Professional Development and Professional Identity: A Qualitative Assessment of the Art of Teaching Program

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Textron
Instruction at Harvard Library

About the Harvard Library:
- 28 libraries, several centralized shared services units, 700+ staff
- No formal faculty status, no centralized, formal library instruction program
- Cross-org governance structure started in 2015, including Research, Teaching & Learning Standing Committee (RTLSC)

Harvard University
- Highly decentralized, 12 degree granting schools + Radcliffe Institute
- Curriculum development and instructional support centered in schools
Significance of instruction work in academic libraries

Significance of professional development

Trainees can develop:
- Professional identity (e.g., Teacher identity)
- Efficacy
- Confidence

Significance of training in pedagogy

- Particularly important for academic librarians who do not hold faculty status but have formal or informal teaching responsibilities.
Research Goals

To understand

◦ How well both programs worked
◦ How the changes in the program structure from 2016 to 2019 have affected their outcomes
◦ How the training program influenced participants’ professional identity and teacher identity
The Art of Teaching for Librarians (AoT) Program

Background
- RTLSC determined need for skill development
- Pilot Workshop in January 2016

Overall Goals
- To develop librarians’ practical teaching skills
- To help them develop a sense of teacher identity

Structured Programs
- July 2016
- Spring 2019
2016 Art of Teaching

20 Applicants: 15 Accepted, 12 completed

3-week intensive training program
  ◦ 4-hour FtF meeting/week with online assignments
  ◦ Group work
  ◦ Teaching presentation
## 2016 Art of Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I gained new skills as a result of this seminar.</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This seminar helped me understand how to apply my learning to real problems and contexts.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This seminar should be offered again in the future.</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For improvement
- Shorter class sessions spread out over more weeks
- Interested in more hands-on in class
2019 Art of Teaching

Semester-long (14 weeks)
- 3-hour FtF meeting/week with supplemental online assignments
- Practicum experience to apply concepts

12 Nominees from supervisors
- 12 Accepted, 10 Completed

Feedback was collected through:
- Pre-post survey questionnaires
- Personal interviews for this case study
Methods

Semi-structured personal interviews by an external interviewer

Survey Questionnaire
- Self-assessment skills, Teaching & Professional Identity

13 Participants
- 6 from 2016 program
- 7 from 2019 program

Qualitative content analysis process outlined by Margrit Schreier (2014).
- Coded by two trained GAs.

Initial coding themes were developed based on:
- Teacher Identity (Positive, Negative, Neutral)
- Self-perception towards teaching as part of their professional identities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>2016 Cohort</th>
<th>2019 Pre-Test*</th>
<th>2019 Post-Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is an important component of librarianship.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting research is an important component of librarianship.</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarianship is an important part of my professional identity.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is an important part of my professional identity.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarians are educators.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a member of the higher education teaching profession is important to me.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read research on teaching and learning.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk to my colleagues (librarians and other members of the higher education profession) about teaching and learning questions.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people think of me as a partner in higher education.</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library instruction is an important part of the teaching mission of higher education.</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall more positive than negative/neutral comments

Positive themes:
- Love teaching/helping students
- Large/important part of role
- Some already identified as teacher

Neutral/negative themes:
- Teaching is not my primary task
- Just what librarians do
- Teaching identity is reserved for ‘real’ faculty
  - Need qualification

Impact of AoT program:
- Helped develop confidence & empowerment
- Gave a name to what they already did
- 2019 participants were less sure how to apply concepts
Discussion

Why did some 2019 participants have lower teacher ID after training?

- Why did they resist?

What is the impact of time on the assessment results?

What is the role of organizational structures on professional identity?
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