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Introducing emerging library instructors to information literacy instruction through programmatic instruction

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Introducing Emerging Library Instructors to Information Literacy Instruction through Programmatic Instruction

Alicia G. Vaandering, Amanda Izenstark, Colin Braun, Erin Cunningham, Reina Kirkendall, and Laura Marasco

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Readers will be able to

- define “programmatic instruction” and describe how MLIS students can support programmatic library instruction at a university library;
- identify key steps in training MLIS students to provide programmatic instruction to undergraduate students and be able to apply them to their own institutions; and
- articulate the value of providing programmatic instruction in the development of MLIS students’ teaching skills and assess potential strengths and weaknesses in this method of library instructor training.

Introduction

Teaching and instruction are critical responsibilities for twenty-first-century academic librarians, particularly those who work in public services. While interviewing academic librarians, Scott Walter encountered one participant who explained, “Even when I’m not in the classroom . . . I’m always teaching.”¹ Given the fundamental role of instruction in academic library work, one would expect courses on information literacy instruction to be a common and required aspect of master of library and information science (MLIS) programs. However, research has highlighted a disconnect between the MLIS course requirements and the expectations of library administrators and librarians with respect to library work and preparation. While many ALA-accredited MLIS programs offer at least one course with an introduction to information literacy instruction, courses on instruction are rarely a requirement for graduation.² This suggests that many emerging professional librarians are developing their teaching skills outside of their MLIS programs. For academic libraries situated at universities with MLIS programs or near such programs, engaging MLIS students in information literacy instruction for undergraduate college students provides a unique opportunity to support emerging library instructors.³

This case study explores the use of programmatic instruction as library instruction training for MLIS students employed at a university reference desk. This study has three primary aims. First, it endeavors to outline how programmatic one-shot instruction sessions, taught primarily for 100-level courses, can be used to provide MLIS students with an introduction to information literacy instruction. By examining longstanding programmatic instruction at the University of Rhode Island, we provide examples of how this model has evolved over decades in response to changes in staffing, budgets, and the information needs of academic departments. Second, this case study shares the perspectives of library instructors who taught their first information literacy instruction as part of this program, examining the legacy of this experience on emerging, early-career, and mid-career library professionals. Finally, this case study demonstrates the strengths of this structure while also highlighting further opportunities for iterative improvement and development.

Literature Review

Instruction in the 21st Century Academic Library

Instruction has become increasingly central to twenty-first-century academic library work. Interviews with academic librarians have showcased that those who work in academic libraries identify “strongly with the role of librarian as teacher,” regardless of whether their job titles or descriptions formally include teaching or instructional responsibilities.⁴ In academic libraries, teaching is not restricted to the classroom. Teaching information literacy often occurs in encounters at reference and circulation desks, as librarians and library staff help students develop the research skills that are needed for college-level research.⁵ As instruction has become more central to work in academic libraries, the role

of the library instructor has also evolved. In its *Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians*, the Association of College and Research Libraries acknowledges this evolution, identifying seven roles that library instructors can occupy: advocate, coordinator, instructional designer, lifelong learner, leader, teacher, and teaching partner.⁶ While the expansion of the work of library instructors has undeniably opened up new opportunities to support student learning and collaborate with campus partners, it has also required emerging and experienced librarians to deepen their pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills to meet the demands of this work.

Recent studies underscore that library supervisors and directors acknowledge the importance of instruction in academic librarianship, and reference and instruction positions remain popular roles in college and university libraries. One 2014 study found that out of 126 recent LIS graduates who successfully found employment, nearly half found positions as reference and instruction librarians.⁷ Furthermore, analyses of professional librarian job postings indicate that instructional duties are a common and expected aspect of academic librarian positions.⁸

Training for Library Instruction in MLIS programs

Given how integral instruction is to academic librarianship, it is perhaps unsurprising that surveys of LIS programs reveal that ALA-accredited programs usually offer at least one course that provides an introduction to information literacy instruction.⁹ Some programs have also developed unique opportunities outside of traditional coursework to prepare MLIS students with pedagogical knowledge and hands-on experience in the classroom. For example, in the early 2000s, graduate students at the University of Hawai'i could obtain graduate course credits by teaching sections of a 100-level information literacy course that was part of the Freshmen Seminar Program.¹⁰ Yet, as recent research has noted, while instruction has become more central to librarianship, many programs still fall short of ensuring that MLIS graduates are adequately prepared for this work.¹¹ In 2020, only three of fifty-seven surveyed MLIS programs (5 percent) *required* students to take a course on instruction.¹² This suggests that many LIS educators and professionals expect emerging librarians to develop and hone their pedagogy and teaching skills outside of the LIS classroom.

Training for Library Instruction on the Job

Research has demonstrated that including MLIS students in information literacy instruction at academic libraries benefits their development as emerging library instructors. In feedback from graduate students who participated in lesson planning, team teaching, and observed teaching for library instruction, Mary Todd Chestnut found that students stressed the value of learning “practical classroom techniques such as recovering when the laptop won’t connect, handling a belligerent freshman in the back row, or bringing life to an early morning class” through hands-on experience in the classroom.¹³ This close work with academic librarians also offers MLIS students an opportunity to network with those librarians and other university faculty.¹⁴ Finally, gaining classroom experience provides

MLIS students with a critical opportunity to build and hone their instructional identities. As Elena S. Azadbakht found, “How librarians see themselves . . . potentially impacts the choices they make during instruction as well as their students’ perceptions of them.”¹⁵ She also noted that the processes of reflecting on classroom experiences and of receiving constructive feedback from peers can play critical roles in developing a teaching persona.¹⁶ Amanda Nichols Hess has also argued that interpersonal relationships, specific experiences (including teaching, learning, and professional development), and professional constructs like work titles and responsibilities impact the development of one’s teaching identity.¹⁷ These valuable experiences, particularly opportunities for reflection and peer feedback, are crucial for MLIS students as emerging library instructors.

Programmatic instruction, which uses a common curriculum to ensure that students across multiple sections of the same course all learn “a pre-defined set of concepts,” offers a unique opportunity to introduce MLIS students to library instruction.¹⁸ In academic libraries, programmatic instruction is often used in first-year experience and 100-level writing courses to ensure that students are introduced to academic research early in their college careers. Because programmatic instruction uses shared lesson plans to teach information literacy skills, it allows participating MLIS students to develop classroom management skills and hone their presentation of information literacy concepts and practices as they teach the same lesson plan multiple times. Cynthia Kane and Kellie Meehlhause note that providing a common curriculum to graduate students who are learning to teach information literacy also removes “the added stress of developing a curriculum right away.”¹⁹ Gill et al. have also demonstrated that MLIS students can benefit from experience in teaching from a common lesson plan, and they highlight the value in developing a script that is not prescriptive but instead provides ideas for how research challenges can be addressed in graduate student information literacy sessions.²⁰ However, further research is needed to explore (1) how programmatic instruction can be structured to support the development of MLIS students’ teaching skills and (2) how experiences in teaching programmatic instruction impact the development of teaching skills for library instructors. This case study seeks to address both of these points by examining how programmatic instruction has been used as a springboard for information literacy instruction experience for emerging library instructors at the University of Rhode Island over the last two decades.

Background: Programmatic Instruction at the URI Libraries

The University of Rhode Island (URI) is the “current Land, Sea, and Urban Grant public research institution” of the state of Rhode Island.²¹ As a college of the University of Rhode Island, the University Libraries aim to support the research and scholarship needs of the university community and the general public.²² Librarians in the Public Services department, one of two departments in the University Libraries, support student learning through a number of instruction initiatives, including credit-bearing courses, one-shots, and embedded instruction sessions. However, the department reaches the largest number of students through programmatic instruction.

The University Libraries have a long history of providing programmatic instruction for general education courses. (See figure 1 for a brief history.) In the mid-1960s, librarians and staff from the Reference Unit and Circulation provided instruction and library tours to first-year composition courses in the English department.²³ The number of sessions ranged from fifty to eighty a year, and library instructors used the sessions to introduce library resources, highlight services, and explain how to find and borrow materials. When librarians gained faculty status in the early 1970s, programmatic instruction shifted to primarily being the responsibility of the Reference Unit. At this time, library faculty voiced increasing reservations about the “low level and generalized presentation” provided in programmatic instruction sessions.²⁴

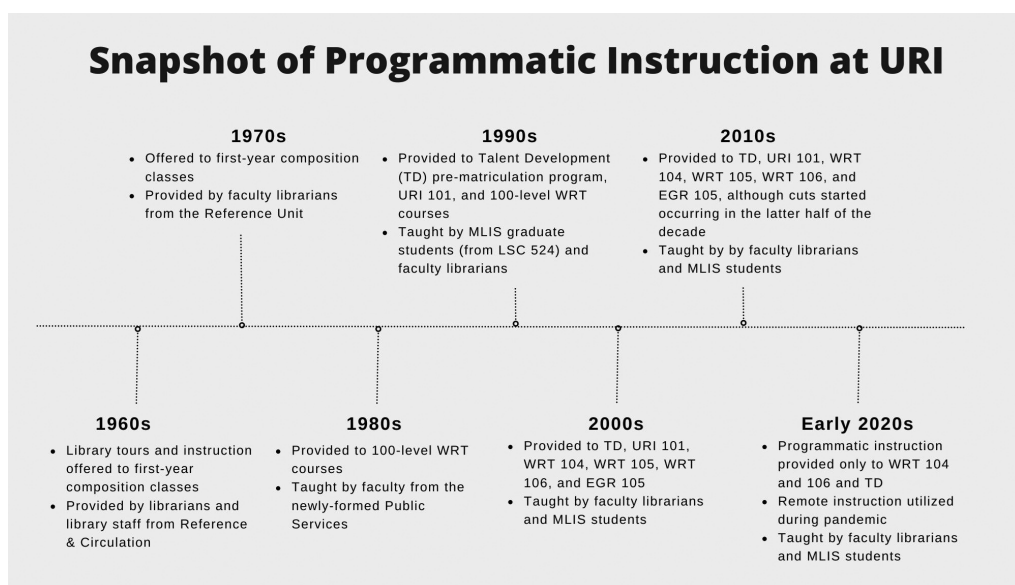


Figure 7.1

A brief history of programmatic instruction at the University Libraries, URI.

In the 1980s and 1990s, programmatic instruction at the University Libraries continued to grow. During this period, the University Libraries were reorganized, resulting in the creation of the Public Services department, which incorporated the Reference Unit and Circulation and assumed responsibility for library instruction.²⁵ The first-year experience course, which included a library orientation session, emerged as a requirement for first-year students in the mid-1990s. By this time, Public Services was also providing programmatic instruction during summer sessions to the Talent Development pre-matriculation program, which supports Rhode Island students from “historically disadvantaged backgrounds.”²⁶ The increase in sessions required a new approach to programmatic instruction. Librarians arranged sessions in “blitzes,” tightly packing instruction sessions together to reach the maximum number of students possible within a short span of time. Librarians developed packets of worksheets to complete during and after the sessions.

However, one of the most prominent changes during this period was the new inclusion of graduate students from URI's Graduate School of Library and Information Studies as instructors for programmatic instruction sessions. Graduate students taking LSC 524 Library Instruction: Philosophy, Methodology, and Materials were invited to observe and teach sessions, an option that proved particularly appealing for graduate students who were already working part time at what was then called the Reference Desk.²⁷

By the early 2000s, the Public Services department was providing programmatic instruction for four multi-section courses and programs. The first, URI 101 Traditions and Transformation: A Freshman Seminar, provided an introduction to the University Libraries, including how to navigate the building and the Library of Congress Call Number system. Taught in a computer classroom used exclusively for library instruction, these sessions gave students hands-on experience finding books. The second initiative was tied to the Writing curriculum and focused on finding articles. This started with WRT 101: Composition, which, in 2004, split into WRT 104: Writing to Inform and Explain, WRT 105: Forms of College Writing, and WRT 106: Writing from Field, Print, and Electronic Sources. The lesson plans for the three courses were similar, but the focus on types of sources varied based on course-specific requirements. WRT 104, for example, did not require the use of scholarly sources, while WRT 105 and WRT 106 encouraged students to rely increasingly on scholarly sources in their research and writing. Summer instruction for the Talent Development program continued, with content that incorporated elements of both the URI 101 and the WRT curricula. Finally, during this period, programmatic instruction was integrated into EGR 105: Foundations of Engineering, a 100-level engineering course required for all students graduating from the College of Engineering.

These programs provided a robust platform to introduce new students to valuable research skills. Lesson plans evolved during this period to incorporate more active learning with the goal of increasing student engagement. Programmatic instruction also evolved in response to changes to course curricula.²⁸ By the 2015–2016 academic year, programmatic instruction was provided by eleven library faculty and lecturers as well as an additional nine MLIS students who worked at the Info & Research Help Desk (previously the Reference Desk) and participated in instruction as a required aspect of their work as reference graduate student assistants.²⁹ In this year alone, 284 programmatic information sessions reached over 6,000 attendees across the four courses and programs.³⁰

Unfortunately, following the 2015–2016 academic year, institutional changes prompted substantial modifications to programmatic instruction at the University Libraries. A reduction of staffing in library faculty, lecturers, and graduate student assistants required the Public Services department to prioritize efforts by evaluating which courses and programs received the most value from library instruction in order to make corresponding cuts. The lack of academic content in URI 101 made it the first candidate for elimination. This allowed for continued outreach to WRT 104 and 106, EGR 105, and Talent Development. Later, as a result of course-related changes during the COVID-19 pandemic, support for EGR 105 was no longer requested. As of this writing, the WRT program is the primary venue for programmatic instruction at the University Libraries, although summer instruction is still usually provided for the Talent Development program. In the

2021–2022 academic year, five library faculty and four reference graduate student assistants provided programmatic instruction to 125 sections of WRT 104 and 106, reaching over 2,000 students through in-person and online instruction.

Training for WRT 104 and 106 Programmatic Instruction

Creating the Lesson Plan

The first step in preparing for an upcoming semester of programmatic instruction for WRT 104 and 106 is developing the lesson plan (for an example of the lesson plan, see appendix A). The lesson plan is designed to meet the research needs of both courses. While WRT 106 is a more traditional college research writing course, WRT 104 focuses more broadly on writing for different audiences and contexts. However, both courses require students to find, describe, and evaluate sources as the first step in their research. Developing the lesson plan utilizes backward design and an application of the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*—specifically, the frames Authority is Constructed and Contextual, Research as Inquiry, and Searching as Strategic Exploration. In recent years, the overarching theme of the session has been being a resilient researcher, which encompasses the following learning objectives:

- Students will be able to demonstrate flexibility and resilience in the research process by reframing search queries in response to initial results.
- Students will be able to find credible sources using relevant keywords from a research question.
- Students will be able to apply the CRAAP test to evaluate the relevance, currency, and authority of a selected source.³¹

Active learning has long been a key component of programmatic instruction at URI, and recent lesson plans reflect a continued emphasis on this. Library instructors guide students in implementing a research strategy and model how to use a library database. Students actively engage by sharing their research questions, identifying keywords, and finding and evaluating sources for their research. Much of this work is captured on a collaborative Google Sheet, which is later shared with the WRT instructor and used by librarians to assess student learning.³² The use of Google Sheets to capture this information is relatively new. Prior programmatic instruction has largely relied on physical worksheets and Google Forms for assessment.

Training Sessions

A two-hour training session is required for all reference graduate student assistants and library faculty participating in programmatic instruction. For reference graduate student assistants, this is usually their first experience teaching information literacy sessions for undergraduate students, although occasionally some have prior experience in teaching other subjects or for other audiences. Because of this, training focuses on explaining the

research needs of students enrolled in WRT 104 and 106, modeling how to deliver the lesson, demonstrating the use of classroom technology, and providing practical tips for teaching and supporting first-year college students.

Prior to training, reference graduate student assistants review the lesson plan and learning objects (i.e., a template of the Google Sheet and the LibGuide associated with the courses). This gives them, as emerging library instructors, valuable time to become familiar with the lesson and consider what questions they might have about implementing the lesson plan. During the training session, the trainer (typically the student success librarian) models teaching the session and shares common challenges and questions that might arise in a typical session. At the end of the session, the graduate student assistants have the opportunity to ask questions, and other librarians share tips for classroom management and teaching first-year writing students.

Observations and Reflections

As part of training in information literacy instruction, graduate student assistants are expected to observe two sessions taught by librarians, and then they are observed and evaluated by a librarian as they teach their first lesson (see appendix B for observation form). Students must pass their evaluation before they are approved to teach further sessions independently. The observations have been a central piece of training MLIS students in programmatic instruction since the 1980s, and they have remained largely unchanged over the years, although the evaluation form has experienced multiple revisions. More recently, graduate student assistants have also been invited to reflect on their teaching by completing a self-evaluation of their session. The librarian observer and the observed student discuss their evaluations to celebrate initial strengths in instruction and identify areas for further improvement.

Reflections from Emerging Professionals

Colin Braun, Reference Graduate Student Assistant (2020–2022)

Erin Cunningham, Reference Graduate Student Assistant (2021–2022)

Reina Kirkendall, Reference Graduate Student Assistant (2021–2022)

Laura Marasco, Reference Graduate Student Assistant (2021–2022)

Understanding the importance of instruction in library work, we were excited for the opportunity to gain experience in information literacy instruction. For all of us, fall 2021 provided our first experience with library instruction, and it allowed us to practice our skills in a supported environment. We led several in-person sessions independently before a surge in the COVID-19 pandemic over the 2021–2022 winter break necessitated a return to online instruction for the spring 2022 semester. After training in January 2022, we conducted our classes via Zoom. Adapting to virtual instruction presented the opportunity to try new teaching styles to increase student participation and comprehension. This experience in adapting our approach has been very helpful for increasing resilience in many professional situations, especially for two of us who have gone on to work in

public libraries. For example, these skills have helped us adapt programs for participants who have disabilities, need additional support, or fall outside of the intended audience age range.

Entering our second semester of teaching programmatic instruction, we experienced increased confidence in the classroom. One of us (Kirkendall), a young black instructor, noted key differences between teaching in person and online. During the first semester when WRT sessions were taught in person, it was difficult to engage some students. For instance, some students did not participate in searching for articles or using the spreadsheet provided in class. In contrast, during online instruction in spring 2022, there was less friction in asking students to participate since requests were directed to the entire class rather than to specific students. In addition, not having to physically check on students in the online session allowed for more time to evaluate student work via the spreadsheet and offer further feedback and assistance in searching for articles.

Although programmatic instruction does not provide the opportunity for reference graduate student assistants to build their own lesson plans, it offers the opportunity to hone individual teaching styles and, within bounds, highlight areas of importance to the WRT instructors while adapting instruction to the needs of specific groups of students. It did not take long before we could identify the areas in which a specific class or student might need additional support. Another benefit of teaching programmatic instruction was increased confidence and expertise in reference interactions at the Info & Research Help Desk. Many students, especially first-year students and others who have been away from learning for several years, experience challenges when beginning a research project. Programmatic instruction provides reference graduate student assistant instructors with significant experience in the basics of starting research, so when they are at the Info & Research Help Desk, they excel. The material taught in the WRT sessions can easily be transformed into a one-on-one experience at the desk, so experienced graduate student library instructors are more capable and therefore more confident in providing reference service.

Finally, the experience of participating in programmatic instruction provided an opportunity to practice public speaking and instruction, both of which are skills that translate well into professional library work. Spearheading events, teaching classes, and overseeing group programming will be expected at almost any library position after graduate school. Having this experience in a safe environment with guided supervision has been excellent and helpful in building better, more confident teaching librarians.

Reflections from an Early-Career Professional

Alicia G. Vaandering, Reference Graduate Student Assistant (2015–2017)

I am an early-career librarian and the student success librarian at the University Libraries, where I supervise programmatic instruction for WRT 104 and 106. My first experiences with programmatic instruction, however, were as a reference graduate student assistant in the mid-2010s. I had prior teaching experience as a teaching assistant for URI's Department of History; but, like our emerging library professionals Braun, Cunningham,

Kirkendall, and Marasco, my work as a reference graduate student assistant was my first experience in information literacy instruction.

One of the most important lessons I learned during my early experiences with programmatic instruction was the value of balancing lecture and demonstration with active learning and discussion. I taught library instruction sessions for WRT 104 and 106, EGR 105, and URI 101, so I was able to observe how active learning is beneficial within a variety of contexts. As students engaged in think-pair-share activities, conducted their own database searches, and evaluated sources, I noted the common (and sometimes uncommon) barriers that students face in their research. This allowed me to develop strategies for addressing classroom barriers by treating mistakes as a learning opportunity and teachable moment that could benefit the entire class.

Participating in programmatic instruction also made me aware of the role that collaboration, teamwork, and collegiality play in instruction programs. While a single person may be responsible for programmatic instruction coordination and training, success relies on a team of library instructors who are willing to share their experience and expertise. By sharing different teaching strategies in the spirit of collegiality and collaboration, instructors signal that teaching is a skill that can be strengthened and improved through practice. This was powerful to me as a new library instructor. While I still approached my required observation with some trepidation, I understood the value of having an experienced librarian help me recognize my teaching strengths and areas for improvement.

When I took my first job as a professional librarian in 2018, I also discovered some gaps in my knowledge and experience as a library instructor despite what I had learned through programmatic instruction. Because my prior teaching experiences had primarily been with one-shot sessions, I quickly recognized that I needed to learn more about scaffolding instruction. To help students deepen their information literacy skills, I needed to structure increasingly complex learning experiences across multiple library instruction sessions. I also recognized that I lacked the pedagogical knowledge and experience to communicate effectively about teaching strategies and goals with faculty in other disciplines. To overcome these shortcomings, I pursued further professional development through webinars and conferences to learn how to create effective lesson plans and build a successful information literacy program across a program of study. When I assumed leadership of programmatic instruction for first-year writing at URI in 2020, I also experienced the challenges associated with moving instruction online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I benefited from my previous programmatic teaching experiences that had introduced me to the content of the sessions, but I had to do further research to discover the tools and strategies that would enable us to move the sessions into an online environment for the first time. While my prior training had not provided me with the specific knowledge of how to do this, it had prepared me to approach the library classroom with flexibility and a growth mindset, a resilience similarly noted above by Braun, Cunningham, Kirkendall, and Marasco. This resilience was invaluable in learning to navigate library instruction during the pandemic.

Reflections from a Mid-Career Professional

Amanda Izenstark, Reference Graduate Student Assistant (2000–2001)

I came to librarianship in 2000 with a background mainly in customer service and less formally in technology, and I had been a non-traditional student who did not have the benefit of receiving information literacy instruction during my undergraduate career. As a graduate student, I was able to take an introductory course on library instruction that introduced me to some basics of lesson planning and education theory, but I had no real experience in the classroom until I began working at the URI Library. At the time, URI's programmatic instruction consisted of two main initiatives, URI 101 and WRT 101.

These sessions were developed by the Public Services faculty librarians, and understandably they were based on the tools and resources available. This meant we needed adequate time to cover both locating citations as well as finding the physical book or article referenced since much material was only available on paper in the stacks. Despite these limitations, the sessions were developed to support student learning by building transferable skills while providing learners with tangible results they could use for their work in the relevant courses. This structure provided me, as a new librarian, with the opportunity to gain experience leading information literacy sessions. Along with other new library instructors, I was encouraged to enhance the sessions with my own skills so long as I remained true to the overall instruction structure and goals. Being able to draw on that experience helped me develop confidence in the classroom.

Eventually, my position developed into a permanent faculty position with a focus on instructional design. This provided me with the opportunity to contribute more substantially to the development, delivery, and assessment of programmatic instruction, specifically the URI 101 sessions that our information literacy librarian and I collaboratively redesigned. We looked at what worked in the existing URI 101 sessions, what revised goals would be appropriate for the renewed sessions (there was no academic research component in URI 101), and what engaging and informative activities would lead students to those goals.

The keys to my growth as an instruction librarian then were mentoring by colleagues and professional development, whether it was at conferences, via webinars, or through reading the literature. Ultimately, this led us to new techniques, including using the Cephalonian Method, a format that provided students with questions to ask as a starting point but which we found encouraged increased student participation by opening the door for students to ask their own questions.³³

With the discontinuation of instruction for URI 101, I am no longer responsible for the design of programmatic instruction, but I do participate in the delivery of WRT sessions as well as scaffolded sessions for my liaison departments. On a personal level, as a now-established instruction librarian, I am wary of falling into a rut. While my years of experience in the classroom have given me insight into what might work and what might not, it is also important to remember that what makes something fresh to an instructor might be alienating or confusing to a student encountering content for the first time. To this end, I continue to request student and instructor feedback, take reflective notes

on my course-integrated sessions, and use that feedback to generate iterative changes to continually improve what I provide.

Next Steps

Iterative Growth Through Feedback

As the Public Services department continues to move forward with programmatic instruction, we have been exploring how to strengthen the program as an introduction to information literacy instruction for MLIS students working as reference graduate student assistants. As our first step, we hope to solicit feedback from our current and previous reference graduate student assistants. We plan to establish an end-of-semester review process for current MLIS students to help identify the strengths and weaknesses in our current training for programmatic instruction. We also want to invite prior reference graduate student assistants to provide feedback on how their training prepared them for professional library work. This feedback would reveal a more comprehensive overview of the gaps that remain in our training and help us prioritize what to incorporate. For example, there may be opportunities for our training to introduce reference graduate student assistants to other aspects of information literacy instruction, including lesson planning, designing assessment, evaluating assessment, and information literacy for credit-bearing courses.³⁴

Re-Envisioning Observation and Teaching Models

Another area where we see opportunity for potential improvement is in the process through which graduate student assistants move from training to observing two librarian-led sessions and then being observed in a solo-led session. This process has remained largely the same since the 1980s. While we recently added a reflective piece to this process by encouraging students to complete a self-evaluation form, there are further changes that we are considering exploring, including offering opportunities for team teaching as part of the training process. Team teaching with a professional librarian could provide greater support to MLIS students as emerging library instructors by providing an opportunity for more informal feedback before progressing to a more formal, observed session. Team teaching would also allow the MLIS students to gain experience with another teaching model that they might use in the future with other librarians, professionals from other academic services (e.g., writing centers), or subject faculty.

Increasing Capacity

Finally, as the University Libraries face further institutional changes and shifts in library leadership, we hope to begin to rebuild our programmatic instruction outreach. We are in the initial phases of planning a pilot project to reestablish an introduction to the URI Libraries and information literacy for URI 101. We hope to accomplish this using Breakout EDU boxes, which operate like an escape room in a box and require students to use library

resources to accomplish different tasks in order to unlock the box and win the game. We plan to continue our programmatic instruction outreach to first-year Writing and to the Talent Development program as well. There are no current plans to reestablish instruction for EGR 105 at this time due to resource reallocation in the libraries and changes in administration in the College of Engineering.

Conclusion

Teaching and instruction seem poised to continue as core responsibilities for academic librarians amid ongoing concerns about undergraduate students' critical-thinking skills and their ability to discern fact-based information from misinformation. In light of this, both LIS programs and academic libraries have a vested interest in equipping emerging library instructors with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively teach information literacy. While learning educational theory and pedagogy in LIS coursework is important, opportunities to gain practical experience in the college classroom are essential for emerging instructors seeking to develop critical teaching skills in classroom management, student engagement, and the communication of information literacy concepts and strategies to diverse audiences.

Including MLIS students in programmatic instruction offers a promising approach to supporting the development of teaching skills. However, while this approach supports emerging library instructors and can help sustain large-scale instruction initiatives like programmatic instruction, academic librarians need to carefully consider how training and support are structured for MLIS students. Our experiences at the University Libraries have shown that integrating observations, encouraging self-reflection, and sharing common challenges and opportunities in information literacy instruction with undergraduate students can build a more meaningful and formative teaching experience for emerging library instructors. These aspects play a critical role in supporting MLIS students as they gain experience and confidence in the classroom. Reflecting on our experiences, we see further opportunities to engage our graduate student reference assistants in discussions of lesson planning, creating and analyzing tools for assessment, and scaffolding instruction outside of programmatic instruction. These conversations could help our graduate student assistants build stronger connections between their MLIS curriculum and their practical experiences in the classroom, providing a more holistic approach to their development as emerging library instructors.

APPENDIX A

WRT 104 and 106 Lesson Plan (Fall 2021)

Before class:

- Pull up spreadsheet on your computer.
- Pull up WRT 104 and 106 LibGuides on computer.
- Write bit.ly link on board: <https://bit.ly/3yEjkad>

Objectives, Resources, and Brainstorming Keywords (~10 minutes)

- Introduce yourself and class—Being a Resilient Researcher
Share bit.ly link with students and have them open guide to Library Research Session Goals and write down 1–2 things they'd like to accomplish in the class session. (Note: you may skip this part if settling into the classroom took longer than expected.)
- Share objectives (from WRT 104/106 LibGuide)
 - Demonstrate flexibility and resilience in the research process by reframing search queries in response to initial results.
 - Find credible sources using relevant keywords from a research question.
 - Apply the CRAAP test to evaluate the relevance and authority of a selected source.
- Share your research question and ask students to help pick out good search terms.
- Introduce **Spreadsheet** and add identified search terms.
- Share with students and have students share questions and initial search terms.
To share spreadsheet: in Impero, make sure all computers have a green check next to them, then go to Action—Run Website/File—Website to enter the website and select “Run.”

Evaluating Sources: The CRAAP Test (5 minutes)

CRAAP test review

Searching in Academic Search Complete (~30 minutes)

Step 1: Initial search (10 minutes)

- Navigate to library homepage and show how to get to databases A–Z.
- Introduce Academic Search Complete.
- Model initial keyword search (WRT calls keyword searching “free search”) with terms from your research question. (Students can follow along with your search or their own; if they choose their own, let them know that they should hold questions on their specific topic until after your demonstration.)
 - Sort by relevance.
 - As you review results, point out synonyms or other possible search terms that come up and indicate that you're going to remember/note these for later.
 - Show limiters in the left column.

- Demonstrate how to open a record to learn more about the source, more about the authors, where to find permalink, how to find full text.
- 10 minutes for students to do their initial search and evaluate the relevance of a selected source. Remind students to jot down ideas for new search terms in the Spreadsheet.
- The students should also do additional reflection on what has worked and not worked during research process.

Step 2: Second Search

If students are still working with their initial search terms, tell them to try some new terms and/or strategies here that they have considered while doing their initial search. They should locate a second source and evaluate the authority during this step.

- 10 minutes for students to conduct their second search, find a second source, and evaluate the authority of the source.

Wrap (~5 minutes)

Reflection

- Give students time to answer last few questions on Spreadsheet (in yellow).
- Ask 1–2 people to share differences they noticed between their two searches.
- Show students the WRT 104 and 106 LibGuide [uri.libguides.com/wrtstudents].

Quick Tips for Tricky Research Questions

- Utilize subject headings.
- Practice citation mining. Use the reference list of a source you have found to find other relevant sources.
- Try a new database.

APPENDIX B

Observation Form

Library Instruction – Graduate Student Teaching Observation Form

Instructor:

Observer:

Class session observed:

Date:

Directions: Below is a list of instructor behaviors that may occur within a given class session. Please use this form as a guide to make observations, not as a list of required characteristics. The purpose of this worksheet is to make improvements to instruction efforts. Please respond to each observation using the following scale:

1 - Not observed

4 - Accomplished well

2 - More emphasis recommended

5 - Accomplished very well

3 - Satisfactorily Accomplished

N/A - Not Applicable

Presentation Skills

Demonstrates enthusiasm/interest in subject matter	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Uses effective vocal delivery	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Uses appropriate gestures/body movement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Makes eye contact with participants	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Paced session appropriately	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Effective use of visuals and/or technology	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Clarity of Presentation

Purpose of the class session is clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Uses examples to illustrate concepts	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Organized/sticks to the points	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Level of instruction delivery was appropriate for the learners	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Instructor Interaction/Engagement with Students

Encourages and responds to students' questions	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Asks questions of students to monitor student progress	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Maintains engagement with students	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Time was allowed for questions and discussion	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

What are the instructor's major strengths as demonstrated in this observation?

What suggestions do you have for the instructor so that they might improve on the outcomes of the next library instruction session?

This teaching observation form is based on evaluation criteria found in the following resources:

Middleton, Cheryl. "Evolution of Peer Evaluation of Library Instruction at Oregon State University Libraries." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 2, n. 1 (2002): 69–78.
University of Kansas Libraries. Instructional Services. "Classroom Observation Worksheet." <http://www.lib.ku.edu/instruction/lib/peerreview/worksheet.pdf>.

Notes

1. Scott Walter, "Librarians as Teachers: A Qualitative Inquiry into Professional Identity," *College & Research Libraries* 69, no. 1 (2008): 61, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.69.1.51>.
2. For more information on the presence of information literacy instruction courses in LIS programs, see Laura Saunders, "Education for Instruction: A Review of LIS Instruction Syllabi," *The Reference Librarian* 56, no. 1 (January 2015): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02763877.2014.969392>; Sandra J. Valenti and Brady D. Lund, "Preparing the Instructional Librarian: Representation of ACRL Roles and Strengths in MLS Course Descriptions," *College & Research Libraries* 82, no. 4 (June 2021): 530–47, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.82.4.530>. For more on information literacy instruction as a required course in MLIS programs, see Margaret Dodson, "On Target or Missing the Mark? Instruction Courses in LIS Graduate Programs," *Public Services Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (April 2020): 83–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15228959.2020.1745131>.
3. For the purpose of this study, we use "MLIS" student to encompass any graduate student in a library science program.
4. Walter, "Librarians as Teachers," 61.
5. James K. Elmborg, "Teaching at the Desk: Toward a Reference Pedagogy," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 2, no. 3 (2002): 456, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2002.0050>.
6. Dawn Amsberry et al., *Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians*, Association of College and Research Libraries, accessed October 11, 2022, <https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/teachinglibrarians>.
7. Max Eckard, Ashley Rosener, and Lindy Scripps-Hoekstra, "Factors That Increase the Probability of a Successful Academic Library Job Search," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 40, no. 2 (2014): 109, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2014.02.001>.
8. For an analysis of reference job postings, see Robert Detmering and Claudene Sproles, "Forget the Desk Job: Current Roles and Responsibilities in Entry-Level Reference Job Advertisements," *College & Research Libraries* 73, no. 6 (2012): 548, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl-304>. In a research study published two years later, Russell A. Hall surveyed deans, directors, and department heads of libraries that had recently advertised jobs inclusive of instructional duties, and he found that the "vast majority of respondents reported instruction as being very important in their libraries and being important to the jobs that were advertised." See "Beyond the Job Ad: Employers and Library Instruction," *College & Research Libraries* 74, no. 1 (2013): 28, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl-236>.
9. For more information regarding the prevalence of library instruction courses in LIS programs, see Saunders, "Education for Instruction," 13–14; Rebecca A. Pappert, "A Course and Syllabus Review of ALA-Accredited Master's Programs: Focus on Education for Library Instruction" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005), 19, https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/masters_papers/7d278x82p.
10. Yvonne Nalani Meulemans and Jennifer Brown, "Educating Instruction Librarians: A Model for Library and Information Science Education," *Research Strategies* 18 (Winter 2001): 254–55, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0734-3310\(03\)00002-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0734-3310(03)00002-8).

11. Dani Brecher and Kevin Michael Klipfel, "Education Training for Instruction Librarians: A Shared Perspective," *Communications in Information Literacy* 8, no. 1 (2014): 44–45; Kimberly Davies-Hoffman et al., "Keeping Pace with Information Literacy Instruction for the Real World: When Will MLS Programs Wake Up and Smell the LILACs?," *Information Literacy* 7, no. 1 (2013): 10–11, <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2013.7.1.131>.
12. Dodson, "On Target or Missing the Mark?," 90.
13. Mary Todd Chesnut, "Night Vision Goggles or Rose Colored Glasses: A Unique Perspective on Training the Library Graduate Assistant in Instruction," *The Southeastern Librarian* 57, no. 1 (Spring 2009), <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln/vol57/iss1/3>.
14. Aloha R. Sargent et al., "Incorporating Library School Interns on Academic Library Subject Teams," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 37, no. 1 (2011): 28–33, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2010.10.004>.
15. Elena S. Azadbakht, "The Many Faces of Instruction: An Exploration of Academic Librarians' Teaching Personas," *Communications in Information Literacy* 15, no. 1 (2021): 60, <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2021.15.1.3>; Maoria J. Kirker et al. also argue that observation and self-reflection play critical roles in improving teaching skills in "Teaching Squares: Improving Instruction through Observation and Self-Reflection," *College & Research Libraries News* 82, no. 8 (2021): 370, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.82.8.370>.
16. Azadbakht, "The Many Faces of Instruction," 68–69; Maoria J. Kirker et al. also argue that observation and self-reflection play critical roles in improving teaching skills in "Teaching Squares."
17. Amanda Nichols Hess, "Instructional Experience and Teaching Identities: How Academic Librarians' Years of Experience in Instruction Impact their Perceptions of Themselves as Educators," *Communications in Information Literacy* 14, no. 2 (2020): 166–67, <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2020.14.2.1>.
18. Mary C. MacDonald, Andrée Rathemacher, and Joanna M. Burkhardt, "Challenges in Building an Incremental Multi-Year IL Plan," *Reference Services Review* 28, no. 3 (2000): 240–47.
19. See Cynthia Kane and Kellie Meehlhause, "GTA = Great Teaching Adventure! Graduate Teaching Assistants at the Emporia State University Libraries and Archives," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2014): 14–15.
20. Navroop Gill et al. examined the use of LIS graduate students in designing and delivering information literacy sessions for the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Master of Teaching program in "Training to Teach Graduate Information Literacy Sessions Using a Team-Based Mentorship Approach: Report on a Pilot Project at the OISE Library," *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research* 12, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.21083/partnership.v12i1.3784>.
21. "Detailed History," University of Rhode Island, accessed November 18, 2022, <https://www.uri.edu/about/history/detailed-history/>.
22. "Mission," University of Rhode Island University Libraries, accessed October 11, 2022, <https://web.uri.edu/library/about/mission>.
23. See *Annual Reports 1965-1966, 1966-1967, 1967-1968, and 1968-1969*, URI Libraries University Archives & Special Collections, Records of the Library Subject Files: American Library Association (ALA) - Annual Reports, Series 1, Box 12, Folder 96 (Annual Reports).
24. See *Annual Reports 1971-1972, 1973-1974, and 1975-1976*, URI Libraries University Archives & Special Collections, Records of the Library Subject Files: American Library Association (ALA) - Annual Reports, Series 1, Box 12, Folder 96 (Annual Reports). During the early 1970s, the library tours were also adapted to be self-guided due to the rapid growth of the student population in response to the Vietnam War, an increase that was not reflected in the number of librarians available to provide instruction.
25. *Public Service Department Annual Report 1982-1983*, URI Libraries University Archives & Special Collections, Margaret Keefe Papers Annual Reports, Series no. III, Box no. 8, Folder 5: Annual Reports - Public Services: 1982/83-1987.
26. The Talent Development program, founded in 1968 in the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, offers a summer success program that runs the summer before Talent Development scholars enter their freshmen year and services during the academic year. Learn more at "Talent

- Development: About,” University of Rhode Island, accessed November 4, 2022, <https://web.uri.edu/talentdevelopment/about/>.
27. A 1997 report notes that most students who opted to teach sessions were already working at the library reference desk. See 1996-1997 *Reference, Government Publications, Special Collections (incl Public Services Department Faculty)* in URI Libraries University Archives & Special Collections, Records of the Library Subject Files: Annual Reports-Art Department, Series 1, Box 13, Folder 98 (Annual Reports 1996-2001).
 28. For example, in 2014, the Writing program updated its curriculum to eliminate WRT 105 and revised WRT 106. A couple years later, WRT 104 was also revised, introducing a badge system to support student success.
 29. Mary C. MacDonald, *Public Services Department Instructional Services Annual Report, July 2015 – June 2016*, 2016.
 30. MacDonald, *Public Services Department Instructional Services Annual Report*.
 31. “WRT 104/106 Guide for Students,” University Libraries, updated September 2022, <https://uri.libguides.com/wrtstudents>.
 32. The design for this Google Sheet is adapted from the work of Paula Patch and Patrick Rudd in “Writing-Intensive Courses: The Impact of Co-ownership and Community: Reimagining the Relationship between Library and Writing Instruction as a Teaching and Learning Partnership,” in *The Engaged Library: High-Impact Educational Practices in Academic Libraries*, ed. Joan D. Ruelle (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2020), 62–63.
 33. Amanda K. Izenstark and Mary C. MacDonald, “Create Your Own Cephalonian Method Adventure: An Interactive Session” (paper presented at the Energize! Accelerate! Transform! - Fortieth National LOEX Library Instruction Conference), 213–18, <http://commons.emich.edu/loexconf2012/39>.
 34. During the semester, new reference graduate student assistants attend weekly training to learn more about subject-specific library resources for their work and responsibilities at the reference desk. Adding one or two sessions to this schedule to explore other aspects of information literacy instruction could be a natural extension of this training.

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