

Assignments

LIS578LE: Technical Services Functions

Summer 2008

Overview

These course assignments are designed to provide a mix of experiences that will help the student achieve the course objectives. Unless otherwise specified, written assignments are to be submitted to the course instructor, through the Moodle course site, no later than 4:00 p.m. LEEP time of the day on which that assignment is due. Alternatively you may send your assignment to me via e-mail. Penalties may be assessed for assignments that are turned in late.

Instructor office hours will be by appointment. Please contact me to schedule an appointment. I will check e-mails every business day. My goal will be to reply to e-mails within one business day of receipt of the e-mail (so, Monday messages replied to on Tuesday; Friday, Saturday, Sunday e-mails replied to on Monday). Think of this as practice for an on-the-job technical services work calendar.

Reflective Journal Entries (three) (*Due June 13, June 27, and July 3*)

Recording one's thoughts, impressions, interesting quotes, etc. in written form as the result of reading assignments, class discussion, work experience, interaction with practicing librarians, or other related experiences, provides another avenue for reinforcing and allowing the variety of themes presented in the course to take hold. This assignment may seem like busy work to some, but these are required assignments and assigned a grade. This exercise can provide many benefits to students. For example, it can provide a ready-made opportunity to build one's thoughts for the Technical Services Brief as the course progresses and therefore significantly lessen the stress of the inevitable end-of-semester activities. Going back to what has been noted even a few weeks earlier in the course may help to bring out new insights and ideas as well. Reflective journal entries should run about 1-2 pages in length.

The general format of the reflective journal is open. **Each student is required to have written his/her reflections for the on campus session and for the acquisitions/collection development and the cataloging course sections.** Additional entries in the journal are encouraged but not required. Each journal entry must be submitted to the instructor through the Moodle course site which is open only to the student and the instructor. Optionally, students are welcome to share their reflections with the class as a whole via the class site before submission to the instructor. It is very typical in today's library environment for colleagues to review and edit each other's work, especially before submitting a report or proposal to a higher administrative authority. In this way, broader discussion and interesting dialogs may result.

Group Case Study (one for each group; student assigned to one group only) (*Due July 25*)

Technical services work tends to be heavily project-oriented, and today's library tend to be very team-oriented. Just a few examples include developing and implementing a plan to get rid of a particular backlog of acquired materials; coordinating implementation of a new integrated library system; or designing a new workflow (e.g. for managing a new category of materials such as electronic resources). All of these activities would involve the efforts of more than one individual. The case study report should run about 3-5 pages, and include appropriate bibliographic citations and sources.

This assignment is your opportunity to work collaboratively to solve a problem (actually, four problems). The Group Case Study Report should be a concise and brief report of how to solve that particular problem. Supporting documentation and justification for methods chosen will factor into the assignment of the grade. The report should discuss the processes proposed and desired outcomes; a proposal for budget resources replete with justifications (when appropriate); a reorganization plan including job descriptions and organizational charts (when appropriate). Think creatively, and use this assignment to fill in gaps or to deepen your understanding of these particular aspects of technical services. Also, as you work on the group report, reflect on the process of team work and problem-solving, and incorporate those reflections in your Technical Services Brief for the course.

There are four case studies. Students will be assigned to only one group, to work on only one case study. There will be four groups, each working on a different case study.

Acquisitions/Collection Development Group Case Study

The acquisitions budget for your community college library is \$1 million. The expected annual growth of the budget for the next two years has been announced at 3% per year. Current publishing costs are increasing in the range of 6-8% per each. Come up with a plan to stay on budget in the next two budget years.

Cataloging Group Case Study

Your medium-sized suburban public library has an acquisitions backlog of 2,000 titles. Your staff includes one librarian cataloger, one paraprofessional cataloger, and a mandate from the new library director to get rid of the backlog within one year's time. Come up with a plan to eliminate the backlog in a year's time.

Preservation Group Case Study

The collection of your academic law library has materials dating back over 100 years, and some of them are starting to show their age. Come up with a plan to deal with preservation needs assessment, processing, collection maintenance, etc.

Serials and Electronic Resources Group Case Study

As a major academic research library, your serials collection numbers over 10,000 titles. Some are print, some electronic, some are in both formats. Come up with a plan to allow discovery of your serials to your users.

Technical Services Brief (Due Friday August 1)

As stated elsewhere, this course covers a broad area of librarianship. Even a specific area such as serials or systems has so many permutations and aspects to it that it is easy to lose sight of the overall whole and how the various pieces fit together. Through the lectures and readings on the four pillars of the course, the group case studies, and the process of team work, you should draw these disparate pieces into a cohesive whole; to present a "big picture" view; to articulate your understanding of overarching issues and problems within this side of the profession; and to express your views and interpretations of what you've learned throughout the course. Ideally, the content of your reflective journal entries will provide resources as well for the Technical Services Brief.

The report should be long enough to review your reflective journal entries, to comment on the four case studies, allow for you to present a dissenting solution to your group's report, or reiterate why the solutions chosen are valid, and include a summation of your technical services experience. This report, like the

others, should be concise. It should be well-written, not necessarily lengthy (5-7 pages). Include appropriate bibliographic and resource citations. **The Technical Services Brief is due no later than Friday, August 1.**

Class Participation *Due throughout the course*

Despite its stereotypical "back room" reputation, one of the most critical aspects to technical services librarianship is the ability to effectively communicate in group settings, whether that is in the form of debating issues, articulating ideas, bouncing ideas off colleagues, asking for help when stumped by a particular problem, or simply requesting support and a willing ear. This element of the course is heavily weighted. Hardly anyone, no matter the size of library or institution, operates in isolation. Even those working in one-person libraries reach out to a broader community of colleagues on a regular basis. (Perhaps it should be stated that *especially* librarians in such situations have this need.) Without effective communication with and input from others in informal and formal discussions, face-to-face or online via chat or e-mail, it is doubtful that any technical services work is being done effectively or well.

Assessment of this part of the course grade will be based upon how well the student:

- integrates concepts and ideas from assigned readings and other resources into class discussion
- articulates her/his thoughts, observations, and interpretations within the group setting
- demonstrates respect for and grasp of alternative opinions or views expressed by others