

Integrating Community-based Learning with LIS Education

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Abstract

With the support of IMLS, Drexel University created a certificate of community-based librarianship that had become a part of their LIS degree. The unique features of the Certificate include:

- Bringing communities to the classroom
- Developing solutions and services through design thinking
- Combining two CBL to create impact to communities
- Engaging communities through capstone work

Two cohorts of the certificate were offered. The results indicate that students were appreciated the opportunity to learn and develop skills on community-based librarianship. They were satisfied with what they learned in the program and wish to learn more. The activities that students like the most include:

- Students develop a good understanding of major concepts and process of community information needs analysis;
- Students learn to collaborate with others to identify and address community needs or problems.

The CBL Certificate

Drexel [College of Computing & Informatics](#)' Post-Baccalaureate/Graduate Certificate in Community-Based Librarianship (CBL) provides an intellectual foundation and fundamental practical skills for paraprofessionals and professionals interested in developing impactful skills within areas such as user and community engagement and services, information and data services, digital technology services, and public or academic librarianship.

The certificate includes three courses:

- INFO546: Data Analytics for Community-Based Data & Service
- INFO547: Design Thinking for Digital Community Service
- INFO890: CBL Capstone Course

INFO546: Data Analytics for Community-Based Data and Service

- A community-based course that utilizes in-class lectures and partnerships with a community small business or non-profit to assess the data and information needs of, design data-driven methods for, and proposal and/or develop sustainable data infrastructure to those community organizations.



Lessons Learned

1. There is great interest to community-based learning and community-based librarianships. (CBL)

- Both libraries and perspective students welcome the idea of developing community engagement skills for students.
- All the parties believe that CBL is important and is what all the libraries should focus on.
- All believe that Library staff need CBL training

2. It is challenging to turn the great interest to actions and involvements

- Unclear how CBL will bring impact to libraries and communities
- The value of a CBL certificate has not been established
- The pandemic interrupted the full implementation of the project which was designed with many face-to-faced activities.

3. An intro-level certificate would be a great way to introduce perspective students to a LIS career.

- A good recruitment to attract perspective LIS students
- An eye-opening and a step stone needed by many

4. It is important to continue develop community-based librarianships

- Develop better Understanding of the communities' needs
- Design and develop community-engagement skills
- Bring communities to the classroom to enhance classroom learning

INFO547: Design Thinking for Digital Community Service



INFO 890 Capstone

- CBL Capstone
 - fusion of community work and LIS work
 - Engage with specific projects/communities
- Sample capstone projects
 - “Liberty Un-Framed: Unsettling the Coloniality of Genius” -- developed a program for youth that teaches fundamental history about abolition, anti Blackness, and the early-modern era.
 - “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Collections Audit” - assisted a library system in its efforts for an EDI collections audit.
 - “Library Programming in nearby Parks” – researched and interviewed stakeholders for a suitable library program and activities in three local parks.



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Publications:

- Poole, Alex H., Denise Agosto, Xia Lin, and Erjia Yan (2022). “Librarianship as citizenship”: The Promise of Community-Based Learning in North American Library and Information Science Education,” *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 63(2), 153-169.
- Poole, Alex H. (2022). “Putting Community-Based Learning and Librarianship into Practice.” Information for a Better World: Shaping the Global Future: 17th International Conference, iConference 2022, Virtual Event, February 28 – March 4, 2022, Proceedings, Part I, Feb 2022 Pages 69–78 https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-96957-8_8
- Poole, Alex H., “Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Library and Information Science through Community-Based Learning,” in K. Toeppe et al. (Eds.), *iConference 2021, LNCS 12645 (2021)*, 529–540. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-71292-1_41. (Runner-up for Best Short Research Paper, iConference 2021).
- Poole, Alex H., Denise Agosto, Jane Greenberg, Xia Lin, and Erjia Yan, “Where Do We Stand? Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in North American Library and Information Science Education,” *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 62, no. 3 (2021): 258-286. DOI: 10.3138/jelis.2020-0018