PRACTICE INTO RESEARCH, RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE:
A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR LIBRARIANS

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Outline of this introduction

- Welcome!
- Why practice into research, research into practice?
- Purpose of program
- Removing obstacles
- Structure of the program
- Conclusion

Welcome!

- Congratulations on your desire to strengthen your knowledge of the research process!

- Many librarians want to improve their practice by conducting research and publishing findings. However, they may not have the opportunity to learn research methods during a masters degree program in library and information science.

Welcome!

- Your knowledge of the practice of librarianship will contribute greatly to the relevance of the research you conduct. This can benefit others in our field, too.

- As a practicing librarian, you are aware of issues and problems facing our profession. Research can provide an evidence base to justify decisions and funding.

Why practice into research, research into practice?

- We know that information and libraries are rapidly and continuously changing…

- Empirical evidence can validate your responses to these changes.

- Systematic studying of problems and potential solutions can result in better practice.

Why practice into research, research into practice?

- Research is a systematic method of studying a problem to discover and develop defensible solutions. It generates new knowledge. It involves:

- Observation
- Study
- Translation or interpretation of results
- Practice of new things learned

Purpose of program

- This program is designed to strengthen your research skills through a self-directed course of study.

- In the process, you will develop a research proposal. Once implemented, you can disseminate the results of that research project through presentations and publications. You can use the results to influence your practice.

Removing obstacles….

- Consider what obstacles might interfere with completing this program. Make a note of them. Now, how can you overcome them? Here are some common ones:

Obstacles: I don't have time!

- Effective time management is essential to accomplishing the goals of this program. Establish a timeline for yourself. Set aside time each week to engage in the learning activities and assignments. Make the completion of the program a priority!

Obstacles: I am afraid of statistics!

- Some research studies require statistical analysis, and others do not. The method for your study will **evolve from your research question**.

- If you do not have expertise in statistics, your analysis may be done by a statistical consultant. You should understand your topic thoroughly as well as the logic and process of the study analysis. You will guide the analysis process by explaining the importance of the observations/variables used, their presumed relationships with each other, and the anticipated results from the study. With this information, the statistical consultant can select models and provide results. You will then interpret and apply the results.

- It is important to understand the underlying concepts for the analysis, not necessarily the math!

Structure of the program

- Research is a mindset. It is a way of thinking about your professional environment. It involves:

    - *Curiosity* about what happens in your professional work. Do you have questions about why something works or doesn't work? How to do something better? What causes something? Where is an optimal place? When is the best time for something? Those are "curiosity" questions!

    - *Determination* to investigate phenomena. Do you have the will to follow through on an organized plan to solve a problem or understand an aspect of your work?

    - *Discipline* to follow through on your research plan. Can you adhere to a timeline?

    - *Attention to detail* so that the planning and implementing of the study are methodical and thorough.

Structure of the program

- The syllabus details your plan of study. Follow the instructions in the syllabus as you progress through the program.

- The learning resources for the program includes a mentor, a textbook, readings, handouts, videos, and exercises.

    Recommended textbook is: B. M. Wildemuth, Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2009.

Structure of the program

There are 5 modules:

1. What will I study? Formulating a research question.
2. How will I answer my research question? Selecting a methodology.
3. How will I answer my research question? Planning your study.
4. How will I analyze and interpret my results?
5. How will I communicate my results?

The outcome for the program is a research proposal.

Structure of program

- There is a **pre-assessment** survey. Its purpose is to understand your self-perceptions of your knowledge about key aspects of research before you begin the program.

- There is a **program assessment** to be completed once you finish the program. The purpose is to understand whether you gained in your knowledge of research methods as a result of the program and to learn whether there are ways the program could be improved.

Structure of program--Mentors

- This program is designed for maximum flexibility, so that you can learn and work at your own pace.

- You should have a mentor for the program. The mentor will respond to your questions and comment on drafts of the parts of your proposal. You can contact the program director, Dr. Sharon Weiner, to discuss the selection of a mentor.

Conclusion…

- This program provides you with a structured way to learn how to develop a research study.

- Once you complete your study and publish the results, you will contribute to much-needed research in library, information, and archival science!

- You will have evidence for improving your practice and the practice of colleagues.

- One last thing--Enjoy!

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