

# Academic Librarians as Teachers and Faculty Developers: Exploring the Potential of the “Teach the Teachers” Model of Information Literacy

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Proponents of the “teach the teachers” approach to information literacy, in which librarians concentrate on teaching the faculty to teach information literacy, have argued that it could potentially result in the increased integration of information literacy into the curriculum. However, more discussion of this model as a path forward for information literacy is needed. This essay explores the potential of the faculty-focused approach to information literacy through a critical analysis of the literature on librarians’ experiences as teachers and faculty developers. Through this exploration, the essay provides valuable insight into the ongoing conversations about the future of information literacy instruction.

## Introduction

Librarians have been expressing concerns over the one-shot model of information literacy instruction for years. In a recent editorial, Nicole Pagowsky outlined many of the concerns librarians have, referring to the one-shot as a “faux-innocuous activity” which has “no memory of where information literacy has been and no vision of where it is going.”<sup>1</sup> Prior to Pagowsky, Melissa Bowles-Terry and Carrie Donovan also made a strong case against the one-shot, stating that the model lacks scalability and sustainability and limits the potential of information literacy as a movement and of librarians as educators.<sup>2</sup> For one alternative approach, a number of librarians have proposed that we concentrate more of our time on faculty development, or teaching the faculty to teach and integrate information literacy.<sup>3</sup> Some have gone as far as to state that librarians should eliminate most direct instruction to students in favor of working with faculty.<sup>4</sup> The faculty-focused approach has been referred to as the “teach the teacher”<sup>5</sup> or “train the trainer”<sup>6</sup> model or as “faculty-led information literacy instruction.”<sup>7</sup>

In addition to specific arguments for the “teach the teachers” (TTT) approach, there have also been several recent articles calling for librarians to engage more with faculty development and increase collaboration with centers for teaching and learning.<sup>8</sup> These articles highlight the connections between the work of librarians and faculty developers and outline the potential benefits for librarians contributing to or leading faculty development initiatives, including raising the visibility of librarians as educators and campus leaders.

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There are many examples of librarians engaging in faculty development, which will be addressed later. However, in a previous literature review on information literacy-focused, library-led faculty development, it was noted that libraries tend to engage in faculty development in addition to, rather than in place of, student-focused instruction.<sup>9</sup> The faculty-focused model has not become the primary approach for academic libraries to support the integration of information literacy into the curriculum. Further, it was determined that “the wide-scale adoption of a dedicated TTT approach to information literacy, especially one in which librarians would give up most or all direct instruction with students, would require a significant change in perception and practice among many librarians and disciplinary faculty.”<sup>10</sup> Here, a critical analysis of what this change in perception and practice might look like is provided through the consideration of librarians’ experiences as teachers and faculty developers.<sup>11</sup> More specifically:

- What can research into librarians’ teacher identities and experiences as instructors tell us about how they might respond to a faculty-focused model of information literacy?
- What have been librarians’ experiences as faculty developers and what insights can this provide for understanding the potential of the TTT approach?
- What changes need to be made, at the personal, institutional, and professional levels, to support the adoption of the TTT model as a primary means of information literacy instruction?

By focusing on these questions, valuable perspective to the ongoing debates among librarians about the most appropriate, or effective models for teaching information literacy may arise.

The faculty-focused model is, of course, not the only alternative to the one-shot model that has been proposed. Librarians have employed, and continue to employ, other models of information literacy instruction, including various types of online tutorials or modules, embedded librarian programs, and credit courses, with varying degrees of success. While these other models are important to include in the broader discussions over the best path for teaching information literacy, considered here is the faculty-focused model primarily in comparison to the one-shot model, for two reasons. First, the one-shot continues to maintain a dominant place in many librarians’ efforts to teach information literacy. Secondly, the faculty-focused model seems the most directly in contrast to the one-shot model. Although the adoption of a primarily TTT approach would not automatically mean that librarians would be required to stop offering all one-shots, if the faculty-focused model were to be adopted by librarians to the extent that has been proposed by some supporters, it could potentially result in a significant reduction in one-shots.

## Definitions

To avoid confusion, the term *librarian* will refer to all those who work within a library, whether or not they have faculty status or the specific title of librarian. *Faculty* will refer to all of those outside of the library whose primary role is to teach or develop credit-bearing courses, including all ranks of tenure or non-tenure track faculty, instructors, lecturers, and graduate teaching assistants.

Faculty development can be defined as “activities and programs designed to improve instruction.”<sup>12</sup> The hope of faculty development is that student learning will increase if faculty adopt more effective teaching practices.<sup>13</sup> Other terms used for faculty development include academic development, educational development, and instructional development, with the

specific term varying by location, institutional context, and individual preference.<sup>14</sup> In this essay, *faculty development* will be used, as it seems to be the term most commonly used by librarians when referring to this kind of work.<sup>15</sup>

As Pagowsky notes, there is not always agreement among librarians as to what constitutes as one-shot. She describes a one-shot as “a standalone session, superficially (or not at all) connected to course content, that is tacked onto a class.”<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this essay, a one-shot will be considered a virtual or in-person session in which a librarian provides course- or assignment-related instruction on research- or library-related topic(s). The librarian is considered a guest lecturer who generally has limited (or no) input into the design, course, or assignment, and does not have significant or sustained contact with the students before or after the session. Here, online tutorials or modules that are incorporated into a course as a replacement for face-to-face contact with a librarian are considered a form of one-shot. A one-shot model of library instruction is one in which librarians primarily, although not exclusively, teach in this capacity.

In contrast, in a “teach the teachers” or “faculty-focused” model of information literacy instruction, librarians would spend a significant amount of time providing strategic and sustained faculty development related to information literacy, with the intent that faculty will effectively incorporate information literacy-related goals, learning outcomes, assignments, activities, and assessments into their courses and programs. In this model, information literacy instruction could become so integrated into the course “that it becomes transparent to students” because they are learning about information literacy concepts and skills at the same time they are learning course content.<sup>17</sup> While the focus of a specific library-led faculty development initiative could be on a limited group of instructors such as every instructor in a specific department, the overall aim of a faculty-focused information literacy program would be to create program-level and institutional-level change in the teaching of information literacy.

## Background

Librarians have identified a wide range of concerns about the one-shot approach, including scalability and sustainability, the questionable pedagogical effectiveness of one-shots, and the impact of one-shots on librarians’ professional standing and mental health.<sup>18</sup> Information literacy programs centered on the one-shot can only grow so far before the number of requests moves beyond the limited staffing in most libraries. And, by focusing on one-shots, time is lost that could be spent on campus-wide initiatives that support information literacy. There are also concerns about what students are learning when they do attend a one-shot. Raising this issue is not meant as an insult toward librarians who devote significant time into developing effective teaching practices. But, as Pagowsky notes, “the one-shot—even if there is more than one—makes it difficult to reach deeper learning, critical thinking, and inclusive pedagogy.”<sup>19</sup>

The difficulty of teaching higher level concepts within the one-shot context becomes even more significant when considering that one of the primary documents that many librarians use to guide their information literacy instruction programs, the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, emphasizes a conceptual model of information literacy, highlighting key concepts and ways of thinking that students need to understand in order to navigate the information ecosystem.<sup>20</sup> The challenge of using the *Framework* in the one-shot context was anticipated by the authors, who clearly stated in the appendix that the *Framework* was “not designed to be implemented in a single information literacy session in a student’s academic

career," but instead needs to "be developmentally and systematically integrated into the student's academic program at a variety of levels."<sup>21</sup> To accomplish this, changes would need to be made to integrate information literacy at the program and institutional level, rather than just the classroom level. The *Framework* authors highlight the need for faculty to develop curricula that supports students' "enhanced engagement with the core ideas about information and scholarship within their disciplines."<sup>22</sup> This, in turn, increases librarians' responsibility to collaborate and engage with faculty, instructional designers, and centers for teaching and learning in the development of such curricula. The one-shot model seems unsuited to support the types of changes that would need to take place to see the integration into the curriculum of information literacy as it is outlined in the *Framework*.

In addition to concerns about the pedagogical effectiveness of the one-shot and their relevance in relation to the *Framework for Information Literacy*, there are the concerns about how the one-shot format negatively impacts the perception of librarians, who may be seen as "reactive problem-solvers and guest lecturers" rather than educators,<sup>23</sup> and in worse case scenarios, little more than "baby-sitters."<sup>24</sup> The lack of agency, combined with the repetitive nature of many one-shot sessions, can have mental and emotional health impacts and lead to burnout.<sup>25</sup>

Proponents of the TTT model point out several potential benefits, including increased scalability and sustainability, expanded reach, and better integration of information literacy within the course and discipline.<sup>26</sup> Faculty represent a more reasonably-sized audience, and by teaching the faculty, librarians may expand their ability to reach students, as each faculty member who participates in faculty development likely teaches multiple courses or sections. In one example, librarians who trained teaching assistants to provide information literacy instruction were able to reach 78 sessions of a biology course over two semesters, although the liaison only taught or attended 14 of those sessions.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, students may be more inclined to take information literacy seriously, and to understand how it fits within the disciplinary context, if it is taught by their course instructor.<sup>28</sup> William Miller and Steven Bell point out that, by handing information literacy instruction over to a librarian, the faculty member could be creating the impression that information literacy is not part of the real content of the course.<sup>29</sup>

There is some evidence in support of the TTT approach. In the previous review on multiple examples of TTT initiatives, the author found indications that faculty teaching behaviors can change as a result of participating in such initiatives and that the TTT approach can have a positive impact on student learning.<sup>30</sup> In one example, librarians at Utah State University facilitated an assignment design workshop for faculty and found that participants made changes in their courses in several areas, including increased scaffolding and modeling of research skills.<sup>31</sup> It was also noted that the majority of their participants reported that their revisions resulted in positive changes in their courses, including increased student engagement.

Despite such positive signs, clear evidence that a faculty development approach would result in improved student information literacy is still needed. Even when positive changes were indicated in previous reviews, the findings were often limited because, in many cases, evidence of changes in faculty teaching practices were based on assessments conducted shortly after the end of the program. Additionally, most reports of these initiatives did not include any assessment of the impact on student learning. As a result, more research on and discussion of the TTT model is needed.

To further consider the faculty-focused approach as a path forward for information literacy, multiple strands of the library and information science (LIS) literature on librarians' experiences as teachers and faculty developers will be explored.

### **Librarians' Experiences as Teachers**

*What can research into librarians' teacher identities and experiences as instructors tell us about how they might respond to a faculty-focused model of information literacy?*

In their essay on the limitations of the one-shot, Bowles-Terry and Donovan refer to one-shots as "fiercely protected" by many librarians and acknowledge that one-shots "provide both personal reward and professional capital, so it is no small feat for librarians to rethink one-shots as their preferred instructional strategy."<sup>32</sup> Those who have argued in favor of a faculty-focused approach, especially if this were to involve significantly limiting or eliminating one-shots, have acknowledged that it can be an unsettling idea. It has been described as a "radical recommendation"<sup>33</sup> and as running "counter to what most librarians have internalized from our graduate studies and professional lives."<sup>34</sup> At the same time, however, articles such as those by Bowles-Terry and Donovan, and by Pagowsky, demonstrate that some librarians are more than ready to embrace alternative approaches to information literacy instruction.

In order to more fully explore how librarians might respond to a shift to a primarily faculty-focused approach to information literacy, multiple factors need to be considered, including librarians' complicated relationship with teaching, the role of information literacy in providing professional legitimacy, librarians' perceptions of their status and relationship with faculty, and concerns over emotional labor and burnout in relation to one-shot instruction.

### ***Librarians' Teaching Role and Teacher Identities***

Librarians have been providing instruction for decades, but teaching has not always been considered a primary part of the librarian role.<sup>35</sup> For example, one study found that only a handful of job advertisements posted in 1973 emphasized instruction, but by the early 2000s, advertisements indicated that instruction had become an accepted and expected role for many librarians.<sup>36</sup> The expectations for librarians to teach have continued to grow. The Association of College and Research Libraries' *Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians* from 2017 outlines multiple roles for librarians including advocate, coordinator, instructional designer, leader, lifelong learner, teacher, and teaching partner.<sup>37</sup> While an individual instruction librarian is not necessarily expected to play all of these roles, the descriptions highlight the wide-range of skills and knowledge that many teaching librarians are expected to possess.

As teaching responsibilities have grown, there has also been increasing investigation into librarians' experiences and identities as teachers.<sup>38</sup> There is some evidence to support the idea that many librarians have embraced a teaching role and consider teaching to be a significant component of their professional identity. For example, in a recent survey of 87 instruction librarians, primarily from research, four-year, or comprehensive colleges or universities in the United States, Andrea Baer found that 71.26 percent (62) of the respondents identified as teachers and, furthermore, "many participants expressed great enthusiasm about their teacher roles and clearly saw those roles as central aspects of their professional identities and of their everyday work."<sup>39</sup> For librarians such as these, any recommendation that librarians should consider significantly limiting the predominant approach through which librarians teach may not be especially welcome.<sup>40</sup> While librarians would still be supporting information literacy

if they concentrated their efforts on teaching faculty, this could be seen as less visible and not “real” teaching.

### *Information Literacy and Professional Legitimacy*

Librarians’ role in the development of information literacy and beliefs about the value of information literacy may also make many reluctant to adopt a more faculty-focused model. As Bowles-Terry and Donovan have stated, “a shift in thinking about information literacy will be a monumental undertaking due to the simple fact that the very people who have worked so hard to create acceptance of information literacy instruction must be those who lead the change in its fundamental delivery format.”<sup>41</sup>

Librarians have played the primary role in developing the concept of information literacy.<sup>42</sup> Lisa O’Connor has commented on information literacy’s role in providing professional legitimacy for librarians, describing how information literacy developed at the time in which libraries’ traditional role as access provider was being challenged by educational reform and technological developments.<sup>43</sup> O’Connor argues that there is evidence to support the claim that “regardless of what else IL might achieve, it was in part a professional response and an attempt to rearticulate and legitimate librarians’ claim to an educational jurisdiction at a time their traditional access-oriented jurisdiction was threatened.”<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, in teaching information literacy, we can argue that we are serving a higher purpose. Librarians have frequently described information literacy as vital, and not just to students’ academic success, but to the functioning of an effective democratic society.<sup>45</sup> Susanna Cowan, in her essay “Information Literacy: The Battle We Won That We Lost,” outlines the lofty way in which we have presented information literacy and our role in supporting it as follows: “librarians advocating information literacy are good citizens (devoted) whose calling is the democratization of information (populism)—and it is *through us* (librarians) and our ability to filter access (winnow, sift) that truth will be found. A high calling indeed!”<sup>46</sup> The descriptions of information literacy outlined in the guiding documents developed by the American Library Association and the Association of College and Research Libraries also provide evidence of the status that we have granted information literacy.

In making the point that information literacy has served as a means of professional legitimacy for librarians as educators, the intention is not to imply that librarians do not truly believe in the value of information literacy. However, because information literacy is now so closely associated with the educational mission of the academic library and is also endowed with such significant attributes, it is less likely that many librarians would be willing to let go of information literacy, as Cowan argues that they should,<sup>47</sup> let alone give up their role as the primary teachers of information literacy to concentrate on faculty development. Although librarians recognize the value of information literacy, they also recognize that it has not always been viewed in the same way, especially by those outside of the library.<sup>48</sup> In *Meeting the Challenge of Teaching Information Literacy*, Michelle Reale describes how, from the beginning, information literacy has been difficult to define and “difficult, at best, to articulate to others, particularly those with whom we aimed to work with.”<sup>49</sup> The struggles that librarians have had in persuading faculty to pay attention to information literacy may create fear about what might happen if we were to try to make faculty the primary instructors of information literacy.

With this background, it is no wonder that the thought of trying to hand over the teaching of information literacy to faculty, even under the librarians’ guidance, will likely not sit

well with many librarians. Librarians' personal attachment to teaching, the role of teaching as part of our professional identity, the connection between librarians and information literacy, including the way in which information literacy has elevated their role as educators, and their concerns over the future of information literacy if handed over to faculty, are all legitimate reasons why librarians may hesitate to fully embrace a primarily faculty-focused approach to information literacy. Librarians, who have struggled for years to be accepted as real teachers, could feel that adopting the "teach the teachers" model might undermine all of the efforts they have put into developing effective teaching practices and building their student-centered information literacy programs.

### *Ambivalence, Lack of Preparation, Imposter Syndrome and Deference*

At the same time, however, it must be noted that the librarian teaching role has never had universal acceptance, and there is clear evidence that some librarians have a much more ambivalent relationship to teaching.<sup>50</sup> Summarizing the findings of several previous studies, Heidi Julien and Jen Pecoskie state that this earlier research indicates that "some librarians remain unconvinced of the value of information literacy instruction, some feel unprepared for instructional roles, and some express hostility towards the instructional expectations they feel towards the students they teach and towards the teaching faculty on campuses."<sup>51</sup> And although Baer's recent study found support for the idea that many librarians are enthusiastic about teaching, she also found that nearly 15 percent of the respondents indicated that they did not consider themselves to be teachers, while another nearly 14 percent were ambivalent about the teaching role.<sup>52</sup>

Librarians have frequently expressed concerns about their teaching abilities. Laura Saunders, for example, describes a "persistent lack of confidence shared by many librarians who take on instructional roles."<sup>53</sup> There is a significant thread within the literature that points to the disconnect between the preparation that librarians receive in their LIS programs and the expectations for teaching that many librarians encounter.<sup>54</sup> While recent studies have found that most LIS programs do offer at least one class related to instruction, it still appears that many librarians are entering the profession with minimal teaching-related training.<sup>55</sup> There are also concerns about what students are being taught in LIS instruction courses. In a study comparing course descriptions with the *Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians*, Sandra Valenti and Brady Lund found that although the "instructional designer" and "teacher" role were both fairly well aligned with the course descriptions, several of the roles, including "leader" and "advocate" were much less prevalent and that, overall, many of the course descriptions included "outdated concepts."<sup>56</sup>

The lack of preparation that LIS students receive may contribute to the teaching anxiety and imposter syndrome (or phenomenon) that has been highlighted in a few studies and essays.<sup>57</sup> In one recent study, for example, Kacy Lundstrom, Britt Fagerheim, and Stephen Van Geem found that 64.9 percent of 925 librarians indicated that they experienced teaching anxiety and that those who had no coursework in instruction or information literacy were more likely to experience anxiety.<sup>58</sup> If librarians are not getting preparation in instruction or pedagogy, and may experience anxiety or imposter syndrome related to their role in teaching students, it seems likely that teaching the faculty would represent an even bigger hurdle. Bowles-Terry and Donovan point out that, even when librarians may feel confident in their ability to teach undergraduates, there is no guarantee that this confidence would transfer into

activities such as instructional consultation or assignment design.<sup>59</sup> As activities such as these would be an important aspect of the TTT approach to information literacy, this represents a significant concern about the potential of this approach.

This contention that some librarians might be anxious or uncomfortable providing instruction or teaching-related consultations to a faculty audience is further supported by research into librarians' deference behavior toward faculty. In a study of librarians' teaching experiences and relationships with faculty, Heidi Julien and Jen Pecoskie found evidence of deference behavior throughout the participants' comments, such as when participants described being "gifted" with time by faculty or were careful to show respect for the expertise of the faculty member.<sup>60</sup> In another study, Lyda McCartin and Raquel Wright-Mair surveyed 139 teaching-focused academic librarians in the United States and found that about 35 percent indicated "high deference" behavior.<sup>61</sup> While they don't specifically use the term deference, in their 2013 article, "Not at Your Service: Building Genuine Faculty Librarian Partnerships," Yvonne Nalani Meulemans and Allison Carr argue "that librarians must cease being at the service of faculty."<sup>62</sup> In making such an argument, the authors provide evidence in support of the existence of such behavior among librarians.

Closely related, librarians have also raised significant concern about how they are treated by faculty and whether or not they are seen as real teachers. In the study by Julien and Pecoskie, librarians expressed feelings of being disrespected or exploited by faculty.<sup>63</sup> Reale describes the frustrations that librarians experience when it appears that faculty do not understand or value what they do, and how this, in turn, impacts the way that they think about themselves, asking: "So when we are not seen as equals, when we are seen as mere service providers instead of teachers, what happens to the quality of our work, not to mention our sense of what we can do, what we are doing, and what we hope to do in the future?"<sup>64</sup> How they are treated by faculty can thus contribute to a negative self-perception among librarians of their worth and abilities. Julien and Pecoskie, for example, suggest that the feelings of disrespect reported in their study appeared to be supported, at least in part, by "librarians' self-positioning as defeated, passive, dependent, and subordinate to teaching faculty."<sup>65</sup>

The combination of librarians' lack of preparation for teaching, deference behavior, and feelings of being disrespected by faculty are significant reasons why implementing a faculty-focused approach to information literacy could be challenging. Librarians may feel inadequate for the task of teaching the faculty, or fear that their efforts to do so will be dismissed just like their efforts to teach students so often seem to be. The TTT approach cannot work if librarians feel they are not capable of teaching and collaborating with faculty as fellow educators, rather than as service providers.

### ***Emotional Labor and Burnout***

Another factor that must be considered when thinking about the potential of the faculty-focused approach is the impact that teaching in the one-shot format may have on librarians' mental and emotional health. As noted by Pagowsky, "instruction programs run heavily on service through emotional labor and care work—which tend to be invisible."<sup>66</sup> Emotional labor is the awareness of the need to manage or regulate emotions in order to be effective at a job, and high levels of emotional labor have been associated with emotional exhaustion and burnout.<sup>67</sup> Librarianship has been described as a profession that includes a significant amount of emotional labor.<sup>68</sup>



In their study of the emotional labor involved in library instruction, Heidi Julien and Shelagh Genuis highlight some of the negative emotions associated with instruction.<sup>69</sup> While acknowledging that many of their respondents expressed positive emotions related to their instructional role, they also found that “other participants were not so enthusiastic; frustration, disappointment, and other negative emotions were reported by many.”<sup>70</sup> Some participants expressed “emotional dissonance” related to their instructional work, indicating for example, that they had to hide their feelings in order to maintain appearances.<sup>71</sup>

As mentioned, high levels of emotional labor have been associated with dissatisfaction and burnout. Concerns over instruction librarian burnout are not new. For example, in 1993 Karen Becker considered the nature of bibliographic instruction (BI) in relation to research on the causes of burnout and concluded that there was a strong potential for burnout among instruction librarians.<sup>72</sup> Although information literacy has generally replaced the term bibliographic instruction, the burnout concerns highlighted by Becker have not disappeared.<sup>73</sup> In reality, they may have increased as librarians’ teaching responsibilities have increased and the rhetoric around information literacy has expanded. The contrast between the high expectations that we have for information literacy, and the reality of teaching information literacy in the one-shot format may contribute to an increased potential for burnout. Pagowsky, for example, states plainly that “one-shots are transactional and keep us in cycles of ineffectiveness. They cause burnout.”<sup>74</sup> David Brennan and Elizabeth Davidson point out that the expansion of instruction responsibilities usually comes without an increase in resources or a decrease in other tasks, which represents a “certain recipe for eventual burnout.”<sup>75</sup>

### *Summary*

What does this mean for the potential of the TTT approach as the path forward for information literacy instruction? Based on this review, if the TTT model were to become the primary approach to information literacy, some librarians would likely react with anxiety, dismay, or even hostility. Many librarians experience genuine satisfaction in providing instruction to students and have embraced teaching as part of their professional identities. They have a strong belief in the need for information literacy and, as a result, real concern that if they attempted to place primary responsibility for teaching information literacy into the hands of faculty, something of great value may be lost. For reasons such as these, there would likely be some pushback against any model in which librarians remove themselves from the classroom to concentrate primarily on faculty development.

It is also clear, however, that many librarians have a complex relationship with teaching, and that not all librarians have embraced the teaching role, nor do all librarians experience satisfaction in teaching one-shots. While they may have a great belief in the value of information literacy, for many librarians, teaching in the one-shot format has become a source of frustration. The concerns that have been expressed about the one-shot model, emotional labor, and burnout indicate that at least a significant component of the profession is ready to consider an alternative approach.

At the same time, however, librarians who feel unprepared for the teaching role with students may find the transition to faculty development work a big leap. The evidence for deference behavior among librarians toward faculty demonstrates that some librarians would be uncomfortable when tasked with teaching faculty. And many librarians would likely also

have significant concerns that their efforts to teach faculty would be dismissed by a group that has so often appeared to have little respect for librarians as educators.

Thus, considering librarians' experiences with teaching provides mixed indications about the prospects for the wide-scale adoption of a primarily TTT approach to information literacy. While there are certainly reasons why many librarians may be ready to abandon the one-shot, there are also reasons why some librarians might be reluctant to adopt a more faculty-focused approach as the primary means of teaching information literacy. Examining what we can learn from librarians' experiences as faculty developers may provide further insight.

### **Librarians' Experiences as Faculty Developers**

*What have been librarians' experiences as faculty developers and what insights can this provide for understanding the potential of the TTT approach to information literacy?*

Librarians have been involved in efforts to support faculty development, in various forms, for decades.<sup>76</sup> Librarians have developed faculty-focused workshops and workshop series,<sup>77</sup> created online courses or modules,<sup>78</sup> led or participated in faculty communities of practice or faculty learning communities,<sup>79</sup> and led or engaged in course or assignment redesign programs.<sup>80</sup> Often, but not always, these efforts are focused on supporting instructors' ability to teach information literacy.<sup>81</sup> What can librarians' experiences with this work tell us about the potential of the faculty-focused approach to information literacy?

### *Librarians as Faculty Developers*

There has not been a significant amount of research into librarians' experiences as faculty developers. The focus of articles describing library-led faculty development programs has typically been more on the implementation process or on the experience of the faculty participants, not the librarians.<sup>82</sup>

There are a couple of studies focused on librarians who participated in Purdue University's IMPACT program, in which librarians joined teams of course instructors and instructional designers to redesign courses with a student-centered focus.<sup>83</sup> In one of these studies, researchers highlight four categories of experiences for the librarians: Connector (the librarian connected the instructor with other experts in areas such as educational technology), Facilitator (the librarian helped the instructor through the course design process), Colleague (the librarian engaged with the instructor as a fellow educator), and Developer (the librarian supported the development of the instructor as a faculty member).<sup>84</sup> Overall, the findings of this study indicated that librarians can be effective in faculty developer roles, and that this need not center only on librarians' expertise related to information literacy. The second study used an action research methodology to outline several steps that librarians in the IMPACT program could take to improve their participation.<sup>85</sup> These included developing knowledge in areas such as the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), framing information literacy in such a way that it would be practical for faculty, and connecting information literacy to other learning theories.

A broader survey of librarians' experiences leading or contributing to faculty development initiatives was recently conducted by Karla Fribley, Jason Vance, and Justin Gardner.<sup>86</sup> They surveyed more than 150 librarians about their experiences engaging in faculty development work. They found that respondents generally expressed positive opinions about their abilities, agreeing that librarians have the knowledge and expertise needed to contribute to

faculty development and that librarians should take leadership roles in faculty development initiatives. Respondents also highlighted perceived barriers for librarians to participate in this work, including a lack of recognition among faculty of librarians as real teachers, as well as lack of time. Overall, the authors find that librarians are well-positioned to engage in meaningful faculty development work.<sup>87</sup> They also suggest that some of the barriers that librarians perceive related to faculty development might be “self-imposed” and indicate that a shift in mindset might be needed for some librarians to embrace this new role.<sup>88</sup>

Additional insight into librarians’ experiences and abilities as faculty developers can be gleaned from case studies and reflective essays in which librarians explore faculty development and discuss their work in this area. Rachel Fundator and Clarence Maybee reviewed the faculty development literature to identify the key responsibilities and activities of developers, highlighting the ways in which librarians can use these insights to move into faculty development.<sup>89</sup> They argue that librarians are well-positioned to take on a developer role. Misa Mi described the development and facilitation of a faculty learning community and the many benefits she gained from the experience.<sup>90</sup> Leading the faculty learning community helped her to “reinvent and grow herself as a faculty member by means of developing others.”<sup>91</sup> Katelyn Handler and Lauren Hays also expressed the personal enjoyment they found in leading faculty communities of practice and highlighted the benefits they derived from their experiences, including the opportunity to move beyond the service provider role and the chance to explore new areas of interest.<sup>92</sup> In a recent article, Melissa Bowles-Terry and Karen Sobel reflect on their experiences as librarians who have moved into faculty development leadership roles. They highlight the overlap between the two roles and indicate that “faculty development is one way for librarians to be in a visible role, and to facilitate the integration of information literacy and critical thinking into the curriculum.”<sup>93</sup>

Examples such as these provide evidence that librarians can effectively engage as faculty developers. However, it must be noted that the sources above appear to focus primarily on librarians who voluntarily took on faculty development work, and as a result, would likely already be favorably disposed toward it. It is less clear whether librarians would have the same response if they were required to move into faculty development, especially if this work were to limit their existing role of providing instruction to students.

This point is supported by the evidence that some librarians may be uncertain about the faculty developer role more generally. In one small study, Shannon Fay Johnson and Ludwika Goodson found that, when asked to define the role of a faculty developer, many of the librarians in their study “indicated a high level of confusion about the role of faculty developer or instructional designer with several respondents indicating that they could not answer the question.”<sup>94</sup> Although this was only one study, it provides support for the idea that some librarians would act with uncertainty if asked to take on more of a faculty development role.

### **Summary**

How does this evidence contribute to our understanding of the potential of the faculty-focused approach to information literacy? It’s been shown here that librarians are clearly capable of being effective faculty developers and that some librarians may find significant satisfaction from leading or contributing to faculty development initiatives. Engaging in faculty development work has allowed librarians to expand their own knowledge and move beyond the confines of the one-shot to become fellow educators and campus leaders. The numerous examples of

library-led faculty development initiatives provide support for the idea that many librarians do already see value in using faculty development to support information literacy, even if the TTT model has not been adopted as the primary approach in most cases.

On the other hand, there is also evidence that some librarians may not be familiar with faculty development or may not recognize it as a potential path for librarians. The recent calls for librarians to engage in faculty development could be an indication that this role is one that has not yet gained significant traction among librarians. Librarians who are unfamiliar with faculty development in general, or who are not certain about the effectiveness of faculty development programs, would likely be opposed to a shift to a faculty-development approach to information literacy. And, since there is still limited research into the experiences of librarians as faculty developers, especially in the long-term, it is also not certain whether this path would allow librarians to avoid some of the problems associated with the one-shot, such as burnout.

Overall, then, while there is support for librarians engaging in faculty development, and indications that librarians can perform this role effectively, there are still impediments that would seem to make the wide-scale adoption of the TTT model as the primary approach to information literacy challenging at this time. In order to make a profession-wide shift to a faculty-focused approach more feasible, what would need to happen?

### ***Moving Forward with Faculty-Focused Information Literacy***

*What changes need to be made, at the personal, institutional, and professional levels, to support the adoption of the TTT model as a primary means of information literacy instruction?*

For the faculty-focused model to become a primary approach used in academic libraries, changes would be needed in several areas, including the preparation of librarians as teachers and pedagogy experts, the organizational structure in academic libraries, and librarians' perceptions of their role and status.

As noted, there is already significant concern within the profession about the preparation, or lack thereof, that librarians receive for their teaching roles. This gap would need to be addressed for the faculty-focused model to be more widely adopted. If librarians are not sure of their ability to teach students, asking librarians to teach faculty would likely be an even greater challenge, especially given what is known about librarians' deference behavior toward faculty. Even when librarians do receive instruction related to teaching, research indicates that this is often limited and centered around preparation for one-shots.<sup>95</sup> As others have pointed out, to effectively engage as developers, librarians would need more instruction on topics such as pedagogy, learning theory, instructional design and faculty development in general.<sup>96</sup> It would not be enough for librarians to teach faculty what information literacy is. Instead, they would need to be able to connect information literacy with other pedagogical strategies and provide practical guidance to show faculty how they can integrate information literacy into their course design process and teaching practices.<sup>97</sup>

In addition to increased instruction in pedagogy, librarians would also need support to develop into campus-wide advocates and leaders related to information literacy. However, in their study of LIS instruction courses in comparison to the *Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians*, Valenti and Lund found that the roles of "leader" and "advocate" were less represented than other roles.<sup>98</sup> This is another area that would need to be addressed if the TTT model were to be adopted.

Beyond the changes that would need to be made in LIS programs, librarians would also need ongoing support and training related to faculty development. Currently, the one-shot is the focus of a significant amount of the literature supporting librarians' instruction practices. Books such as *The One-Shot Library Instruction Survival Guide*, *The Fortuitous Teacher: A Guide to Successful One-Shot Library Instruction*, and *Creating the One-Shot Library Workshop: A Step-By-Step Guide*, as well as numerous articles, focus on supporting librarians' efforts to teach one-shots.<sup>99</sup> In place of these types of works, librarians would need comprehensive guides to the development and implementation of faculty development programs in academic libraries.

The faculty development approach would also likely require a revision in the organizational structure in many academic libraries. There is significant variation in how library instruction programs are organized. A recent publication, *Hidden Architectures of Information Literacy Programs: Structures, Practices, and Contexts*, highlights several different models, including a team-teaching model, in which instruction is provided by a department or team dedicated to teaching, a subject liaison model, in which instruction is distributed across subject liaisons, and a combined model.<sup>100</sup> No matter the specific organizational structure, however, most academic libraries have programs or departments, or at least a few individuals, who devote a significant amount of their time and effort to providing information literacy instruction directly to students. While a faculty-focused model would not necessarily mean that all student-focused instruction would need to completely halt, there would need to be dedicated space within these organizations for librarians who have specialized knowledge in faculty development. Some currently existing positions devoted to student-facing instruction might need to transition into faculty development or into other roles within the library.

Librarians focused on faculty development would need organizational support. Lack of time has been noted as one of the perceived barriers preventing librarians from contributing to faculty development.<sup>101</sup> In addition, Fribley, Vance, and Gardner's research suggest that librarians may be more willing to engage with faculty development when faculty development goals are clearly included as part of the library's mission.<sup>102</sup> For the faculty-focused approach to be successful, libraries would need to make faculty development one of their stated priorities and give librarians the time needed to implement or engage with development initiatives.

To implement a primarily TTT approach, librarians would likely also need to collaborate more extensively with their campus faculty development centers, or centers for teaching and learning (CTLs). The need for librarians to engage more with these centers has already been acknowledged by several authors.<sup>103</sup> While Johnson and Goodson's research highlight some of the challenges that the relationship between librarians and faculty developers may entail, including misunderstandings, uncertainty about each other's roles, and the potential for conflict over territory, there is also evidence that faculty developers would welcome increased collaboration with librarians.<sup>104</sup> Although it was a limited study, Johnson and Goodson found that most of the faculty developers had collaborated with the library as part of their work and tended to rate the value of these collaborations higher than librarians did (although it is unclear why librarians tended to see less value in these collaborations). In another study, Sharon Mader and Craig Gibson surveyed 92 CTL directors regarding their perceptions of libraries/librarians, and found that the significant majority of respondents viewed librarians as fellow educators and felt that it was beneficial for librarians to be involved in center activities.<sup>105</sup> Studies such as these demonstrate that increased collaboration between librarians and

faculty developers in support of a faculty-focused approach to information literacy is possible, but that more efforts to build these relationships would likely be needed.

Perhaps most importantly, for the TTT approach to be successful, there would need to be a change in how librarians think about themselves and their role as educators. In order for a faculty development approach to information literacy to be viable, librarians need to be confident in their ability not just to teach, but to teach faculty or to provide teaching-related consultations. While increases in coursework and training related to pedagogy might help to overcome some of these concerns, there would still be the ongoing challenge that many librarians struggle to see themselves as equal to faculty. Even when librarians think of themselves as teachers, or have faculty status themselves, this concern can still exist. For example, in one study of librarian teacher identities, researchers found that 83.3 percent of their respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they considered themselves to be teachers, but that only 56.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they were teachers in the same way as faculty who teach outside of the library.<sup>106</sup> And in their study of librarians' experiences of faculty development, Fribley, Vance, and Gardner noted that librarians' fears about not being accepted in a faculty development role did not appear to be impacted by faculty status.<sup>107</sup> Instead, the concern was shared by both non-faculty and faculty librarians. For the faculty development approach to be successful, librarians would need to find a way to overcome their tendency to defer to or think of themselves as being less than faculty.

To support this shift, more research into librarians' experiences as faculty developers is needed, especially considering the factors that have allowed some librarians to successfully adopt a faculty developer persona. In addition, more evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of librarian-led faculty development is needed to help convince librarians of the viability of this approach. Collecting this evidence would, of course, require organizational and institutional changes that would encourage more librarians to develop and assess faculty development initiatives. Also, while there may not yet be significant evidence to show that the faculty-focused model would be effective in improving students' information literacy, an examination of the faculty development literature provides indications of the effectiveness of faculty development in general. For example, in *Faculty Development and Student Learning: Assessing the Connections*, the authors discuss the results of a multi-year, mixed-method study across two institutions which found that faculty development does result in changes to faculty teaching practices and supports increased student learning.<sup>108</sup> Increased librarian engagement with the literature from the field of faculty development may provide additional support in favor of a faculty-focused model.<sup>109</sup>

## Conclusion

This essay intended to provide a critical analysis of the potential of the TTT model of information literacy through an examination of librarians' experiences as teachers and faculty developers. It has demonstrated that librarians are capable of acting effectively as faculty developers and that some librarians would clearly find professional satisfaction in this role. Moreover, essays such as those by Bowles-Terry and Donovan, and Pagowsky, indicate that some librarians are ready to move beyond the one-shot approach and consider an alternative pathway. Taken together, this points to the viability of the faculty-focused model as a future path for information literacy. Many librarians already have some experience developing and implementing faculty-development initiatives focused on information literacy, which provide a foundation that other librarians interested in the approach can build on.

It also seems clear that the wide-scale implementation of the faculty-focused approach as the primary means of supporting information literacy would likely encounter significant roadblocks at this time, especially if it would mean that one-shot instruction would be reduced or eliminated. Many librarians would be understandably reluctant to abandon an approach that has brought them professional satisfaction in favor of taking on a role that they may be unfamiliar with, and in many cases, would probably feel unprepared for. Concerns about what information literacy might look like in the hands of faculty should also not be ignored. The success of this approach would, of course, require faculty to be willing to take on some responsibility for teaching information literacy, something which is by no means certain. In addition, librarians who are familiar with poorly designed library or research assignments developed by faculty may fear what could happen if they are no longer the primary teachers of information literacy. However, it is important to note that a faculty-focused model of information literacy instruction would not mean that librarians would be giving up all responsibility for information literacy to faculty and then standing aside with no additional role to play. Instead, librarians would continue to act as the guiding force in defining and promoting information literacy at their institutions.<sup>110</sup> And, if librarians are providing training and ongoing collaboration, it seems likely that the chances of faculty producing the types of unsatisfactory assignments that many librarians fear would be lessened, rather than increased. In the TTT model, faculty would have a better conceptual grasp on information literacy, would be more familiar with pedagogical strategies they can use to effectively teach information literacy in their courses, and would probably be more likely to view librarians as collaborative partners in assignment redesign.

While there are barriers to the wide-scale adoption of TTT approach, the existence of such impediments does not mean that librarians should stop exploring the potential of this model, or should not start taking steps that would allow them to make it a more realistic option for libraries in the future. Although the ultimate success of the TTT model is still up for debate, there are significant concerns with the one-shot approach—concerns which have only become more significant since the adoption of the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. While not all librarians may be using the *Framework* to guide their instruction programs, it is problematic that the understanding of information literacy advocated by the major national organization for academic librarians is not really compatible with the one-shot instructional model. The *Framework* emphasizes the need for students to develop key understandings or ways of thinking that cannot be fully taught in a one-shot session but instead must be developed across a student's academic career, which is a goal that librarians cannot reasonably expect to achieve on their own. Although the authors of the *Framework* do not directly mention the "teach the teachers" approach, they do specifically advocate for increased collaboration among librarians, faculty, instructional designers, and centers for teaching and learning in the design of "holistic" information literacy programs.<sup>111</sup> This type of collaboration seems much more aligned with the TTT model of information literacy than the one-shot model, providing additional support for the notion that librarians need to give increased consideration to the TTT approach.

The "teach the teachers" approach does not have to be the only one used in academic libraries. There would likely still be a place for limited one-shots even within a model where focusing on faculty development takes precedent. Bowles-Terry and Donovan, for example, note that working with faculty on course and assignment design at their institution did often

lead to librarians continuing to work with the students in those classes, but they indicate that this was a more “targeted and sustainable” approach than responding to faculty requests for sessions.<sup>112</sup> Other models of instruction, such as credit courses taught by librarians, could also continue to be offered. Our institutional and instructional contexts are so varied that the notion that a single model of information literacy instruction would be effective at every institution is unrealistic. However, investing more time and attention on the faculty-focused approach could get librarians closer to their goal of seeing information literacy integrated into the curriculum.

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## Notes

1. Nicole Pagowsky, “The Contested One-Shot: Deconstructing Power Structures to Imagine New Futures,” *College & Research Libraries* 82, no. 3 (2021): 300. Pagowsky’s editorial also functioned as a call for proposals for a special issue of *College & Research Libraries* focused on the one-shot, which was published after the completion of the current essay. Readers are encouraged to review that issue (Volume 83, no. 5, 2022) for additional critical discussion related to the one-shot model of information literacy and potential alternatives. In one of the essays in that volume, Urszula Lechtenberg and Carrie Donovan envision a model of information literacy in which librarians act as facilitators of information literacy through faculty development, instructional consultations, and designing information literacy learning objects, a model which closely aligns with the “teach the teachers” approach outlined in the current essay. See: Urszula Lechtenberg and Carrie Donovan, “Undoing Our Instructional Past: Envisioning New Models for Information Literacy” *College & Research Libraries* 83, no. 5 (2022): 837–840.

2. Melissa Bowles-Terry and Carrie Donovan, “Serving Notice on the One-Shot: Changing Roles for Instruction Librarians,” *International Information & Library Review* 48, no. 2 (2016): 137–142, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572317.2016.1176457>.

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8. For examples see: Melissa Bowles-Terry and Karen Sobel, “Librarians as Faculty Developers: Competencies and Recommendations,” *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 48, no. 1 (2022): 102474, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2021.102474>; Katelyn Handler and Lauren Hays, “Librarians as Faculty Developers: Leading Educational Development Initiatives,” *College & Research Libraries News* 80, no. 4 (2019): 220–222, 235; Sharon Mader and Craig Gibson, “Teaching and Learning Centers: Recasting the Role of Librarians as Educators and Change Agents” (2019), <https://alair.ala.org/bitstream/handle/11213/17689/TeachingandLearningCenters.pdf?sequence=1> [accessed 28 March 2022]; Sara Sharun and Erika E. Smith, “Educational Development Partnerships and Practices: Helping



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11. In a separate essay intended as a companion piece to this article, the potential of the "teach the teachers" approach is explored through an analysis of the faculty development literature on the effectiveness of faculty development and the experiences of faculty developers. See: Jane Hammons, "The Faculty-Focused Model of Information Literacy: Insights from the Faculty Development Literature," *Journal of Information Literacy*, 16 no. 2 (2022): 22–40, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/16.2.3222>.

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17. Miller and Bell, "A New Strategy for Enhancing Library Use," 2.

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24. Pagowsky, "The Contested One-Shot," 304.

25. Bowles-Terry and Donovan, "Serving Notice on the One-Shot"; Pagowsky, "The Contested One-Shot."

26. Cowan and Eva, "Changing Our Aim"; Fister, "Fostering Information Literacy through Faculty Development"; Miller and Bell, "A New Strategy for Enhancing Library Use"; Smith, "Philosophical Shift." For an additional overview of arguments in favor of the approach, see: Hammons, "Teaching the Teachers."

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28. Cowan and Eva, "Changing Our Aim"; Fister, "Fostering Information Literacy"; Miller and Bell, "A New Strategy for Enhancing Library Use."

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30. Hammons, "Teaching the Teachers."

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33. Miller and Bell, "A New Strategy for Enhancing Library Use," 1.

34. Cowan and Eva, "Changing Our Aim," 164.

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40. Bowles-Terry and Donovan, "Serving Notice on the One-Shot."

41. Bowles-Terry and Donovan, "Serving Notice on the One-Shot," 138.

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47. Cowan, "Information Literacy: The Battle We Won," 30.

48. Badke, "Who Owns Information Literacy?"

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