

I enrolled in the Children's Materials and Services course to benefit myself in my current position as an elementary school librarian. Throughout this course I have gained a deeper understanding of the many interconnected aspects of children's librarianship, and I appreciate the opportunities this course gave me to translate this research into practice. For my final reflection, I will be responding to the six learning outcomes outlined in the syllabus and sharing my experience achieving each outcome.

1. Understand basic childhood development concepts, children's literature, and culturally aware library services for children (through age 12) and families.

I say this with some embarrassment - basic childhood development concepts were the area in this course that I had the least amount of knowledge of. I am so grateful that this course was sectioned into weekly topics based on different developmental milestones (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and so on). This not only made the weekly readings more focused and digestible, but when paired with focused examples of programming, reader's advisory talking points, and advice from professionals in the weekly interviews, this made the stages of development more clearly identifiable. When watching a storytime, for example, folks without this background knowledge may think that the content is chosen at random. With my new arsenal of information, I can watch this same storytime and see how the elements chosen (the songs, the fingerplays, the stories, etc.) directly support the stage of development their target audience is at. I am thrilled to incorporate this research into my future programming to be more intentional about the learning objectives I set for my participants to achieve.

2. Construct children's programs based on existing service models as well as from your own unique perspective.

The existing service models provided a handy jumping-off point to begin designing my own children's program. Once the foundation of the program was outlined, I felt more confident introducing my (and my school's) unique perspective and needs. My students also played a crucial role in the design and implementation of the program I created, since it was their brainstorming that brought the idea to life. Though it can be difficult at times for me to relinquish control of my ideas, I know that collaborating with my target audience through each phase of program creation correlates with its success, and ultimately strengthens my relationship with these important library stakeholders.

3. Combine knowledge of childhood development with service and program content to develop and maintain a children's collection.

My favorite project this term was the collection development project. I had the opportunity to directly benefit my current library that I work at for this assignment. Working with the District Librarian was a wonderful opportunity in and of itself, and gave me the added benefit of showing her how strong my collection maintenance skills have become. I was able to run circulation reports through Destiny, and combine these statistics with my newfound knowledge of child development and weeding practices to make the case for a fair percentage of our current collection to be removed from the library. I wholeheartedly believe this is not something I was prepared to accomplish prior to this assignment, and am on cloud nine to see how quickly I can make a positive change in my library using the skills acquired through this course.

4. Understand the value of collaboration in the field and the impact of library service models on children's services and programs.

This is the area of the course that I believe I gained the least experience from, however, I do have the tools needed to continue this learning outcome after the course wraps up. As far as understanding the value of collaboration, and its impact on children's library services, that learning outcome has been met. I do wish, however, that I had found an opportunity to apply this to a real-life situation. On a smaller scale, I collaborated with students for the programming assignment and collaborated with my district librarian for the collection maintenance assignment. I am eager to foster relationships with outside establishments for future, larger-scale collaborations that impact our school's library services.

5. Demonstrate a commitment to the community being served.

This learning outcome was one that resonated in an unexpected fashion. For background, I took this course in tandem with the Career Development course. I had made a statement early on in that course that I was looking to return to public libraries as soon as possible, and to work either in teen or adult services, rather than continue to work with children. Somewhere over the course of the ten weeks, I developed a stronger appreciation for my school and its stakeholders. Revisiting my career development near the end of the course, I realized that my long-term goals (over the next 3-5 years) included continuing to work in my current role as a school librarian. I want to give credit where credit is due - this course, the instructors, and my amazing classmates helped me understand the longevity and impact of children's library services. I am leaving this

course with a new level of respect for children's librarians and their commitment to serving their community.

6. Understand where to find resources for continued professional development within child-specific library services.

There were a multitude of resources I gained from the course content and in small group discussions with my peers. One of my favorite new resources is BookFinder, which is a useful tool for carrying out reader's advisory interviews or creating libguides for my teachers and their course content. Another resource I would highlight is one that my library currently uses - Titlewave. Before this course, there was little communication given by my District Librarian on how to make the most of the website and its features. I enjoyed using Titlewave each week to look at in-depth book reviews and compare them with my personal view of the book. This will be a much-used tool the next time I start looking at purchasing new materials for our library.

As mentioned in the introduction, each of these six outcomes are interconnected in virtually every aspect of children's librarianship. Reader's advisory bleeds into collection development, which bleeds into program creation, outreach, and so on. I am confidently leaving this course with a greater understanding of how to support my students' growth on a more individualized level.