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Academic Librarian Experiences and Perceived Value of OER Professional Development: A Case Study

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Academic Librarian Experiences and Perceived Value of
OER Professional Development: A Case Study

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Adult and Lifelong Learning

by

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ABSTRACT

Academic librarianship is a constantly changing profession. Open education librarianship has developed as an area of specialization. Effective continuing professional development (CPD) for learning about open educational resources (OER) is needed to meet academic librarians' knowledge and training needs engaged in this area. This narrative case study examines the experiences and perceptions of academic librarians who completed a structured open education leadership program. Interviews were conducted with a selection of program fellows to capture the personal perspectives of the program participants. These interview narratives were transcribed and, alongside program curriculum and participant projects, utilized to answer the study's research questions about the participants' experiences and perceptions of value gained from the program and its impact on their careers. The analysis concluded that CPD programs are effective and valuable to participants when the time and effort participants commit is accompanied by structured, well-managed, scaffolded, interactive learning experiences that prioritize human interaction and network building. When professionals engage in programs like this one, dedicating the time and focus required, they can realize positive professional outcomes and attain a personal sense of accomplishment.

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DEDICATION

For The Mighty Thorntons: “Go Conquer!”

and

my parents, James and Pearly Roland

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A growing number of academic librarians are becoming involved with campus efforts to expand the use of open educational resources (OER) in academic classrooms. These open resource efforts aim to combat the rising cost of textbooks that add to the increasing cost of college attendance. Many librarians need training, knowledge, and skills to lead campus OER advocacy initiatives. As in most specialized areas of academic librarianship, continuing education, postgraduate training, and professional development have emerged to address this issue. Are these programs effective? Do the participants value them? Researchers and program developers have not yet asked these questions or explored participant experiences in these programs. Webster-Wright (2009) encourages broadening the focus of professional development and professional learning research by examining the experiences of individuals engaged in the learning pursuits and recording their views of the impact of the new knowledge on their practice. My research mirrors the recommendation of Webster-Wright by exploring the participation, experiences, and perceptions of program value reported by academic librarians that have completed an open education leadership development program.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the research context. It serves as the background of the study to situate it within the context of continuing professional development (CPD) for academic librarianship and details my connection to the subject. I also explore the emergence of new areas of professional library work and how these changes and trends necessitate expanded professional development opportunities. Next, the need and purpose of the study are discussed. I then define theoretical concepts related to academic librarianship, continuing professional development, and open educational resources before describing the questions guiding this study.

The conceptual framework is also detailed. Finally, I conclude this chapter by discussing the proposed study's scope and limitations, followed by a summary.

Context of the Study

Continuing Professional Development

For decades, library professionals have debated and scrutinized the required preparation for professional librarianship (Budd, 2018). Core competencies have been established to ensure that accredited programs prepare graduates for entry-level roles (ALA, 2009). However, in the academic library community, it is accepted that a master's degree in library science does not adequately prepare graduates for all areas and functions of academic librarianship. Nor does this terminal degree address the constant professional fluctuations the profession undergoes due to changes in higher education and advancing technologies. Practitioners readily acknowledge the need for continuing education and development (Harhai & Krueger, 2016; Massis, 2010). However, unlike some professions, this continuing education is not mandated or required by a professional body. It is up to each academic librarian to manage individual career and professional goals. Selecting practical and relevant CPD supports these efforts.

A broad assortment of CPD opportunities exist. This includes continuing education offerings from professional associations such as the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and vendors including Library Juice Academy, Lyrisis, and Amigos. Professional librarians choose from amongst these to meet their educational and professional goals. Professional education and development programs provide librarians venturing into new roles in the profession with the information and preparation they need to succeed and expand their professional skills. Leadership and advocacy for open education initiatives is one such emerging role.

Evolving Roles in Academic Librarianship

Academic librarianship, as a profession, must continually reinvent itself to remain relevant as contributors in the academy at technologically and philosophically progressive colleges or universities (Raju et al., 2018). Keeping up with these changes often requires the restructuring of academic libraries and their personnel. Library programs have expanded beyond traditional, foundational librarianship to address this change, and many now include information science and technology in their curricula. During the last decade, key trends emerging in the field include an emphasis on information literacy, which necessitates librarians taking on teaching roles, information technology, data management, and electronic resource specialties (Corrall, 2010). Newer specialist positions include assessment, first-year experience, instructional design, maker space technology, geographic information systems (GIS), data visualization, outreach, and distance learning librarians (Callas, 2019; Witteveen, 2019). Another of these emerging specialties is open education librarianship (Larson, 2020). Just as Corrall (2010) noted, ten years ago, the need for continuing education to fulfill these specializations still exists. As she notes, practitioners see this as a "worthwhile investment but want flexible, tailored" content and development approaches to meet this need (p. 568).

Problem Statement

OER advocacy figures as one of the most recent areas of specialization in the profession of librarianship. A growing number of academic librarians lead OER initiatives on many college and university campuses across the United States and Canada. Bell and Salem (2017) acknowledge that librarians need specialized training to become effective OER advocates. Moreover, for institutions whose programs advance beyond advocacy to OER publishing,

including original creations and re-mixing or adapting content, advanced specialized knowledge of copyright and open licensing is needed (Gumb, 2019).

What should the curriculum for this specialized OER knowledge and training comprise? According to recent studies, an OER guidebook, and a certification program (Larson, 2020; Bell, 2021; Open Education Network, n.d.; Elder, 2019), an effective OER librarian training program or course should feature instruction on:

- The basics of "open" including an introduction to the history of Open Educational Resources and the movement, the primary philosophy of openness, and information on how open resources can be identified and utilized
- Critical issues related to OER including textbook affordability; automatic textbook billing (also known as inclusive access or first-day access); and the use of electronic multi-user library resources as course materials
- Copyright, open licensing, Creative Commons licensing, and fair use as well as the principles of attribution
- The role of libraries in OER discovery and hosting
- Guidance on launching OER initiatives, raising awareness on campus, and connecting OER to institutional priorities
- Leadership skills since libraries often lead campus OER initiatives
- Identifying stakeholders, building relationships, and cultivating partners
- Software skills to manage institutional repositories, publishing software, and basic word processing and web skills

While this is not an exhaustive catalog of elements, it does highlight the essential information needs of librarians engaged in OER work.

As is the case with other recent areas of specialization in librarianship, the knowledge and skills needed to lead OER initiatives are not traditionally taught in library science graduate programs. Therefore, it is up to the individual librarian to seek out and engage in professional development or training as working professionals. Academic librarians seeking training in this area can select various types of CPD ranging from self-directed options such as reading literature on the subject or participation in webinars to interactive, formal alternatives such as attending conference sessions and enrolling in certificate or leadership training programs. Each option offers essential access to new professional information for academic librarians, but some development options require more commitment and interaction than others.

The growing involvement of academic librarians in OER advocacy on campuses across North America has been documented by various researchers (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Hess et al., 2016; Goodsett et al., 2016). However, few studies have explored the experiences of librarians who complete OER professional development programs or the value and effectiveness of these programs for participants. This study augments the existing literature regarding OER professional development options.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore academic librarians' narratives about their introduction to OER and their experiences in the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) Open Education (OE) Leadership program, their perceptions of value or benefit in participating, and the impact of the program on their professional careers. These insights provide information that CPD program developers can use to create effective, worthwhile program content and increase understanding of how academic librarians experience

formal professional learning in the context of open education training. My study focused on the individual experiences of program participants.

I explored program participants' experiences and the value assessments they make of the program on their personal and professional development. Personal development here refers to their individual growth in knowledge and skills. Professional development refers to the impact of participation on their leadership opportunities and career growth. Program developers might use the study's insights to comprehend better what motivates potential professional learners and discover what learning activities and approaches they find most valuable. Open education CPD programs that more adequately meet the needs of participants can be developed using this study's findings.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to guide the study. I explored the initial introduction of academic librarians to OER and examined how they perceived the value they gained from participating in a structured OE professional development program.

RQ.1 How do academic librarians describe how they became interested in open educational resources?

RQ. 2 How do academic librarians describe and assign value to their experiences in a structured, open education leadership program?

- a. How do they describe the time spent in the program?
- b. How do they describe the activities associated with the program?
- c. How do they describe the program outcomes as they relate to their professional lives?

- d. How do they describe the outcomes in relation to their individual growth in skills and knowledge?

Research Design Overview

The study employed a single-case, qualitative narrative case study approach. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) characterize qualitative case studies as a research approach focusing on a "unit of analysis" contained within an "intrinsically bounded" system (p. 38-39). This approach allowed the analysis of a finite collection of data obtained through interviews with a specific number of connected participants (subcases). It also involved collecting and reviewing materials associated with this specific program. The SPARC OE Leadership program is the bounded system; fellows who have completed the program are the unit of analysis. This methodology allowed individual voices to be heard through data gathered from interviews with CPD program participants. Defining the qualitative case study as an in-depth descriptive examination, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggest that qualitative case studies add breadth to basic qualitative research by centering individual experiences in a bounded system such as a specific program. They also acknowledge a range of case study categories, noting that they can be combined with other types of qualitative research such as phenomenological, historical, or grounded theory. My study employs what they refer to as a "single case study" approach with embedded "subcases" (p. 40).

The SPARC OE Leadership program was established in 2017 and has graduated four cohorts of fellows. During the first three years of the program, participation was open only to academic librarians. The fourth cohort of the program was expanded to accept applications from other academic professionals. It is an "intensive professional development program designed to provide library professionals with the knowledge, skills, and connections to lead successful open education initiatives for the benefit of students" (SPARC, 2008-2018).

Case studies are enriched by the collection of data from multiple sources (Yin, 2018). Therefore, I also examined and analyzed program documentation, capstone projects, and participant-created community resources. However, program participant interviews were the primary source of data. The interviews were conducted with academic librarians who completed the program. Yin (2018) notes the importance and relevance of interviews in case study research. This approach helps illuminate participant perspectives. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured, "guided conversations" that allowed participants to discuss their perceptions of the program (Yin, 2018, p. 118).

Strategies for data analysis included constant reviews of the content collected during the interview process. The interview data was gathered using an online platform called ZOOM. Each interview was recorded and uploaded to my account on the Otter.Ai platform. Otter. Ai is a transcription tool. It was used to transcribe the recorded interviews automatically. The auto-generated transcripts were reviewed and edited.

Interview transcripts were then coded using the cycle coding method. Miles et al. (2020) define codes as "labels that assign symbolic meaning" to the qualitative data assembled and detail two cycles of coding procedures (p. 62). The authors advocate for continuous coding throughout the data gathering process. Before beginning the interview process, I created a preliminary list of codes based on the research questions. This list was expanded during the coding process. Review of the interviews began with first cycle coding, which encompassed a mix of approaches, including emotion coding, which provided "insight into the participants' perspectives" and evaluative coding, which was used to determine the participants' perceptions of the program content and its value (Miles et al., 2020, p. 67). During second-cycle coding, the

codes were further analyzed and divided into themes. These themes were be analyzed in relation to the selected conceptual framework (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Rationale and Significance

The focus of this study is on a formal, structured OE leadership program. Formal, structured, time-intensive professional development programs require high levels of commitment from participants. Webster-Wright (2009) stresses that effective CPD is personal to the individual and should be active, practical, and include ongoing learning that is deeply connected to active professional practice beyond the confines of a formal program. Effective, beneficial CPD that provides value and benefit for the participant is critical for professionals already engaged in professional work. This is especially true for academic librarians who are often employed in higher education institutions that support their training using limited financial resources. This is also critical for the individual librarian who devotes extensive time to complete the program while still performing regular assigned professional duties. To be most effective, CPD should provide helpful, practical learning experiences applicable to professional duties. Exploring participants' experiences and perceptions of value or benefit gained from the SPARC OE Leadership program can help CPD developers better understand the program elements participants find beneficial. The study findings might also influence future program development in emerging areas of academic librarianship. This dissertation seeks to explore these ideas through a qualitative narrative case study that situates individual academic librarian experiences as subcases within the bounded system of the SPARC OE Leadership program (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

Examining the experiences of academic librarians who completed SPARC's OE Leadership program will lead to a better understanding of the value and impact of the program

on professional practices. This study provides a means for learning more about what program participants learned, experienced, and how they connected and interacted with their peers and instructors, and how they did or planned to implement the knowledge in the workplace. This knowledge can help professional development program creators design more effective CPD for emergent fields of librarianship.

Researcher Perspective

I began my career as an academic librarian in 2008. Since then, I have continually faced the need to learn new skills, explore and acquire new knowledge, and readjust to the profession's changing demands. New technologies, when deployed, require learning new skills. A new job focus requires learning new knowledge. To stay up to date and advance in the field, one must become an agile, lifelong learner. Some of this learning is informal; some of it is more structured and formal. The latter was the case for my learning into the world of OER.

In the summer of 2017, I applied to participate in the pilot launch of SPARC's new Open Education Leadership Fellows program. SPARC had been awarded grant funding to pilot a new open education professional development program for academic librarians. The purpose of the pilot cohort was to trial the program curriculum on a small group of professionals before launching it as a fee-based program. There was no financial cost for the pilot cohort beyond the cost of attending a national open education conference during which participants would meet for an in-person program induction. Following the conference, pilot cohort participants were required to commit to an additional eight months of online course work, class discussions, synchronous meetings, mentor meetings, and the completion of a final portfolio and project plan.

Additionally, the pilot program participants contributed to the course documentation and manual, helping to improve and refine the educational material created by the program director

and instructor. Following a competitive application process, the SPARC leadership program coordinators selected fourteen academic librarians from across the United States and Canada to participate in the inaugural cohort of fellows. Following my year as a pilot participant, I volunteered as a program mentor for the next cohort of fellows. My experience in this program led me to this current dissertation project.

I began to wonder about the experiences of subsequent program participants. Though the program is no longer grant-funded, the 2018 and 2019 cohorts were double the size of the pilot cohort. Each applicant is charged a fee to attend. The program participation fee ranges from \$2500-\$4000. The fellow's employer pays the fee, but a limited number of scholarships are available. The program curriculum remains intensive, formal, and structured (SPARC, 2020). As I discuss in chapter 3, I am aware that my past experiences with the program may bias my approach to this study. I actively managed these biases as I interviewed participants, reviewed the program documentation and capstones, and analyzed the collected data.

Definitions of Terminology

Five significant concepts provided the key terminology for this study. First, academic librarians are defined as those employed at Carnegie classified institutions that grant associates through doctoral degrees. Academic librarians hold a master's degree from an American Library Association accredited program. They are employed as professional librarians (The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2019; American Libraries Association, 2019).

In this study, I used the terms continuing education, continuing professional education, professional development, professional learning, and leadership development interchangeably. The acronym CPD was employed to represent these terms. The Collins Dictionary of Business (2006) defines continuing professional development as efforts made by professionals to update

their competencies, skills, and knowledge to benefit their occupational duties. *The Dictionary of Human Resources and Personnel Development* (2006) emphasizes that this development occurs through training and education throughout a career.

Open education (OE) and Open educational resources (OER) are closely related terms and are both used in this study. OE refers to "resources, tools, and practices that are free of legal, financial and technical barriers and can be fully shared and adapted in the digital environment" (SPARC, 2007-2019). OE is a broad umbrella term that encompasses philosophy and active behaviors, which lead to advocacy for and the use of OER. It is the belief that people throughout the world should have access to high-quality educational experiences and materials and that barriers to these experiences and resources should be eliminated (Opensource.com, 2019); this belief provides the foundation of OER. OER are teaching and learning materials that can be used and shared, free of charge, by students and educators (Hewlett Foundation, 2019). Generally, open licensing allows for free and liberal dissemination of these learning resources.

Collins English Dictionary offers several definitions of value. The one chosen for this study references desirability and usefulness (Collins, 2014). The identification of the value participants place on their CPD was the central focus of the study.

Summary

As academic libraries continue to evolve due to expanding technology and the development of new areas of practice, specialized CPD is required. Included among these emerging librarianship specialties is OER advocacy. This chapter offered an introduction to the problem: the lack of graduate training in this area that is now being addressed by emerging CPD programs and the failure of current scholarship to examine this type of CPD. My study will help fill this gap by examining librarians' experiences who have participated in an open education

leadership program. The purpose is to understand their experiences and perceptions of value better. Next, I explore the literature on CPD, CPD in librarianship, and published studies focusing on OER.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review explores the emergence of CPD, also described here as continuing professional education (CPE), as a distinct area of inquiry in adult learning and its foundational assumptions, as well as current literature on academic librarian CPD. This review also examines the literature on the emergence of OER and its connection to academic libraries before exploring the conceptual frame of perceived value. Extensive searches of library science and professional development literature were conducted utilizing the following databases: Library & Information Sciences Abstracts (LISA), Library and Information Science Source, Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts, (LISTA), Business Source Complete, ERIC, the Ebsco Professional Development Collection, ProQuest Central and JSTOR. Search keywords included professional development, continuing professional education, continuing professional development, academic librarians, open education, and open educational resources.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore academic librarians' experiences in the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) Open Education (OE) Leadership program, their perceptions of value or benefit in participating, and the impact of the program on their professional careers and personal lives. Additionally, the purpose was to explore their initial introduction to OER and describe this experience. These insights will provide information that CPD program developers can use to create effective, worthwhile program content and increase understanding of how academic librarians experience formal professional learning in the context of open education training. The study will focus on the individual experiences of program participants.

Academic librarians have access to many forms of CPD, but the focus here is on formal CPD. Literature focused on the history of professional development, critiques of effectiveness in CPD, explorations of CPD in academic librarianship, and the state of OER advocacy are explored in this review to build a foundation that supports my study. The concept of perceived value is also explored, followed by a summary.

Rationale for Topics

The topics selected for review provide a baseline of foundational knowledge. My work seeks to incorporate these foundations and expand knowledge of this phenomenon among one group of professionals, academic librarians. Opportunities for CPD include such activities as engaging in self-directed learning through the reading of blog posts, participating in listservs, completing online training, viewing webinars, attending professional conferences, and participating in formal, structured development or continuing education programs. Because the nature and focus of academic library specialties continuously change, CPD opportunities must be developed to accommodate library professionals' changing needs. They often need new skills and knowledge to reinvent themselves and expand professional competencies.

Continuing professional education and professional development

This section explores the historical origins of professional development. I trace the formal beginnings of learning centered on individuals employed in professional roles, the foundational assumptions, and the role of professional development in academic librarianship.

Historical Origins

The origins of formalized continuing education for professionals date back to the 1960s when professional organizations began to adopt formal learning programs for their members (Cervero & Daley, 2016). Formalized CPE efforts began in the medical profession and quickly

spread to other professions with licensing and certification rules. By the 1980s, formal CPE programs had been established in a broad range of fields, including law, pharmacy, nursing, education, and librarianship (Cervero, 2000). The implementation of these formalized programs led to scholarly interest among adult education scholars and practitioners.

Jeris (2010) traces the first significant emergence of CPE as an "area of emphasis in adult and continuing education" back to the inclusion of a chapter on CPE in the 1970 Handbook of Adult Education. By the early 1980s, adult education scholars began to focus on the topic of CPE and its variations in their research. Cyril O. Houle published the first monograph on the topic, noting that "the comparative study of continuing professional learning appears to be a promising field of inquiry" (1980, p. 17). Houle (1980) explores the transformation of occupations into professions. He proposed that the goal of professional education throughout the lifetime should be to increase knowledge of the latest practices while keeping in mind that changes in practice, methods, and required skills are inevitable. He advocated for life long professional learning and advanced the idea that professionals need to continue to learn throughout their careers. Houle recommended that systems be put in place to allow and encourage them to do so. However, he noted that individuals should be responsible for their learning. Therefore, approaches to obtaining CPD should depend upon individual interests and actions. While participation in short-term programs will expand knowledge of professional trends and theories, program attendance without application in the work environment is of little value.

Houle's work was followed by Cervero's (1988) work, which aimed to help CPE educators improve their practices. Comparing his work to Houle's, Cervero stressed that his focus was on effective educator practices, while Houle's seminal work was instrumental in

bringing "conceptual coherence" to CPE (1988, p. xvi). Cervero's work served to further extend and expand CPE as a specific area of inquiry within adult and continuing education.

Foundational Assumptions

Continuing Professional Development continues to be characterized as development that occurs after initial professional training or degree programs. CPD can be either formal or informal. It is predicated on individual interests and is a "means by which people maintain the knowledge and skills related to their professional lives" (Collin et al., 2012, p. 156). Workplace learning is closely connected to CPD. Scholars such as Billett (2002; 2004) emphasize the importance of continued learning throughout individuals' careers and establish the workplace as a learning site. His work emphasizes the importance of practice in learning. He stressed that learning should be intentional and connected to work tasks, new skills, and employee career goals. Billet also notes that access to learning is often contested in the workplace by social norms and structures such as seniority and task assignment. Competing interests between workers and employers inhibit access to learning programs and guidance and may impede individual learning goals. He asserts that workplace learning is both social and personal (Billett, 2008). Illeri's (2003) focus is also on workplace learning. His theoretical perspective asserts that learning is an individual function, not an organizational one. His theory incorporates a functional workplace-based approach to learning that values individual agency and learning by individuals that can benefit both the individual and the organization (Illeri, 2003).

Additionally, Collin et al. (2012) encourage employers to facilitate learning opportunities and encourage employee development. Dirkx (1996) encourages situating human resource development in adult education to broaden the democratic and social justice implications of adult education compared to the frameworks of management science. Moreover, like workplace

learning scholars, Dirkx (2008b) also advocates for practice-based rather than purely theoretical-based research emphasizing human resource development. Considering that CPD and its related traditions can be both informal or formal, the focus of this study is on a formal CPD program. Therefore, our attention will be focused there rather than on informal opportunities.

CPE, CPD, and professional development programs offer formal learning opportunities that incorporate theory and skill development with practical application and experience (Holt et al., 2018). Other themes, such as participant engagement, the importance of social context, and intentionality, also emerge from the literature. For example, Herold (2014) indicates that active engagement requiring participants to plan and implement projects or activities increases program effectiveness. Acknowledging the group dynamics of some development programs, Day et al. (2014) note that these programs involve processes that encompass multiple individuals' development. Though focusing on leadership development within organizations rather than CPD for job roles, Cohen (2017) advises program developers, participants, and administrators to remember the critical role social context plays in leadership development, job performance, and individual behavior. This sentiment is still applicable for CPD focused on developing leadership skills in non-management professionals. Cohen encourages implementing approaches that keep organizations' social context and social construction in mind when developing curricula. For example, Cohen details his experiences leading internal CPD for managers in companies. He notes that each organization has different social dynamics and that these norms should shape the development focus. This approach may be essential for academic librarians who work at a variety of institutions while participating in OE CPD.

Couch and Citrin (2018) make a case for "intentional development," which is contrived from the principles of adult learning theory and links actions to outcomes (p. 276). Like Cohen,

Couch, and Citrin stress the importance of context in leadership development. They also highlight the value of group learning. This concept seems to be a foundational principle in many CPD programs. My literature search focuses on articles concentrating on overarching conceptualizations and practical techniques for CPD rather than on specific CPD for specified groups of professionals. This broad overview of some of the general CPD literature leads us to focus on CPD, specifically for academic librarians.

Library Continuing Professional Development

It is commonly accepted that academic librarians require training beyond the knowledge gained during library and information science master's degree programs to perform specialist roles, keep up to date with changing technology, and maintain professional competence (Rafiq et al., 2016). This review examines selected library science literature published in the last ten years, focusing on continuing education and professional development delivery, needs, and participant experiences and perceptions. The assessment primarily explores academic library CPD in North America. Academic libraries in North America primarily require that librarians complete American Library Association (ALA) accredited master's degree programs. Furthermore, only librarians from Canada and the United States are eligible to participate in the SPARC OE Leadership program. Therefore, CPD efforts in libraries outside North America are not a focus of this study since the general content of the graduate programs may not align with the ALA standards.

In an article that provides a general overview of librarians' need to participate in CPD, Aslam (2017) notes that academic library staff face a constant need to update their skills and knowledge. Aslam's study suggests that administrators include CPD in organizational strategy to

ensure academic library employees' continued professional growth. He describes effective CPD as a curriculum that leads to acquiring specific skill sets when combined with regular practice.

Other literature suggests that, just like in general discussions of CPD, professional development for academic librarians takes many forms. It can be either formal or informal. It might be self-directed and undertaken by an individual or group focused. In a qualitative case study exploring the professional learning experiences of a group of academic librarians with 1 to 40 years of professional experience, Bilodeau and Carson (2015) found that as professionals, the study participants participated in continuous active learning throughout their professional careers. The researchers situate the twelve librarians' experiences in a community of practice framework acknowledging the valuable workplace professional development that shaped the librarians' professional learning. For academic librarians in some institutions, producing scholarly literature is a concern that drives interest in CPD to advance these skills. Approaches to ensuring this kind of CPD connect to the type of learning connected with communities of practice. In their local study of a campus library professional development committee's programs and assessments, Harker et al. (2018) define professional development as workshops and instruction focused on providing academic librarians with skills and knowledge aimed at preparing them to undertake scholarly research and produce publications. The authors stress the value of assessing professional development programs to justify continued administrative support. This study's emphasis is narrow and only centers on programs that develop librarians' research and writing skills, with no other focus on CPD for professional skills or leadership. It also only studies programming at a single academic library, and the assessments and surveys submitted are limited to less than thirty participants at most of the committee's development events.

Similarly, Broussard (2016) explores the barriers librarians face in conducting research and writing for publication. Despite these barriers, she encourages librarians to engage in scholarship and write for publication using the writing to learn (WTL) framework popularized in English and Rhetoric disciplines. WTL philosophy asserts that writing allows opportunities for "critical thinking and learning" (p. 430). Broussard characterizes participation in WTL as a continuing education activity. In this same realm of CPD, Fitzgibbons (2015) examines journal clubs as approaches to affordable in-house CPD academic libraries can initiate.

In one of the few studies that focus on academic librarian's experiences participating in CPD, Atterbury (2016) explores how academic librarians assign meaning to these experiences and experience transformational learning. Her phenomenological dissertation features data collected from interviews with ten academic librarians and focuses on their pursuits of CPD and opinions on a wide variety of CPD. Her study did not limit activity to formal, structured programs but does provide valuable insight. For example, she notes that her study participants "indicated that individual librarians have a responsibility as professionals to continue learning" throughout their careers (p. 127). This sentiment echoes the foundational assumptions of CPE. In an article based on her doctoral study, Attebury's (2017) later qualitative study sheds additional light on the experiences of academic librarians who have participated in professional development programs. Though she does not focus on programs aimed at learning for professional specialties, the author does note the ongoing need for postgraduate learning for academic librarians due to the continually changing nature of academic librarianship. She categorizes courses and workshops as formal professional development activities. Through interviews, the study participants shared insights into professional development activities they perceived as meaningful or transformational. Professional development they identified as most

meaningful or transformational included experiences that encompassed more extended time frames, were immersive, interactive, and required an application or encouraged follow-up afterward. The ability to practice the new knowledge or skills proved essential to some interviewees. Attebury uses this feedback to make suggestions for CPD providers, encouraging more interactive and participatory activities. Organizers of one academic library's in-house CPD program employed active learning strategies. The program's goal was to help library faculty plan and deliver one-shot library instruction sessions. The authors found that participation in CPD employing these interactive methods can change and enhance professional practice, often leading to positive impacts that enhance the librarian's skills and knowledge (McCartin et al., 2018).

Johannessen (2018) explores how support from management impacts the motivation of librarians in choosing CPD. She examines professional development through the lens of knowledge management. Johannessen defines knowledge management as the task of organizing, directing, and creating knowledge and talents in the organizational environment. She charges managers with this task. The author found that management support and encouragement positively influence academic librarians' motivation to seek and participate in professional development opportunities. Job contentment and professional pride are closely tied to participation in professional development. Johannessen suggests that in academic libraries, only limited attention has focused on planning for the professional development that professional librarians need to stay abreast of the new knowledge they need in today's academic world. The author points out that "the knowledge of the staff ultimately decides what the library can do and what services it can offer its users" (Johannessen, 2018, p.3). Organizations need to identify their knowledge gaps. The growth of OE leadership development programs is helping libraries address these knowledge gaps.

Decker (2017) notes that academic librarianship's changing demands will require current librarians who wish to remain relevant to retrain and learn new skills to meet professional evolution challenges. Specialized CPD to meet some of these new areas of practice have been discussed in the literature. Library scholars acknowledge that few library and information science programs offer courses for librarians entering roles in scholarly communication, copyright, maker space technologies, digital scholarship, carpentries, data science, open publishing, or open education (Maceli, 2019; Benson, 2018; Conrad et al., 2017). Abels et al. (2016) found that many recent graduates also needed more extensive technology skills than they obtained in graduate school. They contend that broad, innovative changes in library and information science (LIS) education are needed to meet the profession's changing demands. Their 2015 project research clarifies that recent LIS graduates lack some of the new skills and knowledge demanded by employers. For librarians who have been in the profession for several years, it is even less likely that they encountered opportunities to undertake coursework in any of these areas of specialization. Therefore, post-degree continuing education is a necessity.

Even duties within the more traditional academic library work areas still require training and knowledge acquisition beyond the graduate degree. For example, expectations for instruction librarians require the acquisition of teaching and presentation abilities that are often not acquired in the graduate academic setting. These proficiencies are often acquired on the job or through CPD (Westbrock & Fabian, 2010). Some libraries have taken on the task of providing focused in-house CPD. Guo (2014) acknowledges the need for library employees to improve their skills and knowledge continually. The author's case study of the professional development committee at Central Michigan University explores this type of effort. It

emphasizes the importance of assessing the effectiveness of professional development regardless of its origination.

Discussions surrounding the accessibility of CPD can also be found in the literature. Online programming addresses some concerns surrounding access for a broad audience of academic librarians. In a philosophical discussion, Neigel (2016) notes the increasing sophistication of the profession and the need for those employed in the field to have access to suitable professional learning opportunities. However, she argues that in Canada, particularly, barriers, such as economic constraints and an emphasis on individual responsibility for seeking professional development, exist and can hinder access to continuing education. However, she does not provide specific statistical or qualitative support for her arguments. Academic librarians employed at small rural colleges in the United States also face access barriers. Using a 24-question survey, Kendrick et al. (2013) gathered 218 viable responses from librarians practicing in rural areas of the United States and interviewed four survey respondents. They found that while over eighty percent of the academic librarians surveyed indicated that their organizations provided support for CPD, this support was often sporadic and did not always include financial funding. Most of those surveyed indicated participating in online CPD, and just over half participated in the in-person training. Barriers to CPD identified in the study included funding, travel distance to in-person CPD opportunities, and the lack of time to devote to CPD. However, the study concluded that rural academic librarians were interested in and committed to accessing CPD despite barriers. Divisions of national professional organizations have attempted to address financial barriers to CPD by developing and expanding cost-free online opportunities (Hendrix & McKeal, 2017).

My search of the literature only unearthed one article that mentioned CPD for librarians involved in OER advocacy. Smith and Lee (2017) discuss the development of an OER community of practice in British Columbia to provide professional development and networking opportunities for academic librarians in the province. Activities of the group include community creation of tools, marketing materials, and educational programming. The authors detail the group's activities but do not explore the perceptions of value or the benefits of group members' participation in the community.

Open Educational Resources

Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching and learning materials available at no cost and carry an open license that allows them to be broadly shared, remixed, and redistributed for employment in classrooms and other learning environments. The college textbook affordability crisis has encouraged these resources' development and expanded advocacy for them on college and university campuses. The beginning of the global OER movement is often traced back to 2002. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored a meeting focused on developing universal education resources accessible to the whole world (Hess et al., 2016). In 2007 the Organization for Economic and Co-operative Development (OECD) argued that governments should support OER because their use helps expand access to learning for all population segments. The study also contends that OER expands access to means, tools, and resources for lifelong learning by bridging the gap between non-formal, informal, and formal learning (Centre For Educational Research, Innovation, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, & OECD, 2007). Research on the deployment and efficacy of OER in a variety of higher education disciplines is increasing (Delgado et al., 2019; Kersey, 2019; Nguyen-Truong et al., 2019; Pounds & Bostock, 2019; Ross et al., 2018)). At

many institutions, teaching faculty are introduced to the option of using OER by academic librarians. For this reason, the focus of this review is not on adoption, implementation, efficacy, or sustainability but on OER advocacy, especially as it pertains to academic librarians.

Current literature illustrates how academic librarians worldwide have become involved in OER advocacy and current campus OER initiatives (Okamoto, 2013; Colson et al., 2017; Mwinyimbegu, 2018). Spurred by campus missions seeking to address the rising cost of higher education, academic libraries and librarians have initiated OER advocacy campaigns across North America. Librarians in New York spearheaded faculty development for OER as part of a state-supported initiative to decrease the cost of textbooks in the two-state higher education systems (Katz, 2019). Much of the literature on this phenomenon focuses on library liaison roles in building partnerships with faculty and implementing campus training and faculty development workshops on OER (Crozier, 2018; Raschke & Shanks, 2011; Salem, 2017). Additionally, Walz (2015) even addresses opportunities for libraries to become involved in publishing OER. Furthermore, while many have made calls for preparation for these roles, scholarship on librarian preparation for leading OER campus initiatives is limited.

Publications focus on self-directed pathways and local institutions' efforts but not on the experiences or value of formal OE CPD programs. For example, an openly licensed, published guide on OER librarianship (Wesolek et al., 2018) provides a tool for self-directed learning. Additionally, Smith and Lee (2017) explore the creation of an OER-focused professional learning community at one Canadian institution to support librarians embarking on OER advocacy as add-on duties in addition to their designated professional roles in the library. My study will address this gap in the literature. Furthermore, like Attebury (2016, 2017), my goal was to focus on the participating librarians' experiences rather than solely on program format,

content, or structure. This focus also addressed the need for more studies that focus on participant experiences in CPD, as Webster-Wright (2009) encourages.

Conceptual Framework: Perceived Value

I chose to explore value concepts when seeking a conceptual frame for the librarians' perceptions of their OE leadership program experiences. This choice led me first to explore the concept in library science and education before investigating the idea in other disciplines for expanded "theoretical possibilities" (Casanave & Li, 2015, p. 115). Focusing on the perceptions of value academic librarians place on their OE leadership program experiences inspired me to liken these program participants to consumers. This strategy then led me to business marketing and its focus on consumer perception and behavior. My literature search in library science databases revealed that when the concept "perceived value" is mentioned, it rarely focuses on librarians' experiences in CPD. The focus is most often on the perceived value of library services or content by users or patrons (Rossman, 2020; Bakar, 2009). Therefore, I focused on reviewing the literature on the concept of value in education and training and then investigated the concept of perceived value in business and marketing literature. Drawing from the literature, I devised a multifaceted conceptual frame for understanding the librarians' perceived value of the OE leadership professional development program.

Perceptions of Value: Education and the Concept of Value

Education literature often addresses value and value perceptions from a vantage point that centers education as a necessary good for individuals. Furthermore, Novakovic (2019) contends that the value perceptions of education, at least for individuals, have not been broadly studied. Creating a framework of meaning surrounding these value perceptions is challenging. Efforts to determine a market value for higher education prove controversial, but this is often the goal of

policymakers in Western contexts as they focus on marketizing education. Policymakers' valuation efforts center on the tangible impacts of education on graduates' employability and increased salary earning potential. Focusing on these elements points to positive returns for students and society (Tomlinson, 2018; Gee et al., 2015). The literature search revealed that education researchers explore perceived value from various perspectives using diverse research methods. For example, in their study of graduate students' perceived value of learning resources, Wilhelm-Chapin and Koszalka (2020) link perceived value to motivation and the effort the students put into using the learning resources related to the value they perceive.

In a study of professional development perceptions among college higher education faculty, Lawrence and Hall (2019) draw their conceptions of value from interview answers received from study participants and coded them as valued activities. However, they do not draw from a standard theoretical conceptualization of perceived value. I found this to be the case in other studies in education that focused on perceived value (McDonald et al., 2018). In education literature, viewing students as consumers has proven controversial (Tomlinson, 2018).

In professional development, I contend, however, that professionals can be viewed as consumers. They choose the CPD. The individual or their employer pays for the CPD. The participants expect some benefit or value from the experience. Frameworks for conceptualizing value seem more fluid in these studies than in business marketing studies that identify the consumer as the determiner of value and seek to measure and, to some extent, standardize the elements used to configure the construct of value.

Perceptions of Value: Business and Marketing

In business literature, the concept of perceived value originates from marketing theory. The simplest definition defines it as a consumer or customer's assessment of the advantages

derived from purchasing consumer goods or services (Doyle, 2016). However, the literature reveals many complex, multifaceted conceptual explanations of the concept. Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2007) found a lack of agreement among scholars when defining the concept of perceived value. Constructed definitions view perceived value as fluctuating, biased, and variable. Because of this divergence in agreement, they stress an overall need to view the concept as multidimensional. The construct is created by the interconnectedness of the material value of goods or services and the time and effort expended by the buyer to acquire it. In their attempt to operationalize value, Näslund et al. (2006) found that definitions of perceived value were subjective and dependent on the customer's goals. Along with time and effort, the personal sacrifice required to obtain the product or service shapes consumer perceptions of perceived value. A frame of perceived value that centers the customer or consumer can be derived by synthesizing these definitions.

These complex views of perceived value lend themselves well to constructing a framework for evaluating the perceived value of CPD. Like products and services, choosing and participating in CPD requires effort and action on the participant's part. Participants expect to receive some benefit because of their participation and completion of the program's requirements. Participants' perceptions are likely to be subjective and multidimensional based on each individual's experiences and engagement in the program. As Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2007) note in their extensive systematic review of perceived value marketing scholarship, the value of CPD can also be framed as a construct that is highly context-specific subjective and individualized. With this framework in mind, data analysis in this study focused on multidimensional, individualized constructions of perceived value in the context of participants' experiences in the SPARC OE Leadership program. As Novakovic's (2019) work

illustrates, the stories and perspectives of the individuals engaged in an educational experience emerge as significant elements for creating value frameworks. She uses the life histories of women who graduated from higher educational institutions to center the participant in the value construction rather than larger institutional entities or impersonal, abstract concepts that push a narrative assuming the "implicit value" of education (p. 757). I used the participant interviews to determine the fit of OE leadership CPD experiences to the marketized value model of consumer studies. I applied this broad concept in a non-traditional way while also letting the program participants' own words shape and add to the meaning to construct a value concept that moves it beyond a strict time/value dichotomy. The central research question focuses on how the participants describe their experiences and activities in the program and the value gained from these experiences in relation to their professional and personal lives.

Summary

This literature review details the historical and foundational origins of CPD, CPE, and continuous professional learning from its initial focus on continued learning in the medical professions in the late sixties, through its seventies and eighties, when CPE expanded into other professions. The foundational assumptions of CPD up to the present were also examined before exploring current literature on CPD for academic librarians. Gaps were identified in the literature that focuses on CPD for OER and perspectives of CPD that champion participants' experiences and allow them to attach value to their CPD encounters. My study will contribute to this literature by expanding knowledge of OE CPD and revealing librarians' perceptions of benefit and value gained in the leadership program.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore academic librarians' experiences and perceptions of value related to their participation in an open education leadership program and how these experiences have impacted their professional practice and personal growth. The research questions were,

1. How do academic librarians describe how they became interested in open educational resources?
2. How do they describe and assign value to their experiences in a structured, open education leadership program?

I selected a qualitative research approach that offers the opportunity to focus on "how people interpret their experiences" and how they assign value to these experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 39). The goal for the researcher and potential readers is to gain a deep understanding of participant experiences. Using a social constructivist lens, which is common in qualitative research methods, this study allows for multiple viewpoints concerning participation in a specific professional development program. Social constructivism is a worldview or paradigm that suggests that individuals construct meaning based on their experiences and interactions with others (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interpretations of reality are individualistic and shaped by the social context. This study aimed to understand participant experiences to discover a transferability that might apply to other CPD programs for academic librarians. Social constructivism informs qualitative research and places "emphasis on seeking understanding of the meanings of human actions and experiences and on generating accounts of meaning from the viewpoints of those involved" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 91). The

qualitative design employed was the case study method, which emphasizes studying a phenomenon within a "real-world context," utilizing several data sources (Yin, 2018, p. 15).

This chapter focuses on the methodology used in the study. It begins with a discussion of the research sample, followed by a detailed presentation of the research design, an overview of the research methodology that includes the details of data collection and management, and analysis procedures. Finally, ethical considerations, trustworthiness, limitations, and delimitations precede the chapter summary.

Research Sample

The SPARC OE Leadership program is open to librarians from the United States and Canada. The application process is competitive. Selected applicants must commit to attending a two-day in-person induction program, the annual Open Education (OpenEd) conference. They also participate in a nine-month online training component that includes assigned activities and deliverables, reviewing asynchronous content, discussion boards, and monthly synchronous meetings. Finally, they must complete a final capstone portfolio that consists of a report and a participant-created community resource (SPARC, 2020). The cost of the program ranges from \$2500-\$4000. The cost is dictated by institutional membership in SPARC. Additional financial expenses include conference registration, transportation, and lodging at the annual OpenEd conference.

The program is in its fourth year of operation. Program directors have had time to refine and improve the program, and it is now firmly established. The potential interviewees identified for this study included participants from diverse institutions in the United States. The program contains limited gender, racial, ethnic, or cultural diversity. This is indicative of academic librarianship (Kendrick & Damasco, 2019). However, considerable institutional diversity was

noted. Preliminary findings indicated that program participants are employed primarily at public colleges and universities, private, not-for-profit colleges, universities, or community colleges in the United States or Canada. Because I based my analysis of represented institutions on Carnegie classification standards, a United States-specific institutional categorization, Canadian participants were not considered for participation in this study.

Purposive sampling methods were employed based upon the number of willing participants in the selected group under study. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggest that there is no standard number of interviews to conduct in case study research. The number depends on the research question(s) and how many interviews it takes to get to the point of saturation or when no new knowledge is shared. For this reason, the analysis of the interviews was conducted concurrently with the data collection phase to determine when interview responses become repetitive across the defined, categorized selection of respondents. It has been suggested that when required to provide an initial sample size, researchers can provide an approximation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The sample was selected from a population of SPARC OE Leadership fellows who had completed the program.

I identified twenty-six potential participants and invited them to participate in the study. This number was drawn from cadre individuals who completed the program before 2021. The twenty-six potential fellows were contacted by email. Ten responded, expressing willingness to participate in the interviews. Six interviews were conducted based on the three types of institutions represented by program participants. This number proved sufficient for reaching saturation. Table 3.1 illustrates the demographic representation of potential interview participants by institution type. Two participants from each type of institution were interviewed.

Table 3.1*Potential Participant Snapshot*

| Institution Type | Number of Participants |
|---|------------------------|
| U.S. Public Colleges and Universities | 12 |
| U.S. Private not-for-Profit Colleges and Universities | 8 |
| U.S. Community and Technical Colleges | 6 |
| Total | N=26 |

Using a standard recruitment letter (Appendix A), I contacted the 26 potential participants who met the defined criteria via email. They were asked to complete a participant information form (PIF) created using Qualtrics, an online survey tool. The form (Appendix B) collected basic demographic information about the fellow, their institution, job title, number of years in the profession, number of years involved with OER advocacy, and the percentage of OER responsibilities related to other job responsibilities. The form also provided a means by which fellows could indicate a willingness to participate in recorded virtual interviews.

Interview participants were purposefully selected based on the desire to be interviewed and the previously defined criteria specifying the inclusion of at least two participants from each of the three types of Carnegie classified institutions. Additional research data were selected from program materials, including the publicly available curriculum, participant portfolios, and community resources created by fellows.

Research Design

The need for effective OE CPD that academic librarians find value in was the problem this study sought to address. The development of CPD to meet this need provided an opportunity to explore participants' program perceptions. Studying the experiences of

individuals and their perceptions of value was the focus of my study. Therefore, a case study research method was an appropriate research strategy (Yin, 2018). Case study methods call for a bounded structure in which the researcher selects the population and site, and data are collected within these bounds (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study operated within a single case structure model, treating each participant as subcases within the system's boundaries. Data were generated through the stories that participants share about their experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather primary data. The data gathered were rich and provided a deep understanding of each participant's experience. Even though qualitative inquiry is not concerned with generalization, the collected descriptions and value perceptions offer insights to both CPD creators and providers and professional associations, academic librarians, and library administrators.

Case Study Research

Creswell and Poth (2018) define case study research as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life contemporary bounded system (a case)" using a detailed and multi-source data collection approach (p. 96). I conducted a narrative case study. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) note that case study research can be combined with other types of qualitative analyses. They write, "Narrative analysis uses the stories people tell, . . . to understand the meaning of experiences as revealed in the story. If the unit of analysis is a bounded system-a case, . . . such as a program. . . one would label such a study a 'qualitative case study" (p.24). It is acceptable to adopt a qualitative approach that draws from more than one of the six conventional qualitative research designs. The case study method can be used to "present a person's "story," hence combining narrative with case study" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p.40). I was interested in the experiences and perceptions of value academic librarians attribute to

participation in a specific open education professional development program and their narratives about their personal and professional introductions to OER advocacy. The narrative case study research method was appropriate for my research because I explored individual participant experiences in SPARC's OE Leadership program through the stories they shared about these experiences.

SPARC is a membership organization made up of an international group of academic libraries. Memberships are institutionally based. The coalition focuses on advancing open access in academic scholarship, data, research, and educational materials. The organization promotes and advocates for policy change on behalf of institutional members to expand free and open public access to scholarship, data, and curricular resources. SPARC also creates informational materials aimed at reducing the obstacles that limit access to knowledge sharing. Open education advocacy is one focus of the organization. The SPARC OE Lead program was created to expand knowledge of open education in the academic library community. The program's goal is to "empower academic professionals with the knowledge, skills, and connections to lead successful open education initiatives that benefit students" (SPARC, 2009-2017). SPARC initiated the first formal open educational leadership program for academic librarians. The experiences and perceptions of these program fellows are the focus of my study.

As Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggest, I first identified an open education professional development program that met the established criteria. The criteria demanded the identification of a structured, formal professional development program for academic librarians with a defined publicly accessible curriculum that required at least a six-month time commitment and a final project or portfolio production. Based on its content, format, and approach, the SPARC program fits the required criteria. This bounded program was used as a case to explore the research

questions. The participant interviews, program curriculum, and final portfolio provided the study data. Individual OE Leadership Fellows functioned as the unit of analysis or the subcases. Each participant interviewed was identified as a subcase using the label “Fellow” and a number. The participants interviewed were selected from program completers who expressed interest and willingness to participate in the study.

Overview of Methodology

I wanted to understand the experiences and perceptions of value as defined by a select group of individuals who participated in and completed an open education leadership program.

The research questions were:

RQ1. How do academic librarians describe how they became interested in open educational resources?

RQ 2. How do academic librarians describe and assign value to their experiences in an open education leadership program?

- a. How do they describe the time spent in the program?
- b. How do they describe the activities associated with the program?
- c. How do they describe the program outcomes as they relate to their professional lives?
- d. How do they describe the outcomes in relation to their individual growth in skills and knowledge?

Perceptions and expressions of value are personal, individualistic, and varied (Zeithaml, 1988).

The research questions were devised to gather the unique viewpoints of each participant interviewed during the data collection stage. This study was exploratory and sought to understand these individual experiences and perceptions. The qualitative narrative case study

method best fits the research goal: to understand the SPARC OE Lead participant experiences and valuation of their participation. Hence, the philosophical assumptions of the study- that each person's individual experiences are unique and that value determination is individually constructed.

Data Collection Methods and Tools

A review of selected literature was discussed in the previous chapter. A portion of this review preceded the collection of data, and while it did not impact the data collection, it did provide beneficial background for the focus of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The literature reviewed included the historical origins and foundational practices of CPD. It provided a specific overview of CPD for academic librarians. The emergence of academic librarians as campus OER leaders was also considered. Following the collection of interview data, the conceptual framework was reconsidered. Additional literature was reviewed and expanded the conceptual focus beyond business marketing into education disciplines to gain more perspective on how the benefits and value of education and training have been discussed in the field of education. This led to the development of a more nuanced and multifaced conceptual frame of perceived value.

The data collection methods for this study included collecting the PIF (Appendix B) from a selection of OE Leadership fellows who completed the program before 2021, examining program documentation and curriculum, reviewing participant projects and portfolios, and conducting semi-structured interviews with respondents. Participants were provided with the IRB and the informed consent document (Appendix E) when asked to complete the PIF.

Yin (2018) encourages using multiple sources of evidence. The selection of data I collected and analyzed constitutes the suggested multiple sources. The use and value of each of

them are detailed in the following sections. Josselson recommends pilot testing interview questions (2013). Following this suggestion, I pilot tested the data collection instruments. The PIF and the interview protocol (Appendix D) were pilot tested with a small group of OE Leadership program fellows who were not in the potential interview candidate pool. This was done before the documentation was submitted for IRB so that questions could be adjusted for clarity if necessary. No adjustments were suggested. Therefore, the instruments were submitted for IRB review and employed in the study after the exemption was granted (Appendix F).

The PIF was used to collect demographic information about the participant’s employment and tenure as a librarian. This form was essential because it was used to identify potential interview candidates. Ten program participants completed the PIF forms. Each of the ten fellows who submitted the PIF indicated a willingness to participate in the recorded virtual interview. Table 3.2 illustrates the institutional variety.

Table 3.2
Type of Institution (N=10)

| Institution Type | Number |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Public Colleges and Universities | 4 |
| Private Colleges or Universities | 3 |
| Community Colleges | 3 |
| Total | N=10 |

All respondents were experienced librarians. They all indicated at least five years of experience in the profession (Table 3.3). Because none were new to the profession, it can be assumed that they have had experience applying the knowledge and skills they gained pursuing master’s

degrees in library and information science. Many of these skills are valuable for roles in OER discovery, advocacy, and leadership.

Table 3.3

Years of professional librarianship (N=10)

| Answer | Count |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 2 years of less | 0 |
| 2-5 years | 0 |
| 5-10 years | 3 |
| More than 10 years | 7 |
| Total | N=10 |

However, despite their experience in the profession, all indicated that they had been involved with OER for less than five years (Table 3.4). These responses fall in line with observations made in this study’s introduction indicating the relative novelty of OER and open education work as a librarianship focus or specialty area.

Table 3.4

Years of OER involvement (N=10)

| Answer | Count |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 2 years or less | 4 |
| 2-5 years | 6 |
| 5-10 years | 0 |
| More than 10 years | 0 |
| Total | N=10 |

Additionally, all indicated that OER work was a small part of their job responsibilities (Table 3.5). Numerous institutions began OER advocacy and initiative work without employing librarians whose full-time work commitment was dedicated to OER work. Many have positions

that are primarily focused on other aspects of librarianship. OER advocacy is often assumed in addition to other responsibilities. None of the librarians indicated that their jobs were one hundred percent allocated to OER. Only three revealed that thirty to fifty percent of their work was OER-related.

Table 3.5
Percentage of work devoted to OER (N=10)

| Answer | Count |
|---|-------------|
| 100 percent | 0 |
| 75 percent or more but not full time | 0 |
| 50-75 percent | 0 |
| 30-50 percent | 3 |
| 15-30 percent | 6 |
| Less than 15 percent | 1 |
| I am not currently involved in OER work | 0 |
| Total | N=10 |

Based on the established criteria for institutional diversity, two interview candidates from each type of institution were selected for interviews. Those in each category who indicated the highest percentages of OER job responsibilities were contacted first. I sent potential interviewees a standard email explaining the interview parameters and procedures and listing interview time slots (Appendix C). If the contacted fellow failed to respond to the interview request, an alternate fellow from the same institutional category was chosen and invited to participate. A total of six interviews were conducted.

The program participant interviews served as the primary data. They are vital to this study because the interviews allowed program participants to share the details of their introduction to OER advocacy. Interviews also served as a means to express their perceptions of the professional development program experience and discuss the value they gained from the program and its impact on their personal and professional growth and development. The data collected from interviews was the primary information used to answer the research questions. As suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018), standard questions were used for all interviews. I followed a standard interview protocol when conversing with all participants (Appendix D). I interviewed six participants to cover representation from the three types of institutions that employ the program participants. Saturation was reached after interviewing two participants from each type of institution. Interviews were conducted and recorded using ZOOM, an online meeting communication tool. The recordings were uploaded to another online transcription tool, Otter.ai. This tool was used to transcribe the interviews, and they were downloaded to the appropriate file folder. I then edited each transcription to correct for misspellings and speaker attributions. One recorded interview was conducted with each participant using a semi-structured interview process. Those who consented to interviews through the PIF and accepted the interview appointment received the IRB statement and informed consent form a second time via email before the interview was conducted.

Program documentation, which includes the program website, and the online components of the educational curriculum, was also reviewed and analyzed to see how these components connected with or complimented participant perceptions. I located the program curriculum on the SPARC website. I downloaded and saved it in the designated data folder.

A random selection of participant outputs in the form of capstone portfolios and community resources was also analyzed. Each program participant creates a portfolio project or implements an activity at the end of the program. The final projects are openly licensed as community resources, and the OE Leadership Fellows make them publicly available. I created a document that included links to a selection of these program deliverables (Appendix G). The content found at each link was examined and analyzed in relation to stated program goals and learning objectives, the interview data, and my research questions. These portfolios were randomly selected and were not connected to a specific interviewee. These resources represent program deliverables for individual participants but do not necessarily include projects submitted by the interview participants. These final projects are important because they allow each program member to demonstrate the influence and impact of the program on their professional development and the implementation or expansion of OER efforts they are leading at their institutions. Though they were produced electronically, these projects, openly licensed resources, or portfolios of the OE Lead Fellows were examined as physical artifacts.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research scholars assert that data analysis is an ongoing process in qualitative research that should accompany data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles et al., 2020). The interviews were the primary source of data used in this study. Standard semi-structured interview questions were administered to all participants to ensure data reliability. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggest that semi-structured interviews might include a list of flexible but standard questions that focus on the issues that need to be addressed to gather specific essential data from the respondents. This was the strategy I employed. Participants were asked to elaborate or clarify answers as needed. The collected interviews were reviewed,

and the transcriptions were created and verified with recordings. They were carefully studied on an ongoing basis throughout the research process. The analysis process began immediately after the first interview was completed and continued throughout the interviewing phase. The process was iterative and allowed for a deeper understanding of the content (Terrell, 2016).

MaxQDA, a qualitative data analysis software, was used to code data and to assist with analysis. This software package was chosen because it allows for color coding data, combining codes and sub coding, and has easy-to-use import and export features. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) note that, "Because each study is unique, each analytical approach is unique as well" (p. 279). While conducting my unique analytic approach, I kept the analysis and study findings straightforward and participant-focused. Since my study is a narrative case study, I relied heavily on the words of the program fellows to narrate their own stories and address the research questions. The goal was straightforward, uncomplicated data analysis and reporting. The MaxQDA package gracefully facilitated this approach. First, interview transcripts were uploaded into the software database. Next, the transcripts were reviewed and coded using colors, emoticons, and labels. Coded data were then condensed during the second cycle of coding. Coded data were then exported into Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word formats for further iterative analysis and quotation extraction.

The analysis included identifying common themes and patterns that emerged from each interview and the other data. Creswell and Poth (2018) describe a data analysis spiral that begins with collecting data and includes "managing and organizing data," "reading and memoing emergent ideas," "describing and classifying codes into themes," "developing and accessing interpretations," and "representing and visualizing the data" before sharing the findings (p. 186). I generally adopted this approach as I concurrently collected and analyzed the data.

Using anonymized naming labels, I organized the data by creating digital file folders for each participant and the other data collected, including the program curriculum and the links to selected portfolios and other created content. A folder for codes and data analysis was also created (Figure 3.1). I utilized Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel word processing and spreadsheet software packages to perform this process. All data were stored in an encrypted file folder on the Microsoft cloud and backed up using a password-protected flash drive.

| Name | Status | Date modified | Type |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|-------------|
| Codes and Data Analysis | ✓ | 4/14/2021 11:37 AM | File folder |
| Fellow 1 | ✓ | 4/14/2021 11:36 AM | File folder |
| Fellow 2 | ✓ | 4/14/2021 11:36 AM | File folder |
| Fellow 3 | ✓ | 4/14/2021 11:36 AM | File folder |
| Fellow 4 | ✓ | 4/14/2021 11:36 AM | File folder |
| Fellow 5 | ✓ | 4/14/2021 11:36 AM | File folder |
| Fellow 6 | ✓ | 4/14/2021 11:36 AM | File folder |
| Portfolio and Fellow Created Content | ✓ | 4/14/2021 11:37 AM | File folder |
| SPARC Program Curriculum | ✓ | 4/14/2021 11:37 AM | File folder |

Note. Microsoft word software was used to create a basic arrangement of file folders to store the data and house analyzed text and other content.

Figure 3.1: Visual representation of folder structure for data management.

Following the PIF and interview questions pilot test, I created a provisional list of codes (Appendix H). Miles et al. (2020) define codes as "labels that assign meaning" to collected information (p.62). I created a shortlist of codes based on the sample answers from the pilot test, my research questions, and the conceptual framework. Miles et al. (2020) suggest coding in cycles. I adopted this method of coding during the analysis phase. As I completed the six study interviews, I read and memoed each interview transcript and saved the memoed files under a new name. Next, following the reading and memoing processes, I constructed additional codes based on the emergent themes (inductive) and assigned the *a priori* codes I created before beginning

the research. As Saldana suggests, my coding process was flexible as I reviewed and reread the data gathered (2021).

After completing the interviews, I uploaded the transcripts into the MaxQDA software. I then conducted the first cycle coding. In the first cycle coding process, I grouped data in the form of phrases into similar categories. This process employed "deep reflection" and "deep interpretation" and was the beginning of analysis (Miles et al., 2020, p. 63). I compared codes selected during this cycle with the memoing conducted during each interview. I added those memos to the coded data as I reviewed each transcript and coded it. Many possible approaches can be selected for completing the first cycle coding. Miles et al. (2020) recognize that over twenty-five different coding approaches exist and that it is unnecessary to choose only one method. I employed emotion coding, evaluation coding, and attribute coding during the first cycle coding phase. Emotion coding "provides insights into the participants' perspectives" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 67). The evaluation coding approach was used to discover the participants' evaluative thoughts regarding the professional development program. Finally, attribute coding was useful for coding the multiple data sources that I analyzed in this study. Codes were revised as needed while the study progressed. Cohesively structured code lists were created to maintain alignment within the study. All codes were constructed to "relate to one another in a coherent" manner and were assigned "operational definitions" (Miles et al., 2020, pp. 75, 77).

In the second cycle coding stage, first cycle codes were further condensed and grouped. Next, pattern codes and subcodes were developed following processes recommended by Miles et al. (2020). This included identifying themes and grouping responses from multiple participants. A final code table is included in the appendices (Appendix I). During the analysis stage, I explored how perceptions of value were expressed. A "within-case" analytical approach was

employed using each interview as a subcase. The goal of the analysis was to "describe, understand, and explain" the experiences of individuals within the case, the SPARC OE Leadership Program (Miles et al., 2020, p. 95). Second cycle coding was used to determine four major themes (Table 3.6) created by condensing codes and subcodes. These themes shaped the findings, which will be discussed in chapter 4.

Table 3.6
Final Themes Derived from 2nd Cycle Coding

| Theme | Significant Codes |
|----------------|---|
| Expectations | Structure Knowledge Support Networks |
| Experiences | Support Knowledge Tools Connections Guidance Immediate Applicability |
| Value/Benefits | Mentoring Cohort Structure Content Time & Effort |
| Outcomes | Professional Impact Transformation Leadership Credibility Visibility |

The remaining data, the program curriculum, and the participant-produced capstones and community resources were analyzed holistically and reviewed for elements that supported and

corroborated the themes derived from the interview data. Including this additional content in the analysis supported my triangulation strategy to ensure trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) note that qualitative research studies should be conducted ethically to ensure validity and reliability. To ensure this, I have disclosed my past connection with SPARC and the OE Leadership program. As briefly discussed in chapter one, I have a past association with the program I am studying. I participated in the pilot cohort, the first iteration of the SPARC Open Education Leadership Program. I have also served as a mentor to a program participant. In December 2020, I was also elected to the SPARC's steering committee. Finally, I am also an instructor in another open education professional development program for academic librarians. I may have biases based on my positive experiences in the program and the positive value I perceived. During the interview, coding, and analysis processes, I maintained an awareness of my possible biases. I did not ask leading questions. I also consciously attempted not to allow my perceptions or perspectives to influence the assignments of thematic codes or the data analysis. Also, I purposefully did not include any participants in the study with whom I have a personal or professional relationship. However, the pilot study participants were selected based on my personal acquaintance with them.

The study was also ethically conducted. IRB forms were submitted. The study was judged exempt (Appendix F). All participants were given informed consent documentation and all assented to its dictates before the interviews were conducted.

Trustworthiness was established by employing techniques recommended by Bloomberg and Volpe (2020). To ensure credibility and accuracy in the presentation of the participants' stories, I used multiple strategies. This includes stating my potential biases as the researcher, as

well as employing: triangulation or the examination of multiple sources of data; member checking defined by sharing the study findings with interviewees; and presenting discrepant findings identified through a “seeking instances that might disconfirm or challenge” my expectations of the study outcomes and findings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2020, p. 204).

Dependability refers to collecting accurate and dependable data. Confirmability is the assurance that findings were constructed from the collected data. Dependability and confirmability were ensured through triangulation and maintaining an audit trail, or a record, for tracing the findings through the memoing process. Finally, I used purposeful sampling that focused on selecting potential participants from a pool of eligible program fellows within the case or bounded system and provided a detailed description of the program to ensure transferability (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2020). Following these protocols has ensured an ethically conducted, trustworthy study.

Limitations

This study explored the experiences of a specific cohort of academic librarians who participated in a particular OE leadership program. The intent of the qualitative design is not to generalize CPD experiences but to explain, describe, and analyze how program participants "interpret their experiences. . . and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, p. 6). The scope of the study explored the individual experiences of each interviewee and analyzed trends and commonalities of experiences. The study captured the reflections of participants at a specific moment in time. Therefore, the long-term impact of the CPD on their professional careers cannot be determined.

Summary

This chapter details the methodology employed in this qualitative narrative case study of academic librarians participating in an OE leadership CPD program. The primary focus highlighted the experiences and perceptions of value communicated by participants. I identified the research sample and participant selection and case context, and I have identified and supported the research design and the selection of a qualitative narrative case study approach. I also described data collection methods, tools, and management. A single case approach with multiple subcases was the analytical method chosen. Ethical considerations and trustworthiness were addressed and set the stage for discussing the study finding in chapter four.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this narrative case study was to explore academic librarians' narratives about their introduction to OER and their experiences in the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) Open Education (OE) Leadership program, their perceptions of value or benefit in participating, and the impact of the program on their professional careers.

Description of the Cases

Six interviews were conducted. The librarians represented the three different types of libraries and institutions identified in the pre-interview analysis of potential program participants. They were all located in different states and represented four distinct geographical regions of the United States. This included representation from two public universities, two private universities, and two community colleges. Age, gender, race, and ethnicity were not factors considered in this study. All fellows were anonymized with a number and are identified in this study as Fellow 1, Fellow 2, Fellow 3, Fellow 4, Fellow 5, or Fellow 6 when direct quotes or paraphrases are attributed to an individual.

Summary of Findings

All six interviews revealed high engagement with the program on the part of the participant. Like many librarians, they became aware of open educational philosophies and practices while engaged in other areas of academic librarianship. Our interviews began with discussions around each fellow's introduction to open education philosophies and practices, the state of their knowledge, learning, and work before participating in the SPARC OE Leadership program, to set the stage and provide context for the study. This contextual discussion addressed the issues identified in this study's problem statement: Academic librarians need OER professional development. Participants addressed how they became interested in OER (RQ.1

How do academic librarians describe how they became interested in open educational resources?). My sessions with the interview participants then turned to questions that directly address the second research question and its sub-questions:

RQ. 2 How do academic librarians describe and assign value to their experiences in a structured, open education leadership program?

- a. How do they describe the time spent in the program?
- b. How do they describe the activities associated with the program?
- c. How do they describe the program outcomes as they relate to their professional lives?
- d. How do they describe the outcomes in relation to their individual growth in skills and knowledge?

The findings indicated a need for and value in structured OER CPD for academic librarians. When engaged in programs like the SPARC program, librarians gain knowledge, professional growth and perceive the experiences to be valuable. Additionally, they articulate feelings of transformation following the completion of the program. In the remainder of this chapter, I share an overview of the participants' pre-program experiences with OER before exploring five findings gleaned from analyzing the data. I then provide an overview of answers to the research questions gained from the analysis of the findings. Finally, I offer a concise chapter summary.

Pre-Program OER Experiences

None of the librarians interviewed learned about OER in the library and information science graduate programs they attended. This was not surprising. All interview participants had been employed as library professionals for more than five years, some over thirty years. OER and open access are newer areas of specialization in library and information sciences (LIS).

Even now, few graduate programs include courses that address these niche specialties in either their elective or required courses. Surveying LIS faculty, Katz (2020) found that while some respondents did recognize a role for professional librarians in open education, these same educators failed to clearly articulate “how future librarians might prepare for a career as an OER librarian” (p. 428).

In most cases, practicing academic librarians who desire the knowledge and skills to lead campus OER initiatives must seek this knowledge and training through post-graduate professional development. The fellows interviewed in my study clearly articulated this fact. They had all turned first to some form of self-directed learning through reading articles or following OER listservs. They had also engaged in passive forms of CPD, such as attending webinars, presentations, or conference sessions on OER. Moreover, while they gained knowledge, they all felt that they needed more. More structure, guidance, and strategies to help them launch, lead, or support OER initiatives. Fellow 1 described following many listservs, reading articles, and attending online webinars and finding that it became overwhelming before seeing the SPARC call and thinking, “well, maybe I would benefit from a more structured program.” Similarly, Fellow 3 stated,

I was. . . just attending the conferences. And, you know. . .there were a couple of webinars that I had attended as well, . . . I was doing a lot of listening, but still feeling very overwhelmed about how to transition that into any meaningful action.

Fellow 4 indicated,

I needed to learn all the different nuts and bolts, particularly things like learning about Creative Commons. . . [and] about the five Rs... I just wanted to learn how it worked. I myself needed to learn, you know, what are the advantages of this, and how it works.

OER work was often added to existing job duties. Even when it was a primary role, all participants found that their LIS education had not adequately prepared them to lead OER

initiatives. They were learning on the job and sometimes even learning from colleagues who were slightly more schooled in OER. They often found themselves wishing for more guidance.

But I was like, I wish there was something because I feel like such a pain all the time asking people, “How do I do this? Where is that?” And my big joke was, I feel like every day I come to work is like starting a new startup business. It was like, “What am I going to encounter today that I am not going to have any idea how to do it?” but I have to figure it out. Right? So, I wanted something. So, when I saw that SPARC was doing this program, I was like, you know what, this is perfect. (Fellow 6)

Learning on the job surfaced as a common thread. All the participants became interested in OER through encounters at work or the introduction of new duties as part of their regular professional commitment. However, unlike some add-on duties, none of the fellows interviewed found OER work burdensome or unwanted. On the contrary, they embraced it and, as the previous examples show, sought ways to increase their knowledge and improve their professional practice and OER leadership skills. Because this study only includes interviews from a few librarians involved in OER work, this attitude toward OER duties cannot be generally assumed but was evident among the population studied. This desire to learn more, lead better, and improve OER advocacy skills led them to apply and participate in the SPARC OE Leadership program. This leads me to the five findings gleaned from the study:

- Finding 1: Program structure, mentoring, and participant connections are essential facets of OER CPD.
- Finding 2: Program participants shared their experiences using emotive language and acknowledged that the time demands and effort expended were worth the value gained.
- Finding 3: The SPARC Open Education Leadership curriculum enhanced the participant experience and was viewed as a valuable program component.
- Finding 4: Participation in the program had a positive impact on their professional lives.

- Finding 5: Participants expressed a commitment to open education that seemed both personal and professional and expressed feelings that their participation in the program was a transformative experience.

The remainder of this section will explore these five findings through the narratives participants shared during the interviews interwoven with a document review of the program curriculum and the capstone or community resource final projects contributed by program fellows.

Finding 1

Good CPD should be well structured, content-rich, and applicable to the participant's professional role and level of knowledge. All cases supported this observation. They expressed expectations that the program "would provide structure" and praised the way it was structured and the "scaffolding of the curriculum." (Fellow 3) It was noted that the curriculum included tangible and immediately applicable assignments and strategies. It addressed the "how do you do this" questions in real-time, providing participants with immediately applicable strategies. (Fellow 4)

In addition to good program content and tools, participants valued the program's significant human or interpersonal elements: building connections among the participants by employing a cohort model and the assignment of program mentors. The cohort model was also highlighted as a component of program quality. This model was so valued that one fellow even expressed that the division of the program group into two separate cohorts hindered making connections with more program colleagues. All subcases mentioned mentors as a positive program element. Participants praised the thoughtfulness of the program faculty that went into pairing them with mentors and the support the mentors offered. (Fellow 6, Fellow1) Many developed strong bonds with their mentors. One fellow noted that the assigned mentor "could

sense where I was at where I was struggling with certain things or whatever. And then she'd offer just enough support.” (Fellow 4)

The program structure’s cohort model was instrumental in building connections and support among the program participants. Fellow 6 noted that because of this model, “you had a whole bunch of people that you could ask a question of if you needed to.” Other fellows expressed the value gained from connecting with other OER librarians in the program, discussing, and asking for advice. Before the program, many did not know how to make those connections. They expressed the value of connecting with others experiencing similar situations. (Fellow 5, Fellow4, Fellow 3) Fellow 3’s statement highlighted the importance of this human element, noting that the program directors “and the alumni and my co-colleague cohort in the program were able to draw connections and continue to like, we were all just kind of bringing each other along. This was really outstanding.”

The participant interviews also identified other significant factors that enhanced the program structure. Key among these were the scaffolded curriculum and immediately practical assignments. These elements contributed to the participant's ability to identify value in the program. Reviewing the program documentation supports this sentiment. By first introducing content focused on establishing basic knowledge of open education before advancing to more complex concepts like open pedagogy and program and project management, fellows were exposed to core open education concepts. The module assignments and supplemental materials provided opportunities and tools that allowed them to immediately employ the knowledge and strategies gained (SPARC, 2007-2021). Fellow 3 praised the curriculum and scaffolding and noted the benefit of participating in the program in its latest iteration. Fellow 3 observed that the program leaders had spent time “refining the materials, and they even also. . . engaged us as

editors of the curriculum.” This led to feelings of ownership and engagement among the fellows. Moreover, it engendered a sense that the experience “was all very empowering.” (Fellow 3) Even though this curriculum is openly licensed and freely available on the internet, the fellows confirmed the value of formal participation in the structured program. As Fellow 2 noted,

You don’t have to go through the program to get the materials, but the conversations that go on around the materials as you’re going through the program are really worth far more than the materials themselves. I don’t think I would have ever garnered as much from simply going through those materials solo, as I went through them with this group of people who offered their own insights and experiences and asked questions to kind of, you know make us think beyond the obvious that was on the page.

This sentiment sums up the value fellows found in the formal, professionally directed program that prioritized human interaction and featured well-organized, pragmatic content.

Finding 2

The Fellows shared their feelings about the program using enthusiastic, impassioned language and enthusiasm despite the acknowledged time demands. Participants articulated the extensive time commitment required to complete the program. Still, they viewed the time spent as necessary for the value and benefits they gained from participation in the program. They expressed this using evaluative language. One fellow characterized participation in the program as “exciting.” (Fellow 3) All fellows indicated feelings of personal growth, increased confidence, and comfort.

What I didn’t figure on, I don’t think, is just the amount of emotional growth, you know, that occurred, just the comfort level that developed the ability to seek out kind of those connections and things like that. More confidence in my ability, honestly to take what I’ve learned and teach, you know, and reach out to those groups to make connections. (Fellow 2)

Realizing these gains required a commitment to devote the necessary time and effort needed to complete assignments, discussions, and the final capstone project. Fellow 1 admitted that “it was time-intensive.” This was echoed by others who asserted that there were “a few times that I

thought it was too much” (Fellow 4). All took full responsibility for any issues they had with time management, noting that the program directors and program documentation clearly specified that there would be a substantial time requirement to complete the program successfully. Most also indicated that they had the support of their administrators or supervisors to complete some of the assignments during work time. They also noted that time and effort were necessary to obtain the value. Fellow 2 pointed out that the time expended was “worth every penny, you know, it was a time commitment. There’s no way to lie about that,” while Fellow 5 claimed that the time was “necessary, [but] daunting at times.” However, the positive impact and feelings they expressed about the program were evident.

I've been doing this a long time . . . 34 years now. So as a librarian ... basically, my one and only professional job. But I've attended a lot of professional development and a lot of workshops, a lot of it all is what it is, but this, was to another level of knowledge plus another level of being able to sort of like bond with other people doing this work. Hey, I mean, as opposed to just, you know, some of the other professional development things that we do. And so in that sense, it was more meaningful to me . . . after coming out of it, I feel more that way than ever. (Fellow 4)

The fellows connected in meaningful ways with other program cohort members, mentors, and program leaders. These connections enhanced their experiences and emotionally and philosophically connected them to open education. The participant consensus was that the value received from participation in the program was worth the time and effort expended. The time and effort contributed to completing the program were necessary for realizing the value.

Finding 3

The participants voiced perceptions of the value they found in the SPARC Open Education Leadership program curriculum. They noted the immediate applicability of the assignments in their campus OER work. The SPARC Open Education Leadership Curriculum is freely available on the internet, and all modules are openly licensed under Creative Commons.

The stated program outcomes assert that the program will help participants

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of how to approach the discovery, creation, adoption, licensing, and stewardship of open educational resources and how this connects to open pedagogy.
- Develop skills to define, communicate, and advocate for open education to a wide variety of stakeholder audiences.
- Learn how to assess local needs and barriers relating to open education and design an initiative to address them.
- Gain practical experience planning, implementing, and assessing an open education project that both has an impact locally and contributes back to the community.
- Develop as a leader through personalized feedback, mentorship, and peer-to-peer support.
- Build a network within the open education community, both through a cohort of peers and access to leading experts in the field. (SPARC, 2007-2020)

Each week of the program, the content focuses on information and exercises aimed at leading fellows toward these outcomes. My interviews with participants provided individual examples of the journeys taken to reach these outcomes.

First, participants learned a great deal about finding resources and open licensing. For example, one fellow identified the textbook treasure hunt assignment, which focuses on discovery as a valuable exercise, and something still being utilized. (Fellow 5) All six interviews highlighted the abilities they had developed during the program to advocate for OER to multiple audiences. The stakeholder interview assignment, an assignment that encouraged the development of this skill, was mentioned by all fellows as one of the program's most valuable and challenging aspects. This exercise also helped them learn to identify campus needs and contrive strategies to address these needs. All fellows indicated that they felt that they had developed as leaders. They expressed this sentiment, pointing to increased confidence, gained credibility, and elevated visibility on campus. The leadership development outcome was met. The participants repeatedly identified the human elements of the program: mentors, cohort members, and program directors as high-value factors.

Creating community resources that address issues and needs on their campuses and then are openly licensed and shared embody the outcome that focuses on the fellows gaining practical experiences creating resources, and contributing back to the open community. Each program participant produces a publicly available, openly licensed community resource as an element of the final capstone project. These resources allow the participants to apply the knowledge and skills they have obtained. The resultant products provide personal, professional value to the participant as they use them on their campuses. As shared resources, they also benefit the larger OER community. For example, Fellow 6 shared that when she began work in OER librarianship, she longed for “like a book that I could go to that would be like, this is how you do OER.” Participation in the program allowed the fellow to create this kind of resource for novice OER professionals and share it with local colleagues and the OER community.

I randomly selected forty community resources from various program cohorts as examples of the outputs created by participants. I used these examples to explore the types of assets contributed and to better understand how the final program deliverable enhanced the participant experience and met the program outcomes.

I identified four categories of resources: Templates, Guides and Toolkits, Tutorials, and Other. (Table 4.1) Templates are defined as a model or reusable form. Guides and Toolkits are educational materials created for specific audiences. Tutorials are interactive learning resources. I established a final category labeled as “other” to encompass materials that fall outside the parameters of the other three types.

Table 4.1
Community Resources

| | Guide or Toolkit | Template | Tutorial | Other |
|---------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-------|
| Number of resources | 13 | 10 | 4 | 13 |

Because each fellow chooses to create a community resource that best serves the needs of their institution, many resources created defied categorization, primarily because they are specific to the institution. These 13 projects were labeled as “other.” Some participants realized the great need for basic information for their campus stakeholders, the academic library community, or another distinct group. This led to the creation of guides and toolkits. Thirteen of these resources were identified. Ten templates were identified among the resources. Templates are valuable beyond a single institution. Others can use them as is or adapt them to suit. Finally, four tutorials were identified. These included online courses and workshop materials for faculty and librarians. They serve as guided educational tools aimed at providing interactive OER instruction.

The community resources support the sentiments expressed in the interviews. They serve as examples of the outputs required of fellows. Fellows discussed the time and effort they devoted to completing assignments and detailed the value of the assignments for their campus OER work. The capstones and community resources also demonstrate the fellows’ mastery of program outcomes, such as contributing to the community and creating initiatives.

The CPD program successfully met the outcome focused on encouraging the development of a network. My analysis revealed that the curriculum and program outcomes aligned with findings revealed in the interview data and the value sentiments expressed by the participants. Furthermore, the community resources created supported the fellows’ comments

about the value of program assignments and the applicability of outputs for building and expanding their local OER programs.

Finding 4

Participants noted that the program impacted their professional endeavors at their libraries and institutions and in state, regional, and national OER circles. Their perceptions indicated that they had already gained some professional benefit even though they had only recently completed the program. This included access to higher administrators, increased credibility and visibility on their campuses, and selection to statewide OER leadership positions. All six fellows noted positive professional impacts. The program helped them get “on the radar of people who are sort of setting the tone” in OER advocacy. (Fellow 1) In their library positions, it helped them “receive a little stronger credit for the [OER] work” they had already been doing and helped them advocate for getting OER officially added to their job duties. (Fellow 2) Gaining the credential has also been a boon to their academic promotion portfolios. (Fellow 1)

The fellows also noted increased visibility and credibility in both their libraries and on their campuses. Fellow 2 said that subject librarian colleagues “are at least pointing to me. . . . Yeah. And, also asking questions, I think that they didn't ask before so.” Fellow 6 asserted, “I can feel a little more like, yeah, I'm the person you should come to when you have a question.” Sharing their program experiences with faculty and administrators on their campuses has also increased the participants' credibility (Fellow 5). Fellow 3 noted the role of the program mentor and program directors in building participants up to accept roles as campus experts. Fellow 3 was told, “You are an expert in this. You are the campus authority, as you are the person who everybody on your campus is looking to, for this now and you've earned that. You're not there by accident.” This increased credibility and visibility have allowed some of the fellows' access

onto campus committees allowing them to influence the inclusion of OER as components of campus-wide policies focused on affordability and diversity, and inclusion and earned them seats on-campus strategic priorities committees. (Fellow 2, Fellow 4, Fellow 3)

Participants also perceived increased visibility and access to leadership roles in state, regional, and national OER initiatives, committees, and programs. Completing the program has helped them advance in helping with statewide OER initiatives. (Fellow 1) They have also been able to bring their expanded OER knowledge into statewide and regional committee work. (Fellow 4, Fellow 1) This is significant and shows that participation and completion of the SPARC OE Leadership program almost immediately lead the six fellows interviewed to professional growth. The goal of CPD should be to imbue participants with increased practical knowledge and abilities that can help them realize an enhanced professional profile. The stories shared confirm that this is what they have gained from the SPARC OE Leadership program.

Finding 5

Participants articulated a commitment to open education that manifested as both personal and professional and expressed feeling that their participation in the program was a transformative experience. The interviews with the participants revealed how their experiences in the program influenced transformed professional and philosophical views of the role libraries can play in textbook affordability and open education and their roles as leaders in this work. The interviews served as moments of reflection for the fellows.

There was a feeling among the fellows that the program was designed to push the participants out of their comfort zones, empower them, and encourage transformation. (Fellow 1, Fellow 3) Reflecting on the experience, Fellow 3 intimated that the program had transformed the participant's professional library leadership practice and encouraged confidence to speak up in

campus committee meetings and a sense of belonging in decision-making circles. They also expanded their intellectual and philosophical views of OER and the mission of open education.

Fellow 2 noted this was the first time,

“I really started to delve into or beyond the affordability issue as well. And it was much more that these resources offered than simply being free to students. So, it really helped develop confidence in the fact that you could lead from wherever you were at the moment, you didn't have to reach that, you know, Guru on top of the mountain kind of expert status that we all aim for. Knowledge you were bringing to the table could be utilized to educate others and kind of support the situation on your campus.

Extensive “engagement” and “stretching” engendered these transformative changes in the fellows. (Fellow 1)

The fellows also shared feelings of personal transformation. Fellow 4 noted that now open education work “almost feels like a little bit like a calling.” The connection moved beyond only being seen as job-focused or work-oriented toward a more personal value or ethos the fellows embraced. Fellow 2 admitted to fully embracing the philosophy of open and confirmed a colleague’s assertion that the fellow was “drinking the [OER] Kool-Aid” and noted, “I really can't imagine it not being part of my professional life!” The emotional connection to OER advocacy impacted feelings about work and the role as a library or information professional.

At this point. I think if, the dean came to me and said, well, we're gonna stop this and have you not, you know, not do this anymore. I think I'd be like, that is fantastic but just know that I'm starting to look to go elsewhere. Because I just can't imagine going backwards at this point with it. So, okay, you really do jump in and drink that Kool-Aid!
(Fellow 2)

As the fellows reflected during the interview sessions, they talked passionately about their commitment to and engagement with OER advocacy. They enthusiastically shared the details of their program experiences, the knowledge they gained, and the connections they made with the program directors, their mentors, and other cohort members.

Answers to Research Questions

RQ1.

How do academic librarians describe how they became interested in open educational resources?

The fellows I interviewed all described their interest in open educational resources as something that developed after they had already entered the profession as academic librarians. They had little or no exposure to open education during their master's degree programs. They were all introduced to OER through the expansion of their professional academic library duties. These expanded job duties led to their interest in OER.

RQ 2.

How do academic librarians describe and assign value to their experiences in an open education leadership program? How do they describe the time spent in the program? How do they describe the activities associated with the program? How do they describe the program outcomes as they relate to their professional lives? How do they describe the outcomes in relation to their individual growth in skills and knowledge?

As the findings indicate, the fellows interviewed in this study assigned value to their experiences based on the four factors I identified: time and effort expended, program structure; program content; and human connections. Their narratives described experiences that led me to identify these primary elements. They described the time spent in the program (interpreted as time spent completing assignments) as intense but necessary to reap the program's benefits, which included building networks and increasing knowledge and leadership skills. Related to this are their descriptions of the activities associated with the program. The assigned activities were described as immediately applicable to their campus OER work. The tasks were

meaningful and valuable and allowed them to apply the knowledge as they learned it. Additionally, the fellows shared positive feelings about the impact of the program on their careers. They described gaining access to campus committees and administrators because of their OER work and new knowledge. They expressed feelings of increased credibility and felt singled out as OER experts on their campuses. Finally, they noted that the program had helped them gain positions on state and regional OER committees. The program's impact on their individual growth in skills and knowledge was often described as feeling transformed or renewed after participation. Some mentioned new enthusiasm for librarianship. Others indicated increased confidence and feelings of empowerment. In the interviews, the fellows exuded pride in the gain of new knowledge and leadership skills. This was illustrated in their verbal language and the enthusiasm displayed in the recorded interviews.

Summary

The findings offered few surprises. I expected the interviewees to be enthusiastic about OER and positive about their experiences. However, I did not expect such a high level of enthusiasm for the CPD program and the philosophy of OER to be expressed by the longest-tenured librarians. The data provided valuable details that addressed each aspect of the research question and revealed the most significant and useful elements of the SPARC OE Leadership program. The data showed that Fellows' deep commitment to OER and feelings of benefit and value gained far outweighed the time commitment required. The findings indicated that the program's content, structure, administration, and required deliverables provided a valuable, impactful CPD experience that enhanced both the professional careers and personal perspectives of the Fellows interviewed. The data gathered allowed me to effectively answer the open-ended research questions employed to shape the study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore academic librarians' introduction to OER and their experiences in the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) Open Education (OE) Leadership program, their perceptions of value or benefit in participating, and the impact of the program on their professional careers. The study was performed using a narrative case study methodology. Six interviews were conducted with fellows who had completed the program. An analysis of the interviews and program content yielded five findings that addressed all the research question components. The findings illuminate how participants described their SPARC OE Leadership professional development experiences and signified the program elements and activities that offered value to program participants.

The research and the five findings described in chapter four led me to three conclusions. These conclusions address three areas.

- The multidimensional value of OER CPD
- The impact of CPD on personal and career growth
- Adult and lifelong learning principles in CPD

This chapter explores these conclusions before offering recommendations for practitioners, educators, and future researchers. Finally, a brief researcher reflection closes the chapter.

OER CPD illustrates that value is a multidimensional construct.

Findings one, two, and three illustrated that the value of program structure and curriculum and the required time commitment of the participants contribute to a definition of value that is multidimensional in OER CPD. All subcases highlighted the positive impact of the program structure, content (curriculum), administration, and interpersonal connections with other participants, mentors, and program leaders. Assigned program activities contributed to expanded

knowledge and skills but required the participants to devote extensive time and effort to complete the requirements successfully. Furthermore, while each of these elements has been identified previously by scholars as essential aspects of CPD programs and career development in general (David-West, & Nmecha, 2019; Hussey, & Campbell-Meier, 2017; Guo, 2014), the narratives of the SPARC OE Leadership program fellows suggest that these elements commingle to create a complex concept of CPD value. This multidimensional value framework begs for further exploration and offers lessons for CPD program creators and providers. CPD programs would benefit from structures that encourage human connections between participants and seasoned professionals in the same field or area of interest. They should focus on providing a structure that meets participants where they are and helps them continue to develop the knowledge and skills they need to continue growing in the field or profession.

CPD program curriculum is a critical facet of the program. It should complement all other program elements and provide resources participants can return to after the program ends. This finding has implications for other types of CPD and perhaps even points to the need to create program curriculum that is useful beyond the timeframe of program enrollment. Additionally, the activities and exercises assigned to participants should be meaningful and immediately useable in the work environment.

My study explored an established Open Education leadership program for academic librarians. The data: interviews, the program curriculum, and community resources converged to create a story detailing the impact, value, and effectiveness of the SPARC Open Education Leadership program. I found that this program was well organized, included scaffolded learning, and contained valuable content that would benefit participants beyond the program's end. The fellows I interviewed described a demanding, time-intensive program experience that challenged

them and prepared them to lead campus initiatives, serve as a campus resource, and expand their involvement in state and regional OER initiatives. They clearly articulated that the substantial time commitment was essential to the benefit they gained completing the program.

Additionally, the exercises, activities, and deliverables were immediately applicable to their professional work and contributed value. This value or benefit can best be described as multidimensional (Figure 5.1) and is influenced by concepts of value in education that exalt intrinsic benefits of professional or knowledge gains for the individual's own good and the conceptual frameworks of value in marketing that positions the participants as consumers of the CPD. Participants allot time and effort to reap benefits. My value model is shaped by the narratives of the program participants and highlights four elements that shape CPD value: participant time and effort, program content, program structure, and the incorporation of human connection (network building). This combination of factors creates a multidimensional conceptual framework of value.

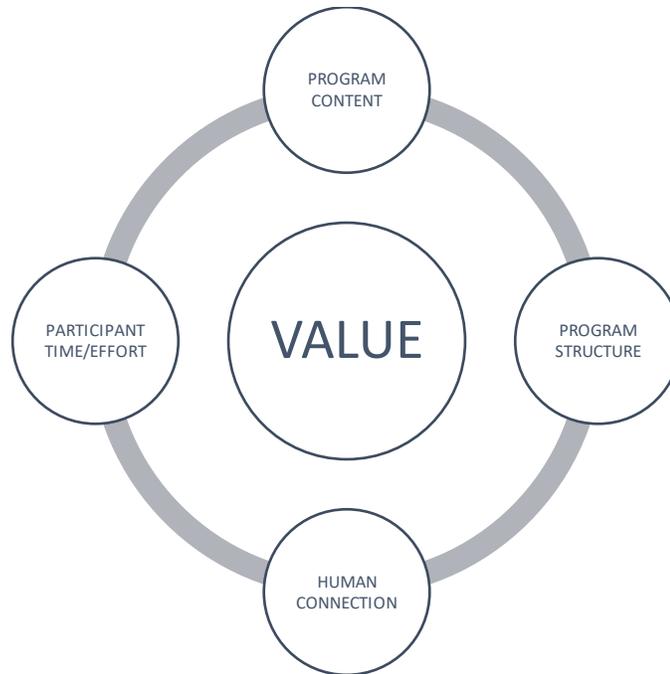


Figure 5.1: Visual representation of the multidimensional value concept. The value attributes participants described were created by four primary elements. These elements formed a multidimensional expression of value that extended beyond the confines of a strict transactional model.

Good CPD Positively Impacts Participants Personal and Career Growth

Findings 4 and 5 point to feelings expressed by the fellows that indicated that the OER CPD positively impacted their professional careers and that the program experience empowered them as individuals and increased their confidence. Program participants described their experiences using emotional, passionate language that suggests a deep connection to the program and open philosophy while acknowledging that the intense time commitment required was necessary to gain its full benefit. The fellows were deeply connected to the SPARC OE Leadership program. The passion they exhibited when discussing their experiences illustrated this connection. They believed that the extensive and sometimes intensely personal and work time required to complete the program was a necessary sacrifice that reaped professional and personal benefits. My interactions with the participants and observations of their enthusiasm and

tenacity led me to conclude that CPD programs can require intensive time demands of participants and expect cooperation if they offer a perceived beneficial professional or personal return to the individual. Furthermore, CPD that connects emotionally and intellectually with participants is viewed as valuable and advantageous by the program participants.

The SPARC OE Leadership program had a positive impact on participants' career outlooks. One outcome of a CPD program should be to help professionals grow and advance their knowledge, skills, and careers. Good CPD programs offer value to participants if they can take what they have learned, and the skills developed into real-world situations as they navigate career paths.

Participants engaged in the program on both a professional and personal level. This engagement led many of them to express a deepened commitment to open education and feelings of personal transformation and empowerment. Their expanded knowledge, enhanced skills, and growing confidence led them to feel accomplished and increased confidence. Their sentiments led me to conclude that program participants who connect emotionally with program principles and content and with other participants may express feelings of personal change. These views are expressed as an altered or intensified sense of purpose connected to their professional work. For work connected to OER, this attitude may emanate from open education's social justice, student-centered nature.

Adult Learning Principles Play an Important Role in Effective CPD

Findings one, three, and five support the inclusion of adult learning approaches in CPD programs. These findings highlight a program structure that incorporates experiential learning principles, an approach that centers on adult learner needs and desires and builds on the life and professional experience they bring into the program. This narrative case study exemplified

foundational adult learning principles, including motivation, the interplay between experience and learning, and the role of emotion in adult learning.

First, Merriam and Bierema (2013) suggest that “our motivations toward learning activities can include multiple goals” (p. 151). The participants’ narratives about their introduction to OER highlight factors that motivated them to seek knowledge through participation in a formal, structured OER CPD program. For example, some sought the program because they desired a more formal, structured learning environment. Others were tasked with leading the OER initiative but knew little about it and needed instruction to obtain knowledge. The SPARC OE Leadership program structure was suited to address the multiple goals or motivations the fellows wanted to accomplish.

Additionally, my study highlights the importance of experience and the value of practical application in the experiences of the program participants. Merriam and Bierema (2013) note,

...learning often leads to new experiences and life experiences that are themselves sources of learning. This relationship between experience and learning is particularly prominent in adulthood when we are engaged in a continual flow of activities in the private, public, and professional spheres of our daily life. At the heart of adult learning is engaging in, reflecting upon, and making meaning of our experiences, whether these experiences are primarily physical, emotional, cognitive, social, or spiritual. (p.104)

The six interviews I conducted provide strong exemplars of this perspective. The fellows engaged in the CPD program add to existing librarianship expertise by learning new open education-related knowledge and skills. The program activities allowed them to employ their developing proficiencies almost immediately in their roles at work. Thus, the CPD became an experiential learning experience. The comingling of the learning experience and their professional roles led the librarians to reflect and make meaning of their expanded knowledge while putting it into action. This process led them to feel transformed, empowered, and engaged.

Finally, the interviews revealed a strong emotional connection to and feelings about the CPD learning experience (Finding 2). Adult learning researchers such as Dirkx (2001; 2008a) emphasize the connection between learning and emotion when adults are engaged in educational experiences. These emotions help adult learners make sense of their experiences and relationships as individuals to the knowledge and social environment around them. The fellows' emotion-rich expressions serve as another manifestation of adult learning principles present in the SPARC OE Leadership CPD experience. The program structure and content encouraged emotional connections to open education.

This selection of examples is not exhaustive. They serve only to highlight a few ways that CPD can be constructed with a foundation in adult learning principles and practices. The findings of my study suggest that the approach employed in the SPARC OER Leadership program is adaptable to other types of CPD, especially if the multidimensional nature of value and the tenets of adult learning approaches are employed.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Study

This study was conducted as a qualitative narrative case study using a small sample of data from a case and featuring each interview as a subcase. There are several ways in which this study might be broadened, and related avenues might be explored. I suggest a few possibilities for future research, including:

1. CPD research focusing on how race and gender might impact the narrative could be a future objective. The librarians' personal racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender identities were not considered in this study. However, it might be interesting to explore and compare CPD participation experiences and outcomes among a group of individuals who

identify as diverse librarians. Would their experiences be similar or different? Would the value expressions remain consistent? One might also explore why so few librarians of color participate in the OER CPD program and how this compares to other development opportunities in academic librarianship.

2. The study could be expanded to include other OER CPD programs to create a comparative analysis that would provide a broader perspective of OER CPD. This might be taken even farther into a study that examines CPD for other emerging areas of librarianship, such as data, digital scholarship, or scholarly communication. Questions that might be asked include: How are these programs designed, who participates in them, and why? How do the participants discuss and define value and benefit?
3. Researchers might explore the leadership program from a community of practice perspective. A concept developed by Etienne Wenger, the communities of practice paradigm, views learning as a social activity and focused on informal groups of shared interest learning from one another (Community of practice, 2015). While its function in this program would be more formal than the traditional application of the concept, the librarians engaged in learning share common interests and learn from each other as they explore this interest. Tendrils of the communities of practice frame manifest in my study, and this might be a feasible direction to explore in future studies.
4. Studying the OE lead program participants using a transformative learning framework might also be an option. In the interviews I conducted, some of the fellows referred to feeling transformed. Examining this from the purview of transformative learning was outside the parameters of my study. However, an analysis could be conducted that centers this theory as a phenomenon that impacts the fellows' learning experiences.

5. Conducting a quantitative study on the OER CPD experiences of academic librarians might also be an option for future research. A survey instrument based on the findings of this study, particularly the proposed multidimensional value model, could be developed to examine the perceptions of a larger group of OER CPD program participants. The survey might also be used to explore the value perceptions of other types of CPD participants.
6. A future research study of SPARC OE Lead Fellows conducted several years after program completion would also be compelling. It might more adequately measure or examine the longer-term professional impact of completing the program on fellows' careers and experiences. This kind of longitudinal study would help draw even more significant conclusions about the value of OER CPD.

Recommendations for Library and Information Science (LIS) Educators

My recommendation for LIS educators focus on ways that OER might be integrated into LIS graduate programs. As Katz (2020) and Larson (2020) have noted, more job advertisements seeking OER librarians have emerged in recent years. However, few LIS programs offer specialized training for these roles. Bell (2021) discusses designing and teaching an elective course on this topic for LIS students. He believes that his course is the first of its kind. His assertions as a LIS educator coupled with the narratives of the fellows illustrate the need for a more concerted effort in LIS programs to introduce graduate students to open education and the knowledge and skills needed to lead and manage campus OER initiatives. According to Bell, graduate students enrolled in accredited library schools in the United States and Canada have few opportunities to learn about open education. This would better prepare them for potential career avenues centered on OER within the profession. Bell proposed and taught a four-week one-

credit hour OER course. However, in some programs, even a one-hour course may not be possible to incorporate into the curriculum. Therefore, LIS educators may need to incorporate OER, open education, and related skills and knowledge into other standard LIS courses. I offer the following recommendations:

1. OER can be introduced in scholarly communications courses that include open access, copyright, and fair use. This content would benefit future OER librarians because these elements are also relevant to open education work. Open scholarship and open education are closely related, and there are natural connections between the two.
2. Educators teaching information access courses can incorporate essential information about OER, OER search tools, and discovery activities into the curriculum. For example, this would allow students to apply search skills to finding and identifying OER using various internet platforms and search tools.
3. Metadata courses can incorporate OER into resource description and cataloging exercises.
4. Project management courses can feature OER program initiative exercises that introduce students to OER and teach them the elements of managing open education programs. It might also include various elements such as stakeholder identification, awareness-raising, advocacy, resource identification, and open licensing and publishing.
5. Finally, courses focused on academic libraries could include a unit that centers OER and academic libraries' role in leading open initiatives on higher education campuses.

Recommendations for CPD Program Developers

The findings and conclusions generated through this study offer several recommendations for professionals planning CPD programs, especially programs targeting academic librarians. As

technology changes, higher education evolves, and academic environments adjust to meet the needs of post-secondary students, the academic libraries and the professionals who staff them must also adapt to meet new demands for resources, services, and support. This changing academic landscape necessitates the need for librarians to move beyond traditional roles. These factors necessitate the need for post-graduate training in the form of professional development.

To create and deliver CPD that is effective and valuable, program developers should consider the following recommendations:

1. Construct programs that build on foundational tenets of adult and lifelong learning principles such as motivation, self-direction, experiential learning, and transformative learning. The conceptual emphases of these approaches might provide stable foundations for building a program curriculum.
2. The results of my study also suggest that a multidimensional value model might also be considered when defining CPD. The interviews I conducted suggest that
 - a. Including program components that feature human interaction with other participants, mentors, and program leaders to network and create connections proved a valuable facet of the SPARC OE Leadership program.
 - b. It is also suggested that the program structure and content be scaffolded and speak specifically to the learning needs of program participants.
 - c. The time and effort requirements of the program should offer exceptional return on investment for participants. Each activity and deliverable should apply to the users' needs and connect with their professional role to be employable immediately. This recommendation can assist CPD developers in

creating valuable interactive programs that address professionals' current and future needs.

These recommendations provide some starting points for CPD developers. Adherence to them will enhance the experiences of program participants and establish structured effective adult learning situations for academic professionals.

Researcher Reflections: Lessons Learned and Advice for Novice Researchers

As I close this study, I reflect on my experience choosing and completing this study, consider some lessons learned, and offer advice for novice researchers interested in conducting qualitative research using narrative case study methodology. From the beginning of my doctoral program, I wanted to focus my research on a segment of the academic librarian population involved in open education and OER advocacy. As I was beginning the graduate program, I was finishing the pilot SPARC OE Leadership program. The program had such a profound impact on my development as a novice OER advocate that I became curious about the experiences of others. I quickly realized that I wanted to study the participants of this program. Because of this, I pursued this study.

The results of my research study were more affirming than surprising. The findings affirmed that the SPARC OE Leadership program provided academic librarians with the knowledge and tools they needed to advance OER advocacy efforts on their home campuses. The program has created strong networks of OER practitioners, many of whom have developed a sense of devotion and responsibility to the complementary missions of open education and textbook affordability. What did surprise me was the willingness and enthusiasm of long-time librarians to learn into this new scope of practice (Fellow 4, for example). I was also surprised by how much the interview participants felt the program had helped boost their careers, opening

new opportunities and pathways to career growth. Thus, the objectives I set out to accomplish when choosing to conduct this study have been accomplished.

I advise novice qualitative researchers to choose a population or topic that interests them. If you plan to conduct interviews, ensure that you have chosen cases or subcases that you want to study in-depth. I found the interview sessions fascinating and instructive. I connected with the program fellows because of our shared professional roles as academic librarians, OER advocates, and former leadership program fellows and because I genuinely wanted to know about them and what they had experienced and how it impacted their careers. It was easy to get sidetracked during the interviews when related topics of mutual interest arose. This brings me to my next piece of advice: Stay focused when conducting interviews. Branching off into unrelated topics might derail your interview protocol. You may need to redirect the subject back to the interview questions. You must be personable and balance building a companionable rapport while maintaining focus on the study concerns. Finally, I recommend keeping it simple! Do not make your study or your questions too complex.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear SPARC Open Education Leadership Fellows Program Alum:

Congratulations on completing the Sparc Open Education Leadership Fellows Program!

As a program participant, you have been selected to engage in a study, Academic Librarian Experiences and Perceived Value of OER Professional Development: A Case Study. The information gathered in this study will expand knowledge on academic librarians' experiences in open education and provide insight into perceptions of OER professional development programs' value. Please participate by completing the participant information form, which will ask you to consent to a follow-up interview. The online form should take no more than fifteen minutes to complete. A sample of participants who consent to be interviewed will be selected. The interviews will be virtual, recorded, and last no longer than 1 hour. If needed, brief (15-30 minutes) follow-up interviews may also be requested to clarify information. After transcription of the interview(s), you will have an opportunity to read the transcribed notes, ensuring that your perceptions have been correctly represented. All responses and data collected will be kept confidential, and aliases will be used to reference your responses to assure anonymity when reporting results.

If you have any questions, please respond to this email. If you are willing to participate, please complete the participant information form.

Sincerely,

Elaine Thornton, Researcher

University of Arkansas, Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX B. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM (PIF)

1. Name _____
2. Place of Employment _____
3. Type of Institution (choose 1)
 - a. Public College or University _____
 - b. Private College or University _____
 - c. Community College _____
4. How long have held a professional librarian position? _____ years _____ months
5. How long have you worked at your current institution as a professional librarian? _____
_____ years _____ months
6. Professional position _____
7. How long have you been involved with OER on your campus? _____
8. Estimated percentage of position/work devoted to OER: _____
9. Did you complete the SPARC Open Education Leadership program? Yes _____ No _____
10. Year of participation:
 - a. 2017-18 _____
 - b. 2018-19 _____
 - c. 2019-20 _____
11. Are you willing to participate in a virtual interview regarding your experiences as an
OER advocate and in the SPARC Open Education Leadership Program?
Yes _____ No _____

Note: interviews will be conducted online. Interviews will be recorded. Interview content will be analyzed and, in some cases, quoted. Participants will be anonymized.

If you answered Yes, please include the following information:

Preferred Email _____

Preferred Phone Number _____

APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW REQUEST EMAIL

Dear _____,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview for my study, “Academic Librarian Experiences and Perceived Value of OER Professional Development: A Case Study.” I am now scheduling interviews. If you are available at any of the times listed below, please indicate which days and times in reply to this email. All times listed are central standard (Chicago).

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Monday, December 14, 2020 | 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm |
| Tuesday, December 15, 2020 | 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm |
| Wednesday, December 16, 2020 | 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm |
| Thursday, December 17, 2020 | 12:00 pm-1:30 pm |
| Thursday, December 17, 2020 | 4:00 pm -5:30 pm |
| Friday, December 18, 2020 | 1:00 pm -2:30 pm |
| Monday, December 21, 2020 | 1:00 pm -2:30 pm |
| Tuesday, December 22, 2020 | 11:00 am – 12:30 pm |

Additionally, interview slots will be opened in January if the slots above are not filled with participants. If you cannot participate this month, I will contact you in January. When you indicate the days/times that will work for you, I will send you a ZOOM meeting invite. An outline of the interview questions will be attached to the appointment. You will also be provided with a copy of the informed consent document.

Please note:

1. All interviews will be conducted in ZOOM. You will need a ZOOM account to enter the interview. If you do not have one, you can sign up for a free account [here](#).
2. All interviews will be recorded from the beginning to the end of the session.
3. Cameras are optional.
4. If I have questions or need additional detail about one of your interview answers, I will send you an email request. A follow-up ZOOM interview will not be conducted.
5. Before the completion of the study, I will send you the interview summary notes. You may review and comment on them or clarify content if you wish. You will have one week after the receipt of the notes to respond. You are not required to respond.

Once again, thank you for agreeing to participate! I am looking forward to the opportunity to speak with you and learn more about your open education leadership program experiences. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best,
Elaine Thornton, Doctoral Candidate
University of Arkansas

APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Time of Interview:

Date:

(Briefly describe the project)

Participants will be reminded of the informed consent document (See Appendix B) they completed before completing the participant information form. They will receive an additional copy of the form and asked to complete it and submit before the interview begins.

Questions:

1. Please state your name, place of employment and current position.
2. Tell me about your introduction to open education and open educational resources?
3. What were your expectations of the program?
4. How would you describe your program experience?
5. How would you describe the value of the experience given the time you committed to the program?
6. What program activities or materials were most beneficial? Why?
7. How would you describe the effects of the experience on your personal life?
8. How would you describe the effects of the experience on your professional life?
9. How did the experience differ from your expectations?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your answers will be anonymized, and recordings and transcripts will remain confidential.

APPENDIX E. INFORMED CONSENT

Academic Librarian Experiences and Perceived Value of OER Professional Development: A Case Study

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Principal Researcher: Elaine Thornton

Faculty Advisor: Kit Kacirek, EdD

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

You are invited to participate in a research study about Open Education professional development for academic librarians. You are being asked to participate in this study because you completed the SPARC Open Education Leadership Program.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Who is the Principal Researcher?

Elaine Thornton, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR, met022@uark.edu

Who is the Faculty Advisor?

Dr. Kit Kacirek, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR,

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this study is to explore academic librarians' narratives about their introduction to OER and their experiences in the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) Open Education (OE) Leadership program, their perceptions of value or benefit in participating, and the impact of the program on their professional careers and personal lives.

Who will participate in this study?

Six to twenty-seven adult professional librarians over the age of 21 will participate in this study.

What am I being asked to do?

Your participation will require the following:

1. Complete the participant information form (PIF) and submit it to the researcher.
2. Choose to be considered for participation in scheduled follow-up interviews by completing contact information and indicating willingness to participate on the PIF.
3. If selected, participate in recorded follow-up interviews via an online communication platform.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?

There are no anticipated risks related to participation.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

There are no anticipated benefits for participants.

How long will the study last?

The study will include completing a fifteen-minute questionnaire followed by participation in a one to two-hour interview.

Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?

No

Will I have to pay for anything?

No, there are no costs associated with your participation.

What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?

If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may refuse to participate at any time during the study.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law.

Personal data will be anonymized in final study. Interview participants will be anonymized in final study. All original documentation will be secured on a flash drive, encrypted, and locked in a locked drawer in the researcher's office.

Will I know the results of the study?

At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results. You may contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Kit Kacirek, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR or Principal Researcher, Elaine Thornton, University of Arkansas, met022@uark.edu. You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

What do I do if I have questions about the research study?

You have the right to contact the Principal Researcher or Faculty Advisor as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

Elaine Thornton, University of Arkansas, met022@uark.edu.

Dr. Kit Kacirek, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR

You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Compliance office listed below if you have questions about your rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Ro Windwalker, CIP
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Compliance
University of Arkansas
109 MLKG Building

Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu

I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

APPENDIX F. UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS IRB



To: Elaine Thornton
MULN 223B

From: Douglas J Adams, Chair
IRB Expedited Review

Date: 11/17/2020

Action: Exemption Granted

Action Date: 11/17/2020

Protocol #: 2010292544

Study Title: Academic Librarian Experiences and Perceived Value of OER Professional Development: A Case Study

The above-referenced protocol has been determined to be exempt.

If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol that may affect the level of risk to your participants, you must seek approval prior to implementing those changes. All modifications must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have any questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact the IRB Coordinator at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

cc: Kit Kacirek, Key Personnel

APPENDIX G. CAPSTONES AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES (SELECTED)

- Collaborations and conversations: Establishing an open educational resources initiative at a small public university
- Open Education Needs Assessment Guide
- OER and Equity in the Classroom
- Open Educational Resources Directory
- OER Adoption Workflow
- OER Course
- Website Featuring the OER Studio
- OER LibGuide: Copyright and Open License for Open Educational Resources,
- OER Outreach materials
- Workshop Template
- Library Outreach for Inclusive Open Education
- Textbook Affordability Dashboard
- Open Ed week Planning Kit
- Open Textbook Workshop Resources
- Environmental Scan Methodology
- OER Grant Initiative Documentation
- OER Event Planning Toolkit
- Developing Student OER Leaders Through Hiring Practices and Collaborative Projects
- Knowing is Half the Battle: A Librarian OER Needs Assessment: Project Information
- Core Metadata Elements for OER
- CCNY OER Workshop
- OER Assessment Tool
- Introduction to Open Educational Resources (OER) — Exploring a New World of Course Offerings is a five-week online course and cartoon
- OER Data Toolkit
- Stakeholder Interviews Template
- OER Subject Librarians Toolkit
- Affordable & Open Educational Resources (A&OER) Team Consultation Form
- OER Campus Policy and other resources
- Marketing OER Toolkit
- Faculty Learning Community Outline
- 13 Ways to Celebrate Open Ed Week
- OER LibGuide
- Intro to OER Presentation slide Decks
- Faculty Communities of Practice on OER-A Toolkit
- Collaborative OER Course Conversion
- Re-mixing OER LibGuide
- (LOERA) Learning OER Anytime
- OER Toolkit for Librarians
- Openly licensed Entrepreneur self-assessment
- OER Implementation Plan

See: tinyurl.com/w2w5wdre

APPENDIX H. PROVISIONAL CODES

A Priori Codes

- Introduction (to OER)
- Support (administrative/organizational)
- Transformation (individual)
- Development (skills/knowledge)
- Leadership (institutional, state, national)
- Career (impact)
- Value (benefit)

APPENDIX I. FINAL LIST OF CODES

Primary Themes: Value, Experiences, Professional Impact, Transformation

Value/Benefit of Participation

- Time and effort value
- Network
 - Cohort
 - Mentor
- Structure
- In-person meeting at Open Education conference
- Assignments

Experiences in the Program

- Support
 - Home institution
 - Program leadership
- Leadership
- Emotions (Nature of Experience)
- Personal life impact
- Differed from expectations

Professional Impact

- Breaking down barriers
- Campus Visibility
- Confidence (imposter syndrome banishment)
- Credibility
- Leadership

Prior Knowledge

- Role of self-directed learning
- Role of on-the-job learning

Expectations and Preconceptions

- CPD
- Connections (network development)
- Knowledge gain
- Tangible strategies

Outcomes

- Perceptions
- Surprises
- Professional Shift
- Transformation

APPENDIX J. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| CPD: | Continuing Professional Development |
| CPE: | Continuing Professional Education |
| CPL: | Continuing Professional Learning |
| PD: | Professional Development |
| OE: | Open Education |
| OER: | Open Educational Resources |
| SPARC: | Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition |