



Teleconference 3

A Professional Toolkit: Skills for Advancement

Friday, March 26, 2004

Outline

First Half: The Big Picture

Part One:
Setting the Stage and Introductions
Linda Slusar

Part Two: Library workers;
Past, Present, and Future
David Dowell

Part Three:
Professional Organizations for Library Staff
Lorelle Swader

Part Four:
Discussion of the History and an Overview of COLT
Linda, Lorelle, and David
Break

Second Half: Focus on You

Part Five:
Memo to Library Workforce of the Future
Linda Slusar

Part Six:
Life-Long Learning
Sharon Comstock

Part Seven:
A Look toward the Future
Linda, David, Lorelle, and Sharon

Part Eight:
Questions
Pam, Linda, David, Lorelle, and Sharon

Speakers Biographies

Linda Slusar, cofounder of the Soaring to Excellence Teleconferences, is the coordinator of the Library Technical Assistants program at College of DuPage and a full-time professor in the program. In addition to course planning and development for the LTA Program, Ms. Slusar also provides advising for LTA students, and has expanded the college's course offerings to include internet courses, two-way video courses, and satellite teleconferences. Ms. Slusar was voted the winner of Library Mosaics "Supporter of Support Staff" for the year 2000, and is devoted to providing educational opportunities for library staff.

Dr. David R. Dowell is the Director of Learning Resources at Cuesta College in the San Luis Obispo County Community College District. Dr. Dowell was the chairman of the American Library Association Task Force to Revise Criteria Statement for Training Library/Media Technical Assistants from 1995-97. He is the author of numerous books and publications, including *Introduction to Libraries and Information* with Denise Fourie.

Lorelle Swader is the Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment Director (HRDR) at the American Library Association. She is also the Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT) Liaison Officer, and a Steering Committee member the 3rd Congress on Professional Education (COPE III).

Sharon L. Comstock received her MLS via the LEEP program at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She holds an M.A. with a specialization in children's literature from Northwestern University, and teaches a series of classes with an emphasis on the special needs of youth services library assistants at College of DuPage. Ms. Comstock is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science, focusing on learning technologies, inquiry teaching and learning, and networks.



Discussion Questions

From **Linda Slusar**

1. What would be the essential elements of your library portfolio?
2. Every portfolio should contain a “professional philosophy.”
What is your professional philosophy?
3. Have you ever had a mentor in the library profession? If you have, then tell how you got you mentor and how this person helped you in your career.
4. If you were chosen to mentor a new library worker, what would be your essential “duties?”
5. Information literacy is considered an essential 21st century skill.
Define information literacy. How does your formal training in the Library Technology program prepare you for teaching information literacy skills?
6. List the workplace skills that are required for your library job. Think carefully and list all skills. If you do not currently work in a library, list the skills that you feel will be required for your first job as a library technical assistant.

From **David Dowell**

1. Who is responsible for your tool kit?
2. Are you a “cosmopolitan” or a “local” and how does this influence your career development?
3. What is the difference between “staff development” and “continuing education?”
4. Where are you now on the Library Career Lattice?
Where would you like to be?
5. What tools do you need to function in your current role? Will those be sufficient to be productive next year?
6. If you aspire to a different part of the Library Career Lattice, what addition tools will you need?
7. What skills and abilities are employers seeking in addition to educational credentials and the mastery of specific technology hardware and software?
8. What is the difference between “accreditation” and “certification?”
9. What is ALA/APA and what does it have to do with career development?

From **Lorelle Swader**

1. Go to the American Library Association web site (<http://www.ala.org/>) and enter LSSIRT in the search box. Based on your findings, describe what LSSIRT is and what they do.
2. Go to the COPE web site.
 - a. Read the descriptions of the three COPE conferences, and describe the audiences for each of them.
 - b. What is unique about COPE III?
 - c. What are three of the main topics of COPE III?
3. Locate the current APA newsletter on the American Professional Association web site (<http://www.apa.org/>). Choose one of the featured articles and provide a summary and reaction to this article. Also explain why you chose this article.

From **Sharon Comstock**

Before the Teleconference

1. What limits—in your work or home place—do you perceive that prevent you from taking next steps in your own professional growth? In an ideal world, what would those “next steps” be? Take an honest inventory of those road blocks and assign a number from 1-5 (1 being least, 5 being most) challenging to overcome. A picture should emerge of your attitudes of internal/external limits and the effort necessary to overcome.
2. Why are you in libraries? What drew you to the library community in the first place? Why do you stay? Identify those factors of “passion” or positive intent.



3. Each library workplace is a culture; one that has its own “folklore” or stories. What stories do you have of your own workplaces? What themes do you and colleagues return to again and again at the reference desk, at lunch, over coffee, across desks, and via e-mail? These stories reveal, not only your workplace, but your roles in it. Note some of these “stories,” and prepare to share your insights into any themes that become apparent.
4. Reflect on your own communities of practice. To what organizations, formal or informal, do you belong? How do you collaborate within—and across—these communities?
After the teleconference
5. How might you begin to build your own CoP in your current work environment? What might be your initial steps?
6. What factors within your current environment enhance collaborative work, and what might your role be as facilitator, mentor, or student?

After the Teleconference

1. How might you begin to build your own CoP in your current work environment? What might be your initial steps?
2. What factors within your current environment enhance collaborative work, and what might your role be as facilitator, mentor, or student?

Selected Resources

From Linda Slusar

Minkel, Walter “**The Next Big Thing**” *School Library Journal* 49 no.5 (2003): 41.

This article discusses 21st century workplace skills. It provides some excellent web sites that describe projects to develop essential skills. It raises the question of where the library worker fits into this scheme.

Satterthwaite, Frank. **The Career Portfolio Workbook: Using the Newest Tool in Your Job hunting Arsenal to Impress Employers and Land a Great Job.** New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003

A useful book that provides examples of the types of materials to include in a successful portfolio.

Nelles, Rick. **Proof of Performance Portfolio.** Manassas Park, VA: Impact, 2001. This book takes you step by step through the process of creating your portfolio to be used in the job search. The portfolio will contain proof of your accomplishments. The importance of attitude is also explored.

Borchert, Carol Ann and Martin, Jana Futch. “**Developing a Mentor Program at the University of South Florida**” 50 no.2 (2002): 3-11. The program at the library school of University of South Florida is described in this article. Includes summary of the program, lessons learned and bibliography.

Harvard Mentoring Project. (2004) That Mentored You? <<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/wmy2004>>
This fascinating web site provides stories of mentors for well know people. Information about mentoring, thanking mentors and audio interviews are some of the highlights of this site.

From David Dowell

Green, Kenneth C., “Digital Dilemmas: Cosmopolitans, Content, and Productivity,” *EDUCAUSE Information Resources Library*. p. 35-44. <<http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ffpfp0104.pdf>>
Pay particular attention to Green’s summary of Alvin W. Gouldner’s characterization of “cosmopolitans” and “locals” which is found on p. 36-37.

American Library Association, “**Library and Information Studies Education and Human Resource Utilization Statement: A Statement of Policy.**” Adopted January 23, 2002.

<<http://www.ala.org/ala/hrdr/educprofdev/lepu.pdf>>

This policy statement which has stood the test of time for 35 years with little need for revision is a great model for differentiating the roles played by staff in libraries and the education level needed in each role. The “Library Career Lattice” is a powerful paradigm for career planning and library organization.



Fourie, Denise K. & David R. Dowell, **Libraries in the Information Age:**

An Introduction and Career Exploration. Libraries Unlimited, 2002.

This book is intended primarily as an overview and textbook for individuals entering or considering entry into the library industry. See particularly pages 4-12 for a discussion of issues related to the Library Career Lattice. In addition, see page 244 for a list other than education and specific technology skills and abilities that employers like to see in tool kits.

From **Lorelle Swader**

American Library Association (ALA) <<http://www.ala.org/>>

The American Library Association (ALA) is the oldest and largest and most influential library association in the world with over 64,000 members. Members are librarians, library support staff, trustees, publishers and other library advocates.

The American Library Association: Supporting Libraries, Supporting Library Support Staff

<<http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/membership/supportstaff.htm>>

Special ALA Membership Offer for Library Support Staff.

ALA Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) <<http://www.ala-apa.org>>

ALA-APA is a nonprofit professional organization established "to promote the mutual professional interests of librarians and other library workers."

ALA-APA Certification Task Force Certification of Library Technical Assistants

<<http://www.ala-apa.org/certflta.html>>

This site provides information on the movement towards creating certification for library technical assistants (LTAs) on behalf of the American Library Association and the Allied Professional Program.

COLT (Council on Library/Media Technicians): List of Library Technician Programs in the United States

<<http://colt.ucr.edu/ltpprograms.html>>

This list, which is indexed by states and updated regularly, includes certificate, associate, and bachelor degree programs. It was compiled from information in the American Library Directory, and various other sources, including user input. Many programs offer distance education options.

ALA Library Support Staff Interests Round Table (LSSIRT) <<http://www.ala.org/lssirt>> LSSIRT's membership is composed of proactive library personnel who are essential to the cultural, educational, and economic life of our nation's libraries. We represent academic, public, school, corporate and special libraries. We have an interest in and activity with other ALA groups and interrelate with all library personnel.

American Library Association's 3rd Congress on Professional Education: Focus on Library Support Staff (COPE III) <<http://www.ala.org/congress/>>

This web page provides links to information relating to ALA's historic meeting in May of 2003 that focused on library support staff. You can access the Implementation Report, the Steering Committee's Final Report and Recommendations, read the key documents, find out who attended the meeting, and more.

Library Worklife Newsletter <<http://www.ala-apa.org/newsletter/newsletter.html>>

Library Worklife: HR E-News for Today's Leaders is a publication of the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA). Library Worklife informs readers about issues - career advancement, certification, human resources practice, pay equity, recruitment, research, work/life balance that concern all library workers.

Accreditation Frequently Asked Questions <<http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/accredfaq.htm>>

ALA Office for HR Development and Recruitment (HRDR) <<http://www.ala.org/hrdr>>

HRDR communicates with libraries on issues relating to management and human resources and acts as an advocate for "best practices" in these areas.



"Criteria for Programs to Prepare Library Technical Assistants"

<http://www.ala.org/ala/hrdrbucket/3rdcongressonpro/criteriaprograms.htm>

This paper was presented to the American Library Association's Committee on Education by the committee's Task Force to Review the Criteria for Programs to Prepare Library Technical Assistants, headed by Dr. David Dowell, at the Midwinter 1998 meeting. It is a recommendation for standardizing college-level education for library technical assistants.

Library Certification: A Bibliography; Council on Library/Media Technicians

<http://colt.ucr.edu/bibcertification.html>

This bibliography was compiled by Rita Gibson, the Access Services Technician (Circulation Supervisor) at the State Law Library of Montana, Helena, Montana. Ms. Gibson and her colleague, Barbara Pepper-Rotness (of Montana State Library) created the Montana Library Paraprofessionals organization in 1997.

From Sharon Comstock

Bruce, Bertram and Jack Easley. **"Emerging Communities of Practice:**

Collaboration and Communication in Action Research," Educational Action Research, 8(2), 243-259.

<http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/~chip/pubs/easley/>

Hearne, Betsy (1999). **"Folkloristic approaches in library and information science,"** Library Trends 47 no3, 341-601.

Holley, Robert P. (2003) **"The ivory tower as preparation for the trenches: The relationship between library education and library practice,"** College & Research Libraries News 64 no3 172-5.

National Electronic Library for Health (2001). **"Communities of Practice,"** Specialist Library, Knowledge Management. http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/knowledge_management/km2/cop_toolkit.asp