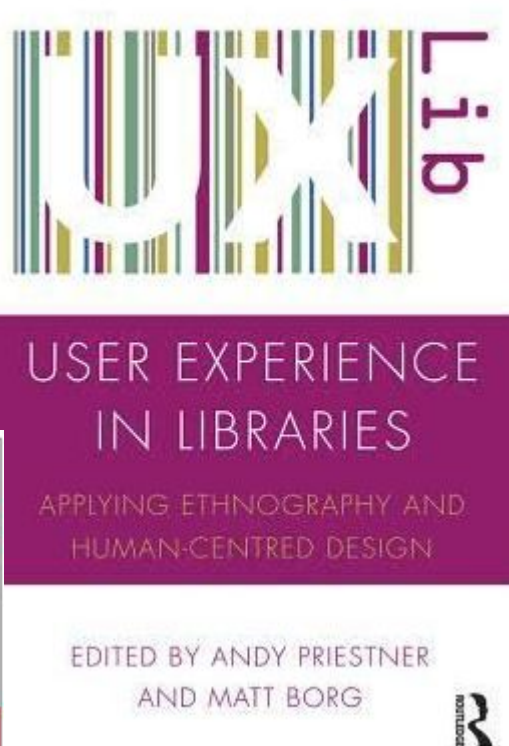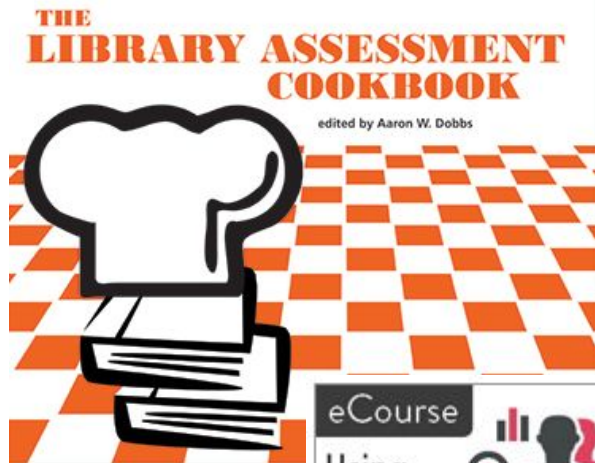# The Efficiency of
Long, Open-ended Interviews

Linda Knox
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Duderstadt Center, University of Michigan

THE LIBRARY ASSESSMENT COOKBOOK

edited by Aaron W. Dobbs

UX Lib

USER EXPERIENCE IN LIBRARIES

APPLYING ETHNOGRAPHY AND HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN

EDITED BY ANDY PRIESTNER AND MATT BORG

ROUTLEDGE

eCourse

Using User Experience (UX) Design to Improve Library Services

with Amanda Goodman and Michael Schofield

Chandos Information Professional Series

CP

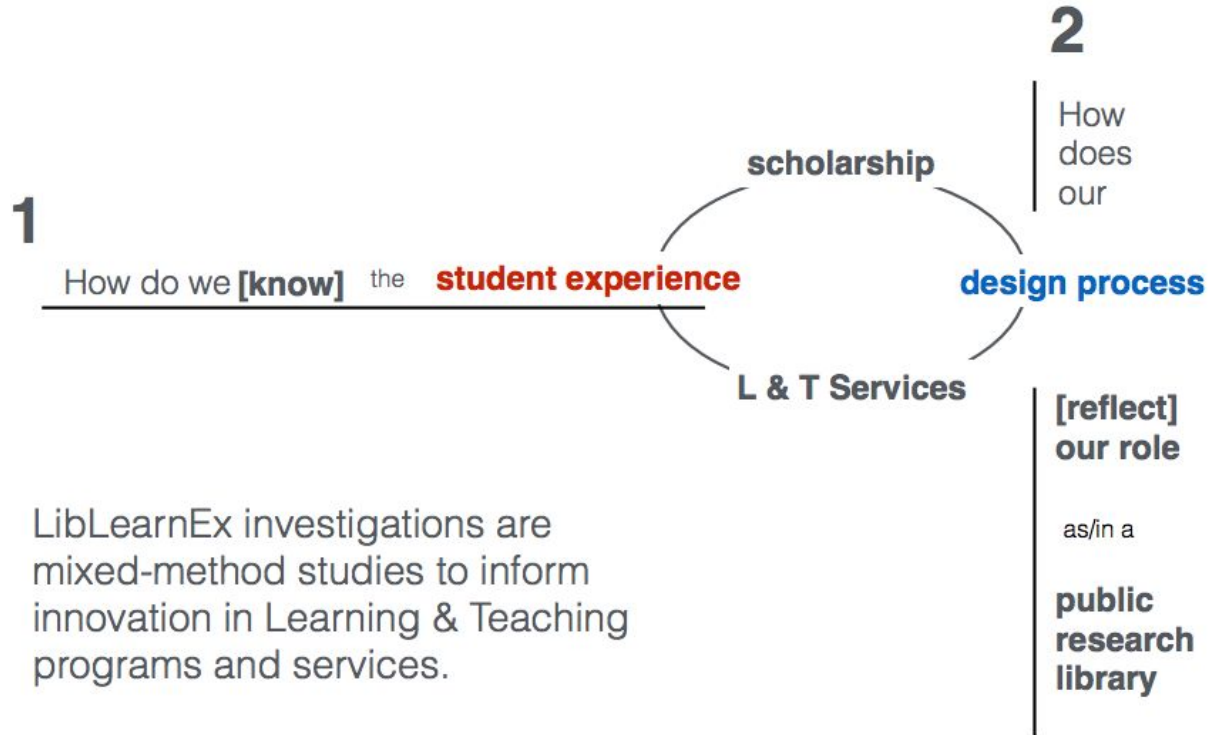Qualitative Research and the Modern Library

Valeda Dent Goodman

"We are calling here for more collective action on the part of libraries, rather than the fragmented landscape we see now."

Donna Lanclos and Andrew Ascher in "'Ethnographish': The State of the Ethnography in Libraries." Weave: Journal of Library User Experience 1.5 (2016).

"How can we make the transition from finite problem-solving ethnographish and UX projects to open-ended ethnography that allows for acquiring an intuition based on the grounded experience of extended research? This is not just about the notion of cumulative expertise, but of using the evidence you collect to inform, change, and transform library policy and practice."

LibLearnEx Research Framework

2

How
does
our

scholarship

1

How do we **[know]** the **student experience**

design process

L & T Services

**[reflect]
our role**

as/in a

**public
research
library**

LibLearnEx investigations are
mixed-method studies to inform
innovation in Learning & Teaching
programs and services.

"Learning from Advanced Student Staff Experiences"

How do the experiences of students employed in advanced library roles

1) inform our goals for those positions and
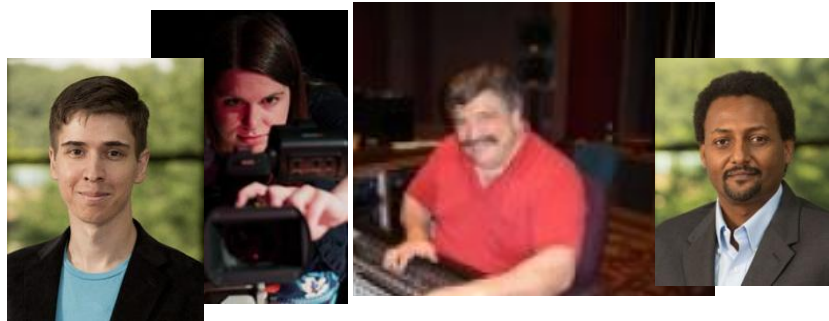2) contribute to our knowledge of emerging scholarship?

What are the paths that bring students to these roles?

How has being in this role helped the students?

How can the program promote communication and team building among staff when their shifts don't overlap?

How might student staff contribute to a more cohesive support structure across resources?

How do project leaders scaffold ambiguity in high pressure, tight timeline projects?

What would encourage consultants to take more initiative?

5 Service areas
13 Roles
21 Students
11 Supervisors
_____

32 1-hour interviews

"Tell me about yourself as a K-12 learner...how did you arrive at this role… how is this experience meaningful to you?"

But basically what we would do is meet with them once at least once a week twice a week if needed but we would give them deliverables and say at the end of this week this is this is the deliverable or this is the piece that we would like to see and give you some feedback on. And there are times that some of that they would even work off site. So they would do it. At home and then communicate with us e-mail and send deliverables to us that way. And we would communicate via e-mail or electronically. So. Probably. The bulk of their work they were doing. On the [...]m and then they would have specific points of check in with [...]nd I to look at what they were doing and then give them feedback. And we also have we also

dedoose
Great Research Made Easy

[00:20:34] But basically what we would do is meet with them once at least once a week twice a week if needed but we would give them deliverables and say at the end of this week this is this is the deliverable or this is the piece that we would like to see and give you some feedback on. And there are times that some of that they would even work off site. So they would do it. At home and then communicate with us e-mail and send deliverables to us that way. And we would communicate via e-mail or electronically. So. Probably. The bulk of their work they were doing. On their own and then they would have specific points of check in with S1 and I to look at what they were doing and then give them feedback. And we also have we also created a focus group. [84.3] Across the library of grad students undergrad students who worked for the library and full time employees who

Codes   ⇄ ❗ ⊕

┃ **Supporting agency**

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consultants

Melissa Gomis
4:05 PM May 16

Resolve

interesting. I feel like the position has always been advertised as a service position and not as a come do your homework type of job, but perhaps not.

Linda Knox
12:58 PM May 18

Thanks - I'll look over the responses again and rewrite this with more specificity. My sense was not that they saw it as a "do your homework" job,

Learning from Advanced Student Staff Experiences: Design Question Summary

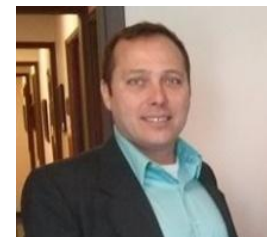| Collaborators	Program	Role-specific Questions	Insights	Suggestions
Melissa Gomis	ScholoarSpace	What would encourage consultants to take more initiative in a new ScholarSpace environment?	Current participants' investment was constrained by their initial expectations and conditions of the transitional environment.	To encourage more investment and longer term commitment: * Promote an exceptionally participatory environment * Seek and encourage relationships/partnerships with faculty and/or campus organizations wherever consultants are engaged.
Karen Reiman-Sendi	User Information Services	How can the program promote communication and team building among staff when their schedules, interests and shifts don't overlap?	Existing communication structures supported participants effectively.	Opportunities for growth: * Develop a more structured mentoring program * Develop more opportunities to share certain kinds of experiences * Encourage integrated internships "abroad" in the library,
Eleanor Daftuar, Dan Fessahazion and Eric Maslowski	Digital Media Commons Resources	How might student staff contribute to a more cohesive and coherent support environment?	Social expectations embedded in each resource attract and sustain different students, or students differently.	To encourage fluid productivity and sharing across resources without disrupting the unique and attractive characteristics of each area * Consider increasing student staff hours * Develop explicit opportunities for more students to become "process consultants", stepping up their ability to support patrons through complex workflows
Amanda Peters	Engagement Fellows Program	How do project leaders scaffold ambiguity in high pressure, tight timeline projects?	Internal library projects were scaffolded slightly more comprehensively than an outward-facing project.	Suggestions for reflection: * What structures or practices might provide a wider net for outward-facing projects? * How might we bring those projects more into the mainstream of library conversations, actions, and affirmations, especially while they are in progress.
Justin Schell	Shapiro Design Lab	How has being in this role helped the Residents?	The participants' experiences model "praxis" as Paolo Friere defines it: "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" (Friere)	To communicate the role of SDL in the context of the library, consider framing it as a platform for critical inquiry and for developing critical information literacy praxis models.

How do project leaders scaffold ambiguity in high pressure, tight timeline projects?

Internal library projects were scaffolded slightly more comprehensively than an outward-facing project.	Suggestions for reflection:
	* What structures or practices might provide a wider net for outward-facing projects?
	* How might we bring those projects more into the mainstream of library conversations, actions, and affirmations, especially while they are in progress.

What paths bring students to these roles?

<u>Common Expressions</u>

Many of the participants explicitly enjoyed recounting their K-12 experience (even if it was a problematic era for them). Often, they recognized through-lines in their life stories that they said they hadn't noticed before, or thought of recently.

As K-12 learners, virtually all received significant support. They attended elite schools, were placed in gifted programs, or, if they attended a public school, they were enrolled in a long list of extracurricular programs. Most described at least one person whose encouragement made a big "difference" for them; that is, made them feel exceptional, and capable.

Most learned of their student staff position through an individual connected to their academic program, either a classmate or a faculty member. Even those who received email announcements (through, say, the School of Information lists), typically ignored them until someone suggested they take a closer look.

Most were attracted to the library role because they wanted a job that would position them to help people, in an intellectual capacity (as opposed to serving food, for instance). They often valued learning from colleagues and patrons, as much as they did offering expertise.

Most felt confident enough to apply for the role because they had exceptional expertise, gained from experience in previous positions.

Most expected that the experience of the role would be important to them as they progressed through their careers.

<u>Significant Outliers</u>

Of the few who described unexceptional K-12 experiences, one became aware of the library position through a general announcement.

One student whose experience was unique in many ways responded to the position posting because they had previously had a positive experience with a library outreach program.

"How do we build a collective and collaborative ethnographic praxis?

Firstly, alongside the short-term problem identifying and fixing, leave space for long-term, less directed, more broadly-based contextual investigations that can yield a holistic picture of context into which the more specific projects can be situated. Generate a space for true ethnography, for long-term, ongoing, exploratory work."

Donna Lanclos and Andrew Ascher in "'Ethnographish': The State of the Ethnography in Libraries." Weave: Journal of Library User Experience 1.5 (2016).

What are *your* questions?