The Art of War for Librarians: Academic Culture, Curriculum Reform, and Wisdom from Sun Tzu

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abstract: Any campuswide, organizational change has to address the academy culture found at an institution to be successful. In order for librarians to be effective in initiating information literacy or other educational reforms on campus, they must be seen as equals by faculty—as leaders in higher education, as scholars skilled in teaching, and as vital participants in the governance of their institutions. Failure to recognize the strength of the academy culture leads to failure of the initiative.

O rganizational culture can be defined as "patterns of shared values and beliefs that over time produce behavioral norms adopted in solving problems."[1] The concept of "academy culture" is particularly important when attempting to manage institution-wide changes such as information literacy (IL) initiatives. Institutional administrators and scholars are coming to realize that, despite the best-laid plans, organizational change must include not only changing structures and processes, but also changing the organizational *culture* as well. "Organizational change efforts are rumored to fail the vast majority of the time. Usually, this failure is credited to lack of understanding about the strong role of culture and the role it plays in organizations. That's one of the reasons that many strategic planners now place as much emphasis on identifying strategic values as they do mission and vision."[2] Institutional change does not come easily. In an age of competition for limited resources, any call by librarians to transform campus culture through core information literacy programs, no matter how impassioned, will often go unheeded. For transformation of academy culture to occur, librarians as academic principals must accept the leadership challenge to cultivate a climate for cultural change and demonstrate their professional and educational expertise through increased involvement in the campus community.[3]

The library literature on faculty partnerships and collaborative efforts is vast. But too often the literature focuses on library instruction and ignores the campus political climate, administrative support, and the involvement, contributions, professional development, and expertise of tenured and tenure-track librarians. Nor does it always acknowledge the myriad of direct and indirect effects the librarian's role has on the library as an institution and on curriculum development as a whole. It repeatedly ignores the big picture as if librarians worked in a vacuum and only entered into the hallowed halls of the "teaching faculty" when they humbly approach professors with an idea for a library component that might fit into the class syllabus. Too often libraries and faculty librarians are portrayed as working at the periphery of the traditional classroom rather than at the heart of it. In 1974, no less a library instruction guru than Evan Farber wrote that "While the two groups—teaching faculty and librarians—can and should work together, neither can do the other's job." I respectfully disagree. I have no doubt that "teaching faculty" cannot be librarians but I am also convinced that many librarians can be and are teaching faculty.

The library and information science literature discusses our "partnerships with teaching faculty." On many campuses, librarians are teaching faculty! On my own campus, library faculty have taught in the University Honors Program, the Department of History and Philosophy, the Education Department, the General Studies program, and the College of Letters and Science. Two library faculty members have affiliate appointments in other colleges and librarians also serve on graduate committees. And yet the literature ponders our "faculty status" and worries about our image, our future, and the perceived barriers to our success. At many campuses, librarians don't have "faculty status," they are faculty! The literature supports a representation of librarians as handmaidens, secondary in importance to more scholarly and proficient "teaching faculty." Why does the literature center on librarians' partnerships with faculty outside the library rather than on their partnerships with librarians? Often, the librarian's knowledge of the tools and processes required for inquiry constitutes a certain advantage over other faculty. Most of our professional literature focuses (appropriately enough) on our support for others' scholarship but disregards the production of our own. The type of condescension rampant in librarians' discourse is destructive, demeans our work, and disregards or misrepresents the critical role that many nonadministrative librarians play in campus leadership and the academic enterprise.

Certainly the possibility of implementing a successful, truly comprehensive IL program in the university curriculum relies almost entirely on the library faculty's stature on campus and their positive working relationships with academic colleagues across the disciplines.

The title of Wade Kotter's 1999 article "Bridging the Great Divide: Improving Relations between Librarians and Classroom Faculty" wrongly implies that librarians are not "classroom faculty." This is typical of the literature and emphasizes the dichotomy some feel exists between "us" and "classroom" or "teaching faculty."

In making this statement, it is all too apparent that librarians frequently mistake activity for achievement. It does no good to tell other faculty how important we are (or should be). We must show them through our leadership in learning communities. Certainly the possibility of implementing a successful, truly comprehensive IL program in the university curriculum relies almost entirely on the library faculty's stature on campus and their positive working relationships with academic colleagues across the disciplines. The achievements of a robust IL program depend on a network of associates, supporters, and allies that *goes beyond collaborative instructional efforts*. Librarians' participation in governance councils, university search committees, curriculum committees, promotion and tenure committees, student advising, faculty council, facilities planning, commencement, etc., and their teaching of courses outside of information science and research methodology classes, ensures that they have a place at the table when IL initiatives and other curriculum reforms are proposed. The essential condition for librarian-initiated IL programs, or for any librarian-lead campus scheme for that matter, is an environment where librarians are seen not only as equals, but leaders in higher education, as scholars skilled in teaching, and as vital participants in the governance of their institution.

Developments Since Hardesty

Larry Hardesty's seminal work on libraries and academic culture was written in 1995. The problem remains that almost all articles focus on the campus faculty as being removed from the culture of the faculty librarian. We are always perceived as outsiders—pariahs in the ecosystem. Should the English professor constantly be lobbying the math professor about the importance of his subject? Well, perhaps when it comes to funding issues. But the value of each of these disciplines, like many of the other customary disciplines, is a given in the undergraduate curriculum. Yet I constantly hear of the failed efforts of faculty librarians to convince their campus colleagues of the importance of IL despite their most eloquent and persuasive cajoling. Why so many failures? Or as Evan Farber put it: "If BI is so good, and can make such an important contribution to student learning and to teaching effectiveness, why is there so much resistance to it by teaching faculty?"[4]

Hardesty et al. provide some factors why some of our efforts have not been met with immediate success. Conditions that hinder our efforts include lack of shared values, lecturing as the still languishing dominant pedagogy, and lack of interest, time and energy on the part of librarians and other faculty. The academic culture puts emphasis on personal autonomy and collegial self-government while downgrading bureaucratic controls and forms of "external" supervision.[5]

However, many things have changed in the last seven years. Recent reevaluations of the core curriculum on many campuses across the country have opened up opportunities for the teaching of IL, but only if librarians happened to be at the table. The uninspiring teaching methods of lectures and readings are being transformed in favor of active, multidisciplinary, discovery-based learning. There is a new emphasis on assessment and accountability. Despite some of their shortcomings, a lot of the leverage for getting our foot in the door was provided by the Association of College and Re-

search Libraries Competency Standards for Higher Education. For many, the Standards have reinvigorated our roles as teachers and provided a foundation on which to promote our instructional mission. No longer are we in business just to support teaching. In a sense, the tables have been turned. Undergraduate teaching needs to support the library and its instructional mission of IL. The library is not auxiliary to campus programs; it is one of them. However, all professions should continually re-examine their activities—even, or perhaps especially, those that seem the most promising or successful. The ACRL Standards are only a weapon that we can use to win the larger IL war. They are not a victory in and of themselves.

Hardesty states: "Much of what will be accomplished is through one-on-one informal contacts *between librarians and faculty members* [emphasis mine]." True, perhaps, but these informal relationships should evolve into more formal institutional changes or they may be condemned to stay at the "one-shot," buckshot approach to teaching IL.

Hardesty provides an overview of faculty culture focusing on its territorialism, stresses, resistance to change, and de-emphasis on teaching and assessment. That somewhat negative view of culture has been changed at many institutions due to curriculum reform efforts that tout student-centered learning and multidisciplinary studies. Now that the larger core culture has at least somewhat changed at many institutions and created a climate more conducive to teaching IL, we need strategies that give birth to successful curriculum programs.

What is research library culture and how does it differ from the academy culture? We are regularly regarded not as colleagues but as info-servicers who try to sell IL like life insurance. Even in our own literature is it so. Oftentimes, we are outsiders in the educational network and not a vital part of it. In most articles we are described as collaborating with (one might substitute "pleading with") "teaching faculty" to get our agenda across. What are ways to assimilate? If we are not considered as academic equals, how do we proceed?

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Hardesty states: "Librarians seldom operate from a position of strength in their relationships with faculty." The ubiquitous question is how do we build strength? While examples of successful IL programs certainly exist, who else can we look to outside our limited profession as a guide? We haven't done enough to examine the literature outside our own vocation. Discussions of the role of the library are disturbingly absent from the literature outside our own, yet another indictment of how little impact we have had on other fields.

Reorganization of educational priorities will have little or no impact—except to sow discontent and discord—unless such planning is based on enlarged awareness of faculty members and their situation.[6] Henceforth, this paper will focus on three important components for IL instructional efforts to succeed: knowledge of academy culture, leadership in curriculum reform, and strategies for victory.

A Look at Academy Culture

Mervin Freedman suggests that most librarians have only the vaguest idea of the organizational workings or the social psychology of their institution.[7] "Systems-level learning is more than the sum of employees' intellectual capital and education. It occurs when organizations synthesize and then institutionalize people's intellectual capital and learning that are housed in their memories—their cultures, knowledge systems, scholarship and routines—and in their core competencies."[8]

> Any organizational culture consists broadly of long-standing rules of thumb, a somewhat special language, an ideology that helps edit a member's everyday experience, shared standards of relevance as to the critical aspects of the work that is being accomplished, matter-of-fact prejudices, models for social etiquette and demeanor, certain customs and rituals suggestive of how members are to relate to colleagues, subordinates, superiors, and outsiders, and a sort of residual category of some rather plain "horse-sense" regarding what is appropriate and "smart" behavior within the organization and what is not.[9]

The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges describes academic culture in this way:

> By culture we mean the characteristic ways of thinking, behaving, and organizing ourselves that give shape and integrity to our institutions. We mean the unified inheritance of customs, values, and mores that shape our vision of the future as scholars and as institutions—the intellectual heritage that informs how we work and makes us part of a global community of learners.[10]

"A final component of culture is an individual belief system. This subsystem is comprised of the collective individuals within the organization who contribute their unique experiences, beliefs, goals, and personalities."[11] If we are to participate in any real way in curriculum reform and in the governance of the university, and if we want to understand the behavior of the campus people we work with and the groups of which they are a part, then we must be able to both appreciate and describe their culture, their language, their problems, and their values.[12] In higher education, the central function of IL is not necessarily well served by decisions made by librarians with no understanding of the different forms of academic life. "A policy is a good deal more likely to be workable if it is in tune with the working context of the practitioners who are expected to translate it into action."[13]

As Peter Drucker points out, every organization has a theory of its business. "The theory explains what the organization has to do to succeed. The problem facing many organizations is that the assumptions about reality which are incorporated into their theories are no longer realistic. The inflexible *strategy* becomes unworkable because the assumptions are invalid. The environment mandates flexibility in *strategic* management."[14] Librarians often have difficulty mobilizing themselves to operate effectively in the collegiate political arena. "Most often, contact with the central administration is left in the hands of the library director, whose success depends on an ability to interact on a professional and social level with administrative superiors and peers. In many cases this scenario resembles a general fighting a battle without benefit of an army."[15] Not only does this put us at risk professionally, it stands as a barrier to realizing our

educational potential. It is important to assert both formal and social influence, or informal power, in the university arena to accomplish task objectives.

As stated earlier, our scholarship seldom cites the literature outside our discipline—literature from the social sciences that is important for understanding the complexities of organizational operations and presents viewpoints "outside our box." This is odd given the interdisciplinary nature of our work. Culture, as a construct or concept, emanates primarily from anthropology, sociology, linguistics, communication, and, more recently, studies of organizational behavior and psychology.[16] The literature of our profession is awash with prolix explanations of the blatantly obvious and most of it cannot rightfully be classed as scholarship. This is not to single out the information sciences. In an atmosphere that puts a disproportionate, and sometimes unfortunate, emphasis on publishing (as opposed to teaching), all disciplines produce their share of rubbish. With the profusion of often silly serial titles in our collections, librarians are well aware of this and hence should be more cognizant of producing better scholarship and more willing to look beyond their own meditations for guidance and inspiration. While accomplished researchers enjoy an elevated cultural status on many campuses (mainly because of their ability to attract students and money), many are not involved in undergraduate teaching and thus they do not influence core curriculum development. It is vitally important that librarians measure up to the publishing standards of their campus colleagues—that they participate in the production of scholarly research, which is a critical component of good teaching and camaraderie in the academy.

Librarians occupy a unique spot in academic culture—one that creates opportunities as well as barriers. But we lack a professional identity on many campuses. We do not claim to have a sense of belonging to a body of campus professionals with shared goals, shared procedures for attaining them, and agreed ways of evaluating their realization.[17] "The isolation of librarians from the larger institutional culture is related to a strong tradition of autonomy and specialization among academics, a tradition that separates them into departments, and, within departments, still further into their areas of specialized interest and research. In the same way, librarians tend to be confined to the library, the realm of their particular professional expertise and interest."[18] We often suffer from a kind of academic isolation, pitting ourselves against some aspect of the institution in which we teach, but lacking the comfort of believing we have many sympathetic colleagues in our struggle. We walk a kind of tightrope between impressing our colleagues and serving our constituents. This fact demonstrates "the interplay of ego strength, academic competence, and awareness of student needs" in today's academic library.[19]

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There are other factors at work in the culture. Stress plays an important role (it certainly does for the author). Self-expectation can become so high that it defies satisfaction. Stress is a function of both external pressures to achieve and an internalization of the values of the academic environment. Together they conspire to instill a sense of urgency and frustration regarding some never adequately completed task.[20] With its often times exaggerated emphasis on research, publishing and academic prestige creating personal stress, the university is an incomplete system of human activity. Its sole concern is intellectual. Freedman has classified it as "an incomplete approach to life."[21]

The bonds of symbol, tradition, emotion, and morality are most visibly seen in the sales brochures, commencement ceremonies, and sporting events of the institution. An individual faculty member's devotion to an institution is often developed over time as his contributions to the university grow over time. Look at all the culture and symbolisms of librarianship: associations, conferences, library school admission requirements, reaffirmations of the value and special virtues of the field, prizes and tributes for outstanding performers and tribal elders, a code of ethics, and an abundance of official professional documents. This occupational identity becomes very powerful as a professor comes to care about the welfare of his discipline as well as the advance of his own work.

"Academic systems are ideologically rich in part because they provide a plurality of nested groupings each of which manufactures culture as part of its work and self-interest."[22] These groupings may be defined as discipline, profession, enterprise and system. An academic librarian partakes of the culture of information science, of the librarian profession at large, the culture of the institution where he works, and the culture of the United States higher educational system.

"The discipline has bonding powers that are often stronger than those of the institution: it is generally less costly to leave the institution than the discipline."[23] The identity of the physicist, the historian, or the librarian "is acquired by socialization into the particular field as a student, the on the job socialization of doing one's work and interacting with disciplinary peers, and absorption of the doctrines of the specialty which help to give a sense of place and to define a way of life."[24]

For many years, the trend in academic culture was toward fragmentation because of increased specialization in discipline, role, and sector. Think of all the disciplinary subcultures, administrative cultures, as well as the differences among individual faculty as to their commitment to research, teaching, professional training, and outside consulting. Librarians are not immune to this seclusion. When interviewing new faculty candidates recently, we realized that we were not including a tour of campus in their interview schedules. This sent the wrong message to potential colleagues that socialization into the larger campus community is not important. It is crucial to remember that new members bring with them at least the potential for change. They have the fresh attitude and the potential opportunity to challenge orthodoxy.

For librarians to continue to advance personally and professionally and for libraries to become more vital to the operations of the campus culture, we should examine the literature outside our own and creatively seek out mentors who can inspire and inform our toil.

The Wisdom of Sun Tzu

Librarian Stephen Atkins states: "Librarians are going to have to learn to advance their own interests before they can prosper in the academic environment."[25] Whose writings can we turn to for wisdom? Talented managers and successful leaders in higher education are strategic thinkers. Perhaps the reader has already perceived my references to military and business strategy in my remarks to this point. The library literature on instruction is surprisingly (perhaps) scattered with warlike analogies. The greatest example is Katherine Beaty Christe, Andrea Glover, and Glenna Westwood's 2000 article on "Capturing and Securing Information Literacy Territory in Academe."[26] Westwood describes herself as a "pacifist" who achieved professional success by observing, studying the culture, and discovering her place in it, while Glover takes a much more aggressive attitude toward achieving instructional goals. Glover describes conducting "reconnaissance" missions where she became acclimated to hostile faculty in much the same way as Jane Goodall accustomed herself to chimps. She also refers to teaching partnerships as "parallel command" and to militaristic-type strategies for successful IL programs.

In *Academic Strategy*, George Keller wrote: "To have a strategy is to put your own intelligence, foresight, and will in charge instead of outside forces and disordered concerns. The priorities are always there. The question is who selects them. . . . Strategy means agreeing on some aims and having a plan to defeat one's enemies, to arrive at a destination, through the effective use of resources.[27]

"Lack of clear, definitive goals, conflict over functions and battles between warring tribes of disciplinarians" often characterize the academic world. It can be viewed as "a series of very vigorous and intelligent small tribes fighting for their separate existence."[28] What tools do we have to compete in such an arena? How long before our "tribe" is attacked by more powerful elements for its irrelevance? How do we launch a preemptive attack? In my search for knowledge, I came upon Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*.

Sun Tzu lived during the "Spring and Autumn" period of China. This was the golden age of ancient China stretching between 722 B.C.E to about 470 B.C.E. At the time, China was not a unified empire, but a group of small states divided into dozens of principalities. And hence my analogy begins.

"During this period of Chinese history, a growing educated class gained influence in government and commerce because of their knowledge, instead of their strength as fighters. The Chinese word "shih", which originally meant a knight, came to mean a literate person during this era. Bureaucracy gained power as the feuding principalities consolidated under larger governments."[29]

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, allegedly written by Master Tzu in the fourth century B.C., is "the most complete and reputable book of military strategy that has survived to date. It is still difficult to determine the biography of the author, who supposedly was a subject of Kingdom Qi and a contemporary of Confucius. Around 512 B.C., he traveled to kingdom Wu and was appointed general. In the ensuing 30 years, he won numerous wars and eventually helped Wu achieve a sort of supremacy by replacing the traditional hegemonic Kingdom Jin. It was at this point that he came to be regarded as a genius of military strategy."[30]

"As were other philosophical and strategic texts, Sun Tzu's strategies were heavily influenced by Taoist thought, which emphasizes the interrelatedness and relativity of everything in the world." Sun Tzu's writings and the "Tao of leadership" stress alternative approaches to strategic and conventional thinking and processes that result in the achievement of objectives. "Sun Tzu believed that the moral strength and intellectual faculty of man were decisive in war, and if these were properly applied war could be waged with certain success."[31] His text is often used by business leaders to formulate strategies. They see the marketplace as a battlefield. Many people in various disciplines believe that the maxims of a Chinese soldier who lived more than 2,000 years ago can help them be more successful in daily life.[32]

Certain comparisons can be made between the academic enterprise and military warfare: both involve competition for resources, strategies and tactics, both must be well organized and well-managed, both require leadership and committed people, and both thrive on information.

"There does exist a fundamental difference between business and war. The former is an act of construction; the latter an act of destruction. As such, the two are diametrical." With this in mind, we should be able to expand on those aspects of academic culture that more closely resemble war—i.e., competition for a place in the curriculum. Where institutional political culture and war overlap, the comparison is sound, the strategies interchangeable.[33]

Sun Tzu emphasized first and foremost the importance of avoiding bloody conflicts as much as possible. Therefore, the highest form of victory is to conquer by strategy. To win a battle by fighting is not the best strategy; to conquer the enemy without having to resort to war is the highest, most admirable form of generalship. The next best form of generalship is to conquer the enemy with an alliance—by borrowing strengths from one's allies. This is followed by the strategy of conquering the enemy by fighting on open ground, where one can attack and withdraw easily. The worst form of generalship is to conquer the enemy by besieging walled cities. This is bound to be the most costly of endeavors. As Sun Tzu said, "For this reason, to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles is not the culmination of skills. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence."[34]

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By all of this I don't mean to refer unfavorably or pejoratively to other faculty, or to imply that we are literally at war with them. From my perspective, Sun Tzu's wisdom can be used to identify strategies that result in increased influence, prestige and power—all necessary if we are to achieve our instructional mission. To state cynically that librarians have neither the authority or power to influence campus politics and initiatives is to ignore the IL advances that have been created and fortified in some institutions. Still, we have a protracted campaign to undertake. I see Sun Tzu not as a military general or war hero but as a master of strategic planning and thinking. For those attributes he is a worthy guru

and as good a counselor as I have found among my own rank. Our attacks should be designed to enlighten our colleagues as to the importance of IL in a student's life. Our goal should be to enable, not manipulate.

To Master Tzu, strategy depended on the morale and relative strength of the troops. The good general needs to be flexible and adapt his operations, and indeed further evolve his strategy, to take into account changing conditions.[35] "Collaboration" is no longer sufficient in today's changing battleground. Perhaps we need to be conquerors. We must be strategists. Lest you think my analogy too pugnacious remember that, to Sun Tzu, *the highest form of war strategy is to win without fighting*. To win wars without waging war. Certainly conversation and collaboration are strategies. But are they enough to succeed, to prevail in our campaign? If they only result in small victories, in scattered pockets of IL teaching, then they are not enough. An inadequate strategy can lead to the ultimate collapse of the kingdom—i.e., to make the academic library dispensable to the institution. Master Tzu states: "The taking of a city intact is far superior to capture through endless battles."

The highest skills of a strategist lie in his accomplishing goals without ever going to war, but war may be inevitable if we are not being granted the position in the organizational culture that we deserve. "Rebel" or "guerrilla" or "insurgent" are terms often applied to aggressive reformers in the business ranks. Are librarians too meek to have these adjectives applied to them? The battle we are engaged in has political, economic, and social dimensions. The principles embodied by *The Art of War* have been used in business circles practically since the time the book was first written. It is proper to speak in such terms in the business field. As many library administrators look to the business world for managerial guidance and innovative concepts, perhaps it is time for the rank and file too to engage in a more aggressive and forceful dialog in an effort to achieve our goals—our goals of establishing IL within the curriculum and of taking positions as leaders and scholars within the higher education community. Some people in organizations attain power by causing others to be dependant on them for desired resources or other outcomes.[36] We've been on the defensive too long and we need strategies to infiltrate our foes and befriend our potential allies.

Librarians and Curriculum Reform

In his inaugural address in 1869, Harvard University President Charles Eliot stated, "the university must accommodate itself promptly to significant changes in the character of the people for whom it exists." Educator James Duderstadt has stated "the abilities of universities to adapt successfully to the revolutionary challenges they face will depend a great deal on an institution's collective ability to learn and to continuously improve its core competencies."

Very few of the texts on curriculum reform even mention the library, and even less, IL. Whatever academicians' views are of "key" skills or "transferable" skills, or of what status these skills merit in the core, there is little debate that IL skills are both key and transferable and that they are essential for "learning to learn." IL serves both vocational and more traditional academic purposes. Since there is little debate about the importance of IL among faculty, why has it taken so long to be instilled formally in the core?

Of course there are many reasons, but among them are the trepidation of librarians, their contentment with incremental progress, their ignorance of the campus culture, and their reluctance to confront the campus community with their knowledge of IL pedagogy. While I am well aware of battles won, usually at smaller liberal arts colleges with limited degree programs, we have yet to win the larger war.

The dominant ideology of an academic community is expressed through the *curriculum*. What knowledge is most worth knowing? How should that knowledge be organized and taught in the curriculum? Who should determine what is taught and how? What is the purpose of higher education in American society? The curriculum is the battlefield at the heart of the institution. However, "academic community" is somewhat of an oxymoron. "Faculty are housed in insular disciplinary structures that exacerbate, rather than stimulate, the ability to communicate across differences. A paradox exists that, at a time of increasing interdisciplinarity, for the most part we work in structures and study ideas that decrease collegial bonds and understandings."[37]

With curriculum reform comes more emphasis on teaching, accountability, assessment, multidisciplinary approaches—all good for library instruction. No matter what your view of curriculum reform may be, liberal or conservative, vocational or civic, practical versus "well rounded"—all should agree that IL is a necessary skill for all students at an institution of higher learning. IL shouldn't provoke arguments over ideology and the curriculum. It is a fundamental skill like writing, speaking, and mathematics.

Over a decade ago, the contributors to *The Librarian in the University* described the importance of librarians' participation in the "invisible college" and the channels through which librarians could play important roles in the subculture of the institution. The book can be summed up: teach, sign up for committee work, and be engaged any way that's possible. OK. Most librarians do that. If we indeed are playing such important roles, why hasn't higher education grasped the strength of our teaching capabilities and the critical importance of IL in the core curriculum? Are we not playing our roles well? Does change simply take a long time? How long is too long?

In a 1998 article, librarian Marian Winner asked that very question: "Why haven't we become more successful?"[38] Her answer again is the simplistic

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"we must partner with faculty." Of course. The real question is, since we've been doing this, and told to be doing this ad nauseum in our literature, why haven't we become more successful? Are we immodest to state that faculty in other disciplines should be partnering with library teaching faculty to explore solutions to student information *illiteracy*? Why not phrase the question in this way? If we are doing our jobs, perhaps there are others not doing theirs. Is it inappropriate to suggest this?

While there are certainly examples of successes, I suspect that the majority of IL instruction that takes place on college campuses has grown out of old bibliographic

instruction (BI) "one-shots" and classes or integrated assignments designed with sympathetic faculty. Very few campuses can brag that they have a comprehensive IL program woven into the core curriculum. Why is this so in an age where the misuses of the Web for research and the confusing proliferation of information technology (IT) are witnessed by faculty and students on an almost daily basis? There are many factors that we can point to—lack of time, lack of resources, lack of administrative support—but one contributing reason may be our inability to comprehend the organizational culture in which we work. We may be so blinded by our own agendas that we fail to see the larger cultural wars taking place around us. That makes us unprepared to engage in the battles necessary for reform.

In one study, "misconceptions, stereotyping of outsiders, misunderstandings and contested views were common within and between the cultural coteries of the disciplines and their sub-specialty areas, so making shared activity and dialogue between different groups difficult, if not impossible, at times."[39] Librarians are certainly not the only victims of stereotyping in the academic world but the view of librarians as purely service professionals is most detrimental. We need to "walk the shop floor," be visible, find out first hand what's happening within the institution and use this as an opportunity to demonstrate commitment to curriculum changes.[40] "How we view ourselves will have considerable impact upon our level of participation in the process of curriculum change."[41] In a time when we are losing ground, we need to gather our will to assert ourselves vigorously. One translation of Master Tzu puts it this way: "On contentious ground, I would hurry up my rear."

At the same time, we need to be forceful but pragmatic and understanding of the larger culture in which we are engaged. However, "patience is not the essential quality of a reformer, and it must be from the collective frustration of curricular reformers that there has developed the academic truism that changing a curriculum is harder than moving a graveyard."[42] Put another way, it has been stated that the progress of an educational institution is directly proportional to the death rate of its faculty. The reasons for curricular rigidity are many, some simply being the function of the organization. "Assemble a cluster of professors in a country town, surround them with scenic grandeur, cut them off from the world beyond, and they will not have trouble congratulating themselves into curricular inertia." University culture is by its nature conservative—to preserve and to transmit that which has survived (that is the role of libraries and in that sense librarians too are "conservative").[43] An institution of higher education is more like an ocean liner than a speedboat—to turn it, you turn the wheel, and then you have to give it time to respond.[44]

This being said, views toward curriculum and curriculum change *can* happen in a relatively short period of time.

> It's common knowledge that fields such as women's studies, Latino studies, and African-American studies have only recently come to the table. But it's less often observed that agriculture, engineering, and business are also somewhat recent arrivals. It was only some decades ago that these "new" professions used their financial resources to gain seats next to the prestigious (but impoverished) fields of the established liberal arts and the existing professional schools, including law, medicine and education.[45]

As late as 1975, computer science at many major universities had no departmental home or degree programs.[46] With the reality of changes in IT and a seat at the table, it *is* possible to effect change.

Look at the growth of women's studies programs. It was recognized that coverage of women was lacking in the traditional curriculum. Campus leaders brought this recognition to the forefront of curriculum reform. Why have multiculturalism, women's studies, interdisciplinary studies, active/discovery-based learning pedagogies, freshmen seminars, etc. widely been accepted into the core while IL has not? Is it simply a matter of time before it is?

Another reason why librarians have not made much progress in the area of IL and curriculum reform is that other educators and administrators have not supported our teaching role to the extent that it should be. In a recent article in *College & Research Libraries,* Bill Crowley discusses the future of academic librarianship without even mentioning librarians' capacity for instruction. [47]

Countless articles extol the importance of programmatic partnerships. In one of the better ones, librarians Kevin Simons, James Young, and Craig Gibson explain the fruits of these partnerships and the development of their own successful IL program:

> The library develops the collaborative skills necessary to 'partner' with faculty and administrators in developing information literacy programs and place information literacy and the constructivist 'network of associations' at the very heart of the teaching and learning process. Programmatic partnerships lead to *curriculum integration*, so that the library's resources and instruction become essential elements of student success in identified courses and programs.[48]

This is precisely the point: library/faculty partnerships must result in larger curricular victories for them to have a truly important impact on the academy. The ways in which we engage in curriculum development and the conceptions we formulate of curriculum reform emerge from our engagement with reform procedures and notions.[49] We must be immersed in the dynamics of the system. We are not outsiders. Our willingness to immerse ourselves in these deliberations and dialogue is testimony to our faith that we will be able to instill into the university curriculum what is real and meaningful.

Certainly information technology joins the notion of continuing the pursuit of knowledge with keeping up with transformations in current technology and indeed with changes in society and the nature of university research. Master Tzu states: "The side with the stronger moral purpose behind them for waging the war is more likely to be hungrier for battle." At a time when other faculty are demoralized by what their students turn in as "research," we remain at a higher stratum, ready and willing to sweep down with comprehensive and awe-inspiring assistance. We are formidable and skilled warriors against the forces of ignorance. We have the collective wisdom of hundreds of years of experience as supporting troops. The library is the battleground for many issues surrounding IT. As Thomas Eland, librarian at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (note another small institution that can boast of IL successes), recently stated in a discussion post: "If information literacy is ever going to be taken seriously by faculty and administrators, librarians must start thinking like faculty and understand how faculty work to own and promote their curriculum."[50]

As for barriers, alliances that rely too much on individual people and their personalities can be shattered easily when those people depart. I know of many instances wherein great instruction programs were established only to disintegrate when a key person went away. This is all the more reason to codify IL goals within institutional culture and standards. Concerning learning outcomes, Kevin Whitson warns that key skills such as IL must be woven into the fabric of the learning experience, not just an add-on to existing courses:

> If 'learning to learn' is defined first of all as an outcome and broken down into elements such as 'uses initiative to find sources for essay when recommended reading not available in library', it will add nothing but another 'box to tick.' If it is seen as an outcome more broadly defined, perhaps as a part of a 'bundle' of outcomes linked to an active-learning experience of a particular kind, the issue of transferability may be realistically addressed.[51]

Master Tzu states: "On ground of intersecting highways, I would consolidate my alliances. Hence he does not strive to ally himself with all and sundry, nor does he foster the power of other states. He carries out his own secret designs, keeping his antagonists in awe."

When confronted with a contrary administration, Check Teck, one of Sun Tzu's biographers, lends this advice:

> The commander in chief in the field ought never to be subject to imperial edicts formulated behind the confines of the walled city. For the king lacks first-hand knowledge of the situation on the ground. . . . [T]he only interests a war strategist should have in regard to war are those of the state and the state alone.
>
> What may be of interest to the state may not necessarily be reflected in the whims and fancies of kings. . . .
>
> So the truly loyal strategist may often be caught in a difficult situation: his own strategic analysis, based on available information, may dictate a course of action diametrically opposed to the desires of the king.
>
> Thus, once I received an imperial edict from a king whose pride at a banquet had been badly hurt by the others mocking him for having a toothless army. Having turned down two earlier imperial edicts I received a third with just one word inscribed: 'Fight.' I simply had to ignore the imperial edict as it was not an opportune time to act. I would still condemn acting against your own best judgment merely to please the king.[52]

Yes, we need courage. Principled dissent is an important factor in changing organizations for the better. "The change process in organizations ultimately begins with one person's analysis of how things might be better (variously defined) if organizational policies and practices were altered. Whether and how that person's ideas are communicated and received by others, and what impact they have, are issues central to the study of principled organizational dissent."[53] We must battle to counteract deteriorating performance within both the library and in the curriculum. We must convince colleagues in the seriousness of our issues through engaged dialogue coupled with assertive and effectual exploits.

Successful Strategies

Conditions that promote IL are collecting data on the benefits, developing a careful implementation plan that balances the involvement of faculty, and developing basic guidelines. In other words, strategic planning. Conduct a survey to make other faculty aware of IL and how the teaching of IL skills can benefit them. A Fall 2001 survey of various faculty across the disciplines at Montana State University revealed that 92 percent of respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that "incoming freshmen do not have the necessary skills to use a research library." A full 100 percent "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that "all MSU students should be taught information literacy skills early in their academic career." However, there was wide disagreement on how to go about teaching these skills. I have used the results of the survey to demonstrate the almost unanimous views of colleagues across campus that IL is important. It has provided an opportunity for library leadership by highlighting our skills in the area of IL development and course design.

"For an individual to have the motivation and strength to be a role innovator, it is necessary for that person to be reinforced individually by various other members of the organization, to be free of sequential stages which might inhibit innovative efforts, to be exposed to innovative role models or none at all, and to experience an affirmation of self throughout the process."[54] "Individuals also need to communicate clearly to external constituencies how they are different from everyone else and why what they do is important to themselves and to others."[55] Given librarians' unique position within the academic culture, it is imperative that we reinforce and promote our instructional agendas and seek pioneering strategies to influence positive curriculum reform.

My discussion to this point encompasses admittedly broad principles of strategy. Leaders must be flexible enough to adapt them to their own campus cultures. Values, goals, and priorities are subject to change through engaged discourse and negotiation. Culture is an act of interpretation—it is viewed differently by different people. "Curriculum transformation is a dynamic, ongoing process, involving complex, long-range interactions between individuals and ideas in various institutional settings."[56] Much of *that* dynamic also belies generalizations.

Loanne Snavely and Natasha Cooper are two of the few librarians that discuss the political climate of the academic institution as it relates to IL. While they discuss an "across the curriculum model," their experience is shaped (once again) from working in relatively small (fewer than 10,000 FTEs) institutional frameworks. To say that we simply have to continue dialogue with faculty outside the library is, once again, not enough. Importantly, they remind us that though the current proliferation of IT creates new challenges, we should not ignore our traditional roles. "Academia would indeed be doing a disservice to its students if it ignored the traditions of research and individual pursuit of knowledge that have accompanied inquiring minds through the ages and that are strongly associated with libraries."[57] While the library may not be in fact the "heart of the campus," it certainly continues to play a major role in the campus culture. Finding a book in the stacks that improves a paper or studying at a quiet and comfortable study carrel still have significant impacts on how library users *feel* about their educational experience. How the library can further enhance that experience is yet another challenge we face.

While Hardesty, Farber et al. recognize and highlight advances in library instruction, I would suggest that their cultural view from their seats at small liberal arts colleges is not applicable at larger institutions and we should stop trying to emulate the standards they set. The more complex political climate, the extended bureaucracies, the myriad of course offerings and degree programs, and the sheer numbers and variety of the student population make the development of truly comprehensive IL programs at large universities difficult at best. Collaboration? Partnerships? Fine. It's not enough. What's next? We cannot keep repeating the same worn out mantra. Even the best collaborative efforts described in the literature reach a relatively small group of students. On large campuses, it is impossible for librarians to teach IL to all students. That is why it is so important to weave IL into the curriculum.

What many curriculums need is not only modification but reengineering. Reengineering enables "individuals and groups to challenge the status quo and its concomitant assumptions, practices, and structures so that the innovative redeployment of personnel and capital occurs and creates the conditions for a high performance organization." Reengineering "does not come with tinkering with systems that are already in place; it comes by fundamentally rethinking the enterprise and suggesting alternative notions not of what is, but of what might be. Those who employ such procedures are not incrementalists; they are visionaries with large goals and an appetite for significant improvements in student learning, faculty productivity, and organizational performance."[58] Redesign does not mean tinkering. It is good to be collaborators. It is better to be visionaries and leaders. Our expectations should be high. Master Tzu states: Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.

The positive impact on the library that librarian leadership can have in curriculum reform efforts is considerable. "As actors perform their routine activity in roles within the organization, they often unintentionally influence or control the actions of other independent actors, as well as the functioning of the entire organization. To the extent that this occurs, functional dominance is being exerted."[59] Our degree of influence in the community is dependant upon how we are interlinked with the university system and the degree to which our skills and activities are seen as important and nonsubstitutable. As our influence increases, the direct and indirect benefits to the academic library also increase. The more we skillfully and successfully address the critical problems (such as information illiteracy) facing our campuses, the more likely we are to gain prestige and attract an appropriate distribution of resources.

The positive impacts of extensive and successful curriculum reform within the institution can also be many: stronger sense of institutional identity, greater faculty satisfaction, increased enrollment (particularly of high quality students), significantly higher levels of student retention and performance, and an improved public profile, often reflected in more success in fundraising. These factors alone should draw faculty and administrators to our cause. Although curriculum renewal can be a community building process, it has the potential to result in bitterness and divisions if not managed well. It is a difficult and complex process.[60] But the trend is to move away from a large smorgasbord of core courses to tracks that are more uniform, smaller and richer, and that integrate skills development with course content—something that librarians have been

working on for years. (A colleague of mine in the history department once told me that he taught a class for three years before he found out it was part of the core.) The more condensed, more structured products of curriculum reform efforts make easier targets for instructional librarians to focus on. The interdisciplinary nature of curriculum change is also conducive to the involvement of the library. As important and genuine campus wide IL programs are established and woven into the core, the stature of librarians will increase and the success of future endeavors will become more likely.

> **The interdisciplinary nature of curriculum change is also conducive to the involvement of the library.**

Cultural leadership is essential for organizational redesign. If we're going to have any say in the redesign then we have to be leaders. Librarian Edward K. Owusu-Ansah states: "The academic library should be restructured with the intent of establishing it over and beyond its custodial duties and functions and should attain the status of a teaching department. That teaching department should provide courses that should become part of the basic requirements of undergraduate education."[61] As libraries become more dependent on resources outside the building, the emphasis on librarians as custodians is diminished.[62] What role will fill that void? The type of extracurricular learning that has always gone on in the physical library often does not occur in the virtual library.

My advice is to find a niche, to infiltrate a soft spot in the battlement—one that provides the best area to devote resources and is the most likely theatre for success. Whatever post you station, communicate its importance and defend it aggressively. Identify the right leaders to follow or befriend. Target those in your way. Soldiers who are instrumental in victories are rewarded—both formally, by medals and promotion, and informally by increased status within the regiment. This also improves self-esteem. Master Tzu: "Concentrate your energy and hoard your strength. Keep your army continually on the move, and devise unfathomable plans."

There is no article that can tell you how to do it because no author can understand the political climate at every campus. Though there may be similarities, each program needs to be customized to the existing institutional culture. Therefore, it is more important to understand the particular culture than it is to understand how it worked elsewhere, however enlightening other methods may be.

Collaborative efforts between librarians and other faculty have been commonplace for decades. Despite recent publications that extol their great achievements, powers, and potential, there is evidence that suggests that library/faculty collaborations have not resulted in any great IL epiphanies in most campus cultures. (Look at the small number of IL programs that are identified as "Best Practice." Even most Best Practice programs do not reach all students at larger institutions.) There are many reasons for this ineffectiveness but many of the successes that have occurred have happened because of the leadership, diligence, and expertise of individual library faculty members, with perhaps scant sympathetic support from other campus colleagues. If Evan Farber had decided to become a lawyer instead of a librarian, what would Earlham College's library instruction program look like? Sometimes the only way to achieve victory and

attract respect in the ranks is to take the initiative and responsibility oneself and *lead*. We must move from collaboration with a few to curriculum reform for all. It is just as unacceptable to say that only a few of our graduates will have IL skills as it is to say that only a few will be able to write well or perform mathematical equations. The more allies, the better. But let's not wait for them. Let's not be so busy congratulating ourselves for winning a battle for it may cause us to lose sight of the war. Master Tzu states: "To see victory only when it is within the ken of the common herd is not the acme of excellence."

The Road Ahead

To be certain, there are principles in *The Art of War* which do not apply to our situation: keep your plans secret, demoralize the enemy, put cloth in your ears when they pester you, set fire to their resources. Still, there are many passages that can be looked to for insight and counsel. Master Tzu states: "Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength." Librarian Norman Higham writes:

> The librarian who sits back and complains of the weak position of the library deserves little sympathy; the solution is largely in his own hands. Against the most hide-bound opposition he has a strong armory, both within the university and among professional associations. His strongest weapon is information, both the information the library is expected to hold for its users, and that which librarians are able to assemble.[63]

Part of that assembly is the expertise we have in the teaching of IL.

The importance of library instruction and the notion that librarians should be equals with other faculty has been put forth for decades. This statement simply magnifies our failure to advance our agendas. In order to remain relevant on campus we must battle with increased resolve. Almost fifty years ago, Stanley Gwynn argued that "in these times and in our present state of learning, with the records of knowledge multiplying at an almost uncontrollable rate, . . . the knowledge and skills we have been talking about [i.e. how to efficiently and effectively use library resources] actually constitute one of the liberal arts."[64] The more things change, the more they unfortunately stay the same. What progress have we really made in fifty years in conveying the importance of IL to the curriculum? Not enough. Of course there are excellent programs that now exist, but again, not enough. In the same dated but still relevant monograph cited above, Herman Fussler wrote: "We must continue to develop a sound body of principles and knowledge that both we and our academic colleagues will understand and be able to follow with confidence. This will not make librarianship any simpler—for there will always be frontiers—but it will make libraries better."[65] Amen.

We must continually earn our respect in the campus community by being accomplished teachers and creditable scholars. The teaching faculty form the elite in the campus culture and we must be among them. The tenure policies that guard the inner circle can be seen as both a hindrance and a help, but we must continue to produce worthy scholarship while pursuing our quarry.

Troops are most often victorious when they have popular support. I'm not stating that collaborations are bad—just the opposite. They are necessary to win allies. Indeed, Master Tzu states: "Wear down the main core of the enemy through sporadic attacks by small elite squads . . . Build up the morale of your own army by accumulating little successes." What I am saying is that collaboration is not enough. Let's not be satisfied with "little successes." They in and of themselves do not constitute an IL program. We need to make the switch from BI to IL not only at the program level but also at the curriculum level. IL needs to be recognized in the core so that every student graduates with IL skills, not just the few who are reached by the muddled approach of many library instruction programs. The ACRL standards are only a beginning for the toil that still stands before us. Master Tzu states: "Do not linger in dangerously isolated positions. In hemmed-in situations, you must resort to stratagem. In desperate position, you must fight. If, on the other hand, in the midst of difficulties we are always ready to seize an advantage, we may extricate ourselves from misfortune."

Collaborative efforts are important. But let's not be so busy patting ourselves on the back for something that should be part of our everyday job that we lose sight of our larger goals. The view of academic librarians as mere organizers and custodians of information was shattered long ago. Now that we've congratulated ourselves on being great collaborators, where do we go from here? We must make IL skills unquestionably as important as writing, speaking, math and science skills. To do less would be a disservice to the students and the institutions that we serve.

"It is high time for librarians to assert themselves responsibly in educational debate and curriculum planning. Heightened understanding of themselves and their social and organizational situation will enable librarians to assume their rightful place as educational leaders on their own campuses, as well as on the national scene."[66] We cannot be relegated to second-rate partners in the educational process. We need bravery, not timidity. Strength in our alliances. Power over our organizational environment. Not just participation, but command in campus leadership. Sun Tzu highlights the leadership qualities of determination, resourcefulness, courage, daring, concern, character, and agility of mind. Leaders must be moral, humane, and attract respect. Identify barriers and develop strategies to overcome them. Pinpoint your opponents' strengths and weaknesses as well as your own. If you perceive that victory is not achievable, fall back and build strength (i.e. develop your program). Even when we lose battles, we gain respect if we fight valiantly.

Library administrators need to place more emphasis on the teaching role of librarians and free up time for them to be crusaders. Catherine Palmer and Collette Ford stress the importance of extending staff resources for library instruction.[67] A soldier cannot adequately engage in battle if he is asked to simultaneously cook the regiment's food, repair their clothing, secure their supplies, keep their arsenal in repair, etc. As reference desk statistics decline, more weaponry needs to be dedicated to the teaching of IL skills to those who do not necessarily visit the library physically. The only way to reach them is through a comprehensive IL program that extends throughout the academic enterprise. IL will not make much impact in higher education unless the curriculum and the manner of its delivery are changed in significant ways.[68] Inertia in the

library's instructional program will have deleterious effects on the future of the academic library's performance overall.

Enlist the support of the powerful. Boast of your conquests. Reveal your adversary's weaknesses, remove barriers, improve communication, build scholarship, cultivate a sense of community. Foster learning communities as part of your institution's culture. Cultivate all types of learning communities and practices: cooperative learning, collaborative learning, study circles, team learning, partner learning, study groups, peer support groups, self-help groups, community education circles, and communities that nobody has thought of yet.[69] We have to establish our turf and protect it. Uninspired custodianship, recalcitrance, and organizational stagnation will be the result of our failures.

Leadership skills can be acquired through training and professional development just as a soldier is trained. We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country—its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps. One important role that librarians can serve in the new teaching paradigm is "to protect both faculty and students from data overload."[70] This doesn't necessarily involve great collaborative efforts. It requires initiative, leadership, and rededication to our traditional role as information managers and guides. The best weapons to exert power in a complex organization are self-confidence, expertise, cognitive complexity, and linguistic ability. "The ideal characteristic of a general is intelligence and sharp adaptivity (or adaptability) to the changing circumstances. The capability of a general to appear as a person that is able to defy classification is truly a strategic asset."[71] Librarians enjoy a strategic advantage in this respect.

"We are librarians in the university, not librarians at the library located at the university."[72] Our reluctance to "invade the province of the teacher" may mean that the library will not be seen as the heart of the university but rather as an insignificant tumor to be lopped off.[73] If the reader believes as I do that the work that goes on in the academic library is every bit as important as the work that goes on in any department on campus, then academic librarians need to be afforded our deserved esteem within the institutional culture. We need to seize and capture our just respect.

According to the *I Ching* (The Book of Changes), there is but one constant in life: change. If we are as adept at change as we claim to be as a profession, approaches to IL and curriculum reform must continue to transform in a way that results in true and genuine victories for our profession. Those that expect to triumph must master the art of tactical management and leadership.

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