Student Employment Matters: Mapping Literacies and Learning Outcomes in Special and Digital Collections

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What role do information literacies play in the lives of library student workers who work with special and digital collections?

Variety of Literacies in the Library Workplace

**Information Literacy**
- ACRL Information Literacy Standards (Framework)
- 6 frames, core concepts

**Visual Literacy**
- ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards Higher Ed
- Over 100 learning outcomes

**Primary Source Literacy**
- SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force Guidelines (drafted)
- 4 learning outcomes

Mapping Standards to Student Job Descriptions

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<th>Job Duty Description</th>
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Future: Map/align responsibilities with specific literacies

Qualitative Student Interviews

7 undergraduates | 5 female, 2 male | Sophomore to recent graduate | 20-60 minutes long
Time in library ranged from 3 months to 4 years, approximately 10 hours per week

**Aspirations**
- Archives, Local History, 5
- Communications, 1
- Library, Student, 3
- Technology, computer skills, 5
- Research, 6

**Perspectives on Libraries**
- “I love the idea of working with books, libraries are acupled, but after working in digital...there are actually preserving history in a way that would go throughout time and be preserved with current technology, a lot of people don’t necessarily see at the library.” Interviewee #3

**Skills Beyond Graduation**
- “I got to learn a little bit about coding, interesting to see and be less intimidated. I work with developers now, and although I don’t know the full extent it is less intimidating. I am ok with admitting I don’t know. It’s not completely foreign, I have some context and experience. It was my first job ever too so it had a really big impact.” Interviewee #3

**Variety of Literacies in the Library Workplace**
- Information Literacy
- Visual Literacy
- Primary Source Literacy

**Scaled Questions**

**ACRL Visual Literacy Student Self-evaluation**
- Analyzed Standard 3 (1, 2) and Standard 4 (1, 3)
- Average score was 3.9 out of 5

“I am developing skills used for working with clients.” Interviewee #1

“At the very beginning I would show you the handwriting sample that I could not read, now other students are showing me the problem and I can work through it. Interpreting handwriting, finding details in images to figure out the when, what, I have definitely improved...taking a small piece of a little clue in the picture and expanding on it.” Interviewee #4

“Since I grew up (out of state), looking at the history of farmers, miners, and blue collar workers was different and interesting to see. Very foreign and diverse for me.” Interviewee #2

**Scaled Questions**

**SAA-ACRL/RBMS Primary Source Literacy Guidelines Student Self-evaluation**
- Analyzed all 4 learning outcomes
- Average score was 4.3 out of 5

“I have always liked history but appreciating Idaho history has led me to do things like go camping locally, going to locations I have worked on. I want to see it with my own eyes, tell other people about it, they ask me about my work and I tell them about what I learned, not just about scanning and metadata. Making connections with state history. Solid 5 if not a 6. My favorite part about this job.” Interviewee #4

“It was really cool especially seeing student organizations and documents showing the growth of campus especially since I have close personal ties to campus through my family, seeing the evolution of Idaho history. Something to be proud of. Things that most people don’t get to see first-hand.” Interviewee #3

Next Steps
- Revisit student job descriptions to align with library and campus learning goals
- Map responsibilities directly related to visual, digital, and primary source literacies and standards.
- Assess whether to include how students “grade” themselves against these standards versus staff evaluations of students throughout their employment.
- Map student experiences to the language of administrators, strategic plans, and learning outcomes; place an importance on experiential and in-depth learning experiences at work (AACU LEAP High-Impact Educational Practices).
- Student worker library experiences play a fundamental role in shaping lifelong information literacy skills. As libraries connect this new information literacy framework to departments that employ student workers, libraries can strategically communicate impacts on student learning, student retention, student success, workplace readiness, and their contribution to the overall information literacy lifecycle.