Student Success and the Neoliberal Academic Library

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ABSTRACT

Academic librarians are committed to promoting student success, and information literacy instruction plays a key role in this mission. But the definition of student success is narrowing as the university aligns itself more with neoliberal mandates. Librarians committed to social justice and to basic library values of openness, privacy, and intellectual freedom must increasingly resist this recasting of student success. How can a critical library praxis encourage and support students’ academic and career goals but still remain faithful to the struggle against the system of inequality and oppression that enables success? This article shows how closely linked the idea of success is today to neoliberal imperatives in higher education. It briefly traces the evolution of neoliberalism in higher education and describes and critiques the hallmarks of the neoliberal academic library. It suggests that within the current constraints imposed on them, students can both learn important skills and knowledge to advance themselves and also become better equipped to use those skills and knowledge to challenge and undermine that system and build a better world. Librarians can and must be facilitators of both kinds of success.

Keywords: critical pedagogy · information literacy · neoliberal library · neoliberalism · student success

RÉSUMÉ

Les bibliothécaires universitaires s’engagent à promouvoir la réussite étudiante, et l’éducation à la culture informationnelle joue un rôle clé dans cette mission. Toutefois, la définition de la réussite étudiante devient de plus en plus étroite au fur et à mesure où l’université s’oriente en fonction de mandats néolibéraux. Les bibliothécaires qui se dévouent à la justice sociale et aux valeurs fondateurçes des bibliothèques que sont l’ouverture, le respect de la vie privée, et la liberté intellectuelle doivent de plus en plus résister à cette redéfinition de la réussite étudiante. Comment une praxis de la bibliothèque critique peut-elle encourager et soutenir les objectifs éducatifs et professionnels des étudiants tout en continuant à soutenir la lutte contre le système des inégalités et de l’oppression qui permet la réussite ? Cet article démontre à quel point est liée aujourd’hui l’idée de la réussite aux impératifs néolibéraux dans le domaine de l’enseignement supérieur. L’article retrace brièvement l’évolution du néolibéralisme dans l’enseignement supérieur. Il décrit et critique les caractéristiques de la bibliothèque universitaire néolibérale. Il suggère que dans les contraintes qui leur sont
Academic libraries are situated within a wide variety of institutions: community colleges, liberal arts colleges, large public universities, small private universities, large wealthy research universities, and many others. Although librarians are accustomed to responding primarily to the needs of their patrons, and they orient their roles and missions to their particular institutions, it is equally important for them to consider the broader forces and trends that create both opportunities and limitations in fulfilling their missions. Today the most important of these factors shaping academia and academic librarianship is neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, as defined by one of its most prominent critics, the philosopher Wendy Brown, is an ideology that generalizes classical liberal economics to all areas of human life:

Human beings become market actors and nothing but, every field of activity is seen as a market, and every entity . . . is governed as a firm. . . . Neoliberalism construes even non-wealth-generating spheres—such as learning, dating, or exercising—in market terms, submits them to market metrics, and governs them with market techniques and practices. Above all, it casts people as human capital who must constantly tend to their own present and future value. (Shenk, 2015)

Of late, the term has become a buzzword within academia, including libraries and information studies. While many librarians seem to use the term more than ever before when referring to their concerns about the profession, some have complained about its over-use or even about its use at all. While neoliberalism may not have a fixed definition, and several interpretations and usages of the term compete with each other, this heterogeneity and capaciousness is not a reason to dismiss the theory’s usefulness, particularly when talking about higher education. While grand theories or umbrella terms can be wielded thoughtlessly or recklessly, they can also assist valid attempts to grapple with the larger forces and structures that we need to understand for our own professional functioning. If some claim that the term is sometimes used to shut down discussion of issues that are of pressing concern, others believe that the term is indispensable for understanding what is happening to academic libraries today. And while it may be annoying or counterproductive to label every innovation and reform in academic libraries as “neoliberal,” I believe that we
can clearly and purposefully identify the ideological manifestations of neoliberalism throughout the academic library today. In short, the neoliberal library exists, and to a greater or lesser extent all libraries are neoliberal today.

Karen Nicholson has recently addressed the urgent need for librarians to confront the challenges posed by neoliberalism, in her article, “The McDonaldization of Academic Libraries and the Values of Transformational Change.” She recommends that librarians both recognize the realities that govern academic libraries today and press for change at the same time:

We need to find productive ways to talk about our role in preparing students for work while continuing to advocate for education and libraries as public goods. We need to frame our critiques of neoliberalism in higher education in a manner that acknowledges the socioeconomic and political realities of our campuses and lobbies for change at the same time. . . . [W]e need to acknowledge the neoliberal context—the McDonaldized paradigm—within which we practice to think critically about its impact and consider what constraints and affordances it presents. (Nicholson, 2015, p. 333, emphasis in the original)

This article takes Nicholson’s recommendation as a prompt to critically examine one of the most commonly used words in contemporary academic discourse, “success,” with particular reference to libraries’ instrumentalization of the term. I will consider the ways that the idea of success performs work for neoliberal goals, but I also will suggest ways that it can be used to challenge those aims. I begin by discussing the origins and nature of neoliberalism in North American higher education, and then I show how academic libraries have attempted to respond to and satisfy the changing demands that neoliberal academic institutions and practices have put upon them. I then suggest openings in the current academic landscape that may allow librarians who are committed to promoting a democratic and socially just society to push back against the neoliberal trends that are making those goals more difficult to achieve.

**The Democratization of Higher Education and the Rise of Neoliberalism**

A serious problem in higher education today is the ever-increasing cost of tuition and the high level of indebtedness of many students, whether or not they manage to graduate from university (Marez, 2014). But even though under neoliberalism a much greater proportion of the burden of education is placed on the shoulders of the students themselves, in crucial ways the overall structure of higher education is much the same as it ever has been. A university education has never been a universal right anywhere, and institutions of higher education have always played a central role in the stratification of society and the maintenance of inequalities and class differences. Higher education in North America, Europe, and perhaps much of the rest of the world, too, has always been driven primarily by the requirements of state and
capital rather than by a democratic impulse to educate and liberate people. The great expansion of higher education in the post–World War II period was driven primarily by the needs of business and the state for a workforce with greater training and education than before. Today only a minority of the total population has the privilege of getting a university degree. And although students in countries with more robust welfare states than the U.S. may pay little or no tuition (this is increasingly no longer the case in many places, however), their systems are also largely focused on producing graduates for various professions, enabling them to assume, or maintain, specific positions in the middle and upper classes.

While the late 1960s witnessed a sizable student-led activist movement to democratize higher education, the global economic slump of the mid-1970s provided the opportunity for the forces of a renewed classical liberalism to begin to roll back the expansion of the public sphere of the previous couple of decades. This period saw a renewed focus on the idea that an education (for most people, at any rate) is only the means to an end (jobs, training, and skills). Ultimately, education has been reduced to a simple formula, equating a good education with a higher income after graduation. Lauren Bialystok has identified the hallmarks of neoliberal education policy today as “high-stakes standardized testing, increasing privatization and commercialization of the education system and assaults on subject areas and teaching methods that are seen as superfluous or radical” (Bialystok, 2014, pp. 416–417). A focus is placed on the individual student as a consumer, who doesn’t have rights but does have choices. As paying customers (usually with borrowed money), students are entitled to as much choice as possible, and the service providers must compete in the open market for their money (Giroux, 2014, pp. 29–52; Newfield, 2011). Many public (and, of course, private) institutions are busy becoming more entrepreneurial and are looking for ways to “partner” with non-educational institutions (usually businesses or business-based foundations). They are seeking a competitive edge or at least the means to stay afloat. Because of the sink-or-swim environment, financial necessity can be cited for any unpopular decision. Libraries usually have little choice but to conform to these trends.

To see how neoliberalism has built on the existing structures of higher education helps to contextualize the situation within which academic libraries now find themselves. Many of the changes since the 1970s have been imperceptible, because the basic structures of the university that came into existence before the advent of neoliberalism are still in place, at least on the surface. But so much of what constitutes the range of possible action in academia, including libraries, has become constrained. Nicholson reminds us that librarians have, inevitably though problematically,
adopted the rhetoric of neoliberal higher education as a way to push for changes within the library world:

As a profession, librarians have largely embraced—or at least unquestioningly accepted—change rhetoric and corporate models. . . . The discourse of transformational change, grounded in an uncritical adoption of neoliberal philosophy and corporate practices, has become the dominant ideology according to which we in academic libraries conceptualize our work, frame our “challenges,” and identify their “solutions.” (Nicholson, 2015, p. 332)

Part of the problem lies in the fact that these processes have come to seem natural, part of the information or academic “ecosystems.” “It is precisely because neoliberalism is part of our everyday lives that it remains largely invisible to us. This might explain why LIS has paid little attention to neoliberalism to date” (Nicholson, 2015, p. 332, emphasis in the original). The remainder of this article will examine and critique one of the neoliberal academic library’s central missions: producing student success.

The Neoliberal Library

First, I will explain what I mean by the term “neoliberal library.” As Nicholson, Chris Bourg, and Jonathan Cope have noted, the neoliberal library is simply one whose policies are guided by the imperative of the market in the strictly economic sense (Bourg, 2014; Nicholson, 2014; Nicholson, 2015; Cope, 2015). Many of the hallmarks of this phenomenon should be familiar to almost anyone who works in a library today:

• The need to constantly justify the existence and purpose of the library and its services and holdings: it’s not a given that the library is a good thing or necessary thing. This is in accord with the general requirement under neoliberalism for everything and everyone to justify itself based on criteria such as cost, efficiency, and performance. And it accords with the general neoliberal principle that no institution or practice has a right to exist, and no one has a right to anything, such as an education or medical care.

• The need to remove protections from those parts of the library that serve no widely used purpose (legacy collections, outdated technologies, underused services such as reference). Useful things must prove their worth through metrics and money (cost savings or income). An increasing suspicion and impatience is directed at anyone who makes claims to resources in order to preserve the existing ways of doing things.

• Information literacy should serve the need of industry and government for skilled and competitive individuals. This mandate is shared by the whole of academia, which is under increasing pressure to orient its functioning toward success defined in narrowly economic terms. Measuring the incomes earned by graduates is one simplistic way of demonstrating the value of their educations. The library is supposed to help with this general effort—anything that does not
tends to be relegated to secondary importance.

• An increasingly urgent call for management strategies that improve performance, value, and return on investment. Library organizations and funding entities invest in and promote individuals who can lead toward this goal. While leadership has always been important for libraries and may always be necessary, there seems to be a stronger mandate to create a managerial class whose interests align with other administrators in the university rather than with their library colleagues or with students.

Scholars in library and information studies have argued that many of these neoliberal practices undermine the goal of providing library services in the open and democratic manner that we have assumed existed or are attempting to achieve. Cope has analyzed how neoliberal language and concepts help shape the ways in which academic libraries conceive of and approach information itself, and how this warps the democratic mission of the library: “Neoliberalism creates a discursive framework in which the value of information is determined by its ability to be monetized.” For this reason, he claims, “LIS must address how neoliberal conceptions of the market have shaped the ways in which information and knowledge are viewed” (Cope, 2014/2015, p. 74). Since neoliberalism functions on a discursive (ideological) level within academic libraries, it is imperative to look at the language that we use on a daily basis to describe and justify our policies and actions. One of the places to look, especially when considering the library’s role in achieving student success, is within information literacy.

The movement for teaching information literacy, as well as its codification by the Association of College & Research Libraries first in the Standards and then in the less-prescriptive Framework that has been proposed to replace it, can be seen as symptomatic of neoliberal trends in academic libraries. Cushla Kapitzke has traced the adoption of the term and the practice of teaching information literacy in academic libraries back to the late 1970s and early 1980s. It was invented as a response to a perceived crisis in industry regarding “inadequate workplace skills” among graduates and adopted by academic librarians as a response to their failure to have bibliographic instruction or library skills become required parts of curricula (Kapitzke, 2003, pp. 2–3). This innovation in library practice coincided neatly with the first appearance of neoliberal economic policies in the wake of the mid-1970s slump and the first efforts to erode the foundations of the welfare state. Judged in the light of its historical roots, information literacy, and the various iterations of Standards that guide us in teaching it, are in essence forms of academic socialization that seek to direct students toward specific skills, competencies, and abilities, even including critical thinking (Lea & Street, 2006). The purpose, however, is easily aligned with the
larger mandate for university education, namely, to produce job-ready graduates who will keep North American industry “competitive” in the world.

Much of the recent debate surrounding the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education has encouraged us to recall the original impulse for information literacy instruction (ACRL, 2015). While resistance to discarding the Standards reflects an anxiety among some librarians that information literacy instruction will lose the authority and cachet it has accrued, the Framework’s creators and supporters claim that the new approach accurately reflects the way learning actually happens in the classroom and in academia more generally. A component of their argument (though not a necessary one) is that the Framework will go much further than the Standards did in ensuring student success. It will in fact strengthen the library’s self-assigned role as facilitator of this ultimate goal of education, and therefore its opponents’ fears are misplaced. But the recent debates have also allowed the internal contradictions and dubious functions of library-based information literacy instruction in general to be exposed. Maura Seale’s close analysis of the Framework shows how much it relies on key ideological features of neoliberalism (Seale, 2013). Arguments over the meaning and interpretation of the Framework have reignited debates about the purposes of information literacy instruction and of the library itself. It is impossible to isolate these discussions from daily reminders of the assault on higher education from the forces of neoliberalism, and therefore it has become necessary to question the idea of student success that has justified the pursuit of information literacy instruction.

**Student Success and the Academic Contract**

The currently dominant conception of student success in academia ensures that often the interests of the student and those of the critical librarian (or librarian committed to social justice) may potentially diverge or even clash. Higher education today is premised on a certain kind of contract, between student and institution and between student and instructor. According to this contract, students are required to perform certain tasks, and if they are judged to have done them in a satisfactory manner they will be granted varying levels of approval and ultimately a diploma (also with varying degrees of distinction) that presumably bestows on its possessor increased power (in the form of social and cultural capital, and in the form of credentials) in the world at large. It is assumed, by the institution and usually by the instructor, that the student has willingly entered into this contract and seeks to acquire the best possible grades and a diploma with the highest possible distinction. This, in the view of many people within and outside of the academy, is what success means in academia. And this success is thought to prefigure that student’s future success in the world of work, wherever that might be. Whether librarians choose to accept this definition of success or oppose it is largely irrelevant to the students with whom they come into...
contact. Most libraries, as well as the profession as a whole, strive to make libraries indispensable for student success, and librarians are forced to help work toward this common goal.

With student success, so defined, placed at the centre of higher education, the mission of the library has become to make itself indispensable for student success as defined by the contract. To do this, libraries and organizations such as ACRL have created new mandates to explicitly link the library with student success (such as *The Value of Academic Libraries*). Librarians have been careful to position themselves advantageously within the contractual structure of higher education. They have presented themselves as valuable aids for students pursuing academic success. In recent decades, information literacy in particular has been the preferred vehicle through which to assert librarians’ unique position as the enabler of student success.

**The Role of Information Literacy in Student Success**

A common complaint among librarians is that teaching faculty, administrators, and often students themselves demand that the library merely teach practical skills, usually ones that will be useful in the workplace. Moreover, there is pressure on librarians to make the acquisition of skills measurable and assessable and to hold them accountable to demonstrate their fitness within the university to teach these skills, so that librarians will be viewed as indispensable to the mission of (re) producing student success.³

As this article has suggested, librarians should question the eagerness with which they are rushing to prove their indispensability to administrators and faculty. In order to allow for some critical distance in their pedagogy, they need to put some space between themselves and those other groups, even though working with teaching faculty is considered one of librarians’ first responsibilities.³ At the same time, librarians have to acknowledge that the structure of higher education, and of society itself, necessitates that workplace skills be taught and learned not only for success in the narrower sense of employability and earning power but also for the survival of students themselves. Especially for first-generation students, students of colour, and working-class students, librarians have a responsibility to teach skills, so many of which more-privileged students have already acquired before they come to university.

Critical librarianship has proposed that information literacy take up the methods and praxis of critical pedagogy to transform library instruction. But this must be negotiated within the specific local contexts of the contemporary neoliberal academy. Joshua Beatty has provided helpful insight into Paulo Freire’s ideas regarding “First-World” pedagogy that speak directly to this challenge (Beatty, 2015). Freire
wanted educators to always keep in mind the specific social and economic context in which they were functioning. The practice of teaching should not be the same in impoverished communities of Brazil as in elite institutions of higher education in the United States, for example. Beatty’s reminder to heed Freire’s explicit belief that critical pedagogy is site and time specific implies that our critical library pedagogy should have varied and unique contours. Nonetheless, one of the many oft-quoted lines of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* expresses a point that speaks to all teachers, regardless of context, namely that “education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction” (Freire, 1970, p. 72). No matter how dedicated we are to critical pedagogy and alternative instruction methods, the contradiction, or tension, between the teacher-who-knows and the student-who-learns exists to some extent, and working in a neoliberal context, ideologically and materially, sharpens the contradiction because the contract promising student success in neoliberal terms forces librarians to make themselves an indispensable part of the formula for success.

The lesson we should draw from the preceding observations is that it is important to respect students’ aspirations for success according to the contract. Our challenge should be to teach success on two levels. We ought to encourage alternative definitions of success while at the same time ensure success in the existing system. But this can be a delicate balancing act. One can err on the side of excessive cynicism or pessimism toward the status quo and discourage a student’s learning the rules and skills required by the system; this approach will adversely affect working-class, immigrant, and minority students. It is easier for students from privileged backgrounds to take a cynical attitude toward the information system or the social and political system as a whole because they already possess much of the cultural and social capital they will need for success in the world beyond academia (or inside it). This is a reality that many librarians and instructors should keep in mind with respect to their own roles. We come from varying degrees of privilege, and we occupy privileged positions in the library classroom (although this is not always the case). It is all too likely that critical attitudes toward society and the political system will appear to students as an extension or facet of our privilege—and indeed it is. If students interpret our critical stance in this way, they may dismiss it as hypocrisy or as a luxury that only some can afford.

We may ask students to question the contract, but we cannot ask them to break it, because it is not easy to offer a viable alternative. Because of this, our specific teaching context is a critical determinant of how success on two levels can be approached: Who is the student? What do you know about the student? This should be one of the first things to understand before this complicated balancing act can succeed. LIS scholars, most notably Emily Drabinski, have suggested an approach that allows us
to acknowledge and work within the constraints that are given while always looking toward the actual teaching and the students to guide one’s pedagogical praxis. Focusing on the immediate local needs of a specific context can allow us to effectively promote dual success.  

Conventional Academic Success and Revolutionary Change: A Long Tradition

It’s not hard to cite examples of activists and revolutionaries who have succeeded in a system but gone on to challenge its very foundations, such as Angela Davis, Mohandas Gandhi, and Mao Zedong (who also happened to work in a library! See Karl, 2010, pp. 4, 23). What we can do is to explore our own students’ definitions of success—we may discover that although they have accepted the limited terms of the contract, this does not mean that their own definitions are circumscribed by its terms. In other words, they may wish to get good grades, learn the skills that will enable them to get good jobs, and succeed in professions whose ground rules have already been established, but they may also wish to see the injustices they have experienced in their lives and careers ameliorated or eradicated through power acquired through their conventional success. To this end, librarians can seek examples of people who did just that. As the above-cited examples and others attest, many activists, revolutionaries, and iconoclasts were raised and educated within the oppressive systems that they sought to reform, remove, or destroy. Many if not all of these people did not have the advantage of a Freirean education: they had usually received traditional forms of formal education that today’s critical pedagogy would view as authoritarian. Yet they (as individuals, but more often as collectives) nevertheless used whatever power this gave them (whether specific skills or social and cultural capital). Despite the encroachment of neoliberal practices into the library, librarians still have the freedom to not only teach the necessary skills for academic and professional success but also help students question the structure of society and the terms under which they are encouraged to succeed.

Assata Shakur has written that “no one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true history, teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free” (Shakur, 1999, p. 181). This speaks to the contradictory position of the teacher vis-à-vis the student, especially when the teacher is committed to social and political change. Because of the tension, we need to consider our own “success” as instructors, librarians, and academics. In many ways, both students and librarians/faculty are on the same level and enmeshed in the same system. We too are driven to succeed according to the same rules, and we too have entered into contracts (with our employers and with the profession as a whole) that stipulate certain behaviours and results. In the neoliberal economy, the fates of every worker and consumer are becoming
increasingly interdependent. Instructors in the classroom are evaluated, scored, and ranked according to feedback given by the students/consumers. And the best way for instructors, or librarian-instructors, to prove their own success is to somehow demonstrate that their teaching is resulting in the increased success of their students—in the form of higher grades or graduation rates. We are also motivated to find ways to quantify the success we seek in the library classroom so that we can show these numbers to each other as well as to our employers. Effectively, these actions serve to make the entire system function more efficiently. They may help our students succeed according to the contract, but how can we also encourage their alternative visions of success?

When we question what student success is, we necessarily have to ask what librarian success is. Of course, this is not a simple question. But in terms of linking our success to that of our students, we can say that if we wish to question the purely utilitarian or instrumentalist version of student success, we have to align our own success accordingly. We should question our own definitions. The competitive and individualistic structure of academia is accepted as normal, it seems, by a majority of academic librarians (even though we may critique and complain about it a great deal). The system of rewards and privileges is more or less the same in libraries as it is elsewhere in academia. We compete for papers to be accepted for conferences and for publication in journals (which are often ranked in a hierarchy of status), for prizes and awards, for promotion and tenure, and for higher salaries. While librarianship may be more collegial and collaborative than other fields, there can be an undercurrent of competition in almost everything we do. And our CVs and introductions at conferences bear witness to the fact that we play the game in order to survive and acquire what we desire for ourselves.

Just as we can’t deny our students the skills and abilities that their contracts have promised them, we cannot completely ignore the rules that govern our own professional survival. But as Nicholson states in the quotation above, we need to “advocate for education and libraries as public goods.” This should include presenting ourselves (through our professional organizations and institutional groupings) as dedicated to the public good of the library and to the liberation of all people, especially those most likely to be disenfranchised and oppressed by the forces of neoliberalism: people of colour, working-class people, people with disabilities, and LGBTIQ people. Embracing a survival-of-the-fittest ideology and its corresponding mandates to innovate and disrupt may reap certain rewards for librarians in the short term, but we will sacrifice our democratic and emancipatory potential in the process. That’s not success for librarians or for students, but failure.
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NOTES
1. For a thorough and systematic critique of neoliberalism, see Brown (2015); see also Harvey (2005). For a good overview of neoliberal educational policies, see Levidow (2004).
2. Neoliberalism has been on the mind of library and information studies scholars for quite a while. See for example the many contributions of John Buschman, most recently Buschman (2007) and Buschman (2012); Michael Harris (1975); the work of Wayne Wiegand (for example, 1999a and 1999b); and more recently Seale (2013); Bourg (2014); Nicholson (2014); Beatty (2014); Bivens-Tatum (2012); Gone Squirrelly (2013); and Clark (2014). On neoliberalism in the academy in general, see Slaughter and Rhoades (2000) and Saunders (2010). On neoliberalism in education in general, see the many works of Henry Giroux, especially Giroux (2014), and Abendroth & Porfilio (2015), in addition to the scholars cited elsewhere in this article.
3. It is true that U.S. higher education was democratized to an unprecedented degree in the mid-20th century, with far greater numbers going to university than ever before in history, anywhere. But the main driver of the expansion of enrolments in the 1950s and 1960s was the shifting of production away from manufacturing to “service” and “white-collar” professions that required specialized training at the post-secondary level. For an account of the powerful roles played by corporations and the government in the founding of American universities at the turn of the 20th century, see Barrow (1990).
4. On the evolution of higher education in the United States, particularly in its periods of growth and crisis that are most relevant to the advent and trajectory of neoliberal educational policies, see Gelber (2011) and Newfield (2011).
5. Classical liberalism was an Enlightenment-era construct imagining free-acting individuals who seek only their own self-interest, unencumbered by social or communal responsibilities, later to be dubbed neoliberalism. “Classical liberalism” is the preferred term for many of neoliberalism’s defenders and theoretical proponents. Yet some critics insist that neoliberalism should not be confused with classical liberalism and is not simply a revival of Enlightenment-era political economy. See for example Dardot & Laval (2013).
6. And, not coincidentally, the advent of the concept of information literacy in libraries and LIS; see below for more on this.
7. See http://www.acrl.ala.org/value
8. In what ways do we see libraries trying to quantify or demonstrate student success? One is the adoption of business- and market-oriented language with which we have been familiar, such as "return on investment." See http://connect.ala.org/files/ACRL%20AI%20Open%20Forum%20Dec%202013.pdf.
9. Helpful in this context is Eisenhower & Smith (2009).
10. Of course, for librarians there’s the caveat of the one-shot session: it’s rare for us to know the students in the class, and we often base our reactions on general impressions and knowledge of the student body as a whole. But sustained acquaintance with students at our institutions can give us a great deal of knowledge that can be useful in teaching one-shots as well.
11. “Such a refocusing returns the librarian’s gaze to its right place: the teaching situation in front of her, one which requires present-tense investigation and reflection to get locally right, rather than the constant measuring against whatever Procrustean bed is promulgated by professional organizations whose concerns rightly and necessarily include both student learning and...
the establishment of a place at the table of discourse about revolution and reform in higher education” (Drabinski, 2014, p. 485).

REFERENCES


