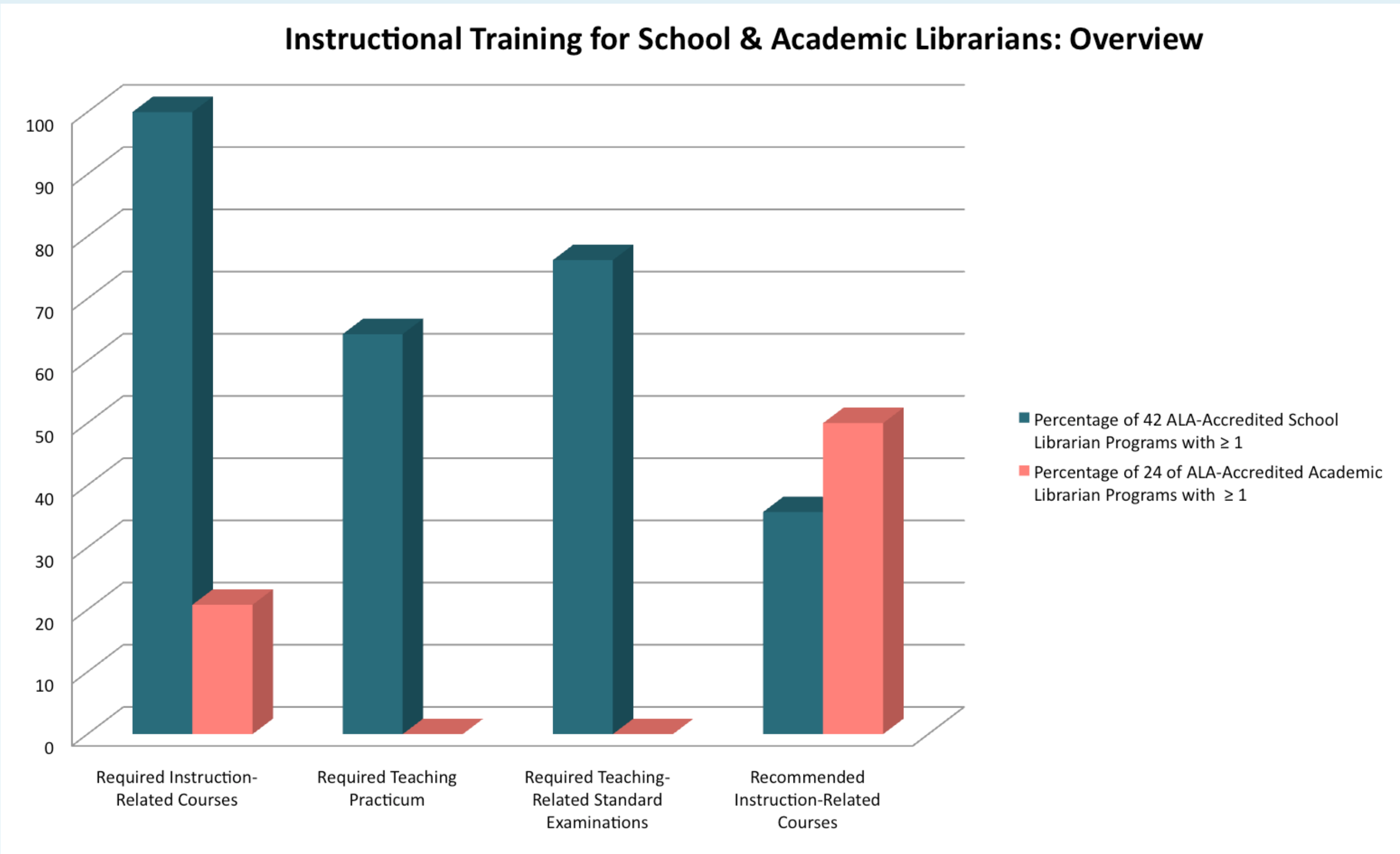


K-12 Praxis in Academic Library Instruction

Overview

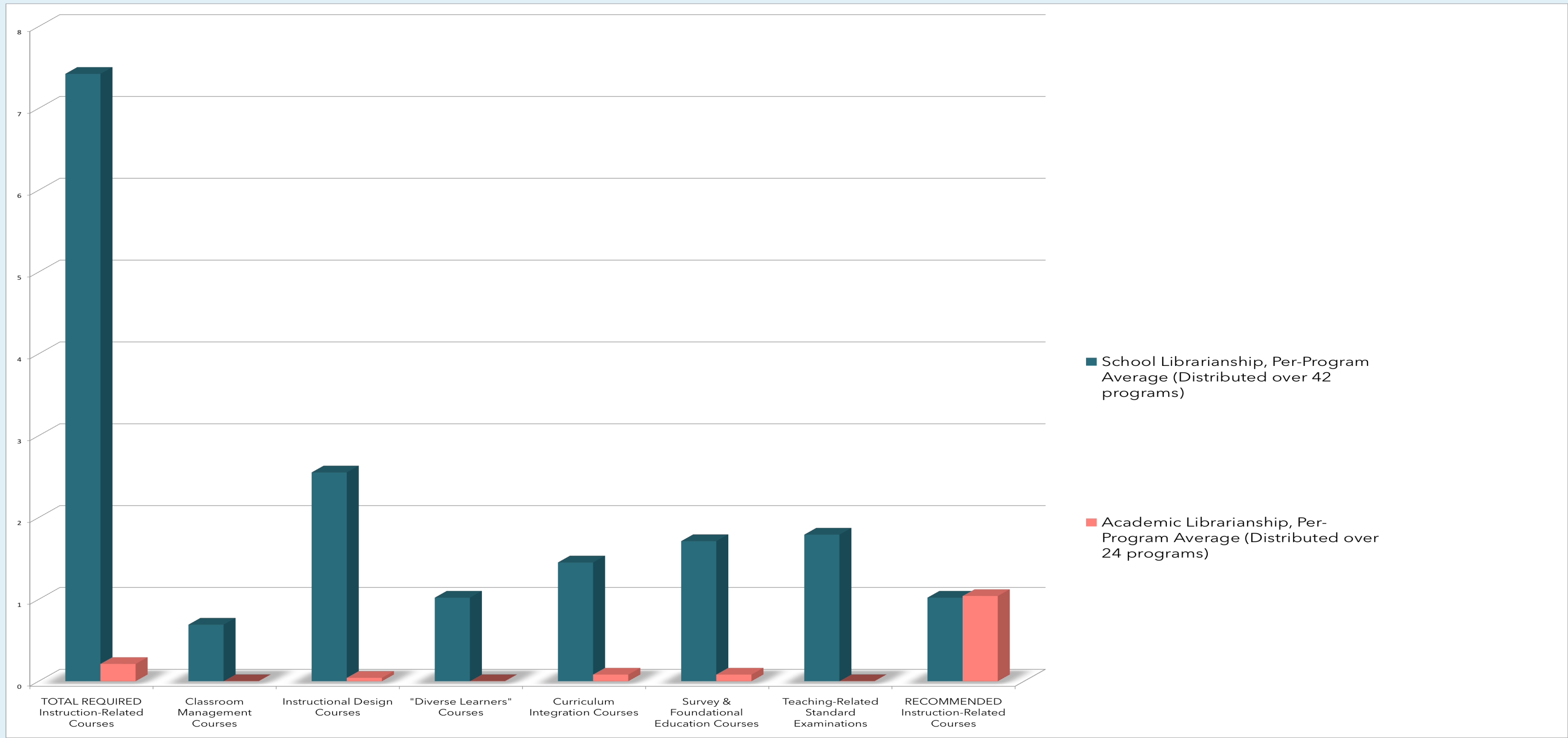
In academic librarianship, “siloeing” is often identified as a factor that negatively affects library services and planning, including library instruction (Barone & Weathers, 2004). Siloeing also exists in the wider library field, particularly between academic librarianship and school librarianship. Literature on school and academic library instruction shows wide usage of information literacy standards by the ACRL and the AASL (Sproles, Detmering & Johnson), but few cite both, even when discussing instruction for college transition. Academic instruction librarians and school librarians also do not share a knowledge base on pedagogy and instruction. There is a wide disparity in pedagogical training between academic instruction librarians and school library media specialists (SLMS) (see graph below), and there are relatively few documented collaborations between SLMS’s and academic instruction librarians.



Documented collaborations between SLMS and academic instruction librarians show little evidence of collaborators borrowing teaching practices from each other; a major exception is Bordonaro and Richardson’s account of using scaffolding in academic instruction (2004). Just as “bridge programs” problematically address college transition by calling on K-12 instructors to teach “college-readiness skills” (Kallison & Stader, 2012), SLMS/academic librarian collaborations place onus on the SLMS to bring students “up” to college level. Documentation shows little pressure for academic librarians to meet students at their existing skill levels (Chiu, 2015).

This unidirectional relationship and lack of shared training between SLMS and academic instruction librarians points to skewed expectations of student learning and behavior in academic classrooms. SLMS’s undergo rigorous training to prepare for the reality of instructing various populations of students and patrons, but many academic instruction librarians exit LIS programs with no instruction-related coursework. Traditional college students are not yet developmentally adults (Giedd, 1999); thus many K-12 teaching practices are valid within the academic classroom. Furthermore, skills taught to SLMS, including classroom management and instructional design, are essential competencies for creating and maintaining an instructional program. Acquiring them would better prepare academic instruction librarians to create effective learning environments.

Analysis of K-12 Instructional Training & Practices



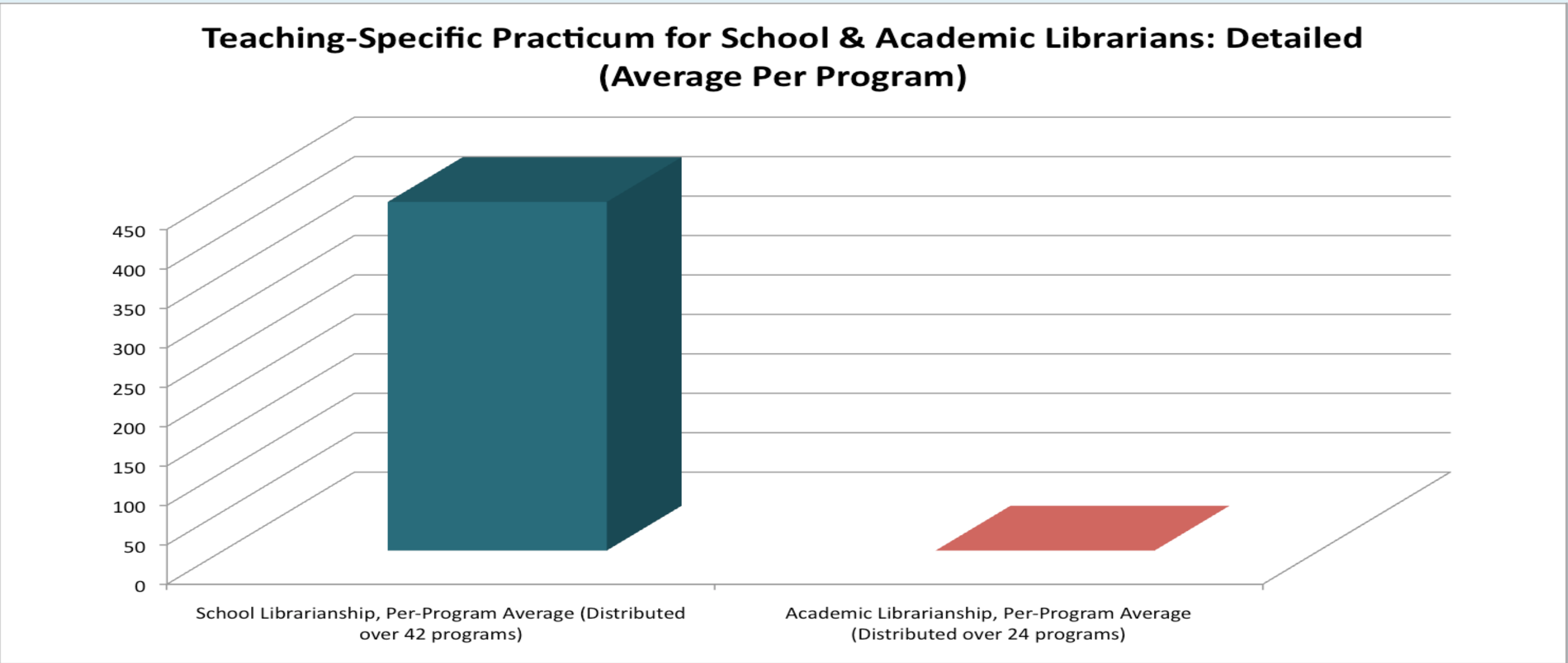
Survey & foundation courses in education generally cover educational psychology. This includes theories and research on human development, with particular focus on teaching and learning processes and motivations. The goal of these courses is to consider psychological and behavioral states of students and their effects on a learning environment. These courses also include cognitive, psychological, and behavioral disorders that affect the teaching and learning process.

Classroom management courses cover strategies and practices for safe and conducive learning environments, both small and large. This includes ways of structuring classes to prevent disruptions in the learning process, creating interactions that promote active learning and inquiry, and positively managing individual and group misbehaviors. These classes often include discussion of differentiated learning, diverse learners, and teaching accessibly.

Many programs also include discrete courses on teaching “diverse learners.” These courses cover differentiated learning in depth and discuss how to recognize and meet needs of students who need individualized accommodations. They focus on practices for inclusivity within heterogeneous class environments, and for promoting uninterrupted learning through accommodations, modifications, and educational technology.

Instructional design courses cover how to effectively design one’s teaching. From lesson planning, to lesson delivery, to lesson assessment, all aspects of instruction are covered. Theories and models to support design of print-based, web-based, or multimedia instruction are emphasized. One also learns how to evaluate existing instructional materials (ex: lesson plans, assessment instruments) to make informed decisions on adopting or modifying them.

Curriculum integration courses cover frameworks & practices for blending information literacy instruction into content areas across the curriculum. This includes curriculum unit planning; librarian trainees are required to consider lesson design within the context of long-term learning goals. These courses also cover effective collaboration with other educational professionals for effective integration of library instruction into school & district goals. The concept of scaffolding is taught in curriculum integration and educational psychology courses. Scaffolding is the act of teaching complex concepts by breaking them into more basic concepts and progressively building them up; students learn various pieces of a larger objective skill, reinforcing each component skill along the way.



Academic Usage

Temple University is a large urban university with a diverse student population; almost 50% of the student body identify as people of color. The main campus library’s instruction program is integrated into the General Education Program and First Year Writing curriculum. Two library workshops are embedded into English 802, a required first-year intensive reading and writing course, covering the information literacy skills for researching and writing an academic paper. Workshop learning goals include: defining research topics, creating search terms, and constructing effective database queries with Boolean operators. The students are given example prompts and, in groups, create potential search terms and test them in databases.

Scaffolding

Within the existing framework, I identified an instructional gap where scaffolding would effectively deepen understanding of creating a manageable research topic. Suggested paper topics in the standard ENG802 curriculum were generally clear and understandable, but prompts that students actually received in their classes often were not as clear. Library workshops did not adequately cover the skills of parsing prompts and generating viable research questions. I created a drop-in workshop focusing on the very beginning stages of a research paper: analyzing & reducing prompts to essentials, generating relevant short-answer and research questions, and deconstructing research questions to create and refine appropriate search terms. My workshop introduces an instructional step missing from the workshops, and simultaneously reinforces querying skills taught in Workshop 2. **-Fobazi**

In speaking with faculty, I realized that the standard-curriculum Workshop 1 requires students to consider how to use sources in writing, but source evaluation is not covered there or elsewhere in the course. To make it easier for students to consider source usage, I introduced the concept of source evaluation in Workshop 1, framed around the question of whether or not to use a source at all. I introduced the six factors of source evaluation using a learning acronym, COCOA P (coverage, origin, currency, objectivity, authority, and purpose). During the workshop’s standard source-usage activity, I called on students to use the six evaluation factors to first decide whether or not they would use a given source, before asking how they would incorporate said sources into a paper. Students with whom I covered COCOA P completed the activity more quickly and discussed their results more readily than students in the prior semester with whom I did not cover COCOA P. In future iterations, I hope to complete the scaffold by calling on students to use source evaluation and source usage concepts again in Workshop 2. **-Anastasia**

Lesson Planning

The Reference & Instruction department of Paley Library at Temple develops and shares stock instructional materials for Workshops 1 and 2, including slide presentations, activity handouts, and guidelines for what should be said during each slide. I created lesson plans for the sessions I taught because it gave me the structure to focus on lesson delivery that would most effectively cater to the learning objectives while allowing for modifications based on technological mishaps and cognitive level. This was especially helpful during the spring semester because the professors I was working with did not use the standard syllabus. **--Fobazi**

Teaching Accessibly

In K-12 schools, instructors and librarians are notified of individualized needs to consider in their classrooms. At the college level, the onus is often on the student to disclose needs or request accommodations, and I am aware that students often choose not to do so; I have done my best to make my classroom inclusive, with an awareness that students may have hidden disabilities that even their faculty instructors may not know about. For example, for students with ADD/ADHD I may have had in my classroom, I did my best to choose links without a lot of extraneous visual and audio stimuli. This often involved using the Readability app and extension or focusing on parts of web pages without advertisements to make it easier to focus on the text on the screen and/or my voice. These are accommodations that I have used in the past, recommended by caseworkers in the K-12 setting, and have definitively shown results in productivity and attentiveness. For textual processing disorders (e.g. dyslexia), I chose fonts that were easier to read, and made sure that I verbally went over directions put on the board and any handouts distributed to the students. **-Fobazi**