WiLS 2017 Regional Meeting: UW-Stout, Menomonie

Thursday, November 16th at 1:00 pm

Information Literacy Discussion

Renee Ponzio: Eau Claire Public Library is creating signs to place in stacks to help patrons find what they are looking for - pictures of Pete the Cat, pictures for topical sections (pets, Fourth of July), recommendations for similar books. Book Link Guides are subject guides (self-help books, speculative fiction, etc.) for patrons. They are also help with technology ("Tech Tuesdays"). Classes haven't been successful so they don't do a lot of them. Integrating help and instructions in one-on-one help. Dabble Box opened in January and it's a makerspace with legos, squishy circuits, a piano, ukuleles, 3D pen, etc.

Donette Mickelson: Baron School District has one librarian and she's considered a coach more than a collaborator: The librarian coaches the teachers to teach info literacy and library instruction skills. There are shared lesson plans and other materials. There is collaboration with the public library on programming on using MORE. Considering ditching Dewey for non-fiction at the Middle School because the public library did and saw their circulation go way up and using the same categories. Kids don't want to use the catalog to find their books - they just want to go find it. Computer skills are taught in the classroom in context. The library creates reading lists and one list that is currently being used is on Mental Health.

There have been students that express how different their K12 library experience was from their college library experience. There isn't a natural space for those librarians to have a conversation with one another but never fear! This meeting is an opportunity to have that conversation.

Jessy Polzer: UW-Stout As an instructional librarian, her role has flipped from teaching 160 classes a year to being a consultant with faculty with an emphasis on instructional design. Jessy's program draws on the Researcher Skill Development Framework. This helps instructors understand where students struggle, identify gaps, and build in remedies to the curriculum and it builds a shared language of research between disciplines. Using this against the ACRL Framework helps round out the curriculum. There is collaboration with K12s in the Fab Lab.

This helps librarians understand where the faculty or educators are because this framework comes from education and not so much librarianship because it is their language. If the library's brand is education, collaboration between K12s and higher education is very important and some schools like CVTC invite students from local K12s to do and learn about research.

Patti Blount: Durand Public Library has created a ton of partnerships with community organizations and businesses, such as a collaboration with the K12 school for history day research and a Staycation book club focus on travel (book, movie, food!). The library is hosting yoga and a class on how to write your own obituary.

Becky Wojahn: Chippewa Valley Technical College is new to CVTC. The stretched staff wasn't able to provide information literacy instruction and the college wouldn't hire more librarians so they started an instructional program, a 2-year associate's degree. The new positions are instructors and librarians both. With her background in K12 libraries, she's energized to continue teaching information literacy. The students have such different backgrounds that each need is different for skills training. This

combination of experience could be very valuable in tackling that question of the gap between K12 and higher education information literacy skills.

Renee: Older people are "computer illiterate" - they don't type or use email or the internet or the device their kids gave them. It's a huge information gap between what children do and what seniors do. There is a willful desire to not learn that only becomes worse as more information is available digitally and the technology advances. The library doesn't have the staff that to do that very remedial instruction. Now unemployment has to filed online and people need help and not every town has a job center. If patrons want to be successful - or get a new job or anything really - those digital skills need to be learned; they are not going away. The divide includes a lot of shame and sometimes that shame results in an unwillingness to learn so empathy is important to help them learn, share your own struggles with learning technology to build relationships and trust.

Teaching skills out of context is not useful and is sometimes vulnerable. Is there a volunteer or mentoring program that allow one-on-one help. Bring in your devices after Christmas and get volunteers to help. There could also be a perception of older people that the library is doing away with books but we should help them understand that print is as important as ever. There is also a barrier because of limited access to broadband (or even low bandwidth) internet at home. There are Tech Zoos in various public libraries that allow patrons to bring in their devices for help.

Literacy Chippewa Valley provides digital literacy training.

In higher education, non-traditional students that sometimes have lack of computer skills. They are largely ashamed and afraid of looking stupid so they don't take classes offered and then fail to succeed because they don't have the skills needed. WITC has created technology support positions for students in that position and was thoughtful in hiring to get folks who are approachable and knowledgeable both.

An online course, like wisc-online.com or Goodwill has a course, could be helpful in getting past the shame factor.

Similarly, financial literacy skills and identifying fake news could be topics that are also shameful to admit you are lacking. The recent Western Union scam might help advocate for more literacy around spotting scams or discerning between content and ads. How do you help people get the skills they need to discern information when it's not curated for them (like a K12 or academic library).

When non-traditional students approach the reference desk at Stout might feel the shift in the librarian, who isn't typically used to helping students with low technology skills and may not come back.

Some schools or libraries lend or issue devices to patrons / students but are not sure that the training is adequate for using those devices and typing skills are sometimes deficient as well and in younger children this is a deficiency.

There is a problem of equity across school districts - some districts have one librarian (or a consultant) and some have a librarian in each school. For those districts that have fewer resources, the librarian takes a coaching approach and then the students may not get the skills they need.

The variety of instructors also plays a part: some faculty place info literacy front and center and some teach writing through Macbeth. There is no set expectation of what's taught and nothing is tested (so it doesn't register to teachers because it's not being assessed). Some organizations that support teachers have written statements about info literacy but there isn't policy or standards. UW-Stout library was able get faculty buy in by insinuating itself on a research initiative driven by faculty at the teaching and learning center. The framework is clear and helpful in bringing faculty in. The one-shot session works against the library in some ways because it's the perception that the library instruction class is enough. Demonstrating that there are lots of skills that the library can help with embedded in their learning outcomes can be powerful as well. Some find this new "additional" work intimidating and sometimes it's about catching them at the same time. It's also about building relationships with students and faculty. River Falls just hired a first-year student success librarian that will have lots of impact on instruction and info literacy which is currently a decentralized task and all librarians are instructional and liaisons to departments. There could be an opportunity to do field trips to other libraries to observe their instruction.

Assessment is sticky - how do you assess the effectiveness of your program? A position dedicated to info literacy and instruction could ease that because it's a single place to judge what's working and what's not. Assessments are scary because they can be either overly critical of your work or might not measure what you want it to or it becomes the sole focus of the overall assessment (or purse string holders or decision makers or administrators). It might be harder to quantify the good that the libraries or librarians do at the public library level because of the lack of feedback, follow up, or because of privacy issues. Stakeholders might not be able to conceptualize what the library does or what a librarian does. There are a slew of things the library does that can't be "counted" - answering hard questions, computer usage, ebook circulation, etc. A narrative might be helpful here instead of data and believe in the value of your services. A spreadsheet + a few highlighted factoids + a powerful story or two = impactful measurement.

Informal Exchange

UW-Stout Open Educational Resources reach broadly and is reaching a tipping point. The E-ffordability Summit will be held in March and there is a call for proposals out now. Broad participation is key from academics and K12s because it reaches at all levels and is a potential way to make education more equitable. This also could help homeschoolers / public libraries as well.

IFLS is interested in Skokie Public Library's Civic Labs and potentially supporting libraries with a kit that helps with difficult conversations or situations that could potentially divide communities. It could be a moment for library collaboration across types as well to have resources for those conversation but also skills in facilitating those conversations. Racism, poverty, etc. Marinette Public Library has teamed up with their county extension office to help folks learn how to disagree with one another respectfully and have civil conversations. The library could play a great role in this as a safe space with space people to be the facilitators of these conversations, public libraries in particular as a community organization.

Eau Claire did a library building study and may be going up (with a new floor) or out (by building space) to provide more study and meeting space. The library is too small for the community side and now they need to get buy-in and funds to build over the next several years. They are happy to have their assumption that the library is too small corroborated by an outside consultant.