

Think like a

(fill in the blank)

making sense of disciplinary knowledge for liaison librarians

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Why this matters

Organizationally

- Liaison model discussion since early 1990s
- Internet facilitated shift in demand, in research productivity, and new forms of capital
- Reorganizations of public service roles

Personally

- Big professional leap from reference to collections
- Witnessed shift in focus from faculty to students.

Community

- Time for generalists to shine!
- Opportunity to make sense of disciplinary knowledge in a way that works for us!

Campus Context

- R1 public university
- Academic division model with 5 divisions: Natural Sciences, (school of) Engineering, Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities
- University of California recognized for strong shared governance (centering on administration and tenure-track academics)
- HSI and AANAPISI
- Librarians are not faculty
- Current climate:
 - Strategic plan emphasizes strong undergraduate programs, opportunities for graduate students, research
 - Support services throughout campus, not always in conversation with one another
 - Always ever have budget constraints

The journey

How it started: Reference, Coordinator of Instruction and Outreach

In between:

- One subject assignment
- One divisional team
 - Team shrank and absorbed two more divisions (three total)
- Two divisions solo
- Two divisions solo with newish functional librarians for scholcomm; OER; instructional designer

How it's going: Arts and Humanities Divisional Liaison with less focus on functional roles

Arts and Humanities Divisional Liaison

with less focus on functional roles

Research support
(is it just reference support?)

Knowledge of
Publishing support -
Scholcomm - OER

Teaching support
OER,
Learning objects

Team based work:
Communications,
orientations,
workshops.

Support
Collections Work
Is it centralized?
*Do you actively
purchase?*

Assessment of
user needs
*Or gather or
engage with users*

Liaison [JDs](#)
@UCSC

Teaching support differences at-a-glance

Library Instruction - writing / first year	Liaison
Lecturers, dedicated to teaching	Faculty, focused on research, teaching, and service
Grad students as GSIs teaching writing	Grad students, early career researchers; as TAs and GSIs
First year undergrads and transfer student onboarding	Upper division, first years and transfer students in major courses
General subjects, general resources	Specialized resources, focused subjects
Colleagues in Instruction and Reference departments or teams; Lecturers	Liaison team, other library depts, systemwide colleagues, professional networks, faculty curriculum committees

How I approach teaching support (and the discipline)

- flipped instruction; in-class instruction; assignment design support ; brainstorming with instructors

To understand how to move forward with a class, I:

- Consultation with the instructors, and set out on a plan
- Review assignment guidelines to connect them to collections and understand their usability
- Design flipped learning activities
- Review flipped assignment submissions to understand what to prioritize in the classroom

Role of disciplinary knowledge

- Broad strokes of the disciplinary methods, ex Theater format is dramaturgy
- Map to relevant source types and databases
- Faculty can be called on to explain the disciplinary context and their expectations

How to innovate your approach

Two courses from IDEOU: Insights for innovation and From ideas to action

- A human-centered design process that helps uncover insights through observation, interviews and other methods to draw deeper insights and surface opportunities.
- Then, brainstorming/ideating, prototyping, and iterating ideas and products as a way forward.

Why I like this method?

- It centers users;
- Ideas and products are designed with users needs in mind;
- Processes and products are never fixed, they can be iterated on;
- Work can be more rapid and responsive

How to develop depth in your knowledge

- Conferences in the discipline or Library associations in the field, example: Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS NA)
- Intellectual life on your campus: Research Centers conferences (where it's at!), and other events (HSI etc.)
- Intellectual life on other campuses: Stanford is close by...
- Public events or groups that are relevant: Music events, Art Exhibitions, Citizen Science projects, etc.

How I use these:

- They deepen my understanding of the subject differently than just learning the subject. I get to see the role these events play in society. Example, attending International Art exhibitions opened my eyes to curation, the various forms of works that can go on display, and the public reaction to them. This goes on to inform my understanding of how expansive art can be, as well as the cultural implications of it, when I work with Art classes.

How to be authentic

Adjectives used to describe the attributes of an ideal liaison: Nimble, agile, adaptable, empathetic, etc.

And sometimes we're just repurposed.

How do we avoid feeling like we're shoe-horning in skills or adopting one-size-fits-all approaches?

I prefer adjectives like curious, verbs like listen because they're more tangible in a liaison role. The others feel like I need to mold myself into something I'm not, but these feel like a challenge I can work on.



A HORSE

Your leadership style is: **Coaching**

DESCRIPTION: When you look at horses in the wild, you'll see that the lead mare will guide the others in a certain direction and sets the pace. If a younger horse compromises the safety of the herd or wanders off, it will be gently and patiently corrected by the mature horses, and taught what type of behavior is preferable. Providing guidance, sharing constructive feedback, helping others learn from their mistakes and improve their skills: these are all typical traits of a **coaching leader**. Coaching leaders believe in identifying and nurturing the individual strengths of employees, so they can develop and achieve their true potential and contribute to the success and unity of the team. These leaders are all about mutual respect, long-term individual growth, compassion, and two-way communication.

STRENGTHS: You are Supportive, Patient, Loyal, Authentic, Compassionate, Reliable, Inclusive.

CHALLENGES: Coaching leaders aim for long-term success instead of quick wins. That requires a lot of commitment and energy, and it can take a long time to see results. Another challenge for you as a coaching leader is that you might focus on individual development rather than team goals, and you tend to become too involved in day-to-day tasks and micro-management.

WORKS WELL IN: Consulting, Sales & Marketing, Education

RECOMMENDATION: Lepaya training to develop your leadership style: [Resilience](#), [Analytical Thinking](#) and [Taking Ownership](#)

Takeaways

- When it comes to understanding user needs, choose methods that center users authentically
- When engaging with your audience, listen, observe, taking in the experience rather than feeling the need to feel heard.
- When assessing information you gather, consider that insights are not obvious; dig deeper to understand patterns or surprises
- Showing up to department events shows that you're interested; that you care
- Faculty respond well when you share what you've learned about students based on your engagement and findings.