**Bobby:**

All right, so, my name is Bobby Bothman, and I’m going to talk to you today about my perspective as an adjunct instructor of the skills that cataloging students need. As you can see by my day job, I work at Minnesota State University in Mankato, and by night, howling at the moon as an adjunct professor for GSLIS at the University of Illinois. I previously have also done adjuncting for Milwaukee, which is my alma mater. So, overview, what I’m going to talk about today is what you see on the board here, and again from my perspective as an adjunct instructor, the skills and competencies that LIS students need, and how the LIS profession and LIS programs can collaborate to help students with this. And I’m just going to be, again, speaking from my own perspective as a cataloging instructor, and we’re going to be talking about cataloging students, so I use LIS a lot, but when I say LIS I really mean catalogers. (And I apologize for reading a little bit more than I’m used to doing, because normally when I do these things I’m talking about cataloging, and I can run around the room and do that off the top off my head. This is not something that I can do that with.) So, and then quickly I would like to go over some definitions. Competence and competency: I’ve seen them used as almost the same term, and they really aren’t, competence being something where you have that—you’re competent, you’re able to do it; sufficiency of qualification, as the OED calls it, and then competency is an industry jargon thing, and it really means an ability or a skill. So, just to set that difference up for us.

ALA has this list of core competencies. So if you go to ALA or if you just Google ALA core competencies, you will come across this. And they have these 8 areas here, and I’d like to quote it here, because it says, “A person graduating from an ALA accredited masters program in Library and Information Science Studies should know and, where appropriate, be able to employ,” and then it means the competencies on this list. Cataloging is only mentioned once, and it’s there on number three, Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information, and it says simply “the systems of cataloging, metadata, indexing, and classification standards and methods used to organize recorded knowledge and information. That is all it talks about for competencies in ALA core competencies. Just basically one line is all we get, which is kind of sad. However, I think as we’ve seen already today most LIS address these core competencies in a sufficient manner, and the idea of employing a specific competency isn’t where cataloging courses are not core isn’t always true. So there are programs where you don’t need to take cataloging, and you can get out of even having that, so you wouldn’t necessarily get all of these in there.

There is also a list of knowledge and competencies statements from other ALA divisions and LIS related organizations. There’s a bunch of other competencies and knowledge from different organizations and professional groups. The only one in there that has anything that relates to cataloging is MAGERT’s “Map, GIS, and Cataloging/Metadata Librarian Core Competencies, and it’s map, GIS, and metadata librarian core competencies. So that’s the only other one that addresses what we do. There isn’t anything from CaMMS in here or ALCTS for cataloging competencies, so that might be something that we can work on in the future.

An instructor wish list. So, I did a scientific Facebook poll (laughter), and so I asked instructor pals what they wished students came to their classes with, and critical thinking was by far the highest one that everyone said. Curiosity, holistic visioning (or, seeing the forest and the trees), open-minded listening, patience, time management. So these are the things that the instructors are really wishing their students actually had more of in class. Competencies we teach, so, Sylvia Hall-Ellis a couple of years ago did an article, and looked at what we’re teaching, what employers want, and this was her list of typically taught courses: descriptive classification, standard subject analysis, sometimes authority control (at least enough to know and be dangerous with it)(?). And then what is sometimes included and sometimes isn’t necessarily: original versus copy cataloging. Certainly we’ve talked about it, but usually when we teach cataloging we’re teaching it from an original perspective, right, not from a copy cataloging standard, because you need to know original to figure out how to do copy. Research and publication; of course not everyone is going to need to do that, but that is also another piece of our focus that I find is not talked about. And then technological applications, and that’s probably the hardest one. We can certainly make use of Connexion browser from OCLC, and most library schools for students to get some hands-on experience with an actual tool that we use. But there is no playground ILS system that we can use, which would be so awesome to have. I did try once, the Koha (because Koha will let you try it for free for a library school) and it was a disaster, mainly because their interface is so complicated and that deer in the headlight picture is exactly what the students had when they saw that, so that’s not an experience that I’m going to do again.

So when we look at what we offer as practitioners, out in the wild, and real libraries, administrative awareness, for example, where we fit in the priority of the organization. There’s all these different things, and some of them overlap, so we’ll see that here in a second. As they overlap here in these necessary competencies, so this is my list that I have created, and I don’t claim them to be comprehensive, but it’s something that I have culled together from different articles and such that I was looking at for this particular presentation, and when I came up with it, I came up with what I called the intersections. So on the one side are shared LIS competencies, so things that between practitioners and LIS curriculum we can offer to students, and then on the other side we have what I call the unclaimed competencies, so things that we want our students to know, we want people that we’re going to hire to know, but that we might not necessarily teach or provide instruction in the skills in the classroom, in the LIS curriculum, or on the job, for example. So that is the main thing that I wanted to bring to this particular discussion.

So when we look at what’s left over, and this is that same list that we were seeing, the unclaimed competencies, so what I did on Wednesday—I’m teaching the advanced cataloging class this semester, so I threw this at my students to have them look at it and see what they were talking about. Because it’s unfortunately been a while since I was in the LIS curriculum myself, even though it doesn’t feel like I’ve aged a day in that time. But, these are the things that we weren’t seeing, but what I was thinking about, what I decided to call the Lego effect, is that we do teach some of this stuff, actually, and one of the things that people are always asking for or asking about was project management skills. That’s one of the new jargon-y terms out there, project management skills. So when you look at what project management skills entail, it’s usually these: attention to detail, and we’ve got that in spades, right, when we talk about descriptive cataloging; communication; leadership; negotiation; organization; and recognizing and solving problems.

So what I decided to do was look at that in the perspective of what we teach in the LIS and cataloging courses, and then the students actually expanded upon it from other courses that they take. So, attention to detail, of course, descriptive cataloging. Communication, they’re doing papers, they’re doing presentations, so they’re building those skills. There are group projects where both leadership and negotiation. Their degree design itself, so what courses they’re going to take and how they’re going to map out what they’re going to do is another negotiation kind of situation, you can think of it that way. Classification and subject analysis really relate to organization. And for recognizing and solving problems they came up with the reference interview and case studies. So the idea there being that they have a lot of these skills, and if you look at it outside of the box a little more, you can repurpose them to meet other competencies that you need. So part of what we may need to do as educators is point out how some of these skills that we’re teaching them for a specific competency can also be repurposed and reused in different situations.

So another one we talked about is holistic visioning, the forest and the trees type of thing. And this is the in-class exercise that we did. I said, “What skills do you have that you repurpose for this competence, and they came up with this, and hopefully it’s mostly readable. Multilingual proficiency, so those students who know another language, they felt that that has come in quite handy. Collection development skills for seeing the big picture have also been handy, knowing your collection and knowing what needs to be done. Knowing the user needs, classification, they said that if you can understand FRBR you can understand the big picture in some ways. And so these are the types of things that they came up with.

And then collaboration options to think about, so one of things—Danny and Ryan talked about this as well—is that our literature is bloated with basically us bellyaching about the skills and things that our students need, and as I was thinking about that I said, “Oh my god, I’ve actually contributed to this morass,” and so I decided to pull that out and reread it, and what I had said at that time was things that we could do would be mentoring, practicums, and professional organizations. Now mentoring comes up a lot, but what I was thinking was instead of mentoring our students and sitting them down in front of the terminal and teaching them how to catalog something, I was thinking more mentoring in terms of—this is the administrative function awareness kind of thing—how does the cataloging department fit in the grander scheme of librarianship. And that’s not something that they’re necessarily going to get, all those big picture kinds of things. So looking at it not from the sit down and how do you do this in front of a computer, but showing them, say, a microchip project, showing them a backlight project, and how that works. So of course practicums would be another example of that. Professional organizations. There are some out there that have student chapters, and that’s probably a wise thing, because they can grow their membership that way. So maybe more of us in these different professional organizations that we have could make some student chapters where students would have an opportunity to do some work and gain some leadership skills, for example, by being in a student chapter of a professional organization.

And I’m going to close with this thought here on perspective, and just to make sure we don’t lose sight of a few things. We’ve talked a lot about LIS students in terms of competencies or skills today, we’ve talked about the courses that we offer, we’ve talked about learning on the job, we’ve talked about those things, and there’s always that that tension between what we can do in library school and what we can get on the job. And I think it’s just important to remember that the master’s degree in library and information science, by master’s degree, we’re asking for a high level understanding and mastery of the subject, not detailed, specific mastery of the subject. So there is that to keep in mind, and while we would certainly love, particularly the students that we can convert to our side at the end of the intro to cataloging course, and get them excited about those things, it is a master’s graduate program, not a vocational school program, so just remember that.

**Moderator:**

Questions?

**Question 1:**

You mentioned something that fascinates me, and Autumn kind of brought it up too, the new research in mentoring shows that mentoring is a two way street.

**Bobby:**

Yes.

**Question 1:**

It informs the mentee as well as the mentor, and you mentioned this is a master’s program. What success have you had as an adjunct in finding mentors that were interested in both teaching and learning from the mentees? How are you finding that?

**Bobby:**

Everyone is always excited about mentoring, and everyone says it’s a good idea, and everyone says we should have more, but when it comes down to it—like I have signed up to do one of those mentoring--ALCTS had one of those things many years ago, and I signed up to do that, and I got connected with somebody, and we worked together for a while, and then they just fell off the face of the earth, basically, and that happens I think more often than it really comes to fruition. So the in-person mentoring is probably the best way to do it. The distance mentoring is definitely more difficult, but I don’t know if I know that many people that are clamoring to do it right now either. Did I get the question mostly?

**Question 1:**

I think that you answered my question. I think that mostly I heard you say that while we may talk a lot about core competencies, we don’t have guidelines for how to be a mentor or a mentee, and there’s no structure to the program, so if I put in what Autumn said that might be a helpful thing to add some structure.

**Question 2:**

Have you thought about getting a Ph.D. and teaching in an LIS program?

**Bobby:**

Every now and then I do, but I like where I am. That’s the harder part. Maybe.

**Question 3:**

I had kind of a follow-up to that. So as an adjunct, as a practitioner, but also faculty, but not part of discussing the ins and outs of the curriculum at the institution where you’re teaching, do you see advantages to that, where you’re coming in from the outside? Can you talk about pluses and minuses of being both a practitioner and an adjunct?

**Bobby:**

Oh, I see. I might be in a more—where I am we are faculty, librarians, and so we do participate, like I have been part of the graduate committee for curriculum, for example, so I have had that experience at work as well, but I don’t know if that’s really the norm of a lot of us that are practitioners. But it has definitely helped me being an adjunct and doing student learning outcomes, and teaching to those, and knowing curriculum and stuff. That has really helped for sure.

**Question 3:**

I want to follow up on that just for a second, because the two universities I’ve taught at, our adjuncts really were at a disadvantage, because they’re not sitting in the faculty meetings with us, they’re not hearing all the concerns and issues the department has, or being a part of that decision making process. And some places are better at providing guidance to their adjuncts than others. And so that’s probably aligning with your experience.

**Bobby:**

Yeah, and both—at Milwaukee I was always invited to be a part of the day that faculty got together and talked and collaborated about curriculum. For Illinois they had us in an extra day—for Illinois the distance program is different because the students all gather over one day—well, they gather over several days, but if you’re only teaching one course you only need to be there one day—and Urbana, so they kept the cataloging instructors over another day a couple of years ago, and we went through and revamped the entire curriculum for the cataloging courses as well. So they have done a good job of keeping us in the loop, but at the same time that’s also a good point, is that I don’t really have a good concept of what the curriculum as a whole entails, what else the students are taking. I know they have two required courses, and the rest is suggestions based on which type of area they want to go into. And I also know that about 80% of the Illinois students take the cataloging course. So there is a lot of them getting through cataloging. We usually have 3-5 sections each semester overflowing, which is nice.

**Question 4:**

Do you see any challenges teaching cataloging on a distance learning program versus meeting face to face?

**Bobby:**

You know, there are people who have wondered and worried about that, and I think it’s actually better. Because I think in the classroom you see the instructor for an hour, and then you probably don’t see them again until next week when you come back, or two hours, or however long it lasts. And how I’ve been doing it online—of course for Illinois we meet for two hours online, so they hear my voice for two long hours. But we’ve got spaces to work in. So they practice, they get constant feedback. So we’re always in touch. It’s not like when I was in college and you saw the professor once each week. There’s more interaction, so I think they’re getting more out of it that way. So I think it’s actually an advantage rather than a disadvantage?

**Moderator:**

Any last questions? Okay, thank you very much, Bobby.