
Editorial: “Emerging” from COVID and moving forward

Editorial

161

Pandemic-related challenges continue to provide opportunities for academic libraries and higher education to reimagine and rethink their futures. How will we deliver a sustainable future? For those in academic libraries, this fundamental question prompts others. We offer an assortment of questions below that we believe are relevant and meaningful to the challenges we face in creating sustainable services and support to our communities:

- (1) What do we need to do to elevate the library, improve library value and increase institutional impact?
- (2) How can we help promote and support success in today’s complex and demanding learning environment?
- (3) What strategic partnerships for teaching and learning do we need to evolve?
- (4) How can we improve the accessibility, inclusivity and visibility of our services, resources and programs?
- (5) What is the librarian’s role in curating the modern curriculum in our transformation to online learning?
- (6) How are we bringing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) to our libraries and institutions?
- (7) How can librarians identify DEI gaps and measure the success of new initiatives? What *is* success?
- (8) Looking at our collections, are we engaging Indigenous literature and knowledge in ways that are both robust and respectful?
- (9) As students return to our campuses and users return to our libraries, how can we create safe and equitable staffing models?
- (10) Focusing on professional development, what strategies have we implemented to support librarians in a changing learning environment? How do we continue to support librarians in this environment in meaningful ways?

Today, we have more questions than answers. Looking in the rearview mirror, back to March 2020, academic librarians have adjusted how they support students, researchers, faculty and administrators. As we emerge from COVID, and focus on how to deliver a sustainable future, we will need to further adjust to support students, researchers, faculty and administrators. The above questions, the topics they represent and the articles in this issue, ask readers to think critically.

Volume 50 Issue 2 includes articles on chat service during the pandemic (Decker), the value of specialized service desks (Bankston), undergraduate and graduate nursing students’ information literacy (Allari), library accessibility webpages (Ezell) and one academic library’s response to the Camp Fire (Korber). We draw readers’ attention to Kline’s article “Graduate Student Intellectual Journeys: A Functional Method to Identify Library Service Gaps and Jarson and Hamelers’ article “Is the ACRL Framework a Teaching Tool?”

Kline’s work on graduate student intellectual journeys made clear the challenges librarians face in supporting the diverse experiences students encounter as they work towards doctorate



Reference Services Review
Vol. 50 No. 2, 2022
pp. 161-162
© Emerald Publishing Limited
0090-7324
DOI 10.1108/RSR-06-2022-113

degrees. To our question of how we can better support success in today's complex and demanding learning environment, Kline presents both a clear and urgent rationale for librarians to use systemic methods and an action-oriented approach to better understand their graduate students and provide better supports.

Jarson and Hamelers raised relevant concerns about the accessibility of librarian language and jargon around information literacy, specifically the ACRL Framework. They explored how the language of the Framework might be used with students, and how students might connect with it in meaningful ways. Information literacy educators will find their methods and recommendations useful in their own teaching practice in connecting information literacy to the student experience.

We continue to ponder these questions as we adjust to new practices, needs and realities emerging from the pandemic. We invite our readers and authors to engage with questions and help us to advance our knowledge, practices and research moving forward.

Sarah Barbara Watstein and Elizabeth M. Johns