

ABSTRACT

Elizabeth Baker, QUALITY AND LIBRARY EDUCATION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LIS FACULTY CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF LIBRARY PROGRAM CURRICULUM (Under the direction of Dr. David Siegel). Department of Educational Leadership, March 2019.

This dissertation aimed to examine the perceptions of faculty about the curriculum taught in a Master's level degree library program. It was motivated by one research question: How do faculty in a Library and Information Studies (LIS) program in the United States conceptualize a quality library education? It utilized a two-part conceptual framework, particularly relying on the work of Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) in which they conceptualized quality in higher education as exceptionalism, perfectionism, fitness-for purpose, value-for-money, transformation, compliance, political or symbolic, employability, and accountability and Argyris and Schon (1992) in which theories-in-use are the actual beliefs and practices while espoused theories are the professed beliefs and practices of professionals. This study employed a phenomenological methodology, utilizing the lifeworld approach as conceptualized by Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom (2008), which stresses a whole-part-whole approach to data analysis. The study concluded that the faculty in the selected LIS program conceptualize a quality library education for their students as community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation. Thus, the faculty in this study identified only two of the nine elements of a quality education as conceptualized by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). Using the study's findings as their theories-in-use and the program's learning outcomes as their espoused theories, it was determined that these two elements mostly match each other, with the exception of student engagement not explicitly appearing in their espoused theories.

QUALITY AND LIBRARY EDUCATION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LIS
FACULTY CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF LIBRARY PROGRAM CURRICULUM

A Dissertation

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The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

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Elizabeth Baker

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QUALITY AND LIBRARY EDUCATION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LIS
FACULTY CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF LIBRARY PROGRAM CURRICULUM

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DEDICATION

For most people, the dissertation process is a long, arduous—and often very lonely—journey. To this list, I personally would add “and fraught with peril.” My dissertation process has been interrupted by two hurricanes, Matthew and Florence. With Hurricane Matthew in 2016, flooding in neighboring towns resulted in my dissertation proposal defense being rescheduled to a later date. This action was inconvenient and frustrating, but it was not “fraught with peril” for me. However, Hurricane Florence in 2018 was a different story completely. With Florence, I lost most, if not all, of a semester with the evacuation before the storm, the arrival of the storm itself, and the aftermath and cleanup from the storm. Unfortunately, Florence was all too “fraught with peril” for my child and me.

Hurricane Florence initially was predicted to make landfall at a Category 4 or higher. It was later (thankfully) downgraded to a Category 1 storm. However, the threat from flooding was never downgraded, with predictions of 10-13 feet of storm surge, which would have submerged my house if it came to be. Therefore, in early September, I fled the impending storm with my child, two small dogs, and a parakeet in a cage. When we made the decision to go, we hurriedly packed suitcases of clothes, toiletries, and pet supplies. We loaded gallons of water and several re-usable bags of non-perishable food into the back of the car.

With my child in the back seat comforting the two dogs and the parakeet bravely riding shotgun in the front seat next to me, we drove out of our hometown, not knowing if we would have a home to which to return. As we were leaving, an older song was playing in the car. From the back seat, my child says, “Mom, do you even hear the song that is playing on the radio?” In an ironic turn of events, the song was “It’s the End of the World as We Know It” by REM. We laughed as this song accompanied our flight out of the path of the storm. It was the best and the

worst song for our situation, and its appropriateness (or inappropriateness?) lightened the mood as we joined the long line of cars moving along the only route out of town. The rest of the title of the song is “And I Feel Fine.” We were fleeing from the impending storm, and we did feel fine.

We spent a week in a hotel room four hours from our home. During this time, we watched the storm approach and settle over our hometown on the hotel room TV. We ate canned soup and ravioli, washed our clothes with shampoo, and cringed every time an image surfaced on social media. We saw streets adjacent to ours flooded, and we read accounts of friends and neighbors reporting damage to their property. After a week, we braved the four hour drive back home. The closer that we got to the coast, we began to see the damage, particularly high water and flooded businesses. We experienced one tense moment when we crossed a space in the road where the water was rising. Less than an hour later, we heard on the radio that this portion of the road was closed because of the rising water that we had just crossed. We made it back home without further incident.

To prolong the anxiousness of seeing our house, we drove around town before going home. We saw many, many signs of the storm: roofs torn off or damaged; siding missing from homes; gutters and awnings hanging; debris piled at the road, large trees down everywhere; and so forth. After surveying the damage, we held our breaths and drove home. When we drove up in our yard, our house looked fine from the front. We breathed a small sigh of relief. When we went to the back of the house, we were greeted with a different scenario. A large tree in our yard had been uprooted from the ground and fallen toward the house. In fact, it missed falling on our house by a mere inches. The upper branches had scraped the house as it fell, but its weight did not land on the house. We noticed a small awning snapped off from our back door laying against the side of the house and a broken window. There were shingles from the roof all over the back

yard and siding missing from one side of our house. Inside, the ceiling in one room had collapsed partially, exposing the beams of the ceiling. We noticed standing water in one room, which came from the area where the ceiling fell. We surmised from where the water was found and from where the water had to come inside that it must have been raining sideways in our house for a while. The electricity was not working. When the tree fell, it took the power lines with it, bending and breaking the pole where the electricity entered our house. It took an electrician to make this repair.

Needless to say, it took days and days to clean the water and dirt from the fallen ceiling out of the house and days and days to clean the shingles and other debris from the back yard. As of this writing, I am still waiting for repairs to the roof and the ceiling. My work and my child's school were closed for several weeks as people recovered from the storm. By early October, everything had returned to "normal." At least, that is, we were back into a work and school routine as we waited for the insurance agents and contractors to assess our damage. Throughout the county, the list for needed repairs was/is long as many people received damage similar to or far worse than what we received.

I was not emotionally or physically able to return to working on my dissertation until late November/early December. I finished writing it in early January 2019. Of course, the editing process came next, which was followed by committee review and dissertation defense. Throughout the entire doctoral process, from course work to defense, one person has made this long, arduous, perilous—but not lonely—journey with me. This person, of course, is my lovely, brave, intelligent, and talented daughter. This dissertation is dedicated to her. Thanks for letting me be your tired, stressed, dedicated, but loving mother.

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Ava—my child, who has been on this entire doctoral journey with me. She endured long rides in the backseat of the car while we traveled to and from my classes. She even practiced a musical instrument (saxophone) and completed her homework (grades 4-6) on these rides. When she was a little older, she helped with the doctoral process by giving me time to work on my dissertation and doing more chores around the house. I cannot imagine life without her, with or without a doctoral degree.

Seanna—a childhood friend, who watched my child while I was in class. It truly takes a village to raise a child or to complete a doctoral degree. I am glad that she was/is part of mine. Some friends are more family than friend. I cannot imagine leaving my child with anyone else for the three years that it took for me to complete the required coursework.

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King Dave—a faculty member, who knows that this acknowledgement is about him even if he is not specifically mentioned. On the first night of the very first class, he jokingly told the entire cohort that we could call him by the appellation of “King Dave.” And, it is important to note that we did. Now, at the end of the journey, I want to thank King Dave for taking on this quirky dissertation (which was not a case study and which used methodology that he had never

used) and this quirky student (who always insists on doing everything her way). I cannot imagine working with or being guided by anyone else.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The American Library Association (ALA) currently has granted accreditation to 58 library education programs throughout the United States (American Library Association Committee on Accreditation, 2015). This credential recognizes that these programs have met ALA's accreditation standards for a Master's level degree in Library and Information Studies (LIS). The function of a LIS program is to prepare its graduates to work in the nation's academic, school, public, or special libraries, with the curriculum designed for students to select a specialized course of study in one of these broad library types. A typical LIS program requires that students take a combination of core and elective courses. For most LIS programs, the core courses require mastery in six main areas: foundations of the field, organization of information sources, reference services and sources, library management, information technology, and research methods and evaluation (Hall, 2009). These core classes are significant to the profession for two fundamental reasons: (1) they foster a shared comprehension of librarianship; and (2) they transmit the foundational knowledge, competencies, and skills that students need to acquire (Hall, 2009). To this core curriculum, societal changes and technological advances have necessitated the inclusion of additional courses such as ethics, user instruction, and human-computer interaction (Hall, 2009).

Accreditation is "the primary means of assuring and improving academic quality in U.S. higher education" (Eaton, 2012, p. 8). The accreditation process, designed to function as a means of self-regulation for postsecondary institutions and programs, follows an established review cycle: (1) the creation of a self-study document using the appropriate standards of the accrediting agency or association; (2) a review of the institution or program by a group of peers selected by

the accrediting agency or association, and (3) a decision from the peer group whether the institution or program meets the standards, including whether (or not) accreditation is awarded (Eaton, 2012). Accrediting agencies or associations, which can be national, regional, or programmatic in nature, are granted the authority to evaluate the quality of an institution or program after their standards are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, particularly the Secretary of Education, as rigorous and effective (Sibolski, 2012). With its peer review process, accreditation supports the academic freedom of faculty to create and deliver their curriculum, the supremacy of postsecondary institutions to adhere to their mission statements, and the autonomy of both parties (faculty and institutions) to determine the academic standards necessary for a quality education (Eaton, 2012).

ALA accreditation safeguards the quality of the education that a student receives from a LIS program. Upon graduation, the student should exhibit mastery of the LIS curriculum, including (but not limited to) the core courses. ALA accreditation guarantees that a LIS program has established appropriate student learning outcomes and has created a learning environment in which these outcomes can be achieved, defining the characteristics of a quality library education according to ALA (American Library Association, 2008). Furthermore, accreditation signifies to educators, employers, and other consumers that graduates possess the core competencies required by their professions. ALA accreditation confirms that a LIS program gauges the quality of its curriculum upon national standards and imparts the common information and necessary preparation for students to enter the workforce. The accreditation process produces a Master's level degree that defines librarianship as a profession, speaks to the beliefs and practices of its graduates, and bestows prestige upon its recipients. Like other professional associations, ALA champions for its constituents, standardizes library procedures, and generates a cohesive

federation of practitioners. With their focus on student learning outcomes, ALA's accreditation standards are qualitative and formative to encourage innovation and to guide improvement in the LIS programs rather than quantitative and summative to measure proficiency or to reach a specified target.

Problem Statement

There exists tension within the library field, especially between library educators and practitioners, as to the function of a library education, leading to the question of whose conceptualization of quality—faculty or outside agencies—should guide the curriculum. With the increasing reliance on accountability measures, especially the standards of accrediting agencies, similar issues are evident within other accredited programs within higher education. Bullough, Clark and Patterson (2003) note the rising importance of external accrediting agencies on teacher education programs, a situation that is eroding the voluntary nature of the accreditation process itself, particularly when accreditation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) supposedly signifies a competent (or quality) teacher. For the program under review, it may be tempting to follow the accreditation template to the letter when preparing the self-study document; however, the authors caution that “fitting the standard may not be proof of quality nor will it aid in program improvement or promote faculty learning” (Bullough et al., 2003, p. 49). Furthermore, with the prevalence and impact of external agencies on teacher education, such as NCATE, Beyer (2002) warns that the preparation of future teachers is being treated “like a science” in which adherence to standards is thought to produce the best results for academic programs yet this approach fundamentally narrows the definition of quality, isolates the program socially and ideologically, and reduces intellectual growth for students and faculty (p. 240).

Since ALA accreditation standards are qualitative in nature, each LIS program is left to interpret the meaning of the standards and to construct unique student learning outcomes. If, as Bullough et al. (2003) point out, the faculty of the LIS program under review create a self-study document that is based on their individualistic learning outcomes but if the visiting team does not understand or agree with the effectiveness of these outcomes, the library education that the program delivers to students may not be deemed as quality. In addition, regardless of the outcome of the accreditation visit, compliance with the accreditation standards does not prove that good teaching or effective student learning has occurred, as Beyer (2002) points out. Furthermore, as the literature review in Chapter 2 delineates, although numerous studies have traced the evolution of library education, particularly the composition of the core courses within the LIS curriculum (Marco, 1994; Markey, 2004; Hall, 2009; Irwin, 2002), there is a scarcity of empirical evidence that explores what constitutes a quality education and what role (if any) that the program learning outcomes (such as those created by ALA accreditation standards) play in producing this education. Furthermore, this scarcity is increased when exploring the subjective experiences or viewpoints of LIS faculty who design and deliver the curriculum within the nation's library programs and who write the self-study documents that are used to evaluate these programs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how the LIS faculty in a library program in the Southeastern United States described a quality library education for their students. According to ALA, quality is defined as “the effective utilization of resources to achieve appropriate educational objectives and student learning outcomes” (American Library Association, 2008, p. 3). By investigating the phenomenon of quality at the collective level

through the interviews with multiple faculty members in one program, the study revealed the subjective, inner world of the individual participants, illuminating their actual beliefs and practices, creating a conceptualization of a quality library education from their viewpoint instead of an outside agency, such as ALA accreditation. In addition, a single LIS program within the United States was selected in order to interview instructors who teach subjects across the discipline of library science, incorporating more of the core classes within one study. This approach will provide a better overview of library education in general rather than just one course across many LIS programs or a smattering of random courses under the same circumstances.

The results of this study could be used for many purposes. For example, LIS faculty throughout the country could use the results to review and improve their programs, to recruit and retain students, to decide whether to pursue or maintain ALA accreditation, and to improve the reputation of their programs. Students, whether potential or actual, could use the results in order to make choices about their education, particularly the role (if any) that ALA accreditation plays in the quality of library education, which could impact their choice of schools, which could affect their future careers. Higher education administrators could use this study to make informed decisions about LIS programs in relation to staffing and funding. At the national level, ALA could use the results to evaluate the purpose and significance of its accreditation standards, making alterations where needed, and federal lawmakers and agencies (such as the U.S. Department of Education) could assess the effectiveness of the accreditation process in general and of this recognized accreditation association (ALA) specifically, possibly impacting tuition dollars for the institution or program if accreditation is withdrawn. From a theoretical standpoint, the results of this study add to the literature in library science because of its unique focus on LIS

faculty (not students or practitioners) and its exploration of how faculty characterize the concept of quality (not an outside accrediting agency). In the triangle of students, practitioners, and educators, faculty may be the least studied group. As the holders of doctoral degrees (instead of the master's degrees of practitioners) within the field, faculty (usually but not exclusively) are the scholars within library science. Traditionally, the faculty have elected not to study themselves. This study may provide a unique glimpse into the subjective world of LIS faculty.

Conceptual Framework

This phenomenological study explored the intersection of two constructs—quality and library education. Within higher education, quality is dependent on several variables, including (but not limited to) stakeholder expectations, experiences, or needs; institutional and program performance, services, or competitiveness; or graduate skills, transformation, or employability (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). In addition, quality has become associated with terms such as value-added, elitism, or superiority (Harvey & Green, 1993). Looking at higher education, Harvey and colleagues conceptualize quality as exceptionalness, perfection (or consistency), fitness-for purpose, value-for-money, transformative (Harvey & Green, 1993), compliance, political or symbolic (Harvey & Newton, 2004), employability (Harvey, 2001), and accountability (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). Library education is concerned with the professional preparation of the people necessary to run our nation's academic, public, school, and special libraries. As such, the curriculum often is structured to ensure the mastery of core skills or competencies, such as information evaluation and retrieval, information organization, library administration and management, professional ethics and principles, and technology (among others) (American Library Association, n.d.b).

Argyris and Schon (1992) recognize that people often develop theories that guide their actions and that they modify these theories to interpret increasingly more complex scenarios. The authors characterize these theories as “vehicles for explanation, prediction, or control” and label them as theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1992, p. 5). The authors contend that theories-in-use can be applied to professions where their practice becomes a reproducible and valid theory of action, especially when they are utilized to overcome dilemmas within the working environment (Argyris & Schon, 1992). Based on prior knowledge, experience, or assumptions, theories-in-use guide the actual (and not theoretical) behavior and thoughts of professionals. Using Argyris and Schon’s (1992) theories-in-use will allow a comparison of the collective LIS faculty members’ *actual* thoughts, actions, and principles regarding a quality library education to what they *profess* as their thoughts, actions, and principles (which might be impacted by outside parties, such as accrediting agencies).

The conceptual framework employed within the present study has many functions. It describes the relationship between the two constructs (quality and library education) through the analysis of the intersubjective experiences of the participating LIS faculty; examines the actual beliefs and practices of the faculty in the selected program; and acts as a guide to examine and analyze the data collected during the study. Therefore, the components of the conceptual framework produced a description or interpretation of what the LIS faculty considered a quality library education for their students, whether or not this education conformed to standards established by ALA (or other agencies).

Overview of the Methodology

This phenomenological study was designed to describe how faculty in a LIS program in the Southeastern United States theorized a quality library education for their Master’s level

students. As a result of its phenomenological nature, the study attempted to reduce the individual experiences of its participants into a “description of the universal essence” for all participants of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Utilizing Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom (2008) lifeworld approach to phenomenological research, the phenomenon to be investigated in this study was how faculty in the selected LIS program conceptualized what constituted quality in library education. The lifeworld approach to phenomenological research draws on the foundations of both transcendental and interpretative (or hermeneutic) phenomenology. Within the lifeworld approach, the researcher does not impose meaning on the phenomenon under study or force it into pre-determined categories, a process that allows the meaning to present itself organically (Dahlberg et al., 2008). The participants in this study were faculty members from a LIS program located within the Southeastern United States. Criterion sampling was employed in order to recruit faculty who teach a variety of classes within the overall curriculum, including both core and elective classes.

Research Question

This study explored the subjective experiences, understandings, or beliefs of faculty in one ALA accredited library program in the Southeastern United States. The overarching research question that guided this study was:

How do faculty in a Library and Information Studies (LIS) program in the United States conceptualize a quality library education?

This study focused on the individual experiences of the selected faculty, which provided a micro view of the concept of quality in library education, and these collective experiences were used to create a universal description of this phenomenon, which provided a macro view of the concept of quality in library education, at least within this one library program.

Data Collection

In this phenomenological study, several data collection methods were employed. First, the faculty were asked to write first-order critical narratives in which they describe an experience that depicts a positive experience that showed quality in library education and a second experience that depicts a negative experience that showed a lack of quality in library education. Creswell (2013) simply describes first-order narratives as those stories (or experiences) that people tell (or relate) about themselves. Next, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the faculty in order to discuss their narratives and to ask additional open-ended questions about a quality library education. The study's participants were asked to draw their visual conceptualization of what is necessary (resources, service, etc.) for a quality library education during the interview, and they were asked to discuss their visual depictions with me and to answer some open-ended questions about them. Since the written narratives and visual depictions varied based on the individual experiences of the faculty participants, the subsequent faculty interviews were distinctive in nature. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

To further speak to the issue of rigor, rich data were collected from the extended length of the interviews, particularly with multiple activities taking place during the interviews (discussing the writing prompts, answering questions (both prepared and spontaneous), and creating the visual depiction). In addition, detailed notetaking occurred during my visit in order to prepare for the interviews after reading the participant's writing prompts and after the interviews to record impressions and key concepts that were discussed. Furthermore, I employed member checking during the interviews in order to clarify that the faculty descriptions or constructions of a quality library education were fully understood by me (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). These methods allowed for any discrepancies to be discovered and investigated and for any ensuing questions to be asked and answered. Subsequently, these various methods allowed a glimpse into the subjective worlds of the participating faculty members, culminating in a written description of their conceptualization of a quality education, including their professed and actual beliefs and practices.

Data Analysis

The data in this study were examined through the following steps. The transcribed interviews were read in the following manner. First, they were examined as a whole in order to understand the meaning in its entirety. Then, the interviews were read with an eye to organizing the data into meaningful pieces or parts, such as words, sentences, or phrases. The next step was to identify codes within the data by describing or interpreting even smaller categorizations of meaning or information. After labeling the codes, they were grouped into general themes, or “broad units of information that consists of several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186). Then, the data were organized into a new whole in order to reveal the LIS faculty members’ conceptualization of a quality library education. This process follows the whole-part-whole analysis approach as outlined by Dahlberg et al. (2008), revealing the essence of the phenomenon under study (quality library education) to these selected participants (faculty in one LIS program). These results were described in narrative form. Using the components of the conceptual framework, the narrative described whether (or not) the faculty conceptualized a quality education as being or representing exceptionalness, perfection (or consistency), fitness-for purpose, value-for-money, transformative (Harvey & Green, 1993), compliance, political or symbolic (Harvey & Newton, 2004), employability (Harvey, 2001), or accountability (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). This narrative, also, provided dimensions of quality outside of those

conceptualized by Harvey and colleagues as they were generated by the study itself (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). From these methods, an authentic description or interpretation of the faculty members' personal perceptions and practices in relation to a quality education emerged.

Significance of the Study

The focus of this study filled in gaps in the current literature on this topic in three important areas. When considering the quality of a professional education, it is important to examine the prevailing practices of those within the field. Colson (1980) contends that effective professional education “must be based in a clear perception of the realities in which the profession exists” (p. 91). As “education for the profession is part of the profession” (Colson, 1980, p. 91), an exploration of the actual beliefs and practices (theory-in-use) rather than the professed beliefs and practices (espoused theory) of LIS faculty created a narrative of how LIS faculty in one program conceptualized a quality library education (Argyris & Schon, 1992).

For library science, ALA accreditation signifies a quality education which signifies a competent graduate who can assume a position within any library. Currently, the profession operates on the perception that ALA accreditation is the gold standard to achieve. However, there is contention within the field, particularly with practitioners who hire library school graduates, that LIS programs do not adequately prepare librarians for practical work. When examining the literature on library education, particularly the evolution of the core curriculum, there is a dearth of research that examines the subjective experiences or beliefs of LIS faculty with this phenomenon, particularly as a majority of the research focuses solely on a history of LIS core courses throughout time. My research filled in this glaring gap in the current literature.

While the current reliance on learning outcomes (and their expected results) underscores the link between accountability and quality, there still remains the need to investigate the effectiveness of this relationship (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). With this study, it was evident that several research opportunities existed. The study accomplished the following: (1) it explored the conception of quality as held by LIS faculty, regardless of the subject specialty of the instructor; (2) it provided an empirical study of the actual beliefs and practices of LIS faculty, regardless of the ALA accreditation standards; and (3) it fostered an environment in which LIS faculty could focus on depicting the education that their program provides, regardless of which stakeholder (students, administrators, employers, or policymakers) that it serves. Again, the results from this study addressed deficiencies that will strengthen the literature.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of clarity, the following terms are important to define within the context of the study.

Accreditation— “the primary means of assuring and improving academic quality in U.S. higher education” (Eaton, 2012, p. 8).

ALA—the American Library Association, founded in 1876, “is the oldest and largest library association in the world, providing association information, news, events, and advocacy resources for members, librarians, and library users” (American Library Association, n.d.a).

ALA accreditation standards—“assures the educational community, the general public, and other agencies or organizations that an institution or program (*a*) has clearly defined and educationally appropriate objectives expressed as student learning outcomes, (*b*) maintains conditions under which achievement of objectives can reasonably be expected, (*c*) is in fact

accomplishing objectives substantially, and (d) can be expected to continue to do so” (American Library Association, 2008, p. 3).

LIS—“Library and information studies encompasses information and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition, organization and description, storage and retrieval, preservation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, dissemination, and management” (American Library Association, 2008, p. 3).

Quality—“the effective utilization of resources to achieve appropriate educational objectives and student learning outcomes” (American Library Association, 2008, p. 3). Also, it is conceptualized as exceptionalness, perfection (or consistency), fitness-for purpose, value-for-money, transformative compliance, political or symbolic, employability, and accountability (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010).

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Biases of the Study

A delimitation of this study is that it centered on the perceptions of LIS faculty in a program in the Southeastern United States. The beliefs, experiences, and practices of these professionals could differ from other LIS faculty in the field or in other programs, from the colleagues in their own program, or from the standards for competencies generated by ALA. Therefore, the main delimitation to the study centered on the fact that faculty from one LIS program in the United States were interviewed. This study is concerned with the LIS faculty member’s description of their real-world, subjective experience with quality in a library education and did not assume that the ALA standards resulted in a quality library education necessarily. However, it is important to note that an ALA accredited Master’s degree may afford its recipients greater prestige within the profession, which may grant its holder more employment opportunities.

As for study biases, I am a graduate of an ALA accredited LIS program and hold an accredited Master's degree. I have first-hand knowledge of LIS curriculum and its intended student learning outcomes. I work in a library as a practitioner and have knowledge of the skills and competencies needed for this type of working environment. Using the lifeworld approach, I minimized the study's biases through a conscious self-awareness that recognized my connection with the subject matter and that allowed me simultaneously to be close (a part of the world in which the study is taking place) and distant (a researcher encountering the data for the first time). The lifeworld approach as conceptualized by Dahlberg et al. (2008) labels this process as openness. The openness process was enhanced through the utilization of the phenomenological attitude, which "strive(s) to suspend presuppositions and go beyond the natural attitude of taken-for-granted understandings" (Finlay, 2008, p. 2). Within the lifeworld approach, Dahlberg et al. (2008) utilize the term bridling to describe this process (instead of Husserl's bracketing).

Summary

The purpose of accreditation is to provide acknowledgment that an institution or program delivers and maintains an education that is governed by standards, which allows graduates to continue their education, particularly in earning a higher degree, and/or to enter into professional practice, such as in librarianship. That is, the accreditation process should ensure a quality education for students. However, within the field of library science a tension exists between its many stakeholders (faculty, students, employers, etc.) what constitutes quality in library education. Using phenomenological methodology, this study intended to provide a conceptualization of what LIS faculty in one program in the United States consider quality through the utilization of two frameworks developed by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001;

Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) and Argyris and Schon (1992).

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter is guided by the exploration of three main considerations: quality, library education, and theories-in-use. While the concept of quality is important to higher education, particularly with the advent of accountability, there are many ways for institutions or programs to define or apply it within their operations or curriculum. For example, quality can be found in exceptionalism, perfectionism, fitness-for-purpose, value-for-money, compliance with established standards, employability of graduates, or accountability measures. Or, quality can be deemed as political or symbolic in nature. Throughout its history, which stretches back over a century, library educators and practitioners have debated what courses and skills should encompass the core curriculum, with information organization and library management remaining a constant while technology and research have become increasingly important to the curriculum. Library education is accredited by the American Library Association (ALA), which defines a quality library education as reliant on the creation and achievement of learning outcomes. As characterized by Argyris and Schon (1992), theories-in-use depict the actual practices and beliefs of professionals. Within this study, this knowledge will be used to uncover how library educators conceptualize the concept of quality within a library education. This chapter contains an overview of the concept of quality (including the nine components of quality education and stakeholder perspectives of quality), library education (including a historical review and a description of the core curriculum, competencies, electives, field experience, portfolios, conflicts and challenges), and theories-in-use (including an explanation of what is a profession and a description of espoused theories and theories-in-use.)

Quality

Although often difficult to define, the concept of quality is an important issue in higher education, especially with the current increased focus on accountability, decreased access to physical resources (Harvey & Green, 1993), perceived intrusion of accrediting agencies or associations (Newton, 2000), massification and globalization of higher education, increased competition in the educational market (Rosa, Sarrico, & Amaral, 2012), promise of a suitable educational experience for paying students, public dissemination of information about the effectiveness of institutions and programs (Harvey & Newton, 2004), and establishment of ranking systems that are not based on teaching or learning (French et al., 2014). The implementation of policies and procedures to ensure quality frequently increases the centralization of information; produces distinct boundaries of power or authority; prompts examination of the institutional or program brand; generates the formulization of rules, handbooks, etc.; encourages cooperation among different people and units; spurs the creation of marketing tools; reveals a need for transparency; improves the decision making process; and reveals the importance of stakeholders in the entire system (Stensaker, 2008).

While the inherent existence of quality frequently is taken for granted at the institutional or program level, it has an enduring relevance for employers who recruit and hire the nation's students into the workforce (Harvey & Green, 1993). In fact, besides students and employers, "there are a variety of stakeholders in higher education," including college and university employees (faculty and staff), the government (federal and state), accreditors (institutional and program), auditors, etc., with each stakeholder partial to their own unique role in higher education, resulting in a variety of ways to measure or verify quality (Tam, 2001, p. 47). Likewise, Harvey and Newton (2004) describe the process of trying to monitor quality as

dialectical (impacted by opposing ideas) and phenomenological (requiring self-awareness) in nature. Compounding this issue is the lack of consensus of the purpose of higher education as either (1) producing skilled workers, researchers, or scientists ready to enter the workforce; (2) sufficiently educating students through effective teaching; or (3) providing future opportunities for personal growth or professional development for graduates (Tam, 2001). If the purpose of higher education is narrowed to just a focus on the experience of the student, the function of colleges and universities expands to the pursuit of knowledge, the development of autonomy, the expansion of personal beliefs or perspectives, and the advancement of critical thinking skills (Tam, 2001). Furthermore, within higher education, there often exists differences between how the concept of quality is theoretically defined or understood in an institution or program and how it is actually implemented or practiced, leading to realistic outcomes that differ from the expected ones (Ramirez, 2013).

The inherent ambiguous nature of the term (quality) itself lends to the elusiveness of this construct, particularly when (1) its meaning is relative to the individual and the context in which it was used and (2) it can be characterized as an absolute standard or confirmation, which requires that the target be exceeded in order for quality to be obtained, while, simultaneously, it can be characterized as an absolutist process, which requires that the target consistently produces a desired outcome for quality to be achieved (Harvey & Green, 1993). Thus, quality is subjective, and, as a value-laden term, it authenticates other concepts through the act of association (Harvey & Green, 1993). Furthermore, defining quality proves elusive because it is relative to the stakeholder, creating multiple definitions concurrently. Harvey and Green (1993) conceptualize quality as being exceptional, as representing perfection (or consistency), as displaying fitness-for-purpose, as containing value-for-money, and as being transformative. To

this list, Harvey and Newton (2004) conceptualize quality as compliance and as political or symbolic in nature, Harvey (2001) conceptualizes quality as employability, and Stensaker and Harvey (2010) conceptualize quality as accountability.

Quality as Exceptionalism

In viewing quality as demonstrating exceptional attributes, the concept signifies exclusivity, specialness, distinctiveness, or inaccessibility, with the beholder taking the apodictic view that quality is self-evident even if it cannot be defined, articulated, or measured (Harvey & Green, 1993). In this traditional view, higher education institutions or programs internalize the concept of quality and believe that it is manifested in their everyday activities. In addition, when considering quality as exceptional in nature, the concept becomes synonymous with the absolutist notion of excellence, which, in turn, is focused on achieving institutional or program standards (or benchmarks) via inputs or outputs, with excellence determined by the reputation of the institution or program, the amount of physical resources that it holds, and/or the perception of its achievement of a pre-conceived gold standard (Harvey & Green, 1993). In this perspective, excellence and standards are “inextricably linked,” culminating in two unique scenarios: (1) employers who support the need for maintenance (and improvement) of institutional and program standards to ensure the cultivation of transferable job skills in students and (2) postsecondary institutions and programs creating an educational niche from the ensuing competition for excellence in order to attract students in the first place (Harvey & Green, 1993, p. 13). Paradoxically, it is important to note that the pursuit of excellence can result in either elitism as institutions and programs are ranked (or judged) as prestigious by these standards (whether earned or not) or relativism as institutions and programs determine not only their own standards but whether (or not) they achieve them (Harvey & Green, 1993).

Quality as Perfectionism

From the quality as perfectionism (or consistency) perspective, quality is realized when a product or service is produced or delivered without flaws or defects (Harvey & Green, 1993). In this characterization, the emphasis swings from a focus on inputs and outputs that achieve (and maintain) a gold standard to one of conforming to definable and measurable specifications (Harvey & Green, 1993). Quality is marked by reliability and consistency in the product or service, displaying an emphasis in preventing defects through an organizational culture in which quality is a part of everyone's daily business (Harvey & Green, 1993). While this scenario appears to be a search for excellence (or quality) through the implementation of best practices, it really becomes the installation of a culture obsessed with quality improvement, validating external quality measures (Harvey & Stensaker, 2008). Thus, with accreditation and assessment routinized in higher education, a quality culture emerges that is composed of the psychological aspects (beliefs, values, emotions, and commitment) and the structural/managerial components (processes, tasks, standards, and responsibilities) of organizational life (Harvey & Stensaker, 2008). Nevertheless, with different functional missions, educational purposes, internal governance, and political ambitions, a common quality culture is "impossible to define since every higher education institution is unique" (Harvey & Stensaker, 2008, p. 434). However, despite its "never-ending complexity," the concept of quality culture can be used to analyze how a higher education institution or program responds to its external or internal stakeholders (Harvey & Stensaker, 2008, p. 434). Harvey and Stensaker (2008) outline four ways:

- The actions of a responsive quality culture are directed by the external demands of accrediting agencies or associations or state or federal governments. This idealized type of postsecondary institution or program views the demands of these outside

sources as an opportunity to review their internal processes for compliance and possible improvement. People operating within this environment might try to emulate the best practices gleaned from other institutions or programs. Quality control is viewed as a means to address issues or concerns that are created by others; therefore, the concept of quality is not internalized into their everyday work practices.

- As its name implies, a reactive quality culture reacts to the demands of external sources rather than voluntarily absorbing these requirements into their daily practices. As such, while employees working in this type of idealized environment may respond favorably to rewards, they will harbor reservations about the potential improvements or innovations that come with their compliance and will lament the perceived lack of autonomy that results from the imposed demands. In addition, there may exist subcultures within the institution or program that resist participation in or acceptance of any perceived quality measures.
- Within the regenerative quality culture, there is an awareness of the external demands placed on the institution or program; however, this culture exhibits an internal focus. This type of quality culture creates a plan for its own continuous improvement, adopting external initiatives when they add value to or create learning opportunities for the institution or program. Because of its dynamic state, this idealized cultural type appears to fluctuate as it moves through events or activities, reflecting on their effectiveness and reframing its future based on the results. In this environment, the pursuit of quality will be reflected in the day-to-day activities of employees, especially with its focus on teamwork. Interference from external sources (which might include administration) often produces dissidence in employees.

- The reproductive quality culture works to maintain the status quo by diminishing the effects of the demands of external sources. For this idealized type, its people on both the institutional and program level strive to enact and sustain those practices that produce the best possible results (including any rewards that they may receive). Therefore, quality becomes internalized through established norms that become an indistinguishable part of the organization's everyday activities. Although the reproductive quality culture appears to advance collaboration, it mirrors the professional knowledge and skills of its members and any disruption of the status quo will be met with resistance.

It is important to note that Harvey and Stensaker (2008) claim that postsecondary institutions or programs may display characteristics from each idealized type in different situations. In addition, the political environment in which the institution or program operates will influence the variables that create its culture (Yorke, 2000). Therefore, Yorke (2000) advances the importance of leadership in the development of quality culture. In establishing or guiding a quality culture, the role of the leader is to develop vision or strategy at the institution or program level, to establish a sense of necessity (or importance) of a quality culture, to create a guiding coalition (or team) to lead the advancement of this culture, to communicate this focus widely and continuously in simple, direct language, and to develop a shared commitment between the members of the institution or program (Yorke, 2000).

Quality as Fitness-for-Purpose

Returning to the conceptualization of quality as determined by Harvey and Green (1993), the fitness-for-purpose viewpoint focuses on the function (or purpose) of the product or service, with quality determined by how well the product or service meets this function. This approach is

different in that quality is not a status (or distinction) to be earned or a specialness (or elitism) to be maintained, which in both instances makes quality exclusive as exceptionalism is difficult to achieve (Harvey & Green, 1993). Instead, “if something does the job it is designed for then it is a quality product or service,” making quality inclusive as “every product and service has the potential to fits its purpose” and thus mark it as quality (Harvey & Green, 1993, pp. 16-17). In the pursuit of a product or quality with zero defects, the specifications of the customer are paramount, and quality arises only when these requirements are met (Harvey & Green, 1993). However, complicating this approach is the necessity to not only reevaluate the customer’s product or service requirements periodically but also to predict their needs in advance based on current market trends, technology, cost, and available manpower, which are factors that may impact the customer’s expectations and options (Harvey & Green, 1993). Thus, while customer requirements are vital to this characterization of quality and play an important role in the design of the product or service, customers rarely are capable of identifying these needs, leaving the producer or provider to anticipate their customer’s needs or desires (Harvey & Green, 1993).

In higher education, besides the contentious use of the word customer itself, the question emerges: who is the customer that institutions or programs serve? The answer can range from the student who pays tuition to attend classes (and, thus to receive an education), to state or federal governments that finance and regulate higher education, to the members of the academy itself (such as faculty, staff, or administrators), or to society in general (which would include employers) that looks to higher education to train the next generation of workers and problem-solvers (Harvey & Green, 1993). In fact, Harvey and Green (1993) question whether students are “the customer, the product, or both” (p. 18). For this reason, students and employers often are referred to as the consumers of higher education because they are the ones who receive the

product (or service) and who utilize the product (or service), respectively. Additionally, as already discussed, customers often cannot formulate their own requirements, leaving students to enroll in those courses that are available or that are required in a specified path of study (Harvey & Green, 1993). While students and employers can shape the product (or service) through their selection of courses or the application of pressure to modify (or add) courses (or skills), these two groups do not create the product (or service), which is the responsibility of faculty (Harvey & Green, 1993). However, unlike the manufacturing industry, students and faculty, as customer and producer, are intertwined in the educational process, making it difficult to define quality as the customer (the student) is not always the best judge of this concept, particularly if the student has limited experience with the material to be mastered or has never attempted to take the selected course at multiple institutions or from multiple instructors (Harvey & Green, 1993)

Within the fitness-for-purpose approach, quality occurs when the institution or program achieves its own established standards, objectives, or mission (Harvey & Green, 1993). The competition generated when higher education institutions or programs strive to create an educational niche for themselves endorses “the definition of quality as that of fulfilling the mission of the institution” or program, with quality (or fitness-for-purpose) becoming equated with how the institution or program performs in their selected market (Harvey & Green, 1993, p. 19). Therefore, “A high quality institution [or program] is one which clearly states its mission (or purpose) and is efficient and effective in meeting the goals that it has set for itself,” which may or may not ensure that quality actually exists (Harvey & Green, 1993, p. 19). Consequently, a need for quality assurance is evident. The role of quality assurance is twofold: to define the concept of quality for an institution or program and to put measures in place that achieve them successfully (Harvey & Green, 1993). With quality assurance, “everyone in the organization has

a responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the quality of the product or service” (Tam, 2001, p. 49). Therefore, quality becomes the concern of the entire institution or program, with the prevention of defects taking precedence over their detection, making this approach a constant goal to work toward but possibly not achieve (Tam, 2001). Thus, the question still lingers whether quality assurance measures actually produce quality and whether in higher education students experience quality or just the process that should generate it (Harvey & Green, 1993).

Looking at how quality assurance functions in reality in higher education, Newton (2000) conducted a study with participants that he termed as academic front-line staff. He surmised that there would be a difference between how policy is designed and how it is actually implemented, claiming that “outcomes emerge that are not anticipated or intended” (Newton, 2000, p. 154). The author’s findings revealed that the institution’s employees believed (regardless of level or position within the organization) that all accountability measures were met, yet there was an “implementation gap” when viewing quality as meeting the managerial objectives (as designed by administration) than from how quality was executed at the operational level (as implemented by front-line staff), with the individual beliefs and practices of employees, the particular organizational framework, and the working environment acting as hindrances (Newton, 2000). In explaining the implementation gap, Newton (2000) posits that several factors may have contributed to this finding: (1) the application of quality measures becomes a meaningless ritual (or “feeding the beast”) to appease management; (2) the pursuit of quality becomes something imposed on front-line staff and not incorporated into their everyday activities; (3) front-line staff fail to develop a sense of ownership for the quality measures, opting instead for a practical or cynical acceptance of them; (4) front-line staff viewed the quality assurance measures as distinct from quality improvement, which could have happened on its own or from a variety of other

sources; (5) the external imposition of quality assurance measures makes front-line staff believe that their work is not valued and that they have little organizational influence; and (6) and front-line staff are not passive players in quality assurance measures, although individual members display differing levels of support, enthusiasm, tolerance, or opposition. This study illuminates the difficulty (yet importance) of making quality measure inherent in the daily practices of academic employees.

Cardoso, Rosa, and Stensaker (2015) conducted a similar inquiry as Newton's (2000) but with a narrower focus on teaching staff (or faculty) only. Noting that students and employers are often the focus of quality in the educational process, faculty comprise an important group of stakeholders, too (Cardoso et al., 2015). Within their study, the authors uncovered several obstacles to quality assurance. First, the faculty in the study decry a lack of commitment to quality in the culture of their institutions, citing such wide ranging factors as (1) passivity within their group; inadequate training opportunities; communication issues; heavy workloads; poor working conditions; and job instability, which all produced psychological effects and (2) hierarchical, bureaucratic, ineffective, or non-transparent governance structure; leaders who lack vision, management skills, impartiality, or interest in academic freedom or who have too much power, are motivated by personal interests, are resistant to innovation, or play power games, which impact the structural elements of the organization (Cardoso et al., 2015). These factors were seen as influencing strategic planning, decision making, material resources, equipment, support services, internal quality mechanisms, and financial decisions (Cardoso et al., 2015). Second, in the study, quality was equated with compliance, particularly to external political or legal requirements that affect funding, access, decision making and require constant changes and policy monitoring (Cardoso et al., 2015). Third, the study pointed to quality assurance as a

means to ensure consistency, especially in relation to higher education processes such as learning, teaching, research, collaboration, competition, and societal interaction (Cardoso et al., 2015). The authors note that the study's participants reported those obstacles related to the structural elements of an organization were seen as the biggest impediments to quality assurance, leaving the authors to point out that "This explanation might also imply that quality assurance routines and practices in institutions are de-coupled from the work that academics [particularly faculty, in this case] perceive is directly linked to quality" (Cardoso et al., 2015, p. 12).

Acknowledging that "academics seem to have a negative perception of quality assessment," Rosa et al. (2012) question the purpose of quality assessment, noting its competing role as either responsible (1) for the continuous improvement of the institution or program, manifesting "a simple cause-effect model that implies that internal processes are related to improvement," or (2) for the reinforcement of the importance of accountability, signifying that an external monitoring process "ensures impartiality, credibility, authority, comprehensiveness, consistency, and transparency" (Rosa et al., 2012, pp. 350-351). Besides the tension between improvement (improvement purpose) and accountability (accountability purpose), the authors claim that other factors may influence the implementation of a quality assessment system, including developing open and clear communication to build trust and transparency (communication purpose); measures that support the strategic planning goals of the institution or program and that motivate employees to participate (motivation purpose); feedback mechanisms to monitor progress and to guarantee consistency (control purpose); and an inclination to take risks to implement innovations (innovation purpose) (Rosa et al., 2012). In this study, the authors reported that their academic participants (faculty) showed greater support for the improvement purpose (teaching, learning, and student support), communication purpose (information sharing

and decision making), and innovation purpose (introduction of new practices and better alignment of old practices) of quality assessment while they reported lesser support for the control purpose (seen as loss of autonomy) and motivation purposes (preferring rewards over penalties) (Rosa et al., 2012). It is important to note that the authors did not examine the accountability purpose in their study.

Consumer satisfaction often functions as a mediator within quality assurance, providing the producer or provider a glimpse into the perspective of the consumer, which can supply (or not) the evidence of a quality product or service (Harvey & Green, 1993). Harvey and Green (1993) label consumer satisfaction as a “proxy assessment” that subjectively reports whether students’ educational expectations were met (Harvey & Green, 1993, p. 21). However, they also state that the link between quality and student satisfaction is weak since students usually are not able to articulate their long-term needs, making them poor judges of educational quality (Harvey & Green, 1993). Yet, it is important to note that a widespread lack of consumer satisfaction may exert a post hoc influence on educational quality through the completion of course evaluations or exit surveys at the end of a class or program, respectively (Harvey & Green, 1993). The results from these evaluations and surveys assist faculty and administrators in assessing the quality (or effectiveness) of their missions and objectives from a fitness-for-purpose perspective while simultaneously affording an opportunity to respond to the wants and needs of students, an important consumer group (Harvey & Green, 1993). With many institutions and programs creating their own niche within the realm of higher education, a universal definition of fitness-for-purpose is almost impossible to draft, especially when the options include advancing learning, instilling knowledge, transmitting culture, and teaching job skills (among others) (Harvey & Green, 1993).

Tsinidou, Gerogiannis, and Fitsilis (2010) examined the quality of higher education services in order to determine the level of consumer satisfaction from a student perspective. The authors note that “Education services are often intangible and difficult to measure, since the outcome is reflected in the transformation of individuals in their knowledge, their characteristics, and their behavior” (p. 227). While it may be difficult for students to articulate their needs as consumers, especially *prior* to using a campus product or service, their satisfaction with the quality of service *after* the experience may be analyzed, gathering their feelings about whether (or not) their expectations were met (Tsinidou et al., 2010). The authors surveyed undergraduate students in two academic departments (business and economics) to gather their perception of quality in the seven areas of the study. However, for the purpose of this literature review, the results of only three areas will be reported because of their applicability to this study: academic personnel (or faculty), curriculum, and future career prospects. The sub-criteria of these areas are summarized:

- Academic personnel—professional qualifications, experience, communication skills, friendliness, business or industry links, and research activity
- Curriculum—interesting course content, high quality educational materials, efficient course structure, accessible information on the structure of courses, availability of electives or specializations, laboratories that connect with market demands, and convenient schedule
- Future career prospects—professional career possibilities, postgraduate program opportunities, study abroad opportunities, exchange program availability, and business or industry links (Tsinidou et al., 2010).

For the faculty, the students weighted the criteria in this order (greatest to least) as determining a quality instructor: communication skills, friendliness, experience, qualifications and research (tied), and links with business and enterprise. In this study, the authors note that personality characteristics appear to outweigh professional characteristics in their perceptions of faculty and that the student participants in this study may not have had much experience with the importance of faculty links to business and industry, which may have impacted their responses (Tsinidou et al., 2010). When reviewing the curriculum, the students weighted the criteria in the following order: a variety of electives and laboratories and links to real-world business and industry (tied), efficient course structure, accessible information on the structure of courses, interesting course content, convenient schedule, and high quality of educational material (from greatest to least) (Tsinidou et al., 2010). Finally, the students ordered the criteria in the future career prospects category (from greatest to least) as professional career possibilities, postgraduate program opportunities and business or industry links (tied), study abroad opportunities, and exchange program availability (Tsinidou et al., 2010). While not conclusive in its findings, this study points to the importance of faculty interaction on the student experience, of electives courses in specializing a student's education, and of providing the knowledge and training that will translate into a future career.

Quality as Value-for-Money

In the quality as value-for-money standpoint, value is intertwined with cost. This characterization of quality evokes the underlying assumption of exceptionalness without supporting the notion that value stems from brand recognition or market domination, like the fitness-for-purpose approach (Harvey & Green, 1993). In order to understand quality-for-purpose, it is important to understand its origin. Namely, the increasing governmental demand in

recent decades for efficiency and effectiveness became tied to funding; funding became tied to accountability in higher education institutions and programs; and the notion of accountability prompted higher education to become answerable to its financial supporters and consumers (which includes students and employers), which has led to a focus on quality improvement in postsecondary education in general (Harvey & Green, 1993). Along these lines, Harvey and Green (1993) advance that the ensuing development of “economic individualism” that resulted from market forces and competition supports the association of quality with cost, specifically with value-for money coming from the rivalry (whether consciously or unconsciously) for students, funding, physical resources, and research opportunities (Harvey & Green, 1993, p. 22). This competition encourages postsecondary institutions and programs to examine how they use these resources (whether financial, physical, etc.) as well as to generate control mechanisms that rely on quantifiable outcomes or assessments to determine their effectiveness (Harvey & Green, 1993).

Performance indicators have been incorporated into higher education to address the efficiency and effectiveness issue. Performance indicators have three important characteristics: (1) they should collect quantifiable information at regular intervals; (2) they should produce a monitoring function that tracks the overall performance of the system; (3) they should provide updated statements on resources employed or achievements realized (Tam, 2001). For higher education, performance indicators become the outputs that institutions and programs need to attain coupled with the inputs that will make this primary objective possible (Tam, 2001). Stemming from the political need to compare colleges and universities, performance indicators provide a benchmark for accountability (Tam, 2001). However, although performance indicators routinely are utilized to record the effectiveness (or quality) of institutions or programs, there is

concern that they are employed to measure those elements that can be quantified while ignoring important factors that cannot, essentially eliminating qualitative aspects of the educational process and further reinforcing the claim that they measure efficiency but not effectiveness (Harvey & Green, 1993). Additionally, within academia, outputs might be the product of several inputs, making it almost impossible to attribute direct links between outputs and inputs, such as between teaching and curriculum effectiveness (Tam, 2001). Therefore, as the use of performance measures becomes more pervasive within higher education, “quality becomes further entangled with value-for-money” (or accountability) (Harvey & Green, 1993, p. 23) while remaining quiet “on the quality of the student experience in higher education” (or intellectual growth and personal development) (Tam, 2001, p. 51). Finally, performance indicators can only interpret past behavior; as such, they cannot be used to predict or improve future operations (Tam, 2001).

Quality as Transformation

The quality as transformation approach relies on the occurrence of “cognitive transcendence” that is observed in both Western (Aristotle, Kant, and Marx) and Eastern philosophy (Buddhism and Jainism) (Harvey & Green, 1993, p. 24). In addition, cognitive transcendence is correlated with the radicalism that influenced postsecondary instruction in the 1960s, which introduced a social awareness into higher education curriculum and culture, encouraged an in-depth engagement with (and questioning of) prevailing knowledge and ideas, and produced a form of transformative learning within the educational process (Cheng, 2014). Transformative learning involves increasing confidence in current practices and beliefs yet still developing new procedures or innovations by questioning these deeply held assumptions (Cheng, 2014). The construct of quality as transformation is popular because it addresses the needs of

both internal and external stakeholders, pointing to the idea that change is beneficial and achievable as it is more than just student capacity (grades), institutional or program outcomes (resources), or product-centered (Cheng, 2014). In fact, Harvey and Green (1993) note that “education is not a service *for* a customer [or consumer] but an ongoing process of transformation *of* the participant” (emphasis in the original) (p. 24). Therefore, a quality education should affect the participants (or students) in a positive manner, enhancing their knowledge, abilities, and skills and providing opportunities for them to participate in the learning process, which in turn empowers students to take ownership in their learning and strengthens their decision-making and critical thinking skills (Harvey & Green, 1993). Quality as transformation requires that some control of the educational process be yielded to employers (and other such consumers) to help set institutional or program standards, to recommend applicable procedures, and to specify necessary curriculum requirements, a system which emphasizes the process and not the outcome (Harvey & Green, 1993). This characterization of quality advances the notion of excellence through the value-added transformation of education coupled with the crucial process of empowerment throughout the entire process (Harvey & Green, 1993). Within this environment, excellence is determined by compliance with standards that are designed to advance the personal and professional development of students and not just ensure mastery of the philosophies developed by experts or authorities (Harvey & Green, 1993). Furthermore, while a value-added education may be more appealing than analyzing inputs and outputs, it assumes that a stable relationship exists between the student’s ability at the start and end of a single course or entire educational journey, making accurate measurement of the student’s academic progress problematic (Tam, 2001). Like performance indicators, value-added

education reports the past academic or developmental changes experienced by students but cannot provide an explanation of why this change may have occurred (Tam, 2001).

Cheng (2014) notes that transformation can be described as neurobiological or psychocritical (producing a personal change) or social, developmental, or spiritual (producing an emancipatory change) in the individual or society. Operating on the premise that change is intentional and developmental, Cheng (2014) conducted a study with doctoral students and their supervisors to analyze whether (or not) the students could identify if transformative learning occurred during their studies. While transformative learning is concerned with “the rational process of learning,” it frequently is coupled with an intense set of emotions from the student participant (Cheng, 2014, p. 275). Transformative learning faces many challenges with students (who must be open to receive the experience), with institutions or programs (that must provide an environment for the experiences to occur), and with the process itself (that might produce an experience that does not have a clear-cut start or end) (Cheng, 2014). Believing that “doctoral students possess the meta-cognition to reflect on their own learning,” the study focused on students from three disciplines (education, physics, and engineering) with varied academic and professional practices (Cheng, 2014, p. 276). The study’s participants disagreed on whether quality-as-transformation was a significant part of their education, with the responses ranging from not being relevant to their studies; to being inherent in the educational process itself; and to not being applicable to their particular program (Cheng, 2014). Furthermore, the participants did not equate quality with transformation, viewing the two concepts as separate and distinct entities, especially since the existence of one did not guarantee the existence of the other (Cheng, 2014). In fact, the study found that a stronger association existed between quality and training, standardization, and quantification (based on outcomes), with knowledge operating as

instrumental in nature, while transformation was viewed as diverse, unpredictable, and personal (based on self-reflection), with knowledge operating as emancipatory in nature (Cheng, 2014). In addition, quality was linked to institutional brand, resource availability, and learning outcomes while transformation was characterized as intellectual, emotion, or physical (Cheng, 2014). Whereas the participants believed that quality should be a part of their educational process, there was not a consensus on what defines quality or how it should be delivered. Transformation proved equally elusive for the participants, leaving the author to conclude that perhaps the focus on complying with standards and instilling transferable skills impedes student transformation (Cheng, 2014).

Quality as Compliance

In the US, quality as compliance is associated with accreditation, which is concerned with the achievement of benchmark standards, which in their own right impact the curriculum taught, the learning outcomes established, and the course content in institutions and programs (Harvey & Newton, 2004). This approach to quality utilizes external surveillance mechanisms, such as the already mentioned standards as well as site visiting teams from accrediting agencies or associations, to ensure that quality requirements are met (Harvey & Newton, 2004). Compliance often places pressure on institutions and programs to expand access for students, to increase their sensitivity to social and economic concerns, and to confirm their similarity (or not) to other institutions or programs (Harvey & Newton, 2004). With compliance, the practices and procedures that are automatically or involuntarily performed must be examined and documented to prove compliance; thus, this practice forces self-reflection on the part of the institution or program (Harvey & Newton, 2004). Within this approach, the external review system(s) purport(s) that their primary function is the continual improvement of institutions or programs;

however, this purpose may play a secondary role as accountability (in the form of compliance) becomes the main focus, particularly if the practices of the institution or program are designed to meet the reviewer's standards (through the production of pages of documentation or the establishment of learning outcomes) and not to enhance the student's educational experience (Harvey & Newton, 2004). Compliance may use a variety of measures to prove quality, including a self-evaluation that may incorporate anecdotal evidence, systematic data collection that may include convenience measures, and effectiveness studies that may attempt to prove the institution's or program's impact on learning, curriculum development, etc. (Harvey & Newton, 2004). Harvey and Newton (2004) caution that quality as compliance can be used as a "smoke screen" to hide institutional or program issues (p. 152). Furthermore, quality as compliance may demonstrate an impact on institutional or program staff, internal procedures, or managerial structure while overlooking the impact on student learning or failing to produce any impact at all (Harvey & Newton, 2004).

With the increased pressure of proving performance (or accountability) being tied to continuous funding, institutions and programs are turning to what they hope are comparable and objective measures to assess student learning (Lodge & Bosanquet, 2014). Within higher education in general, student learning outcomes often function as an indicator of quality; however, the process of evaluating quality learning is multifaceted and challenging, generating questions of how learning outcomes should be assessed since the use of different measures, such as classroom tests, final grades, and institutional or program self-reports, often generate different results (Caspersen, Frolich, Karlsen, & Aamodt, 2014; Lodge & Bosanquet, 2014). Moreover, compounding this issue, the measurement of an increase in cognition (as the result of the student's introduction to and interaction with new knowledge and ideas) would be difficult to

assess, increasing the need for phenomenological methods (Lodge & Bosanquet, 2014). However, an “over-reliance on phenomenology” has resulted in “relatively insufficient scientific evidence underpinning the measures of learning outcomes in higher education” (Lodge & Bosanquet, 2014, p. 12). Regardless of the means of assessment, Lodge and Bosanquet (2014) caution that most methods struggle with producing stable and consistent results (reliability) and with proving that the assessment measures what it intends to measure (validity), which could make comparisons difficult. Therefore, Lodge and Bosanquet (2014) contend that “an alternative approach to looking at generic outcomes of higher education is to assess generic student attributes” (p. 8).

Accordingly, higher education is becoming more concerned with graduate attributes (or capacities) (French et al., 2014). “Graduate attributes are the transferrable, generic or core learning skills that institutions [or programs] determine should be acquired by all graduates regardless of their field of study” (French et al., 2014, p. 25). Graduate attributes usually are linked to program outcomes, are assessed using direct and indirect measures, and are used as evidence of student achievement (French et al., 2014). French et al. (2014) explain that “merely collecting data” is ineffective, urging faculty to use the data to improve their programs, a process that assures learning (p. 26). In a study that focused on business schools, the authors selected programs with external accreditation (group 1), programs undergoing external accreditation (group 2), and programs without external accreditation (group 3), and they included both faculty and academic deans as participants in order to compare the results across all groups. The study found that all groups supported the process of continuous improvement and that external accreditation was ‘the primary driver’ for this process (French et al., 2014, p. 31). Additionally, group 1 stressed the importance of the involvement of all staff in continuous improvement and

balancing academics with compliance requirements; group 2 focused on providing evidence of student learning and aligning their curriculum with employer needs; and group 3 discussed mapping graduate attributes to the external accreditation standards (French et al., 2014). The authors used their results to formulate three stages of learning assurance: setting standards and mapping the curriculum (group 3); establishing and measuring outcomes (group 2); and maintaining the process (group 1) (French et al., 2014). The academic deans focused on change, faculty engagement, and the effectiveness of the programs as a whole while the faculty focused on developing student skills, providing motivation for the learning assurance process, navigating program politics, and making learning objectives conform to their classes (French et al., 2014). For this study, curriculum mapping was a “powerful stimulant” for the programs, highlighting the importance of capstone courses and portfolios in the student learning process (French et al., 2014, p. 33). Moreover, the measurement of learning outcomes benefitted from the consistent use of established rubrics and multiple criteria to interpret the collected data (French et al., 2014). Finally, the programs with external accreditation participated in continuous improvement practices at a higher proportion and incorporated greater stakeholder input than their non-accredited counterparts (French et al., 2014).

Again, Lodge and Bosanquet (2014) caution that the assessment of graduate attributes may not be “suitable for accountability purposes” (p. 8). With these challenges in place, many institutions or programs are utilizing self-reported measures to evaluate student learning; however, as with the previous measures, there are inherent issues with this practice, including the delayed feedback from the student surveys or evaluations, the potential bias or misrepresentation of self-reported information, the surveys or evaluations often report student satisfaction with the learning experience (which could be the result of many factors), and the concerns of proving the

validity of the surveys or evaluations remain (Lodge & Bosanquet, 2014). All of these factors may impact the perception of quality.

Since learning outcomes are an assessment tool that are important to external and internal stakeholders, Caspersen et al. (2014) questioned whether learning outcomes in different disciplines or professions measure the same concepts or outcomes in all areas, and, conversely, whether generic learning outcomes when applied to different disciplines and professions generate different concepts or outcomes because the context is different. For this study, learning outcomes are acknowledged as containing transferable skills that would be necessary for gaining employment in “today’s dynamic and knowledge intensive labor market” (Caspersen et al., 2014, p. 210). The authors choose the four disciplines of teaching (or education), nursing, engineering, and law because they are different from each other, representing “hard and soft, pure and applied, and general academic and profession-oriented” programs (Caspersen et al., 2014, pp. 196-197). In addition, these disciplines organize knowledge in different ways with different teaching objectives, such as delivering a set of core knowledge for students to learn or preparing students to enter professional practice (Caspersen et al., 2014). The authors conducted a study to analyze learning outcomes from the (1) the students’ self-reported surveys conducted in their last year of study, (2) their grades at the time of graduation, and (3) their survey responses three years after graduating from the chosen programs (Caspersen et al., 2014). These three measures allow both formal (grades) and informal assessments (self-reports) to be performed, allowing the authors to compare grades (a direct measurement) with the students’ self-assessments (an indirect measure) at two different points in time (Caspersen et al., 2014). The authors categorize the learning outcomes into (1) four types of competence (practical, leadership, reflective, and knowledge) from the data collected from the self-reported assessment three years after

graduation and into (2) three factors labeled social and ethical learning outcomes (tolerance, empathy, ethics, values, etc.), leadership learning outcomes (working under pressure and independently; taking initiative and responsibility, etc.), and practical learning outcomes (work-related skills, general knowledge, self-reflection, etc.) from the self-assessment at graduation (Caspersen et al., 2014). In this study, although noting the similarities between the two self-assessments, the authors concluded that different patterns emerged among the selected academic disciplines, pointing to the different knowledge organizations found within each, leaving them to declare learning outcomes as ambiguous, multifaceted, and intertwined into the composition of each discipline (Caspersen et al., 2014). In addition, it is important to note that (1) the student survey conducted three years after graduation may be influenced by on-the-job learning and confidence acquired from professional employment and that (2) grades may not reflect mastery of learning outcomes as the grades in the study were self-reported, leaving room for student mistakes or dishonesty. Therefore, there are unresolved issues with the practice of using learning outcomes to signify quality, with this study pointing out that comparisons across different disciplines may not be achievable (addressing quality at the institutional level) while comparisons among disciplines might be possible (addressing quality at the program level).

Quality as Political or Symbolic

As already discussed, policy is rarely implemented as it was originally designed. Any conceptualization of quality must account for the “structure, history, and ideology” of an institution or program (Harvey & Newton, 2004). Since quality is not “a neutral measuring process,” the impact of the local culture and organizational structure are important (Harvey & Newton, 2004, p. 156). When looking at quality from a technical-rational perspective, the right decisions, practices, or approaches are assumed to result in a level of standardization that ensures

a quality product or service (Ramirez, 2013). However, postsecondary institutions are multidimensional organizations in which groups may have conflicting agendas from each other (as well as from the institution itself), may compete for physical and monetary resource to meet their needs, and may participate in quality control measures only by coercion or pressure (Ramirez, 2013). These preceding factors often create an imbalance in the power structure in institutions and programs, especially in relation to accreditation where the peer review process operates both vertically and horizontally across the institution and its many programs to ensure compliance and control (Ramirez, 2013). An examination of quality as political in nature uncovers that the distribution of institutional and program power has changed direction as accountability has shifted their focus from the preeminence of academics to compliance with bureaucratic standards (Ramirez, 2013). In fact, accountability in this approach is considered “a mechanism to limit institutional [and program] autonomy” as power struggles impact the everyday activities of employees (Ramirez, 2013, p. 135).

From a symbolic perspective, compliance with accreditation standards becomes a means to avoid negative consequences, to ensure funding, or to prove legitimacy. The symbolic aspect of quality has been described as:

an intricate process by which universities or subunits of universities represent themselves in the best light possible, according to their own interpretation of quality standards established, whether or not such image represents their daily reality. As a result, metaphors of quality processes from a symbolic perspective tend to emphasize performativity. (Ramirez, 2013, p. 136)

The symbolic approach posits that institutional or program practices are not always rational as human behavior is not rational. In addition, this approach considers the organizational culture of

these higher educational entities, particularly the taken-for-granted beliefs and practices, the underlying assumption and values, and the shared sense making of ambiguous situations that brings a group together (Morgan, 2006; Ramirez, 2013; Schein, 2010).

Quality as Employability

Lodge and Bosanquet (2014) contend that “learning is the core business of universities” and, subsequently, this primary function makes them “responsible for the education of competent professionals” (p. 3). The educational process should be engaging and challenging for students, and it should involve a transfer of knowledge (Lodge & Bosanquet, 2014). This transfer is important for two reasons: (1) it should improve the student’s competencies or skills from the beginning to the end of a single class or selected curriculum and (2) it should provide the student with the experience or aptitude to respond to unusual or ambiguous situations (Lodge & Bosanquet, 2014). To this end, Lodge and Bosanquet (2014) acknowledge that the transfer of knowledge is “a fundamental obligation” that institutions and programs owe to their students; yet, employers often exhibit “reservations” about the skills and training of graduates (p. 13). These reservations raise concerns about the employability of students, leading many higher education institutions and programs to measure the number of their graduates who gain employment after the completion of their studies, creating a process that often links employability with institutional or program outcomes (Harvey, 2001).

According to Harvey (2001), the concept of employability encompasses several factors: (1) finding a job in general (but it may also signify finding a job related to the student’s specific program of study) within (2) a specified time after graduation in which the student (3) brings core skills and abilities learned through the educational process, is able (4) to be productive on his or her first day with minimal training, and (5) demonstrates the capacity to continue to learn

throughout his or her employment (Harvey, 2001). Harvey (2001) posits that employment rates may reflect more on the natural ability, career network, and previous experience (among others) of the student and not the effectiveness (or quality) of the institution or program. As such, he lists many reasons why graduate rates do not necessarily point to effectiveness (or quality).

Employability may be measured in varying ways based on the operational definition used by the institution or program, which could range from the number of graduates who obtain a job (any job), who obtain a job in their field (a career-oriented job), or who are satisfied with the job that they obtain after graduation (a fulfilling job) (Harvey, 2001). Within higher education, there is “a presupposed causal link” between the development opportunities provided by institutions and programs and the employability of students (Harvey, 2001, p. 101). However, it is important to note that students do not participate in these opportunities equally and that employers recruit and select their workforce based on the individual attributes of applicants (Harvey, 2001). Moreover, many unpredictable factors may impact the hiring process, including the reputation of the institution or program, the chosen field of study of the student, the geographical location of the student in reference to the employer, the perceived mobility of the student, and socioeconomic factors of the student (such as age, gender, race, etc.) (Harvey, 2001). Similar to other approaches to quality, a student’s personal or professional growth may not be attributable to an institution or program, making measurement challenging.

Quality as Accountability

Quality has become a significant concept within the realm of higher education, propelling discussions of accountability into the forefront (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). Trow (1996) describes accountability as “the obligation to report to others, to explain, to justify, to answer questions about how resources have been used, and to what effect” (p. 310). Simply,

accountability is being responsible for one's own action, and, within higher education, it represents the social contract between colleges and universities and society as a whole (Castiglia & Turi, 2011; Zumeta, 2011). Although accountability has national consequences, particularly with countries determining the means in which postsecondary institutions or programs are held responsible, such as through an external accreditation process (United States) or through a governmental ministry (France), internationalization and globalization are becoming increasingly important within higher education—which is evident in the changing relationships between higher education institutions and governments, the adoption of the notion of institutional efficiency and value-for-money, and the proliferation of information technology (Huisman & Currie, 2004)—and has expanded the scope of the stakeholders to whom institutions or programs are answerable, generating a scenario in which “multi-actor, multi-level, and multi- subject government networks” are enacting changes in governmental policy (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010, p. 8). In many situations, these changes allow higher education institutions the freedom to create “their own development and destiny” through a unique application of historical institutional and cultural idiosyncrasies as well as through new or novel collaborations, associations, or markets (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010, p. 8). Since the mid-1980s, which ushered in an examination of state budgets, business-based quality improvement models, the professionalization of legislative staffs, commission reports that criticized education, books that provided scathing critiques of higher education, complaints about the rising cost of a college education, and the emergence of a collegiate ranking system (Castiglia & Turi, 2011; Zumeta, 2011), the demand for accountability has grown as a culture of evaluation and assessment has permeated higher education, extending from the program level where the improvement of teaching and learning was the primary focus to the institutional level where the performance and effectiveness of the college and university

was documented (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). This transference was perceived as a manifestation of good institutional governance (whether actual or symbolic in nature), with quality (particularly, high quality) demonstrated through education (a public service) delivered affordably (at a low cost) and in an efficient manner (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). In order to be effective, accountability should hold relevance for the primary stakeholders, invite open communication between all parties, provide a realistic appraisal of the institution's performance, and encourage the development of trust (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010).

With the shift from professional to political accountability, postsecondary institutions frequently have implemented accountability mechanisms that measure existing activities (such as course evaluations, grants received, articles published, etc.), a practice that is based more on convenience than the assurance of quality (Huisman & Currie, 2004). Trow (1996) recognizes two dimensions of accountability: (1) internal versus external and (2) legal/financial versus academic. An institution uses internal accountability to examine its own operations and processes in order to formulate self-improvements and external accountability to conduct an audit to provide assurances to its supporters and funders (Trow, 1996). Internal assessments, particularly when focused on the effectiveness of faculty teaching, frequently utilize quantitative and qualitative measures gathered from student exams, portfolios, and capstone projects (for example), and the gathered information is used to improve the future (Castiglia & Turi, 2011). External assessments frequently utilize quantitative methods that are gathered from standardized measurements and prove the current quality of the institution to its stakeholders (Castiglia & Turi, 2011). Legal/financial accountability reports that an institution uses its resources lawfully, and academic accountability shares how the institution uses its resources to improve teaching, learning, and public service (Trow, 1996).

While not exhaustive in nature, several accountability issues impact higher education. Stensaker and Harvey (2010) posit that: (1) the concept of quality is difficult to define and suffers from a multitude of individual interpretations, making it a challenge to prove or achieve; (2) the services offered by postsecondary institutions are not easily understood by the public, making the cost of an education difficult to specify; and (3) the effectiveness of a college or university is problematic to quantify, interpret, and compare, making the performance of these institutions difficult to evaluate. On one hand, accountability can be viewed as a means to generate trust between higher education institutions and their individual stakeholders, federal and state lawmakers, and the public at large; however, pointing to a deteriorating relationship between higher education and these parties, accountability represents the converse of trust, especially since genuine trust negates the need for an accountability scheme altogether (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). In addition, enforced accountability increases the prevalence of cynicism as the level of bureaucracy escalates and dilutes the autonomy and diversity of postsecondary institutions as the practice becomes institutionalized (Huisman & Currie, 2004; Trow, 1996). As accountability is “owed to all people, groups, or institutions that are or will be affected by what the accountable actors are doing,” the concept becomes “quite meaningless” as it becomes so weakened that it is not actionable as it is based on the perceptions of each individual stakeholder (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010, p. 12). Castiglia and Turi (2011) note that “the cry for full accountability” often undermines “the culture of data-driven self-improvement that the proponents of outcomes assessment in higher education intended” (p. 122). The fear of chastisement or retribution may guide institutions (and programs) to share only self-promoting information (Castiglia & Turi, 2011). When higher education institutions are concerned with the impact on their reputations, brands, or resources, they may not be forthcoming in sharing any

deficiencies or issues that are discovered as part of the accountability process (Trow, 1996).

Accountability, particularly in the form of accreditation, “encourages institutions to report their strengths rather than their weaknesses, their successes rather than their failures—and even to conceal their weaknesses and failures from view” (Trow, 1996, p. 316).

As is apparent from the preceding discussion, the concept of accountability has many functions in academia. It is designed to generate curricular improvement; to restrict arbitrary power, fraud, and manipulation; to improve institutional and program performance; to encourage institutions and programs to conform to established standards; to act as a regulatory mechanism; to provide legitimacy for postsecondary institutions and programs; and to deliver information so that people can make informed decisions about higher education (Castiglia & Turi, 2011; Trow, 1996).

In summation, Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) identify nine components of quality in higher education. Quality as exceptionalism is equated with excellence, providing institutions or programs with sense of being distinctive from their peers. Quality as perfectionism allows institutions or programs to claim a sense of flawlessness, as defects or imperfections are seen as lacking. Quality as fitness-for-purpose, simply, implies that an institution or program provides to its stakeholders what is was designed to provide. Quality as value-for-money exists when the worth (or importance) of an institution or program is linked with its price (or money). Quality as transformation occurs when a change is evident; the change can be physical, emotional, spiritual, developmental, or social in nature. Quality as compliance is evident when an institution or program achieves the benchmarks or standards required to obtain and maintain accreditation. Quality as political is evident when an institution or program switches its focus from centering

on academics to centering on compliance while quality as symbolic only appears to be compliant to accreditation benchmarks or standards. Quality as employability centers on graduating students who are able to find jobs, who are able to keep their jobs, and who are able to work from the first day of hire. Quality as accountability centers on an institution or program that proves its self-worth (whether internally or externally) through internal assessments.

International Studies of Quality in Higher Education, Stakeholder Perspectives

Quality is an elusive concept, particularly as Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) indicate that the definition varies by circumstance and by stakeholder. Compounding the issue, Watty (2003) points out that quality frequently is not observable, making it difficult to measure or label. Urging higher education to make quality an organizing principle, Middlehurst (1992) recognizes that the authority for quality rests with both internal and external stakeholders within the institution. Therefore, it is important to understand the perspectives of these individuals in relation to quality in higher education. An analysis will reveal the dimensions of quality that stakeholders value most or least, will help to make quality a little less elusive as a concept, and will assist in the formulation of an agenda to maintain or improve quality at the program or institutional level (Middlehurst, 1992; Watty, 2003). The following review focuses on the internal stakeholders of students, faculty, academic programs, and administrators.

Students were the focus of four studies by Jungblut, Vukasovic, and Stensaker (2015), Bamwesiga, Fejes, and Dahlgren (2013), McDowell and Sambell (1993), and Calvo-Porral, Levy-Mangin, and Novo-Corti (2013). In a study that consisted of an online questionnaire, Jungblut et al. (2015) surveyed 6,643 students in five European countries (Germany, Latvia, Poland, Norway, and Slovenia) to assess the students' perceptions of quality in higher education.

(The study originally meant to study eight European countries, but the data were not available for three countries because it took too long to reach the researchers.) The students in the study were seeking a bachelor's degree in public universities. Bamwesiga, Fejes, and Dahlgren (2013) conducted a qualitative study with 20 students in Rwanda. McDowell and Sambell (1999) studied students in the United Kingdom. Looking at quality in education in Spain, Calvo-Porrà, Levy-Mangin, and Novo-Corti (2013) compared student perceptions at two higher education institutions, one public and one private. The researchers used an online questionnaire to survey a total of 255 undergraduate students in their junior or senior year of study.

The four studies focused on different components of the concept of quality as conceptualized by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) or created their own criteria. Using only five conceptualizations of quality as developed by Harvey and Green (1993), which included quality as exceptionalism, perfectionism, fitness-for-purpose, value-for-money, and transformation, Jungblut et al. (2015) concluded that the students' perception of quality supported the five conceptualizations overall but were strongest for the concepts that are the most student-centered, which the researchers identified as quality as transformation and quality as fitness-for-purpose (Jungblut et al., 2015). Through semi-structured interviews, Bamwesiga et al. (2013) identified two concepts that characterized the students' concept of quality in higher education. With quality as transformation (Harvey & Green, 1993), the students identified personal development, intellectualism, and the acquisition of knowledge, noting a value-added component (Bamwesiga et al., 2013). For quality as practice, the students focused on the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practical skills, gaining skills necessary to find and keep employment, and the

implementation of collegiate skills in the workplace (Bamwesig et al., 2013), which equates with quality as employability (Harvey & Green, 1993).

Instead of looking at all five of Harvey and Green's (1993) conceptualizations of quality, McDowell and Sambell (1999) focused on only one, quality as fitness-for-purpose. In their qualitative study, the researchers utilized fitness-for-purpose to examine the perceptions of students in the assessment of student learning outcomes. Traditionally, students are not included in the assessment process because it is believed that they do not possess the requisite knowledge needed to contribute, they do not understand the purpose of assessment, and they would not be able to participate objectively because they are the ones being assessed (McDowell & Sambell, 1999). Adapting the dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument for higher education, Calvo-Porrá et al. (2013) focused on the following five dimensions: tangibility (providing a well-maintained institutional infrastructure for students), reliability (providing the services or resources promised to students), responsiveness (providing timely and speedy response to students), assurance (providing positive interactions with and regular feedback for students), and empathy (providing an individualized, caring response to students) (Calvo-Porrá et al., 2013).

The four studies reached different conclusions based on the student participants' responses. Jungblut et al. (2015) found that attending school full-time increased the students' perception quality as perfectionism), which may have been influenced by the fact that the part-time students in their study were majority non-traditional students (over 25 years of age) (Jungblut et al., 2015). Conversely, the researchers found that the length of time that a student was enrolled in school had a negative effect on their perception of quality as exceptionalism, value-for-money, or transformation (Jungblut et al., 2015). In addition, the researchers found that (1) students who were employed agreed with quality as fitness-for-purpose and (2) those students

whose parents were educated (particularly, the mother) agreed with quality as exceptionalism and quality as value-for-money. Conversely, under the same scenario (an educated mother), the students were less likely to agree with quality as fitness-for-purpose (Jungblut et al., 2015).

When describing quality as knowledge durability, the students in the study by Bamwesiga et al. (2013) expressed the importance of retaining knowledge over time, particularly after graduation and into employment (Bamwesiga et al., 2013). With quality as employability (Harvey, 2001), the students identified the importance of finding a job, being competitive in the job market, and performing well in a job (Bamwesiga et al., 2013). It is important to note that two of the concepts that the students identified are directly related to work (practice and employability) while a third is related but not as strongly (durability of knowledge). The only non-work related concept is student-centric (transformation).

McDowell and Sambell (1999) determined that the students in their study were interested in their education, with them sharing how an effective assessment tool increased their motivation, learning, and opportunities to improve. In addition, the students wanted transparency in the assessment tool itself, reassurance that the assessment tool really was measuring learning, accuracy in the grades produced from the assessment tool, and realistic opportunities in both time and resources to complete the assessment tool. The researcher concluded that the students in the study were capable of contributing to the assessment process and that the student experience is valuable when examining the fitness-for-purpose of using assessment to examine student learning outcomes (McDowell & Sambell, 1999).

Calvo-Porrall et al. (2013) found that the private institution in their study received a higher evaluation overall in all dimensions, but the tangibility and empathy dimensions were the most important to students regardless of institution (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2013). The importance of

the tangible dimension points to the students' need for an institution that supports the process of education through well-equipped laboratories, libraries, classrooms, etc., which alludes to the students' need for an institution that is well-equipped to provide the education that they need, which is fitness-for-purpose in the Harvey and Green (1993) conceptualization. The empathy dimension points to the emotional needs of the students and could have an impact on the personal development of students, which is associated with Harvey and Green's (1993) quality as transformation.

Oliveira, Oliveira, and Costa (2012) interviewed students (38) and faculty (6) in two universities in Portugal in order to examine their perspectives on quality in higher education, with the aim of determining if differences existed. The qualitative research focused on students enrolled in a first year introductory physics courses in the engineering department and the faculty that taught these courses in the same department. The results from the study can be broken into three main areas for both the students and faculty: students, institutional, and teacher (Oliveira et al., 2012). In the student category, the study's participant thought that faculty should be able to explain their material well, develop relationships with students, motivate students to learn, and provide relevant content (Oliveira et al., 2012). In the institutional category, the study's participants thought that quality was dependent on good infrastructure within the institution (libraries, laboratories, classrooms) (for both students and faculty respondents), opportunities for success (for the student respondents), and well defined goals and objectives (for the faculty respondents) (Oliveira et al., 2012). In the teacher category, the study's participant thought that motivation and self-study (for both student and faculty respondents), accomplishment of task (for the student respondents), and development of skills (for the faculty respondents) were important (Oliveira et al., 2012). The researchers found that students in their study thought that the quality

of education was more the responsibility of the faculty than students (Oliveira et. al., 2012). From this study, it can be extrapolated that the students and faculty identified quality as fitness-for-purpose (Harvey & Green, 1993) as an important element in a quality education, particularly as most of the items discussed in the study point to a higher education institution fulfilling its mission.

Faculty were the focus of five studies by Barandiaran-Galdos, Barrenetxea-Ayesta, Cardona-Rodriguez, Mijangos-Del-Campo, and Olaskoaga-Larrauri (2012), Watty (2006a; 2006b), Kalayci, Watty, and Hayirsever (2012), Kekale (2002). In a quantitative study, Barandiaran-Galdos, et al. (2012) surveyed 1,033 faculty members in various disciplines in public higher education institutions throughout Spain. The intention of the survey was to determine what factors that the faculty considered important in a quality education and whether these factors were favored at their universities (Barandiaran-Galdos et al., 2012). Watty (2006b) investigated the state of accounting education in Australia. With the quality of accounting education perceived as declining since the mid-1980s, the researcher surveyed 231 accounting faculty throughout the country via a mailed questionnaire, examining the faculty's' (1) beliefs about the current state of accounting education and (2) attitudes about what should be happening in accounting education (Watty, 2006b). Utilizing the information in this survey in a second study, Watty (2006a) questioned what the accounting faculty's perception of the purpose of higher education might be.

Building on the work of Watty (2006b), Kalayci, Watty, and Hayirsever (2012) examined accounting education in Turkey. Instead of conducting quantitative study, the researchers elected to conduct qualitative face-to-face interviews using the questions from Watty's (2006b) previous questionnaire that examined the perspectives of faculty on their current beliefs and desired

attitudes (Kalayci et al., 2012). Watty's (2006b) questions were translated into Turkish for this study, and they were asked by the two researchers who spoke the language. The study's participants were composed of 64 faculty members from four higher education institutions (as compared to 37 institutions in the Australian study) (Kalayci et al., 2012).

Kekale (2002) examined the perceptions of Finnish and British faculty on the quality of research in their academic disciplines. The researcher decided to study physics, biology, sociology, and history because they are a mix of hard and soft science, pure and applied science, convergent and divergent fields of inquiry, and urban and rural social dimensions (Kekale, 2002). (Convergent disciplines have stable, uniform standards while divergent fields often have the opposite; urban disciplines focus on a small area of research intensely and quickly for short-term solutions while rural fields focus on a wide area of research methodically and slowly for long-term solutions (Kekale, 2002). For example, physics is hard, convergent, and urban in nature while sociology is soft, divergent and rural in nature (Kekale, 2002). Biology is hard and soft, varies along the convergent and divergent continuum, and is mostly rural in nature while history is soft, mostly convergent, and rural in nature (Kekale, 2002).

Like with the student studies, the five faculty studies centered on different aspects of Harvey and colleagues concept of quality (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). The participants in the study by Barandiaran-Galdos, et al. (2012) collectively identified (1) the transformation of students (Harvey and Green's (1993) quality as transformation) and (2) meeting stakeholder expectations (Harvey and Green's (1993) quality as fitness-for-purpose) as their top factors in determining a quality education (Barandiaran-Galdos et al., 2012). Watty's (2006b) survey utilized Harvey and Green's (1993) conceptualization of quality; however, it omitted quality as perfectionism since the researcher

thought that perfection was extremely hard to achieve and was not the focus of higher education anyway. In the study by Kalayci et al. (2012), the faculty ranked the dimensions of quality identified by Harvey and Green (1993) in the following manner: (1) quality as exceptionalism, quality as value-for-money, and quality as fitness-for-purpose and quality as transformation tying for third place for *current* beliefs and (2) quality as exceptionalism, quality as fitness-for-purpose, quality as transformation, and quality as value-for-money for *desired* attitudes. Through the qualitative interview process, it emerged that the faculty in the study by Kekale (2002) viewed quality in research as academic excellence, which equates with Harvey and Green's (1993) quality as exceptionalism.

Again, like the student studies, the faculty studies reached a variety of conclusions. Barandiaran-Galdos et al.(2012) found in their study that the faculty perceived that their institutions valued the opposite factors of quality than they did; for example, the faculty perceived themselves as focusing on students (Harvey and Green's (1993) quality as transformation) and stakeholders (Harvey and Green's (1993) quality as fitness-for-purpose) while they perceived their universities as focusing on the mission (Harvey and Green's (1993) quality as fitness-for-purpose) and money (Harvey and Green's (1993) quality as value-for-money) (Barandiaran-Galdos et al., 2012). In general, it is evident that this study adheres to Harvey and Green's (1993) conceptualization of quality; however, it brings to light one difference—the motivation of the perceiver. The faculty perceived themselves to be student-centered and the administration to be institution-centered.

Looking at their *actual* beliefs, after the elimination of perfectionism, Watty's (2006b) participants ranked the remaining four dimensions in the following order: quality as fitness-for-purpose, quality as value-for-money, quality as exceptionalism, and quality as transformation.

However, when asked what their attitudes toward quality *should* be, the study's participants ranked the dimensions in the following order: quality as transformation, quality as fitness-for-purpose, quality as exceptionalism, and quality as value-for-money (Watty, 2006b). The researcher surmises that the discrepancy between the two factors might be attributed to disagreement of quality assurance measures implemented within their institutions and/or disagreement with the practices of administrators within their institutions (Watty, 2006b).

In her second study, Watty (2006a) concluded that the faculty believed that the purpose of higher education *was* to (1) prepare graduates for work, (2) deliver efficient teaching, (3) create student opportunities, (4) promote lifelong learning, (5) increase student academic abilities, (6) increase student critical thinking skills, (7) develop student autonomy, and (8) train future researchers. However, their attitudes of what the purpose of higher education *should be* was to (1) increase student thinking skills, (2) promote lifelong learning and increase student academic abilities (tied), (3) develop student autonomy, (4) create student opportunities, (5) deliver efficient teaching, (6) prepare graduates for work, and (7) train future workers (Watty, 2006a). Comparing to Harvey and colleagues conceptualization of quality, the study's participants identified quality as employability (preparing graduates for work and training future researchers) (Harvey, 2001); quality as fitness-for-purpose (delivering effective teaching and increasing student academic abilities) (Harvey & Green, 1993); and quality as transformation (creating student opportunities, promoting lifelong learning, increasing student critical thinking skills, and developing student autonomy) (Harvey & Green, 1993).

The findings in the study by Kalayci et al. (2012) show that the Turkish faculty identified quality as exceptionalism as important now (present beliefs) and in the future (desired attitudes) while the Australian faculty identified quality as fitness-for-purpose and quality as

transformation, respectively (Kalayci et al., 2012). The researchers posit that differences in the history, culture, and economics may attribute to the differences in the two countries, particularly as Turkey may be classified as a developing country which may be more focused on training the professionals necessary to carry the country forward (Kalayci et al., 2012).

In the research by Kekale, 2002, the faculty were not concerned with external stakeholders, believing that research was a purely academic endeavor. For the physicists, the international peer-review process, number of publications in reputable journals, and rank among international peers are important factors for quality assessment of research (Kekale, 2002). For the biologists, publications in reputable international journals, rank among international peers, and recognition among peers are important factors, although the biologists seemed to doubt the strength of the peer review process to denote quality in research (Kekale, 2002). For the sociologists, quality of research was determined by fruitful research, good research questions, new research perspectives, self-reflection, and professional reading (Kekale, 2002). For the historians, trustworthiness and accuracy were seen as more important than the international peer review process, and the historians point out that language barriers, societal changes, and national research issues impact their research more than researchers in the sciences (Kekale, 2002). Thus, it is evident that the conception of quality in research seems to vary by academic discipline.

Focusing on multiple academic disciplines, Storen and Arnesen (2016) examined the quality of a master's program through four identified factors: to what extent did the program provide its graduates practical knowledge, theoretical knowledge, methodological knowledge, and analytical thinking skills. Particularly, the researchers investigated whether these factors impacted the workplace and if this impact mattered by academic discipline (Storen & Arnesen, 2016). The researchers focused on three-year graduates from humanities, law, psychology, social

science, technology/engineering, and natural science programs located in Norway. While the web-based survey did not assess the participants' concrete skills, it determined that they perceived that their graduate programs provided the identified factors in the following order: theoretical knowledge, analytical thinking, methodological knowledge, and practical knowledge (Storen & Arnesen, 2016). However, the survey determined that the graduates from the more vocationally focused graduate programs (law, technology/engineering, and psychology) used their knowledge and skills to a greater degree in their jobs (Storen & Arnesen, 2016). The four identified factors (practical knowledge, theoretical knowledge, methodological knowledge, and analytical thinking skills) demonstrate quality as fitness-for-purpose in Harvey and Green's (1993) conceptualization.

Pham and Starkey (2016) examined the perceptions of quality in Vietnam. The study's participants included administrators (4), business education faculty (22), and quality assurance managers (9) from three universities in one Vietnamese city, representing institutions that are traditional, evolving, and embryonic in nature (Pham & Starkey, 2016). With the country utilizing an accreditation system similar to the United States, the researchers examined national accreditation documents as well (Pham & Starkey, 2016). Pham and Starkey (2016) found that their results mirror the conceptualizations of quality as determined by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993). Specifically, the study's participants identified these characteristics as positively or negatively impacting the quality of education on their campuses:

- Fitness-for-purpose— meeting predetermined objectives and goals, the condition of the institutional infrastructure (libraries, laboratories, classrooms, and teaching materials), qualifications of the faculty, and preparedness of students

- Exceptionalism— high student grades reflected the elitism of the institution, and higher education is ideal for top students
- Employability— graduates capable of finding jobs, preparation of graduates for professional work, and graduate skills matched employer's needs,
- Transformation—preparing students to become good citizens (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993)

While the written documents would suggest the importance of quality as compliance (Harvey & Newton, 2004), particularly the adherence to the national accreditation standards that the country has developed, the researchers found that the participants in their study identified the employability of students as their most important characteristic of a quality education,

Lomas (2002) questioned whether the massification of higher education impacted quality. The study utilized Harvey and Green's (1993) conceptualization of quality, omitting quality as perfectionism because the researcher stated that perfection was not the intention of higher education (Lomas, 2002). Lomas (2002) surveyed 108 senior managers, which was defined as pro-vice-chancellors, vice principals, deans, and registrars, in the United Kingdom for their interpretation of quality. The study's participants were asked to assign points to the Harvey and Green's (1993) dimensions in the manner that reflected their personal perception of quality. The dimensions were ranked in the following order: quality as fitness-for-purpose, quality as transformation, quality as exceptionalism, and quality as value-for-money (Lomas, 2002). The researcher concluded that "Whether massification has led to the end of quality in higher education provision depends on how quality is defined" (Lomas, 2002, p. 77). When quality is perceived as fitness-for-purpose, which is focused on fulfilling the needs of the consumer (or customer) and is conveyed through student learning outcomes at the program level or the mission

statement at the institutional level, the massification of higher education is not seen as detrimental to quality (Lomas, 2002). When quality is perceived as transformation, which is the personal growth of students and is viewed as transcendence from one state to another, massification appears not to hinder quality either (Lomas, 2002). However, Lomas (2002) cautions that quality as transformation is hard to measure and may not have as positive impact as the study shows (Lomas, 2002). Quality as exceptionalism is defined as excellence; the massification of education may have negatively impacted quality when using this definition (Lomas, 2002). Quality as value-for-money is equated with restraint in spending or offering a similar product at a lower cost; it is perceived as having a negative effect of the massification of higher education in this study (Lomas, 2002).

From the proceeding 12 international studies, the following conclusions can be reached collectively. The students identify quality in higher education from their own perspective, describing quality in terms of their personal transcendence (quality as transformation), the infrastructure of their institutions (quality as fitness-for-purpose), and the acquisition of skills necessary for entering the workforce (quality as employability). In general, the faculty results mirror the students, with them identifying fitness-for-purpose, transformation, and employability as important characteristics of quality. The faculty perceived themselves as more focused on the well-being of students while they perceived the administrators as more focused on the well-being of the institution. In the studies that concentrated on academic disciplines, the faculty acknowledged that quality may vary by subject area in the ability of graduates to find employment after graduation, to utilize knowledge acquired in a program of study, and to be prepared for the practical work of their chosen fields. The faculty, also, recognized that the perception of quality varied by academic discipline in relation to research. The administrators'

results are either included with the faculty's or focused on a single issue, the massification of higher education, which makes their results harder to compare. For these selected studies, it is important to note the dimension of quality as perfection was omitted from several studies.

Library Education

Historical Overview

From the establishment of the earliest library education programs, students were expected to master several skills or competencies. Irwin (2002) notes that:

At the dawn of the twentieth century, library school administrators, without exception, mandated that students learn about cataloging, classification, bibliography, reference work, book selection and accession, bookbinding, shelving, the principles of circulation, library buildings, management, the history of books and libraries, editing and printing, and indexing. (p. 176)

From this list, nine core curriculum courses soon emerged (reference, cataloging, classification and subject headings, book selection, acquisition and accessions, bibliography, circulation (or loans), library administration, and the history of books and libraries), and this collection was soon enriched by a rich array of elective courses as well (Irwin, 2002). As the twentieth century continued, the library curriculum continued to grow, change, and struggle as library education began the shift away from training (a focus on technical skills) to philosophy (a focus on theoretical principles), moving from the “how” of apprenticeship to the “why” of formal education (Asheim, 1955). This practice often resulted in the need for libraries to spend the first year of employment providing training for the newly hired library student, garnering some criticism from practitioners (Asheim, 1955). In addition, at this time, the importance of a

research methods course was not recognized and a debate on “making the thesis optional or dropping it altogether” emerged within the field (Asheim, 1955, p. 83).

In the 1940s, the library program began to teach and require that students take the curriculum courses in a specified sequence before the electives (or specialized courses) could be taken (Irwin, 2002). “With the acceptance of a core curriculum in most schools,” these elective courses created areas of specialization for students while simultaneously distinguishing library programs from each other through the courses offered beyond the core curriculum (Asheim, 1955, p. 87). It is important to note that the core curriculum often was taught as part of an undergraduate program, with the coursework acting as a fifth year of study (Asheim & Kenan, 1978). By the 1950s, the addition of research methods, communication, and libraries in society could be seen among the already established core courses (reference, administration, library history), expanding the basic curriculum (Irwin, 2002). Shera (1953) explained that the core curriculum should be distributed between classes that focus on library history, materials acquisition, materials organization (cataloging and classification), and materials usage (subject bibliographies, reference, information sources). Beyond a focus on the core, Shera (1953) warned that the continued specialization process was causing a fragmentation within library knowledge that could impact the programs and that the educational process itself should be centered around an active (not passive) engagement of course content for students. During this time, the master’s level degree was recognized as the professional degree for librarianship although core and elective classes were continuing to be taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Asheim & Kenan, 1978).

With the “social upheaval, increasing emphasis on individual choice, student empowerment, and the enlarged role of computers in libraries,” the 1960s and 1970s saw an

erosion of the core curriculum, with many programs creating a scenario in which electives comprised “more than ninety percent of the credit hours required for the master’s degree” (Irwin, 2002, p. 176). Also, during this time period, some LIS programs experimented with the core curriculum. For example, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) introduced a concept called the integrated core in which students enrolled in a block course consisting of 12 hours that met daily throughout the course of the student’s first semester (Roper, 1978). This block class consisted of an amalgamation of the core curriculum, including the library in society, automatic information processing (computer technology), library services and materials (acquisitions, organization of information, research methods, library management and administration, and the library as a profession) (Roper, 1978). After the first semester, students increasingly were able to enroll in electives to complete their program of study (Roper, 1978). Notwithstanding UNC’s emphasis on the core as necessary to instill common library knowledge in students, there raged a debate during the 1970s that the inclusion of a set of core courses produces generalist rather than specialist librarians (Asheim & Kenan, 1978). At this time, Asheim and Kenan (1978) cautioned that with a singular focus on specialization that librarianship would become “a scatter of different specialties with not enough in common to bring them together under a professional roof” (p. 155). Looking at both accredited and non-accredited library programs, Powell, Young, and Flanagan (1974) surveyed library school directors about the (then) current curriculum. The results showed strong results for a core curriculum, with support for including a course (or at least content within a larger course) on information storage and retrieval, library automation, non-print materials, financial management, foundations of librarianship, communications theory, planning and evaluation, intellectual freedom, and research methodology. The program directors, also, supported working

collaboratively with another discipline, educating students to be library generalists, stressing theoretical principles over practical training, preparing students for library specialization, deriving curriculum content from employment practices, and requiring a supervised internship (Powell et al., 1974). The program directors disagreed with making the master's program into two-year program, offering a sensitivity training course, and requiring a thesis (Powell et al., 1974). The results were split on necessitating a comprehensive examination or an independent study project (Powell et al., 1974).

During the 1980s, library education witnessed the return of required (or core) courses, forcing a reduction in electives to create a more balanced library curriculum (Irwin, 2002). Grover (1985) acknowledged that library education was not just the purview of LIS faculty, an opinion that encompassed the needs of students, employers, and the public in general. Moreover, "In a society that which is marked by rapid change, a proliferation of knowledge, and a technological boom, the creation, organization, dissemination, and retrieval of information and knowledge is critical" (Grover, 1985, p. 35). As such, a library education requires a course structure that will prepare students to meet this challenge, leading Grover (1985) to outline a model core curriculum that consists of the philosophy of library and information professions (foundations of librarianship); human interaction with information (selecting, processing and using information); the transfer of information (creating, disseminating, and organizing information in society); organizing information for easy and convenient retrieval (cataloging and classification of library materials); management theory (management and administration of a library); analyzation of information (selection, organization, and delivery of information based on user needs); research methodologies (supervising, conducting, and interpreting research); evaluating and designing an information system (using computers and technology); and

comprehending the societal function of libraries (creating appropriate services for different communities). Coupled with a wide array of electives and possibilities for field experience, Grover (1985) stated that this curriculum should prepare students to be managers and leaders in the nation's libraries.

From this history, it is not surprising that there is still disagreement among LIS faculty (as well as practicing librarians and library students) as to what should constitute the core curriculum, with the arguments fluctuating between the belief that the programs should teach more job-related skills (reference, collection development and management, critical thinking skills, etc.) which are taught in the core courses to the notion that the programs should offer specialized education for specific careers (archivist, children's librarian, school media specialist, etc.) which would be learned from the elective courses (Irwin, 2002). Throughout its history, LIS education has evolved from instructor-driven classroom lectures to student-centered holistic learning experiences (Latrobe & Lester, 2000).

Core Curriculum

The core curriculum, "by definition, ought to include subjects that significantly affect librarians in all types of institutions" (Irwin, 2002, p. 177). Irwin (2002) advances that the examination of core courses "yield[s] enormously significant clues about the values, health, and future of various professions" (p. 175). He continues that core classes often are not only used to introduce students to "the ethics, terminology, common practices, and history of a profession" but also to identify (and, possibly remove) students that are not well-matched with the profession itself (Irwin, 2002, p. 175). The examination of the core courses of a profession over time reveal the changes that the program has undergone as well as its attempts to remain current and relevant in its discipline (Irwin, 2002). Irwin (2002) conducted a study of the core courses of ALA

accredited LIS programs by examining their catalog descriptions of core courses and comparing them to the recommendations of the International Federation of Library Associations published in 1976. The author chose these particular recommendations based on a study completed a decade earlier by Marco (1994) that expressed concern over the disappearance of the LIS core curriculum and, subsequently, its future impact on the profession. Marco (1994) criticized that the inclusion of computer competencies had led to the removal of some previously identified core courses, leaving reference and cataloging to compose the core. Including only ALA accredited LIS programs, Irwin (2002) reported that computer technology had not usurped the core curriculum, that LIS faculty described the core courses “in more familiar, traditional ways” (although the terminology often varied), and that the core curriculum comprised one-third of the required credits (p. 181). In a separate study of ALA accredited programs, Park (2003) examined the incorporation of research methods with the core LIS curriculum, discovering that the term was “loosely defined in LIS programs” (p. 20). That is, the description of research methods varied “from comprehensive coverage of both quantitative and qualitative methods to superficial inclusion of simple survey methods” (Park, 2003, p. 20). At this time, Park (2003) found that the research methods course was not a priority in LIS education, concluding that LIS programs functioned like graduate programs in the humanities or education (who did not universally require research methods in this study) rather than graduate programs in the sciences or social sciences (who did universally require research methods in this study). The inclusion of a research methods course allows LIS students and, subsequently, library practitioners (after graduation) to be both consumers (individuals who review published studies) and contributors (individuals who publish studies) of research (Park, 2003). This dynamic adds to the theoretical versus practical debate about the purpose of LIS education.

Looking at ALA accredited programs that were also members of the Association for Library and Information Science Educators (ALISE), Markey (2004) determined that “a typical set of core courses” drew from the categories of reference, management, organization of information, library foundations, and either research methods or information technology (p. 325). Markey (2004) found that many LIS programs gave students a choice in the management category based on their selected library type, with school librarians having a course tailored to their profession and all other students taking a general overview course. The organization of information category primarily encompassed cataloging and classification but indexing and abstracting classes were available in some programs (Markey, 2004). The foundations category provided a broad introduction to “concepts, issues, and trends in the field” (Markey, 2004, p. 325). The information category included courses in “library automation, technical services, database management, system design, and general surveys of information technologies” (Markey, 2004, p. 326). In general, Markey (2004) depicts the LIS curriculum as a series of three concentric circles.

- The deepest circle represents the life cycle of information: creation of information, collection development, organization of information, retrieval of information, use and evaluation of information
- The next ring contains elements that impact the discipline: technology, standards, law, ethics, management, economics, technology, policy, etc.
- The outside ring contains elements that relate to careers: field experience, professional practice, and practical engagement (Markey, 2004)

LIS programs provide depth to their curriculum through specialization, certification, dual program enrollment, and origination of new degrees (such as information science or information

management) (Markey, 2004). Finally, Markey (2004) notes that LIS curriculum demonstrates an increasing focus on the user, which is demonstrated in courses such as human-computer interaction.

Hall (2009) acknowledges that the core classes in a LIS program are important because they impart a “common understanding of librarianship,” instilling the “fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities” that library student should be able to demonstrate at graduation (p. 57). Examining course titles, descriptions, and syllabi, Hall (2009) concluded that the core curriculum looked similar to Markey’s (2004) earlier findings. Hall (2009) notes that a student’s career track (academic, public, school, etc.) impacts their required courses, often creating a semi-core structure that varies by specialization. Regardless of career track, the majority of programs required organization of information, foundations, management, reference, research methods, *and* information technology (not research or information technology as Markey (2004) found (Hall, 2009). The author found that almost 50% of a student’s total credit hours came from core courses with electives completing the rest of the requirements (Hall, 2009), demonstrating an increase from Irwin’s (2002) study. This study marks the addition of ethics and user instruction as elective courses (predominantly) and the existence of a capstone/ thesis/ portfolio requirement within the curriculum, and it notes the coupling of access to information with the retrieval of information (Hall, 2009). Finally, Hall (2009) notes that “Reference is becoming less a part of the core and research methods and information technology are seen more often in the core curriculum” (p. 65).

Competencies

Learning outcomes encompass “the knowledge, skills, and attributes that instructors intend for students to attain through the course, and as such, essentially describe the

competencies that students are mastering” (Saunders, 2015, p. 10). Building on these individual classes, the LIS core curriculum as a whole is designed to impart the competencies that students need to work in the library field. As such, the core curriculum prepares students for entry-level positions in the nation’s libraries, regardless of library type or career specialization. Asheim and Kenan (1978) speak to this directive in the following quote:

In my mind the role of the professional school is to prepare, not only for current practice, but also for the future, and even to have a hand in designing that future. What every librarian should know, then, is not how to perform a particular task in a particular way, but how to look at the library’s goals and objectives, and devise appropriate means for accomplishing them. (p. 157)

To provide students with the capability to meet the current and future needs of the library profession, ALA adopted the Core Competences of Librarianship in 2009 (American Library Association, n.d.b). These competencies focus on the theoretical preparation of students (meeting goals and objectives) instead of the practical preparation (performing a particular task). Defined as “the knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from ALA-accredited master’s programs in library and information studies” (American Library Association, n.d.b), the competencies in many aspects mirror the core curriculum historically found in LIS programs (Hall, 2009; Irwin, 2002; Markey, 2004).

- *Foundation of the field*—introduces students to the ethics, values, principles, and history of the profession; includes a focus on intellectual freedom
- *Information resources*—covers the lifecycle of knowledge and information; includes the evaluation, selection, and storage of materials and the management and maintenance of library collections

- *Organization or recorded knowledge and information*—teaches how to evaluate, describe, and organize knowledge and information; includes cataloging, indexing, and classifying library materials
- *Technological knowledge and skills*—impacts the delivery of library resources, services, and information; includes identifying and evaluating current and emerging technology
- *Reference and user services*—provides access to information for library users and imparts techniques to retrieve, evaluate, and synthesize information; includes information literacy
- *Research*—introduces qualitative and quantitative research methods; includes researching findings about librarianship
- *Continuing education and lifelong learning*—engaging in continual professional development; includes a focus on the practitioner as a lifelong learner as well as the library user, incorporating learning theory, instructional design, and assessment measures
- *Administration and management* — contains the management or leadership skills necessary to operate a library; includes strategic planning, budgeting and finance, evaluation of services and resource, human resource development, collaboration and partnerships, and principled, transformational leadership (American Library Association, n.d.b)

However, the inclusion of “principled, transformational leadership” seems incongruent with the other skills listed under the administration and management competence. In fact, Hicks and Given (2013) point out that the “leadership competence was the only competence added from the

floor when the Core Competences were adopted” (p. 12). After conducting a discourse analysis on the notes and minutes from the task force meetings and interviews with the participating task force members that produced the Core Competences, Hicks and Given (2013) conclude that the term “principled, transformational leadership” refers to the incorporation of ethics or morality (having principles) and the need for an innovative response to change (being transformational) with the library field, not necessary a specific style of leadership (transformational leadership). According to task force members, the usage of principled, transformational leadership points to the changing nature of libraries and the need for library leaders capable of navigating these changes (Hicks & Given, 2013).

As outlined above, the Core Competences for Librarianship include a focus on leadership and management. With its multitude of definitions, leadership frequently is confused with management (Hicks & Given, 2013); however, while similar in some aspects, the two concepts are distinct in their organizational functions—management focuses on the practical completion of everyday tasks and the supervision of human and physical resources while leadership centers on the creation and communication of a vision and the relationship between the leader and his or her followers (Northouse, 2013; Phillips, 2014). Within the hiring process, leadership is an often requested (or required) skill of job applicants. When questioned what qualities a library leader should possess, library practitioners (specifically library directors) responded in a study conducted by Jordan (2012) that integrity, customer service, accountability, credibility, communication skills, vision, and political understanding (among others) were necessary. With “the majority of ALA-accredited LIS programs” declaring that the preparation of library leaders as an important goal (Hicks & Given, 2013, p. 19), LIS education addresses this competency through coursework (through standalone classes such as library administration and

management) and field experiences (through internships or service learning in which mentorships can be formed) (Phillips, 2014). With the flexibility afforded by the ALA accreditation standards, “each program will continue to approach the teaching of leadership differently” (Hicks & Given, 2013, p. 20). Conversely, although they included in the Core Competences, many of the ALA task force members who helped to draft the competences “described leadership as a skill best developed outside the LIS programs through professional development experiences” and admitted that not every LIS program graduate would (or should) become a leader and that leadership might be a skill or attribute that cannot be taught (Hicks & Given, 2013, p. 13).

Looking at the concept of management, particularly as a position that controls both people and processes, Mackenzie and Smith (2009) studied the curriculum in ALA accredited programs to determine the management skills imparted to students. In their study, the authors found that while the majority of LIS programs (54.2%) required one management course to graduate (which left about 43.8 % to require no management course at all), and some LIS programs designated their management course(s) as electives (Mackenzie & Smith, 2009). However, when reviewing the course offerings from the different LIS programs in the study, the authors discovered that more management-related concepts were taught in the required classes than in the electives and that the overall curriculum focused more on managing library processes (the selection, acquisition, and organization of information) rather than on the management of people (hiring, supervising, and mentoring employees) (Mackenzie & Smith, 2009).

In tandem with the accreditation standards and Core Competences from ALA, Lester and Van Fleet (2008) contend that LIS programs should consider competencies and standards developed by other professional organizations or associations when designing their curriculum.

This habit points to “the strength of the ties between education and practice” demonstrated by the LIS programs because “these documents express the perspectives of practitioners,” especially the “knowledge, skills, and attitudes” necessary for the workplace (Lester & Van Fleet, 2008, p. 44). Lester and Van Fleet (2008) conducted a study of ALA accredited (and ALA accreditation seeking) LIS programs in order to determine if the programs incorporated the professional competencies and standards into their programs. The authors elected to compare the program’s self-study documents (via a content analysis) as submitted to ALA’s Office for Accreditation and the survey responses gathered from faculty employed within the LIS programs, finding a discrepancy between the number of programs that stated that they valued the professional competencies and standards (from the survey results) and the number of programs that actually referenced them in their self-study document (from the content analysis) (Lester & Van Fleet, 2008). To address this incongruity, the authors provide several explanations: (1) peer pressure may have influenced the faculty responses if the respondents thought that they should be incorporating the competencies and standards into their curriculum; (2) there may be a limitation in the study itself, particularly if the self-study documents were older (nearing the 7 year accreditation renewal cycle) or the respondents expressed their personal but not program beliefs; (3) the competencies and standards themselves may need to be reviewed for currency to the field, drafted so that they cover “core knowledge rather than specific skills,” and developed to represent the needs of the program, employer, and student (Lester & Van Fleet, 2008, p. 61).

In her often cited study, Markey (2004) found that information technology courses were not as integrated into the core curriculum as other required courses, noting that information technology classes frequently were listed as electives instead. When part of the core, Markey (2004) writes that “library automation, technical services, database management, system design,

and general surveys of technology” comprised the required information technology courses. The author observed that LIS programs appear to have claimed one information technology niche: a focus on the user (Markey, 2004). In fact, the LIS curriculum “remain[s] strong in traditional coursework that seeks greater understanding of users, their information-seeking behavior, and the sources and services that libraries provide to users generally and to special populations” (Markey, 2004, p. 334).

Singh and Mehra (2012) and Scripps-Hoekstra, Carroll, and Fotis (2014) focused on technology in their studies. With the impact on the LIS curriculum from the changing expectations of employers found in job descriptions and advertisements, and the perceptions of newly graduated library practitioners that they were not prepared for their positions, Singh and Mehra (2012) selected the top 25 ALA accredited LIS programs from the *U.S. News & World Report*’s rankings, justifying that they should provide an “average or better” education (p. 223), and studied their technological course descriptions (whether core or elective) to survey what technological competencies that the chosen LIS programs were teaching to their students. Singh and Mehra (2012) compiled a list of technological competencies from the 2009 Competency Index for the Library Field created by Webjunction (which subsequently was updated in 2014). (Webjunction is an online resource that offers staff development and training for library personnel). Scripps-Hoekstra et al. (2014) questioned how many LIS programs published their technology requirements, what technology skills were required of library students, what methods were utilized by the programs to evaluate these skills, and what remediation practices were in place to assist students lacking proficiencies.

Singh and Mehra (2012) discovered that more LIS programs taught the following competencies: database application proficiency (21 schools); operating and automation systems

(19 schools); web design and development (18 schools); web site design program proficiency (18 schools); digital resource technology (17 schools); networking and security (16 schools); electronic program proficiency (16 schools); server administration (15 schools); technology planning (14 schools); core web tools (13 schools); administration of software applications (11 schools); and technology policies (10 schools) among others. The authors found that very few schools in their study taught hardware, email applications, presentation program proficiency, internet, or e-resource management from the Webjunction list of technological proficiencies (Singh & Mehra, 2012). The authors conclude that “not even one of the top-ranking schools [in their study] is teaching everything the students need to know to be successful in their employment,” leaving them to recommend e-resource management, core web tools, public access computing, and technology policies as suggested courses to include in the LIS curriculum, urging at least one information technology course in the core curriculum (Singh & Mehra, 2012, p. 225).

From their examination of ALA accredited programs, Scripps-Hoekstra et al. (2014) concluded that the majority of LIS programs (78%) published their technology requirements on their web pages, with the specifications that these proficiencies were either a requirement for admission, a suggestion for admission, required by the start of coursework, or attained throughout the program itself (Scripps-Hoekstra et al., 2014). Using the published information online, the authors determined that word processing, presentation programs, spreadsheets, file management, Internet, web content creation, bibliographic databases, social media, and automation systems (in varying degrees by varying programs) were the technological skills required by LIS programs (Scripps-Hoekstra et al., 2014). The evaluation of technological skills incorporated many methods, ranging from a self-assessment checklist that students were not

required to share with the LIS faculty, to a submitted online examination, to enrollment in an information technology course to meet the requirement, to providing proof of existing proficiency, and to no specified requirement at all (Scripps-Hoekstra et al., 2014). The most common remedial practices provided for students with insufficient skills was enrollment in an information technology course within the program, orientation sessions hosted by the program, workshops provided by other departments or units on campus (such as the library or the Information Technology (IT) department), or courses taught by outside agencies (such as community colleges) (Scripps-Hoekstra et al., 2014). Finding a wide discrepancy in how the individual programs addressed this competency, even among programs with a similar structure, Scripps-Hoekstra et al. (2014) declared that LIS programs were “setting the bar too low for incoming students” (p. 48), providing inconsistent training for students throughout the county, and failing to communicate best practices with each other (which may be more the product of competition among the programs themselves). As the field becomes more reliant on technology, attention to these competencies ensures that students are prepared to enter the profession.

In a study that included faculty, students, practitioners, and the public, Bertot, Sarin, and Percell (2015) examined the current state of the LIS education to ascertain the value and future of the master’s degree and the competencies and abilities needed by future librarians (among other things). Although the primary focus of libraries and other information organizations (such as museums and archives) has migrated from curating collections (physical or digital) to assisting people and communities, the authors note that the core values of the profession remain fixed on access to information, equity and inclusion in services and resources, intellectual freedom protections, privacy safeguards, learning and education opportunities, and social and civic engagement (Bertot et al., 2015). To prepare future librarians to uphold these values, the

LIS curriculum should provide the following competencies: leadership and management ability; learning and education facilitation; technology proficiency; marketing and advocacy skills; written and oral communication skills; people skills; problem-solving and critical thinking skills; crisis management training; fundraising, budgeting, and policymaking skills; networking, collaboration, and relationship building skills; and program assessment ability (Bertot et al., 2015). Thus, the authors propose that LIS programs should incorporate technology, digital asset management, data management, assessment and planning, policymaking, diversity training, information needs assessment, design thinking, and change management into the future curriculum (Bertot et al., 2015).

Electives

With the many contemporary studies of the core curriculum (Hall, 2009; Irwin, 2002; Marco, 1994; Markey, 2004), the historical overview of the core (Grover, 1985; Roper, 1978; Shera, 1955), and the comparison to ALA's Core Competences for Librarianship (American Library Association, n.d.b), the relative (although not absolute) consistency of the LIS program is evident. Like its multitude of counterparts, the typical LIS program is composed of a specified number of credit hours in core and elective courses. The elective courses allow LIS programs to offer traditional and unique learning experiences for students. ALA encourages LIS programs to create an educational niche, which might be accomplished through the elective courses, which might be utilized to prepare students for specializations in career tracks (academic, public, special, school libraries), established functions or services (reference, cataloging, etc.), emerging or distinctive positions or skills (continuing resources librarian, geographic information librarian, etc.). A quick (but not exhaustive) review of elective courses in the areas outlined above follows, highlighting the curriculum, course, or content that addresses the specialization.

Library students can choose from several career tracks through the selection of courses, such as academic libraries. As an example, Bailey (2010) conducted a study that focused on the course content covered on a class on academic librarianship. Using course descriptions and syllabi from ALA accredited programs, Bailey (2010) concluded that the subjects most often taught to students (in descending order) are library collection management and development, budgeting and finance, information literacy and instruction, organization (of the academic library), personnel and staffing, scholarly communication, management and administration, an overview of higher education (including governance structure), assessment and evaluation (standards), library facilities, future of academic libraries, cooperation and collaboration, public services (including reference), electronic and digital resources, technical services (including cataloging), and technology. These topics highlight and reinforce competencies that are taught in full-length core courses, such as library administration and management, organization of information, reference, technology, etc., while introducing students to working in the higher education setting. With this elective course in a specified career track, Bailey (2010) concludes that his study “suggests that most courses in academic librarianship cover the subjects they should while quite reasonably depending on other areas of the curriculum to develop needed proficiencies” (p. 41).

As with any longstanding profession, the established functions within libraries have evolved over time, slowly or rapidly depending on the function in question. The cataloging of library materials has been part of the library curriculum (in one form or another) from the beginning of formal library education (Rockwood, 1968). As the needs of libraries have changed, information organization was introduced into the core curriculum of LIS programs, with basic cataloging becoming a part of this concept (Joudrey & McGinnis, 2014). Similarly, as collecting

and classifying information has become more complicated, the job of the cataloger has become more involved. “Catalogers still catalog books and serials, but they also may describe archival collections in finding aids, develop controlled vocabularies or taxonomies for local use, and develop multifaceted metadata strategies for digital initiatives, along with a host of other responsibilities” (Joudrey & McGinnis, 2014, p. 508). In order to determine which information organization courses are being offered (listed in the program’s course catalog) and whether traditional cataloging was still part of the LIS curriculum, Joudrey and McGinnis (2014) conducted a longitudinal study on ALA accredited LIS programs, revealing emerging trends in the curriculum. While the total number of courses taught decreased slightly over a five year period, at the end of the study, the majority of these information organization courses were elective (75%) and not required (25%) courses (Joudrey & McGinnis, 2014). Additionally, the authors found that 88% of the LIS programs in their study required at least one information organization course and that almost 74% of these required courses were not cataloging (Joudrey & McGinnis, 2014). The authors revealed that the following information organization electives were offered (listed in the program’s course catalog) in this study: cataloging (86% of programs); metadata (86% of programs); indexing (69% of programs); and advanced cataloging (45% of programs) (among others) (Joudrey & McGinnis, 2014). These same electives were taught by the LIS programs that offered them at the following percentages: cataloging (100% of programs); metadata (100% of programs); indexing (14% of programs); and advanced cataloging (38% of programs) (Joudrey & McGinnis, 2014). While the authors agreed that the basic cataloging course should be an elective for only those students who want specialize in this area, library students who want to become catalogers need education beyond this traditional course,

especially with the increasing importance of metadata to the position specifically and the profession generally (Joudrey & McGinnis, 2014).

With “the increasing calls for accountability” within education in general, instruction is becoming “even more central” to the duties of practicing librarians, particularly to those individuals employed in academic or school libraries (Saunders, 2015). As such, the LIS curriculum is incorporating competencies that focus on information literacy, instructional design, lesson planning, learning theories, assessment, and technology (among others) (Saunders, 2015). Through a content analysis of course syllabi of ALA accredited programs, Saunders (2015) discovered that although most programs offer at least one instruction course it often is an elective that may only be taught once a year. In addition, as part of the general education requirements found in the core courses, most students encounter instruction within the reference class; however, it is not unusual for this competency to cover one classroom experience either as the entire lesson or in conjunction with other topics (Saunders, 2015). Therefore, the intensity of coverage varies from developing a basic working definition or understanding of the concept from the single session scenario to being able to integrate instruction into everyday practices (conducting a reference interview) or specific job duties (designing a lesson plan for a particular class or project) from the semester-length course (Saunders, 2015). This inconsistent practice means that most librarians acquire the skills and knowledge to engage in instruction on their jobs and not through their coursework (Saunders, 2015). Saunders (2015) concludes that instruction is “limited” in most programs (p. 13) and that the LIS curriculum could benefit from the inclusion of “public speaking, presentation, and communication skills” (p. 16). Noting that “instruction and information literacy are central to the service of most libraries,” LIS program may not be adequately preparing future librarians to join the workforce (Saunders, 2015, p. 17).

LIS curriculum can prepare students for distinctive positions within the field. Two examples will be discussed. Libraries collect materials that are published or available in a serialized fashion. Traditionally, a serials librarian was responsible for the acquisition, management, and development of this specialized collection. With the growth of materials in this area, particularly its expansion from print periodicals to include (but not necessarily limited to) electronic resources, scholarly and scientific communication, licensing, and information technology management, the term continuing resources now describes the serialized material collections that many libraries maintain (Sutton, 2009). Sutton (2009) conducted a content analysis of the online course catalogs and web pages of ALA accredited LIS programs to examine the formal education that might prepare library students to assume a continuous resources position after graduation. The author found that while the majority of programs (almost 94%) offer at least one course that includes content on continuous resources, a much smaller percentage (about 26%) offer a semester length course on the topic (Sutton, 2009). While the semester length course (if taught) is not part of the core curriculum, making it an elective, an introduction to continuous resources appeared in a required class in this study about 14% of the time (Sutton, 2009).

In the second example, Bishop, Cadle, and Grubescic (2015) assessed the specialization-centered competencies that are needed for geographic information librarians. Noting the continual changes in science and technology, geospatial data has become increasingly important to business, military, higher education, and the government, creating “a great need for professionals skilled in geographic information systems (GISs) in a variety of libraries, archives, and other information agencies,” especially with the proliferation of mobile technologies and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) courses (Bishop et al., 2015, p. 68).

In response to the “massive growth and change in the adoption and use of GIS in society,” the Map and Geospatial Round Table (MAGIRT), which is a part of ALA, created a set of core competencies needed by librarians working in this specialization (Bishop et al., 2015). The aim of these competencies was to shape LIS curriculum (faculty), to help draft job advertisements (employers), and to guide GIS librarians (practitioners) (Bishop et al., 2015). Through a survey that required participants to rank the competencies, Bishop et al. (2015) created four learning outcomes of LIS education for this specialization: demonstration of geographic and cartographic principles; development and management of a geographic and cartographic collection (including selection and acquisition of materials, copyright consideration, and handling of materials); exhibition of reference assistance and instruction ability in geographic and cartographic materials; and familiarity with metadata standards, geospatial records, and cartographic scale. Through the learning outcomes, this study could be used by LIS faculty to create coursework that aligns with the work of current practitioners, improving their students’ ability to find work within this specialization area (Bishop et al., 2015).

Field Experience

Coupling classroom theory with real-world practice, field experience is “a relatively common component of professional education programs,” especially when it provides a realistic introduction to the working conditions and environment that the student will encounter in the workplace (Hoffman & Berg, 2014, p. 221). Consequently, LIS programs identify field experience as an important component of an ALA accredited degree (Ball, 2008). The participation in field experience benefits the student in the development of a professional identity as a librarian, irrespective of the type of library in which the student will seek employment, and it will help to shape the professional beliefs, values, and ethics that the student will take into this

future position (Ball, 2008; Coleman, 1989; Hoffman & Berg, 2014). Varying in length and responsibility, field experience opportunities are called by different names in different LIS programs, including practicum, internship, service learning, co-operative agreement, etc. (Coleman, 1989; Hoffman & Berg, 2014). Regardless of name, the field experience provides the student a chance to build personal confidence, to form a professional resume and reference contacts (Coleman, 1989), to develop professional career goals (Ball, 2008), to formulate community partnerships (Albertson & Whitaker, 2011), to gain hands-on experience in the field, to develop a mentoring relationship with a practicing librarian, to build a career network, to begin the socialization process into profession, and to adjust their personal conceptualizations about the field and its required work if there is a misalignment (Hoffman & Berg, 2014). Additionally, it allows the LIS program “to evaluate the appropriateness of its curriculum relative to the current practice of librarianship” and “to maintain its visibility to practitioners” who may hire its graduates (Coleman, 1989, p. 20). Despite the benefits, LIS programs may not offer a field experience opportunities for students because of limitations in resources (people to administer or money to finance the experience), time (already overburdened faculty or curriculum schedules), or location (sites willing or able to host student learners) (Coleman, 1989). Historically, the field experience has been a part of library education practically from its inception, with many ALA accredited programs choosing to incorporate practical learning into their curriculum (Ball, 2008; Coleman, 1989). In fact, field experience was mentioned in Charles Williamson’s report *Training for Library Service* from 1923 (Coleman, 1989), although Williamson criticized library education programs that valued practical real-world training in libraries over the knowledge and skills learned in an academic classroom (Ball, 2008). The debate between the practical and theoretical aspects of LIS education has continued from this

time onward. Adding to the debate, within many LIS programs, field experience (practicums, service learning, experiential learning, etc.) usually is managed by adjunct faculty while the theory-based core curriculum is taught by tenured (or tenure-track) faculty (Ball, 2008).

In their qualitative study of LIS students completing a field experience opportunity, Hoffman and Berg (2014) found that the practical experience clarified concepts that the students learned in the classroom, that the students regarded the workplace and not the classroom as the place that they would learn their professional skills, that they enjoyed the collegial atmosphere of their host libraries, and that they were able to participate in a wide variety of professional and paraprofessional activities that mirrored their curriculum (Hoffman & Berg, 2014). Therefore, the students benefitted from working informally with practicing librarians (as opposed to the more formal aspects of classroom work) in a professional community (Hoffman & Berg, 2014). In a separate study of field experience for students, Coleman (1989) discovered that LIS programs varied in how they administered a practicum, with the majority of results split into two options: (1) programs utilizing one faculty member to coordinate all student field experience opportunities regardless of the faculty member's specialization or the student's preference for a specific library type or (2) programs that utilize multiple faculty members to administer the field experience in order to match the faculty member's specialization with the student's library preference or the host site. Under option 1, this split allows continuity in the field experience for all students, but it may not serve all students best as it is highly unlikely that one faculty member will possess the experience and technical skills necessary to assist students in all library types (Coleman, 1989). This scenario could impact the student's learning experience, making it less valuable or informative, leaving the individual programs to decide what role the field experience may (or may not) play in their established curriculum (Coleman, 1989).

Looking specifically at service learning, Ball (2008) contends that this field experience promotes the development of student values, encourages self-reflection, fosters civic engagement, improves problem solving, and develops critical thinking skills. Albertson and Whitaker (2011) purport that service learning opportunities connect the learning objectives found within the LIS core curriculum with a practical, hands-on community engagement, with the hope of increasing the likelihood that the student will be civic-minded after graduation. The authors explain that:

Community engagement typically addresses inadequacies and/or inequalities existing in access to goods and services for certain groups. This lack of access translates into a deficit of skill sets necessary to enable members of those groups to succeed in the workplace and in society at large. (Albertson & Whitaker, 2011, p. 153)

With information literacy (and technology literacy) seen as a fundamental twenty-first century skill, Albertson and Whitaker (2011) outline a framework for LIS students to engage in a service learning opportunity that address this societal necessity through the design and implementation of information/technology literacy training models, while the LIS faculty simultaneously map the program's core curriculum to activities necessary to achieve this goal. The authors found that the curriculum corresponded to the service learning project in the following manner:

- *Introduction to Library Information Studies*—socializes students into the library field; introduces core library principles
- *Organization of Information*— instructs students to use search tools to gather information
- *Research Methods*— describes how to design and implement a research project or study

- *Information Sources and Services*— familiarizes students with a wide variety of print and electronic information sources
- *Administration and Management*— imparts decision making, delegation, and communication skills to students
- *Information Technology*— acquaints students with current technology and prepares students for future changes (Albertson & Whitaker, 2011).

Using student feedback gathered in the study, Albertson and Whitaker (2011) assert that LIS students exercise a wide variety of the theoretical concepts taught in their core courses in a well-designed field experience, with service learning offering the added benefit of integrating a socially conscious worldview through the development of community partnerships.

Portfolios

Although portfolios are considered “relative newcomers to graduate education,” they are accepted and utilized as tool that can provide an accurate assessment of a student’s educational journey (Burke & Snead, 2013, p. 27). In fact, Applegate (2006) describes the portfolio as a “super-resume” that can be arranged to demonstrate student learning outcomes (p. 334). Whether the final product is delivered in paper or electronic in form, the portfolio can be structured in a variety of ways, including as an “assessment or evaluative, reflected, integrative, structured, process of learning, and showcase or professional” educational tool (Burke & Snead, 2013, p. 27). With the current environment of compliance with accountability standards, they often are utilized to demonstrate student mastery of learning outcomes, tying together competencies from several core courses (Burke & Snead, 2013; Latrobe & Lester, 2000). In fact, Latrobe and Lester (2000) expound several benefits of employing portfolios in LIS education: (1) they can be used “to document, explain, and defend” a student’s professional competencies; (2) they reinforce

“the program’s objectives, relevance, and structure;” (3) they support that self-reflection is part of the learning process; (4) they provide a flexibility that allows individual student expression; and (5) they can be used to guide future career choices (p. 198). To this list, Burke and Snead (2013) add that portfolios:

- utilize a broad spectrum of skills (such as writing, critical thinking, and knowledge synthesis) that may cross the curriculum
- provide a longitudinal measurement of student growth and progress in the program
- deliver hard evidence of student mastery of the LIS curriculum and competencies
- predict a student’s future career potential in the library field
- produce a sharable artifact for students to take to job interviews
- encourage student creativity and innovation in the design and deliverance of the work
- reduce test anxiety for the student if the product is used in place of a comprehensive exam
- assist faculty in assessing the student’s academic ability after completion of the program

From this discussion, it is easy to see that portfolios are used as an accountability tool for both the student (documenting a successful learning experience) and the program (documenting an effective curriculum) (Latrobe & Lester, 2000). While there are several distinct advantages of LIS programs using portfolios within their curriculum, there are several drawbacks, particularly when the portfolio is used in lieu of a single, comprehensive exam. For example, issues in grading consistency and validity arise when multiple faculty members evaluate different finished products, possibly producing a scenario of uneven student assessment (Burke & Snead, 2013). This scenario could lead to subjective or inequitable standards being applied across multiple core

competencies when assessing the portfolios (Burke & Snead, 2013). While the utilization of portfolios may offer flexibility and individuality for students, these qualities may create uncertainty for students in how to approach and complete the assignment (Burke & Snead, 2013). By the nature of its design, the portfolio creates an educational requirement for the student that is both arduous and prolonged, which might increase student anxiety and stress levels (Burke & Snead, 2013). For faculty, whether consciously or unconsciously, the continued production of portfolios for each graduating class or cohort may result in an increased expectation that the quality of portfolios will rise (Burke & Snead, 2013).

A study conducted by Burke and Snead (2013) reveals that faculty may have diverging opinions on the usage of the portfolio within their programs, perhaps even revealing that it is a misunderstood educational tool. The authors report that only 36.7% of the LIS faculty ranked the portfolio as their “top preference” as an effective assessment measure of a student’s mastery of program competencies when compared with a comprehensive exam, field experience, capstone course, or research project (Burke & Snead, 2013, p. 30). The LIS faculty expressed mixed opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of using portfolios, with the results ranging from a compliment that these educational tools could be used to “help faculty assess instruction, diagnose problems with the program or the courses and evaluate whether [LIS] program competencies” are being mastered to the criticism that the finished portfolios elicited a response that “was ‘so what’ and held no real value” because the experience “did not teach skills or require critique” (Burke & Snead, 2013, p. 31).

Conflicts or Challenges of LIS Education

As discussed, the LIS educational process is divided between the instillation of practical skills to work in the nation’s libraries and the introduction of theory in an academic setting,

evolving from an on-the-job apprenticeship-like training in the nineteenth century to a theoretically-based curriculum in today's LIS programs (Ball, 2008). Accordingly, Ball (2008) describes library education as "bifurcated," with "one part dedicated to training master's level practitioners" and one part "focused on more scholarly research at the doctoral level" (p. 70). As has been discussed, library practitioners criticize that the skills and competencies taught in LIS programs frequently fail to meet the professional needs of the workplace, a scenario in which new librarians will need on-the-job training in order to be effective in their positions. Some employers condemn the need to train new employees while others recognize an opportunity to build upon the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom. Conversely, LIS faculty respond to this claim by pointing out that the library practitioners may not comprehend the objectives of the LIS curriculum or the restraints that accountability place upon it (Hall, 2009).

While similar charges have plagued the profession throughout its history, in a divisive stance during his ALA presidency, Gorman (2004) declared a crisis in library education. Among his many charges (all of which will not be discussed here), he decries the lack of a common core curriculum, the encroachment of information science and technology, and the misguided focus of the ALA accreditation standards. For a model core curriculum, Gorman (2004) proposes the following activities: collection development and acquisitions; cataloging; reference and library instruction; circulation, maintenance, and preservation; systems; management; and types of library. From the preceding discussions, these activities (or competencies) usually are taught in these courses (respectively): information sources; organization of information; reference; information sources or information technology; information technology; administration and management; and various elective courses. Gorman's (2004) criticism of ALA accreditation is that it is awarded on the idiosyncratic mission and vision of each LIS program (and whether this

idiosyncratic mission and vision is achieved) rather than on national standards, leaving each student and program (in Gorman's (2004) opinion) to plot their own course. As for technology, this argument has plagued library science for decades, with equal arguments for and against it as fact-based. Thus, as technology changes and becomes integrated into personal and professional usage, there is concern that it is eroding the foundation of the library field, both in practice and theory.

Dillion and Norris (2005) refute Gorman's (2004) claims as "crying wolf," pointing out the longevity of the supposed crisis in library education, beginning with the report drafted by Charles C. Williamson in the 1920s. While a core curriculum appears to exist, the number of identified core courses does vary by LIS program (with the average being about 5 required classes), and this core is supplemented by a host of elective courses (Dillion & Norris, 2005). Dillion and Norris (2005) posit that the perpetual library education crisis stems from two sources: technology intrusion and quality control issues (both of which were raised by Gorman's (2004) concerns). Mulvaney and O'Connor (2006) expound that for a course to be labeled as core that "there must be agreement on its definition and on the length and depth of its syllabus," noting that some LIS programs devote anywhere from a class session to a semester on important student skills or competencies. Mulvaney and O'Connor (2006) argue that this discrepancy "renders the idea of a core meaningless" (p. 39). Perhaps, as Dillion and Norris (2005) encourage, this perpetual crisis is an opportunity to evaluate the current state of the library field and to prepare for an emerging future, ensuring that the LIS curriculum prepares students for productive library work and that the accreditation process generates meaningful data that could improve the practical and theoretical aspects of this education. At this point, it should be noted

that Gorman (2004) took such an opportunity when he participated in the ALA task force that was charged with creating the Core Competences in 2009.

While the ALA accreditation process and the LIS curriculum have been criticized as possessing shortcomings, library students may enter a program without full knowledge of what they want to accomplish through their studies or the quality of the education that the program offers, adding to the perception of conflict or crisis within the educational process (White & Mort, 1990). Furthermore, White and Mort (1990) claim that most practicing librarians do not participate (or have limited participation) in continuing education opportunities, making the design of the core curriculum even more vital. Focusing on ALA accredited LIS programs at both public and private institutions, the authors' study revealed that students frequently select a LIS program based on geographic convenience (scoring first in the responses) over quality of the education (scoring second in the responses), the availability of specializations (scoring third in the responses), or the cost of tuition (scoring fourth in the responses) (White & Mort, 1990). Through their engagement with the curriculum and interaction with faculty, students often changed their minds about the type of library (academic, public, school, or special) in which they expected to work from their initial enrollment to graduation as well as what type of specialization (reference, cataloging, etc.) in which they were interested during this same period (White & Mort, 1990). The authors point out that this shift might "represent nothing more than a growing awareness of career options" on the part of the students from information learned in the program (White & Mort, 1990, p. 197). Pointing to constraints in both the job market and geographic location (whether real or imagined), White and Mort (1990) also note a discrepancy between the job expected at graduation and the one that students actually receive, causing the authors to suggest that "an openness or a casualness in the job search" exists, especially when

“matching qualifications or expectations to positions” (White & Mort, 1990, p. 200). Perhaps, the competencies found in the core curriculum prepare students for library work, regardless of the library type or specialization. When looking specifically at elective courses, White and Mort (1990) state that many students in their study (although not the majority) selected these classes based solely on convenience or availability in the schedule instead of in pursuit of a library type or specialization, concluding that students may believe that “the binary result of achieving versus not achieving an accredited degree as more important than what is specifically learned in that degree” (White & Mort, 1990, p. 207). Furthermore, the authors remind that students are not able to determine the quality of the education of LIS programs or to compare it against other programs or established standards based on their enrollment attendance, and graduation from their selected school” (White & Mort, 1990). Similarly, employers frequently “are equally oblivious to whatever distinctions” may exist between the various LIS programs (White & Mort, 1990, p. 211).

Mullins (2012) and Creel and Pollicino (2012) conducted research that centered on the preparedness of LIS students for work in the nation’s libraries. In fact, the preparedness of LIS students for employment in the nation’s libraries is a perennial issue in library education. Mullins (2012) focused his study on academic librarians working in research libraries and solicited participants for his study from all library directors working in Association of Research Libraries (ARL) institutions, with nine directors volunteering to answer his questions. Creel and Pollicino (2012) centered their study on public and school libraries, utilizing students from one LIS program (St. John’s University) to survey practicing librarians in these areas, comparing the results from the librarians with the students (who took the survey as well). Creel and Pollicino (2012) noted that their study included a higher percentage of Hispanic participants than in the

library profession, their student participants were older than the average library student, and the majority of public library students (71%) had no or limited experience working in a public library at the time of the study (as compared to 35% of the library school students working in school libraries). However, the study revealed that there was not a statistical significance between the age of the students or public library experience and their answers (Creel & Pollicino, 2012).

In Mullins' (2012) study, the library directors (as well as members of the job search committees) felt like the greatest candidate deficiency was the "inability to be proponents for the libraries" as the candidates lacked "the requisite people skills that would allow them to serve as liaisons or ombudsman for the library with a department or with faculty" (Mullins, 2012, p. 130). Additionally, the library directors mentioned the need for training or mentorship of many newly hired LIS program graduates, alluding to unevenness in the LIS programs' preparation of academic librarians, particularly when the hiring library was not geographically near a high-ranking LIS program, who were praised for the quality of their graduates (Mullins, 2012).

Examining student perceptions, the study by Creel and Pollicino (2012) revealed that "classroom experience appears to lessen the belief" that the LIS curriculum alone prepares students "for the realities of working in the public or school setting" (Creel & Pollicino, 2012, p. 59). However, the school library students in the study, who were required to participate in a field experience working in a school library, reported that this experience prepared them for work in this environment (Creel & Pollicino, 2012). The public library students did not have this same field experience requirement, creating a noteworthy difference between the two groups. For the practitioners' perceptions of the students, "school librarians were more likely than public librarians to say that their students *are* overall prepared for the realities of the work place for

which they are being trained” [emphasis in the original] (Creel & Pollicino, 2012, p. 61). In the study, the practitioners believed that the students possessed cutting-edge technology skills because of their recent education while the students believed that their skills were not as advanced because of a lack of hands-on opportunities within their coursework (Creel & Pollicino, 2012). The students and practitioners (school and public) agreed on the added value of field experience, but the school librarians and public librarians disagreed on the reference skills of the students, with the school librarians reporting that they felt that the school librarians were better prepared in this area (Creel & Pollicino, 2012). Thus, the study revealed differences between the preparedness of school and public librarians, pointing to the importance of assessing the education of LIS students across all specializations (Creel & Pollicino, 2012).

Theories-in-Use

Schon (1983) insisted that the existence of professions (such as law, medicine, education, and so forth) are “essential to the functioning of our society,” stressing that our culture’s “principal business” was conducted through these professions (p. 3). In fact, as a society, “We look to professions for the definition and solution of our problems, and it is through them that we strive for social progress” (Schon, 1983, pp. 3-4). Many privileges are afforded to recognized professions, including the autonomy to practice their craft or skill, the ability to control their membership socially or academically, and the possession of specialized or extraordinary knowledge or abilities (Schon, 1983). Furthermore, Schon (1983) acknowledged that professional practice was characterized by complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict that may challenge the professional knowledge base of the field (which is viewed as specialized, scientific, bounded, and standardized), creating competing (and shifting) images of and views held within the profession, leaving the practitioner to develop an artful (or even

poetic) approach to not only discovering the problem but to devising the solution to it as well. Thus, professional practice often is a “puzzling anomaly” because it is not systematic, observable, or empirical in nature (Schon, 1983, p. 33). Increasingly, professional practitioners engage “messy but crucially important problems” in which they rely on prior experience, continual experimentation, gut instinct, and dogged perseverance rather than technical expertise in order to address (Schon, 1983, p. 43), pointing to the “gap between professional knowledge and the demands of real-world practice” (Schon, 1983, p. 45). Addressing this disparity, Schon (1983) posited that professional practitioners exhibit a “spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of [their] everyday life” in which practical knowledge becomes tacit through their ordinary behavior, routines, techniques, comprehensions, and expectations (p. 49), in which the practitioner “makes innumerable judgements of quality for which he [or she] cannot state adequate criteria” (p. 50), and in which the practitioner “displays skills for which he [or she] cannot state the rules or procedures” (p. 50), a phenomenon that he labeled as reflection-in-action. Reflection-in-action can be utilized to analyze the specialized procedures and repetitive patterns that characterize a profession, creating a critique of their effectiveness and revealing areas for improvement (Schon, 1983). In addition, reflection-in-action allows the practitioner to respond to ambiguous or novel situations by crafting an artful response that is not bound by established theories or techniques and that does not separate thinking from doing (Schon, 1983).

However, as Argyris and Schon (1992) pointed out, the integration of thought with action is plagued with obstacles. Practitioners may be isolated from others within their profession, creating a scenario in which these individuals may compete with their counterparts for resources or reputation or in which they may form an incomplete view or take a preferential stand on a professional issue (Argyris & Schon, 1992). In addition, the practitioner makes a decision in the

moment with little (or no) time for evaluating existing information, gathering feedback from the environment or colleagues, or conducting an assessment of potential alternatives (Argyris & Schon, 1992). The authors purported that theories of action “determine all deliberate human behavior” (Argyris & Schon, 1992, p. 4) and were dependent “on a set of stated or unstated assumptions” (Argyris & Schon, 1992, p. 5). As such, theories in action are not accidental; in fact, even if the individual is not aware of their existence, theories in action are purposeful as the individual is responsible for their design and implementation; thus, the individual is responsible for his or her own behavior (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985). Therefore, theories of action determine the norm (or standard) when assessing one’s own behavior (constituting a theory of control) and are utilized to explain or predict one’s behavior when this behavior is assessed by others (Argyris & Schon, 1992).

If theories of action apply to all deliberate human behavior, as Argyris and Schon (1992) suggested, then this application exceeds just a focus on people (self and others) and expands to include the situation in which the action occurs and the consequences of the action as well, which are all used to form theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1992). Argyris et al. (1985) explained that “there are two kinds of theories in action. Espoused theories are those than an individual claims to follow. Theories-of-use are those can be inferred from action” (p. 81-82).

Theories-in-use, therefore, are the theories in action that *actually* control an individual’s behavior as opposed to the theories in action that he or she *claims* shape his or her responses (or espoused theory) (Argyris & Schon, 1992). As such, Argyris and Schon (1992) stated that:

Theories-in-use include knowledge about the behavior of physical objects, the making and use of artifacts, the marketplace, organizations, and every other domain of human activity. In other words, the full set of assumptions about human behavior that function in

theories-in-use constitute a psychology of everyday life. All propositions about the structure and operation of society, about the culture, about the design and construction of artifacts, about the physical world—insofar as they function as assumptions in theories-in-use—constitute a sociology, an anthropology, an engineering science, a physics of everyday life. In this sense, everyone is his [or her] own psychologist, sociologist, anthropologist, engineer, and physicist. (pp. 7-8)

It is not uncommon for a person's theories-in-use (which are revealed through his or her behavior) and the person's espoused theories (which he or she alleges to follow) to be incompatible, incongruent, or inconsistent (Argyris & Schon, 1992). Theories-in-use assist with maintaining a person's inner consistency because they are used to construct his or her reality of the world, particularly in relation to the variables that shape or impact behavior (Argyris & Schon, 1992). Theories in action are formed in many ways, including "a linear increase in building-blocks of experience" or "infrequent, discontinuous eruptions that are initiated by dilemmas" (Argyris & Schon, 1992, p. 30). These obstacles (or dilemmas) arise when theories-in-use and espoused theories clash (dilemmas of incongruity), when the variables in the theory-in-use conflict (dilemmas of inconsistency), when the variables in the theory-in-use are not realistic (dilemmas of effectiveness), when the created behavioral reality is objectionable (dilemmas of value), and when the individual cannot confirm or disconfirm the assumptions that he or she created in his or her behavioral reality (dilemmas of testability) (Argyris & Schon, 1992). Whether the dilemmas appear suddenly or gradually, they usually do not generate significant impact on the variables of the particular theory-in-action because people tend to value the constancy and consistency that they create, frequently making the theory-in-action self-sustaining (Argyris & Schon, 1992).

Argyris and Shon (1992) defined theories of practice as issues that stemmed from an individual's work situation. In fact, "theories of practice describe routines, procedures, and specific practices for dealing with problems common to the practice environment" (Houchens & Keedy, 2009 p. 50). Theories of practice are designed to meet the needs of others, particularly those individuals that the practitioner serves as customers, clients, patrons, and so forth (Argyris & Schon, 1992). Theories of practice are composed of a series of interrelated actions that are performed in a specific sequence that will yield expected outcomes or intended consequences (Argyris & Schon, 1992; Houchens & Keedy, 2009).

In his article, Crowley (2001) examined the tacit knowledge—and sometimes the tacit ignorance— of academic librarians. He acknowledged that tacit knowledge may have many interpretations that are determined by the individual person. These interpretations may be personal in origin, functional at the organizational level, valuable only to the possessor, job or context specific, intertwined with explicit professional knowledge, known (or unknown) to the possessor, etc. (Crowley, 2001). Crowley (2001) wrote his article as a stranger to academic librarianship; that is, he identified himself as an outsider (he is not an academic librarian), but he was knowledgeable about the group (he is a LIS faculty member). In fact, he used his association as LIS faculty to critique the tacit knowledge of academic librarians, practitioners that he may have helped to educate, in their response to the continued necessity (or not) of academic libraries with the proliferation of information in electronic format and the perceived threats to academic libraries from changes to accreditation standards as the result of this proliferation (Crowley, 2001). When the ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries) published a document that questions whether students receive a college education if they do not utilize library materials, he chastised this group, which is composed of academic librarians, of

misunderstanding the tacit knowledge of faculty, particularly that faculty were the only ones qualified to evaluate courses or programs, faculty knew what is best for their classrooms, faculty knew that students become overwhelmed in the research process, and faculty work under strenuous conditions (Crowley, 2001). This article showed the tacit knowledge of these two groups at odds with each other, even though one might perceive an overlap in their function and professions.

Edwards (2010), Greenall and Sen (2016), and Bird and Crumpton (2014) conducted studies on reflection and LIS education. Edwards (2010) contended that reflection-in-action could be used to address the dilemmas found in LIS education. Specifically, the researcher utilized this practice to examine whether student theories-in-use about their coursework align with the stated learning outcomes of the class (Edwards, 2010). Greenall and Sen (2016) conducted a study to examine the benefits and barriers of reflective practice in the library and information sector in England. The study recruited 432 library professionals from across the country, with a majority of the responders self-identifying as working in higher education (Greenall & Sen, 2016). Bird and Crumpton (2014) looked at the practice of reflection in LIS education as well. As has been discussed already, there exists a conflict between the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom and the practical skill needed to work in libraries. In this scenario, the internship was seen as a means to bridge this professional divide (Bird & Crumpton, 2014). In order to address this issue, the researchers used a model called the Real Learning Connections project to create “specially designed internships that might alleviate the conjoined problems of academic isolation, practitioner burnout, and student unpreparedness for the workplace” (Bird & Crumpton, 2014, pp. 92-93).

In a study conducted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with one undergraduate and one graduate level course, the students in Edwards's (2010) study provided anonymous feedback through various means to the instructor, including an outside consultant who visited the class and written prompts that asked for student responses (Edwards, 2010). During the early weeks of the courses, the students perceived that the assignments were not aligned with the learning outcomes, with many questioning the value of completing the assignment at all (Edwards, 2010). For the purposes of their study, Greenall and Sen (2012) defined reflective practice as "an activity undertaken by professionals to enable them to deal with complex situations by evaluating actual or possible events or scenarios to gain insight from experience" (Greenall & Sen, 2016, pp. 139-140). The researchers explicitly named reflective writing as a method to record reflections and included the following clarifications: the writing could be by hand or by electronic means; the writing could be regular or irregular in frequency; and the writing should include analysis or evaluation and future action plans (Greenall & Sen, 2016). Bird and Crumpton (2014) conducted a three year case study at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in which LIS students participated in internships with library practitioners from the University's academic library under the supervision of a LIS faculty member.

The conclusions of the three studies supported the value of reflection to LIS education. Edwards (2010) found that the students in the study enjoyed the completion of a hands-on assignment that included a reflection component. For the undergraduate class, at the end of the semester, the majority of students expressed that their required assignment—researching and writing a Wikipedia article—was the most beneficial to their learning process (Edwards, 2010). Upon the completion of the class, other undergraduate students noted that they valued the peer review process that was built into the class (Edwards, 2010). For the graduate students, who were

asked to complete three large projects, there was an initial recognition of the importance of the peer review process from the beginning, which is different from the undergraduates, but their end-of-semester responses that the course activities increased their learning was similar to the undergraduates for the majority, although some students voiced a negative opinion (Edwards, 2010). For both groups, the students liked the projects that were the most design-based (the Wikipedia article for undergraduates and building a core collection for a specified community of users for the graduates) (Edwards, 2010). This study challenged the students' tacit knowledge that they understood the research process intuitively and forced them to reflect upon their theories-in use in this matter.

Greenall and Sen's (2016) study pinpointed many benefits of reflective practice, including learning from significant incidents, continual professional development, identification of gaps in professional skills or knowledge, identification of personal strengths or weaknesses, and learning from training or educational opportunities (Greenall & Sen, 2016). The barriers to reflective practice are listed as lack of time, lack of motivation, lack of organizational support, and lack of guidance on how to participate in it (among others) (Greenall & Sen, 2016). In their study, the relationship between receiving training in how to participate in reflective practices and actually partaking in reflective writing exercises was found to be significant (Greenall & Sen, 2016). The writers surmise that being exposed to different methods of reflective practices, such as drawing or talking with peers, may help those individuals who are reluctant or uncomfortable to find a method that works for them (Greenall & Sen, 2016).

In the study by Bird and Crumpton (2014), the researchers discovered that their investigation had academic and practical implications. The LIS faculty were introduced (1) to new material for curriculum courses and staff development opportunities for the university's

academic librarians and (2) to the internship projects that produced real world work experience for the student participants, respectively (Bird & Crumpton, 2014). The reflective components of the collaborative study allowed the participants to examine and question their own practices, allowing the LIS faculty and academic practitioners to learn from each other (Bird & Crumpton, 2014).

Al Hijji and Fadlallah (2013) considered the division between theory in practice in cataloging courses in LIS education, just as Bird and Crumpton (2014) examined the LIS internship for the same purpose. Al Hijji and Fadlallah (2013) interviewed 20 students in four focus groups from the library program at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in Oman. SQU offers seven cataloging courses, with the courses divided between cataloging traditional materials, cataloging non-traditional materials, Dewey decimal classification system, library of congress classification system, classification of archival documents, subject analysis and ontology, and indexing and abstracting (Al Hijji & Fadlallah, 2013). Overall, the student responses were negative when queried about the balance of the theoretical and practical in their cataloging courses for both traditional and non-traditional materials, with the students criticizing both the teaching methods of these courses and the lack of opportunity for hands-on, practical work (Al Hijji & Fadlallah, 2013). The study's results were similar for the two subject analysis courses. As for the classification courses, the students felt that the instructional time was more balanced between the theoretical and practical for the Dewey decimal and library of congress classification system courses, although they still criticized the teaching methods in these courses. (In this study, not all students took the archival course as it is not a general program course.) Additionally, the students felt that their education could have been improved with greater collaboration with the academic librarians in the university's libraries, especially since the

practitioners could have provided increased opportunities for hands-on training in a real working environment (Al Hijji & Fadlallah, 2013). With this reflective practice, the LIS faculty can examine their actual theories-in use about the structure of their courses and make improvements to their program.

Kerr and Todd (2009) examined the espoused theories and theories-in-use in the teaching of information literacy in academic libraries. The study of information literacy is complex and contradictory because of a multitude of definitions, understandings, or models that are used to teach it in this setting (Kerr & Todd, 2009). Examining the instructional mission statement(s) and online tutorials of a pilot library, the researchers discovered that the espoused theories of information literacy as found in the written policy(ies) did not match the theories-in-use found in the tutorials; furthermore, they stressed that the activities of the online tutorial would not produce the goals of the policy statements (Kerr & Todd, 2009). For example, “the public documents indicate that foundational values of information literacy including collaborative instruction, curriculum integration, lifelong learning and the enhancement of critical thinking are espoused by the library” while the online tutorials are guided by the ACRL *Information Literacy Standards* that define information literacy as a continuum of skills that range from finding to using information for a specified purpose (Kerr & Todd, 2009, p. 8). From the pilot study, Kerr (2010) conducted the same study on 11 other academic libraries in her dissertation, finding that a multitude of information literacy definitions did indeed exist between the libraries. In addition, the study found that the online tutorials universally focused on teaching the skill of information location and retrieval (from the ACRL Standards) while they did not address collaboration, integration, lifelong learning, or critical thinking. This result points to a disconnection between

the espoused theories contained in the written documents and the actual practices of the academic librarians found in the online tutorials.

Kane, Sandretto, and Heath (2002) evaluated research studies that examined faculty (whether instructor, lecturer, or professor) beliefs about their teaching practices. The researchers acknowledged a lack of consistency in the terminology to define teacher beliefs, with the words knowledge, cognition, self-reflection, perspectives, attitudes, and conceptions (among many others) being used interchangeably (Kane et al., 2002). Kane et al. (2002) clarify that espoused theories are encompassed in the description that people give of their behavior or beliefs and can be found in interviews, concept maps, autobiography, and written narratives (to name a few) and that the actual practices, or theories-in-use, can be found in direct observation, document analysis, audio-and video-recording, journaling, and other self-reflection activities.

Using Argyris and Schon's (1992) theories in action as a framework, Kane et al. (2002) critiqued 50 research studies, dividing them into three broad groups: (1) studies that made assumptions about the faculty members theories-in-use (actual practices) about their teaching practices based on their espoused theories (stated beliefs); (2) studies that did not make assumptions about their theories-in-use about their teaching practices; and (3) studies that made direct links between the faculty theories-in-use and espoused theories about their teaching practices (Kane et al., 2002). For group 1, the researchers criticized that the studies did not include observations of the faculty teaching, making their conclusions faulty because they were based solely on espoused beliefs, or how the faculty described their practices to the researchers (Kane et al., 2002). For group 2, the studies stated that their focus was on the faculty perceptions of their teaching practices, and they did not include observations because they analyzed the self-reflections of the faculty (Kane et al., 2002). For group 3, the studies included observations of

the faculty teaching and made comparisons of these observations to their espoused beliefs, which were shared with the researchers before the observations (Kane et al., 2002). Kane et al. (2002) claimed that their findings might be used to improve faculty classroom teaching, whether seasoned or novice. In addition, their work could be used to improve the research practices of faculty as they noted failure in the following areas for many of the studies in their critique: repeatedly citing a study until its deficiencies are no longer noticed; absence of researcher perspective or assumptions, particularly in qualitative research; and deficiencies in data collection and examination (Kane et al., 2002). Finally, Kane et al. (2002) asserted that the study of the link between faculty theories-in-use and espoused theories was important because it impacted their classroom behavior, which impacted their students' education.

Gravani (2008) questioned whether faculty and practitioners “are partners in generating knowledge or citizens of two different worlds” (p. 649). In a qualitative study conducted at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece, the researcher examined the theory versus practice dichotomy with university faculty and secondary school teachers who both taught in the areas of philology and philosophy (Gravani, 2008). In a specially designed program, 12 faculty taught courses to 22 school teachers in order to update their subject knowledge, educational theory practices, and research and teaching methodologies and to keep them abreast of developments and reform in education (Gravani, 2008). Through the interview process, Gravani (2008) discovered that the participating faculty believed that theoretical knowledge was the fundamental purpose of the training for the teachers while the teachers held the opposite view that practical knowledge was the main purpose of their attendance. The researcher found that in this study that the faculty members with practitioner experience (such as secondary classroom experience) brought a greater balance of theory and practice to their presentations (Gravani,

2008). Along these same lines, the researcher discovered that the faculty viewed their role in the training as propositional (the transmission of knowledge) while the teachers viewed their role in the training as procedural (the application of knowledge), making faculty knowledge producers and teachers knowledge translators (Gravani, 2008). The disconnection between the faculty and teacher espoused theories and theories-in-use in this study stem from their views of their disparate professional roles. Thus, to answer her own question, the researcher did find cultural gaps between the two groups; however, she asserted that collaboration and partnerships could be used to bridge the divide.

Summary

The concept of quality is difficult to define or measure because it is dependent on the subjective experience or interpretation of the individual person or stakeholder. In higher education, this group encompasses faculty, students, administrators, employers, and policymakers who all hold varying agendas, expectations, and needs. Harvey and colleagues provide the following conceptualization of quality in higher education: exceptionalism, perfectionism, fitness-for-purpose, value-for-money, transformation, compliance, political or symbolic, employability, and accountability (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). With the dynamic nature of the term itself, it is not surprising that a quality library education is difficult to define or measure. Among library education stakeholders, discord exists about what should be the focus of library education: practical job-related skills that prepare students for entry-level position, specialized education that prepares students for highly specialized careers, or theoretical courses that prepare scholars or thinkers within the field. With the help of Argyris and Schon's (1992) theories-in-use conceptual framework, in conjunction with the conceptual framework of quality in higher education as

outlined by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010), this study aims to determine how faculty conceptualize quality in library education, revealing their actual rather than just professed beliefs and practices.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Qualitative research attempts to uncover how people construct meaning of their world and how they interpret the experiences that they encounter in this created world (Merriam, 2009). With qualitative research, which draws from “the philosophies of constructionism, phenomenology, and symbolic interactionism,” the researcher is concerned with developing an emic (or insider’s) understanding, which is gleaned from collecting and analyzing data from the viewpoint of the study’s participants (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). Through an inductive process, a rich description that is formed with “words and pictures rather than numbers” emerges from the data collected throughout the research process (Merriam, 2009, p. 16). For this study, I employed a qualitative research strategy in order to explore what quality is in library education according to LIS faculty. This chapter contains the following sections: researcher reflexivity; research design; research question; sample and site collection; data collection; data analysis; validity, reliability, trustworthiness; delimitations, assumptions; biases of the study; and summary.

Researcher Reflexivity

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I am a library practitioner; moreover, I have spent my entire career as a library practitioner. While I have worked in a variety of library settings, I currently am employed as a library administrator in a small academic library. In this capacity, I am responsible for the hiring, training, and success of the employees that I supervise. Recently, I was faced with the supervision of a failing employee. This situation was frustrating because there did not seem to be a correlation between this employee’s educational level and the job that this individual was hired to perform. In my opinion, the problem with this employee’s job performance rested with an ongoing issue with library education: the disconnection between the

theoretical material learned in class and the practical skills needed to work in a library. This dichotomy led me to a series of questions: Where does the problem lie, with the curriculum or with the individual? If an individual holds a degree, should this person automatically be able to perform the job that it prepared him or her to hold? Or, does the disparity in individual skill, personality, and initiative vary so widely as to make this situation impossible to assess by degree attainment alone? I acknowledge that there are no easy or universal answers to these questions.

In the preceding paragraph, I discuss my subjectivities in relation to the topic of this dissertation, which is a quality library education. This was the first step in bridling my pre-conceived notions or beliefs as required by the lifeworld approach to phenomenological research. I acknowledge that I am part of the field understudy as both a long-term practitioner and a degree holder. I have first-hand knowledge of the practical skills needed to work in a modern library as well as the theoretical knowledge learned in a library program. In addition, I have real world experience when the practical and the theoretical did not meet in a graduate's ability to work in a library. By addressing these pre-understandings, I was able to conduct the study in a disciplined yet open manner. This openness allowed me to listen to the faculty participants in the study, which allowed the phenomenon under study to present itself organically through the interviews, which allowed the deeper meaning of the phenomenon to surface throughout the process as well. Thus, bridling and openness forced me to look forward, instead of backward as bracketing does, in order to understand how faculty in the selected LIS program conceptualize a quality library education in the study as a whole.

Research Design

While the concept of quality is difficult to characterize, interpret, quantify, or describe, it has become linked with the performance of higher education institutions or programs,

particularly in the form of accountability measures designed to prove effectiveness, trustworthiness, and legitimacy (Castiglia & Turi, 2011; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010; Trow, 1996). In order to discern the quality of a graduate education, particularly a master's degree as in this study, it is necessary to assess the professional practices of those working within the field (Colson, 1980). Therefore, this study used phenomenology as a research method to explore the first person experiences of LIS faculty, as they prepare and deliver the curriculum that will produce the next generation of professional librarians. This section of this chapter will explore phenomenology as a methodology generally and the lifeworld approach as a phenomenological method specifically.

Phenomenological Methodology

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach and a research methodology that utilizes experience to describe or analyze past events, subjective understanding, or tacit knowledge (Finlay, 2012). Moreover, phenomenology examines those often taken-for-granted yet distinctly typical human experiences that are found in the everyday life of ordinary people (Finlay, 2012). Phenomenologists endeavor to collect “fresh, complex, and rich descriptions of phenomena as concretely lived” by individual people either to construct a description or to create an interpretation of the implicit, holistic, and often contradictory meanings of the phenomena (Finlay, 2012, p. 173). In fact:

The search for meaning is a question of diving below the surface and finding the deeper underlying and intentional meanings that are being born, first in the relationship between subject and phenomenon, but in research also in inter-subjective relationships. Not least, there is the great challenge of understanding and explicating the meaning of another's experience. (Dahlberg, 2006, p. 16)

From this description, it is easy to see that the relationship between the individual and his or her world becomes a central component of phenomenological research. In fact, phenomenological research uses first person accounts to examine the lived experiences of individuals in their own natural language. The researcher analyzes these collected accounts, whether written or verbal, looking for the essence of the phenomenon under study, attempting to uncover both the explicit and implicit meanings within them (Finlay, 2009; Finlay, 2012).

Within the field, a dichotomy exists in which phenomenological researchers or scholars subscribe to two often distinct approaches to empirical inquiry: descriptive phenomenology and interpretive (or hermeneutic) phenomenology (Finlay, 2009; Finlay, 2012; Vagle, 2009).

Descriptive phenomenology, which aims to reveal the essence of a phenomenon (or its essential meaning), has its origins in the transcendental phenomenology fashioned by Husserl

(1931/2012), is practiced by researchers such as Giorgi, and is associated with the human sciences (Finlay, 2009; Finlay, 2012; Vagle, 2009). Interpretive (or hermeneutic)

phenomenology springs from the ideas advanced by philosophical thinkers such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Gadamer “who argue for our embeddedness in the world of language and social relationships, and the inescapable historicity of all understanding” (Finlay, 2009, p. 11).

Interpretive (or hermeneutic) phenomenology is practiced by researchers such as van Manen and Todres, is associated with the humanities, and includes self-reflection and the experiences of the researcher in the research process (Finlay, 2009; Finlay, 2012; Vagle, 2009). Descriptive

phenomenology aims to reduce the influence of the researcher on the phenomenon while

interpretive (or hermeneutic) phenomenology recognizes that the researcher will contribute to the meaning of the phenomenon (Vagle, 2009). There are researchers that combine elements from

both descriptive and interpretative (or hermeneutic) phenomenology, notably the lifeworld

approach by the Swedish researcher Dahlberg (and colleagues) and an unnamed approach by the British researcher Finlay (Finlay, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Vagle, 2009; Vagle, 2014). These two approaches borrow or incorporate elements from both descriptive and interpretative phenomenology, creating an amalgamation of the two (Vagle, 2014).

Regardless of chosen methodology, a phenomenological researcher should diminish—or, at the very least acknowledge— prior knowledge, previous understanding, or past encounters with the phenomenon. This action will generate a renewed sense of discovery that will allow the researcher to view the phenomenon from the perspective of another individual rather than from one's own (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nystrom, 2008; Finlay, 2012; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). This stance is called the phenomenological attitude and allows the phenomenologist to question the world (at least in relation to this phenomenon) from a universal perspective, creating a comprehensive description of the phenomenon (Finlay, 2012; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008).

Overview of Descriptive Phenomenology

Phenomenology, as conceptualized by Husserl (1931/2012) in the early twentieth century, focused on human consciousness. In fact, according to Husserl (1931/2012), ego was the “presupposition of the knowledge of the world” (p. xl). This primordial presupposition became what he characterized as the beginning of the beginning, a science that examined phenomena reflectively in order to understand their distinctive nature (Husserl, 1931/2012). Although phenomenology focused on consciousness, its founder stressed that phenomenology is not psychology, which is a discipline that examines human experiences through the analysis of actual facts or existing reality while phenomenology is concerned with ideals (Husserl, 1931/2012). In opposition to psychology, Husserl (1931/2012) characterized phenomenology as an eidetic science that uncovers the essence (or essential universality) of phenomena. He

recognized that phenomenology, as a theory of essential being, is idealistic (not based in facts) and a priori (independent of experience) in nature although he asserted that knowledge stems from human experience in the natural world (Husserl, 1931/2012).

Within this context, the natural world was the totality of phenomena that can be known through direct or perceived experience (Husserl, 1931/2012). Within phenomenology, the essence is intuitively (or self-evidently) grasped as an object, an idea, or a conceptual construct, and it is acknowledged as such when it exhibits itself to the individual person, revealing its givenness wholly and entirely, in the process (Husserl, 1931/2012). Husserl (1931/2012) pointed out that this progression is equivalent to sensory perception, a dawning consciousness of an essence through sight, sound, touch, etc. Therefore, phenomenology urges the assumption of what Husserl (1931/2012) deemed the natural standpoint: that is, the person stands aloof from prior judgements or theories about a phenomena before examining its essence (Husserl, 1931/2012). This action is labeled as bracketing, or a purposeful disconnection in which the person refrains from forming conclusions about the phenomena, leaving them untested and uncontested while under investigation (Husserl, 1931/2012).

The examination of phenomena is never absolute since its completeness can never be reached or its fullness can never be comprehended (Husserl, 1931/2012). This statement is supported by Husserl's (1931/2012) claim that experience determines meaning. The author claims that a reciprocity of understanding allows people to identify with the experiences of others (Husserl, 1931/2012). Humanity's experiences (or consciousness) are collected in the natural world, and since transcendence is achieved through these intersubjective connections, the natural world must be placed between the brackets to reduce its effect (Husserl, 1931/2012). This phenomenological reduction allows for the purposeful abstraction of the essence since what

remains is pure transcendental consciousness, devoid of social or cultural influence (Husserl, 1931/2012). As such, Husserl (1931/2012) claimed that phenomenology is a descriptive discipline that inductively arrives at the pure intuition inherent within human consciousness (or experiences). Reflection is the main methodology of phenomenology (Husserl, 1931/2012). Since no two people have identical experiences, even when reflecting upon the same phenomena, their spheres of consciousness will differ, adding to the overall perceptual meaning of the phenomena under study (Husserl, 1931/2012).

Overview of Interpretive (or Hermeneutic) Phenomenology

The philosophical work *Being and Time* was written to analyze and question the meaning of being, or what it means for an entity to be, or to be present. Heidegger (1927/1962) characterized the concept of being as commonplace, predetermined, and universal. He utilized the term *dasein* (which is translated as “being-there” in the original German) to describe this concept. Heidegger’s (1927/1962) conceptualization of being (or *dasein*) sought to uncover the essence of what is human, animal, or object. Consciousness was consciousness *of* something, such as an entity, a concept, etc. Therefore, the subject required an object. Conversely, there were no entities, concepts, etc. without human consciousness of them (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Thus, consciousness involves thinking about average things in the everyday world. According to Heidegger (1927/1962), this being-in-the-world stemmed from a mood (or state of mind) that is projected (or thrown) onto the hidden possibilities found within the world, allowing the individual the opportunity to discover or to interpret the meaning of these potential possibilities, particularly since people are seen as the performer(s) of intentional acts which are bound together by the unity of meaning” (p. 48).

Heidegger (1927/1962) stressed that being is located within the world. Subsequently, experience was located within the world as well. For Heidegger (1927/1962), the disclosure of the world was a process in which humans make sense of their world, which was possible because entities within the world were connected through their very existence. Veering from Husserl (1931/2012), who thought that phenomenology provides a *description* of experience and that experience is an intentionality that is directed *toward* (or about) something, Heidegger (1927/1962) stated that experience is *interpreted* for its underlying meaning and is rooted in the consciousness *of* something. In fact, he asserts that “All interpretation is grounded on understanding” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 195). Heidegger (1927/1962) used the concept of care to conceptualize this understanding. Care was characterized as a basic, factual, practical way of being engaged in the world that facilitated a potentiality (or possibility) of seeking the answer to the question of existence or of making sense of this questioning in a meaningful and intelligent manner (Heidegger, 1927/1962). It is important to note that the physical presence of an item does not constitute its being. This state represents its usefulness as a tool (as a piece of equipment), and this usefulness has meaning because of its intended purpose or stated objective (Heidegger, 1927/1962).

Language was an important component of Heidegger’s (1927/1962) conceptualization of being. In fact, language was so essential in understanding the meaning of being that he created his own terminology from the root forms of German and ancient Greek words in order to give his philosophy a newness that would not be found in using common, everyday words to describe his concepts (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Heidegger (1927/1962) centered his views about language—which he characterized as an entity consisting of the totality of words—to discursive speech (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Language was composed of talking, listening, and remaining silent

(Heidegger, 1927/1962). Through these means, people used language to interpret the intelligibility of the world, a process that Heidegger (1927/1962) dubbed as being-in-the-world, which was an everyday state of operating in the world and which could be used to create a perception that makes the indeterminate more determinate (Heidegger, 1927/1962). As with consciousness, language required an object since talk is *about* something (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Besides words, speakers used tone, tempo, modulation, and manner of speech in order to communicate their meaning (Heidegger, 1927/1962).

Thus, one's concept of being was rooted in oneself. If meaning was contingent upon the questioner (or the investigator), being must continuously be defined anew, and the journey to understand it must start with the questioner (or the investigator's) conception of being (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Therefore, in order to understand the meaning of being, the investigator must concede that being exists in the world a priori to this argument (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Not only does the author recognize this argument as circular reasoning, he characterized it as vicious in nature (Heidegger, 1927/1962). However, Heidegger (1927/1962) assured us that scientific investigation is possible because of his concept of care, which allowed for the possibility of self-awareness and self-reflection.

In his book *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) discussed three important concepts to his interpretation of phenomenology: perception, body, and language. Building on the work of Husserl (1931/2012) and Heidegger (1927/1962) that all consciousness was consciousness of something, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) posited that all consciousness is perceptual consciousness of something. For the philosopher, "Perception is the background upon which all acts stand out" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. xxiv). In this viewpoint, our world consisted of what we perceived, and perception became our access to the

truth of our world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/ 2012). Within Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2012) view of phenomenology, inner perception was possible only through outer perception. In an ongoing process, a phenomenon to be examined was brought into the perception of the perceiver. Since consciousness must be consciousness of something, the perceiver was not detached from this examination and was aware of the sensations introduced during this transaction. However, borrowing Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2012) words, we must rupture our familiarity with our world in order to recognize our existing presuppositions. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) noted that perception was not memory because bringing a phenomenon into consciousness happens in the present, even if the experience happened in the past.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) focused on the body as an idea, particularly he asserted that the body was the “outward manifestation of a certain of being in the world” (p. 55). The philosopher believed that through the body that experience was brought down to the physical level, that the body was the expression of consciousness or being, and that the body represented the return to the lived world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). Consciousness became what Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) deemed as the universal center of knowledge, which was not designated to a particular region of the body. As consciousness moved from created to creating, from constituted to constituting, it achieved transcendence. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) reminded that transcendence occurred when the individual reflected upon their reflecting upon a phenomenon. He believed that empiricism failed as a research methodology because it omitted this step (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012).

Thus, it was easy to see that the idealized body was composed of two distinct divisions—the actual body that was moved by the motor functions of the physical body itself (or biological existence) and the habitual body that was constituted by the embodied consciousness of routine,

custom, or instinct (or pre-reflexive existence) (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). The behaviors of the habitual body were impacted by the cultural and social world of the individual (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/ 2012). The actual and habitual body often worked in tandem, making it difficult to tell whether a behavior was the result of a bodily function or a habitual practice. Because of this feature, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) criticized idealism (which he deems as intellectualism) because it required the phenomenon to depend on itself for understanding, separating it from its natural world.

For Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012), the act of giving an object (or an idea) a name brought it into existence. The philosopher explained that thought presupposed speech, and it was through the process of expression (or speaking) that our thoughts became our own. Speech allowed people to be introduced to the thoughts of another person; if these thoughts were absorbed or incorporated, they became capable of expanding the perception (and perceptual experience) of others (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). Eventually, speech stopped being the manner of designating an object (or idea) as an object (such as labeling a ball as a ball) and became the conscious embodiment of it (such as when the label and the object are inseparable) (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). In the idealized body, speech was used as a gesture (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). In this viewpoint, words were steeped in the social and cultural aspects of the speaker's world, and they provided the meaning or context to understand the gesture (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012).

Lifeworld Approach

According to Dahlberg et al. (2008), an individual's lifeworld encompasses his or her world of experiences. The lifeworld focuses on the phenomena within this realm, attempting to uncover not only the phenomenon themselves but also their complex meanings (Dahlberg et al., 2008). The lifeworld simultaneously is composed of the perceptible and the imperceptible and

serves as a source for understanding the relationship between the individual and his or her world, both externally (social) and internally (personal) in nature (Dahlberg et al., 2008). In fact, the imperceptible meanings are the “background against which phenomena and their meanings have the possibility of standing out as figures” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 217), especially since consciousness is rooted in the lifeworld. Equally, it is important to note that “Researchers, as all other living persons, are embedded in meaning and have a lifeworld, which is an inescapable context for all research” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 125). As such, researchers are a part of the framework that produces meaning since they come from the lifeworld itself, and everything is connected in the lifeworld (Dahlberg et al., 2008).

Within the lifeworld approach to phenomenological research, reflexivity (self-awareness) is important. Lifeworld is the embodiment of the individual (or self), which in turn is a product of the “shared language, culture, discourse, and history” that constitutes the relationship between the individual and others (Findlay, 2012, p. 180). With its focus on the everyday world, the lifeworld approach aims to identify, describe, or interpret the patterns of meaning found in the lives of ordinary people (Dahlberg et al., 2008). This process creates a broad understanding of phenomena, possibly unearthing hidden meanings (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 96). Since researchers are part of the lifeworld, they become original contributors to the patterns of meaning in the phenomenon being studied (Dahlberg et al., 2008).

As an approach, lifeworld research requires two central items: openness and bridling. In order for openness to occur, the researcher must possess a basic understanding of the phenomenon under study (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Openness includes an element of discoverability as the phenomenon guides the researcher in the quest for meaning and understanding (Dahlberg et al., 2008). During this period of discovery, the lifeworld approach

requires sensitivity, flexibility, receptiveness, curiosity, objectivity, and patience as the research process unfolds (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Dahlberg et al. (2008) characterize this state of being as exhibiting a “vulnerable engagement” while simultaneously (and conversely) demonstrating a “disinterested attention” to the phenomenon (p. 99). This inherent ambiguity forces the researcher to acknowledge how his or her personal experience (or understanding) might influence the phenomenon under study, leaving the researcher open for self-reflection and self-disclosure (Dahlberg et al., 2008).

At this point, after setting aside all pre-conceived notions about the phenomenon, the researcher will experience a feeling of immersion (or absorption) in the phenomenon as a result of this intense concentration and attentiveness (Dahlberg et al., 2008). While the researcher must be close to the phenomenon in order to experience openness, the lifeworld approach requires that this individual, also, must exhibit “a reflective difference,” creating a scenario in which the researcher oscillates between being both near and far simultaneously from the phenomenon in order to preserve the study’s objectivity, an act that requires the researcher to be cognizant of one’s own intellectual and emotional reactions to the study’s participants and data (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 108). While the preceding description of openness appears to outline a methodological approach to research, the authors caution lifeworld researchers from developing a routine practice of inquiry that is bound or characterized by specific steps or organized tasks as this procedure would jeopardize the open process itself (Dahlberg et al., 2008). “In short, we must resist any approach to research that demands absolute certainty and order” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 113).

Speaking to the topic of intersubjectivity in lifeworld research, Dahlberg et al. (2008) declare that the ultimate goal of research is the advancement of knowledge and that the

experience of the participant is more important than the experience of the researcher, regardless of the researcher's background or experience, creating an unbalanced relationship in favor of the participant. Thus, the researcher directs the openness toward the phenomenon and the participants under study (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Finally, it is important to note within the lifeworld approach that meaning is infinite, contextual, flexible, and never absolute (Dahlberg et al., 2008). "Meaning emerges with the lifeworld, and when the lifeworld changes, meaning changes as well" (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 115). As the lifeworld approach is concerned with the lived experience of people, language (whether verbal or written) becomes a crucial tool in the search for patterns of meaning within the phenomenon under study; however, the limitations of language impact the fluidity, ambiguity, and surplus of meaning that the researcher encounters in lifeworld research (Dahlberg et al., 2008).

Dahlberg et al. (2008) write that the phenomenological natural attitude needs to be "slackened" in order for the researcher to examine the phenomenon and to clarify its meaning. In transcendental phenomenology, Husserl (1931/2012) urged the researcher to step outside the natural attitude—or to take up the natural standpoint—in order to critically examine a phenomenon using a process that he termed bracketing. Bracketing allows the researcher to reduce the impact of his or her individual experiences on the phenomenon under study. In the lifeworld research, Dahlberg et al. (2008) advocate the use of the term bridling as a substitution for bracketing as it is impossible to bracket all pre-understanding of a phenomenon. The authors characterize bridling as:

- Restraining pre-conceived notions, beliefs, or theories about the phenomenon (which collectively are pre-understandings)
- Undertaking the study in a disciplined yet open manner

- Waiting for the phenomenon to present itself organically
 - Looking forward in order to understand the whole phenomenon (in opposition to looking backward with bracketing)
 - Reflecting on the whole phenomenon
 - Diving below the surface to discover meaning
 - Embodying the meaning of the phenomenon through a process of scrutinization
 - Acknowledging that the researcher belongs to the same lifeworld as the phenomenon
 - Recognizing that any phenomenon is related to every other phenomenon in the world.
- (Dahlberg et al., 2008)

According to the authors, bridling artfully allows the phenomenon “to keep its indefiniteness as much and for as long as possible” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 33). Noting the difficulty of bridling pre-understandings, the authors encourage lifeworld researchers to practice self-reflection continuously and to question their traditional presuppositions or prejudices, historical interactions, emotional attachments, and cultural affiliations with the phenomenon under study actively and authentically throughout the research process. This “dialectical process between the things encountered and the self that encounters them” creates a self-understanding to guide the research process, especially since the pre-understanding of the phenomenon cannot be removed once it exists (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 143). Thus, self-awareness and self-reflection become a part of the methodological process. However, the researcher must be aware that reflection has a blind spot as it is needed to understand the phenomenon under study even though it was part of the process that created it in the first place (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Self-awareness requires the researcher to be critical of his or her relationship with the phenomenon, causing a “re-experiencing and re-thinking” of the phenomenon (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 165).

Mirroring the dualism found within phenomenology itself, the lifeworld approach can be used to produce descriptive or interpretive analysis. Descriptive analysis provides a description of the phenomenon without bringing in outside beliefs, theories, or explanations to provide meaning or understanding, utilizing the data supplied by the study's participants alone (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Conversely, interpretative analysis questions the meaning of the phenomenon, using the research process to go beyond its everyday understanding in order to produce "intentional explanations" that address why the meaning exists (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 280). In both approaches, bridle is used to allow the phenomenon, and not the researcher, to supply the meaning. Furthermore, the lifeworld approach incorporates elements from both transcendental and interpretative (or hermeneutic) phenomenology. For example, the lifeworld approach utilizes the concept of a phenomenological essence as outlined by Husserl (1931/2012) in transcendental phenomenology:

An essence could be understood as a structure of essential meanings that explicates a phenomenon of interest. The essence or structure is what makes the phenomenon to be that very phenomenon. That is, the essence or structure illuminates these essential characteristics of the phenomenon without which it would not be that phenomenon.

(Dahlberg, 2006, p. 11)

However, when understanding the meaning of the essence, the lifeworld approach relies on the philosophical works of Heidegger (1927/1962), Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012), and Gadamer (1960/1989). Building on the work of Husserl (1931/2012), which focused on everyday phenomenon, these three philosophers focused on how people exist in the world and how they interpret this existence (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Gadamer (1960/1989) describes the lifeworld as "the pre-given basis of all experience" (p. 239) while Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) characterizes

the lifeworld as “this world that is prior to knowledge” (p. xxii). With the lifeworld built around the “profound intertwined relationship between humans and the world,” the intersubjectivity (or shared consciousness) of Heidegger’s (1927/1962) concept of being-in-the world (which he termed as *dasein*) opens the possibility of understanding other people through this universal connection. The concept of intersubjectivity can be coupled with the concept of intercorporeality (or recognition of the self from the other), which acknowledges the distinctiveness of people and their lifeworlds, which allows people to compare and contrast themselves to other people and their experiences, which points to Merleau-Ponty’s (1945/2012) concept of perception. Therefore, to examine a phenomenon, a researcher utilizing the lifeworld approach should step outside the natural attitude, as characterized by Husserl (1931/2012), assume the phenomenological attitude (which was described earlier), and question the taken-for-granted lifeworld in order to clarify the meaning (determine the essence) of a phenomenon while confronting (or bridling) his or her personal experiences with the phenomenon, keeping in mind that meaning is contextual and tied to human understanding (or interpretation).

Research Question

The central research question guiding this study was:

How do faculty in a Library and Information Studies (LIS) program in the Southeastern United States conceptualize a quality library education?

For the purposes of this study, this exploratory questions provided (1) a collective description of the LIS faculty members’ shared experiences with the concept of quality in library education and an (2) an overview of the process that generates a common interpretation of the concept of quality among the LIS faculty in the selected program. As such, this qualitative

research strategy allowed the essence of the experience to be investigated for the faculty participants as a whole rather than as individual instructors.

Sample and Site Selection

For this study, faculty members in one LIS program located within the Southeastern United States constituted the study's participants. This approach was designed to investigate library education as a unified whole, looking at the curriculum and educational process in one program as delivered by the faculty in this department rather than the experiences or perceptions of faculty who teach the same or similar courses in different and varying programs or a random sample of non-related library courses throughout the country.

The selected LIS program is listed on the website of ALA's Office for Accreditation as a program in good standing. It is a large, four-year public, doctoral, university that is physically located in the Southeastern United States. The American Association of Geographers identifies the following states as composing the Southeastern United States: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (American Association of Geographers, n.d.). At the time of the study, there were 12 LIS programs in these states. The curriculum of these 12 programs was reviewed using their web sites. Particularly, I noted the core courses offered at each program and selected a program for study whose curriculum mirrored (but did not replicate verbatim) the traditional library education classes of (1) foundations of the field, (2) organization of information sources, (3) reference services and sources, (4) library management, (5) information technology, and (6) research methods and evaluation (Hall, 2009), as noted in the literature review of Chapter 2. In addition, I reviewed the elective courses that the programs offer. After this process, I selected a single program from the list for participation in the study and sent a letter electronically to the chair of

this program. The letter outlined the purpose and scope of the study and asked for the program's participation in this study. After receiving approval from the program chair, individual participant letters that outlined this same scope and purpose were sent electronically to the faculty. The faculty responded directly to me whether (or not) they wished to participate in the study. While all 10 faculty within the selected program were asked to participate in the study, only seven people accepted the invitation. Demographically, these faculty members ranged in age from the early 30s to the early 70s, from just beginning their collegiate teaching career to entering a two-tiered retirement step-down phase, from having no professional experience between earning their doctoral degree and working in the selected LIS program to working two decades in the library field before joining the program as faculty. There were four women and three men who participated in the study.

Since this project employed criterion sampling to recruit its participants, the faculty from the selected program spanned the core courses (as well as some electives) across library education in general, allowing a deeper examination of the curriculum as a whole. For the purposes of the selected methodology, the size of the program in number of total faculty (whether full- or part-time) or enrolled students (whether full- or part-time) was not relevant to the study as the most important characteristic was the faculty's perception of the quality (whether actual or perceived) of the offered LIS curriculum. As such, the selected program contained faculty who have taught core and elective courses, whether currently or in the past. As such, the selected program produced a diverse faculty pool, including participant curriculum specialty, teaching experience, and previous work experience (as some of the faculty have been employed as practitioners). Each faculty member within the department was asked to participate as they met the requirement of having experienced the phenomenon under study. All faculty members

who volunteered constituted the study's participants. As such, it was feasible that the study could have attracted a participant whose perceptions differed from those of the other faculty members in the program. If so, these divergent views would have strengthened the study by expanding the interpretation of quality or by exposing alternative or dissenting viewpoints within the program.

It is the view of this researcher that the selected program encapsulated library education. Because of common learning outcomes (created by the program), ALA accreditation standards, and input from library practitioners, current students and alumni, the curriculum in the selected program reflected the common core classes necessary to produce competent graduates from any LIS program in the United States, regardless of region. The faculty working within the department reflected the demographics, teaching load, and research practices of faculty in other, similar LIS programs. It is important to note that some of its elective classes, particularly in the area of music librarianship, created a unique niche (or student attraction) for the selected LIS program. This action was expected as elective classes allow the faculty to create a unique focus that other LIS may not have or that they may not be able to offer. While the educational niche of the selected LIS program was different from other programs, its existence is reflected in other LIS programs across the country as they create similar, yet different, educational niches of their own. Finally, by including all faculty members who wished to participate, even those who might have held alternative views, the study balanced both the positive and negative of library education and provided an accurate snapshot of faculty engagement (in both belief and practice) of this program, which could mirror other LIS programs.

The focus of this study explored the tacit knowledge of these educational professionals through written narratives, verbal interviews, and visual depictions. In keeping with the lifeworld approach, the number of participants was determined by the needs of the research process in

which the variation of participants (curriculum specialty, teaching experience, and previous work experience) was more important than the number of participants (Dahlberg et al., 2008). In addition, the lifeworld approach allowed the participating faculty to make multiple contributions to the collected data and that these contributions could have been at different and varying times throughout the research process (Dahlberg et al., 2008). As the phenomenon itself guided the study, there was not a saturation point to reach, particularly since meaning (or understanding) was limitless and elastic in nature (Dahlberg et al., 2008). All LIS faculty who agreed to participate in the study signed a consent form. This measure informed the faculty that their participation was strictly voluntary and that any information that was collected was confidential. As such, I followed the guidelines that the institutional review board (IRB) at East Carolina University (ECU) established for working ethically with human volunteers.

Data Collection

In the lifeworld approach, data is gathered when researchers “seek descriptions, utterances, characterizations, narrations, depictions, and other possible expressions of the studied phenomenon” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 172). Within this approach, meaning functions as a component of the lifeworld, creating an intersubjective relationship between the phenomenon and the researcher in which he or she employs openness and bridling to arrive at an understanding of the phenomenon (Dahlberg et al., 2008). In order to achieve this objective, several data collection methods were employed. The participating LIS faculty were asked to create a written narrative about their conceptualization of quality in library education.

A narrative is a description of a lived experience that is written down or recorded by the informant. Narratives focus on life events, for example an episode in the informant’s everyday life experience, which in some way illustrates the phenomenon that is the topic

of study. It is always personal and it is relatively undisturbed by the researcher. (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 178).

The LIS faculty were asked to recall critical situations for this narrative. Critical situations “remain as vivid and detailed memories over a long period of time” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 182). For this task, the faculty were asked to write two narratives: a positive description and a negative description. The writing prompts are listed:

- From your personal experience as faculty member in this program, please describe an incident or situation where you encountered/witnessed the concept of quality displayed in the library education offered to students. Please include specific examples and as much detail as possible. In this particular situation or incident, at what moment were you most engaged as a participant or witness? At what moment were you most distanced? What action helped you to see quality in this situation or incident? Did anything confuse you about this incident or situation? Did anything surprise you about this incident or situation? Thinking of this specific incident or situation, how would you define “quality” in library education?
- From your personal experience as faculty member in this program, please describe an incident or situation where you encountered/witnessed a lack of quality displayed in the library education offered to students. Please include specific examples and as much detail as possible. In this particular incident or situation, at what moment were you most engaged as a participant or witness? At what moment were you most distanced? What action helped you to see lack of quality in this situation? Did anything confuse you about this incident or situation? Did anything surprise you

about this incident or situation? Thinking of this specific incident or situation, how would you define “lack of quality” in library education?

These writing prompts were adapted from the Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ) as developed by Brookfield (2012). The CIQ is a classroom evaluation tool designed to help students to learn to think critically (Brookfield, 2012). According to Brookfield (2012), the purpose of critical thinking is to uncover the assumptions that influence our thoughts or actions, to test our assumptions for accuracy, to view our assumptions from a different perspective, and to engage in informed and justified action or behavior.

Besides responding to the writing prompts, the participants were asked to create a visual depiction using the following directions:

As a faculty member, when you conceptualize a quality library education for your students, what services, resources, tools, etc. are involved?

This visual depiction could have been a drawing, a concept map, a cartoon, and so forth. Vagle (2014) states that the utilization of the visual arts in a study allows phenomenological researchers to examine a topic beyond its customary constructions. A visual depiction, as Dahlberg et al. (2008) write, is a good starting point for talking about a phenomenon because it is tied to the lived experience of the participant. In this study, the faculty were able to respond to the directions in whatever manner they chose, and this lack of structure allowed them to include those elements of their personal experiences that were most important or influential to them (Kearney & Hyle, 2004). As Kearney and Hyle (2004) purport, the visual depictions allowed me to view the emotional responses, or the unconscious experiences, of the study’s participants; in addition, they showed me the unaltered or unbiased perceptions of the faculty’s personal beliefs (in relation to quality in a library education) because they were devoid of any expectations or

pre-suppositions, as Dahlberg et al. (2008) assert. Within the data gathering process, the visual depictions were used to start a conversation in which the participants explained their meaning (as they were subjective in nature) and to expand the connections between quality and library education within the interview.

While visiting the LIS program, I interacted with the faculty in their natural working environment, allowing me to observe them in any natural conversations that occurred during my visit. Although few in number, these interactions allowed me a glimpse of the organizational culture and daily routines found within the program. During this time, I collected additional data that I documented in my field notes. The field notes served many purposes: (1) to check for meaning and understanding in the moment; (2) to assist with memory recall later when analyzing the data; and (3) to provide context for the data collected within the interviews. My field notes, also, allowed me to document my perceptions during the visit.

Finally, I participated in member checking informally throughout the research process to ensure that the faculty conceptualization of a quality library education was interpreted correctly. For example, I asked the faculty to explain what their visual depictions meant before beginning the interview questions about their visual depictions. Then, I asked them questions about their art work, asking for clarification if something was not understood. This action ensured that I understood what was communicated and was not assigning my own interpretation to it. In fact, this process was utilized during the entire interview where I was unsure of the participant's answer in order to clarify the meaning on the spot. This process presented the phenomenon under study from multiple angles, assisted with the issue of trustworthiness, and strengthened the final results. While triangulation is not a formal (or recognized) part of phenomenological research, it occurred in this study through the various data gathering methods employed throughout the

study, particularly when the data collected from these diverse methods was compared against each other. For example, the data gathered during the portion of the interview conducted to discuss the written narrative was compared against the data gathered from the portion of the interview conducted to discuss the visual depiction, acting as a means to uncover and clarify the results.

During the data collection process, each interview was unique even though they followed a pattern. Acting as an open dialogue, “lifeworld interviews are a means of listening to the lifeworld” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 184). In lifeworld research, the phenomenon is the primary focus of the interview, and, as Dahlberg et al. (2008) explain, my role as the interviewer was to act as a facilitator throughout the interview while the faculty shared their stories. This process sought a balance between the structured and the unstructured and produced a conversation with “deeply anchored meanings, rather than superficial attitudes” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 186). Before the start of the interview, I reviewed and analyzed the written narratives, which were the responses to the two writing prompts. I read the written narratives multiple times. On the first reading, my goal was to understand the content as a whole. I used the second reading to highlight words, phrases, or sentences in the written responses. During the third reading, I formed concepts and themes based on the faculty’s responses. I compared these themes and concepts to those conceptualized by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) and noted themes and concepts that were not a part of this a priori coding scheme. Finally, I wrote down questions generated from the readings, and I used them as a means to stimulate the dialogue of the interviews.

The interviews were conducted during a single week when I visited the selected LIS program. They were held in the individual offices of the faculty participants and ranged in length

from approximately 1.5 for three interviews, to 2 hours for two interviews, and 2.5 hours for two interviews. They were structured in a five part process, which is listed below.

- Introduction: the structure of the interview was explained to the faculty.
- Writing prompt: the faculty were asked to describe their written narratives in their own words. They were asked the questions that I created after reading their responses. If the responses did not come up naturally, they, also, were asked some prepared questions.
- Quality in library education: the faculty were asked to define their concept of a quality library education. This answer was not restricted to the LIS program, as the response to the writing responses were. If the responses did not come up naturally, they, also, were asked some prepared questions.
- Visual depiction: the faculty were given a page with the directions written on it. In addition, they were given drawing paper, markers, and colored pencils. They were asked to explain their drawing after they completed it. If the responses did not come up naturally, they, also, were asked some prepared questions.
- Closing questions: the faculty were given an opportunity to share any additional information that did not arise in the interview. They were thanked for their time and asked if they could be contacted in the future if I had any questions.

Thus, from this description, it is evident that the interviews were unique in nature as the writing prompt responses, visual depictions, and answers to the interview questions, whether prepared in advance or asked spontaneously in the moment, were subjective.

After the completion of each interview, I noted the themes and concepts generated from the interview. While their descriptions were fresh in my mind, I analyzed the visual depictions

again and recorded themes and concepts found within them, looking for references to the identified coding scheme as conceptualized by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) as well as for others not found in this a priori scheme.

Data Analysis

Within lifeworld research, data analysis is a synthesis of “the way that the different parts, the meanings, particularities and uniqueness are related to each other and the whole of the research” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 233). Data analysis is governed by a three-part structure that examines the whole phenomenon, parts of the phenomenon, and the whole phenomenon again (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Expounding on this idea, Dahlberg et al. (2008) assert that it is imperative that each part is understood in terms of the whole, but also that the whole is understood in terms of its parts” (p. 236). The utilization of openness and bridling allows the researcher the reflexivity to engage in a dialogue with the phenomenon under study through text, words, or pictures (Dahlberg et al., 2008). This whole-part-whole process creates a spiral suitable for exploring and understanding the phenomenon on its own terms (Dahlberg et al., 2008).

In this study, the participating LIS faculty were given the same writing prompts for the written narratives. As previously discussed, I read these first-order narratives several times for meaning and clarity, identifying patterns within the positive and negative responses. These patterns were used to guide the faculty interviews. Therefore, while a few standard questions were asked of each faculty member, the interviews were individualistic in nature and explored the phenomenon of a quality library education based on each person’s distinctive subjective experience. These interviews were transcribed for analysis. Following the lifeworld approach, the data passed through an examination that focused on the whole, the parts, and the whole to

elicit meaning. First, the interviews were read with openness in order to gain an overall understanding of the data. This initial reading provided an overview of the phenomenon and allowed me to identify and bridle any pre-understandings that I possessed. Then, on a subsequent reading, the data within the interviews was organized into meaningful patterns or themes, which could have been single words, longer phrases, or whole sentences. Next, these patterns (or parts) were broken down into even smaller units or codes. Gadamer (1960/1989) refers to this process as interrogating the text. Finally, the results were used to produce an overall description of how the faculty members in this LIS program conceptualized a quality library education, producing a new whole that provided a new understanding of the phenomenon. This same pattern was repeated to examine the data from the visual depictions. During my visit to the program, I took general notes from the observations and conversations that occurred naturally around me, looking for comparisons to the written narratives, interviews, and visual depictions.

The study's conceptual framework was used to organize and evaluate the results in a narrative form. For example, the faculty's conceptualization of a quality library education was compared against the construct of quality as outlined by Harvey and colleagues, looking for whether (or not) the faculty described or interpreted quality within their program as exceptionalism, perfectionism (or consistency), fitness-for purpose, value-for-money, transformation, compliance, political or symbolic, employability, or accountability (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) These terms are briefly explained:

- Exceptionalism—Displaying exclusivity, specialness, distinctiveness, or excellence
- Perfectionism—Lacking flaws or defects
- Fitness-for-Purpose—Meeting the purpose for which it was designed

- Value-for-Money—Intertwining value with cost
- Transformation—Enacting change physically, emotionally, spiritually, developmentally, or socially
- Compliance—Achieving accreditation benchmarks or standards
- Political or Symbolic—Shifting focus from academics to compliance (political) or appearing to be compliant (symbolic)
- Employability—graduating students who find jobs
- Accountability—Proving self-worth through internal assessments

The study used this conceptualization of quality as an a priori coding scheme.

That is, I began the coding process looking for words, phrases, or images that match the conceptualization of quality as created by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010)). For example, if a faculty member had drawn a picture of a dollar sign in their visual depiction, I would have asked them to explain the meaning behind including this symbol and then determined if they were referencing the value-for-money coding scheme. (This is an example and did not actually happen.) After searching for the a priori coding schemes, I reviewed the data again, searching for additional themes, ideas, or relationships that emerged from the collected information. These emergent codes were indexed and mined for meaning and context. The emergent coding scheme was refined and compared to the existing (a priori) scheme, creating a fuller picture of the LIS faculty's perceptions. From this analysis, a distinct picture of the faculty's actual beliefs and practices emerged. Since this depiction was not reliant on meeting (or surpassing) the standards of an outside agency (such as ALA), the study noted the theories-in-use that the faculty utilized within their professional employment within this program.

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

To paraphrase Maxwell (2013), validity is my conceptualization of the trustworthiness of my study and the methods that I employed to identify and remedy any threats to this trustworthiness. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of my study, the five-part structure of the interview process with the faculty increased its credibility through (1) prolonged engagement with the faculty during a lengthy interview process and (2) persistent observation and comparison of their answers during each portion of the interview, which (1) yielded an immersion into the selected department's organizational culture and (2) identified the most relevant characteristics of the phenomenon under study, respectively (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, these conditions allowed member checking to take place as any discrepancies were clarified by asking questions throughout the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For example, I solicited feedback from the participants before leaving the interview in order to clarify any questions or issues that I had about a concept, theme, or response. After reviewing my notes, I sent emails to a few faculty members that still needed clarification. Furthermore, listening to the recorded interviews helped to illuminate any lingering questions.

As for transferability, or generalizability as Dahlberg et al. (2008) insist is possible, which will be discussed later in this section, the collection of rich data to create a thick description allows applicability of the study's findings to other similar groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interviews with faculty within the selected LIS program provided a "full and revealing picture" (which is the rich data) of the phenomenon under study (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126). By consciously following the lifeworld approach to phenomenological research, the study's dependability was supported (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As for confirmability, I created detailed notes during my visit to the selected program, including before and after the scheduled

interviews and of my general observations during the visit, in order to provide an audit of my process during the collection procedures and to compare against my subsequent findings later or against other study related materials (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Within this study, the LIS faculty members showed little reluctance to respond to questions freely and openly. Although no faculty appeared concerned with speaking against the views of their program or ALA standards, one faculty participant professed concern that other members of their program might be able to trace their responses back to them if job title or function within the program was used. I reassured this individual that all answers were confidential, that all precautions would be used to prevent this from happening, and that all participants would be referred to as faculty member with no other identifiers included. My answer seemed to satisfy this participant's concerns.

Through the interview process, I determined that the professional views and practices of the interviewed faculty mirrored the other faculty participants within the selected LIS program. The lengthy multiple-part interviews with the participants allowed me to confirm or disconfirm the LIS faculty member's true viewpoint. During the data gathering process, the faculty developed a comfortability through their answers that allowed them to move from sharing what they thought that they believed, or what they expressed publically, which were their espoused theories, to providing examples of how they operated within their classes, or what they actually practiced, which are their theories- in-action. This progression allowed me to understand how they conceptualized a quality library and to create a realistic description of this phenomenon.

The research process requires being open and sensitive during the faculty interviews and observations (Dahlberg et al., 2008; Vagle, 2009) and employed bridling as described by Dahlberg et al. (2008). When adhering to descriptive phenomenology, the researcher's purpose is

to describe what it means to experience the phenomenon *as* a valid experience (Vagle, 2009). Interpretative phenomenology “supports the point that the researcher’s intentional relationship with the phenomenon can never be separated from any discussion of validity in a study” (Vagle, 2009, p. 589). Thus, combining the two approaches in lifeworld research, my aim throughout the study was to create an empirical process that was constant to the LIS faculty members’ subjective experience and that was cognizant of my personal experiences and pre-understandings of the phenomenon throughout the research process, which strengthened the study’s validity. Also, as Dahlberg et al. (2008) point out, the meaning of a phenomenon (1) should be based on data gathered during the study; (2) should explain the phenomenon in such a way that no other explanation is possible; and (3) should provide an explanation that does not contradict the data gathered during the study.

The following paragraph addresses reducing researcher bias throughout the study. As a practicing librarian, I am a graduate of a LIS program in the United States. Within the lifeworld approach, this condition provided me with a unique perspective to study how LIS faculty members conceptualize a quality library education, particularly since I have experienced this phenomenon (a library education) first hand. My pre-understandings were beneficial in the research process, although they were analyzed and bridled for the study to be successful (see Chapter 4). The use of open-ended questions allowed the study’s participants to answer in their own words at their own pace. The utilization of a single interviewer (me) maintained consistency in delivery (timing and emphasis) of the interview questions and provided comparable response time to the same (or similar) questions from each participant throughout the study. However, Vagle (2014) asserts that:

It is not important to the phenomenologists how one interview is the same or different from another. Rather, all interviews are treated as exciting opportunities to potentially learn something important about the phenomenon....The goal is to find out as much as you can about the phenomenon from each particular participant. (p. 79).

While the presence of the researcher is felt in the study in phenomenological research in general, and in the lifeworld approach specifically for this study, the researcher (me) resisted *giving* meaning rather than *finding* meaning within the study as it is important for the phenomenon under study to reveal its essence through the data (Vagle, 2009). Thus, while “validity is elusive,” it is not impossible (Vagle, 2009, p. 603).

Within research, generalizations are employed to suggest that the researcher’s findings might be “meaningful to more people than those involved in the study” (Dahlberg et al., 2008, pp. 325-326). Within the lifeworld approach, objectivity is achieved through openness and bridling while validity is ensured through the prescribed (yet open) empirical process (Dahlberg et al., 2008). While qualitative research is commonly believed not to be generalizable because it is context specific, Dahlberg et al. (2008) assert that the findings from a lifeworld approach study, which go “beyond the concrete individuals and their experiences,” are generalizable to the group participating in the study, such as LIS faculty members in North America, healthcare workers in Sweden, etc. (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 342). Thus, “the results of a [lifeworld] research study are practiced and understood better within a particular context, a particular area of practice” and could be generalized to that group (Dahlberg et al., 2008, p. 345). For this study, the conceptualization of the LIS faculty of what constitutes a quality library education could be similar to their peers employed in other LIS programs (whether accredited or not) throughout the

country. Thus, the results of this study could be applied to LIS faculty throughout the library science field, particularly within the United States.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Biases of the Study

The faculty members in the study are professional educators who work, present, and publish within the field of library science and other closely related disciplines. The fact that the faculty were recruited from one LIS program in the Southeastern United States is a delimitation. Their conceptualization of LIS education may not mirror their peers and colleagues in other LIS programs or practitioners working throughout the field. In addition, their views may not uphold those advanced by ALA standards or competencies. As already stated, Dahlberg et al. (2008) disagree with this assessment. The study does not assume that the ALA accreditation standards produce a quality LIS education while it does acknowledge that an ALA accredited Master's degree bestows more prestige, status, and opportunity upon its holders than a non-accredited degree. These conditions may assist LIS graduates in the workplace in securing employment and higher salaries.

As has already been noted, I am a graduate of a LIS program that is ALA accredited and hold an ALA accredited Master's degree in library science. Therefore, I have personal knowledge of the student learning outcomes created through the completion of the LIS curriculum. In addition, I have experience working in a library as a practitioner, with my previous positions ranging from entry-level through administration. I have first-hand knowledge of the skills and competencies that are required for library work through this personal experience (my own positions) and through interviewing and hiring people to fill other library positions (that were not my own). The lifeworld techniques of openness and bridling as defined by the lifeworld approach to phenomenological research was used to address these biases, requiring a self-

awareness that allowed me to be both close to the data (as I am a part of the world in which it exists) as well as distant from it (as it needed to be viewed from an empirical standpoint).

Summary

This study utilized phenomenological methodology. As both a research methodology and a philosophical approach, phenomenology attempts to uncover the hidden meaning (or essence) of an object through the examination of the subjective experiences of everyday individuals. Phenomenology can be descriptive or interpretive (or hermeneutic) in nature. The lifeworld approach as outlined by Dahlberg et al. (2008) incorporates elements of both approaches.

The study began with an examination of my experience, particularly in relation to hiring a person whose education should have been enough preparation for this individual to perform the duties of a library position for which they were hired, leading to my questioning what constituted a quality library education. Therefore, through this exercise, I bracketed my own beliefs, preparing me for interaction with the faculty in the selected LIS program.

Utilizing openness and bridling throughout the research process, the lifeworld approach was used in this study to examine how faculty in one LIS program located in the United States conceptualized a quality library education. The data collected in this study was analyzed using the whole-part-whole process as described by Dahlberg et al. (2008). According to the creators of the lifeworld approach to phenomenological research, the results are generalizable to other people within the same group, such as LIS faculty in the United States, as in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter contains the findings from my study that investigated the subjective practices and beliefs of faculty employed in one library program in one region of the United States. The study was guided by one central question: How do faculty in a Library and Information Studies (LIS) program in the United States conceptualize a quality library education? The study gathered data by several means. Before my visit to the selected program, the faculty were asked to write a narrative in which they described an experience that demonstrated quality in library education (positive response) and a narrative in which they described an experience that demonstrated a lack of quality in library education (negative response). Then, the faculty participated in semi-structured interviews where they were asked open-ended questions about their written responses and additional questions about a quality library education. During the interview, the faculty were asked to draw a visual depiction of their conceptualization of what resources, services, and so forth were necessary for a quality library education. They were asked to describe their artwork, and then they were asked a few additional questions.

Using phenomenological methodology, the transcribed interviews were read for understanding and for breaking the data down into smaller codes and then broader themes. After the establishment of the broader themes, the data was organized into a new order that revealed the faculty's conceptualization of a quality library education. The data analyzation process followed the whole-part-whole approach as outlined by Dahlberg et al. (2008). The chapter is organized in the following manner: an overview of the program, an overview of the faculty

participants, an overview of the curriculum structure, the faculty's description and interpretation of quality, and the faculty's theories-in-use.

Program Overview

The selected LIS program resides on a research university in the Southeastern United States. It is located within the School of Education building, and the faculty's offices are clustered together on a single floor. During the interview process, the faculty shared that their program had moved from predominantly face-to-face classes in the past to predominantly online courses in the present. While the faculty are exploring the option of adding a few traditional face-to-face classes into their course schedule, the curriculum mainly is delivered in online synchronous classes presently. That is, although the program is online, the classes are scheduled to meet on certain days at a specified time. In fact, the faculty teach online in the evening and work independently in their offices during the day. They utilize these hours to prepare for their classes. Collectively, they shared the difficulties of teaching classes in an online environment, particularly how much preparation is required for one course, the challenges that technology creates that are not found in traditional classes, the disconnection created by never (or rarely) meeting their students, the effort needed to engage students in the course content, the geographic barriers created by distance, and so forth.

When asked about the structure of the program, the faculty responded in unison that it was student-driven and not program-driven. They noted that their students were working professionals who were either already employed in libraries and were seeking more credentials, working professionals who were not employed in libraries but were seeking the credentials to begin this work, or individuals who had a gap in their education and were returning to graduate school. When asked what libraries that their students may work in, the faculty said that their

graduates fall into the following categories: (1) public librarians; (2) school librarians; and (3) academic, special, and 4) other (such as archivists) librarians.

At the time of my visit, the program was preparing for an ALA COA (Committee on Accreditation) visit, which was scheduled for six months in the future. In fact, one faculty member elected not to participate in the study because this individual was preparing the program for this accreditation visit. As part of the accreditation process, the program reviewed and updated its program learning outcomes. It is easy to surmise that these outcomes were fresh in the minds of the faculty.

Faculty Participants

For this study, all of the full-time faculty in one LIS program in the Southeastern United States were recruited for participation. Of the 10 people contacted, seven people agreed to take part in the study. For the three people who did not participate, one faculty person respectfully declined, writing that “The assessment part of higher education is mostly political so trying to pin down 'quality' library education is not an interest of mine.” I responded to this individual that:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to consider participating in my study, even if you feel that it is not the right fit for you. However, for clarification, my study is not about assessment. While it may be difficult to conceptualize quality in library education without mentioning assessment, it is not a main focus of my data collection at all.... I am interested in the professional views of LIS educators in what they consider quality within their programs. That is, what makes quality as well as what should make quality.

For the other two faculty members who did not participate, they both never responded to my written request, although I was told by a third faculty member that one of these people was

working on their ALA accreditation and that this task was consuming all of this individual's time. For transparency, one of the faculty members who readily accepted participation in the study expressed doubt that they would be beneficial to the study because, in their own words, "my language is not that of the evaluation or quality expert." My response to this individual was simply: "I am not looking for a quality or evaluation expert. I am looking to interview a LIS educator." Thus, two faculty members assumed that quality must equal assessment before the study began.

The seven participants represent the four library types of public, school, academic, and special. The faculty members teach (or have taught) courses in these areas, giving the study a good overview of the library field. The faculty in the study teach (or have taught) a combination of core and elective classes, with just one of the seven faculty members teaching only electives in the program. Outside of the four library types, the faculty participants teach (or have taught), cataloging, foundations, reference, technology, music librarianship, GIS, special collections, practicums, and more. Again, these courses represent an array of core and electives throughout the field. Furthermore, although the length and scope of the experience varies, the faculty have some experience working in public, school, academic, or special libraries, which is practical knowledge that they would bring to their classes. For example, six faculty members report the following: 21 years of experience working in public high and elementary schools; 17 years working in public and state libraries; 23 years of experience ranging from private music instruction, classroom teaching, and online workshops and classes for ALA; 4 years of experience teaching in another LIS program; and 30 years working in the present LIS program with previous experience working as a reference librarian in an academic library. The final seventh faculty member has experience in archives and museums.

Within this program, the faculty are at different points in their careers. At the time of the study, three faculty members were at the beginning of their collegial teaching experience (less than four years), three faculty members were in the middle (5-20 years) of their collegial teaching experience, and one was nearing the end of their collegial teaching experience (more than 20 years). For this group of participants, five are tenure-track and two are non-tenure-track. Of the seven faculty, six hold a doctorate degree, with one earning this credential in music. Two faculty participants are graduates of the selected program.

The faculty choose librarianship for a variety of reasons. In answer to this question of why they selected the field, the faculty responded that their decisions were influenced by the following reasons: (1) the belief that librarianship is at the center of society (“I think the daunting thing is that it's everywhere.”); (2) the memory of positive experiences with librarians in the past (“So, I had good role models.”); (3) the need to choose a different occupation (“It was a complete career change.”); (4) the necessity to find a job, any job (“I didn’t choose it.”); (5) the search for a doctoral program that fits one’s study interests (“The program was interdisciplinary, so that part enticed me the most because it wasn’t just library. Basically, you had option to take courses from any field that you would like.”); (6) the interest in the importance of the arts and humanities in society and an interest in promoting social justice (“I think there was a component of me that just does not fit into everyday life in America. There was that part of me that was social justice oriented.”).

Thus, the participants’ answers ranged from the practical, to the inspirational, and to the aspirational. For example, one faculty member described a path to librarianship that followed a spouse’s education and employment trajectory, falling into librarianship because a job was available. Another faculty member described a medical diagnosis that required the examination

of physical ability and then the subsequent switch to another occupation. A third faculty member described a need to find an occupation where they would be accepted as both a minority (for sexual orientation) and an individual with eccentric interests. A fourth person detailed how a passion for the profession developed because of positive interactions with librarians while a student. Several other faculty members discussed the importance of librarianship on society and the desire to advance the profession through original research and/or educating the next generation of librarians. Collectively, the answers present a well-rounded faculty with many and varied career trajectories that brought them into the profession, creating a scenario that should enhance their ability to relate with students. It is important to note that not all faculty answered this question through rosy glasses. While the majority of participants would remain in the field, one participant stated if they had to choose a profession again that they would become a kindergarten teacher. This outlier response provides balance and perspective to the collected data.

The faculty were asked to share what they like best about the field. While the responses are a little more homogenous than the responses to the question why they choose the profession, there is some variation in the answers. One faculty member liked “the openness to new ideas” found within the field, describing librarianship as having “porous boundaries” that allows it “to be open to everything” and always having “feelers out for new developments.” A second faculty member shared that the approachability of librarians was an asset, stating “that people can come to us librarians from wherever they are, whatever point they are” in order to get help in finding information. A third faculty member expressed that the service within the field is important because “we’re helping all different kinds of people in lots of different ways.” Echoing this sentiment, a fourth faculty member said, “I really like the people. You get good people in the

library field. I mean, it's a field that is designed for people who want to help other people." A fifth faculty member thought that the faculty did "a whiz-bang job," particularly on their impact on their students, their "humongous contribution" to the field of education, and their graduation of competent students to work in libraries. A sixth faculty member cited research as the best part of the field ("It's really like a puzzle, trying to put things together and find out why people do this.") The final faculty member reiterated the importance of people in the library field and liked that it has "room for eccentrics." Thus, the faulty responses reflect an affinity and genuine respect for the people in the field, their fellow librarians. The participants, also, expressed an appreciation for helping library users to enrich their lives, particularly through the dissemination of information or through other services, such as employment assistance. As educators, the faculty enjoy helping their students to achieve their educational goals. In addition, the faculty stress the importance of research in the field, the pervasiveness of the tenets of the field in society at large, and the openness of the profession in general in embracing new ideas or innovations.

Additionally, the faculty were asked what they liked least about the field of librarianship. Again, the answers varied while some similarities were noted. A faculty member lamented the "the lack of research on issues on kind of professional concerns to practitioners" and that research needed to discover "ways to connect back to people in practice," creating "a more hands on approach to research." A second faculty member thought that many librarians within the field dislike change because "we like knowing the answers. We like being able to tell people definitively what something is." A third faculty member described frustration with the perceived politics of the field, particularly as being seen as wasting taxpayer money advocating for libraries, encouraging the reading of controversial material, and needing to constantly justify

your existence. (“You feel like you are banging your head against a wall because you have to explain it over, and over, and over again.”) Two faculty members mentioned the misperceptions and stereotypes about libraries and librarians that come from both within and without the field. For example, the faculty stated that the stereotype that people think that all librarians do is stamp books or read books all day is still widely held. Also, people do not realize that librarians are trained to organize information in order to make it available for use by other people. The faculty shared that:

And even within the library world, even within people who have master’s degrees in library studies and PhDs, they don’t understand what other people in the field do.....

They don’t realize that catalogers are tech savvy coders. And they don’t realize that reference librarians are some of the best researchers on the planet.

Another faculty person shared that conducting qualitative research within the field itself can be challenging because of the need to work with human subjects, and the final faculty member responded with the belief that many people working in libraries, particularly at the management or administrative level, are control freaks. In summary, when queried what they like least about the field, the faculty members mentioned (1) current research within the field (lack of research on concerns or issues that are important or relevant to library practitioners and challenges working with human subjects as opposed to working with numerical data); (2) lingering negative stereotypes that pervade the profession (misperceptions inside and outside of the field about the work that librarians do); and (3) the growing political focus within the profession (creating a necessity for librarians to continually prove their worth); and the faculty (4) critiqued people within the profession (noting that many people are resistant to change, intimidated by reference challenges, and need to control their environment and/or other individuals).

Curriculum Structure

The selected program requires its students to take a minimum of 36 hours to earn a Master's Degree in the field. The program requires 13 hours of core courses, which are Foundations of Library Information Science (foundations) for 3 credit hours, Information Sources and Services (reference) for 3 credit hours, Information Organization and Access (cataloging) for 3 credit hours, Library Administration and Management (library management) for 3 credit hours, and a capstone course (portfolio) for 1 credit hour. Although not labeled as a core course, students in this program must take a required technology course, making this class a required elective. Unless another course is approved by their advisor, the students may choose from 3 courses: Computer-Related Technologies for Information Management, Emerging Technological Trends in Information Access, or Media Production Services for Library Programs. This required elective is explained to students through the orientation and regular advising process. The remaining 20 hours (or more) are selected from the program's electives, which can be used to select a career path in public, school, academic, or special libraries, or to create a specialty such as in cataloging or reference.

It is important to note the similarities between the selected LIS program's curriculum and the ALA Core Competencies and the findings in the study conducted by Hall (2009). Discussed extensively in Chapter 2, the Core Competencies call for professional librarians to understand the foundations of the profession; to be able to manage library collections (information resources); to understand how information is organized; to be able to access and synthesize information; to possess technological skills; to be familiar with the basics of quantitative and qualitative research; to participate in continual professional development; and to be familiar with how to manage the daily operations of a library. Table 1 provides an overview of the ALA

Table 1

ALA Core Competencies

Competency	Description	Purpose
Foundations of the Profession	Ethics, values, fundamentals, and history of librarianship	To promote democratic principles and intellectual freedom
Information Resources	Lifespan and development of knowledge	To describe the acquisition, disposition, and evaluation of resources; to teach the management and maintenance of collections
Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information	Organization and description of knowledge and information	To convey the techniques of cataloging, indexing, and classifying knowledge and information
Technological Knowledge and Skills	Technologies that impact the delivery of resources, services, and information in information organizations	To introduce methods of identifying and evaluating current and emerging technologies
Reference and User Services	Concepts and techniques used to provide access to information for library users	To impart the techniques or methods needed to find, assess, and synthesize information; to instill information literacy; to demonstrate how to conduct reference interactions with library users
Research	Quantitative and qualitative research methods	To explain how to conduct and understand research within the field

Table 1 (continued)

Competency	Description	Purpose
Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning	Continual professional development	To reinforce the role of the library in the learning process of its users; to renew the skills needed to teach others how to find and evaluate information
Administration and Management	Operation of a library	To learn about planning and budgeting, human resource development, evaluation of services, developing partnerships and collaborations, and leadership in libraries

Note. Adapted from the Core Competencies created by the American Library Association. Retrieved from www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/corecompetences

Competencies, and Table 2 provides a comparison of the ALA Core Competencies to the curriculum of the selected LIS program.

The curriculum of the LIS program in this study is similar in structure to the findings described by Hall (2009) in the earlier study. That is, the common core LIS curriculum is composed of foundations, cataloging (organization of information sources), reference, library management, information technology, and research methods. The main differences between what the selected program requires and Hall's (2009) research study is that (1) the research methods course (which is called Library and Information Science Research in the program's online course catalog) is an elective and (2) the selected LIS program requires a master's project (or portfolio) that Hall (2009) does not deem as a core requirement in his study. Table 3 presents a comparison between the ALA Competencies, Hall's (2009) study findings, and the LIS program's curriculum. From the three tables, it is evident that the LIS core curriculum supports the ALA Competencies and mirrors the core curriculum found in other LIS programs.

Electives, Field Experience, and Capstone Portfolio

Like other LIS programs throughout the nation, the selected LIS program offers its elective courses as a means for students to customize or personalize their educational journey. For instance, students may select a library type in which to specialize and then take courses designed to prepare them to work in academic, public, special, or school libraries. In this example, a student might enroll in LIS 617 Materials for Children, LIS 618 Materials for adolescents, or LIS 625 Electronic Resources for Youth if he or she wanted to be a school librarian. If a student wanted to specialize their education toward a specific function or service, this individual might take LIS 627 Humanities Information Sources, LIS 628 Science and Technology Information Sources, or LIS 629 Business and Information Sources and Services in

Table 2

Comparison of ALA Core Competencies to LIS Program Curriculum

ALA Core Competency	LIS Program Course Description	LIS Course
Foundations of the Profession	Survey of access issues in library and information studies; professional operations and potential roles in society.	LIS 600 Foundation of Library and Information Studies (core course)
Information Resources	Principles, processes, and problems in selection, evaluation, and acquisition of resources for libraries and information centers.	LIS 610 Collection Management
Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information	Introduction to the organization of information and collections to enhance access. Topics include format choice, verification of appropriate sources, collection definitions, methods and systems of description, classification, and metadata assignment.	LIS 640 Information Organization and Access (core course)
Technological Knowledge and Skills	Various courses	(Not a core course, but a required elective)
Reference and User Services	Covers philosophy and techniques of matching information to people's needs. Introduces human information behavior and information retrieval concepts; prepares students to meet needs through needs assessment, source selection, and user-instruction.	LIS 620 Information Sources and Services (core course)
Research	Problems of concern to libraries and information center personnel, including application of interdisciplinary concepts and research methods.	LIS 661 Library and Information Science Research

Table 2 (continued)

ALA Core Competency	LIS Program Course Description	LIS Course
Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning	(No comparable subject area)	Various courses, including electives
Administration and Management	Emphasizes management functions, resource management, and application of concepts to management situations in libraries and information centers.	LIS 650 Leadership and Management in Information Organizations (core course)

Note. Adapted from the Core Competencies created by the American Library Association and the LIS program's course catalog. Retrieved from www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/corecompetences

Table 3

Comparison of ALA Core Competencies to Hall's (2009) Study and LIS Courses

ALA Competency	Hall's (2009) Study	LIS Courses
Foundations of the Profession	Foundations of the field	LIS 600 Foundation of Library and Information Studies
Information Resources	Organization of information sources	LIS 610 Collection Management
Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information	Organization of information sources	LIS 640 Information Organization and Access
Technological Knowledge and Skills	Information technology	(Various courses)
Reference and User Services	Reference services and sources	LISA 620 Information Sources and Services
Research	Research methods and evaluation	LIS 661 Library and Information Science Research
Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning	(No comparable subject area)	(Various courses, including electives)
Administration and Management	Library management	LIS 650 Leadership and Management in Information Organizations

Note. Adapted from the Core Competencies created by the American Library Association, the LIS program's course catalog, and the study conducted by Hall (2009). Retrieved from www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/corecompetences

order to become reference librarian. If a student wanted to focus on an emerging positions, such as a geographic information librarian, LIS 688 Geographic Information Systems (among other courses) could be taken.

Field experience is a means for students to apply the theory learned in the courses that they take with practical experience in a library or other similar setting. Field experience offers students an opportunity to actually practice the craft of librarianship, to connect with professional librarians, to gain an understanding of the working environment of librarians, and to shape their professional views, practices, and ethics under the guidance of a practitioner (Ball, 2008; Coleman, 1989; Hoffman & Berg, 2014). Field experience may be called practicums or internships and may come from other experiential learning opportunities (such as classroom assignments that send students to interact with professional librarians in their workspace). For the selected program, practicums (for licensure) are required for students wanting to be school librarians; other field experience (such as an internship) are optional and can be taken as an elective. However, if the student has never worked in a school before, they will take the school library media field experience course at the beginning of their studies. In this scenario, the student will take the field education course in conjunction with the foundation of education course “because they are sort of getting their educational background.” The practicum course is an elective for all other students outside of school librarianship.

The selected LIS program requires all students to take a capstone course. An electronic portfolio is the product of this course. The portfolio is composed of work from the student’s time in the program and can come from classroom assignments, practicums, internships, independent study, or professional practice. The portfolio should prove the student’s mastery of the program learning outcomes, drawing together competencies that the student has learned in core courses as

well as highlighting proficiencies learned in elective courses. The capstone portfolio allows students to showcase their work throughout their educational process and gives them something concrete to share with future employers that demonstrates their potential as employees. Moreover, the capstone portfolio affords students an opportunity to pursue individual interests and to make personally relevant discoveries within the field, depending on the selected work.

The faculty noted challenges with this area. First, a faculty member stated that “Some students intentionally avoid taking a technology course.” As discussed, technology courses are electives in this program. If students avoid taking technology courses, this action may harm them in the future because whatever positions they take in libraries will involve technology. Next, the practicum should be required of all students, with another faculty member stating that mentoring should be a part of the practicum, especially for school librarians:

I would love to see us do a sort of mentor match program maybe or something like that.

One of the things that we have in the school library program is they do a practicum, but so many of them are already in a library. They actually don’t have a library mentor. They don’t have a site supervisor who is a librarian. So, developing a better practicum experience, I think, would be...in terms of having that mentoring aspect... would be important for the future.

Finally, it was noted that school librarians “are doing twice the work” as other students:

...the capstone course is required of every person in this program, regardless of what their concentration is. It doesn’t help school library people because our school library folks have additional student learning outcomes that they have to have in addition to the general program. They have to do a portfolio for the school of education, and they’re having to do one for the capstone.

This faculty member questioned why the school librarians need to take the separate capstone course if they are already completing a portfolio. Perhaps, the program will address this issue in the future.

Quality

From the written narratives and faculty interviews, several findings emerged from this study. Although the concept of quality is important to its institutions and programs, it often proves elusive to define within academia. While many reasons may influence this condition, two relevant explanations center on the intertwining beliefs (1) that quality is taken for granted as a condition that just exists within the institution or program and (2) that quality is subjective in nature as a concept that is beholden to the views and practices of the individual in question. Noting the ambiguous nature of the word, Harvey and colleagues conceptualize quality as being exceptional, as representing perfection (or consistency), as displaying fitness-for-purpose, as containing value-for-money, and as being transformative, as being compliant, as being political or symbolic, as creating employability, and as creating accountability (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010).

The intention of this study was to examine the concept of quality as conceptualized by the faculty in one LIS program in the Southeastern United States. As such, the findings are subjective to this program. Employing a phenomenological approach, the study asked for the participating faculty to reflect upon their professional beliefs and practices, requiring a self-awareness of their personal thoughts and actions. In the present study, the faculty in the selected LIS program conceptualized quality as community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation. These six concepts are discussed in no particular rank or order.

Quality as Community Building

The program emphasized the importance of community building in their response to the written narratives, study interviews, and visual depictions. For the faculty in the program, it is necessary to cultivate activities that encourage student involvement with their classes and with their program. This practice builds the following relationships: student to student; student to faculty; and student to program. In fact, students are so important in this practice that one faculty member described them as agents in the community building process. This individual states that “a major challenge” of community building is “kind of setting the stage but then kind of getting out of the way so that the students can kind of build the community;” that is, the students can create their own spaces where they are comfortable to engage in dialogue with other students and the faculty. In this process, the faculty become more of a facilitator or a moderator, rather than a lecturer, in the classroom. A faculty member responded, “But that is something that I would say is an ongoing challenge: to create a learning environment where everything is not controlled by me.” Instead, this faculty member wanted to create an environment where students have the authority to take charge of the community building process, or “to own their agency.”

When asked how community building might take place within a classroom, a faculty member answered that using the microphone and camera could address this issue. These features allow the student to see and hear the instructor in real time. (“Students really like it.....They want to see you.”) A faculty member verbalized that community building within a classroom and/or learning environment involves making students comfortable within the environment. That is, they let the students choose their mode of communication, whether by microphone or text within Canvas (the program’s LMS, or learning management system.) Also, as this LIS program is completely online, community building takes place by letting the students see and hear the

faculty member. In this way, the faculty are seen as real people with whom students can build rapport.

The faculty in the program listed many ways that the students can build a sense of community with the faculty outside of the online classroom and with the program itself. The students have opportunities to attend faculty meetings, a program sponsored lecture series, and other possible workshops and conferences. In fact, one faculty member considers their research to be community based and attends state and national conferences to share this research. However, this faculty member expressed that these conferences should be attended not just by LIS educators but by practitioners in the field as well. The faculty member believed this stipulation is important so that they can engage professionals in the field and create a dialogue about the research, particularly in how it applies to the practitioner's experiences. The faculty member asserted that presenting at conferences was a means to not only engage library practitioners and other professionals with the research but also to try to recruit them to the research subject area. Additionally, this dialogue might encourage enrollment in a library program if the person was already searching for a library school or if a new career or research interest was initiated. Thus, the faculty member believed that "engaging them [library practitioners and other professionals] in conversation is a form of recruitment."

When questioned further about recruitment, this faculty member responded that "recruitment is at a building stage right now" for two reasons. First, faculty from the program are actively attending conferences to either present their research or to staff a booth or table that promotes the LIS program to potential students. Second, the program engages alumni. The program at the time of the study was experiencing a "massive growth in enrollment" that one faculty member attributed to the passive recruitment from alumni: "I think alumni are

recommending the program to people that they know and work with, and I think that we do have a good reputation.” Thus, the program’s faculty saw alumni engagement as imperative to recruitment. Therefore, it is not surprising that the LIS program takes alumni engagement seriously in the quality of the education that it provides.

The faculty had much to say on the subject of alumni engagement. For example, a faculty member viewed “anything related to the operation of the school” and “how it educates and prepares students” as “tied back to alumni engagement.” They believed that “maintaining open lines of communication with alumni” is an essential component “to closing that division between practice and research.” When contacting alumni by telephone, the faculty member mentioned that alumni were “overjoyed” to receive the contact. (“They had really good memories.”) The faculty member believed that their alumni are the best recruiters for the LIS programs since they have “a strong network” of alumni. Another faculty member mentioned that they try to utilize the professional expertise of their alumni within their courses as guest lecturers for two main reasons: to help students to make connections across the field and to provide them “with ideas and resources to cut across professional divides.” Finally, the program hires its own graduates. (“We had an opening this year to hire someone new because of program growth, and we hired one of our alumni as a lecturer position. I think that’s really smart, and she’s going to be doing some recruitment.”)

Sandwiched in between recruitment practices and alumni engagement, there exists the current students who are earning their MLIS degrees. A faculty member characterized their students as “student professionals” as many of them are already working in the field and are just earning a professional credential or they are professionals working in a completely different field

and are changing careers by returning for more education in a new subject area. A faculty member described this situation as:

.... it is more truly changing careers or making a sideways movement in their career. So a lot of the sideways movers are teachers who are moving into media centers in school libraries. That's a huge part of our non-traditional students. We also have a lot of true non-traditional students.

This faculty member emphasized that the MLIS degree itself is an important piece of a quality library education because it opens up a lifelong endeavor for the students, introducing them to the program, which introduces them to the profession. The faculty member contended that “the entire sphere” of their program begins before the degree with “a conscious and deliberate effort” to recruitment of a diverse student population and ends after the degree with concerted alumni engagement. Thus, The LIS program operates as if community building is a three step intertwined process: the recruitment of new students, the education of current students, and the engagement of alumni.

During the study, negative aspects of community building were discovered. While the importance of alumni engagement was stressed by the faculty in the program, the program has moved from face-to-face to online instruction. This condition caused a faculty member to question the future connection of students to the program:

We are in this transition moment from the face-to-face to the online. So a lot of people [who] have the fondest memories participated in the face-to-face, which still exists but is proportionately a smaller and smaller a portion of our student body. The one thing that I worry about is how we can continue to build the strong sense of community and

connection that people will want to consistently be identified with in an online environment.

This faculty member worried that the online environment may impact the future of community building for the program, particularly if present and future students do not make the strong connections that former students formed. Perhaps, this situation may impact future alumni engagement. In addition, another faculty member questions the admissions process to the program:

.....and you know I've been on the admissions committee, so I know. I've worked with some folks. We've let a whole lotta folks in, um, and we pay the price because we do have to then have our strong student skills to make sure they get through the program, and there are some that, you know, you just probably should have turned away. So, we've been through both. Now the cycle is up, and we're in a very good spot, and we're having to turn students away, but you never know. Next year, we could have a crash, and it could be back to...you know, anything could happen.

The faculty member thought that wanting to keep enrollment at a certain level may result in students being admitted that are not academically ready for attendance, particularly if application numbers drop in the future. The admittance of academically unprepared students may impact the quality of the program.

Quality as Student Engagement

In higher education, student engagement is manifested in a variety of ways, including cultivating general interest in learning, demonstrating attention to course material, encouraging involvement in the decision making process, attending class, participating in discussions (both written and verbal), completing class assignments, and much more. In the selected LIS program,

the faculty foster student engagement intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Each component will be discussed throughout this section.

Intellectually, student engagement is supported through course assignments or activities that are designed to stimulate the curiosity or personal interest of students, through the program's required capstone project, the ability to customize or personalize career pathways through the program, and other enriching experiences. For example, a faculty member stated that they started utilizing the discussion board feature in Canvas more, assigning the students to read extra articles and to discuss them with their classmates. However, while these articles may not have been as detailed as what the faculty member normally assigned to the class, they were intended to challenge the students to think about library issues from a different reference point. For example, this faculty member stated that they discussed providing access to library materials to distinct populations of library users, such as Native Americans, and the issues that may arise in providing this access to this specific population. The faculty member described the process in this manner:

I try to bring in some stuff like that, that is less technical, more interesting to them. Then I turn them loose, and say, look, your only responsibility this time this week is to talk about this stuff. You don't have wrong answers, but you have to have answers....

The faculty member used this assignment to stimulate the students' thinking, to stretch their thoughts beyond the ordinary or obvious. The faculty member shared that their discussion board assignments required three substantive posts from each student; however, the faculty member noted that "the vast majority" of students "go way beyond three" posts, which they interpreted as showing that the students were not just posting for a grade. ("They are really into it.")

With similar types of assignments, the faculty member was trying to find the balance between (1) giving the students information and having them find out information on their own

and (2) lecturing for an entire class period while the students sat quietly versus having the students participate in the classroom discussions where they can make comments or ask questions for clarification. A faculty member stated:

So, without being able to show them all the material out there, I have to sort of distill it down...so, finding that balance of how much I need to talk, and how much they need to talk, and how we do that. How do we balance giving them enough time to discuss with giving them enough material so they know how to discuss it?

The capstone course, in addition, can be used to show that the students have found the balance between learning from independent study and learning from classroom lectures. The student's capstone portfolio should contain original work that is professionally presented, should provide a comprehensive overview of the student's educational journey, and should be innovative and reflective in nature. The portfolio is evaluated on its demonstration of the student's mastery of the program learning outcomes, with the included artifacts' showcasing the student's specialization within each specified outcomes. This process gives every student a means to engage in their own intellectual interests or pursuits.

The program's structure allows students to customize their career path. Like most LIS programs, students can choose to work in a school, academic, public, or special library. The program offers classes to prepare students to work in these libraries. Also, like other LIS programs, students can take additional courses that would prepare them for a specialized position within a library, such as taking additional cataloging courses as electives. The faculty believed this ability to customize is a hallmark of quality library education. As one faculty member noted:

And, I think that a quality library education has to be customizable because everybody has their own needs.....somebody who wants to do school library media is going to have

a different set of needs from somebody who wants to go into archives. So being able to customize that...I mean there is a certain amount of overlap no matter what you want to do. There are those core classes, but then from there you need to have a way to work toward your specific goal.

The ability for students to create a customized career path was important to the LIS faculty. This customization not only prepared students for the workforce, whether for employment within a particular library type or for a specialized library position, but it also allowed students to connect intellectually with a concentrated course of study.

Socially, student engagement is promoted through group work, student organizations, experiential learning, and other collaborative learning experiences. The social aspects of student engagement were emphasized by the faculty because they impacted the students beyond the program, following the students into the workforce and lasting throughout their career. A LIS faculty member shared:

I think that it goes beyond because if you think about the libraries in general...although not all of our students work in libraries...but you have to work with people. So, you need to know how to engage with people, how to engage with students, because, one, you are expected to teach, right. So, I think that it is important for them eventually.

The faculty assigned group work in their online classes to require their students to engage socially with one another. A faculty member describe the necessity of group work:

It's especially challenging in an online environment because you don't get together, and all those kinds of things. And I definitely understand..... But I still do some group projects in my courses.....and I am seeing in their evaluations that they don't like group projects. I tell them up front, yes, you may not like group projects, but as a professional

when you're in the field, you'll work in groups, and sometimes you won't have options to choose who you are going to work with.

These examples show how the faculty used the classroom to engage students socially and how the social aspects of student engagement extended outside the classroom as well.

The program used its student organization to promote student engagement in the operation of the program itself. The faculty described the importance of the student organization to the functioning of the program and to the students' future careers in the following quote:

Students are very involved in the decision making in the department and keeping people informed. I mean, we went to our faculty retreat, and the [student organization] president was there all day for the faculty meeting. I was like "yeah, I'm impressed with this."I like how this department is very student focused..... We had our first regular faculty meeting, I guess, a week ago, and the [student organization] president was there for that.

So that's one of the things that I have seen a great deal of is the students are involved.

As mentioned in the quote, the student organization at this particular LIS program was very active, even though the program was predominately online. The organization provided a means for the students to interact with each other and with the program, addressing in part the issue of isolation created by an online environment where the students were not located in one place.

During the interview process, a few faculty referenced an experiential spring break. The students in the selected LIS program participated in an experiential learning project in which they "partner[ed] with several public libraries to do projects over spring break.....they basically went and volunteered in public libraries to do specific projects that they [the libraries] needed to have done." Throughout the course of the study, this faculty member emphasized the importance

of experiential learning to obtaining a quality library education. This form of collaborative learning was characterized in the following manner:

I think that it's just the idea of that those are good experiences for them to have, that they are building experiences, that they are not isolating students...they are bringing them in to be part of things. I find all of those things to be positive experiences that students can have. If you want to go in the opposite direction, if they have no connections here, if there is no connection, all they do is go to class, and that's it...and I am not saying that there aren't students who don't do that in this program...there are...but there are options for them to not do that. You know, the more students have practical application of what they're doing is something that I really believe in.

As will be discussed in a later section of this chapter (Quality as Student Learning), the practical application of what the students' learned in class played a vital component in a well-rounded (or quality) library education according to the faculty, and experiential learning opportunities allowed the students to apply their classroom learning to real-world situations, garnering positive experiences in their chosen field.

Emotionally, student engagement is encouraged through community building (which was discussed in the preceding section of this chapter) in which a supportive learning environment is developed through relationships between students, faculty, and the program, creating a long-term affiliation and attachment to the program, particularly for alumni. The LIS faculty assessment of this situation was universally summed up in one quote: "I think most students feel connected personally to our program." This sentiment was echoed over and over by the faculty. One of the main ways that the faculty described building an emotional connection to the program for students was to involve them in committee meetings where they can participate in the decision

making process for the program. The faculty praised student involvement in the program. One faculty member observed:

One of the things that I see better here is the student connection. They are really involved. They sit on every committee.....we have two student members on the curriculum committee.....They came in through WebEx and participated in the meeting..... [Names faculty colleague] kept going back to the students and saying “what do you think about that?” So it wasn’t just so they were sitting there to listen. They were involved. They were asked their opinion. They were asked, “What do you think about this? Do you agree with this perception that we have about this course or about the way that we run blended courses?” They were specifically asked.

A faculty member noted that this involvement helps to prepare the students for the future:

So that’s one thing that I see that the department is doing... is really trying to include students in decision making and sort of in every aspect of the program, and that, for me, is sort of experiential learning. You know, understanding how an organization works. When you work in a library, it is an organization. It is a group of people, and understanding how you make decisions as a group, how you deal with issues that come up, those types of experiences are invaluable when you go into a library.

This faculty member valued the students’ involvement in the program because they expressed that this involvement created an emotional connection for the students. This type of involvement may foster fond memories for the students, possibly strengthening alumni affiliation with the program after graduation. While participation in the decision making process of the program builds an emotional engagement with the program, the faculty pointed out in the quotes that it also helps to build the students’ career skills as participation in program committee meetings

offers an experiential learning opportunity of how an organization operates and shares what community building looks like.

There are negative aspects to student engagement. The faculty noted the challenges of teaching students in an online environment and the issues that surround engaging students during instruction time, as exemplified in the following observation:

..... I don't know this for certain...I get the sense that some online students are kind of there just going through the classes, but they're not necessarily participating in the larger kind of community that were trying to build in this program and its identity.

The online teaching environment often requires more faculty effort to keep students interested and interacting with the course material. A faculty member explained:

I think that it is a little bit more faculty engagement, generally, from our side so that you feel that you are engaging with them. And, I mean, I ask questions in my online lectures, during my instruction, and they respond. I don't want to necessarily call out students. I did in the past..... But they respond to my questions, and then, you know, afterwards I get questions about the topic that I have spoken [about] in class. Hopefully they feel a little more comfortable in approaching you when they have problems.

Thus, the structure of the program requires the faculty to work harder to build the intellectual, social, and emotional aspects of the student engagement that they deem necessary for a quality education.

While several faculty praised the student involvement in the program, there was caution about allowing students too large a voice. One faculty member mentioned that higher education was “seeing a different dynamic of student” than in times past:

...students are coming in with an expectation of, um,” I paid this much for this class, and I expect this.” And they’re not coming in with the attitude that I remember going into graduate school with..... So much of what I am seeing is about getting a better job or, um, you know, moving to this position..... So, there’s a lot of different dynamics going on from the students in the program, so I think there is a disconnect between wanting them to know and understand the theory and the background and them not caring about that.

The faculty member believed that some students exhibited a quality as value-for-money approach to education, which is a view that the faculty member did not share with these students. In another example, a faculty member worried that student evaluations of faculty might have unseen repercussions in the classroom:

So, some of this student voice to me...I think that it’s important that they say the class was boring...it was just a talking head...some of those things are valuable...but I think we are giving them too much power when those types of things are being used against us for promotion or for tenure. So that’s a negative side of it. The other negative side of it is...when all your faculty are not teaching the same way, there is less rigor in some classes because they’re more concerned about that popular vote by the students, and that’s a reality. You know it is. I’ve heard students comment.....I’ve heard alumni comment. Um, you know for a fact when you’ve got certain folks not updating their courses and not teaching new courses that, you know, they’re stagnant. So, that’s negative.

In this second example, the faculty member identified quality as fitness-for-purpose. In this scenario, the student was seen as a customer (or consumer) and the course evaluations were a

reflection of product satisfaction (or dissatisfaction). The faculty member believed that satisfaction with the course or the instructor did not adequately evaluate the quality of the education received and that the course evaluations could be used as a popularity contest tool that could harm faculty with stricter classroom standards.

Quality as Service

The faculty identified a sense of service as necessary to a quality library education. In the library field, the concept of service is demonstrated when a library worker provides assistance to library users. This assistance may come in many forms, such as helping people to use the library itself; answering a specific question; demonstrating how to find information on a specified subject; and so much more. Simply, service is helping library users (or customers). This action is provided to fill a need or to meet a demand on behalf of the library user, and it requires the librarian to utilize the skills, ability, or knowledge learned in library school or honed on the job. One faculty member defined service as “communication, identification, and reinforcement” in the written narrative. During the interview, when asked about this definition, this individual responded, “When I was answering the question, it was an “a-ha” moment to me, too. I had never articulated it that way.” Thus, the writing exercise was a learning moment for the faculty.

One faculty member declared that instilling a sense of service to their students is imperative. This faculty member declared: “I think that it is part of a quality library education because we have to serve the people in our community.” Thus, the first step in understanding service is to know the community that is being served. For the public library, the community could encompass a neighborhood, town, city, or municipality depending on the size of the geographic area that the library serves. For an academic library, the community consists of the students, staff, and faculty affiliated with the college or university on which the library is located.

(Additionally, many colleges and universities serve their surrounding communities.) For a school library, the community is composed of the students and teachers within the particular school. Special libraries serve the people who work for the businesses, industries, churches, agencies, etc. associated with their place of employment.

Next, as a faculty member expressed, the needs of the community should be assessed. This individual advocated for outcome based planning and evaluation. “The first phase is gathering information, your base line information: who, what, when, where, and how.....Who are you serving? How are they being served?” After this information is gathered, a mission, strategic plan, and goals should be formulated. Then, the library should create outcomes and indicators from these tools. At this point, the library should be able to plan the programs and implement the services that meet the needs of their individual communities. With this model, the faculty member wanted their students “to understand their community and serve the needs of their community” without getting caught up in new and evolving trends. With this focus, the student would be able to “plug into” these needs and have those materials or services “that everybody in the whole community is behind.” With this description, the faculty member offered a practical means for students to employ service in their libraries as well as a practical reason why service is central to the beliefs of the library profession.

A faculty member was asked to talk about service in relation to the LIS education, particularly within the curriculum. This individual stated, “I think it comes up in every course. I don’t know that it hits you over the head like experiential learning does.” Thus, every course within the curriculum adds to the service credo of the profession. That is, catalogers are conscientious in creating database records because library users rely on these records to find the books and other materials that they need; reference librarians are diligent in their search for the

needed piece of information for a library users question; and collection development librarians use the reading interests of their community of users or the academic subjects taught by the instructors at their institutions to guide selection choices. All of these statements are examples of service even if this is not readily evident to an outside observer. Thus, the concept of service would not be considered more important to one library type or library position. However, it may look different in different settings, such as in an academic library where a reference librarian receives repetitive questions about the same assignment from different students in the same class, or a special library within a corporation or business in which a request is made for an esoteric article, or the public library where an information request may be inhibited by a language barrier.

If service is a part of every class, as the faculty member contended in the quote above, then how might it be taught to students, if it can be taught at all? While the faculty member conceded that teaching service was “very hard,” they did have several means that they tried to introduce the concept to their students. These methods included modeling, discussions, assignments, and experiential learning. With modeling, the faculty member relied on their personal experiences, sharing with their students their own past encounters and lived situations. In this scenario, having practitioner experience was helpful because the faculty member could relate an incident from an actual workplace environment. Modeling, in addition, would extend to how the faculty member interacted with their own students as well as other people in the program. A faculty member described this scenario:

But, I think the only thing that you can do is model it...that’s something you can do. And hope. Because some people will get it and some people may not. But, I guess that it goes back to love. It always goes back to love. And, and, it’s not always easy because some

people aren't very lovable.....But that's what service is. And, you do it from the bottom of your heart, and you just put it out there.

Another faculty member mentioned that the profession's service credo instructs that "everybody is your customer." That is, everyone is to be treated with respect and dignity and to have their informational needs taken seriously.

The faculty stated that classroom discussions were another way to teach service. A faculty member noted that "the classic way" to discuss service is through case studies; however, they responded that they did not like using this method because they found it an ineffective teaching method ("I don't always know that people always get why you are doing this") and that students did not respond well to the lesson ("Every time I have tried to employ case studies, you know, half the class is unresponsive.") The faculty member believed that field experience may be the best means to introduce students to the concept of service:

Maybe the way to do it is to place people in internship positions and, um, not to evaluate them on what they don't do or their lack of compassion or anything. It's really, um, just to get them the experience of being in a situation where people are desperate [for help]. Therefore, the use of case studies may be unsuccessful because students miss the point of the lesson. Or, as many faculty pointed out, service is learned through interactions that can only be offered through field experience (such as practicums or internships) or other forms of experiential learning where the student is immersed in the experience and working one-on-one with library users.

As for classroom assignments, the faculty pointed to one particular assignment that they believed was very effectual in having students see a library from the point-of-view of a library user, not a staff person. In this assignment, the students were given a persona and asked to visit a

library of their choosing. This institution could have been a school, academic, public, or special library. The students were asked to walk around the library as if they were a different person (not themselves), to observe library interactions, and to report the ease or difficulty that their assigned persona might have encountered using the selected library. The personas were complicated and designed to mimic the real lives of real people. For example, while there were many personas from which they could choose, one persona asked the students to imagine themselves as an elderly Asian woman with a language barrier who visited the library with her granddaughter. In their written reports of their visits, the students experienced many “a-ha moments” in which they noticed obstacles to service that they might not have seen otherwise.

With this assignment, it was easy to see that diversity awareness is a necessary component of service. When asked how they prepare students to work with diverse populations, many faculty responded that they start with a diverse student body. As seen in the earlier section on community building, the faculty used their recruitment practices to build diversity into their student population. During the study visit, a faculty member was proud of their previous efforts to secure a grant that allowed the program to increase their diversity, admitting several cohorts of students with its funds.

Several faculty were asked about students who do not display the service credo. During the interview process, two quotes were significant to the response to this question. The first quote comes from a veteran faculty member within the program:

But I think most commonly we try to solve it through diplomacy. I think the hardest thing to do is to reason with someone who violently disagrees with you..... I don't know that I have ever seen anybody who really did not exhibit a service credo. It's usually some sort of bad fit.....you know, either the reason is they're over privileged, or they're

underprivileged. And, you know, I've had both.....and so what you do is you try to...try to bring them up to speed. You work with them. You do everything you can. And sometimes you succeed, and sometimes you don't.

The second quote comes from the school library track:

We have something called professional dispositions that they are evaluated on. They do a self-evaluation.....they get evaluated during their practicum. If their dispositions aren't at a certain place, then they don't finish... Now, has that happened, I don't know.....there are a couple right now that I would counsel out of school librarianship. I would say that you should go into a technical services field. You should go into a special library because, you know, your attitudes toward students and access for students are not really in line with what they should be for a school librarian.

These faculty acknowledged in their experience that it was rare for a student not to display the profession's service credo, but it did happen occasionally. In the second quote, the faculty member believed that the student in question was not a good fit for the school library media career track; however, the student might could have found a good fit in another library type. The question here becomes do most students choose the library field because they want to serve and already are capable of serving? Like other fields, such as nursing, does library science naturally attract students with certain innate characteristics? If yes, this might answer why a veteran LIS faculty member had few examples of students who were poor fits with the profession as far as service is concerned. (Of course, there are other reasons why students may not fit well with the profession.)

When speaking about diversity in relation to library users, the difference between diversity and inclusion was brought up. In fact, one faculty member was very clear that a

distinction needs to be made between the two concepts when talking about people and their needs:

I tend to talk about diversity as things. You have a diverse collection. You have fiction; you have nonfiction. You have books; you have e-books; you got toys; you got computers. That's a diversity of materials. What you want to do for people is to include them in the planning, in service...include their needs....What are the feelings that you get when somebody talks about I need to make this a diverse library? And you think, I need a black person, I need an Asian person.....but when you say I want to include people from my community here...yeah, I think about people I know.... So, when you talk about inclusion, it's like who are you gonna bring to the table? As opposed to diversity, which is almost like bean counting.

In the library field, the concept of service strives to “bring to the table” everyone within the community served. To this faculty member, inclusion is a big enough word to accomplish this task while diversity may be too restrictive.

Quality as Student Learning

For the selected program, quality as student learning covers two main areas: instruction and course content or structure. Beginning with instruction, the faculty discussed this concept in the three stages of pre, during, and post. The pre stage of instruction is planning. Among other things, the faculty plan their courses based on the online learning environment in which they teach and on where their students are academically in their studies. A faculty member stated:

So, planning these online classes, it can be really challenging because I have tried to do very discussion-centric classes, and I end up sitting here at the desk with the door closed, staring at a computer screen in silence, waiting. And in a classroom, you can do that to a

certain extent, and they see you watching them, and somebody is gonna start talking.

Online, it doesn't always happen that way, and so that's been a real challenge. It's, it's also a challenge because the classes that I do teach...there's a lot of information that I do need to put out there quickly. So, how do you put that information out there in a coherent fashion except through a lecture? So, I've had to figure that out.

Additionally, the faculty consciously think about where their students are professionally within their careers. A faculty member shared:

When I am thinking about structuring my course, and I am thinking about the assignments that I am making...I'm going okay, how can they take this and translate it into where they are. Now, some of my students are already in libraries, so they are taking the things...they are actually using their own libraries as their test case for their assignments. So, they are able to take all of that and then turn around and use it. That is what's important to me is that it needs to be practical. They are getting theory...theory is the foundation of it, the best practices and all that. But it needs to turn around and be practical.

The planning phase for an online class might be rather extensive for the faculty. As the passage notes, they often try to incorporate activities or assignment within their classes that can build upon the experiences or knowledge that the students already have.

The second stage is the actual instruction itself. The faculty described this portion of their instruction process as a series of trial and error experiments, working to achieve the right balance of faculty lectures and student discussion, the right balance of theory and practice, and the right balance of challenge and encouragement. A faculty participant conveyed:

But it's certainly been a learning curve.....most of my student reviews have been very strong, but there has been those who've said, you know, that I wanted more discussion. And then I try to do more discussion, and then they don't discuss. And so that can be very frustrating. You know, it frustrates them. But it frustrates me. So, finding that balance of how much lecture do I do, how much information do I give them, how long do I sit here quietly and try to wait for them to talk? Are there other creative ways that I could get them to engage? And I found some ways with short presentations and short quizzes thrown in, and stuff like that. It's still something that there's certainly been times that it hasn't worked.

Another faculty member emphasized using examples and relating the material to the student's previous experiences:

And, I use a lot of examples when I teach my class, and also I ask them, okay, from your own lives and from your own experiences...it doesn't have to be in a library, and that's what a lot of...I don't work in a library, so I don't know if I can do this. Yes, you can. You have had experiences in your life. Let's extrapolate. That's fine. You, you've been to classes, you've had information. You've taken Foundations of Librarianship. You've heard this, you've read articles. Put those altogether. And most of the things that I am asking about... It's not a right or wrong answer. It is about synthesis, analysis...it is using your good judgement, your brain, to think about things and say, "oh, I can do this."

The post stage of instruction is feedback. The faculty discussed their responses to student assignments, citing that they like to give "copious" written feedback on papers and projects. One faculty member admired an adjunct who gave verbal feedback to his class through recordings that he made of himself evaluating his students work. The faculty member thought the recorded

feedback was effective because it included body language clues, such as facial expressions, hand gestures, and tone of voice. (“They can get additional information about your response.”)

Another faculty member said that when a class was “missing the boat” on an assignment that the response was to add details and an explanation to the directions. The faculty member responded that when writing feedback to students that they may review the entire paper again and update their comments. (“So, it can be time consuming in my opinion.”) This form of feedback is easier to perform for some classes rather than for other classes. However, the faculty member believed that they experienced “more personal connections with students that way.” The faculty offered this personalized attention in other ways as well, such as participating in email exchanges with students, staying after class to talk individually or in a group with students, or initiating a chat session with students. One faculty member mentioned virtual tours where a student participating in a practicum or internship could receive feedback from the instructor even when a physical visit was difficult or impossible. (“I think that I think that the ones that we have done the most successfully have been through Google Hangouts, and they actually give me a tour. I’ve been taken all through the school.”)

The faculty noted several instruction challenges. In a modern classroom environment, the exchange of emails between faculty and students (and vice versa) is an important means of communication. However, a faculty member lamented students often do not read emails thoroughly and miscommunication results when the students rush through the body of an email. (“So I do things like break it up into sentences. I highlight; I italicize; I color code. I make sure that my subject, you know, nails it. This is valuable, this is important because....respond by.”) This attention to communication requires more effort on the part of the faculty. In fact, the faculty agree that teaching in an online environment versus face-to-face requires more effort in

general because “everything is scripted” beforehand. (“Because there is so much kind of “Wizard of Oz” behind the scenes setting the stage. You have to have everything ready to go” while “In a face-to-face environment, basically you teach.”) While faculty need to be prepared for a face-to-face classes as well, a faculty member noted they “can wing it in a face-to-face” class easier because they can get the students talking, which brings up examples, which generates more discussion. (“It builds.”)

Comparing an online and face-to-face course, a faculty member shared, “You don’t get that same feeling even if you are the very best online teacher out there. There’s still a limit of what people feel comfortable doing in a virtual environment. So I think there’s that...still that disconnect.” Some of “that disconnect” that the faculty experience stems from student reluctance to speak in class. (“And that’s been an issue for a long time. It has not gotten better. It is still very difficult to get them to chat naturally, to speak up naturally in class. That voice.”) If students are reluctant to talk, they often are reluctant to ask questions as well. (“And also what I have seen is students seem to be a little more comfortable asking questions in a classroom environment versus an online.”) The faculty noted the difficulty in receiving feedback from their students in this scenario. (“But when I keep asking the same thing...it’s not good either because I am just repeating myself you know when you don’t get feedback.”) Also, a faculty participant found that their students are at different levels of comfortability with an online learning environment. (“They don’t have much experience in an online learning; they may operate in a different understanding from a face-to-face perspective..... They need to be told about everything.”)

The chat feature is beneficial in this situation where students are reluctant to talk (“I like the chat piece because if you’ve got an idea, and you don’t want to interrupt, but you don’t want

to forget it); however, it does not replace the student voice (“I would much rather have them talk.”) In addition, with the chat feature, a “back channel” of communication is created that requires the faculty’s attention (“but it’s hard to integrate when you’re the only person in the room that’s controlling it”) and/or diverts their focus from the lesson (“and you’ll go past a question and have to backtrack, and that throws me off. Ok, where were we?”) With face-to-face, many faculty felt that a deeper discussion could develop (“You can stop and follow a tangent, and really focus on something.”)

With online instruction, there are some barriers that are both social and physical in nature that impact teaching. For example, several faculty expressed frustration with not being able to interpret their students’ facial expressions or body language (“And then you can’t see the students faces so much to know if they’re getting the concept or not” or “I don’t see their faces when I’m teaching certain things, and when I ask them if they have questions, they don’t say that they do”) or feelings or mood (“When you are in a classroom setting may be you gage the feeling...I can’t gage the feeling if nobody says anything”) of their students. Thus, “it requires more energy from the instructor’s side to make this experience meaningful for the students.” As with any mode of instruction, the students come to the learning environment with varying levels of technology proficiency and subject comprehension. (“Yes, they have some instructions, but still there are different mindsets.”)

Since they teach predominantly in an online environment, several faculty stated that ongoing education and training is necessary for them. (“Continuous improvement is kind of key.....Yes, I may know this technology now, but as I get older, things are going change, and, probably, I am going to be resistant to change because that’s what I know the best”.) A few faculty members believed that some of their colleagues may not want to teach online courses

because they feel more comfortable teaching in a face-to-face environment. (“I do fully understand that. If I had the option, I would teach face-to-face, too. It is definitely much easier in a sense. At least, I find it easier because I can give a student their stuff.”) Noting again the time consuming aspect of the online environment, these faculty contrasted face-to-face students and online students with the following statements: “If they come to your office hours, they do. If they don’t, probably they won’t necessarily seek you that often” versus “online students feel more comfortable sending me a question and expecting me to answer quickly as well.” Since many LIS faculty did not take any education courses while earning their doctoral degrees, they may not understand much about classroom management (“But the main thing I think is... I think that we need to learn more about this community building aspects” of education as instruction is more than just the content (“There are other aspects, too...after the content is delivered.”))

In discussing the necessary preparation for teaching an online course, a faculty member described the process:

.....in my case I try to get not all but most of my course content prepared ahead of time and often times posted online.....I just make everything available so they will see what’s coming. Same thing for assignments. Sometimes, if the course is a new course, it may take a while to get all the assignments up. So, I make them available as time goes on. But if it is not a brand new course, if it is something that I have taught before, I generally make all the content on the same assignment available ahead of time. I update them [PowerPoint slides] every semester..... Generally, on the day, I do make another final review.

If the faculty member is teaching a brand new course, this process requires more time. The faculty member stated that students are informed that they are taking a new course and that the

content and assignments will be released throughout the semester, with the faculty person trying to be a few weeks ahead of the students in order to keep the course moving. The speed of the content release depends on the background of the faculty and their familiarity with the course subject. (“So, if I am comfortable, it is much easier. But if I am not, it takes more time”).

Course content or structure requires the faculty to review their courses for clarity and improvements, to offer opportunities for both theory and practice, and to refine how the courses are delivered. Many faculty shared that it takes a lot of time and effort to design a course in an online environment. While the content itself is an important component, the students cannot find anything in the LMS if the course module is not well designed. The faculty build redundancy into their course modules by placing information in multiple places with multiple links to find it. However, even with this extra effort, some students still have trouble finding certain things. (“I wonder why because everything is there..... often times, actually, they don’t follow the instructions.”) Some courses are reviewed when new faculty come onboard to update them, as illustrated in the following quote:

And I spent most of the summer just trying to wrap my head around what is this course, what is it supposed to include, what is the content. And then trying to get into the system, finally getting into Canvas because they won’t assign you any information until the end of August. So, then, um, I looked at the content of the course, and I looked at it, and I was like “oh, my God. There are 15 articles for them to read this week. And I’m just like no..... Let’s get rid of some of these, you know...there are more adjustments that I want to make, but I’m cutting back on the reading. I am trying to make it more discussion based.

After working on the course in order to refine it and to make the student learning outcomes sharper, the faculty member organized the course into two-week modules in order to cover the content. Sometimes, courses need to be reviewed to ensure that faculty are teaching the core courses for all career tracks. The following quote illustrate this second reason:

There's a particular course that I want to review.... It's an elective for everyone else in the program. It's required of the school librarians. Well, the problem is everyone in this library field needs to do technology these days, so I think there should be a general library technology course, and there should be a specific emerging technologies in school library's course. They should be two separate courses, so I have looked at the syllabus for the 635 course. For the last year and a half it has been taught by adjuncts. It's a core course for school librarianship.....Elective courses should be taught by adjuncts. Core courses should be taught by faculty.....You have a tenure-track school library professor. Why isn't she teaching the core courses in school librarianship?

With this quote the faculty recognize the need for faculty to teach all core courses to the students. It also points to the how the curriculum might differ for students wanting to specialize in a certain type of library and how that curriculum content may need periodic review to ensure that it meets the needs of these students and does not require extra coursework on their part. In the selected program, it appears that school librarianship may place students in this position.

In the field of library science, there is a long standing debate of theory versus practice in education. The faculty had much to say on this topic. First, several faculty believed that a library educator should have practical experience working in the field before entering the classroom, as this quote from one faculty member illustrates:

Well, the interesting thing about it is with this field in particular the people who are teaching in the LIS program need to have practical experience. If you go straight through college and go straight to your PhD that's not a good plan because you can get all the theory you want, but you can't apply it in the real world.

Second, they recognized the value of their time spent in the field as practitioners, particularly that this time helps them to make real world applications for their students, as shared in this quote:

And the other thing is my practical experience is really helpful for students because I can say, yes, this is one thing that happened in my library.....[Sometimes] I have to draw on other people's knowledge, but I can always connect people with that because of that network that I have, so I think that my practical experience is in some ways more helpful than my theoretical knowledge because I have seen how it works in the real world situation, and I think that that's something that my students recognize..... So, I think that they like that I have that experience, and I can do it from that perspective.

The faculty reported that their students respect their years of experience in the field and what it can bring to the classroom. This practitioner experience helps the faculty to advise students and to guide their students' future career paths.

Several faculty described the students in their program as hungry for practical experience in the field. Therefore, these faculty agreed that the collective content of the courses should provide students a well-rounded dose of each concept. In the first quote, a faculty member shared that:

The students here certainly crave, um, experience—experiential learning—learning the practice—far more than they tend to crave the theory. Most of my students, when I combine the two, are really interested in the theory because it tells them why they are

doing something practically. But if I only present the theory, I lose them pretty quickly..... But they are so drawn to what am I actually going to do as a librarian, and how am I actually going to do it.

In the second quote, another faculty member stated:

I think that a quality library education is a balance between theory and best practice and then also practical application. If you don't have...you need the theory...yes, the basis for why we do things. But then you got to actually put it into practice somehow. That's why I think internships are really important, practicums, whatever, or field experiences, or even people who work part-time and things in libraries. That is so important that they actually get into a library and experience that.....The best library education will include the theoretical and the practical, and I think, also, opportunity...the more opportunities that we offer for our students to experience things is really important.....It might be [names colleague]'s study abroad thing that she did this past summer. Or it might be the experience of serving on a committee or being involved in a state organization, going to the conference, working to interact with people in the library world, and talking with librarians.

These faculty affirmed that their students are enthusiastic about participating in experiential learning opportunities. These opportunities may range from classroom assignments, to study abroad trips, and to practicums and internships. Among other things, the students benefit from interacting with professional librarians in the work environment, creating professional networks, and experiencing the working conditions in different libraries. With these learning experiences, the student can make connections between the theory and the practical, which reinforces the theory and its importance.

In addition, these experiences increase the students' professional ability as they force students to actually practice librarianship. A faculty participant insisted:

Nobody comes out of the womb great at story time, or nobody comes out of the womb being excellent at asking, at doing the reference interview.....You've got to practice it.

Librarianship, it's a practice; it's like nursing; it's like dentistry; it's like being a doctor, being a teacher. You've got to practice to get good.

Thus, the experiential learning experiences allow students to not only make real connections between theory and practice, they allow students to perform actual library job duties and responsibilities within a library setting. If a student was not already in a library, this scenario gives a student experiences to place on a resume or to discuss in an interview. If a student is already employed in a library, this scenario gives a student a potential opportunity to perform tasks or duties that are outside of a normal job assignment, which might lead to promotion or qualification for a new position.

In an online learning environment, faculty are continually refining how their courses are delivered. To one faculty member, the mode of delivery was very important, even more important than the course's content, because of the student engagement aspect of a quality library education. This individual stated:

I don't think that it's about the content. It's more about how this content is delivered.....

It's more about the engagement.....I don't have any doubt that any of my colleagues or a chair professor would have any problem with the content. It's about how that content is delivered to the students.

As discussed previously, the faculty valued student engagement in their courses. ("And so that is where I realized that it was engagement.") Therefore, they build assignments and activities into

their courses that are designed to engage the students intellectually and socially. (“We can post things on the discussion board and have them respond. I can respond.”) The faculty collectively made a conscious decision to deliver their courses synchronously rather than asynchronously. (“But there is also this thing...I have done some research on online learning. There is this lack of immediacy when you do asynchronous.”) While the classes are delivered online, they have scheduled meeting times, such as every Wednesday at 5:30 pm, instead of allowing students to log into the LMS at their own leisure and move through the course content at their own pace. A faculty member described this alternate experience:

Otherwise, you just went to school, type in some stuff, and got your degree. You won’t have much of an attachment to the school or the program or the faculty, for that matter, and that is what I have seen about the engagement, and that seems to be lacking in some courses.

The synchronous mode of delivery supports their beliefs of a quality library education requiring both student engagement and community building. (“With synchronous, they can engage, they can hear your voice.”) The faculty continually improve their courses. Among other things, they participate in peer evaluations (“Sometimes we are asked to look at each other courses. You know, how things are designed, everything else”), and they ask the students about their online learning experiences (“Again, you may be a great teacher, but you may suck at teaching online.”)

While the faculty understand the benefits of synchronous online course delivery, they acknowledged that it has created some challenges or frustrations for students in the past, particularly when encountering a problem. A faculty person shared that this issue is evident:

....especially when you are taking a technology course. The students try to describe the problem....you know, it was about website design. I have no idea what the student wants

to describe because it is difficult for them to describe sometimes...I am creating this web page and the page looks too large...I know, I understand. But there may be a number of reasons for it to happen. And generally, after you teach it multiple times, you observe, maybe, they have made a mistake at some point, so it would be easier to pinpoint. But the thing is when you try to identify such problems in a chat based synchronous environment it was very difficult.

By choosing a synchronous mode of course delivery, the faculty do two things; 1) they create an environment for students to engage with the course material and other people and 2) they reinforce their belief in the need for this engagement even through the logistical or technological problems that may arise. (“There is a sense of belonging that you are actually promoting.”)

Although there are challenges with which to contend, the faculty do not see their program changing its mode of course delivery back to face-to-face as the primary mode of instruction. A faculty participant noted:

I don't see us ever going back to that in general. I don't see the world going back to that. Maybe there's going to be technology and ways of teaching and instructing that are going to come down the pike that are going to make it more comfortable... So, I think down the road that the technology will improve, and online teaching will be amazing. Probably, we will be doing it like a holodeck, you know.

The faculty believe that online instruction will become easier as students have more experience with this mode of delivery while earning their undergraduate degrees.

Quality as Employability

Quality as employability is one of the elements of a quality education as identified by Harvey (2001). Harvey (2001) concludes that employability centers on students gaining

employment after graduation (whether in or out of a specific area or discipline). The concept often examines how long it takes a student to begin work after earning a degree, what skills or abilities the student brings to the workplace, and whether the student is prepared for the work after being hired. Employability, also, can examine if a graduating student remains a lifelong learner throughout his or her career. Thus, employability may be determined in many ways.

For this study, the selected LIS program identified many components of Harvey's (2001) description of employability as the purpose or function of a quality library education. The faculty's general views center on two statements. The first statement, which is aimed at students, states, "It's preparing you to get a job." The second statement, which is aimed at themselves, states, "Your component is job preparation." A faculty person described the program in the following manner: "This is a two-year professional degree. It's not a liberal arts degree....so competency is definitely a core part." Besides instilling professional competency, one faculty member declared, "I, also, want my students to feel empowered, and capable, and be leaders, and kind of change makers in the profession." The faculty member continued, "I want them to not only to become kind of entry-level employees but also capable to take their organizations and the profession more generally through actions that are going to" advance it.

A second faculty member described the role of a quality library education in student employability in this manner:

I think it should do two things. I think that is should prepare people for the practice of librarianship....When they get out of here, they should know the basics of what they're gonna do in a job and be able to walk in. And there is still gonna be a learning curve, but they're going to have the basic tools to hit the ground running. I think, also, we need to be teaching people to think—to think critically, to be curious—because their education

isn't going to end here. If you are in a library, you are in a field that is constantly changing—constantly evolving and adapting—so you have to be able to take what you learned in this program and in five years throw all of it out and start over because it's going to change. So, we have to prepare them to walk into a job, but we have to prepare them also to keep walking after they get the job...to adapt to the changing environment because libraries are constantly changing.

Although they did not mention the word itself, these quotes show that employability is many things to the LIS faculty studied: (1) student employment after graduation; (2) the professional competencies or skills to gain this employment; (3) the preparation necessary to perform this employment on the first day with little training; and (4) the instillation of the necessity for lifelong learning. The faculty did not mention employability as the length of time that it takes for a student to secure employment.

The faculty ensure the employability of their students through the assignments and activities of their courses, the career pathways, and other student activities. Within their courses, the students have opportunities to interact with professional librarians working in the field. This interaction might be through practicums or internships. ("We try to encourage more experiential [learning] so they would know what it [the profession] entails.") Sometimes, the classroom assignments require students to ask people about their jobs. ("I have students conduct interviews with library directors and with technology directors.") These assignments, also, allow the students to establish connections within specific communities. ("So that they would have more information about their communities; therefore, they can reach out to them.") One faculty member mentioned having students write grant proposals with "strong community components," which has students practice a real world skill while focused on the people to be served.

A faculty member discussed the effectiveness of inviting guest lecturers to speak to their classes. (“So I bring in the experts that I can find in those different fields.”) In an online environment, it is easy for professionals to join a class from anywhere in the country or the world. The faculty member stated:

But one of the things that students have typically loved is when I bring in guest lecturers. And this is something that works especially well in our online classroom environment because I can bring in people from anywhere.... I mean, last week I had one in from, uh, Nashville. She was at Vanderbilt..... And, basically, she talked to them for about 15 minutes, and then they did about 45 minutes of just asking her questions. Chatting. And they were totally into it. They were so excited about the material, and I just find that that works really well.

The guest lecturers help students to make associations between what they read in class (theory) and a practical application of the reading (a professional job). The faculty member continued:

I mean, I do give them a fair share of reading, but I think the thing that makes it work is that they do get these pictures of what people actually do in the field. So we talk about the theory, and we read about the theory, and we read some practical studies about what people have actually done. But then they actually get to talk to somebody and hear what that person has to say about what they actually do. And then they start to feel a little bit more grounded in the field.

The LIS courses cover a large amount of material in a short period of time, which can be overwhelming and disheartening to students. The use of guest lecturers helps students to feel more at ease with the material, invites students to ask questions about a certain subject area or job, and to make professional connections with practicing librarians. In addition, the interaction

with the guest lecturer provides students with a snapshot of what their life might look like when they enter the field; it tells them what to expect when they are working in a certain area or at a certain job. (“At the same time, I mean, it’s more about them feeling comfortable.”) To this scenario, the faculty member claimed that the students “get kind of excited about that possibility;” that is, they get excited about glimpsing a possible future.

The benefit of inviting a guest lecturer does not apply just to the one class that the guest joins. The faculty member believed that the classroom guest enriches the entire learning experience for the entire semester:

It certainly drove home the importance, at least in this particular class, of bringing in expert in the field and getting the students the chance to hear somebody who really knows what they are talking about. That was a big part of it. And this semester teaching this class I am bringing in a few extra guest lecturers because of that, and I did change the way the course was organized a little. Instead of doing a three hour seminar once a week, because that can be brutal, they have more reading and more stuff to do outside of class, and then you have an hour, maybe two, in the evening, and they get their guest lecturer many weeks.

In this example, the faculty member restructured a class, hoping for more student engagement from the students. The restructuring required students to read the theory outside of class, to participate in a discussion of the reading, and to listen to a guest lecturer make connections between the reading and the discussion. The students were more intellectually involved with the material (student engagement) and with their fellow students, instructor, and classroom guest (community building).

As the previous discussion suggests, preparing students for entering the job market means that they exit the program with realistic expectations. A faculty member shared that the last time the university's library opened a position for employment within its archives over 100 people applied. With this position, the faculty member felt that most students "really don't know what they are signing up for;" that is, they do not understand the job because "they hope that they will be fluffing about with old papers" instead of using technology to make the materials accessible and conducting outreach to "convince people why these things are important." The faculty member said, "Part of what I do is try to persuade them from going down this route because it's incredibly competitive, and it's not easy to get a job." The faculty member believed that students should understand the job itself as well as how difficult it may be to acquire this job:

I've been trying to do a lot to prepare students, especially since a lot of them are nearing graduation, to get really serious about the market or go somewhere else because it will be easier to get a job outside of archives and special collections.

The faculty member advised students to really understand the job market that they wish to enter before graduation to determine if this is really the career route that they wish to pursue. If the answer to this question is yes, then the student should proceed forward with these career plans. If the answer is no, then the student should change their route. The faculty member wanted the students to make informed decisions based on realistic expectations of the job market and the jobs available to them.

The LIS curriculum is customizable, which allows students to create their own career pathways. Many faculty conveyed that this customization lies in the electives that students can take as well as in the advising that they receive. The way that students can use electives to customize a career path varies from student to student or from situation to situation. For

example, many of the program's technology courses are introductory. ("They are not necessarily very advanced given our student profiles. Most of their backgrounds are English and social studies. They don't necessarily have a technical background when they are accepted into the program.") In the emerging technologies course, there is a small component of the course content that introduces programming to the students. ("It is not necessarily very advanced, but it would help them to understand the rationale, and some of the basic things when it comes to programming. You know, how things build and [how] things are executed.") In this situation, the students are able to see what the programming course would require of them, such as what the course content and their assignments might involve. ("So it gives them a perspective, and it helps them define where they want to go whether it is something that they are interested in, or maybe they are not.") The students can make more informed decisions about their future class choices. In the present example, they can choose to take additional technology courses, such as digital libraries and metadata, which build on each other. ("So if they take digital libraries, they can go further. They can take metadata. They can change their path to more digital collections management and that kind of areas.") Thus, the elective courses can be used to build an individualized career path. ("So it helps, I think, in that regard.")

As for advising, this function is done formally with an assigned adviser. As a student is admitted to the program, it is common to select a library type in which to specialize. As is customary, an adviser with experience in this area is assigned to help guide the student through the curriculum and, subsequently, through the program. In conjunction with this process, the faculty often provide informal advising through their courses or personal contacts with the students in the program. A faculty member shared:

Um, with my students I am constantly telling them like, ok, if you are interested in this thing that we spent one week on in class, here are your tools to pursue that further. Here, start with the readings we did in class. Look at what they say in their bibliographies. Go do some more reading. Take this class that's offered during spring semesters. Take another class that offered in the fall semesters. Go talk to this person in the library who could help you do a practicum in this area. Or, if you're not in [names city], find somebody in a surrounding library who does this sort of work and ask them for a practicum. I am constantly trying to give them the tools. If this is something that you are interested in, we are barely going to touch on it in this class. You can take the initiative and go forward with it.

With these tools, the faculty member was helping the students to devise their own career pathways. ("And I think that is really important because everybody's going to have different needs.") Some students will want to take an academic approach ("Some people are going to want to dig very much into the academics and the theory") while other students will want to take a more practical approach ("and other people are going to want to get as shallow as possible and then run in the other direction and get a lot of practical experience and get out and get a job.")

The LIS program provides other activities designed to increase their students' employability. As previously discussed in another section of this chapter, the student organization, LISSA, attends faculty meetings, participates in service projects, and collaborates with other community organizations. All of these activities provide students a glimpse of professional life. In a practice environment, another faculty member gave students the opportunity to apply for a job of their choice, and they would receive guided feedback on their application materials:

I mean, I do try to provide— especially in my archives and special collections, which are upper-level courses—a good amount of job preparation. One thing that I'm trying this semester is an optional thing. If students want to... it's not part of their grade...but I tell students if they want to they can identify a job, a job opening either past or present, and then actually go through the process of organizing a cover letter and a resume and submitting the whole package to me, and I will give them some feedback.

These activities provide practical outlets to practice skills that will be used on a job as well as to be used to get a job.

A few faculty noted a negative aspect to quality as employability. While these faculty see the employability of their graduates as a good thing, there is more to receiving an advanced degree than just getting a job. The education itself is important, as noted in the quote:

There's certainly this feeling...and, I think this is a cultural thing, in this country particularly, that you are getting a degree so that you can get a job, and so there is the emphasis on I need the practical skills. Get me out. I need to get out and start making money. And it's like can't you just get an education? And that's certainly a challenge.

That societal feeling that it just needs to be wham, bam, get a job. You're done.

In order to combat this one-sidedness, the faculty reinforce why the students are learning and encourage continual learning. Another faculty person stated:

My role is to try and balance out what they want from the program, which is usually the practical experience, with making sure that I am still constantly telling them why I do certain things and challenging them to keep looking for new ways to learn new stuff because they can't stop when they get the degree.

The faculty view the theoretical and the practical as necessary to a quality library education. Therefore, they reinforce both concepts, even if a particular student is only interested in one. During the study, a faculty member made an observation that there are two kinds of library organizations: (1) creative, innovative libraries that are on the move or (2) “flat-lined management” libraries “where everything is process oriented” and where nothing ever gets accomplished. It is not difficult to surmise that the faculty in this study want to prepare their students to work (and possibly lead) the creative, innovative libraries of the first category.

Quality as Transformation

Quality as transformation centers on cognitive transcendence, which embraces an academic culture that displays a social awareness and encourages careful examination of existing belief systems and accepted knowledge, which is thought to produce transformative learning. Transformative learning should increase the confidence of students, allowing innovation and growth. Thus, Harvey and Green (1993) assert that a quality education should have a positive impact on students, particularly on their skills and competencies, and should encourage them to take some control over their learning, particularly adding to their empowerment as students. Quality as transformation is a form of value-added education that produces an intellectual, emotional, or physical change in the student. As such, personal and professional development should be evident in the student (Harvey & Green, 1993). Harvey and Green (1993) affirm that employers as future consumers of this transformation should have a role in the procedures that produce it.

The faculty in the present study believed that quality as transformation encompasses socializing students into the field and imparting professional competency. A faculty member proclaimed, “We are firmly rooted—dedicated—to turning out librarians who are going to work

in public libraries, academic libraries, [and] school libraries. Not necessarily lesser ones. We have had some pretty remarkable graduates out of this program.” With such a statement, it is not surprising that the socialization of students into the library field is a priority, as the following quote illustrates:

Well, one thing you do...maybe, the main thing we do...is that you are socializing students into the profession. And that makes it a lot less task-oriented and cut and dry. And much more porous and like, um...yeah, porous. And, um, permeable. And, um, a little fuzzier, too. The content of what you’re teaching is still important... but you’re never stopping at just the classroom.

The faculty acknowledge that their teaching does not begin and end with delivering the content or their courses. They contend that their main task is to prepare their students to become librarians.

Taking up the mantle of this task, the faculty undertake the responsibility of imparting a set of beliefs and practices that introduce their students to the culture and philosophy of library work. The faculty believe that the student will change throughout their journey in the program. A faculty participant declared:

If you have really received a quality education, your identity has changed in a way. You become part of a culture that you weren't part of previous to it, and as part of entering that culture, you have assimilated some of the culture’s norms and values as well as gained an understanding of the standard.

A faculty member believed that the student will be introduced to tools that will help them throughout their career:

I see a quality education as kind of... it's not giving you absolutely everything that you are going to need throughout your career or life, for that matter, at a broader level. But it's giving you the fundamental tools that you'll need to become a lifelong learner within whatever the field is that your kind of learning about, a discipline. And a big part of that is to acculturate you because lifelong learning is not an individual attribute; it's a communal attribute..... I mean, a big part of being part of a profession is, is joining that community and culture.

The faculty believe that a quality library education will produce library professionals. A faculty member stated:

But, you know, I think the purpose really is to create professionals who understand the basic beliefs of the library profession and have that background and will go out into the world and implement them in whatever capacity they have. You know, the idea of access to information and the freedom to read and all those things that are the basic beliefs that we have and that should be sort of the core underlying everything that we do is what are our basic beliefs as a profession. And then how do you infuse that into all the different aspects of what they are learning here and what they take out into the world? If they go out into the world and they don't believe in those things, then we've done a bad job.

The faculty understand that their function or purpose extends beyond the boundaries of their teaching environment. They have the fundamental task of introducing students to the customs, values, practices, and social forms that define the daily existence of a professional librarian. This task includes ensuring that students understand and can uphold library philosophical or belief statements, such as Freedom to Read, Code of Ethics, Core Values of Librarianship, and so forth.

It is easy to transition to the next question: how do you teach belief? The faculty are ready for this question. An individual explained:

It's hard to teach belief. That's, that's a discussion that I have had with people. How do you teach belief? Well, that becomes a question of who do we admit to the program?

You know, if they don't have it at their core this idea of equal access to information, if they don't have at their core the defense of the right to read, if they don't believe that students should have access to a wide variety of materials, and everyone should, are they people that we really want in the program? And we've talked about admissions.

The faculty understand the difficulty of this portion of their jobs. There is no easy answer to how to teach a set of beliefs to students. Through the admission process, they hope to select students who will be a good fit for the program and the field. The section of this chapter on quality as service describes the importance of these beliefs to the field, particularly in meeting the needs of all library users in an open manner.

The second component in quality as transformation for the faculty in the selected LIS program is professional competency. The faculty want to teach their students to “tap into their own good judgement and their own knowledge” by “providing them information and research and sources and opportunities for practice, for learning...so that when they go out into a library they don't feel gobsmacked.” Throughout the program, the students are learning and developing proficiencies from each class that will help them in their future jobs. By the end of their educational journey, they should be able to synthesize these proficiencies into a coherent practice that they will employ to help library users. A faculty member used the comparison of distilling information down from the size of the ocean to the size of a cup in order to make it meaningful and manageable for the library user:

The function and the purpose of a library education is to help the student to really understand how the theory and the practice behind providing a cup of information. And I'll explain that.....If you are thirsty, and somebody says, "Hey, drink the whole ocean." You can't drink the whole ocean. So what librarians do is we take all that information, all that data, and we channel it down into a river, and streams, and lakes, and ponds, and creeks that then go into your faucet. Then you turn it on, and you get a glass. You can drink a glass. In the meantime, we have filtered out the salt, all the impurities. We've cleaned it up, and we have given you what you need. That is accessible, that is drinkable, and you're not left feeling like you have just been hit by a tsunami. We're the ones that can take you from that ocean to that glass.

By graduation, students should be able to distill an ocean of information down into a cup of information, a process that takes a potentially overwhelming amount of information and breaks it down into an expedient amount to answer a question or to meet an informational need. This skill takes practice and incorporates proficiencies from many classes.

Furthermore, the faculty want to graduate students not only with the abilities to join the workplace but also with the dedication and foresight to move the profession forward. A faculty member stated:

Competency is definitely a core part. I mean, I also want my students to feel empowered and capable and be leaders and kind of change makers in the profession. I want them to not only to become kind of entry-level employees but also capable to take their organizations and the profession more generally [into the future].

The faculty want to graduate students who will become future leaders in the field. They want their students to leave the program with competencies that will lead to critical thinking and will spark innovation in the field.

The faculty see the profession itself as transformative because of its impact on individual library users as well as society in general. A faculty participant conveyed:

I think we as a profession are all about helping people to help themselves: helping them to find information, helping them to understand and interpret [information]....I think we as a profession give people hope. We give them opportunities to express themselves in different ways. We open our doors to everybody...there's no limit to what a library brings to society. So, I think we're a very precious, precious part of society.

Another faculty member declared that “we are very much a library-centric program.” If the faculty hold libraries in such high esteem, it is not surprising (1) that they would take their role in preparing its future workers so seriously and (2) that they would believe a quality library education requires a transformative process to graduate these professionals.

Faculty Reflection

During the study, the participating faculty were asked to reflect on their written narratives and their answers to the interview questions. The faculty were asked to describe what they were thinking while writing their narratives. Besides worrying about the appropriateness of their answers in general (whether they answered the question that they perceived that I asked), the faculty responded that they were thinking about (1) the importance of thinking of education holistically at the program level (“they're not kind of like applying to take a particular class when they apply to our program; they're applying to our program”); (2) the importance of service to the program (“Just, I think, for me, what I was thinking about is helping my students understand

not be afraid or limited in their provision of service”); (3) the importance of the students in the program (“I think that one of the things that I wanted to convey was how student-centered this program is”); (4) the importance of continually reviewing course content (“I mean, I am one of those professors who every single semester I do teach the same information and organization class. Every single semester it’s different, and so there is this constant feeling of re-examining and changing things”); (5) the importance of the faculty to the program (“but when I landed on that idea of what we do as a department and what my philosophy of what I do, then I could look and say it...it is partly the reason that I feel comfortable in this department is because we are all on the same page”); and (6) the importance of student success to the faculty (“I think we bend over backwards as a department to work with students: to accept them into the program, to coach them through, to let them cry on our shoulders, to give them every opportunity to succeed and multiple opportunities to succeed. And, we, you know, we probably cry when they fail, the ones we lose”).

With their narratives, the faculty said that they were pleased with the student focus, with the improvements they noted in their teaching, with the opportunity to share their feelings, and with their memory or recall. They mentioned being frustrated about being seen as complaining, about being seen as disloyal to their colleagues, about not providing the information that they thought I needed, about discovering that they had much more to say, and about being too busy to find time to respond to my request. One faculty member responded feeling “a little hampered” with the writing:

I didn’t feel like I could talk about curriculum stuff. I don’t know if that was my, just my perception of the question.....I interpreted both of your questions to be learner-centric, and it may be just the way that I interpreted them, and I didn’t want to focus on me..... I

wanted it to be more about the students. I guess that's sort of maybe I am just translating my own issues into the question.

This faculty member was reassured during the interview that there were no right or wrong interpretations of the directions for writing the narratives. The responses were individual to the person.

The faculty were given an opportunity to share what they wanted me most to understand about (1) their written narratives specifically and (2) a quality library education generally. They reiterated the themes of community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation in *both* questions. First, for their written narratives, the faculty were asked to focus on their program purposely. In reflecting on their writing only, the faculty had the following responses. Addressing community building, one faculty member stated:

That's kind of a big issue with online education... is that students can fall through the cracks. So what can we do to make sure that students are not falling through the cracks? Like maybe they're going... they're going from course to course, and they may even be doing well in their individual courses, but if you would ask them what they think about the program, they would be all totally isolated, and they're alienated from it. How do we ensure that that doesn't happen?

Addressing student engagement, the faculty shared that they felt their program was very student-centric, that they "work very hard to take care of" their students, and that they recognize that their students are why they even have a job. One faculty member noted that:

I think the takeaway is that students tend, in my opinion...seem to learn better if there is some sort of personal connection. Um, they want to feel a personal connection, and not just with the material but also with people in that field and the field as a whole. And if

they feel that, if they feel like they could actually be a part of this, and this is meaningful, they perform better in the classes. They enjoy the classes more, and they come out of the degree excited about what they are going to do.

Addressing the concept of service, the one faculty member shared that:

We just can't make assumptions. Like my students can make assumptions about first time users in the library and how people understand how to use it. And I think here in terms of creating quality for our students, we have to...we can't just make assumptions that what we have always done is good enough and should continue to be that way.

Finally, addressing transformation, one faculty member made a personal statement.

I think, um, you've helped me realize that I really do believe something and that my life hasn't been in vain. My career hasn't been in vain.....I mean, I don't sit here and ponder about them every day. You know, it's really nice to take a break and say, "Oh, good. I haven't lost it. I haven't lost it. "

As stated, these answers only pertain to the written narrative. They cover these components of a quality library education as identified by the faculty in the selected LIS program: community building, student engagement, service, and transformation. Student learning and employability were not addressed.

Second, during the interviews, the faculty were asked about their personal views about a quality library education. These questions were not specific to the program. When queried what they wanted me most to comprehend about quality in library education, the faculty focused on the following components: (1) community building ("I think the most important thing about a quality library education is communicating what that means and what that looks like to faculty, staff and students, so everybody is on the same page....It can look different depending on

context and need.”); (2) service (“People are central.”); (3) student learning (“I guess it should be practical application of theoretical belief. That you get the theory but then you have to use it.”); (4) transformation (“Get ready to have your mind blown over and over because you have to be a lifelong learner to be a librarian. Today a quality education is lifelong.”); (5) student engagement (“You have a program that really cares about you. You are going to feel in some capacity that somebody cares about you.”); and (6) employability (“You need to follow the trends and needs of the field.”)

These questions were used as a summation piece at the end of the two sections; they were designed to force the faculty to think about their written narratives and interview questions in a self-reflective manner. They did not know that these questions would be asked; therefore, they could not prepare for them. However, they reiterated the themes found in their writing and verbal answers. One faculty member stated, “I didn’t necessarily think about it until you asked that way... We discussed and looked at how we can improve instruction in our program, but I don’t remember thinking to myself how library education should look like.” This statement shows a depth to the reflection induced by the present phenomenological study.

During the reflection portion of the interview, the faculty were asked to compare their verbal answers to their written narratives. All agreed that their answers were similar; that is, they spoke on the same themes in both pieces of the interview, even with the written portion drafted weeks before the actual interview and the focus of the components being the program (written narratives describing a positive and negative example of quality) and their personal views and practices (verbal questions describing a quality library education). Some of the faculty mirrored their earlier statements (“It’s all about how do you create an environment that facilitates community building where students are agents in that process,” and “I think to me that I tend to

make one point all the time....about focusing on your users.”) One faculty member reiterated their message but questioned the practices of the program:

When we talk about being student-centered, why are we making the decisions that we are making? Is it because for the benefit of the student, or are we doing it because it is the easiest thing for us to do?

Additionally, a second faculty member noted future challenges for the program or the profession:

To me, a quality program is about the students. But if you’ve got students in it for the wrong reasons, not in it for the reasons that you think people coming in a program should be in it, there’s a disconnect. It’s very hard to...it’s very hard to serve those students, and there’s a tendency to be a little jaded. I wonder if this is where our profession is headed.

A third faculty member added that there was a need for self-reflection while two other faculty members agreed that while their verbal responses matched their written responses they were broader and more diffuse in nature. The final faculty member surmised that the selected LIS program mirrors what is happening in the wider library community.

In addition, the faculty were asked how their answers (written and verbal) compare to the goals and objectives of the program. As for matching the program, the responses were affirmative. Most faculty agreed that their answers matched the program “pretty closely” or “pretty well.” They noted that the program included language on communication and diversity, focused on what students needed to learn to become librarians, contained what students needed to act as good community partners, and provided the tools that students needed to be successful. However, one faculty member noted that the program’s learning outcomes were more technical in nature. Finally, a faulty member said that the core courses are structured in such a way that a student who completes these course would be meeting the program’s outcomes “at the

minimum,” with the elective courses complementing this learning process. Thus, all faculty were in agreement on this point.

As for differing from the program, the faculty overwhelmingly agreed that there were few (if any) differences. One faculty member noted that the program’s learning outcomes were more technical in nature than their answers while another faculty member thought they were “heavier” on the need for personalized attention in the student learning aspect of a quality education than the program was. However, even with these small differences, the faculty expressed that their answers complemented the program as their conceptualization of quality matched the goals and objectives of their program. This consensus could be a product of the program’s selective hiring practices or the recent review of their program learning outcomes for their ALA accreditation self-study document and upcoming site visit (which was scheduled at the time of my visit).

Visual Depictions of Quality

Participant produced drawings were used as a data collection method in this study. While the faculty were informed in the recruitment stage of the study process that a visual depiction would be a part of the interview session, they were not given the directions for these drawings until the interview itself. During this portion of the interview, the faculty were given a sheet of paper with these directions: As a faculty member, when you conceptualize a quality library education for your students, what services, resources, tools, etc. are involved? They were reassured that there were no right or wrong answers to the directions. Their answer would be unique to them as it would convey their own thoughts, beliefs, and practices. The visual depiction could be a drawing, concept map, flow chart, cartoon, and so forth.

The faculty were provided with a clean sheet of drawing paper within a spiral bound pad of drawing paper. They were told that they could choose the orientation of the paper (whether

landscape or portrait) and that there was plenty of paper if they made a mistake. Once drawing, only one faculty member choose to tear the initial drawing sheet from the spiral bound pad of paper, crumple it up, and begin the exercise again. The initial sheet of paper was thrown in the trash can. The faculty were provided with an assortment of colored Sharpie makers and Crayola colored pencils for their artwork. They were given free rein to choose whether to use the markers or colored pencils and what colors to choose for their visual depictions. Most faculty made positive remarks about the choice of colors available for them. In fact, one faculty member expressed a desire to use a colored pencil that matched the vibrant color of a shirt that was being worn that day.

The faculty demonstrated mixed feelings about the request to produce a visual depiction of their concept of a quality library education. The faculty responded in the following manner: (1) three were visibly excited about producing a drawing; (2) two were reluctant to do it all; and (3) two were ambivalent about the request, showing no strong emotions either way. The excited faculty sat up straighter in their chairs and “oohed” and “aahed” when I presented them with the pencil box containing the markers and colored pencils. These faculty exclaimed that they loved coloring, with one telling me that drawing was a clever way to gather data in the study. Another faculty member produced their own pencil box of colored pencils and used these supplies to make the visual depiction. The two reluctant faculty members made faces and good-naturedly laughed at their own reactions. The final two faculty members waited patiently for the directions and supplies, asked a couple of questions, and then began drawing.

All seven of the faculty lamented their lack of artistic ability; all seven of the faculty members were reassured that their artistic ability was not under scrutiny. The concepts in their artwork were more important than their artistic skills. The visual depictions took 10-20 minutes

for the faculty to complete. While they worked, I stepped out briefly, except for one instance when the faculty member described the visual depiction as it was being drawn. I remained in the room to hear the description. As stated, for all the others, I stepped outside for a few minutes when the faculty began to draw and returned while they were still working. All seven faculty produced a visual depiction, with each declaring when their artwork was complete.

The data gleaned from the visual depictions was incorporated into the faculty conceptualization of a quality library education as discussed earlier in this section of this chapter. The visual depictions support the themes of community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation. A synopsis from the interview transcripts and the actual visual depictions themselves (labeled as figures) are provided in Appendix E.

Faculty Reflection on Visual Depiction Activity

After the faculty described their visual depiction of the resources needed for a quality library education, they were asked to participate in a self-reflection activity in which they were posed several of the same questions as before. First they were asked to describe what they were thinking while they were drawing. One faculty member responded that a holistic overview of library education was the aim (“I think my mindset was really to draw something that would give a big picture perspective”); this individual elaborated that infrastructure was a concept used in their research (“not that infrastructure determines all the smaller interactions, but at the very least, it sets the stage for everything that happens at a smaller scale.”)

Another faculty member shared that their drawing started with thoughts about who the primary users of a quality library education are, which are students and faculty according to this faculty person, and the importance of two-way communication between these two groups. Another faculty member expressed starting with a visualization of the end product of a quality

library education (“We want happy graduates. We want people who go out and are happy in the field. And do good things.”) Still another person shared that they had many ideas about how to complete the drawing (“I had too many things that I wanted to do”) while yet another person revealed that the drawing exercise expanded their thinking about what constituted a quality library education (“That it was things that I haven’t thought about before.”) Particularly, the importance of experiential learning was brought to the forefront for this person. For the final faculty member, their drawing reminded them of the saying “each one, teach one,” which points to the potential significance on society of producing a better world for all if every person helped someone else along the way.

The faculty were asked to share what pleased them about their drawings. Their answers ranged from the artistic (I like colors! Just using the colors was fun”), to the cerebral (“It helped me to remember things”), to the affirmative (“As I went through it I could see that is.....yeah, that’s exactly what I believe we are doing”), to the explanatory (“I thought...because I started this off with just a sign.....A sign. Expectations. And all these things hang off the expectations. Yet, that’s true, *but*, you know, you’ve got all these other things coming in, too”), to the professional (“I guess that I was thinking about....all the interactions of the different elements of librarianship...sometimes there can be the perception that they don’t go together...but that actually the best education comes when all of that stuff intersects”), and finally to the personal (“I enjoyed trying to conceptualize it visually. It was a challenge. I enjoyed that.”)

When asked about what frustrated them about your drawing, their answers centered on their artistic ability (“Oh, well, my inability to draw”), their artistic choices (“I think that I would have started just a little further up [on the page]”), their time spent drawing (“And, I felt like I was taking too long”), their interpretation of the directions (“Because I said she said whatever I

want to do, I'm gonna use words"), and their ability to put their thoughts into visuals ("Translating it.") One faculty member expressed frustration about not having all the answers to my questions during the interview ("I wish that I had kind of better data to answer them. You're kind of making me want to go back and see if I can because, honestly, I don't know, and it changes so quickly.") I am unsure how this may (or may not) have impacted the visual depiction, but it was a frustration voiced by this faculty member. Another faculty member stated that they did not like being put in the position of the student ("If you think about it, I'm an instructor, and I don't want to be questioned") and they did not like being asked to do "the kind of homework type of stuff" in the study. Another faculty member agreed that creating the visual depiction was easier than describing the same concepts in words because a visual can increase comprehension of difficult topics (both in total overall comprehension and in the amount of time needed to comprehend) ("That's why my students get lots of diagrams and pictures in their lectures.")

At this point, the faculty were asked to compare their responses about their visual depiction to their responses about their narratives (both written and verbal). The faculty universally agreed that their answers are equivalent to each other, using phrases such as "similar," "along the same lines," "a lot of the same stuff," and "exemplifies it." When asked if their visual depiction matches or differs from the goals and objectives of the LIS program, the faculty concur that the themes they included in their drawings are analogous to those identified by the program ("I think it's pretty congruent"), with a few elaborating that their drawing "connects to the program learning outcomes," that the themes of their drawing "are really explicitly sort of stated in beliefs," and that their drawing "fits" with the program's focus on providing students the tools that they need. While the faculty agreed the themes in their

drawings aligned with the program's overall goals and objectives, one faculty member shared frustration with the goals and objectives in general:

I hate to say this. The goals and objectives of this program have to be congruent with the School of Education, which have to be congruent with the goals and objectives of the University, which have to be congruent with the three year plan and with the....whatever we told, um, the SACS. And having said that, I'm not sure that I think a lot about the goals and objectives of this program, and I never have. I have always done what I thought that I had to do. And I pray that I'm not on that committee that has to dream up those goals and objectives and keep it all bureaucratically correct because I just hate activity for the sake of activity.

As already noted, not a single faculty member believed that the components that they felt were necessary for a quality library education (as evidenced in their drawings) diverged from the goals and objectives of the LIS program (as evidenced in the program's student learning outcomes). However, it is important to note that one faculty member questioned the validity of the student learning outcomes to ensure a quality library education.

The faculty were asked to share what they want me most to understand about their visual depictions. All seven faculty members answered this question, with most responses coming in paragraph form. However, one faculty member answered in a short declarative sentence: "It's symbolic." Speaking about the focus of the program, a second faculty member had a slightly longer response: "I think it's student-centered. "It's a kind of cliché. But it's student-centered. More hands-on experience." These two responses demonstrate the faculty's dedication to their students.

When asked this question, a third faculty member elaborated that the visual depiction showed overall how the program provided a quality library education:

I guess, you know, that it's about, um, really preparing people for the reality of librarianship.....the world of academia gets this ivory tower reputation because what we are doing is not really practical...I don't think that this program is that case. Um, it's all about practice. It's all about service. It's all about interacting with the public and interacting with students.

Two additional faculty members mentioned the importance of the right people to the success of the program. This focus was on both faculty and students and stressed the admission and hiring process to recruit these people. With a focus on students, the fourth faculty member stated, "We've got community here that you serve.....you've got to have the right people, and the right kind of communication here to make that work." With a focus on faculty, the fifth faculty member declared:

I think it's the people that are in your program. The people that you hire. Which puts a real onus on the search committees and the chairs and how they go about structuring interviews, and the people that they pull into interview, and I think that says a lot about whether you are going to have a successful program or not.

The responses of these three faculty members demonstrate their belief that the success of their program hinges on their student selection process, their faculty recruiting and hiring process, and their ability to prepare students for employment.

The final two faculty members focused on the library field itself in their responses. Particularly, they mentioned the interconnectivity and complexity of the field. The sixth faculty member stated:

I would say that it's got to be the interconnections of everything. That's the main thing. And I didn't put it here, but the roles of faculty are research, teaching, and service. I think if everything is working well these roles are dispersed throughout all of this. It's all connected. It's not as if you're doing research one day, teaching the next, and service the third. I see them... I see everything is interconnected.

The seventh (and final) faculty member reiterated the density of librarianship.

I think just that this is a complex field. Teaching it and learning it are fairly difficult. But there is that center place where you can make it happen. It's just, it's gonna involve everybody—teachers, students, professionals, anybody whose involved in that process—to have buy-in and really work how to get to that center place where everything intercepts.

Both of these faculty members see connections between roles, resources, concepts, and so forth within librarianship. The interconnections and complexity make librarianship a difficult yet rewarding profession.

Closing Remarks

At the close of the interview, the faculty were given one last opportunity for self-reflection, to seek clarification, to ask a question, or to make a statement. When asked if they had anything else to share on the topic of a quality library education, two faculty did not have answers while another mentioned the comprehensiveness of the interview itself (“I think that it was a fairly deltoid process.”) A fourth faculty member made a personal statement:

The only thing I would say kind of it would be hypocritical of me to say that I want my students to become lifelong learners if I myself I'm not a lifelong learner. So I would say that I also try to keep an open mind. So if you were to come back and do this interview

again a year or two from now, I would hope that I would draw something different as I continue to learn, and I see that as a positive not as a negative.

This statement reiterates the faculty member's commitment to lifelong learning, particularly since the statement does not excuse oneself from participating in continual development.

A fifth faculty member shared how different the curriculum is for the school library as compared to the other library types. ("We have a different Master's in that we must meet the School of Ed. requirements, and then we must meet the ALA requirements"). The extra requirements for school librarians make the faculty feel as if they "are pulled in a lot of different directions" because they have "a lot of additional responsibilities." This person felt that even the other faculty in the department are not aware of the "additional things, hoops to jump through" that are required for school librarianship. ("So, there is a little bit of a unique perspective from the school library, um, role that the department as a whole doesn't quite grasp.")

The final two faculty spoke about the concept of quality itself. One faculty member surmises that the next generation of students will equate quality with customer service:

I think if you were to ask a layman that they might have a whole different idea of what quality is. And, I think students might...I don't know... I think students may be that customer service... I think that's becoming bigger and bigger, so I think that's gonna factor into it, so if you're already good at it, you're gonna be ahead of the game, but I think that's the kind of students that you're gonna see. Expect way more customer service with the younger generations coming in.

The final faculty member asked a question of me. "Does quality depend on who is looking at it? Who's evaluating? And who are you asking?" I responded to this question in the following manner:

For my study, I am looking at faculty in one program. So, I think that a case could be made that when you switch the focus, you're probably dead on. So, who's being asked and who is asking become very important.....Who's the study or who's the question aimed toward? So, that's a good question. And, in this study, it's looking at faculty. Faculty in one program. And one library education program..... But there is certainly room for the answer to change depending on who is at the center of being questioned and also whose asking..... What does it mean? To whom? And my answer to that is LIS faculty in this program. That's whom I am asking. That's who I am talking about.

With this question and answer, we cycled back to the elusiveness of the concept of quality and how it can take on many forms and meanings depending on the person and the context.

In the final minutes of the interview, the faculty were asked two last questions. To the query if they felt that I did not understand something that they explained, the faculty all responded negatively. They did not feel that anything needed to be explained. When asked what they felt was the biggest takeaway of the interview, the responses included (1) wanting to learn more about some of the concepts discussed in the interview ("it's just wanting to know more about some of these things"); (2) examining their instructional goals ("it's actually helped me kind of focus on where, what I think, and what my personal educational goals are for the students, so that I can always look and go 'that's what I want to do,'" and "it's just another opportunity to re-examine what I do in the classroom and where that comes from and what the goals are"); (3) reaffirming already held beliefs ("this program really is about preparing students to be successful in whatever they choose to do.....that is pretty much the entire focus of the department, and I think in some ways that our discussion has clarified that for me"); (4) encouraging self-examination ("it's this perspective of quality that I have never focused on,

which is very intriguing and really soul-searching...its forced me to soul search and see what... I care about in what I provide and how I contribute”); (5) introducing a new line of inquiry (“it helped me think about a quality library education. We talk about it. Not necessarily as direct as you asked. We talk about education in general from a program perspective...But other than that, we take this one as granted”); and (6) focusing on me (“I want to read your dissertation.”)

During this closing portion of the interview, one faculty member shared a comment about the program’s learning outcomes. At the time of my visit, the outcomes had been reworked to reflect what the current faculty wanted students to glean from their time of study. The faculty member stated:

...one of the things that we said that would be throughout the individual program learning outcomes would be our orientation around social justice, social change issues. I didn't talk about that, but I see that as kind of, yeah, just something that's integral to the whole composition of education and librarianship.

During an earlier portion of this chapter, an individual faculty person expressed personal interest in social justice, with this being a long-term pursuit for this person. In the above quote, a different faculty member declared the entire program’s loyalty to this issue as evidenced in their program learning outcomes.

Throughout the study process, the faculty were asked many questions about a quality library education. Their answers varied from a couple of words, to a couple or sentences, to a couple of paragraphs. Without fail, their answers were erudite and thoughtful. Through their answers, the themes of the study arose: community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation. They identified only two components of quality as conceptualized by Harvey and colleagues, which are employability and transformation

(Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). The faculty never used the words “employability” or “transformation” although their answers and examples described these components of a quality education as conceptualized by Harvey and colleagues perfectly (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). A more detailed comparison of the conceptualization of quality as described by the faculty in the selected LIS program to the conceptualization of quality as described by Harvey and colleagues is included in Chapter 5 (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010).

Throughout the study, the faculty identified several broad themes that encapsulate their conceptualization of quality. These terms serve as an umbrella under which smaller themes or concepts are included. If describing quality in a single word (or two), the faculty maintained that quality is community, serving/service, positive learning, communication, care, and engagement. These single word descriptors match the study’s broader themes and the program’s learning outcomes (which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter). On a final note, one faculty member declared that “I think a sign that you’ve had a quality library education is 10 years after you get your degree you still remember who your professors are. And, you still remember what they taught you in class.” This statement summarized the faculty member’s views of the importance of course content and personal connections to this (or any other) LIS program.

Theories-in-Use

Professions are indispensable to contemporary society. It is difficult to imagine our modern world without the benefits of doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, and many other professions that keep us healthy, educate us, advocate for us, and so forth. As a cohesive group,

professions are provided the authority to regulate their practice, manage their membership, and require their affiliates to have customized skills or specialized knowledge (Schon, 1983). Within a profession, individual practitioners often rely on their prior experience and continued experimentation to decide on a course of action. Sometimes, intuition and determination overrule a need for technical expertise (Schon, 1983). Moreover, practitioners display their professional knowledge tacitly throughout their normal working day, making decision after decision without being able to describe the criteria for their actions, a condition that Schon (1983) characterizes as reflection-in-action. These conditions often make a profession difficult to study empirically.

Argyris and Schon (1992) contend that theories-of-action apply to all intentional human behavior. They can be used to examine or predict behavior. The authors believe that when theories-of-action are applied to human behavior that the context and consequences of this behavior should be considered as well, formulating theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1992). Theories-in-use constitute the *actual* behaviors (in context and with consequences) that an individual displays and not the espoused behavior that they *claim* to perform (which is espoused theory) (Argyris & Schon, 1992). Sometimes, an individual's theories-in-use and espoused theories do not match. That is, people do not do what they say they do.

Within the library field, there is contention whether librarianship is a profession or not. For the purposes of this study, librarianship is considered a profession. It meets Schon's (1983) description as a cohesive group that regulates their practice through higher education and professional development training, manages their membership through admission to graduate programs, and requires customized skills or specialized knowledge that is learned in the classroom as well as through experiential learning, practicums, and internships. Furthermore, librarianship has a nationally-recognized professional organization, ALA, that does all of this for

the field as well. Library practitioners utilize their prior experiences to determine the needs of their current situation, whether that is answering a reference question posed by a library user or cataloging a material that is unusual in nature. In these situations, the practitioners use their tacit knowledge to complete their tasks.

Moreover, the faculty in the LIS program seem to consider it a profession as well. During their interviews, the faculty used phrases such as “a big part of being part of a profession is...joining that community and culture;” “I also want my students to feel empowered and capable and be leaders and kind of change makers in the profession;” “the purpose really is to create professionals who understand the basic beliefs of the library profession;” “I think we as a profession are all about helping people to help themselves;” “I think we as a profession give people hope;” “you are socializing students into the profession;” and “if they don’t feel connected to your program, they may not necessarily feel connected to the profession either.” With these words, it is easy to see that the faculty prepare their students to enter the profession. Throughout the study, they conceptualized a quality library education with both the needs of their students and their profession in mind.

The study was divided into several distinct categories. After agreeing to participate, the faculty were asked to write a positive and negative description of an experience in the program that showed quality and lack of quality, respectively. During their scheduled interviews, the faculty discussed their written narratives and answered questions about them. Next, the faculty were asked a series of questions in in order to share their personal views and practices about a quality library education. Then, the faculty were provided art supplies so that they could create a visual depiction of the resources necessary to provide a quality library education for their students. Each section of the study expected the faculty to focus on quality and a library

education. Each section allowed the faculty to describe or discuss their thoughts, views, and practices on these two intersecting topics. During the scheduled interviews, the faculty were given opportunities for self-reflection where they could examine their own thoughts, views and practices on a quality library education.

Using Argyris and Schon's (1992) theories-in-use, a comparison of the LIS faculty's espoused and actual beliefs and practices as a cohesive unit will be generated. Throughout the multi-step study process, six study themes emerged to describe a quality library education: community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation. These themes constitute the first column in Table 4. Before my visit, the selected LIS program created seven program learning outcomes, which are in the middle column in the table. Where applicable, I have matched the study themes with the program learning outcomes, which means that the program outcomes are not in order. The program learning outcomes were selected as the program's espoused theories because they were approved before my visit and, therefore, cannot be a result of my visit. Also, the program learning outcomes are what the program claims to believe as a cohesive unit. The outcomes are matched to the study's themes based on my interpretation alone; therefore, other interpretations are possible. In the table, there are two learning outcomes each for community building and employability, but no learning outcomes for student engagement.

The final column in the table is evidence of the faculty's theories-in-use. Based on theory of practice, the evidence consists of actions or beliefs that were learned during the study at any point, whether from the written narratives, from the verbal answers to the interview questions, or from the visual depiction activity. These pieces have been gathered from the body of this chapter. Some listed items may have been discussed in greater (or lesser) detail than others in

Table 4

Comparison of LIS Faculty's Espoused Theory and Theories-in-Use

Study Themes	Espoused Theories (Program Learning Outcomes)	Theories-in-Use
Community Building	<p>Communicate and collaborate with colleagues and communities</p> <p>Assess and respond to the needs of diverse communities</p>	<p><u>Online environment</u>—allows students to choose own mode of communication; faculty use cameras during instruction; faculty provide video feedback for students</p> <p><u>Outside of classes</u>—encourages students to attend faculty meetings; program sponsors annual lecture series; student organization is active and involved</p> <p><u>Faculty</u>—focus of research; attend and present at national conferences</p> <p><u>Recruitment practices</u>—admits diverse student population</p> <p><u>Alumni engagement</u>—contacts alumni; hire graduates</p>
Student Engagement	(No comparable program outcome)	<p><u>Course assignments or activities</u>— readings and discussion board posts involve students in class</p> <p><u>Capstone project</u>—students pursue personal or intellectual interests</p> <p><u>Curriculum</u>—students can customize or personalize career pathways</p> <p><u>Collaborative learning</u>—group work, student organizations, experiential learning</p> <p><u>Community building</u>—experiential spring break</p> <p><u>Committee meetings</u>—students involved decision making for program</p>

Table 4 (continued)

Study Themes	Espoused Theories (Program Learning Outcomes)	Theories-in-Use
Service	Connect people to information and information technology, particularly to promote a just and equitable society	<u>Course assignments or activities</u> — faculty modeling, case study discussions, and persona assignment <u>Experiential learning</u> — practicums or internships <u>Community building</u> — diversity/inclusion awareness
Student Learning	Utilize instructional strategies and communication in both formal and informal interactions to increase information competence	<u>Instruction</u> — classroom discussion, feedback on assignments, virtual tours email and chat exchanges, revamping directions for assignments, revamping course syllabus <u>Course content/structure</u> — preparation, design (building modules, building redundancy), peer evaluation <u>Best practices</u> — connections between theory and practice, student research practices
Employability	Analyze problems and propose solutions through the application of evidence Advocate for public policies, laws, organizations, and resources that promote a just information society	<u>Course assignments or activities</u> — inviting guest lecturers, conducting interviews practitioners, writing mock grant proposals <u>Advising</u> — creating career pathways, customizing the curriculum, guided feedback on their application materials <u>Interacting with professional librarians</u> — practicums, internships, other experiential learning opportunities

Table 4 (continued)

Study Themes	Espoused Theories (Program Learning Outcomes)	Theories-in-Use
Transformation	Embrace change to lead organizational innovation	<u>Socialization of students</u> —instill a sense of awareness/social justice, utilize the admission process to select students who are a good fit for the program and the field <u>Professional competency</u> —teach professional beliefs, practices, and critical thinking skills

Note. Adapted from the LIS program.

this chapter. Regardless, the items are of equal weight as proof of action or belief as their description may have been summarized from a more in-depth passage. An action was used as evidence of a theory-in-use for most study themes; however, transformation is subjective to the person observing or witnessing the event. Since transformation is an internal process, the faculty's beliefs about students' learning and displaying the professional competencies and social norms are used in the table in the theories-of-use column.

The point of this exercise was to determine if the program's espoused theories are congruent with the study's themes and the faculty's theories-in-use. The program learning outcomes, as stated, were used as the faculty's espoused theories. The espoused theories (or program learning outcomes) align with the study's themes except for student engagement. The espoused theories (or program learning outcomes) do not have a statement that explicitly matches the faculty's commitment to student engagement. While student engagement might be implied in the espoused theories (or program learning outcomes), it is not decidedly stated. The words "student engagement" are not used nor is there a description from which this theme could be inferred. The faculty provided evidence of their practice of student engagement, which is listed in the third column of the table, even if they did not include a statement in their espoused theories (or program learning outcomes) to corroborate it. For the other study themes of community building, service, student learning, employability, and transformation, there are corresponding espoused theories (or program learning outcomes) and practices or beliefs (or theories-in-use). Therefore, it can be concluded that the faculty's *actual* practices and beliefs (or theories-in-use) affirm the study's themes and their claimed espoused theories. Thus, there is (mostly) consistency in the faculty's practices and beliefs.

Review of Faculty's Perception of Program

At this point, a relatively clear picture of the LIS faculty's perception of their program has emerged. As discussed throughout this dissertation, the faculty were asked to produce a visual depiction during the interview. They were supplied paper, markers, and colored pencils to complete this request. They were given a simple set of directions in which they could interpret as they saw fit. Following my own initiative, I have produced a visual depiction of the faculty's perception of their program, particularly in relation to producing a quality library education for their students.

As Figure 1 shows, the students are at the center of the program. The faculty reiterated this belief time and time again throughout the study. Their focus on the student is holistic; it begins at recruitment, extends through the design and delivery of the curriculum, and carries through post-graduation to maintaining alumni engagement. In the second circle, the purpose of the curriculum is to balance theory, practice, and experiential learning. The faculty used their individual classes to introduce students to these components, and they have created opportunities outside of a classroom setting for them to practice them as well. The third circle contains the function of their program, which centers on the study's themes of building a community of learners, engaging their students in the learning process, instilling a sense of service to library users, addressing their students' learning needs, preparing their students for employment, and transforming their students into librarians. The final circle represents the career pathways that are built into the program and which the faculty try to help their student navigate. The faculty were insistent that the curriculum is customizable to fit the needs of their students. In turn, the students are able to take this customization feature to prepare for work in a certain library type or for a certain library position or within a certain area.

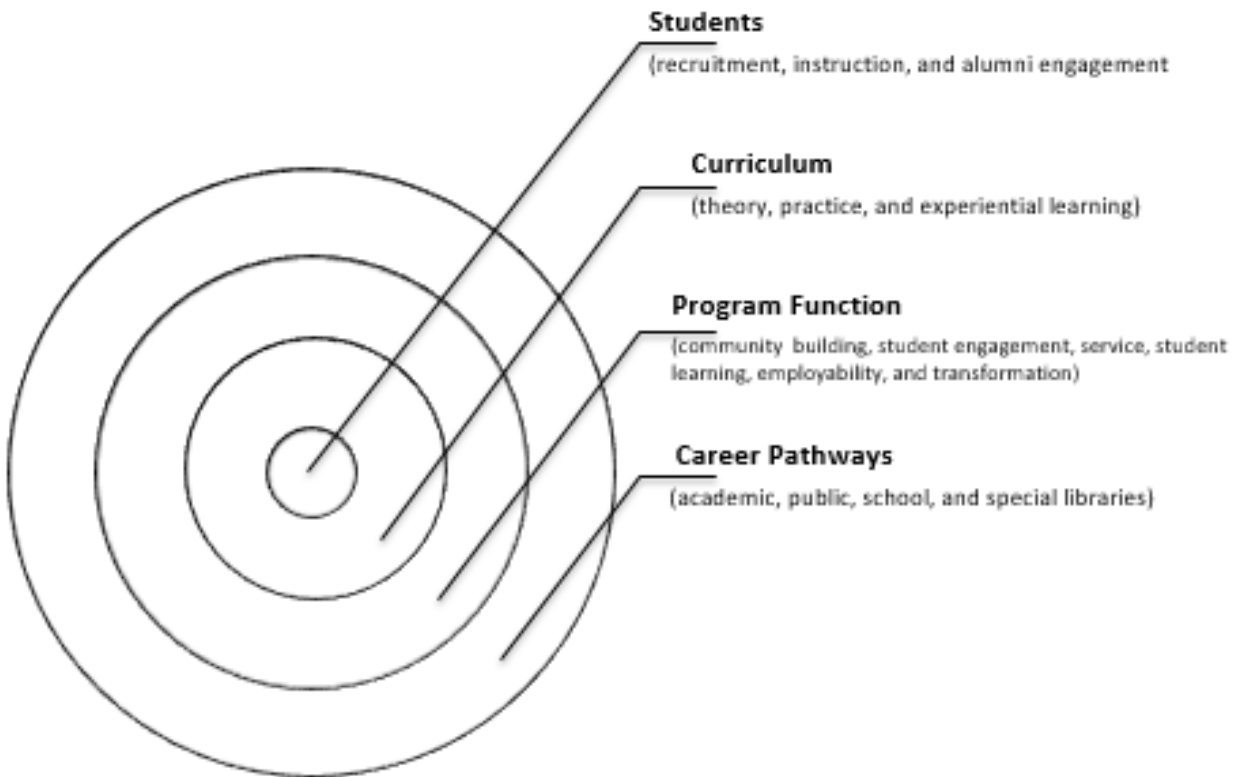


Figure 1. Visual depiction of the LIS faculty's perception of quality library education.

Throughout its history as a profession, many have questioned what needs to be taught and how it needs to be taught in a library program. Asheim (1955) framed it this way: “The question is: What really is the content of librarianship?” (p. 89). While there are no responses that may supply the answer to this question definitively for all time, the continual need for reflection on the question is necessary to meet the needs of the changing profession. For the faculty in the selected LIS program, at this time in their history, the contents of librarianship are contained in their answers that produced my visual depiction.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings from a study that analyzed the conceptualization of quality of the faculty in a LIS program in the Southeastern United States. Through a variety of data collection methods (written, verbal, and artistic), a description of the faculty’s conceptualization of a quality library education emerged. The faculty in this program conceptualize quality as community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation. The faculty identified only two components of a quality education as conceptualized by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). Using their program learning outcomes as their espoused theories, it was shown that the faculty’s theories-in-use were congruent with their espoused theories with one exception. The faculty showed a strong commitment to student engagement which was not a part of their program learning outcomes, which as stated were used as their espoused theories in this study. In the next chapter, the study’s findings are discussed, implications are drawn, and suggestions for future research are given.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Within the library field often there is disagreement about the role of library education, particularly between library educators and library practitioners, particularly about the balance of theory and practice within the curriculum. This conflict leads to questioning what constitutes a quality library education and who determines the curriculum that provides this education. Outside agencies, such as ALA, are thought to have increasing effects on library education, especially since accreditation by this organization is important for LIS programs to achieve and maintain. Without accreditation, a program loses its competitiveness to recruit and retain its students, which could impact its sustainability, and students lose their competitiveness for jobs, which could impact their future employability and earnings.

In order to comply with the ALA accreditation process, library programs must construct program learning outcomes based on their interpretations of the accreditation standards established by ALA. The program learning outcomes are qualitative in nature and can vary by program. In fact, LIS programs can use their program learning outcomes to claim a unique niche in the library field, setting themselves apart from other programs. It is important to note that a well-crafted set of program learning outcomes (or a successful accreditation result) does not signify that students have earned a quality education. In fact, as is demonstrated in Chapter 2, many researchers have traced what constitutes a core set of library courses (Hall, 2009; Irwin, 2002; Marco, 1994; Markey, 2004). However, these studies do not address the issue of quality (does a core set of library courses guarantee a quality library education?) or whether the program learning outcomes as required by ALA for accreditation produce this quality (do program learning outcomes guarantee a quality library education?). Likewise, these studies do not focus

on LIS faculty; therefore, there is a scarcity of empirical research that explores the beliefs and practices of those individuals who design and deliver the curriculum that prepares librarians. This study has addressed this gap in the literature. This chapter contains an overview of the study; a summary of its findings; recommendations for practice and research; and implications, limitations, and conclusions of the study.

Study Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the faculty in one LIS program located in the Southeastern United States described a quality library education. Quality is an elusive term whose definition is determined by subjective means, such as context or past experience. ALA, for example, defines the concept as “the effective utilization of resources to achieve appropriate educational objectives and student learning outcomes” (American Library Association, 2008, p. 3). While this outside accrediting agency has given their definition, how do LIS faculty define the same concept? Aiming to address this question, the present study formulated one research question:

How do faculty in a Library and Information Studies (LIS) program in the United States conceptualize a quality library education?

One LIS program was selected to recruit instructors who teach courses across the entire library curriculum, both core and elective. This approach allowed an overview of the curriculum as a student within the program would have encountered it, rather than looking at one course (such as cataloging) across many LIS programs or a random assortment courses (such as cataloging, reference, school library) with little connection to each other. Out of a program with 10 full-time faculty, seven participated in the study. These seven faculty not only taught courses across the curriculum (both core and electives) but they had experience across library types

(academic, public, school, and special) and represented a wide range of library educator experiences (newly hired to retirement eligibility).

The present study explored the intersection of quality and library education. It employed a conceptual framework designed to describe the relationship between these two constructs. As such, the study builds on the work of two sets of researchers, Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) and Argyris and Schon (1992). Focusing on higher education, Harvey and colleagues conceptualized quality as exceptionalism, perfectionism (or consistency), fitness-for purpose, value-for-money, transformation, compliance, political or symbolic, employability, and accountability (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). Argyris and Schon (1992) suggest that actions are guided by the theories that people develop to explain, predict, or control their environment, whether internal or external, and characterize them as theories-in-use. The authors propose that theories-in-use can be applied to the work of professionals, particularly since their work is based on tacit knowledge, previous encounters, or basic suppositions. By examining a group of professionals' theories-in-use (the beliefs and practices they *actually* demonstrate) against their espoused theories (the beliefs and practices they *claim* to possess), a subjective, yet realistic, depiction of this group will emerge.

The study utilized a phenomenological approach for its methodology. The data was collected in three main ways: (1) a written narrative describing a positive and negative experience with quality or a lack of quality that was observed in the LIS program; (2) interview questions with a focus on quality library education that required self-reflection from the faculty; and (3) a visual depiction in which the faculty were asked to produce a piece of art that showed the resources, tools, and so forth needed for a quality library education.. The study relied on the

lifeworld approach as conceptualized by Dahlberg et al. (2008) to analyze the collected data, incorporating the author's whole-part-whole approach to analysis. This three part approach looks at the whole for meaning, breaks the whole into the smaller parts of codes or categories, and then reassembles the smaller parts into broader themes to create a new, whole description of the concept. This practice resulted in the illumination of their actual beliefs and practices of the faculty in the selected LIS program, which was used to describe their conceptualization of quality and to compare these actual beliefs and practices with what they claimed to be their beliefs and practices.

Summary of Findings

The concept of quality is difficult to describe, define, or explain. In many instances, it is determined by an "I will know it when I see it" attitude, making it highly subjective to the individual observer and/or restrictively bound by the specific context. Trying to determine what constitutes quality in education, Harvey and colleagues identified nine components from their studies (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). These components are listed and explained in Table 5. Using the work of these authors as part of the conceptual framework for this study, faculty in a LIS program were asked to conceptualize their description of a quality education, particularly a quality library education. The faculty in this study identified six components of a quality library education, which became the study's themes. The themes are quality as community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation. They are listed and explained in Table 6. As the tables show, the LIS faculty identified only two of Harvey and colleague's (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) nine components of a quality education: employability and transformation. For the LIS faculty, employability is

Table 5

Quality in Education (Harvey)

Themes	Conceptualization
Exceptionalism	Displaying exclusivity, specialness, distinctiveness, or excellence
Perfectionism	Lacking flaws or defects
Fitness-for-Purpose	Meeting the purpose for which it was designed
Value-for-Money	Intertwining value with cost
Transformation	Enacting change physically, emotionally, spiritually, developmentally, or socially
Compliance	Achieving accreditation benchmarks or standards
Political or Symbolic	Shifting focus from academics to compliance (political) or appearing to be compliant (symbolic)
Employability	Graduating students who find jobs
Accountability	Proving self-worth through internal assessments

Note. Harvey and Colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010).

Table 6

Quality in Library Education (LIS Faculty)

Themes	Conceptualization
Community Building	Activities or events that encourage student involvement with other students, the faculty, and the program itself both in and out of a formal learning environment
Student Engagement	Assignments or activities that stimulate the curiosity or personal interest of students, promote collaborative learning experiences, and/or develop a supportive learning environment
Service	Skills, ability, or knowledge that are utilized to provide assistance to library users and/or to help the people in the accompanying community
Student Learning	Planning, instruction, and feedback that delivers both theory and practice. Course content and structure that are reviewed for clarity and improvements.
Employability	Employment that results after graduation. Professional competencies or skills that obtain and keep employment. Preparation that is necessary to perform job skills on the first day. Belief that learning is lifelong. (Graduating students who find jobs).
Transformation	Activities, events, or interactions that socialize students into the profession and that impart professional beliefs and practices. (Enacting change physically, emotionally, spiritually, developmentally, or socially).

Note. LIS faculty (results of present study).

about (1) preparing their graduates for work in the library field (2) from the first day of hire (3) with the professional skills to remain employed and with (4) an intellectual curiosity to remain lifelong learners. Transformation centers on the personal and professional growth needed to become a librarian in thought, action, beliefs, and principles. The faculty identified four themes that are unique to them and their program. Of these four themes, two are student-centric (student engagement and student learning) while the other two are community or library user-centric (community building and service). If one looks at all six themes, four are student-centric (student engagement, student learning, employability, and transformation) while the other two remain community/library user-centric (community building and service). Throughout the course of the study, the faculty proclaimed that they were both student- and library-centric. The study's themes support these claims.

While the faculty did not agree with all of Harvey and colleague's (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) components of a quality education, they showed a negative association with three of them. During the recruitment phase of the study, a LIS faculty member declined participation in the study because the word quality triggered an association of quality as accountability, in which the faculty person could not subscribe. Also, within the study, quality as value-for-money and quality as fitness-for-purpose were negatively attributed to students' attitudes about a quality library education. Again, the faculty could not concur with this viewpoint as quality.

Like its counterparts in other disciplines, LIS programs throughout the country require their students to take a combination of core and elective courses in order to graduate with a Master's degree in librarianship. Building on the earlier work of Markey (2004), Hall's (2009) research determined that a typical LIS program designated six main courses as core to the field:

foundations of the field, organization of information sources, reference services and sources, library management, information technology, and research methods and evaluation. For students, core courses are important because they provide a common introduction to the principles and practices of the profession, and students will need these competencies and skills in any job they take in a library or related position. Once the core courses have been taken, in most LIS programs, a student takes elective course to specialize in a career track (academic, public, school, or special library) or position (such as reference or cataloging) or area (such as technology).

How does the selected LIS program's curriculum compare to Hall's (2009) findings? The LIS program requires students to take foundations, cataloging, reference, library management, and a capstone course as core courses. The program labels the research methods course as an elective and the capstone (or portfolio) course as a core requirement in this study. In addition, the program requires students to take a technology course as an elective. These three courses (research methods, capstone, and technology) are the main difference between the selected LIS program in this study and a typical LIS program in Hall's (2009) study.

The selected LIS program requires students to take 36 credit hours to graduate. The core courses constitute 13 hours, with all courses being three credit hours except for the capstone course, which is one credit hour. These 13 credit hours represent 36% of the total credit hours that students are required to take for graduation. If the required elective (technology) is factored in at three credit hours, the results are 16 credit hours, which would now be 44% of the total credit hours. This scenario leaves students 64% (without the technology course) or 56% (with the technology course) of their remaining credit hours to take in electives, respectively. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, the students could then use these remaining credit hours to create a career track, specialize in a service function, or prepare for another specified position.

For the purposes of this study, librarianship is a profession. The faculty in the study considered it a profession, and it meets the description of a profession as conceptualized by Schon (1983). Schon (1983) posited that a profession is defined by their ability to regulate or manage their work, membership, and specialized skills, with seasoned practitioners relying on their tacit knowledge or gut instinct in daily or unknown circumstances, respectively. Schon (1983) labels this behavioral or thought pattern as reflection-in-action, and its existence can make a profession hard to analyze in an empirical study. Argyris and Schon (1992) assert that human behavior is governed by theories in action which can be used to examine or predict the behavior. Grounded in the context and consequences of the behavior, theories-in-use are the *actual* behaviors that a person exhibits while espoused theories are the behaviors that this person *believes* that he or she exhibits (Argyris & Schon, 1992). At times, the theories-in-use and espoused theories can be incongruent.

Throughout the study, the faculty were asked to conceptualize a quality library education; they often focused on both the needs of their students and their chosen profession. The study generated six themes: community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation. The faculty created seven program learning outcomes before my planned visit. As these were generated before the study and were a collective effort by the faculty, the program learning outcomes were used as the faculty's espoused theories. The LIS faculty's espoused theories (what they claim to believe and practice) was compared to their theories-in-use (what they actually believe and practice).

In Chapter 4, I mapped the study themes to the program learning outcomes, producing a table (see Table 4) which shows how the study's six themes correlate with the program's seven learning outcomes. However, the themes of community building and employability have two

learning outcomes a piece while there are no learning outcomes for student engagement. In addition, on this same table, I mapped the practices and beliefs that the faculty shared during the entire interview process, which are their theories-in use. The practices include activities, assignment, events, and so forth that the faculty wrote, discussed, or drew; they were discussed throughout Chapter 4 and are of equal weight regardless of how in-depth (or not) they were discussed within the chapter. Transformation, as an internal process, is subjective to the person or event. Therefore, the faculty's beliefs were used as evidence of support for this theme. The selected LIS program's espoused theories (or program learning outcomes) support the study's themes except for student engagement. The faculty's theories-in-use support both the study's themes and the espoused theories. Therefore, the *actual* practices and beliefs of the faculty align with their *claimed* espoused theories and the study's themes in all but one area, student engagement, making their theories-in-use and espoused theories mostly congruent.

Recommendations of the Study

This phenomenological study used the subjective practices, beliefs, and experiences of faculty in a selected LIS program to explore how the two constructs of quality and library education intersect. The two-part conceptual framework used in the study relied on the work of Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) to describe the relationship between quality and library education as conceptualized by the faculty in the selected library program and Argyris and Schon (1992) to compare whether their professed views and practices (espoused theories) matched their actual views and practices (theories-in-use).

Recommendations for Practice

A primary focus of library education is to prepare professionals to work in the nation's libraries, regardless of the library type. The skills and proficiencies learned in library school should be transportable from situation to situation, from library to library. To meet this requirement, students often take core courses in foundations, cataloging (organization of information sources), reference, library management, information technology, and research methods as the core curriculum (Hall, 2009). The selected program deems the following as core courses: foundations, cataloging, reference, library management, and capstone.

For the selected LIS program, the research methods class is not a core course required for all students. Instead, it is an elective. The findings from this study show that research in the field of library science is important to the faculty. The faculty promoted the importance of their research and the research of library practitioners to community building. Yet, how are students to conduct research if they are not introduced to the methodology? This practice leaves research to those with doctorates, who are primarily library educators. In order for practitioners, whose terminal degree is a master's degree, to contribute to library research, they should take a class that introduces the concept to them. Thus, in order to address this issue, the research class should be required in the program's core courses.

A practicum is not a requirement for the LIS program except for school librarianship. During the study, a faculty member discussed the importance of the practicum for students in this career track, lamenting that a mentor match was missing from this experience. While the student may (or may not) have a supervisor at the practicum site, he or she does not gain a mentor, or someone to guide them professionally by answering questions, sharing knowledge, modeling expected behavior, and so forth. Again, with the importance of experiential learning to the

faculty, its impact on student learning, and the creation of a supervised environment for students to apply theory learned in the classroom in a real world practice, the lack of a required practicums for the rest of the LIS students seems a second glaring error. Technology is a required elective. Perhaps, a practicum should be a second required elective.

For the purposes of this study, quality within higher education was based on the conceptualization by Harvey and colleagues of exceptionalism, perfectionism, fitness-for-purpose, value-for-money, transformation, compliance, political or symbolic, employability, or accountability (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). As discussed, the faculty in the selected LIS program identified only two of their nine components as characterizing a quality library education. It is easy to see why they identified employability and transformation. Employability pertains to graduates getting a job after graduation. As a program that prepares students to be practitioners somewhere in the field of library science, the faculty see employability as a foundational purpose of a quality library education. In fact, if their students are not employable, have the faculty done *their* jobs? For the faculty, transformation centers on socializing students into the profession, bringing them into the fold so to speak. Upon graduation, the students should walk, talk, think, and act like librarians.

The faculty never mentioned quality as exceptionalism, perfectionism, compliance, or political or symbolic while they referred to fitness-for-purpose, value-for-money, and accountability in a negative light. The faculty identified four unique components of a quality library education: community building, student engagement, service, and student learning. These components were important to them at the point in time that the study took place. They reflect both their program learning outcomes (all components except student learning), their commitment to the profession (service and community building), and their jobs as faculty

(student engagement and student learning). Thus, the fact that the study's participants are faculty in a field with long established standards, principles, and belief statements may have contributed to the study's unique findings, accounting for the differences from Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). Further research is needed to determine if the results from the selected LIS program are typical of other LIS programs (or not).

As the study pointed out, the faculty's espoused theories were almost a complete match to their theories-in-use and the study's themes. Because they were created before the study took place and because they were a collaborative effort by the faculty to record their collective beliefs about the purpose of their program, the study used the program's learning outcomes as their espoused theories. Because they were written down, discussed verbally, or drawn on paper throughout the course of the study, the practices and beliefs of the faculty were gathered from throughout this dissertation to represent their theories-in-use. The espoused theories, theories-in-use and study themes are a match except for student engagement, which does not appear in the espoused theories (or program learning outcomes). The espoused theories (or program learning outcomes) do not use the words "student engagement" or provide a description that depicts student engagement, although it might be assumed that students would be engaged in the learning that they describe. For a program with such a student-centric focus and with such a large faculty commitment to this subject, this exclusion represents the third glaring oversight of the study. With their strong convictions about student engagement, perhaps a statement should be added to their program learning outcomes so that their espoused theories will reflect this viewpoint as well.

The selected LIS program delivers its classes in a synchronous online environment. Throughout the entire interview process, whether written within the narratives, spoken within the interviews, or drawn within the visual depictions, the faculty disclosed their challenges with technology, struggles to build community, and efforts to ensure student engagement. As the faculty themselves shared, this learning environment is not going away any time soon. As more working or distance education students wish to earn college degrees (whether graduate or undergraduate), it will not be surprising to see this mode of instruction increase in popularity. Thus, in a fourth recommendation, it is imperative for the faculty to participate in ongoing professional development opportunities in technology for continual self-improvement.

Along these same lines, at several points in the study, various faculty admitted that thinking about quality in library education was either a novel idea or something that was taken for granted. Although many faculty encouraged or required their students to reflect upon their own beliefs and practices as part of classroom assignments, the faculty may not engage in this activity routinely or systematically themselves, at least not as deeply as the study required. Thus, the study's final recommendation is to encourage the faculty to continue their reflections about a quality library education, particularly thinking about the structure of their curriculum, the substance of their instruction, and the importance of their interactions with students. During the course of the study, it is important to note that not one faculty member mentioned themselves as an imperative component of a quality library education. Perhaps, more self-reflection about this concept about their role or function in this concept is needed.

Recommendations for Research

The recommendations for future research center on filling in the gaps in the existing literature, particularly addressing the scarcity of research on LIS faculty in general, on LIS

faculty's perception of their curriculum, on LIS programs and quality, and on other graduate programs and quality. Within the field of library science, the holders of doctoral degrees are more likely to be the field's scholars while the holders of master's degrees are more likely to be the field's practitioners. This is not an absolute statement since some library practitioners do publish. As the holders of doctoral degrees, library educators have conducted research on students, practitioners, library services, library resources, technology, and a plethora of other topics. In the past, they have rarely, if ever, turned their research focus on themselves. This study adds this missing piece to library science literature. There needs to be more research on the faculty who teach in LIS programs in general.

Many studies trace the evolution of the library curriculum, particularly the required core courses or the changing offerings of elective courses. However, there is a dearth of research that asks faculty to reflect on the curriculum, gathering their thoughts and opinions. Moreover, there is a dearth of research that focuses specifically on the faculty's perceptions of quality in library education generally and what constitutes a quality library education specifically. Thus, more qualitative studies are needed to gather the faculty's perceptions and possibly lived experiences in relation to the library curriculum.

This study focused on one LIS program in one region of the country. While it offers an understanding of the lived experiences of the faculty in this one program, in this one location, it does not describe these experiences for all faculty in other programs in other locations. The perceptions of the faculty in the selected program may not mirror their counterparts in other programs. Therefore, the study could be conducted in other programs, and the results could be compared against each other. For example, the study could be conducted with larger and smaller programs, at programs in public or private institutions, and in programs located in different

regions of the United States. The results from each of these populations or groupings could be compared for greater insight into LIS programs.

Are the results of this study unique to LIS programs? Would other graduate programs produce similar or vastly different results? The study could be conducted within programs as diverse as English, psychology, and mathematics for a comparison. Within this realm, the study could be conducted with the faculty from other graduate programs that graduate practitioners, such as law and medicine. Again, would the results be the same or different with these different populations? Would adding in the aspect of preparing practitioners make any difference at all? The study could be replicated for comparison of other graduate programs and with other graduate programs that graduate professionals.

As the preceding paragraphs illustrate, the present study lends itself well to duplication. It could be used to gain a deeper understanding of LIS faculty and LIS programs as well as a deeper understanding of other graduate level programs. It could be used to compare faculty and programs across many pairings or categories.

Implications of the Study

The present study has implications methodologically, theoretically, and practically. My study helps to advance research methodology because it utilized a phenomenological approach to study an under-studied group; thus, it was a novel approach. Moreover, the use of phenomenological methodology was successful in describing and interpreting the faculty's conceptualization of quality. In fact, I found this research method to be a natural fit for this study.

The lifeworld approach is disciplined and logical in its methods of data collection and data analysis. It provided a way to address any presuppositions that I might have had so that I

could get out of the way of the research. Using the lifeworld approach helped me to acknowledge that I was part of the world that was being studied; yet, it required me to create distance between the study and myself. This process allowed me to be open and receptive during data collection and analysis, which allowed the study's themes to unfold at their own pace and in their own way. Furthermore, the self-awareness and self-reflection inherent in the lifeworld approach guided me when I was gathering, describing, and interpreting the beliefs, practices, and experiences of the faculty. Thus, a phenomenological approach was beneficial in eliciting the lived experiences of the faculty, and it allowed these experiences to be recorded in the faculty's own words.

Finally, the data collection method included a written response before the interview, semi-structured yet open-ended questions during the interview, and a visual depiction created during the interview. These three modes of information gathering allowed the study to utilize different strengths of the study's participants, incorporating written, verbal, and visual communication. They asked the faculty to reflect in different ways to the same question, which broadened the faculty's self-reflection. It is important to note that while qualitative research does not necessary need triangulation to prove the strengths of its results, the study created a triangulation method where the faculty's answers to each information gathering mode could be compared and contrasted against each other. Each faculty member's answers stayed consistent throughout the study. In a couple of cases, the faculty reported that the visual depiction exercise forced them to remember something that had been forgotten. Most of the faculty felt like their artwork reinforced their answers. Another faculty member complimented the use of artwork to gather information.

The present study has theoretical implications because it added to the research literature in three main areas: library faculty, library education, and library program learning outcomes.

The study explored the subjective perceptions of the faculty in a single LIS program. LIS faculty usually are the group who are the researchers and not the group who are the ones studied in the library field. This study asked the professionals, who structure and teach the curriculum, to discuss what makes the curriculum effective; that is, what makes the curriculum a quality curriculum.

ALA accreditation has been the standard against which a quality library education has been measured. In the past, if a program had accreditation, it often was assumed that the teaching and learning within the program was of a high standard. Yet, conversely, there, also, is contention among library educators and library practitioners that a library education does not always prepare graduates for the real work of libraries. This study asked the library educators in the selected program to share their views on a quality library education. ALA accreditation was never mentioned as a standard to achieve even though the program is accredited. In addition, any focus on a library education has followed the evolution of the core courses within the field. This study veered from this trajectory. It had no intention of tracing the core throughout time. Instead, it asked the professional educators to conceptualize what a quality education looks like. The faculty went well beyond listing the core courses in their answers, thinking for the most part of a library education as a holistic process that prepares the student for the library field in skills but also socializes students into the profession's beliefs, principle, and ethics.

ALA accreditation is predicated on the establishment of program learning outcomes. This study allowed faculty to focus on what constitutes a quality library education without being tied to accreditation or learning outcomes. The faculty could have chosen to answer in this manner; that is, they could have chosen to talk about how the program outcomes create an effective program or library curriculum. However, given the opportunity to answer any way in which they

liked, the faculty did not posit that learning outcomes make a quality library education. They referred to having outcomes or matching the program's outcomes. However, they did not begin with the program outcomes. The mention of program learning outcomes came up in the verbal questions when directly asked or when a natural connection could be made to them. Therefore, the faculty in this program appeared not to link program learning outcomes with a quality library education.

For its conceptual framework, the study used the work of Harvey and colleagues in order to create a conceptualization of quality (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010). As discussed, the findings in this study were not consistent with the nine components of quality that the authors identified. This scenario may be the result of this study focusing on only faculty, only faculty in one program, or faculty in a program that graduates practitioners in a specific field. Additional research is needed to study the results of this conceptualization of quality against different populations within higher education. For the second part of its conceptual framework, the study used the work of Argyris and Schon (1992) to compare the faculty's actual beliefs and practices to their claimed beliefs and practices. The study found that library science is a profession and that the faculty in the selected program are consistent (mostly) with their actual and claimed practices and beliefs. This framework could be used in academia in other higher education programs and/or outside of academia to examine the beliefs and practices of other professions. This study adds to the literature of those researchers empirically studying those individuals in a profession.

The present study has practical implications. The primary audience of the study would be LIS faculty. Although great efforts were undertaken to conceal the identity of the chosen program, this program knows that they were the focus of the study. The faculty could read the

chapters on the study's findings and conclusions, and discuss these chapters in a staff meeting, use the information in them to review their own program, and make improvements and changes as they see fit. This process could make the program even stronger. The study could be conducted at other LIS programs throughout the country, and these programs could review their own findings and make changes to their program as well. If the study cannot be conducted, the other LIS program could benefit from reading the results and findings and comparing their own beliefs and practices to their program learning outcomes. Finally, whether they take action or not, the study provides LIS faculty a means to think of quality without it being dependent on accreditation, accountability, or compliance. This action might impact their views on ALA accreditation and what it means to their program.

The suggestions from the previous paragraph could be extended to other programs who may want to participate in a self-review process, particularly it might benefit other graduate level programs who prepare students for professional practice. Reflecting on their views of a quality education might impact the way that the programs (LIS or otherwise) recruit and retain their students and the steps that they take to maintain or improve their reputation as a program.

The results of the study could be used outside of academic programs. At colleges and universities, administrators could read the study and learn more about the purpose or function of LIS programs and the commitment of LIS faculty to this function or purpose. This information might help them to make better informed decisions about the staffing and funding of these programs. Students, whether current or future, might use the study to make decisions about their education. Besides an introduction to the purpose of the core course, they could understand what the end result of their education should look like; that is, they could glimpse what the total library education hopes to accomplish. Also, they would have the opportunity to form an opinion

on the importance (or not) of an ALA accreditation on their education. The choice of library schools could impact their degree, which could impact future learning potential. Beyond the local level, ALA might could use the results of the study to inform themselves what LIS faculty consider most important about library education and review their accreditation standards in this light. At the federal level the accreditation process should always be reviewed for effectiveness for any improvements or innovations that could improve the process. These decisions affect higher education locally via tuition dollars if the institution's or program's accreditation is maintained, suspended, or revoked.

Limitations of the Study

This phenomenological study was conducted at one LIS program located in the Southeastern United States. The aim of the study was to collect the perceptions of the faculty in this one program. The study presents a collective overview of how the faculty conceptualize a quality library education in relation to their curriculum. While the study's findings are true to the beliefs, practices, and experiences of the faculty in the selected program, faculty teaching in other LIS programs throughout the country may not have similar perceptions; that is, they may not identify the same six study themes as the faculty in the selected LIS program did. This discrepancy could result from a differing interpretation of the ALA accreditation standards, which would produce a unique set of program learning outcomes, or it could result from the personal or professional convictions of the faculty in those programs, which might not equal the faculty in the selected program.

As for the selected program, their views were consistent with each other. This scenario could be the result of working on their program learning outcomes for their upcoming ALA accreditation visit or the result of the hiring and recruiting practices in which the program

participates in order to select faculty for their views and practices that match the program. The selected program did hire two of its former students, and these two faculty participated in this study. Throughout the lengthy interview process, the faculty were asked for clarification to their answers in numerous places, and they were asked in the study's closing questions if they had anything on the subject to add or if they thought something was not clear to me. This informal member checking allowed for meaning and clarity to be addressed at the point of need. This practice helped to ensure that the faculty's views were accurately captured and interpreted.

From the beginning, the present study was centered on gathering the subjective, lived experiences of LIS faculty as to what constitutes a quality library education. It did not assume that compliance with the ALA accreditation standards would produce this quality education. However, in Chapter 1, it was noted that an ALA accredited Master's degree was a more prestigious degree for students to earn and hold as it increased employment opportunities and earnings for students. During the entire course of the study, the faculty in the selected program did not reference the accreditation standards from ALA. They did mention their program learning outcomes when it related to the question or when they were directly asked about the goals and objectives of the program.

As I noted throughout this dissertation, I am a library practitioner. I hold an ALA accredited Master's degree. I have worked in libraries for my entire professional career. Currently, I have an administrative position within a small academic college. As a library program graduate, I have first-hand knowledge of how the LIS prepares a graduate (or not) for actual library work. I have worked many positions within a library, from entry-level to managerial. I understand what skills are necessary for an employee to possess on the first day of hire.

Therefore, using the lifeworld approach methodology, I had to practice a self-reflection activity before beginning the study. I knew that I was close to the subject matter as a library program graduate and a library practitioner; I am part of the world in which the study takes place. So, my self-reflection allowed me to create distance from the study simultaneously as I acknowledged my own connection to it. Dahlberg et al. (2008) call this practice openness. Within this openness, I was able to bridle my presuppositions, which is a practice that is different from bracketing as proposed by Husserl. Bridling looks forward while bracketing looks backward. The process of looking forward allowed me to step back in order to let the study unfold organically on its own.

Conclusions

Earlier in this chapter, I proposed two questions for thought. Does a core set of library courses guarantee a quality library education? Do program learning outcomes guarantee a quality library education? Certainly, arguments can be made on both sides of these questions, with pro arguments showing that they can (or do) and negative arguments showing that they cannot (or do not). The debate might be endless with no clear answer. While there may not be a universal, unequivocal answer to these questions, they do invite reflection. And, reflection has been an important part of this phenomenological study.

Reflection is built into the methodology, which relied on the lifeworld approach as conceptualized by Dahlberg et al. (2008). This approach to phenomenology believes that the experiences of an individual's life are contained within their lifeworld. The lifeworld functions as a bridge between the person and their experiences, whether they are internal or external to the person. The lifeworld helps to bring meaning and understanding to these experiences for the person; as such, consciousness is channeled through it. This consciousness creates mutual

relationships between people, particularly through conversation, culture, and history (Findlay, 2012). The lifeworld approach is concerned with the everyday world of everyday people, wanting to find meaning and then to describe or interpret this meaning, creating a broad understanding, or uncovering a new understanding, of the phenomenon being examined. The lifeworld approach builds on the work of the earlier philosophers Husserl (1931/2012), Heidegger (1927/1962), and Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012). Husserl (1931/2012) postulated descriptive phenomenology while Heidegger (1927/1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) advanced interpretive phenomenology.

As fashioned by Husserl (1931/2012), descriptive phenomenology uses reflection to understand in as much totality as possible the individualistic nature or characteristics of a phenomenon. Concerned with ideals and not facts, descriptive phenomenology strives to discover the essence of an object, an idea, or a conceptual construct in a natural and holistic manner. In descriptive phenomenology, when an essence is revealed, the result is a dawning consciousness that is similar to a sensory perception; that is, the senses are invoked through sight, sound, touch, taste, and so forth. For this philosophical methodology, meaning is arrived at through the examination of experience, and since everyone's experience is different, each person brings a different consciousness to the examination of the object, idea, or conceptual construct, which adds to the overall perception of the phenomenon.

With his focus on the concept of being, Heidegger (1927/1962) wants to unearth what it means to be a human, an animal, or a thing. For the philosopher, consciousness requires an object; that is, consciousness is awareness *of* something (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Without human consciousness, there cannot be a something of which to be conscious. For Heidegger (1927/1962), consciousness is thinking about everyday things in the everyday world. Heidegger

(1927/1962) posits that this sense of being in the world makes our experiences be located within the world. Heidegger's (1927/1962) depiction of phenomenology differs from Husserl's (1931/2012) in that he believes that this methodology helps to interpret underlying meaning, not just describe it. Language, which can be talking, listening, or remaining silent, is important because it is a vehicle through which people interpret the world (Heidegger, 1927/1962). This interpretation is a continual cycle in which the unknown becomes the known (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Thus, according to Heidegger (1927/1962), in order for a person to investigate consciousness, this person must first acknowledge that being (or consciousness) exists before the investigation begins (Heidegger, 1927/1962). This investigation is possible because of self-awareness and self-reflection.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) states that our world is composed of those things that we perceive as composing it. Our consciousness, then, is rooted in our perception; thus, all consciousness is perceptual (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). Perception becomes the means through which people interpret the reality of their world, with their inner perception dependent on their outer perception (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2012) form of phenomenology joins the subjective with the intersubjective, mixing the experiences of one person with the experiences of another. Reflection is significant to his viewpoint. However, if reflection is significant, then Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) believes that the act of reflecting upon your reflection is transcendent, or transformative. Perception, body, and language typify Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2012) conceptualization of interpretive phenomenology. Perception is used to interpret the sensations that the body feels. The body represents a return to the real world (or the lived world) because it channels these experiences. Moreover, language is the means via which humans share their experiences with others. In this exchange, the experiences of the first

person might be incorporated into the experiences of the second person, expanding their perceptions altogether. In addition, language is the means in which people label and name the objects in their world; without speech, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) questions whether the objects in our world would even exist because they lack a name or label. Thus, thought comes before speech. Yet, it is through speech that our thoughts truly become our own. Because words are socially and culturally meaningful, they are a gesture to understand an individual's world.

Using this methodology, the faculty participants in the study were asked to reflect on their perception of a quality library education. The first instance of reflection occurred when they were asked to write a narrative in which they described both a positive and a negative experience with quality (or a lack of quality in the negative response). Many of the faculty choose to write about the same issue, whether knowingly or unknowingly, for both responses. For example, the same faculty person shared an exemplary example of service for the positive response and an inadequate example for the negative response. The second reflection occurred when they responded to prepared interview questions about a quality library education, and the third reflection happened when they were asked to draw what resources or tools were need to provide this quality education.

The study aimed to find the essence, in Husserl's (1931/2012) words, of their perception of a quality library education. They reflected from their personal experience, which includes their thoughts, actions, beliefs, and so forth. This process produced a description of the faculty's collective description of a quality library education. Moving deeper, the faculty were asked to discuss their writings and drawings. The themes that surfaced in the written narratives were repeated in their answers to the interview questions and in their visual depictions. At this point, the faculty were conscious of their focus on a quality library education.

As Heidegger (1927/1962) points out, they were thinking deeply about ordinary things in their ordinary world. Yet, many shared that they had never pursued this line of thought before. It illuminated their beliefs to themselves. At this point, the process produced an interpretation of their perceptions of this topic (a quality library education). During several key points in the interview process, the faculty were given an opportunity to reflect on their answers to the writing, answering, and drawing. Thus, they were reflecting upon their reflections. Their inner perception was working on their outer perception. Whether they realized it or not, they were using their perceptions to reflect upon their everyday world. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) characterizes this practice of thinking about your thinking as transcendent, or transformational.

For the faculty, they were asked to reflect on something that they may not normally reflect on because it is part of their everyday world. It is something that they take for granted. This study preserves a moment in time for them. They can use their reflections moving forward to reinforce their personal and professional views about a quality library education. These reflections might impact their views about what should be included in their program learning outcomes, how their curriculum should be designed and delivered, why finding or creating experiential learning opportunities is necessary for their student, and when making recommendations for program improvements. The entire reflection process might serve as an exercise to keep the essence of beliefs at the forefront of all decisions, activities, and events.

The conceptual framework was dependent upon reflection. The study utilized a two-part framework built upon the work of Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) and Argyris and Schon (1992). Looking at higher education, Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) conceptualizes a quality education as exceptionalism,

perfectionism (or consistency), fitness-for purpose, value-for-money, transformation, compliance, political or symbolic, employability, and accountability.

When asked to reflect upon their perception of a quality library education, the faculty identified community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation. These six components became the study's themes. It was discussed that the faculty's conception of quality may have differed from Harvey and colleagues' (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) conception because of the study's unique focus on LIS faculty only and LIS faculty in a single program. After reflecting upon the directions (written narrative and visual depiction) and upon the questions (interview), the faculty responded as educators thinking about a quality library education. That is, their responses would have been centric to teaching and instruction, library curriculum content and structure, and library program goals and objectives. This scenario may account for their veering from Harvey and colleagues' (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) findings.

The second part of the conceptual framework relies on Argyris and Schon's (1992) theories-in-use and espoused theories. As noted, theories-in-use are an individual's actual beliefs and practices while espoused theories are his or her professed beliefs and practices. Within the present study, the selected program's learning outcomes were used as their espoused theories as they were in place before the study; therefore, they could not have been influenced by participating in the study. The beliefs and practices of the faculty, which were gleaned from their written responses before and discussions and artwork during the interviews, represented their theories-in-use. For this study, the faculty's theories-in-use, their espoused theories, and the study's themes all matched except student engagement was missing from the espoused theories.

One of the study's recommendations was to add this component to their program learning outcomes (which represented their espoused theories in this study), especially since they have a strong commitment to it collectively. These findings may be mostly congruent because the faculty had created a new set of program learning outcomes in preparation for their ALA accreditation process, and they may have been fresh in their minds during my visit. In addition, as a profession, the library field has long established statements on library principles, beliefs, values, and ethics, which the faculty use to socialize students into the field. Therefore, under these conditions, it would not be surprising if the faculty in the selected program had similar perceptions on a quality library education. Finally, it must be noted the program's recruitment and hiring practices might produce faculty of like minds as well, particularly since the program hired two of its own graduates, both of which participated in this study.

I participated in reflection during the study. In Chapter 3, I included a section on my reflexivity about why I undertook this dissertation process, with an aim to determine why there sometimes seems to be a disconnection between the attained education of a person and their ability to perform the job for which that education should have prepared them perfectly to perform. I questioned where this disconnection rested, with the library education or with the person unable to perform the job. I questioned whether a person with a certain degree, in the case of this study a master's in library science, should automatically be able to perform a job tied to that degree. In addition, I questioned if there were too many variables in skill, personality, and initiative to even answer my questions. Therefore, I have no answers to my own questions.

However, the act of reflection upon my journey as the researcher in this study leads me to conclude that if LIS faculty in other LIS programs throughout the country have the same level of commitment to graduating future librarians to work in the nation's libraries as the LIS faculty in

the selected program visited in this study have, then the next generation of professional librarians is in capable hands. The core curriculum appears to be consistent throughout time while the elective courses generate areas for growth and innovation. Perhaps, as the study suggests, more fieldwork in the form of practicums and internships are necessary. Experiential learning in any form becomes vital to bridge the divide between theory and practice. Perhaps, there truly is no way to teach practice but through actual practice.

Therefore, the collaboration between library educators and library practitioners needs to be stronger. Library educators should reach out to library practitioners to learn what is missing in their graduates' skills. If it truly is the only chance to practice being a librarian, this leaves the practitioners to open their doors for practicums and internships. Responding to a mass email from a library program in my state, I have volunteered my services as a mentor. This small step will not solve the problem, but it is a move in the right direction. Thus, I have closed this conclusions section, with its focus on reflection, with my reflections upon this ongoing issue.

Summary

Throughout its history, there has existed a discrepancy in library education over its purpose, whether to lend a greater focus to theory or practice. With a potential disagreement between library educators and library practitioners, what constitutes a quality library education? In fact, the purpose of this study was to ask this question of faculty in one LIS program in the Southeastern United States. Using the lifeworld approach to phenomenology as its methodology, the study had a two-part conceptual framework in which it used Harvey and colleagues' (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) conceptualization of quality and Argyris and Schon's (1992) theories-in-use and espoused theories to explore the intersection of quality and library education.

Several findings emerged from the study. It was determined that the faculty identified quality as community building, student engagement, service, student learning, employability, and transformation and that their theories-in-use and espoused theories were mostly congruent. The faculty only identified two of the nine components of a quality education as identified by Harvey and colleagues (Harvey, 2001; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Stensaker & Harvey, 2010) and the faculty missed student engagement in their espoused theories when comparing their theories-in-use and espoused theories to the study's themes. When examining its curriculum, the selected program designated foundations, cataloging, reference, library management, and a capstone course as the core courses, veering off from Hall's (2009) earlier study by making technology a required elective and making research methods as an elective. The study recommends making the research methods course and the practicum a part of the core requirement.

The study concludes the chosen phenomenological methodology was appropriate for the study. The present study contributes to research in its examination of library faculty, library education, and library program learning outcomes. The study could be conducted with LIS faculty in other programs specifically or faculty in other graduate level programs generally, which could add to future research. Finally, self-reflection was a large part of the study, from the methodology, to the data collection interpretation, and the researcher reflexivity.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office

4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building- Mail Stop 682

600 Moyer Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834

Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 · www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB

To: [Elizabeth Baker](#)

CC: [David Siegel](#)

Date: 5/25/2017

Re: [UMCIRB 17-000975](#)

Quality and Library Education

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 5/24/2017 to 5/23/2018. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category #6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Baker dissertation proposal Chapters 1-3.docx	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Baker dissertation proposal writing prompts.docx	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Informed Consent Document Template No More Than Minimal Risk submitted.doc	Consent Forms
Participant Letter, Department Chair.docx	Recruitment Documents/Scripts
Participant Letter, Faculty.docx	Recruitment Documents/Scripts

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH



Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: Quality and Library Education: A Phenomenological Study of LIS Faculty Conceptualizations of Library Education Curriculum

Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Baker

Institution, Department or Division: East Carolina University, Educational Leadership (higher education concentration)

Address: East Fifth Street, Greenville, NC 27858

Telephone #:

Study Coordinator: Dr. David Siegel

Telephone #:

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?

The purpose of this research is to create a description of how faculty members in one LIS (Library and Information Studies) program conceptualize a quality library education. That is, the study aims to investigate how LIS faculty members view, understand, or interpret a quality library education for their students. You are being invited to take part in this research because you are a faculty member who teaches in the selected program. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, we hope to learn how LIS faculty define a quality education in their program.

If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about 10 people to do so.

Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?

I understand I should not volunteer for this study if I am less than 18 years of age, or I am experiencing a medical condition that would prohibit my participation.

What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?

You can choose not to participate. Your participation is voluntary, and there are no consequences for not participating.

Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?

The research will be conducted on your campus, in your department. You only will need to come to come to work on the days that I am scheduled to visit your department to participate. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is 5 days during my visit.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in the following activities throughout the week of the visit:

- Respond to two writing prompts in your own words. The purpose of this exercise is to create a narrative of your lived experience that demonstrates a positive and a negative experience with quality in library education.
- Create a visual depiction of your conceptualization of quality in library education. This visual depiction can be a picture, cartoon, flow chart, etc. It is your choice how you respond.
- Keep a journal of your thoughts and experiences during the week of visitation.
- Participate in on-on-one interview sessions to discuss your written narratives and visual depictions. The questions for the interview sessions will vary as they are designed to discuss the unique narratives and visual depictions that you create.
- The interview sessions will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. The recordings and the transcriptions will be reviewed only by the principal investigator (me). You will be given an alias to protect your identity, and this alias will only be known to me. The audio recordings will be erased after 3 years. The transcripts will be labeled with your alias, not your name. You may choose for your interview sessions not to be recorded.

What might I experience if I take part in the research?

We don't know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We don't know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future. However, if you participate in this study, it may provide you an opportunity to reflect upon your curriculum specifically and your program's curriculum generally, which could benefit you and your students.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?

We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Will it cost me to take part in this research?

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?

ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.

How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?

The information gathered in this study will be kept secure in varying ways. First, everyone who participates will be given an alias that will be used in place of a name or other personally identifying information. The name of the institution will not be used and will be given an alias or non-identifying designation, as well. The audio recording of the interview sessions will be kept for three years before they are erased. The transcripts of the audio recordings will be labeled with your alias, not your name (or other personally identifying information). If the research for this study is not complete, audio recordings may be kept longer. However, they will be erased as soon as the research is completed. The main purpose of this study is to gather information for a dissertation. However, the information may be used in future presentations, publications, conference workshops, etc. Again, the information will be stripped of any personally identifying information and will not be able to be traced back to your participation in the study.

What if I decide I don't want to continue in this research?

You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at 252-646-2401 Monday through Friday from 8:00 am- 5:00 pm.

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2914 during normal business hours days (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of the ORIC, at 252-744-1971.

Are there any Conflicts of Interest I should know about?

There are no known conflicts of interest.

I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.

- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

Participant's Name (PRINT)	Signature	Date
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Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)	Signature	Date
-----------------------------------------	------------------	-------------

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT LETTER, DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Elizabeth Baker
bakere12@students.ecu.edu

Date

Department Chair, Department

College Name

College Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Dr. Department Chair:

As a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership (higher education concentration) program at East Carolina University in Greenville, I am beginning my dissertation research. My research focuses on how faculty members in one LIS program in the Southeast United States conceptualize quality in library education.

I am writing to ask for your program's participation in the study. I am interested in recruiting as many LIS faculty members from your program as would like to participate in the study. I am interested in faculty who teach core or elective courses, whether on a full- or part-time basis. I would like to visit your program for a week during the duration of the study. The visit will be arranged in advance at your department's convenience.

The faculty who volunteer for this study will be asked to participate in several activities. The faculty will be asked 1) to create two written narratives from a prompt that describes their interaction with quality in library education and 2) to create a visual depiction of their interpretation of what is needed to produce quality in library education. After completing these activities, the faculty will participate in face-to-face interview to discuss their narratives and visual depictions. The interviews will last an hour and will be recorded and transcribed. In addition, the faculty will be asked to respond to journal questions during my visit.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at [phone number] or bakere12@students.ecu.edu. I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Baker
Doctoral Student
East Carolina University

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT LETTER, FACULTY

Elizabeth Baker
bakere12@students.ecu.edu

Date
Faculty, Department
College Name
College Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Dr. Faculty:

As a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership (higher education concentration) program at East Carolina University in Greenville, I am beginning my dissertation research. My research focuses on how faculty members in one LIS program in the Southeast United States conceptualize quality in library education.

I am writing to ask for your participation in the study. I am interested in recruiting LIS faculty from your program who teach core or elective courses, whether on a full- or part-time basis. I will visit your program for a week in order to conduct the study. The visit will be arranged in advance at your department's convenience. In addition, your interview will be arranged in advance at your convenience and can take place at a location of your choosing.

You will be asked to participate in several activities for this study. You will 1) create two written narratives from a prompt that describes your interaction with quality in library education and 2) create a visual depiction of your interpretation of what is needed to produce quality in library education. After completing these activities, you will participate in face-to-face interviews with me to discuss your narratives and visual depictions. The interviews will last about an hour and will be recorded and transcribed. In addition, you will be asked to respond to journal questions during my visit.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at [phone number] or bakere12@students.ecu.edu. I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Baker
Doctoral Student
East Carolina University

APPENDIX E: FACULTY VISUAL DEPICTIONS

Faculty 1: So, I think I got it. This little... you can think of this... I don't know... a funnel... this little space here in the middle is the LIS education. It's the Masters. Yeah, I'll just call this the Masters. It's a piece of quality education because it should be kind of a lifelong endeavor.....we want to keep students... this is the kind of the actual degree itself... but then I also think that the entire sphere of our program extending before the Masters, if we want to make a conscious and deliberate effort to recruit students, to bring a lot of diversity to the field..... What makes a quality education? We have the Masters here, but really the quality education is much larger... and then the other thing that I was thinking about after students graduate... these are... I'll put a few here... so we have school, public, academic, special, archives... so students kind of go into their own little silo.....their own professional networks..... But I see at a programmatic level kind of alumni engagement. We're continuing to draw connections across these different fields. I see that is something that enables a quality education because, yes, students are going to go into their own professional networks and stay there for logistical... for a lot of different reasons... good and bad. I see through alumni engagement the ability to continue to provide students with ideas and resources, to cut across professional divides in ways that's useful..... so students are coming to our master's degree... in this kind of section here is where we get involved with them prior to their involvement in the master's program through recruitment both passive and active passive forms of recruitment are... for instance, alumni recommends the program to a student. We're not directly involved in that recruitment, but it kind of connects to the importance of our network... the stage here is alumni relations, continuing professional development. And I'm also going to put research here, but I actually think research has a lot to do with alumni engagement. So yeah... so we have... so these are three parts of what makes a

quality education for our students. It actually begins before they even become students at that recruitment stage. We have the Masters itself, and we have everything that comes after they complete their degree...this is one two and three. There's connections so I'm not sure exactly how to draw this, this passive.....there's kind of a circular motion to it. It is not fully linear..... (community building)

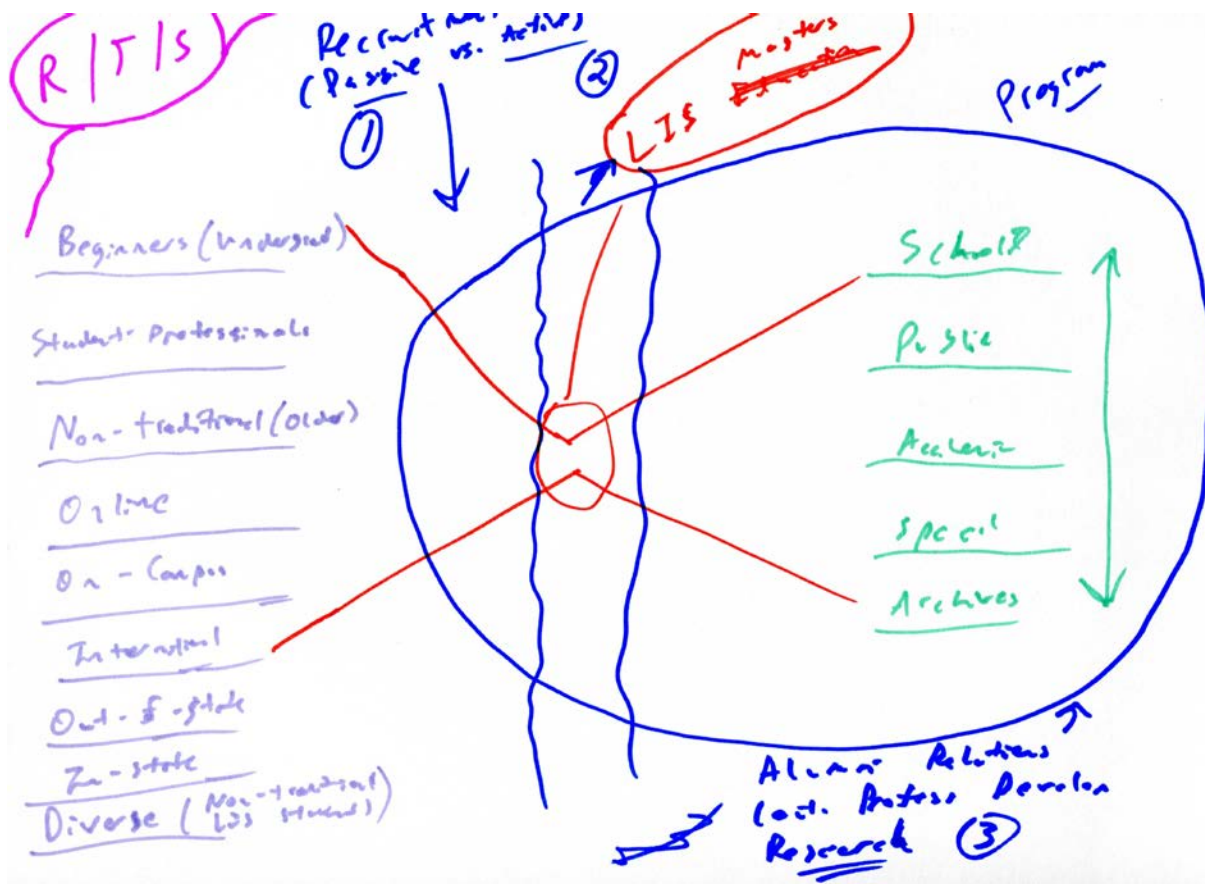


Figure 1. Faculty 1 visual depiction of a quality library education.

Faculty 2: So, I put the expectations up here because I think that goes back...to me, it's like the goals. What the purpose is. And so when you know that, then you can use these tools. First of all you can get the kind of people you think can meet these expectations in terms of serving the communities, in terms of being able to navigate technology on both sides, being interested in knowledge. There's my blank book.....And, you know, yes, we like books, but then we have all these other tools here...data here...talking about metadata...but then, you, you hire the staff here that have various backgrounds and who are interested in making sure that students from their own varied backgrounds can understand what the expectations are and how to use all of these tools to then go out..... It starts out with program goals....as you go down, you have to look at each course, but they all have to funnel into those larger expectations, and even higher than program goals, it's us librarians ...it's like ALA..... Users. Users and use. Community. Program. Even when we talk about...business and industry. Education. So, I think that it is the expectations for...you know, we have all of these expectations that the program...you know, that's not even right. Do you know what? These are the raindrops.....This is where these guys come in. ALA. What else did I have over here? Business and industry. Users. Education. Yeah. What was the vocabulary...I have all sorts of other ones, but I think these are the program expectations here. The university. All of this stuff falling on the umbrella. That they have to deal with. And you've got all these things under here. That you've got to contend with. Maybe, umbrella wasn't right. But I think that you got all these competing things.....And you don't want, you don't want them, you don't want to be in the deluge. You're still going to get damp. But it's all not falling on everybody's head. And drenching them immediately..... It [the program] sort of funnels them [the drops] away, but it's sort of protecting from all these things, but its taking into account that, yes, we're getting wet..... But, they are focusing the influence. Okay, come

under here, and we will help you. Maybe the umbrella isn't the right thing. Maybe it should have been, I don't know...a maze. (Laughs) But this is what I thought of.....It's like the program expectations...it takes all of these things and then it keeps them from just drenching..... It makes sense of them. You can...better yet you can walk through this whole deluge and not get washed away, but you still know that it's raining outside. Your feet are getting wet, but you can deal with it. (service, community building, employability)

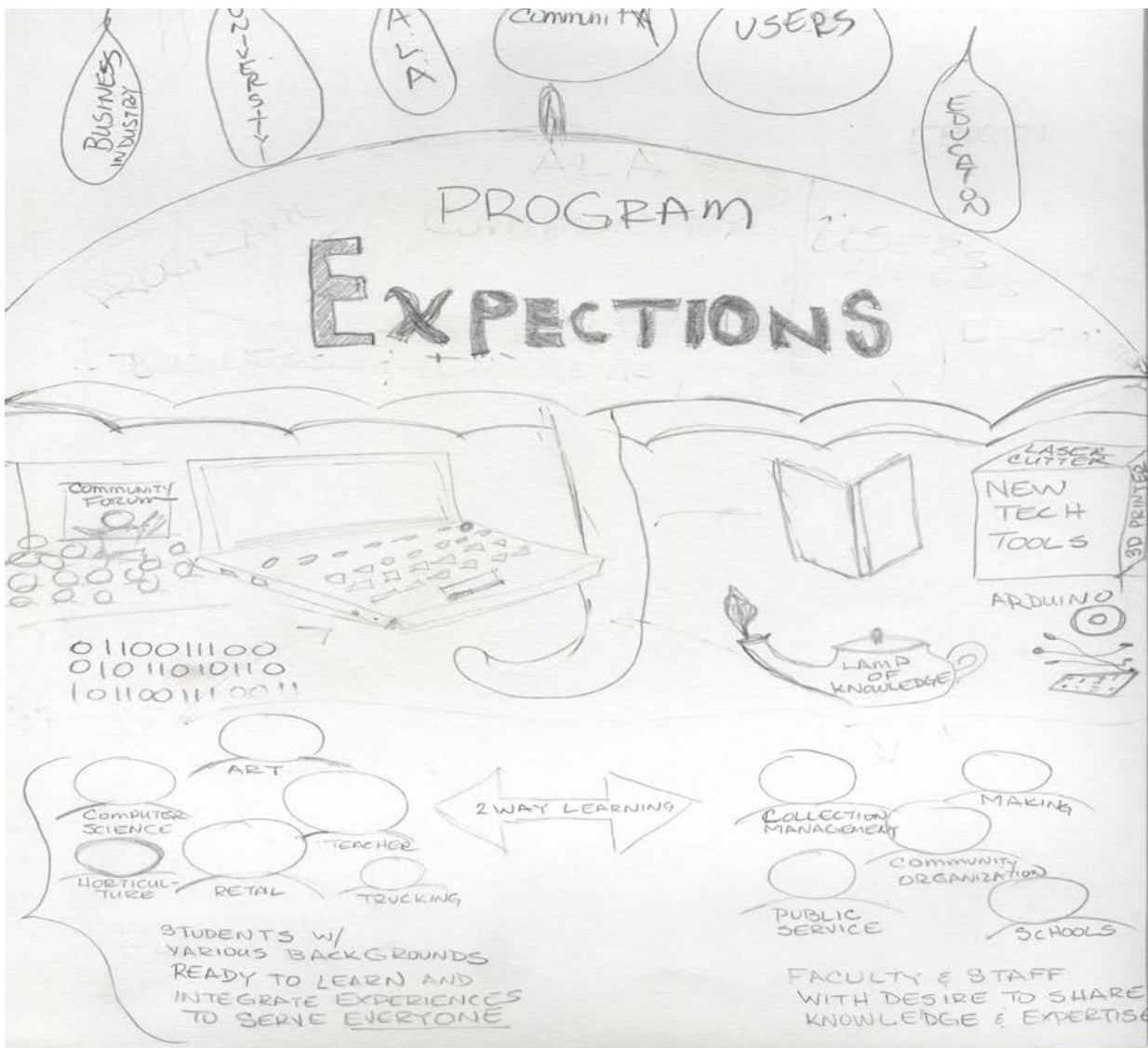


Figure 2. Faculty 2 visual depiction of a quality library education.

Faculty 3: Well, I thought, you know, so where's my theme here? My theme is that quality education means experiential learning, practical application of theory. So what I've done is a sort of mind map to show four components that I think are important. And so I think first here is... what I have here... this is like a faculty member meeting with a student, and so online meetings with distance students since most of our students are distance students, not all are. But this being willing to meet them, you know, at pretty much any hour, and have that interaction. And, one of the things that are true of school librarians is that they typically are the only one in their buildings, and so if you want to be part of a professional learning community or if you want to be...make decisions at your district level, you have to meet virtually. Um, if you want to be involved in a state or national association, it means virtual meetings. So, I think having this experience is good for you in the class but also is practical experience for you in the profession. So then over here I have a name tag for the library interns. For whatever program that they are in, I think internships are really important, even though I don't think that we require them for all as we do for school librarians.....And, so um, I have put here our committee, interacting with faculties and students. Again, that is experience because you are always going to be on a committee of some kind as a school librarian and learning how to function on a committee is important as well as being able to voice your issues and concerns. And I think assignments need to be practical assignments, that they should be things that that you could turn around and tweak that could be actually used. So, I list a couple that I think are really practical ones—an advocacy plan for your school library program; collection analysis that is something that we do ongoing as librarians; designing a facility, either to design or renovate, things like that; a budget plan and being able to justify that. Those are all actual assignments that I do in my school library

management course that they can then tweak and turn around and use... they can take into practice. (student learning, student engagement, employability)

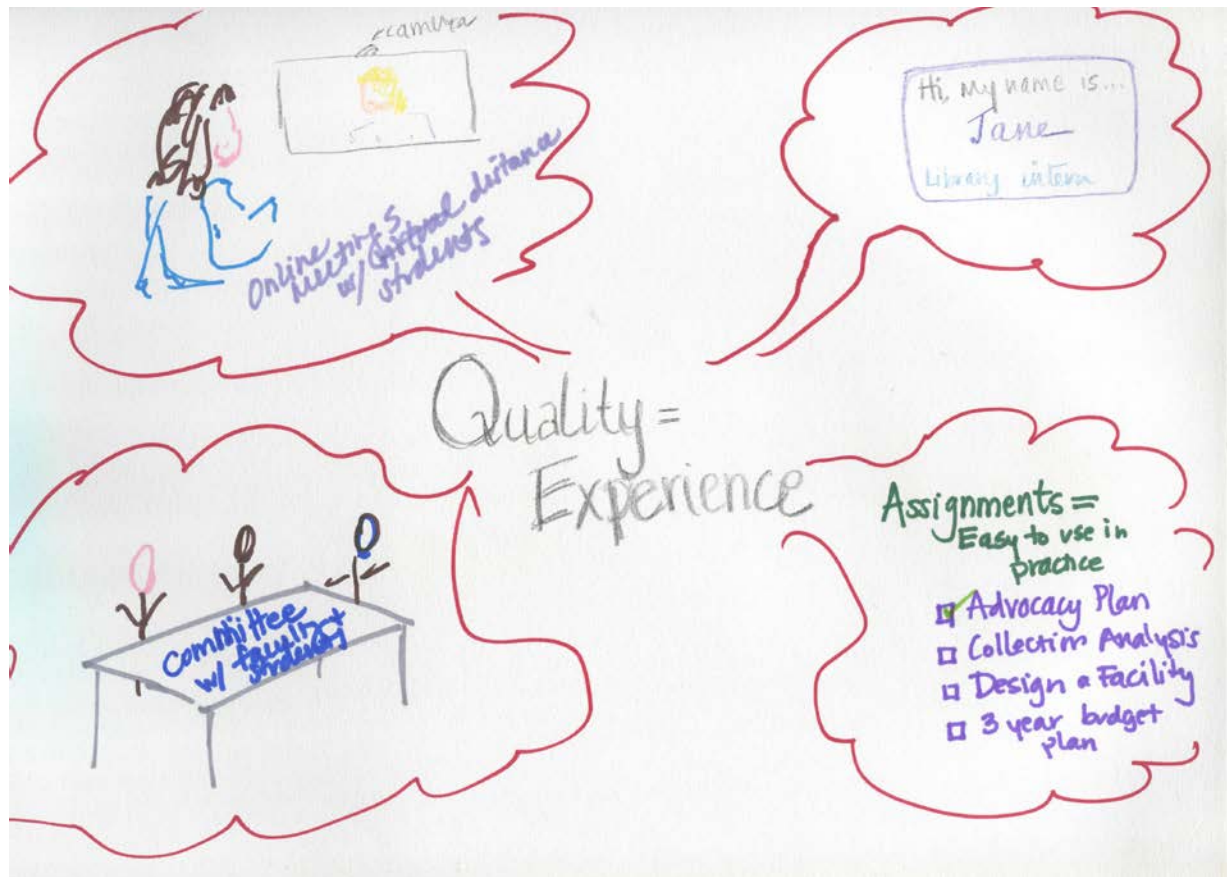


Figure 3. Faculty 3 visual depiction of a quality library education.

Faculty 4: So, I thought of a quality library education is a bunch of ideas intersecting. So, the idea, like what we have been talking about a lot, you have communication. You need to have communication. The students need to feel connected to their professors, with their advisors, with other students. Having access to ways to practice their craft as they learn it. Um, having access to academic resources, like the library. Things like that...that they have a way that they feel that they will have a way to go learn more on their own. And then making sure that they feel some confidence in the field that they start to build that confidence in themselves and in the field so that they feel like they can ask questions but at the same time don't have too much confidence because in order for learning to happen you have to be...you really have to be broken down to a certain extent....Yeah, and you have to be uncomfortable to a certain extent. I like to tell my student you should feel confident that you can ask me questions and that you can speak up in class, but you don't have to feel completely confident in the material. And that's ok because you're learning and that'll take you forward. (student engagement, transformation)

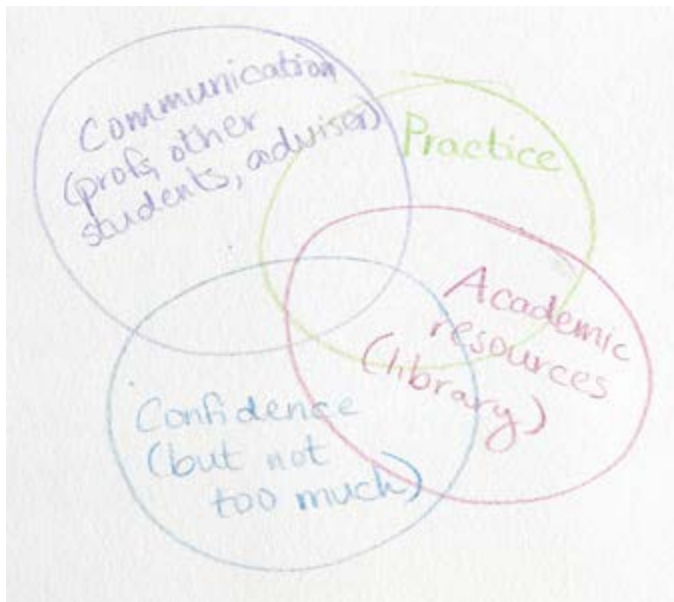


Figure 4. Faculty 4 visual depiction of a quality library education.

Faculty 5: Thinking of quality.....I'm thinking, you know, for the students, a road. And, at the end of this road, you know, it's going to be bright sunshine. It's going to be a new future for you. A new career, opportunities, rainbows. Um, a pot of gold perhaps if you either not necessarily in terms of making a high salary but in terms of satisfaction with jobs. So, reward. Some sort of rewards out of that. And to get there, the more I kept working on it, then I realized tools and services, but it's just about the people. It really about the people that are pushing you in that direction, so, um. I started out with the people, you know, showing the student....I don't know how to do it but little. So that's kind of indicative of a faculty....people helping the student. Um, initially I drew the hands with a rope kind of symbolizing we're supporting you, we're pulling you through. We're not going to abandon you. You have this lifeline. Warmth was the fire. [Laughs]. And, then, um, I did this first with the idea... it starts...the strength of it being in the foundation. And I thought, who's holding that up? That is actually the people in the program. Not just faculty, but, you know, predominantly going to be the faculty in the program. They're gonna give you that foundation. They're gonna give you knowledge to climb the ladder. Confidence and experience to put you on the right path to the best job. And, I thought what do we have over here? They're gonna have unduplicated, I guess, knowledge, expertise, their passion, their know-how. There are probably some other things there, but nothing...I'm getting dull. [Laughs]..... Yeah, I'm getting dull, so. Essentially, I am back to this idea that it's the people who drive the program. It's not necessarily....when you say tools, I'm thinking technology, laptops, the underneath piece that helps us distribute the education, but it's really the person behind that who's presenting that information and getting you to think and challenge you. (employability, community building, student engagement)

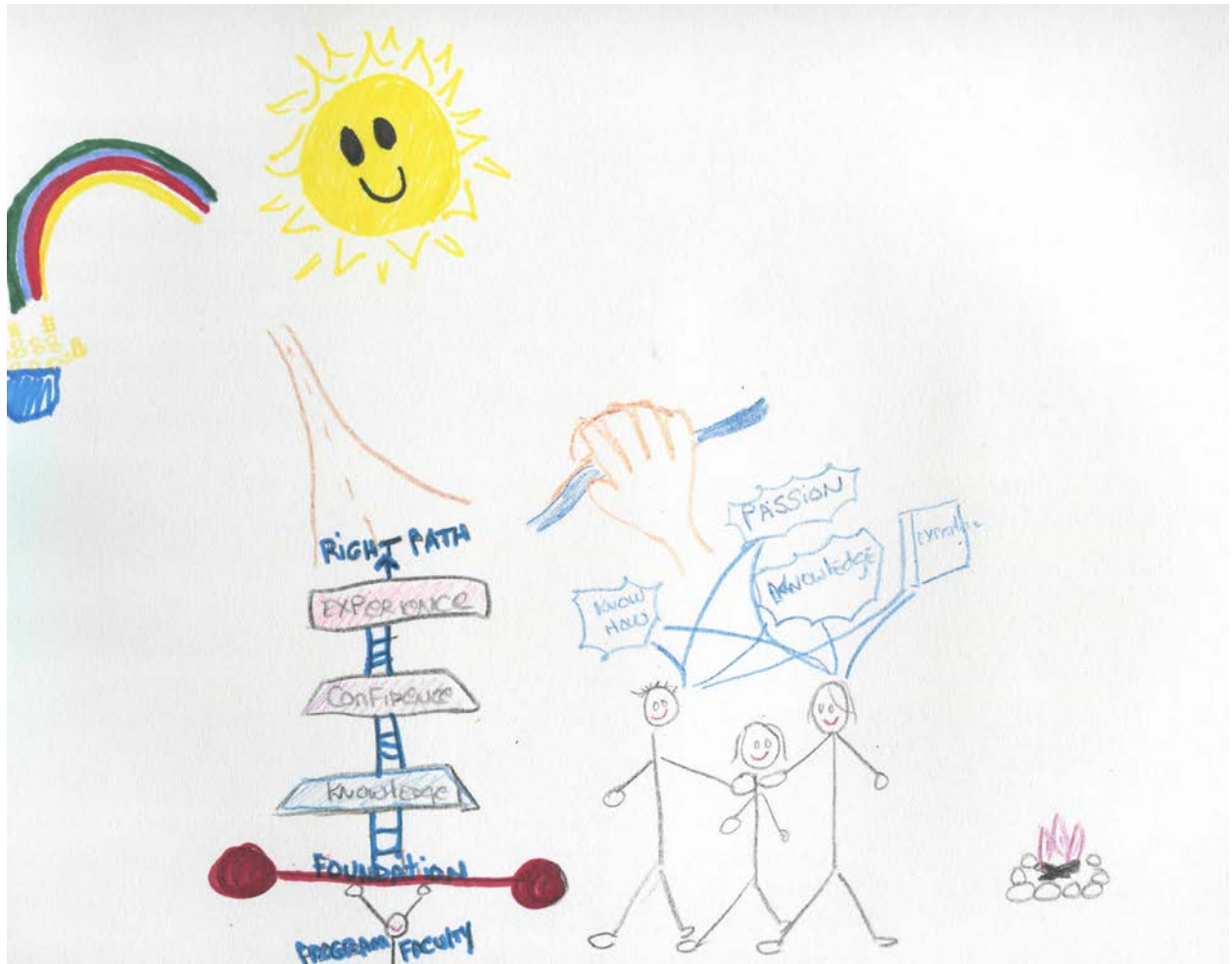


Figure 5. Faculty 5 visual depiction of a quality library education.

Faculty 6: Basically, you can place students at the center. You can place students.....Basically, students are at the center, right? You want to have a more diverse student body in terms of race, gender, race based because...it's not....uh, we talk about these diverse aspects in our courses. Uh, you know, reading about it, talking about it. Meeting with students, like international students and other ones with different experience and hearing from their perspectives. Definitely very valuable.I think it is very critical not only just for the field in general but also our students' experiences too when they, uh, serve their communities. And I mention that feedback is critical. It always goes both ways between the instructor, program, and the students And, the...you asked about the ideal case....the content should be more interdisciplinary because sometimes you focus too much on libraries, and LIS education is beyond libraries because if you think that it is just libraries it would be limited because you think about the information access, right. It doesn't necessarily happen only in libraries .but other places, too, and lots of places you can use library skills, but they don't necessarily know about those things. I think having a more interdisciplinary content would definitely lower the pressure on the faculty to teach, to offer these different kind of courses, because they can take some courses from other departments, too. And, of course, their emphasis may not be on libraries. That is fine. Because your emphasis would be on the content not necessarily just libraries. And you need to think about how it could be applicable to libraries. Therefore, you could have more experiential courses or experiential...or more experiential opportunities available so that they could actually get to practice those things either within a course or be a practicum, for example. And we discussed making practicums required, for example, in our program.....We have not necessarily made a decision. But we strongly encourage our students who do not have practical experience in our libraries, in libraries to have a practicum..... It's not a requirement, but we tell students if you

do not have experience you should definitely consider doing a practicum. Uh, because, it definitely when you apply for a job, it definitely helps you with that aspect as well. And technology is infused in every station here.....Technology kind of infuses in all processes..... You should not forget the human aspect in all of these parts of these. So, online learning builds this community so that students, uh, feel connected to their programs, feel connected to the field, the profession and to their peers. Otherwise it will be kind of like mass production of things. It may not necessarily have any...I don't know...I don't want to say soul...but they kind of don't feel...they just feel something...not necessarily...it may not be more meaningful. So, that's it. That's my opinion. (student engagement, student learning)

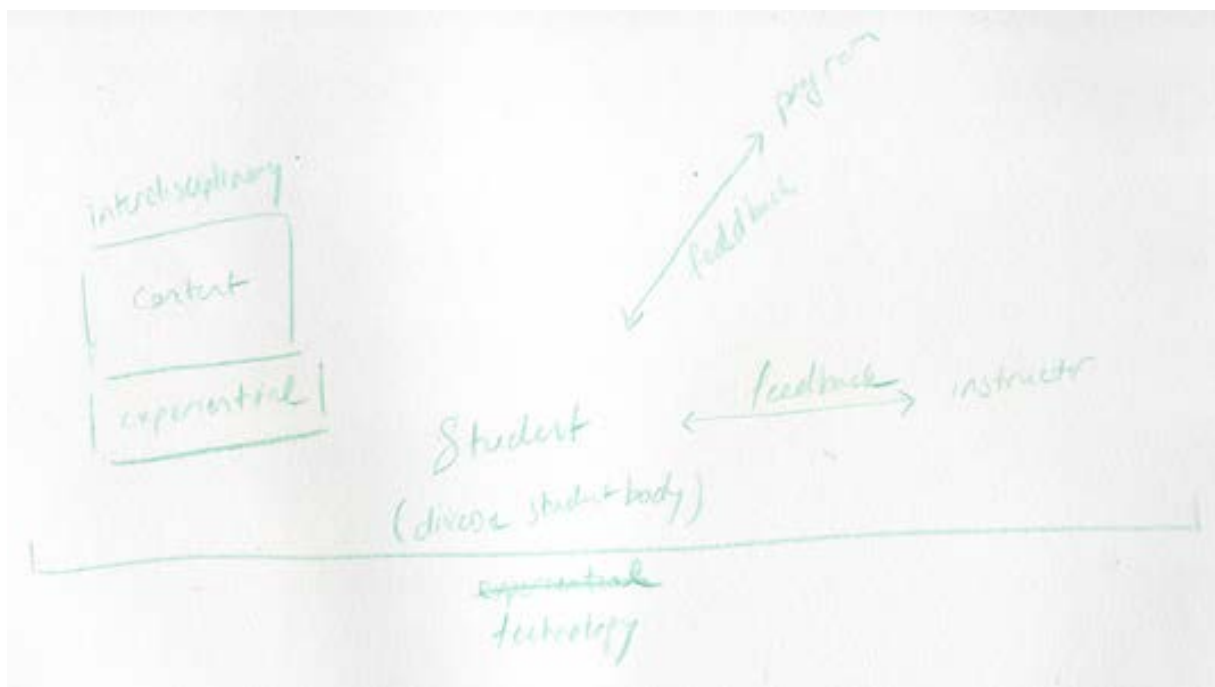


Figure 6. Faculty 6 visual depiction of a quality library education.

Faculty 7: We're going up the mountain...and, uh, we're reaching...we're reaching for something better. And behind me there is somebody who is almost falling, and I'm the top there....I am trying to help the next person who is trying to help the next person. It goes further on back. I'm trying to make an infinity out of it. I should have put a path back there. [So, this is you pointing to the top?] Reaching for the top. [And this person falling, you said. Sort of, maybe, stumbling.] Well...stumbling. And I'm trying to help show the way. [And while this person is



sort of falling...still has an arm out.] Yeah, yeah. Because I had the arm out. (transformation)

Figure 7. Faculty 7 visual depiction of a quality library education.
