Finding Your People
Abby Johnson
Collection Development Leader, Floyd County Library

Starting in a new role can be hard, especially if you’re the only one doing what you do in your building or your system. About two years ago, I switched positions from Youth Services Manager to Collection Development Leader and it’s been a big change. I’m now selecting and managing all our materials (youth and adult), cataloging, and working with vendors in a much more involved way than before. And one big challenge for me has been building my personal learning network (PLN) in this new-to-me area of library service. It has made me really appreciate the youth services PLN that I had built over the years and I want to make sure you have one, too.

What’s a PLN? A Personal Learning Network is a network of relationships that results in learning opportunities for continued growth. It may be a group of people you can reach out to and ask questions, it may be people that you follow on social media to get ideas.

Why build a PLN? Because you don’t have to do this alone. It may feel that way, particularly if you’re the only youth services person, but it doesn’t have to. Reaching out to other librarians can help you brainstorm new ideas, troubleshoot things that are going on at your library, learn about programs and services going on in other libraries, and release stress by commiserating over common struggles. Having a group of talented, enthusiastic youth librarians that I could turn to has not only made me a better librarian, but it’s made being a librarian more enjoyable.

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Welcome to Our New Board Members

Terms begin July 1, 2020

See more ALA Election results at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection

VP/President Elect:
Kimberly Bishop

Secretary:
Katherine Kimball Adelberg

Member At-Large:
Amber Loveless
Alexandra Abenson
Angela Glowcheski
President’s Message
Cheryl Wright, LearnRT President

Technology - the New Normal?

Are you working with a Luddite (a person opposed to new technology... NOT one of the band of English workers who destroyed machinery in the early 1800s for fear it was taking their jobs)? Are you responsible for creating opportunities for technology or digital literacy training for library staff?

As technology becomes more of the status quo, and base of all of our processes, it is important to find ways to help our co-workers and colleagues overcome their fears of that technology. This is so much harder than it sounds. I remember when we first got a PC at work. I was managing a small branch library and my staff were terrified to even touch the computer. They were certain that if they opened anything, they were going to bring down the entire library network (we have 23 branches!)

It took me a while to get them to understand that we had safety measures in place that would prevent this. I found the best way for them to learn, was to simply do easy tasks. I gave them some exercises to do (not physical although that might have helped ease the stress) and made several “mistakes” myself that would lock up the system, just to show them that it could easily be restarted.

Playing is such a key to learning, and I hope that we can all find ways to play as we learn. Making exercises that are specific to job duties is a great way to get started. And technology is so much more than just the computers – it is the public printers, the usb drives, the apps on phones, cameras, robots, self check machines, etc. Identify the tools your staff use and find ways to help them learn their proper use.

One of the great ways to learn is to have a “petting zoo” – where staff can touch and play with different technologies. Help them learn how to code, or take pictures with a phone, and then upload and edit it to a photo editor. Show them how to make a greeting card in various programs, or build a household budget in Excel.

Good luck in paving the way for more technology learning! It is a big, scary world, but as trainers - we’ve got this!
Member Profile - Raymond Pun

Raymond Pun (he/him/his) is an instruction/research librarian at the Alder Graduate School of Education. As a solo academic/school librarian, he supports all library services, and is interested in fostering professional development opportunities, specifically in diversity, equity and inclusion. Ray is a member of IFLA’s CPDWL (Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning) Section and collaborates with library workers from around the world to create learning opportunities for the profession at large.

Training for Library Supervisors

The Supervisor Success Committee of ALA’s Learning Round Table exists to coordinate professional development activities around the topic of supervisory training. Their vision is for every library to have well-trained supervisors.

The Committee created this collection of self-paced training modules to equip supervisors with core skills that help them effectively meet day-to-day challenges, achieve results, and build a more positive, effective workplace and environment. The content is applicable to a range of audiences:

- New supervisors or people ready to move into supervisory roles
- Supervisors that have never had training, still winging it 10 years later
- Supervisors that need a refresher

Modules include:

- Encouraging Motivation in the Workplace
- Managing Conflict for Supervisor Success
- Performance Management for Supervisors

Click here to learn more at WebJuntion.
As librarians, we all know that continuing education is extremely important to our development, both personally and professionally. From learning a new technology skill or attending a seminar on customer service, the growth we experience as individuals helps the patrons that we serve as a community.

The majority of our staff worked in libraries prior to transitioning to ByWater to provide partner focused support and ongoing educational initiatives focused on technology ownership and empowering libraries. For this reason, ByWater has been particularly well equipped to provide ongoing education for both our customers and other libraries and vendors in the community.

When COVID19 caused a worldwide pandemic, the staff at ByWater realized that our individual skill sets could be shared with our partner libraries to help adapt to the challenges faced by this new normal. Topics such as content creation, computer science, community outreach, ILS management, and working from home are all areas that we as individuals have significant experience with and could easily and openly share with the library community.
Due to COVID-19 and the stay at home order within the state of Florida, the Consumer Health Librarian of the Clifford E. Graese Community Health Library of Orlando Health, Jessica Daly, MLS, realized she must think of an innovative way to bring her health literacy education to the communities of Central Florida from the confines of her home. During her first phone call to cancel an in-person presentation for a local rotary club, Jessica was asked by the club’s president if she would like to present during their Zoom meeting the following week. The virtual presentation during the rotary club’s meeting was a huge success! Not only were just as many people reached, but the president of the Rotary Club of Orlando wrote an amazing recommendation that Jessica was able to share as a testimonial, and it assisted her in scheduling virtual presentations with other clubs for the coming weeks and months.

The success of the virtual health literacy presentations has led to even more opportunities for additional club, organization, civic groups, and even chamber of commerce virtual presentations within central Florida, and throughout the state. By presenting virtually, distance is no longer an issue nor an expense for the consumer health library when it comes to travel. The most requested topics include: “Becoming Your Own Patient Advocate”, “Dealing with Stress the Healthy Way” and “Sleep and Your Health”.

This easy method of presenting has also led to an increased number of patient and family caregiver weekly research requests to the consumer health librarian, meaning the health literacy of the participants is improving! When health literacy is improved, we know the overall health and quality of life of these patients will improve, which is the overarching goal of this role.

During the month of May, Jessica created a webinar series entitled “Coffee and Conversation” where she presented two live webinars to the public. Each was also recorded due to many contacting her and explaining they could not attend at the proposed live webinar time, but they wanted the information.

In June of 2020, a new series has begun called “Let’s Do Lunch” meeting Mondays at 12 noon. The new topic of telemedicine will be the first webinar, giving patients and family caregivers information and confidence in conducting virtual healthcare visits.

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The Learning Round Table (LearnRT) of the American Library Association is pleased to announce that Jerilynne Stewart (the Corrections Librarian at SCI Mahanoy, which is part of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections) has been selected as this year’s recipient of the Pat Carterette Professional Development Grant. As part of her award, Ms. Stewart will receive a $1,000 grant to attend a professional development event and she will be matched with a LearnRT member-mentor for the year. Cheryl Wright (the Manager of Organizational Learning & Development at the Indianapolis Marion County Public Library and LearnRT President) will serve in that role.

Ms. Stewart will use the grant to attend the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Indianapolis, IN, in January 2021. Ms. Stewart has a documented history of continuous professional development. In addition to being a 2019 Eisner Innovation Grant winner, she has taken a course on the Prison Library as Agent of Rehabilitative Change and she is currently enrolled in a paralegal program to better assist her patrons. The selection committee was also impressed with the ideas that Ms. Stewart has on how to share what she learns at the ALA Midwinter Meeting with the other correctional librarians in her state, who have limited opportunities to engage in professional development.

This grant is designed to honor the passion that Pat Carterette (a past-President of LearnRT) had for professional development in the field of library and information sciences. Pat’s legacy is focused on providing outstanding educational opportunities for her colleagues to grow and develop within their career field. Funding for the grant comes from pre-conference events and sponsorship of the LearnRT Training Showcase.

The application period for the 2021 – 2022 grant will open in the fall of 2020 and close on February 15, 2021. The grant application will be advertised on the ALA site.
So, how do you build a PLN? Let me count the ways!

Do you prefer face-to-face contact? Attend a regional or national conference or meeting and bring business cards to exchange. (May I recommend the ALSC Institute, happening in October this year?) Strike up conversations with those sitting or standing near you – at a library conference we all have something in common. If all else fails, ask them what book they’re reading or what they hope will win the Newbery Medal and go from there. Exchange emails and don’t be afraid to reach out and make a connection. In my experience, librarians are eager to help; it’s in the nature of our job! (Editor’s note, this was written pre-COVID-19.)

Do you prefer virtual contact? There are tons of ways to build to build a PLN virtually. I am a huge fan of Twitter – it’s great for crowdsourcing questions and finding new ideas. Search the hashtag #librarylife to find thousands of librarians who are regular Tweeters. Pick some to start following, respond to their tweets, strike up a conversation. Once you’ve found some folks that you click with, tag them with your questions or send direct messages.

Twitter not your thing? Consider librarian Facebook groups such as Storytime Underground or Teen Services Underground. These groups have tons of content with program ideas, book suggestions, and interesting discussions.

Even if you don’t find every post helpful, watching the group for awhile can help you identify like-minded people to reach out to when you have questions or need some inspiration.

The ASLC Blog and other youth librarian blogs can be a great tool for networking – comment on posts of interest and get a conversation started. If you hit it off with someone, ask to exchange emails for easier communication.

Taking advantage of the chat functions in webinars can be a great way to get even more bang for your buck when you sign up for training. When I attended one of NoveList’s genre reading webinars, the chat was just as valuable at the official presenters with people sharing titles and ideas. When you see that happening, jump in!

However you decide to dip in and get started, I hope you’ll find your Personal Learning Network as valuable as I have found mine. Youth librarians are an amazing bunch!

Abby Johnson is the Collection Development Leader at the Floyd County Library and she served on the 2015 Newbery Medal Committee. You can find her on the web at abbylibrarian.com.

This article was originally published in the ALSC blog, and has been reprinted with
Leadership and Transparency
Doug Crane, Director, Palm Beach County Library System

"The traditional relationship between "leaders" and "followers" is the opposite of what I believe is needed to be most effective, and being maximally effective is the most important thing a "leader" must do." – Ray Dalio

Although I have been a librarian for over twenty-two years, it still amazes me that certain books can have a deep impact on our view of the world and ourselves. This happened recently with a remarkable book called Principles by Ray Dalio. Ray Dalio is an American billionaire investor, hedge fund manager, and philanthropist. Most famously, Dalio is the founder of Bridgewater Associates, one of the world’s largest hedge funds and a company with a unique approach to culture.

Bridgewater and Culture

Bridgewater strives to be a meritocracy of ideas where openness and dialogue are maximized for the goal of allowing the best ideas to surface. At Bridgewater, every meeting is recorded, every staff evaluation is open record, and anyone can give and receive feedback from anyone else. For some, this total transparency is uncomfortable. For others, the culture becomes a powerful tool for growth. Adam Grant’s podcast WorkLife, explored Bridgewater in the episode, “How to Love Criticism.”

I believe the Bridgewater approach to leadership is worth exploring because the basic principles have universal application. I think it is especially true for government as our public records laws already force us to be open. As well, Bridgewater’s idea of leadership has merits for libraries as free access to information is core to our profession.

Leadership in an Idea Meritocracy

At Bridgewater positional leadership is irrelevant. For a leader in an idea meritocracy, supporting the pursuit of truth is paramount. Leaders encourage a culture of conversation and debate. Dalio states that "Thoughtful discussion and disagreement is practical because it stress-tests leaders and bring what is missing to their attention." When an organization wants to discover the best ideas, Dalio believes that leaders must do two things well.

1/ Open-mindedly seek out the best answers.
2/ Bring others along as part of that discovery process

In Bridgewater’s culture, Dalio says "A truly great leader is appropriately uncertain but well equipped to deal with that uncertainty through open-minded exploration.”

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LearningExchange  June 2020
While some leaders hesitate to ask questions to avoid appearing ignorant, Dalio believes that asking questions is, "necessary in order to become wise and it is a prerequisite for being strong and decisive." He believes leaders should seek out those smarter and wiser, even letting junior staff who are better equipped take the lead. As Dalio states, "The objective is to have the best understanding to make the best possible leadership decisions.”

Leaders seeking to make everyone happy are bound to fail. I have sometimes found myself slipping into the "likability" trap. For Dalio this trap is dangerous for an organization as it is wasted energy. As he puts it, "If you don’t have better insights than them, you shouldn’t be a leader – and if you do have better insights that them, don’t worry if you are doing unpopular things.” He tells his leaders, "Just worry about making the best decisions possible, recognizing that no matter what you do, most everyone will think you’re doing something – or many things – wrong.” Disagreements are viewed as a sign that leaders are doing their job. Meaningful debate leads to exploring problems fully and finding novel solutions.

This approach places responsibility on leaders to effectively communicate. Leaders must ensure that everyone understands the issues at hand. Dalio warns that, "When you are the only one thinking, the results will suffer.”

The old style authoritarian leader who barks orders doesn’t cut it at Bridgewater because "Authoritarian managers don’t develop their subordinates, which means those who report to them stay dependent.” This type of leadership ends in resentment or even worse, defiance.

From Dalio’s point of view, leaders in a meritocracy need to recognize that, "The greatest influence you can have over intelligent people – and the greatest influence they will have on you – comes from constantly getting in sync with what is true and what is best so that you all want the same thing.” Being in sync means that everyone is in agreement on the broader principles and goals. Once the terms of engagement are clear, vigorous debate can follow.

The Future of Leadership?

I think Ray Dalio and Bridgewater provide a modern view of leadership that more people should strive to emulate. I am applying these principles to my own leadership approach. I challenge you to see what happens when openness and discussion are amplified in your organization.

(Author note: The material and quotes presented here are from Principles, 2017, Section 10.10, pages 464-466. This is a condensed version of an article originally published at www.efficientlibrarian.com)
We find that people are much more interested in viewing 10 five minute videos at their leisure, as opposed to one 50 minute video.

Breaking content into chunks helps lessen the anxiety over having to sit and engage with a computer screen, especially when the audience is used to in-person training interactions.

We believe that it is not only important to provide continuing education to our partner base, but also in making it easy for the partner to create and share their own content independently. Truly successful continuing education results in the recipient not only being the student, but also being enthusiastic enough about a topic to then pass that knowledge on to others. We believe that true collaboration and community building works most successfully when it becomes viral.

Continuing Education comes in many forms, either in-person instruction or virtually through live webinars. The content used to facilitate these sessions should be engaging, easy to access, and free to share. This empowers libraries to become their own trust agents and pass on knowledge learned during their personal and professional interactions to others in a way that also promotes future dissemination.

The other topics will be becoming your own patient advocate, researching your health online safely, and a webinar on what’s in your medicine cabinet. These webinars were promoted throughout Orlando Health, through email lists, on social media and on library listservs.

Many groups have shared how they may continue with virtual meetings in the future due to the savings they have accrued while not having to rent a space to meet. One rotary club even shared how they gave the money normally used to rent their meeting space to the local hospital frontline workers, providing them with food and recognition. This exemplifies giving back to the community while also improving the health literacy.

For more information on how this process became a success, feel free to email Jessica Daly at Jessica.Daly@OrlandoHealth.com.

Jessica Daly currently serves as the Consumer Health Librarian for Orlando Health Hospital System in Orlando, Florida.
Best Practices for adding Closed Captioning to your videos with two low-cost programs

Martin Dunlap, Engineering Librarian
Evansdale Library, West Virginia University

Like most institutions, we are required to have captions on all public facing multi-media that we create. We have a campus group which is tasked with providing the captioning, but they are inundated with work and their turn-around times can be days, if not weeks away. We needed a way to create captions ourselves without breaking the bank.

I use a low-cost program called Screencast-o-matic (SOM) to not only make the most of my videos, but to also create caption files. I use another (free) program called Format Factory (Version 4.3) to actually add the captions to the video file.

Let’s say I have created a 93 second video about how to access a certain database on our library website. I could send it over to Accessibility Services to have them add the captions, but it would make more sense for me to add them myself. It will only take a few minutes of my time, and I can get it out to the students who need it right away.

Click here to learn more, including further instructions and screen shots.

Training Resources from WebJunction

As many of us are adapting to new working environments, working remotely, and ever changing daily operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed at the constant and rapid changes taking place. Don’t forget about the great tools available to you from WebJunction!

Check out helpful resources related to:
• Online Training and
• Creating and Delivering Training