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Collaboration between Libraries and Academic Departments: Sustainability in Reading Habits

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Abstract

The urgency to develop collaborative models has been heightened over the last two decades, as academic success has become increasingly linked to sustainable reading habits. Conversely, academic departments possess specialized subject expertise and can accurately identify information requirements for diverse assignments and research projects. Joint efforts between academic departments and libraries enhance the quality of the educational experience, benefiting both faculty and students. Students who possess digital literacy are able to participate in scholarly activities and in the global knowledge economy on their graduation. The collaboration between academic and public librarians, characterized by shared expertise and mutually beneficial outcomes, has reinforced confidence and broadened instructional scope. A literature review shows that reading habits have evolved from silent reading, through social reading, digital reading, to social digital reading, while social reading is also becoming popular in the digital age.

Keywords: Collaboration, Library, Academic Department, Sustainability in Reading Habits, Collaboration Models, Diverse Reading Materials, Digital Literacy.

Introduction

Partnerships between academic departments and libraries are fundamental for long term student achievement. They are essential for sustaining long term reading habits. Libraries provide critical resources and support that contribute to academic success. Historically, reading habit formation has also been a popular topic among library science theorists. In the last decade, research on reading habits has reflected two trends: a renewed interest among scholars and the fact that reading serves as an essential foundation for academic collaboration (Godbey, 2013).

In the field of library science, the term collaboration is commonly used to describe cooperative efforts between academic departments, especially when a shared interest in promoting reading exists. A practical example is the collaboration of two libraries in Pittsburgh to foster sustainable reading habits among college students by organizing shared activities. Large-scale research has examined the impact of collaboration with academic departments on sustaining student reading habits. College students rely heavily on the college reading list, spending most of their time on designated books.

The Role of Libraries in Academic Success

Library resources and support contribute to academic success. A collaboration between libraries and academic departments can sustain reading habits.

Libraries provide access to a variety of resources, encompassing both physical and digital media supply, including scientific publications. Moreover, the public library is a hub for citizens, automating services in order to build and sustain an active reader base, through technologies such as RFID and social reading platforms. Embracing new technologies and maintaining scientific collections represent an opportunity for academic libraries to become a strong, reliable resource for students and the entire university community (Ramsey & C. Aagard, 2018).

Academic libraries are strategic partners for educational departments. Libraries should activate collaborative plans with academic departments that introduce students to a mix of paper and digital media that fosters scholarly research and the development of sustainable reading habits. Such habits are a crucial requirement of modern-day students. As shown by the rise in electronic book access and distribution on campus, library collections must be integrated with other activities that build sustainable reading habits. This is also aligned with the idea that academic libraries serve as anchor points for the student community because of their support for curricula (De Groot & Branch, 2009).

Understanding Reading Habits

Reading habits are generally defined as the consistent practices or tendencies of individuals or groups to engage with textual content through various media, including electronic tools, books, journals, articles, and the internet. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning has explored reading habits from multiple disciplinary perspectives, seeking to illuminate the relationships between reading patterns, learning processes, and academic performance (B & T Sampath Kumar, 2019). Foertsch reported that students' reading habits for both academic and recreational purposes generally decline over time, tend to be instrumental and selective, and vary in accordance with the level of academic success and the nature of disciplinary specialization.

This section provides an overview of existing research on reading habits, starting with their historical evolution and moving on to recent studies that have examined contemporary reading patterns and their implications for academic success.

- **Historical Perspectives**

Attention to reading habits from a historical perspective has provided several insights for the current study. Peterson's investigation into librarian attitudes from 1945 to 1975 showed that academic librarians have long regarded libraries as a nest of opportunity to develop sustainable reading habits (L. Peterson, 2006). Research that examines offsets for short attention spans or information overload is much more unsettled than ideas about the power of collaborative teaching and outreach.

- **Current Trends**

Reading has long been a key pedagogical tool for connecting curriculum with academic literature (Alonso-Arévalo & Vázquez Vázquez, 2018). Emerging technologies and popular culture have challenged traditional reading habits, necessitating new models of communication and interaction between academic departments and libraries to sustain reading practices (Del Pilar Echandi Ruiz, 2019). The urgency to develop these collaborative models has been heightened over the last two decades, as academic success has become increasingly linked to sustainable reading habits.

Libraries have traditionally played a significant role in supporting academic departments to address these challenges, but the importance of their collaboration is now more crucial than ever (Odess-Harnish & K. Baugess, 2014). To optimize cooperation, it is essential to evaluate the role of university libraries in fostering the sustained engagement with reading that underpins academic success.

The Importance of Collaboration

Academic libraries significantly support the classroom experience, and their resources positively affect overall student retention (Godbey, 2013). They contain a broader array of information than academic departments alone, supporting interdisciplinary connections. Conversely, academic departments possess specialized subject expertise and can accurately identify information requirements for diverse assignments and research projects. Thus, librarians and faculty working collaboratively contribute to the academic growth of students within the university environment (Godbey, 2013).

Joint efforts between academic departments and libraries enhance the quality of the educational experience, benefiting both faculty and students. Faculty receive multifaceted curricular support addressing one of teaching's most challenging aspects: inspiring students to read outside the classroom (E. Shawgo, 2012). Collaboration introduces faculty members to numerous campus perspectives,

enriches their awareness and engagement with library resources, and empowers them to direct students to specialized services such as study skills workshops and research sessions with librarians. As a result, faculty develop a keener understanding of library services and actively promote these offerings among colleagues and students.

Simultaneously, libraries enjoy increased visibility on campus through partnerships with academic departments. The library becomes integral to the learning process and a natural location for both students and faculty. Public recognition of the library's essential role attracts greater funding opportunities and justifies the expansion of programs, services, and collections. Therefore, supplying solutions beyond the immediate classroom environment creates a foundation for ongoing collaborative engagement between academic departments and libraries, wherein each actively supports the other's initiatives.

- **Benefits for Libraries**

Collaboration between libraries and academic departments which is establishing sustainable reading habits—offers academic and financial avenues for libraries to contribute beyond traditional resource provision, thus warranting focused investigation. Interdisciplinary programmes that include various reading genres can forge connections between academic and leisure reading and are more effective at promoting sustainable reading habits when staff from both entities jointly plan and implement them.

Carefully developed collections allow libraries to promote reading for enjoyment and literacy development through the availability of books beyond the local school's syllabus, readers' advisory services, and children's programmes.

The relationship also fosters sustainable practices, including partnerships with publishing houses for book purchases. Faculties contribute through exhibitions and author-signing events.

- **Benefits for Academic Departments**

Academic departments also find substantial benefits in collaborating with libraries. Partnerships ensure the availability of up-to-date research by centralizing materials through university units (Alonso-Arévalo & Vázquez Vázquez, 2018). This centralized approach is particularly useful and spread over several units as library personnel often manage and inspect materials collectively. Depending on the library's organizational capacities, departments gain ongoing accessibility to current publications and historical resources (Del Pilar Echandi Ruiz, 2019). Proximity to reading rooms increases the likelihood that students visit the library regularly during study sessions (Odess-Harnish & K. Baugess, 2014).

Both collaborators derive advantages because libraries earn public recognition from sponsoring specific programmes within faculties. Many seek to attract future graduates who will subsequently work in their administrative units, thereby obtaining interns for extensive training.

Models of Collaboration

When considering sustainable reading practices necessary to maintain reading habits, collaboration models such as interdisciplinary programs and bibliotherapy illustrate how libraries and academic departments might undertake shared responsibilities.

Several factors have contributed to the recent suggestion that academic departments work more closely with libraries, increasing the need for collaborative models. The Curriculum model develops collaboration through library staff participation in subject area-specific academic teaching, research, and development. The Disciplinary model builds collaboration through peripheral participation in specialized discipline-based scholarly activities. The Academic Support model administers a partnership with institutional bodies offering student support services and links to teaching and research. The Subject/Academic liaison model integrates library-based teaching, research, and development to provide academic department specialists.

Sustainable reading practices to which collaborative agreements can aspire are threefold. First, the promotion of digital literacy necessitates equipping students as digital readers. Second, encouraging the reading of diverse materials advocates building critical, analytical, and creative reading. Third, models of sustainable reading include interdisciplinary programs, disciplinary models, art collections, and workshops.

- **Interdisciplinary Programs**

Interdisciplinary programs are initiatives that integrate students from two or more disciplines in a unitary manner around a broadly defined topic or theme. Such programs enable students under clearly stated objectives and learning outcomes to achieve or demonstrate competency and mastery of the chosen topic. It is worth noting that the data on the number of students involved in interdisciplinary programs is discrepant, depending on the units reporting.

- **Joint Workshops and Events**

Joint workshops and events represent an effective collaborative model to promote sustainable reading habits (J Aulisio & McHugh, 2013). Academic librarians often supplement participation by assessing attendees' understanding and providing feedback to colleagues, ensuring consistency and alignment with program goals. Schools and community institutions commonly support sustainability through activities such as recycled-art workshops. For example, an event featuring origami crafted from repurposed book covers received positive feedback from faculty, although student

participation was comparatively limited. Within this framework, libraries and academic departments co-develop thematic programs, administer shared outreach efforts, and contribute co-speakers capitalizing on the overlap between sustainability and academic success as a central theme encouraging enduring reading practices.

Sustainable Reading Practices

Establishing sustainable reading habits is critical for acquiring knowledge, as well as achieving academic success and cultivating lifelong learning practices. Institutions of higher education are responsible for providing the necessary facilities to support and promote these habits (J Aulisio & McHugh, 2013).

- **Promoting Digital Literacy**

Digital literacy is a crucial aspect of sustainable reading habits. It includes the use of electronic and digital resources and information management skills. Digital literacy allows a person to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Students who possess digital literacy are able to participate in scholarly activities and in the global knowledge economy on their graduation.

Collaboration between libraries and academic departments can promote digital literacy by raising students' awareness of electronic and digital resources, such as databases, digital archives, dissemination channels, and search techniques in various subject areas. These areas include scholarly communication, research data management information literacy for theses or dissertations (R. Malanchuk & N. Ocha, 2005).

- **Encouraging Diverse Reading Materials**

Promoting a variety of diverse reading materials provides opportunities for students to sustain reading habits as both an academic response and a personal practice. Development of multicultural collections enhances student engagement and understanding of different backgrounds. Librarians should actively seek out diverse titles and collaborate with academic departments to support inclusive learning environments. Building a diverse collection is essential for fostering inclusion and supporting students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Walter, 2005).

Books help teens see themselves represented and affirm the validity of their struggles. Rudine Sims Bishop characterized books as windows, sliding glass doors, and mirrors, highlighting their capacity to transform human experience. When characters in young adult literature predominantly derive from a limited demographic, readers outside those experiences find it more difficult to relate. Exposure to diverse literature enables members of majority groups to cultivate empathy and understanding for different lived experiences (Osborne, 2018). Complementary outreach and programming initiatives support recreational reading and intellectual engagement, featuring an annual summer reading booklet, an online featured reader column, and reading and discussion groups for students (Odess-Harnish & K. Baugess, 2014).

Challenges in Collaboration

Addressing digital literacy while encouraging students to tap into the university's specialized resources should be a shared goal of the library and academic departments (Godbey, 2013).

Despite the clear benefit to students, the promotion of sustainable reading through effective collaboration is troublesome. Dedicating the necessary resources, time, finances, space and capital is a continual challenge, and one that is generally met with enthusiasm but a near-impossible list of priorities (E. Shawgo, 2012).

- **Resource Allocation**

The allocation of resources between libraries and academic departments is a pivotal aspect of their collaboration on sustainability initiatives for reading habits. The library's collection development budget is fundamentally constrained, and the priorities of academic departments have a significant influence on the allocation of funds within the collection. Furthermore, the more resource-intensive the collaborative activities are, the greater the burden on the library's collection budget, exacerbating conflicts of interest. (J Aulisio & McHugh, 2013).

- **Communication Barriers**

Communication barriers frequently prevent the free flow of information and diminish collaborative efforts both within libraries and between libraries and other units (J Aulisio & McHugh, 2013). An increase in the volume and diversity of messages, people, and channels further complicates communications. When collaboration breaks down, meetings degenerate into reiterating different points without resolution. Telephonic conversations suffer disruptions, while videoconferencing is highly sensitive to bandwidth, latency, and jitter; detachment from meeting participants; and personal habits.

Future Directions

Past collaborative efforts between libraries and academic departments demonstrate the positive impact such partnerships have on promoting sustainable reading habits among students. Future research should consider expanding existing frameworks to better facilitate these practices, examining facilitative as well as inhibitive influences encountered.

Engagement with course-required materials is essential for academic progress, yet some readers establish habits that curb enduring interaction with texts (J Aulisio & McHugh, 2013).

- **Innovative Approaches**

Modern-day knowledge workers are required to locate, sort, analyse, and synthesize data from a wide variety of formats and sources. Business intelligence (BI)

technologies are vital tools for these knowledge workers because BI systems integrate, transform, and encapsulate data in ways that make it easier to locate, understand, and disseminate relevant knowledge.

- **Technological Integration**

The integration of technological tools in academic library settings is a crucial element in fostering sustainable reading habits (Alonso-Arévalo & Vázquez Vázquez, 2018). Technology-enhanced academic programs and information literacy skills are associated with sustainability and provide a multifaceted approach to collaboration (Zegzula & Smyrnova-Trybulska, 2018). The availability of digital platforms, which can be incorporated into the curriculum for self-paced learning, offers a global perspective that benefits students.

Conclusion

The theme of collaboration between libraries and academic departments is developed through sustainable reading habits, linking academic attainment to long-lasting reading. Reading habits have evolved from silent reading, through social reading, digital reading, to social digital reading, while social reading is also becoming popular in the digital age. Both evolution and recent emergence of new reading habits, however, create issues for academic libraries and their services for students. Reading habits of academic undergraduates confirms that social digital reading is becoming the prevalent reading habit, as students read predominantly from mobile devices, with their preferred reading genres being academic and research, news and current affairs, and general knowledge. Suggestions from some students to help their reading reflect problems with some existing library services, while highlighting collaboration between academic departments and libraries as a possible solution. Analysis of benefits reveals what both partners can gain from collaboration and provides rationale. Two models of collaboration illustrate different approaches interstate and intra-state, while four mechanisms outreach and advocacy, content design, training and skills development, and information literacy suggest means to cultivate sustainable reading habits. It works as motivation and guidance for enhancing collaboration and furthering reading sustainability.

A model that employs collaboration could therefore develop teaching and outreach initiatives with more comprehensive support.

The collaboration between academic and public librarians, characterized by shared expertise and mutually beneficial outcomes, has reinforced confidence and broadened instructional scope, report amplified professional networks, extension of programming options into new subjects, and enriched content related to sustainability.

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