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### **Authors**

Johnson, Matthew Weirick  
Lasher, Meggie

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# The Community Workshop Series: A Case Study for Community-Engaged Learning in LIS

Matthew Weirick Johnson

Lead for Teaching & Learning and Librarian for English & History, UCLA Library

[mattweirick@library.ucla.edu](mailto:mattweirick@library.ucla.edu)

Meggie Lasher

Research & Academic Engagement Librarian, Davidson College Library

[melasher@davidson.edu](mailto:melasher@davidson.edu)

## ABSTRACT

For over a decade, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) has offered some variation of the Community Workshop Series (CWS), a partnership to provide digital literacy and computer technology classes to community members at local public libraries. Both authors have served as coordinators of the program as Library Science graduate students at UNC SILS.

We situate this program within existing literature on digital and information literacy, community engagement, and the graduate student experience to show the utility of this program and similar programs for training graduate students, enhancing the graduate student experience, supporting the needs of community members, and bolstering the capacities of public libraries.

The authors provide an overview of the program and encourage others to start similar programs. To this end, the authors present a case study of the Community Workshop Series (CWS), including discussion of creating the program, keeping things going, and a how-to guide for creating your own. The authors identify four recommendations for creating a similar program to clearly delineate take-aways that might inform readers' attempts to create similar programs, and they provide additional materials and documentation in appendices to support the creation of new community-engaged programs in LIS.

## KEYWORDS

Service-learning, experiential learning, LIS education, community engagement

## INTRODUCTION

For over a decade, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) has offered some variation of the [Community Workshop Series \(CWS\)](#), a partnership to provide digital literacy and computer technology classes to community members at local public libraries ("Community Workshop Series" 2020). This work has significantly engaged students in [UNC's School of Information and Library Science \(SILS\)](#), including the role of a student coordinator ("UNC School of Information and Library Science" 2019). Both authors have served in this position to coordinate the program as Library Science graduate students at UNC SILS.

For the period from 2016-2018, when the authors were leading the program, they partnered with three libraries: the Carrboro Cybrary (part of the Orange County Library system),

the Chapel Hill Public Library (a municipal library within Orange County), and the Durham County Library system's Southwest Regional branch. Volunteer instructors provided weekly, in-person 90-minute workshops on topics ranging from how to use a computer, mouse, and web browser, to setting up a Gmail account, to advanced skills in Microsoft Office applications during the spring and fall semesters. For the most part, these workshops were taught by current graduate students at UNC SILS, with the rare instructor who was a professional librarian. At UNC SILS, this was one of few opportunities to gain library instruction skills and experience that was open to all students. While opportunities existed through individual work experiences, internships, or job opportunities, there was only one class offered on providing library instruction, and this program filled a specific gap in the training of students to provide instruction that centered on practical skills.

In this article, the authors present CWS as a unique model for incorporating student-led, community-engaged learning into LIS education. The program simultaneously meets the learning needs of LIS graduate students and community members, comingling and balancing academics and community.

The authors situate this program within existing literature on digital and information literacy, community engagement in the graduate student experience, and community-engaged learning in LIS education. By engaging this literature, the authors show the utility of this program and similar programs for training graduate students, enhancing the graduate student experience, supporting the needs of community members, and bolstering the capacities of public libraries. Specifically, CWS is distinctive for situating students in leadership roles and centering the program around students' intrinsic desire to learn about library instruction rather than extrinsic degree motivators.

After detailing the significance and impact of the program and distinguishing it from other field experience and practicums, this article further discusses the program's history and provides practical details for others interested in creating a similar program. The authors aim to provide a theoretical underpinning for the program, a primer for building such a program, and recommendations for the continued improvement of this work.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Digital Literacy & Inclusion*

Understanding the many facets of digital literacy and inclusion aids in understanding the full scope of the program. Digital literacy, while ever-changing, encompasses not only the access to technological tools but also an ability to use them. (Gilcrest 1997) This combination of access and ability highlights the dynamism in the concept. One can sit down at a public library computer terminal but not have the skillset to send and receive an email or vice versa, an excellent handle on digital communication but no access to a networked device (Jaeger et al. 2012) Digital literacy requires a component of critical thinking as well; the knowledge and access necessary to use digital devices are not removed from evaluation and application in everyday life. (Thompson 2008)

Reflecting on the specific populations served by our program, the information behaviors of older adults is an essential facet of the Community Workshop Series. Lenstra (2017) examines this group's behavior in detail both in libraries and senior center digital literacy initiatives. He re-examines the often deficit focused narrative surrounding older adults learning digital literacy skills. Lenstra presents how older adults employ a community-based approach to learn these skills and participate in wider information society. Elements of this community-based information infrastructure include building relationships, shaping technology help services, and support from library staff and volunteers. Other key points Lenstra articulates are how ageism often clouds the discussion about older adults and digital literacy. Lenstra concludes with insight on how older adults are not just passive consumers of technology help but are key informants who model what evolving digital literacy services look like for everyone in information society.

A final piece to understanding the scope of CWS must be to examine digital literacy training for LIS students in MLIS programs. Martzoukou and Elliott (2016) take a deep dive into the existing education structures in LIS to support the well-documented need for digital literacy instruction and foster digital inclusion in public libraries. The authors interviewed library managers, examined strategic plans, and analyzed MLIS program components to create a picture of "readiness" for the public library setting and community needs related to digital inclusion. They found that digital literacy skills were indeed important to library managers; additionally, these managers voiced how skills related to analyzing community needs to develop strong services and learning opportunities were also necessary.

### *Community Engagement and the Graduate Student Experience*

Learning through community engagement for students is often referred to as service learning, experiential learning, or community-embedded learning. Barry G. Sheckley and Morris T. Keeton (1997) define service learning as "an educational activity, program, or curriculum that seeks to promote students' learning through experiences associated with volunteerism or community service" (32). They argue that service learning is a repetition of the experiential learning cycle which is a cyclical process of learning through a concrete experience, reflecting on observations from this experience, forming abstract conceptualizations, and then experimenting before beginning again in the cycle.

This definition of service learning prioritizes student learning, which is complicated when trying to balance student learning and providing a professional service. Further, service-learning should include community-driven projects that emphasizes a community's own goals and priorities that are met while achieving student learning goals. Learning the process of working with and for the community to determine their goals and avenues for achieving them is its own learning outcome for a service-learning model.

To this end, Yontz & de la Peña McCook (2003) quote Barbara Jacoby, who defines service learning with a greater focus on community needs, emphasizing "[r]eflection and reciprocity": "Service-learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development" (Jacoby 1996, 5 quoted in Yontz & de la Peña McCook 2003, 58). Kazmer (2005) defines community-embedded learning

through students' connections to their own communities, arguing that they bring knowledge gained in class back to their communities (192–93). In this sense, while online learning might be place-agnostic, the implementation of knowledge in community-embedded learning is very place-based.

Both of these models employ experiential learning within a community to enhance student learning and contribute to community building, and both models are employed in LIS education as ways of training professionals in what should be a community-driven profession. In the rest of the following section is an overview of the benefits of these community-engaged experiential learning opportunities for LIS education, examples of how this has been achieved in previous research, and an explanation of how CWS is different.

### *Community-Engaged Learning for LIS Graduate Students*

Kazmer (2005) argues that using a community-embedded learning model allows for greater connections to be created between higher education institutions and distant communities while also improving the learning of distance education students. Remembering that this article was written in 2005, there are also considerable opportunities 15 years later to think about opportunities provided by newer or different technology. Becnel and Moeller (2017) also employ the community-embedded learning model in a synchronous online course, requiring students to work with a library in their neighborhood. They also point out that developing relationships with community partners can be a considerable strain on the instructor (Becnel and Moeller 2017, 57). Mehra & Robinson (2009) discuss a collection development and management class using a community-embedded model with distance learning students. Students in this study noted challenges from “limited knowledge of the agency’s policies, politics, and practices and difficulty in learning particulars; difficulty in identifying appropriate scope of work within the semester’s time-bound course expectations; and, lack of skills in developing community contacts and relationships” (Mehra and Robinson 2009, 25). Most (2011) taught a required management class for distance learning students in a library program and required a final reflection activity. Most argues that this type of service-learning or experiential learning is often left until later in the curriculum but reflections from students in this course show that this type of learning could and should occur earlier in the curriculum.

Albertson & Whitaker (2011) develop a framework to map service-learning activities to MLIS core curriculum at the University of Alabama for a digital literacy instruction program. They argue that “the objective for the theoretical study of a particular project framework is to enable educators to provide students with the most effective and relevant learning situation and guidance for the development of community partnerships” (Albertson and Whitaker 2011, 161). Students who worked with this particular project received credit hours towards their MLIS for their participation. Cuban & Hayes (2001) discuss the experiences of five LIS students enrolled in a service-learning course also noting how the students develop professionally, specifically reflecting on their own roles in the future and the role of the library in a community. Becker argues that a “reflective component is central to the service-learning model” (2000, 286), which de la Peña McCook refers to as “the most important aspect of the service learning experience in library settings” encouraging the use of human rights as a way to frame or guide that reflection (2009, 5). Elmborg et al (2001) discuss a project with local public libraries through a service-

learning course, which the instructor argues was a success while admitting that the results were mixed for the libraries. O'Brien et al (2014) employed a peer-to-peer model of service-learning with graduate students assisting undergraduate students and found three primary learning outcomes: learning about the limits of their own knowledge, learning what their role is as a professional, and learning effective communication skills (330–31). In this sense, service-learning offers professional students the opportunity to develop the skills they learn in theory by applying them in a practical and professional setting.

Lau, Gilliland, and Anderson's 2012 article, "Naturalizing Community Engagement in Information Studies," expands on service learning as the community engagement model with student-led community engagement projects. This departure from community engagement in service-learning model included these initiatives: creating a library for incarcerated youth, facilitating a library space and archive for LGBTQIA+ students at UCLA, and managing a non-profit arts group archive. The authors demonstrate that both the curricular and student-led initiatives in community engagement offer authentic, practice-based opportunities to experience how LIS is part of larger social justice issues.

#### CASE STUDY: STUDENT-LED COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SERIES

CWS is a multifaceted program with a direct impact on digital literacy while also serving as a place of learning for graduate students interested in teaching, community development, public librarianship, and outreach. Historically, the program consisted of three parties involved in facilitating the course: the program coordinator, volunteers to teach and assist, and library partners. The program coordinator recruited, trained, and retained volunteers to teach classes ranging from using a keyboard and mouse to Microsoft Excel and online safety. The coordinator worked with community partners to set the schedule. Volunteers choose from two roles: lead teacher and floater. They signed up for classes organized by date, topic, and library site. The lead teacher planned the lesson according to pre-developed handouts for students while the floater assisted with individual questions. Library partners promoted the workshops and booked the space for the sessions. Some libraries opted to have registration, so these sites would facilitate the participant sign-ups. As a whole, the program functioned the same way for many years.

Through our review of existing literature, the authors demonstrated how the Community Workshop Series differs from many other models for incorporating community-engaged learning for LIS graduate students. In the following section, we demonstrate how to create a similar program to empower students to create and lead community-engaged programs that fit their learning needs while supporting the needs of their own communities. The authors discuss challenges to developing the program, provide an overview of program implementation and coordination, outline some advantages and disadvantages to the particular structure of the program, and conclude with ideas for improving the program.

#### *Keeping Things Going and (Re)Creating a Program*

In 2016, the UNC Libraries made the decision to stop supporting CWS and thus to end funding the graduate research assistant position for the CWS Coordinator due to larger budget cuts within UNC Libraries. After sharing this news with library partners and participants, it became clear that the program was the only source for digital literacy education for the libraries involved. To

end CWS would be to close a bridge to digital inclusion and meaningful teaching opportunities for MLIS students. Because of the singularity of the program, with its direct connection to the community and hands-on classroom experiences, the second author opted to find a way to continue CWS during her tenure as the program coordinator. This decision evolved into an up-close foray into advocacy for digital literacy and a crash course in stakeholder relationships.

Transitioning from paid to pro-bono work required a comprehensive evaluation of the whole program. To facilitate the deep dive, the second author developed an independent study within the MLIS curriculum framework. She viewed the course as a field placement; she created deliverables, readings, and a discussion schedule modeled after benchmarks in the field experience program at UNC SILS. The first deliverable detailed the status of the program including its history, a description of our audience and current operations, and improvements set for the Fall 2016 semester. Another important factor in evaluating the program was understanding its impact and scope; both of these facets informed later discussions with key stakeholders. The first deliverable also outlined volunteer testimonials, workshops offered, and statistics on participation to offer insight on the scope of the program.

The independent study framework also allowed the opportunity to design and improve tools already in place for volunteers and program participants. After the initial program evaluation, it became apparent that many of the internal practices like updating handouts, implementing evaluation, and sharing program information with the community were closed, hidden processes only known and handled by the program coordinator. CWS operates with values of openness and accessibility; keeping core practices and information private went against the values the program coordinators and volunteers practiced in the classroom. The program needed to be more open and accessible to volunteers, library partners, and program participants. Moving to incorporate more open principles in coordinating the program consisted of writing a how-to guide for other LIS programs about enhancing their own CWS-esque program as well as updating the program website, and enhancing our assessment tools with a student-centered, outcomes-based focus (Lasher 2017).

In terms of transparency, all of the handouts and other materials for CWS classes were publicly available online from the CWS website with a Creative Commons license. However, the handouts were originally hosted by the UNC Libraries which removed the handouts without notice or communication during the first author's time as coordinator. Interestingly, the absence was noted by stakeholders at other libraries who used the handouts for their own programs, demonstrating that our stakeholders extended beyond the immediate communities that CWS served and that the materials allowed for others to create similar programs. Nonetheless, this also meant a need to quickly host the materials in another location online. Since the program was now supported by UNC SILS, the first author was able to meet with the information technology (IT) department to develop a solution. These materials are still hosted on the CWS website with the same Creative Commons license, though they are now referred to as manuals. In the iteration of the program following the first author's tenure, shorter handouts, which do not appear to have Creative Commons licenses, were created.

Both authors served as Program Coordinator for CWS. The duties of this position included recruiting new volunteers, setting the schedule with library partners, facilitating sign-ups and training with volunteers, and teaching workshops. Balancing these duties made it immediately clear that not only did the Program Coordinator deserve funding, but also that CWS as a whole needed the stability, time, and effort that could only come from a dedicated, embedded research assistant role within the SILS program. As our research shows, the work of developing and maintaining relationships with community partners is time-intensive and can be difficult for individual students to learn. Hence, having a paid coordinator provides that cohesion and develops a foundation for the program that graduate students can easily enter to participate.

After realizing the clear need for funding, it was necessary to adjust the CWS workflow and assessment procedures to share the impact and story of CWS with external groups: SILS faculty, the Chapel Hill Public Library, and UNC student programs. An important stakeholder, the Chapel Hill Public Library, identified CWS as one of their core services in the digital literacy arena; they met and discussed future funding options.

As a result of this work, a Graduate Research Assistant role was created in UNC SILS to support the program. This provided a stipend, tuition remission, and graduate student health insurance, all forms of compensation that allowed for a greater focus on developing the program, that is to say that adequate compensation ensured that the required time and attention was paid to the program. Program coordination requires continuous effort and a clear plan for each semester based on the mission and goals of the organization. CWS relies on volunteers to lead classes and assist one-on-one with students. Volunteer management is crucial to the success of the program. Coordinating this part of CWS includes recruiting new volunteers, communicating with volunteers about duties and responsibilities, and relaying updates and feedback to library partners and the rest of the volunteer corps. All of these responsibilities demand time and consideration and should be paid labor

### *Marketing, Improvements, Future Directions*

An integral part of CWS and of community-engaged learning projects is building relationships with community partners and continue to understand and meet their needs. To this end, the CWS Program Coordinator met with contacts at the three participating public libraries. In each of these meetings, they discussed priorities and opportunities. They talked specifically about the communities that each of the libraries served and how they could better identify and market to marginalized community members who might benefit from digital literacy courses but who might not be aware of our programming. Prior to these meetings, they reviewed how the classes were marketed and found that the classes were primarily advertised online, which seemed inappropriate for some of our learners—the first classes in our series discussed using a computer and web browser. If the people the program were trying to reach were those who struggle with digital skills, it seemed antithetical to advertise to them online. When meeting with our partners, the meeting attendees discussed other places to advertise, such as print advertising in the library or at other public services locations (e.g. in local public schools).



In addition to increasing marketing from the public libraries, the Program Coordinator also worked to expand marketing to our graduate students by presenting about the benefits of participating with CWS at a faculty meeting, at new student orientation for graduate students, and in a variety of SILS classes. Two examples of the materials used to advertise the program are included in the appendix.

Because of a perception that students were not participating as volunteer instructors because they were concerned about their own teaching skills, additional training was created, including three hour-long sessions on adult learning theory and specifically working with the CWS curriculum. However, these were not well-attended. Hence, partnering with an existing course might be a better option than incorporating theoretical instruction into CWS, especially since this actually increases the time involvement for already time-burdened graduate students.

UNC SILS offers a course on user education that focuses on pedagogical and practical learning about teaching. CWS provided a potential opportunity to expand the practical teaching opportunities for graduate students enrolled in the course. This was discussed as a potential future venture but required additional time and buy-in to execute.

As coordinator, it was clear that students struggled to describe and highlight the program on their resume or curriculum vitae. In another attempt to incorporate CWS more effectively into the curriculum, the coordinator and program advisor looked into either creating a credit-bearing course or developing a sort of certificate related to participation in CWS. The goal was to develop a better way for students to signal their involvement while also encouraging greater participation and buy-in from both the faculty and students. However, the certificate program also required a longer term to complete than was possible within the graduate student coordinator role. Hopefully, as the program continues, future coordinators will develop new ways to encourage student participation and garner engagement from faculty.

These two examples of attempts to incorporate CWS more systemically into the curriculum demonstrate that the one-year terms the authors worked in were inadequate for continuity in the program and for creating new and valuable programs and opportunities related to CWS. Unlike faculty, who might be involved with a program and community for years to come, as graduate students in the master's program, they were only there for two years. UNC SILS has since hired a coordinator just entering the graduate program, meaning that it will have continuity for two years instead of switching over after a year. This might provide additional opportunities for growing the program or developing longer-term solutions.

To keep the curriculum in pace with the needs of the community, the course offerings are constantly assessed and new courses are added as necessary or desired. Instructional design tasks help the program update existing course materials and create new classes and series from student input. At the Chapel Hill Public Library location, they offered our community health information course in two parts; one part looking at evaluating online health information and another part on specific sources to find credible health information online. These were taught in partnership with UNC's Health Sciences Library. Two other course additions were a News & Media Literacy course in the wake of increasing discussion about "fake news" and an Online Security & Privacy

course. Adding additional courses always requires either giving up existing courses or finding more time; more classes were offered each semester by extending the number of weeks that the series ran. This was primarily possible because of the paid position of the coordinator; it was generally assumed that the coordinator would teach the classes offered during the first weeks of the semester, while marketing to graduate students was picking up, and during the final weeks of the semester, when graduate students were busy preparing for finals.

## DISCUSSION

### *Advantages & Disadvantages of student-led program design*

There are a variety of advantages and disadvantages to our student-led and volunteer-driven design. As discussed previously, many similar programs have been initiated that are often led by faculty and involve a course for credit. One of the benefits of CWS for students is that they don't have to sign up for a class and the program is fairly flexible. Students are able to sign up for whatever number of classes work best for their schedule, rather than having to meet the requirements of a course. This means that students can make decisions that best match their career goals and desired time commitment. Students can also get involved in CWS at any point during the curriculum, which was identified as an issue with for-credit opportunities in the literature. However, students aren't paid for their work or compensated through course credit, so there's less of a direct commitment. Also, while allowing any students to participate as instructors reduces barriers to entry, the program can't be seen as entirely equitable since students still need to complete their coursework and many students still need a source of income. Hence, the design of the program relies on graduate students who are privileged enough to have the time to participate voluntarily. However, the classes are offered in the evenings, potentially avoiding conflict with work and school commitments during the day.

Establishing and maintaining relationships with community partners can be a significant burden on instructors interested in service-learning courses (Becnel & Moeller 2017) and developing these relationships and understanding different "policies, politics, and practices" can be a burden on students (Mehra & Robinson 2009, 25). However, in the CWS model, the part-time paid coordinator manages and maintains these partnerships as a primary responsibility for the position. This creates connections for the institution that faculty members and students can take advantage of, while also reducing this barrier for entry for students and faculty who might not have experience developing community relationships. Since the partners are generally the same each year, there's also less work to understand new procedures, and the coordinator is able to explain the necessary procedures to volunteers.

Because the program exists outside of the curriculum, there is more autonomy. For example, though our course schedule generally followed the semester system to accommodate student schedules, it doesn't have to, unlike service-learning courses which have to happen within the semester system. Additionally, since students are volunteering, they participate out of their own interest and excitement rather than working towards credit; the graduate students are intrinsically motivated to participate. Nonetheless, students might participate because of the opportunity to develop marketable professional skills in instruction and the opportunity for research related to teaching, digital literacy, or adult services. Similarly, because the program

isn't tied to curriculum, students can participate at any point in time during their course of study, providing an antidote to Most's (2011) concern that experiential learning often takes place later in the course of study.

On the other hand, because the program is not connected to the curriculum, there is no guarantee that students will participate. The coordinator taught a significant portion of the classes because of a lack of involvement. Anecdotally, this was often because of students' other commitments, such as work, classes, or other extracurriculars. Furthermore, since the program was student-led, it lacked some institutional buy-in or commitment. The school provided funding for the coordinator position, which was incredibly important, but faculty buy-in was still limited. Finally, marketing the program to graduate students was often difficult because students were often already overworked. Hence, getting more buy-in from graduate students and faculty was a significant focus for the coordinator.

### *Community-Engaged Learning and CWS*

A central aspect of past work on this topic is that they are predominantly led by a faculty member and predominantly connected in some way to a credit-bearing course. In this sense, it's clear from these examples that the model holds and can be an incredibly valuable experience, especially when incorporating reflection and the development of professional identity. However, the Community Workshop Series diverges from many of these because it is led and implemented by graduate students and unconnected from coursework. This positioning effectively centers the graduate student experience and allows graduate students to do both the work of identifying community needs and working with community partners and balancing those needs with their own education needs and desired learning outcomes.

Further, the program centers students' own intrinsic motivation to learn about library instruction and community engagement rather than being primarily motivated by grades, instructors, and degree requirements. Simultaneously, success and failure for the initiative is dependent on students' work and engagement, preparing them for initiating and leading library projects in their future careers. Finally, this model can spread the administrative load of community-engaged programs, which might be taxing when they're entirely the responsibility of a single course instructor, noted by Becnel & Moeller (2017) as a difficulty of the course-integrated model (57). This also supports the sustainability of the program; where a course-integrated program might end if that course can no longer be offered, CWS can clearly continue as long as students are interested in and dedicated to the program, the community, and the learning opportunity—though (financial) support from the university is certainly helpful for sustainability.

Hence, this program presents a different model for approaching service-learning from those approaches discussed above. The next section includes an overview of the history of CWS and the operation of this program then a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages to our processes in comparison to some of the programs discussed above.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Recommendation 1: Use Reflection*

CWS offers a distinct opportunity for graduate students to engage with praxis as they navigate the theory of the LIS field and the practical skills necessary to prepare for the workplace. Inspired by Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1993), praxis requires participants to critically reflect on their actions as well as their role as individuals in society. Further work to develop a critical reflection module or evaluation for graduate students could allow them to develop their identities as teaching librarians with larger issues of social justice and information privilege in mind. Becker (2000) and de la Peña McCook (2009) argue for the importance of reflection in service-learning program, and many of the programs discussed in the literature review implement reflection as a research practice but also to encourage students to think about their own role and professionalization.

On the other hand, the program itself requires reflection, which can be accomplished through program assessment and data analysis. Data analysis allows programs like CWS to understand the wants and needs of participants, volunteers, and partners. Without regular engagement with feedback, the program can grow stagnant or even chaotic; organizing statistics, updating feedback forms, and relaying insight from the data gained encourages intentional development and a secure future.

### *Recommendation 2: Engage with the Existing Curriculum*

For the most part, CWS has operated separately from the LIS curriculum; however, connecting CWS to the existing curriculum might help with recruiting graduate students. A few opportunities include developing a certificate program, developing a practicum or field experience, offering a credit-bearing course (like many of the programs discussed in the literature review) or partnering with an existing course. It might also help to simply map the learning outcomes of CWS (or a similar community-engaged learning program) to existing learning outcomes within the curriculum to specifically emphasize the ways that the program complements the existing curriculum similar to Albertson & Whitaker (2011); the exercise of mapping to the curriculum may increase MLIS buy-in to participate as instructors. In the case of CWS, there was only one class at UNC SILS that focused on instruction, meaning there was limited opportunity to gain this valuable teaching experience in a low stake yet still impactful environment. Hence, CWS provides an additional opportunity for students to develop and practice skills relevant to their future careers, which they might not have been able to develop and practice otherwise.

### *Recommendation 3: Provide Leadership & Community Engagement Opportunities*

While the focus for CWS has often been identifying graduate student volunteers to serve as instructors and floaters, there are opportunities for engagement beyond those roles. While the coordinator is responsible for managing the program and maintaining relationships with the library partners, there are still other opportunities for volunteers to take on leadership roles or be more involved with community engagement to develop other professional skills that might benefit them or be of interest to them. There are certainly opportunities for other independent studies or master's projects and papers similar to the second author's approach when the program didn't have funding. These should be encouraged and fostered by the coordinator and involving

other graduate students directly with the community partners, might help spur new ideas and new relationships.

#### *Recommendation 4: Listen to Community Partners & Focus on Sustainability*

It's important to remember that the program is a partnership between the institution and community partners, in this case, public libraries; Yontz & de la Peña McCook (2003) center this reciprocity in their approach. Programs like CWS depend on community engagement to support relationships with library partners; some of this work includes fostering new relationships with potential library sites and organizations, managing a social media presence, and facilitating communication between the organization and community partners. Meeting with these community stakeholders and partners is important to assess their needs and ensure that the program is sustainable. For CWS, the program coordinator should be able to sustain the program on behalf of the institution, but the community partners still have to participate in terms of booking space, advertising to community members, and listening to the community's needs. While the program bolsters their digital literacy offerings by relying on volunteers, there's still a demand for staff time and commitment from the partners.

#### CONCLUSION

CWS is a unique program with its real-time community engagement and opportunities to put digital inclusion in practice; however, there is an extensibility to the model. For example, many public libraries offer technology help in a variety of forms such as formal workshops like CWS to individual tutoring and drop-in hours. Interested current professionals and graduate students alike could identify active digital literacy initiatives and begin the process of partnering with those libraries. Much of this work requires fostering relationships. Often times the connection between an instructor and participants far outweighed the instructor's Microsoft Excel knowledge. Community engagement requires this type of hands-on, active collaboration. The CWS model allows others to create a framework that works for their communities.

The Community Workshop Series demonstrates a unique student-led model for community-engaged learning in LIS education that exists separately from the curriculum while still bolstering and complementing that curriculum with practical professional experience. To this end, this article situates CWS within the context of service-learning and experiential-learning in LIS education, and provides a brief layout and recommendations for anyone interested in creating a similar program. The authors hope that others will see the value for both graduate students and community members and initiate similar community-engaged learning initiatives at their own institutions.

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#### BIOGRAPHIES

Matthew Weirick Johnson is the Lead for Teaching & Learning and Librarian for English & History at UCLA Library. While acquiring an MSLS at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Information & Library Science (UNC SILS), Johnson served as the graduate research assistant managing the Community Workshop Series from July 2017 to May 2018.

Meggie Lasher is the Research & Academic Engagement Librarian at the E.H. Little Library at Davidson College in the Charlotte area of North Carolina. She was the Program Coordinator for the Community Workshop Series during its transition from May 2016 to June 2017.

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