skills with faculty and offering instructional services to help address the gaps.

Faculty may need assistance incorporating research components into service-learning projects, so librarians should consider offering assistance in the design of assignments in collaboration with both faculty and community partners. Librarians might also consider providing faculty with sample prompts for soliciting student reflections about the research process, in addition to the already common service-learning approach of having students reflect about the service experience.

Incorporating non-scholarly sources into service-learning projects can offer a more diverse group of students the opportunity to succeed in research assignments. Yeh's finding that service-learning especially benefited underrepresented students[48] links well with the current study's finding that underprepared students may excel at employing "real-world" sources more than their counterparts who are more comfortable using scholarly sources. Librarians can lend their expertise in helping all students navigate and evaluate non-scholarly sources, including experts in the community, through explicit instruction in source evaluation for service-learning courses as well as consultations supporting individual and small group projects. At the same time, engaging with secondary sources can help students understand that the issues addressed by community projects are complex, multifaceted, and not easy to solve. Incorporating effective IL instruction into service-learning may also help students develop a more nuanced understanding of research and can help address student perceptions of research as negative, irrelevant to the "real world," or both. Librarians might consider teaching more information literacy sessions in classroom buildings, if space and technology allow, to address possible student perceptions of research as separate from academic pursuits in the disciplines.

Further research is needed to help librarians, faculty, and administrators improve and expand service-learning offerings on college campuses and support students' lifelong learning through civic engagement. While the proposed study focuses specifically on faculty perceptions, further studies may investigate student perceptions as well as any direct connection between IL instruction and student learning in the areas of critical think-

ing and problem-solving in service-learning courses. Several study participants provided syllabi for service-learning courses, assignment instructions, and other artifacts, though these were not specifically requested. Content analysis of teaching materials as well as student work might answer a wide range of research questions that could aid librarians in understanding and supporting information needs for community engagement. Additionally, research is needed on library roles related to providing spaces and online archiving of artifacts (such as in institutional repositories) related to service-learning projects and community-engaged research.

Service-learning continues to expand in higher education as an effective student engagement and retention tool. It can also assist students' career, personal, and cognitive development. Shedding light on faculty perceptions of IL-SL connections may enable librarians and faculty to better collaborate in creative ways that empower students to use research in solving real-world problems. This study can help faculty and administrators develop a richer understanding of faculty needs in implementing service-learning and the library's role and value in supporting student learning. As academic librarians continue to provide leadership through innovative services, an increasing emphasis on civic engagement offers an important opportunity to demonstrate the library's contribution to the development of students' lifelong skills. Information literacy is a natural connection with service-learning and can enrich the experiences of students, faculty, and nonprofit representatives, but further study is needed to better understand the implications for various stakeholders. This study sheds light on faculty perceptions of the library's role in this process, providing ideas for creative faculty-librarian collaborations to empower students to conduct community-engaged research, better understand their communities, and solve real-world problems. At the same time, the findings may help librarians think about additional ways to support institutional missions and articulate library value.

> Information literacy is a natural connection with service-learning and can enrich the experiences of students, faculty, and non-profit representatives …

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A

Interview Guide for Service-Learning Faculty with Information Literacy Session

* = key questions within each domain

Introduction

Tell me a bit about the course in which you are including a service-learning (SL) project this [or last] semester. Course name? Student level?

Describe the SL project your students took part in this [or last] semester.

Briefly describe any experiences you have had including SL in the same or any other course prior to this one.

Faculty Expectations/Experiences with Student Research in SL (Domain 1)

Think about SL projects you've had students complete for this or past courses. What sort of research did you ask them to do?

Describe the research assignment(s) you had students complete.

*How well did students' level of research skills meet your expectations as far as service-learning is concerned?

What ways beyond research did you encourage/require students to prepare for the project?

 Class discussion? Lecture? Readings? Reflections?

Faculty Awareness of IL Services (Domain 2)

Have you had a librarian do any instruction in one of your classes before (service-learning or not)?

[If yes] What did you think of that experience?

*[Prior to my involvement with your course/the SL Institute], what thoughts do [did] you have about library instruction for service-learning?

Faculty Expectations/Responses to IL Session (Domain 3)

*How would you describe the connection between library instruction and your students' success with SL projects?

Did the session contribute to your students meeting the course learning objectives for service-learning?

Are there other research-related components that could be included in the session to better meet the course objective?

What were [are] your expectations for librarians' instructional role in SL?

Faculty Perceptions of Student Engagement (Domain 4)

Think about the library instruction session with a librarian. How did you see students engaging with information sources during the session?

How did they show interest and involvement within the session? Example?

Did you require students to do more with the information we gathered during the session? For an assignment? Reflection?

How did you use the information we had gathered during the course of the project?

How did you see or hear students refer to information sources during the course of the project?

What are some skill areas or tasks related to research that you see still needing improvement for students?

*Tell me about any changes you noticed in students' apparent motivation or level of engagement with the SL project over the course of the semester. How invested were they in the project?

Do you think research had anything to do with that?

Closing

Are there any other topics you'd like to discuss or comments you'd like to make? Any questions for me?

Thank you again for participating. If you'd like to be notified of my research results, I'd be happy to let you know when I have results published.

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Service-Learning Faculty without Information Literacy Session

* = key questions within each domain

Introduction

Tell me a bit about the course in which you are including a service-learning project most recently. Semester? Course name? Student level?

Describe the SL project your students took part in this [or last] semester.

Briefly describe any experiences you have had including SL in the same or any other course prior to this one.

Faculty Awareness of IL Services (Domain 1)

Describe your experiences having a librarian work with any of your classes before (SL or not).

*What thoughts do you have about library instruction in relation to service-learning?

Faculty Expectations/Experiences with Student Research in SL (Domain 2)

Think about SL projects you've had students complete for this or past courses. What sort of research did you ask them to do?

Describe the research assignment(s) you had students complete.

*How well did students' level of research skills meet your expectations as far as service-learning is concerned?

What ways beyond research did you encourage/require students to prepare for the project? Class discussion? Lecture? Readings? Reflections?

Faculty Perceptions of Student Engagement (Domain 3)

[If you required research] Did you require students to do more with the information they found? For an assignment? Reflection?

How did you see or hear students use the information they'd researched during the project?

What are some skill areas or tasks related to research that you see still needing improvement for students?

*Tell me about any changes you noticed in students' apparent motivation or level of engagement with the SL project over the course of the semester. How invested were they in the project?

Do you think research had anything to do with that?

Closing

Are there any other topics you'd like to discuss or comments you'd like to make? Any questions for me?

Thank you again for participating. If you'd like to be notified of my research results, I'd be happy to let you know when I have results published.

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