

SLO#4: The Student Designs Services to Meet the Information Needs of All Users and Communities.

Just like all living things in this world, we humans are born with a natural curiosity. We have an unending, natural desire to find out as much as we can about the world and beyond as possible. It is the mission of every living being to dissipate the stress that is caused by the natural fear of the unknown. To constantly fulfill this eternal mission, people need to have the tools they need to find the information that they are looking for.

That is where librarians like myself come in. The role that we fulfill in this world is to create the tools that users need to combat the intimidating beast that is the unknown. It is our duty and responsibility to provide the user with as many information-gathering tools and skills as possible so that they themselves can acquire the knowledge they need to obtain success. You can say that the world of library and information studies lives, breathes, upholds, worships, and applies the phrase “knowledge is power,” which is the undeniable truth.

To make sure that users are continually reaching out to this truth, information professionals are constantly perfecting and modifying the latest in information technologies. For me personally, one of my first attempts at designing an information service comes from a certain class assignment that really took me out of my comfort zone. In my LIS 631 – Emerging Tech Trends class, one of the last assignments I did for the course was to create a program that teaches a value of library information using the Scratch website. I will honestly admit that out of all of the assignments that I have done in this entire program, this one was the most daunting challenge for me to undertake. Up until this point, programming and me were like oil and water. We did not mesh well with one another. I was constantly relying on Google and YouTube, as well as my own, personal tech support, which is my father, to figure out how to work with technologies that were unknown to me. To say that I was pretty scared what seemed to be a towering, technological monster would be an understatement.

Like everything else in this graduate program, I simply took a deep breath, cleared my head, and took it one step at a time. Patience is your greatest ally, and it will help you rip tear down the veil of illusion that makes an assignment seem difficult. It was my greatest tool in this particular assignment, which allowed me to create a good, basic Scratch program that teaches users useful library knowledge. Patience will also come in handy in the future when I will have to learn how to constantly with and adapt to the latest in library technologies, which in turn will help me design services that will meet the user’s information needs. This assignment has taught me that if I want to continue providing users with good information service, then I need to continue to step out of my comfort zone and break my perceived limits.

After spending my time earning my technological sea legs in Emerging Tech Trends, I would continue breaking my limits again in the LIS 662 - Diverse Client Groups course. Considering the fact that I seem to keep coming back to this course when

it comes to the other learning objectives, this was probably one of the most important classes for me in this program. It not only granted me the opportunity to directly interact with the community I'll be serving, but it also allowed me a chance at designing an information service that would fulfill their needs. To get into the specifics, I came up with an event that would involve teaching the elderly community not only how to separate fake news from genuine news, but also teach them how to work with the latest in information technologies as well. While it may not have been perfect, it allowed me to exercise this learning objective.

Even though this may have just been an exercise, I really did feel like I was creating a product that would benefit my local community. It gave me a chance to perform the duties that libraries all around the world do on a daily basis. Before I did my practicum over the summer, this was about as close to doing professional library work as it got for me. It allowed me to put all of the skills I acquired from my previous classes to practical use. While my product could have been better, I am happy with the experience that I have gained from this assignment. This will be experience that I will come to rely on when I design information services for real.

It will also allow me to stand out from the rest of the library professionals when it comes to creating innovative information products, which are what both the information and field and the community are looking for in regards to evolving as a civilization. In the classic Disney movie, "The Nightmare Before Christmas," the main character, Jack Skellington is always looking to do something completely different for each Halloween. He's never a fan of doing the same thing each and every time. That is the mindset that everyone who is in the library and information field needs to have in order to make sure that both the profession and the community that they serve continues to succeed and make progress. After all, if you keep doing the same thing over and over again, you will immediately be going nowhere fast.

That's why it is important that you push your imagination to its limits and think creatively when it comes to designing information services. This is especially important in this digital age, where the possibilities, as well as the opportunities to be creative, are endless. In my opinion, everyone in the information field should be encouraged to go way out there and think unusually. Go crazy a little bit when your designing products to meet the community's needs. That is how you are going to continue to meet those needs. However, don't go insane with it though. After all, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result each time.

The best counter to preventing that in the information field are all of the tools and tricks of the trade that I have previously mentioned. All of the information gathering tools, which include the needs assessment, social media, geographic information system (GIS), etc., that these classes have given me all play a role in guiding me towards the ultimate destination, which is the completed product. A completed product that users will use in their never-ending quest to combat the forces of the unknown. These information services that libraries create are created for the singular purpose of satisfying the user's curiosity. That curiosity is the ultimate fuel that keeps the engine that is the

library information field going. That curiosity is the ultimate tool that creates those services. It will be the hammer that I will use to forge my own information services.

Artifacts

LIS 631 – Emerging Technological Trends in Information Access – Assignment 3.2 –
The Library Information Bot - <https://scratch.mit.edu/projects/261119797/>

LIS 662 – Information Services for Diverse Client Groups – Term Project