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## Effective Mentoring

by

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## Abstract

*Effective Mentoring is essential to the growth and success of librarianship in all types of libraries. This paper considers the possibilities for fostering mentoring activities among early career librarians, mid-career transitional librarians and non-professional library workers.*

*First, the paper describes existing studies to illuminate the urgency of mentoring activities to address the diminishing number of librarians and changing librarianship in the workforce as well as to support ongoing staffing needs.*

*Second, it documents the academic library and professional organization's typical mentoring activities including its extensiveness and limits. The paper focuses on academic librarians in a university setting.*

*Third, this article describes one librarian's mentoring activities to support and encourage beginning librarians to advance their careers in library and information science to become active members of professional associations and to think about possible leadership roles*

*The paper concludes with a) the author describing how her own mentoring/mentee roles have influenced her professional direction and b) linking effective mentoring to library leadership. It demonstrates how the effective mentor will help the mentee navigate not only the maze of professional organizations and committees, but also to achieve a more global understanding of the platform of libraries without borders.*

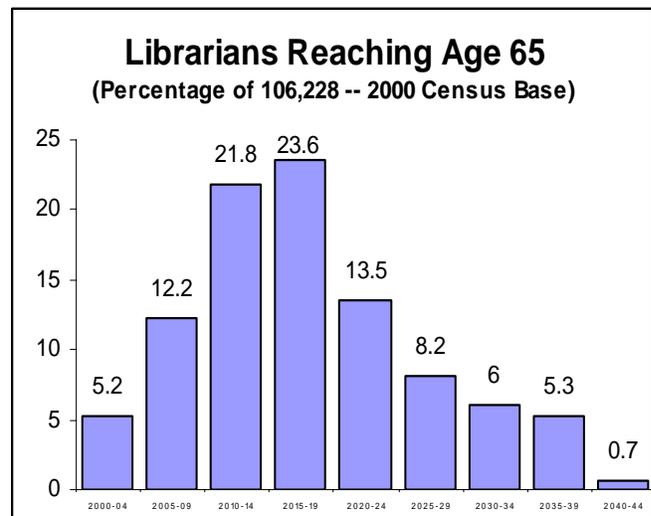
# Introduction

The evidence indicates that there is a strong need to build and retain a sound library workforce and a nimble library organization structure to deal with the ever changing library environment. The recognition that career development through mentoring is vital to librarians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is no longer debatable. Increasingly, research libraries which foster a culture of learning have started looking into mentoring as a professional development effort as well as a way to retain workers and deal with the massive retirement of librarians.

Effective mentoring is essential to the growth and success of librarianship. Mentoring is recognized as one of facilitating learning in the workplace, and is designed to make use of guided learning to develop the knowledge and skills required for high performance (Tovey, 1999, as cited in Matthews, 2003, p323). Fostering mentoring activities throughout the stages of a librarian's career stages and guiding and supporting career paths will be important for librarians and library organizations. The impact of effective mentoring for librarians at the department level, the institutional level, or through professional associations cannot be ignored because librarians need help to navigate uncharted waters.

The work of librarian was relatively stable for a long time until the Web tsunami. With the surge of electronic Internet information, the work librarians do has dramatically changed the balance of information resources. What is happening around the library world is clearly changing the library workforce in addition to changing how we access library resources, and what is available in the publishing and library world. Furthermore, librarians are, as a group, substantially older than those in comparable professions, and they are aging out at a much faster rate. Only 12 percent of librarians fall into the 25-34 year age range versus 25 percent in that range in comparable professions.<sup>1</sup>

According to a 2005 American Library Association study, the number of librarians retiring each year is steadily increasing. The projected number of retirement from 2015 to 2019 will reach a total of 23.6 percent when librarian retirement will peak. This trend starts in 2010 for a ten year period when 45 percent of today's librarians reach age 65. This massive retirement trend presents a challenge in any library organization including public, school, and research and academic libraries. There is an urgent need to recruit, retain, and replace librarians. So how do libraries deal with this organizational change?



(Source: Mary Jo Lynch, *et al*, 2005 Retirement & Recruitment)

<sup>1</sup> Library profession faces shortage of librarians: key facts and figures from the American Library Association 10/29/01

Wilder (2000), in his research on change in librarianship, makes comparisons by looking at traditional careers for young women, defined as nursing, elementary education, and librarianship. Using Census data from 1970 to 1990, he finds that the number of women under 30 choosing librarianship declined sharply by 9 percent in the 20-year period, while the overall growth of jobs in the profession rose 62 percent. He also notes shifting positions inside the traditional academic research library. The number of catalogers declined 63 percent between 1990 and 1998, while the number of functional specialists was up 54 percent in the same period. The functional specialist includes jobs such as systems librarians and technologists representing 61 percent of new hires.

The Colorado State Libraries Study (2003) based on Colorado statewide librarian interviews, reported that there is a considerable gap in perceptions and expectations between the new professional librarians and the existing library workforce. The study revealed that one out of five retiring librarians expects their job to be eliminated, down-graded, or to be combined with another one.

To replenish the diminishing library workforce, library organizations need to look into attracting a more diverse workforce including minority groups and women to replace the retiring library management, and to increase the retention of the competent mid-career library workforce. To meet these objectives, mentoring can enable and help library organizations to recruit, retain and revitalize the library workforce as well as to enable them to be engaged in a continuous learning process for professional development. Mentoring enables the protégé to be prepared by transferring relevant knowledge and also provides an enriching and supportive environment for the new entrant to the profession and the professional association. Munde (2000) points out that thoughtful and effective mentoring practices sponsored by library administrators can assist in meeting the transitional challenges as well as rejuvenating the professional library workforce.

Golian-Lui in her “Fostering Librarian Leadership Through Mentoring” concludes that mentoring is an essential part of the leadership journey (2003) because mentoring provides opportunities for significant personal, professional and leadership development. In a time of rapid change for the library and information science world due to the impact of technological innovation, mentoring will definitely play a sizable role as a guiding light.

# Mentoring Concepts

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Telemachus and Mentor By Pablo E. Fabisch

The word “mentor” originates from a reference to Mentor in Homer’s *Odyssey*. According to the story of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus had been away for many years on his journey. Therefore, his son, Telemachus, had been deprived of a father figure. So the goddess Athena disguised herself as Mentor and befriended Telemachus and provided him with a role model and encouragement. Thus, the term mentor came into the language as referring to a supporting role model that is copied and respected in many professions even today.

The mentor definition has a host of differing concepts and nuances, Ragins (1989) stated that there are common threads in most definitions in that (1) a mentor is usually a high ranking, influential, senior member of the organization with significant experience and knowledge, and (2) the individual is also willing to share experiences with younger employees (as cited in Mathews, 2003, p. 316)

Mentoring is defined and theorized in two categories: career, and psychosocial. Career mentoring describes specific mentor behavior supportive of a mentee’s career success. Psychosocial mentoring refers to the personal aspect of a relationship related to supporting a protégé’s professional identity and sense of confidence. A mentor has been defined as an individual with more experience and knowledge who is committed to providing upward career guidance and advice (Kram, 1985). Since the latter part of the 1980’s, the business and psychology literature has been full of mentoring benefits and positive outcomes.

Although a lot has been written and said about mentoring, it is still a rather mysterious concept for most of us. However, there are some clearly recognized benefits to mentoring. It has been actively used in business and management in conjunction with leadership, role modeling, precepting, coaching, and training. Mentoring can help improve the socialization of new library workers, improve performance, provide support, and complement other professional development activities (Gibb, 1999). Formal mentoring programs are an effective means of providing support during periods of sweeping change (McDonald 2003). When mentors listen, provide structure, express positive expectations, share themselves, and make the relationship special; mentees are likely to feel supported. Support is the most critical aspect because it lays the foundation for challenge and vision. (Zachary 2000). In fostering mentoring relationships, feedback is a powerful vehicle for learning and a critical mechanism. Different kinds of mentoring may be needed for support and giving and receiving feedback at different stages of a librarian’s career.

Benefits for the protégé include the opportunity from within a safe and non-threatening relationship to interact with and learn from someone with experience and contacts. Outcome

of this support which builds confidence and maintains motivation includes developing skills and knowledge, solving problems, determining how and where to find further information, exploring career options and learning coping strategies. Benefits for the mentor include personal satisfaction from helping someone else, a renewed commitment and enthusiasm, and an opportunity to stimulate thinking and develop new skills. Mentoring also contributes to the mentor's professional development and encouragement and motivation of others (Coombe, 1995; Moore, 1992, as cited in McDonald, 2003).

Putting it all together, mentoring contributes many organizational benefits. These benefits include increased employee retention, reduced turnover, faster new employee induction, and guidance to organizational expectations, and improved leadership. Many business organizations incorporate a formal mentoring program as part of leadership development and employee retention efforts. A mentoring relationship effectively facilitates organizational learning.

While there is no apparent shortage of benefits for the mentor and the protégé, the author finds a lack of studies from the organization's perspective. Gail Munde (2000), in her research on academic library mentoring, notes that academic libraries are operating mentoring program, but they are not involved in the practice and it is lacking within individual academic libraries. Organizational mentoring is defined as a program designed to achieve the organization's leadership goals and meet its existing and future workforce needs. For example, a formal mentoring program initiated by a library organization to recruit new librarians would be different from a mentoring program initiated informally to support librarian promotion and tenure processes.

While there is ample evidence and documentation on the positive side of mentoring, there are some negative aspects of mentoring reported by protégés including mentor-protégé mismatch, manipulative mentor behavior, and lack of mentor expertise (as cited in Eby, *et al*, 2004, p. 412). The three most common complaints about mentors are a perceived lack of commitment by the mentor, difficulties in communication between the mentor and the protégé, and the perception that the mentor had taken credit for some work or project of the mentee.

Mentoring is a special relationship within an organization. Roma Harris's (1993) article on mentoring pitfalls describes organizational mentoring concerns. Harris questioned that if mentoring is a significant mechanism for enhancing the careers of only some individuals within an organization, the culture, practices, and procedures of that organization may pose barriers that stand in the way of participation and opportunity for all its committed employees.

## Mentoring Roles in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Professional Associations.

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Any librarians in need of mentoring may need to look outside their organizations in order to obtain full mentoring support and to avoid possible obstacles related to authority and dependency in a boss/subordinate mentoring relationship. In addition, some library managers may be reluctant to engage in mentoring partnerships between staff in the belief that they may create suspicion or envy from others within the organization. Since the beginning of the decade, professional associations have begun to play an active role in the form of continuing professional education and professional development as a mentoring process for their members.

No one will argue about the fact that participation in professional associations will contribute positively to a librarian's career. Networking and learning opportunities in the professional organizations are ongoing and well-established for professional librarians. What role, then, does mentoring play in the area of CPD for professional associations? Mentoring is connected to theories and practices that are linked to the concept of lifelong learning and the learning society. Reflection on learning experience and on practice is regarded as an important element of the CPD process (Friedman and Phillips, 2002, p. 222, p. 273)

The qualities of continuing professional development as 'continuing education' are consistent with the philosophy of mentoring. These qualities are: 1 It implies a notion of lifelong learning as a means of keeping an individual up-to-date with new knowledge; it prevents obsolescence. 2 It includes updating a person's education (e.g. makes an individual's education comparable to that of a person receiving a like degree or like certificates at the present time). 3 It allows for diversification to a new area within a field (e.g. supervisory and management training). 4 It assumes that the individual carries the basic responsibility for his or her own development. 5 It involves education activities that are beyond those considered necessary for entrance into the field. (Stone, et al, 1974, as cited in Ritchie and Genoni, 1999, p. 218)

The mentor plays an influential role as a facilitator of networking in order for the protégé to become active in professional associations. For example, in today's Web environment, there is abundant continuing education information. However, vital information can be easily buried and lost without the facilitative role of a mentor who will understand its relevance and will synthesize and share it with the protégé. This information sharing can be found in the context of mentoring relationships naturally and spontaneously. In Ritchie's research (1999), she articulates the advantage of a mentoring program as immediately responsive to an individual member's needs and its availability to 'members only' can be designated as one of the advantages of professional association membership. Becoming active on committees and other organizational units of professional associations can be challenging and time consuming. It can easily frustrate experienced librarians, let alone new librarians. In addition, getting on a committee or becoming involved in some formal capacity can be

facilitated by mentors who are already participating in the activities of the professional association.

Mentoring roles provided in the professional associations in the United States differ from those of European countries and Australia. In the States, typically entry level mentoring programs for new members exist in the professional associations. For example,

- American Library Association New Mentors Roundtable Program (NMRT) (<http://www.ala.org/ala/nmrt/comm/mentoringcommittee.cfm>)
- Spectrum Scholar Mentor – Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)

Dr. E.J. Josey Spectrum Scholar Mentor Program

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlproftools/mentorprogram.cfm>

- Medical Library Association (MLA), <http://www.mlanet.org/mentor/>
- Special Library Association (SLA) - Upstate New York Chapter (<http://units.sla.org/chapter/cuny/mentoring.html>) and this program offering is on a volunteer basis
- Australia Library and Information Association (ALIA) has provided both individual and group mentoring programs <http://www.alia.org.au/members-only/groups/quorum/mentoring> for members (Ritchie and Genoni 1999, p. 223).

Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995) explain that in Britain, there is a far greater emphasis on mentoring being a form of support for learning where the learner has an opportunity to reflect on career goals, make choices, and pursue options rather than through possible sponsorship opportunities offered by a mentor. The sharing of knowledge is an important part of British mentoring relationships, but does not appear on the U.S. agenda, as in Kram's application of the core functions (as cited in Friedman and Philips, 2002, p. 271).

According to leadership consultant, Jim Freedman (2008, pers. Comm.), the U.S. culture tends to promote and idealize any independent action and activity performed by an individual, rather than through the help of any organization including professional organizations. On the contrary, European countries respect hierarchy and organizational knowledge. This statement coincides with the amount of English-language research on informal mentoring activities in library literature. A recent survey of U.S. academic and research libraries reported that only 26% of libraries had formal mentoring programs; In the United Kingdom library and information studies field, only 17% of mentoring initiatives were reported. (Ritchie and Genoni, 1999, p. 222)

Once a newcomer's induction and socialization to professional associations is completed, and then what can professional associations do in career advancement efforts for a librarian? Networking opportunities are abundant in professional meetings. Davidson and Middleton's (2006) study supports the conclusion drawn by Ritchie and Genoni (1999) that professional associations play a vital role in mentoring members through networking, continuing

professional development, and informal mentoring from a subject-oriented library associations. The primary benefits of participation in professional organizations were identified as networking opportunities and continuing education activities to keep up with the chosen subject field and learning new skills and best practices. (Davidson and Middleton, 2006, p. 211)

A formal mentoring initiative by the South Central Chapter of the Medical Library (2006) finds that mentoring by a professional association strengthens professional memberships and further concludes that professional association mentoring programs are a solution to the lack of formalized mentoring programs in librarian working organizations. (Kwasik, *et al.*, 2006: 24) The need of professional association mentoring at a certain career stage, mainly newly entering librarians, has been described well; however, Ritchie (1999) points out that “employee’s [mentoring] needs for support during transitional stages in their careers” was often neglected from an organizational viewpoint. In addition, she asserts that professional association mentoring was lacking and limited in spite of the fundamental purpose of the formal mentoring program as seeking to maintain, change the status quo, or the idea of facilitating a transition for the individuals being mentored has remained firm.

Colleen Beard (2002) asserted in a proposal to establish a mentoring program for the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives (ACMLA) that professional associations are beginning to notice the importance of mentoring “due to the changes in job tasks that are imposed on librarians” in the specialty of the Map/GIS librarian in particular, and to realize that mentoring is a means of developing professional growth, and ultimately sustaining an association.

# Mentoring for Academic Librarians

Mentoring is not a new model for professional development and personal growth of individuals within organizations (Level & Mach, 2004, p. 304). Mentoring is known as an invaluable tool for career development for library and information professionals. Mentoring programs offer an established, proven best practice to enhance organizational and individual learning (Goodyear, 2006, chap. 3). Mentoring can be used for a librarian's professional development or as a tool to enhance the organization's goals or library workforce development activities. In fact, it has been used in the business and management world effectively in the form of the "old boy's network." Traditional mentoring is when an experienced high ranking executive (mentor) actively supports a younger, less experienced employee in her or his career. Typically, mentoring activities start out as career functions, but develop into psycho-social functions. In higher education literature, mentoring has received attention and mentoring activities are reported to be more focused on career functions, rather than on psychosocial activities.

The mentoring focus for academic librarians is also closely tied to the librarian's career stage and professional development. The mentoring relationship plays a vital role in terms of career stage. There are 5 types of academic librarian mentoring programs according to career stages: new librarians in a probationary period, librarians for reappointment, librarians for promotion and tenure, librarians in the career retirement phase, and paraprofessionals and/or library and information science (LIS) students. The table below describes the relationship between career stage, professional development, and mentoring focus.

Career Stage	Professional Development	Mentoring Focus	Mentoring Type
New Librarian – Probationary Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library functional area</li> <li>Library administration &amp; procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library procedures</li> <li>University Procedures</li> <li>Guidance &amp; Support</li> </ul>	Formal or Peer Mentoring
Reappointment – Tenure track librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional service</li> <li>Continuing scholarship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher degrees</li> <li>Tenure File Preparation</li> <li>Professional Service Committee membership</li> </ul>	Peer Mentoring or Formal
Mid-Career-Promotion & Tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus Committee Works</li> <li>Professional service</li> <li>Continuing scholarship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library &amp; University policy &amp; procedures</li> <li>Union Governance Profile</li> <li>Leadership position in professional association</li> <li>Networking with professional associations</li> </ul>	Informal or Peer Mentoring
Career Retirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentoring activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentoring activities</li> </ul>	Formal Mentoring
Paraprofessional & LIS Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involvement in professional association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance &amp; support of library professional organizations</li> </ul>	Informal Mentoring

**Table 1: The relationship between career stage, professional development, and mentoring focus for academic librarians**

(Source: Matthews, P., 2003 Academic Mentoring. Table 3, p.326)

Research has shown that librarians with faculty status and within tenure systems most often have mentoring programs to support tenure programs. The common thread of academic librarian mentoring programs is to support the librarians for tenure and promotion processes.

Many articles in both the library and higher education literature affirm the popularity of mentoring as a way to navigate through the difficulties of the tenure process and retain strong faculty. (Level & Mach, 2004, p. 302) Most mentoring programs for academic librarians are reported to address the librarian's reappointment, tenure and promotion irrespective of the mentoring models. Current mentoring practice in academic libraries as reported in the literature indicate mentoring programs were predominantly initiated informally out of librarians' self-awareness and concerns for their careers or to provide orientation or to recruit for academic librarianship as in the formal mentoring programs at Louisiana State University Libraries and University of North Carolina -Chapel Hill. Mentoring for newly hired librarians at Colorado State University and University of Wisconsin Madison Libraries focused on orientation and induction for new librarians. These mentoring programs were presented in informal and formal settings to ease the socialization of the new librarians in their early career stages.

<b>Academic Library</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Mentoring Activities</b>	<b>Mentoring Type</b>
Auburn University Library	The Research Committee	1995	To support the untenured librarians	Informal Mentoring
Brown University Library	The Librarians Support Group	2004	To support librarian throughout career stages	Informal Mentoring
Colorado State University Libraries	Librarian Peer Mentoring	2001	Mentoring for newly hired librarians and untenured librarians	Formal Peer Mentoring
Louisiana State University Library	Formal Librarian Mentoring	1998	Tenure-track librarian support group	Formal
Mississippi State University	The Research Committee	2005	To support untenured librarians at MSU as institutional support	Informal Mentoring
Northwestern State University	The Professional Advancement Group	---	Untenured Librarian Support	Peer Mentoring
Oakland University Library	The Untenured Librarians Club (Un-TLC)	2001	To support untenured librarians	Informal
Queens College – City University of New York (CUNY)	New library faculty mentoring program & LIS Student Internship Mentoring	1994	New library faculty orientation which includes promotion and tenure processes	Formal
Texas A& M University	The Tenure-track Librarians Support Group	1991	Informal monthly meetings to support throughout the years of pursuing tenure	Informal
University of Delaware	Mentoring Program	1993	3-tier structure	Informal Mentoring to Formal Mentoring

University of Kansas	Mentoring Program for mid-IT managers	2002	To support for middle women managers <a href="http://www.InformationService.ku.edu/mentoring">http://www.InformationService.ku.edu/mentoring</a>	Formal Group Mentoring Formal Mentoring
	The Library Mentoring Committee	2002	<a href="http://www.lib.ku.edu/public/mentoring/">http://www.lib.ku.edu/public/mentoring/</a>	
University of North Carolina Libraries (UNC-Chapel Hill)	LIS graduate to UNC Librarians – CALA in 2000	2000	Recruitment tool for LIS graduate to academic librarianship	Formal Mentoring
University of Wisconsin – Madison Libraries	New Colleagues Mentoring Program	1998	Orientation program for new colleagues	Informal Mentoring
Oregon State University	The Library Faculty Association (LFA)	1998	Peer criticism of manuscripts and publications	Peer Mentoring

**Table 2: Selective Academic libraries with mentoring program**

Despite the popularity of mentoring and the increased use of mentoring as a developmental strategy (Lacey, 1999), mentoring initiatives in librarianship in a United Kingdom study showed only handful of libraries participated and most of these schemes were from academic and public library sectors. The challenges and barriers to academic librarian mentoring are also worth our attention to better understand the full picture of the mentoring environment. Classical barriers were identified as organizational obstacles: women not helping other women, the lack of senior women's understanding about mentoring and institutional resources, an old boy's network framework being hard to break into as a woman and/or a minority, and downsizing the number of tenure-track library faculty positions. At the departmental level, challenges included the lack of a library departmental culture of fostering mentorship and the non-existence of intentional reward systems.

## Mentoring Models

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The most commonly used mentoring systems in the academic library context are described here:

- **Formal (or Informal) mentoring within an organization**  
This is the traditional mentor/protégé relationship or informally formed mentoring relationship between senior and junior. An informal mentoring relationship is one that happens spontaneously based on mutual respect, rapport, and relationship. How the relationship is developed distinguishes the formal from informal.
- **Peer Mentoring**  
Peer to peer mentoring includes faculty-to-faculty, or library faculty to colleagues mentoring. This is a process where there is mutual involvement in encouraging and enhancing learning and development between two peers, where peers are people who perceive themselves as equals (Mcduougal & Beattie, 1997, as cited in McBain 1998)

- **Group Mentoring**  
Group mentoring offers the opportunity for a number of people to benefit from a single mentor. Group mentoring has an added synergistic effect through the interaction of the group members (As cited in McDonald, 2005; Keys & Jacobson 1995). It is a relatively new concept, and has been incompletely defined and poorly represented in the literature to date. In the broadest sense, the term "group mentoring" has been used to describe a function of professional associations in which the career development of members of that professional group is influenced by the group's exertion of "social norms and roles" (Dansky, 1996, p. 6).
- **Self-managed Mentoring.**  
This mentoring type is the most different from traditional one to one mentoring. In this mentoring relationship, a mentee is responsible for and proactive about his/her own professional development by seeking mentoring-type relationships as the need arises. A person has a number of mentors simultaneously, each collaborating to develop the particular strengths of a mentee. (Darling & Schartz, 1991, as cited in McDonald, 2003)
- **Mentoring within Professional Associations**  
Professional Development Mentoring occurs in the professional organization includes ALA, ACRL, IFLA, MLA, SLA and includes subject-focused mentoring (e.g., Healthcare, Law, Music or Geographic Information Systems (GIS), or a particular sector or in the industry.)

## Mentoring Stories

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My academic librarian mentoring experience started at Brown University Science Library as a mid-career change. I had spent years in the business world prior to deciding to return to higher education. Although I was an experienced librarian even before I had much experience in the Information Technology industry, I was, in a sense, a beginning librarian in the academic world. Academic librarianship in the 21st century had shifted fundamentally with the impact of library technology and the Web. Much had changed since I had practiced my academic librarianship 20 years earlier.

I met my mentor, Tovah Reis, Medical School Librarian, at Brown University Library. She was a busy, active person both on and off campus, and not always available for me in the beginning. Respecting her work style and reputation, our relationship developed very slowly and cautiously. Once she agreed to meet with me, she was willing to give me guidance and advice in the area of modern academic medical librarianship. I quickly adapted and was able to come up to speed not only in the academic library setting, but also gradually to medical librarianship through participation in local, regional and national professional association meetings and continuing educational programs. Most importantly, Tovah always introduced and connected me to medical faculty members, other librarians, and library leaders on campus. If a formal meeting was not possible, she would arrange an informal lunch meeting.

Her organizational skills, project management skills, her attitude towards librarianship, and leadership positions in several professional organizations impressed me. She was an active member of many, local, regional, national and international professional associations and served on several committees and boards. These included the IFLA, MLA, North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries (NAHSL), and the Association of Rhode Island Health Sciences Libraries (ARIHSL). As she was the President of ARIHSL, she invited me to several ARIHSL meetings. Being an active library leader within the Brown University community, she encouraged me to attend campus-sponsored conferences and meetings. For example, I participated in the Evidence-based Medicine Conference in April 2004. She included me in Brown University Library meetings on campus. She would inform me through email or in conversation about the meetings she attended and informed me about what was new in the professional associations.

Our mentoring activities were steadily and gradually formed. I would request to meet with her with a set of questions I had. Initially, the questions were more about how things got done at Brown University Library, information resources available at the Sciences Library and the organizational subunits and paraprofessionals and their duties and responsibilities. Gradually, our discussions developed more towards potentially interesting project opportunities and the Library Associations' roles and impact. Sometimes, I agonized about the topics to discuss prior to our meetings fearing that I would waste her time. Without fail, I felt that she was a good listener and had a great capacity to suggest and to guide me to points which I may have overlooked. I always had the sense that I was being enlightened at our meetings. As a result of our meetings, I initiated three major projects and participated in one project with her on "*Lifelong Learning (Information Resources) for Brown Medical Students.*"

Tovah was particularly diligent at updating medical faculty and students and writing in the Library newsletters and emails to her colleagues. She managed her time very effectively and was passionate about her work as a medical librarian. My current employment and success as Head of Acquisitions and Serials and my involvement in IFLA would not be possible without having had the benefits I received from Tovah's academic librarian mentoring activities.

In addition to being my mentor, she also provided mentoring activities and relationships to support and encourage paraprofessional staff, beginning librarians, and mid-career librarians to advance their careers. The following information was gathered from Tovah's mentees via survey questionnaires during the spring of 2006.

The mentoring groups were as follows:

- Group and Individual Mentoring for paraprofessionals who were attending library school:
- Peer Mentoring for new co-workers
- Informal Mentoring and Self-Managed Mentoring for Mid-career Librarians.

Different activities and interactions occurred among different mentees according to the respective protégé's needs and career stage. Not only did the mentoring activities and

relationships evolve in different forms and shapes, but also the subsequent activities lasted for differing durations from 6 months to 3 years and more. Some have evolved into friendship.

For Peer Mentoring, the following activities occurred:

- Invited mentee to share lunch and talk together
- Initiated contact with library department leaders for a peer librarian
- Shared the library/university cultural norms
- Answered any questions a new librarian had and listened to concerns and provided advice.

For Library Staff attending library school, the following Group Mentoring occurred:

- Monthly group meetings with mentor playing the role of a facilitator
- Made initial contact with library department leaders who it was thought important for mentees to get to know.
- Shared perspectives and experience in the mentor's field of librarianship
- Created a secure environment for asking questions regarding the Brown libraries and the profession of librarianship and the information science field

For professionals who were new to the library environment:

- For those who are still in library school, the mentor discussed professional association options
- Consulted for independent study projects
- Initiated contact with library department leaders and set up meetings with them

For Mid-career Librarians, the Mentor:

- Provided leadership for self-managed librarians in their mid-career
- Consulted and coordinated mentee's library projects
- Encouraged and invited them to professional association meetings and events and introduced them to colleagues
- Set up an orientation to the University Library's resources and contacts
- Provided opportunities to work in various library departments during transitional periods for mid-career professional librarians

## Summary

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Although formal mentoring programs have become an increasingly popular employee development tool in both business and education, research has shown that library organizations have not been actively involved in the practice, according to Gail Munde (2002). The Association of Research Library study revealed that only 26% of libraries have a formal mentoring program. Given the number of issues today's librarians are facing including rapid workforce change, librarian's shortage and the changing nature of required skill sets in our field, mentoring will play an essential role to ease the tension among which are the confidence of the individual, the perception of the work life of the librarian and the stagnant mid-career librarian's career. To counterbalance the lack of library organized formal mentoring programs, effective mentoring from professional associations would be welcomed and desirable.

On the other hand, mentoring has shifted its focus away from a traditional model of senior professionals advising junior professionals to librarians at any career stage identifying their own needs (Goodyear, 2006, p. 53) and reaching out to seek help using different mentoring types such as peer mentoring, group mentoring and self-directed mentoring and even having multiple mentors. Effective mentoring needs to be recognized and examined in the context of librarians' career stages. Librarians' career stages and professional development needs will influence mentoring focus as well as mentoring type. For example, in examining the relationship between career stages and mentoring types, during the reappointment stage of a librarian's career, mentoring activities become vital and most typically spontaneous and informal mentoring occurred naturally to support and encourage librarians. The impact of plateauing on librarianship at a particular career stage, namely mid-career stage needs to be addressed by library leadership and professional associations. Effective mentoring needs to focus not only to improve individual librarian's performance, but to enhance library organization's productivity.

Considering how little mentoring activity was reported as initiated by career retirement stage librarians in the library literature review, this is an area for future study. This wealth of knowledge and experience can be transferred and preserved by engaging in mentoring activities with younger and less experienced librarians. Satisfying and supportive professional librarian learning cycles would be opened up and perpetuated by involvement in mentoring relationships. In return, library organizations and professional associations could promote the professional growth of their members and employees. These mentors will facilitate their global understanding of libraries in their interactions with protégés and enlightenment could begin along the pathways illuminated by mentors in the library and information science field.

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