

The Quarterly Interview: Carrie Donovan

Indiana University Bloomington

-Edited Transcript-

LOEX: Where do you work? What is your job title and main responsibilities?

Donovan: I am the Head of Teaching & Learning for the Indiana University Libraries. I've been in this position for three years, but I've worked at IU for six years. My job is to connect the libraries with student learning in curricular and co-curricular contexts. I also do a lot of what I call "party planning" which involves the bringing together of various groups internal and external to the libraries to develop, engage in, or assess information literacy.

What are a few books or articles that influenced your teaching philosophy?

- 1) Vygotsky, Lev (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
 - I always knew that scaffolding was important, but I never understood the concept fully until I read this.
- 1) Dewey, John (1964). *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings*. Reginald D. Archambault (Ed.). Modern Library: New York.
 - Dewey always reminds me what is so great about learning – that it is a process unique to each of us and it is ever-changing, based on our prior knowledge and our relationship with the world.
- 3) Bizup, Joseph (2008). BEAM: A rhetorical vocabulary for teaching research-based writing. *Rhetoric Review*, 27(1), 72-86.
 - This article completely changed the way I think about, teach, and assess information evaluation.

What courses do you teach at IU SLIS and how long have you been teaching them?

I have been teaching S573: Education of Information Users since 2007. S573 is an elective course for students pursuing the MLS. I've tried to design the course in such a way that it allows students to learn important educational theories and to practice the application of those theories in an information literacy-related context. The whole point of the class is for students to begin to develop their own teacherly approaches and identities. The course was my first introduction to information literacy when I was an MLS candidate at IU in 1999. It's kind of fun to think about how S573 and information literacy education have evolved since then. For

example, back then the information literacy competency standards were brand new and we were in awe of them. Nowadays information literacy standards are evolving and, while we rely on them to guide our instructional initiatives, we regularly question and challenge their viability and relevance.

I'm also currently serving as a member of the IU-SLIS Alumni Board. It's been an interesting year for our board, as the School of Library & Information Science at IU is preparing to merge with the School of Informatics & Computing. Most of our Board meetings and our communications with other alumni have centered around this topic in recent months, as we attempt to ask and address the right questions regarding what this will mean for our association, our school, and for the future of LIS education at Indiana University.

Has there been any change that you've noticed in students in the last 3-5 years (e.g., in terms of their interests, their skills, and/or what they want/need to know)?

When I first started teaching S573, many of my students were future K-12 librarians. I couldn't figure out why students in other tracks of the MLS (e.g., digital libraries, archives, academic libraries, etc.) were not interested in the class. Apparently having the word "education" in the course title made it anathema to students who didn't already self-identify as teachers. Now, most of my students tell me that they are taking the class because they see "instruction" listed in academic librarian positions and they are hoping to gain experience with instructional design and learning assessment. I'd like to interpret this switch in attitude as not entirely driven by the job market. Instead, I'm hopeful that students are beginning to understand the potential for leadership and influence that we have in our role as educators.

What does IU SLIS do to support students in their professional development outside of their school work (e.g., attending and/or presenting at conferences, writing articles, mentoring by staff/faculty)?

SLIS is very supportive of students in scheduling career fairs, hosting on-site interviews, offering panels of experts to provide advice for jobseekers, as well as resume review opportunities.

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Last August was the first IU Libraries Information Literacy Colloquium (held in New Albany, IN). As one of the event coordinators, why did you and the other IU librarians decide to start this conference?

The Colloquium itself was the brainchild of my very creative and smart colleague, Maria Accardi, at IU-Southeast. She had a vision for what could happen if we brought together 100 librarians to talk about information literacy and student learning, which turned out to be an amazing day of idea-sharing and relationship-building. While the large majority of people were from the state of Indiana and surrounding areas, it never occurred to us that people would come from as far away as Texas and South Carolina to share their experiences and learn from each other! So, I think we were both surprised and satisfied with how well attended the event was.

What was one or two of the biggest successful aspects of the Colloquium? What do you hope to improve?

The best aspect of the Colloquium was learning from all the presenters and meeting so many fellow instruction librarians! It was a terrific reminder of how challenging, fun, and important our work is AND that we have wonderful colleagues who are in it to win it with us. From our evaluations, we also discovered that the attendees greatly enjoyed our keynote speaker, Barb Macke from the University of Cincinnati. Barb brings a personal, yet practical, approach to her teaching and the way she described her methods for connecting with students and supporting their learning really inspired the members of our audience. Also Barb is funny, honest, and outspoken, so she very much embodied the spirit of the event, which was intended to be a celebration of librarians' teaching as a means toward inciting change in our organizations/institutions. One thing we would like to improve would be the attendees' access to restaurants in the evenings, which are a bit of a drive from where the overnight accommodations were located.

You're currently the Chair of the Immersion Program Committee. Immersion added another instruction track this year, Teaching with Technology. What was the impetus behind that change?

The rationale for creating the new track was the increasing importance of educational technologies and distance learning (not to mention MOOCs) on our campuses, which in-turn heightens the need for librarians to develop online or hybrid instructional offerings. This program fills a growing need for professional development for librarians in this regard. ACRL and the Immersion faculty are also launching a new "Practical Management" track of the Immersion program in April 2013. This track will provide participants with the management and supervision concepts needed in order to

develop an action plan that specifically focuses on the work of their department or team.

Why was the Teaching with Technology track decide to be held in conjunction with the annual conference, as opposed to July or November, when other tracks have traditionally held their sessions?

The reason it is being held during ALA is to reduce costs for participants who may have planned on attending the conference anyway, while also taking advantage of a hybrid model of instruction. The Immersion faculty are famous for developing learning experiences for participants that model best practices for teaching and assessment. By designing the Teaching with Technology track as a combination of online and face-to-face learning, they've taken "going meta" to new heights (instructionally speaking, of course).

What technology, if any do use? Any that you hate?

I like Poll Everywhere (www.polleverywhere.com) for conducting formative assessment during library instruction sessions because you can poll a large number of participants using computers or mobile devices. I can't really think of any technology that I hate, but one that I haven't yet quite figured out how to incorporate into my teaching is QR codes.

You are very into music. How has that influenced your teaching and your work in libraries ?

Yes, I'm definitely into music, but only as a fan and bystander. I'm not a musician, but I have loved music since I was a little kid. I'm no good at remembering important names, dates, or events in history, but I can sing all the lyrics to "Billie Jean" without missing a beat. Even though I don't have the greatest singing voice, I very much enjoy karaoke and will be forever grateful to my karaoke experiences for helping me develop an authentic stage presence, a powerful voice, the ability to project, and the strength to withstand hecklers—all of which I call upon every time I teach. I wouldn't be the librarian I am today without karaoke. My #1 karaoke jam at the moment is "Bette Davis Eyes."