



RISING TOGETHER:

Leading from the Middle to Advance
Subject Librarianship

- LOEX 2025 -

AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Liaison Journeys
3. Identity Building
4. Relationship Building
5. Peer Leadership
6. Case Studies
7. Next Steps



INTRODUCTIONS



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LIAISON JOURNEYS

The background features a stylized rainbow with three bands of orange and yellow, positioned behind the text. Below the text, there are several abstract, rounded shapes in dark green, orange, and light green, resembling a hand or a set of fingers.

Calantha



1. **Early career:** [Public Services to Reference]
 - a. Public library summer intern
 - b. School library work study student/staff (BA)
 - c. University library graduate assistant (MLIS)
2. **Mid career:** [Instruction to Liaison]
 - a. Regional university instructional services librarian
 - b. University library social sciences librarian



Janet



Pre-Career (I want to be a librarian)

- Paraprofessional at a legislative library

Early Career (I want to be an art librarian)

- Dual MSLIS + Art History Master's
- Art library & cultural heritage internships
- Special Project Librarian at a hospital library working in scholarly communication

Mid-Career (Accidental business librarian)

- Multidisciplinary liaison librarian at UT Arlington, an R1 university
- Manager of Research Support and Partnership

complex research, operations,
creative rights, teaching,
organizing things & people

Anita



Before MLS:

- bookseller, stock film footage editor/office manager/talent clearances/copyright, legal admin, on-site sales rep, academic admin & reference clerk

Early Librarian career:

- microfilm : Book/newspaper digitization
- Access Services plus reference, instruction, and scholarly communication

Mid-Career Transitions:

- Public Services: Access Services, ILL, Outreach, health sciences liaison, information literacy (IL), collection dev (CD)
- Health & Social Sciences liaison: IL, CD, research consultation, bibliometrics/research impact, evidence synthesis

SUBJECT EXPERT IDENTITY

Who we Are:

Expert navigators

Learners

collaborators

connectors

Soft Skills we bring:

- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Insight

Techniques for developing subject expertise also build soft power:

- learn the language of ea discipline
- attend dept meetings/events
- curriculum/research support
 - information literacy
 - collection development
- research consultations/collaborations
- conferences: ours & theirs
- and more!



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

SERVICE VS. COLLABORATE

You are a peer expert NOT a research assistant.

COLLECTIVE CARE

Productivity is not paramount over wellbeing.

BOUNDARIES

Lean on tools like opportunity rubrics, communication buffers, and collaboration charters to help you say NO.

AWE VS. REALITY

Librarianship is a job, NOT a religion.

LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

Middle Management vs Peer Leadership

- “Leading from the middle” is often associated with **middle managers** (reporting up and managing down)
- **Leadership is not the same as management**, though they often overlap
- **Any person can demonstrate leadership** regardless of title or position

LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

Middle Management vs Peer Leadership

"Anyone who exerts positive influence through his or her work and relationships can be considered a leader"

LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

Qualities of Peer Leaders

- Identify problems and seek solutions
- Volunteer ideas and time
- Skilled in a particular area and can put those skills to use
- Collaborate with peers
- Lateral influence

LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

Qualities of Library Leaders

- Strategic Vision
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Integrity or Trustworthiness

LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

Skill Development

- Workshops and seminars
- Committee and Task Force work
- Special Projects
- Mentorship

LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

Not Always Means to an End

- **Passion** often driver for emerging leaders
- Individual contributorship **may lead to a titled position**
- **Not always a successful transition** due to needing a more balanced approach

CASE STUDIES



Peer Mentorship



1. **Formal** -

- a. Training manuals
 - i. Templates
 - ii. Best practices
- b. Skill sharing presentations

2. **Informal** -

- a. Buddy system
- b. Consultations
- c. Coffee with Calantha

Peer Advocacy



Change agent:

- Information Literacy instruction support
- Evidence Synthesis Policy

Shared governance:

- Librarian Forum
- University Senate



Community of Practice



Goals

- Development of subject knowledge for liaisons new to the discipline
- Support growth of core liaison skills

Activities

- Resource guide
- Collective outreach
- Database demos
- Reference peer-review
- Journal club

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

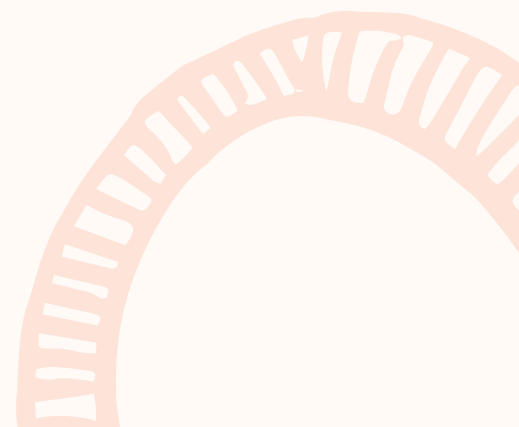
Peer Mentorship

- Librarian Liaison Handbook
- Liaison Communication Best Practices
- Liaison Email Templates



Community of Practice

- Business librarian resource list
- Meeting agendas



NEXT STEPS



Presenters

- Collaborative Autoethnographic Study (CAE)
 - Daily tasks tracker
 - Reference/Instruction Self-Assessment
 - Peer discussions

Attendees

- Reflect on who/what/how you want to be a subject expert
- Create/share/maintain boundaries
- Consider peer mentoring/advocacy opportunities



QUESTION?

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