Teacher, Librarian, or Both? A Quantitative Investigation of Instruction Librarians' Teacher Identity

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This study investigates instruction librarians' potential teacher identity and the factors that may contribute to it. Responses to a survey of instruction librarians in the United States suggest that respondents see themselves as teachers and devote a significant portion of their time to teaching, though they received little pedagogy training in library school. In addition, a relationship was found between pedagogy knowledge and teacher identity. However, respondents reported having insufficient time for pedagogy-related professional development although they actively seek such opportunities. This research underscores the importance of institutional support so that instruction librarians can engage in pedagogy-related professional development.

Introduction

Instruction librarians' professional identity includes elements related to librarianship and teaching, both of which can be entire professional identities on their own. An understanding of instruction librarians' professional identity can impact two major groups: instruction librarians themselves and those with whom they work on campus. Thus, the issue of instruction librarians' professional identity is not merely one of professional navel-gazing. As an instruction librarian works with others within the library and on campus, their professional identity influences how they show up for these interactions[1] and may influence how they communicate their role to others. If campus partners do not fully understand the role that teaching plays in instruction librarians' work, instruction librarians may find their effectiveness limited in these partnerships.[2] Furthermore, research on teacher identity in K–12 teachers suggests that "a teacher's realization of [their] identity" contributes to a "sense of agency"[3] as well as to their commitment to teaching and how fulfilled they are professionally.[4]

The discussion about librarians' potential roles as teachers is not new, surfacing as early as the 1940s.[5] However, as teaching has become an increasingly large part of many academic librarians' jobs, it has become difficult to agree with the broad assertions of Glenn H. Brown and others that librarians are not teachers.[6] When a significant portion of a librarian's entire job is dedicated to instruction, it may seem obvious that these librarians are teachers, yet anecdotal evidence suggests that many librarians are reluctant to identify themselves as such.

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While there have been many arguments both for and against viewing librarians as teachers, less frequently have instruction librarians themselves been questioned about this aspect of their professional identity and the factors that contribute to their self-perception. Only after we understand how instruction librarians perceive themselves can we further explore how their identities impact their work and campus partnerships. This study, which analyzes the results of an online survey, explores instruction librarians' teacher identities and the factors that may contribute to a teacher identity, including the amount of teaching, the length of time teaching, and training in pedagogy. The results of this study have implications not only for instruction librarians but also for their campus partners and library administrators and help further the field's understanding of instruction librarians' professional identities.

Literature Review

Teacher identity is widely studied in education, particularly in the field of teacher education. However, understanding teacher identity is complicated by the difficulty of defining it because of the dynamic nature of identity and the many facets that contribute to teacher identity.[7] In addition to attempting to define teacher identity, many studies have examined the interplay between an individual's teacher identity and other factors. In their review of the literature on teacher identity, Catherine Beauchamp and Lynn Thomas highlighted issues related to teacher identity, such as the relationships between identity and other factors, including the self, emotions, narrative, reflection, agency, and context.[8] In their review, Douwe Beijarrd, Paulien C. Meijer, and Nico Verloop concluded that identity development is ongoing, determined by the teacher's context, not monolithic but composed of subidentities, and shaped by teachers' agency in forming their identity through professional development.[9] Similarly, John Coldron and Robin Smith argued that "being a teacher is a matter of being seen as a teacher by himself or herself and by others."[10]

While education literature presupposes teachers' teacher identity, library literature has long grappled with the question of whether or not academic librarians are teachers. For instance, in the 1940s Brown argued that librarians' and teachers' jobs are inherently different: "the librarian's functions are to preserve, organize, and make available written and printed records of all ages and all subjects; the teacher's functions are to organize and transmit knowledge in a limited subject field."[11] This debate was revived in the 1970s as the Association of College and Research Libraries advocated for faculty status for academic librarians, with a number of articles in the 1970s and 1980s continuing the discussion. Topsey Smalley noted that, while librarians "function as teachers in many respects," they lack knowledge of pedagogy.[12] Pauline Wilson called the idea of librarians as teachers "an organization fiction" designed to support the notion of faculty status for librarians, combat unflattering librarian stereotypes, and elevate the status of the profession.[13] Echoing Smalley, she noted that librarians may sometimes function as teachers, but it is not their core function. Similarly, David Peele saw the argument that librarians are teachers as an attempt to justify librarians' faculty status and a symptom of librarians' dissatisfaction with their roles as librarians.[14] In contrast, John Budd argued in favor of librarians as teachers, agreeing that teaching is a function of many librarians' jobs, and that "reference librarianship …provides the embodiment of that teaching function."[15]

The issue of academic librarians' professional identity has become more complex as academic libraries themselves have changed. As academic libraries transformed themselves in

response to dramatic shifts in technology, information access, and student needs and expectations, librarians' roles changed as well.[16] As teaching became a larger part of many librarians' roles, researchers turned to examining various aspects of the librarian's potential teacher identity, noting that functioning as a teacher does not necessarily mean that someone identifies as a teacher or fully embraces the role. Kaetrena D. Davis noted that many librarians experience teacher anxiety since they may not have gone into librarianship to teach and may lack the needed pedagogy training.[17] Similarly, Eveline Houtman found that many of the instruction librarians she interviewed learned to teach on the job and felt strong personal responsibility for learning to do their job well.[18] In contrast, Laura Bewick and Sheila Corrall, in their study of subject librarians in the United Kingdom, found that most respondents felt that their level of pedagogical training was sufficient for their teaching role.[19] Other studies examined librarians' emotional labor,[20] the role that campus relationships play in their teaching experience,[21] librarians' attitudes toward the faculty with whom they work,[22] and the differences among different types of librarians' teaching roles.[23] The underlying assumption in these studies is that librarians do function as teachers, though a teacher identity is not a given.

The relationship between instruction librarians' potential teacher identities and their identities as librarians can be challenging to tease out. Many, using a qualitative approach, have asked whether or not librarians view themselves as teachers. Trevor Austin and Janine Bhandol noted that many librarians move into a teaching role during the course of their careers and therefore may feel "a lack of legitimacy in the teacher role" and resist identifying as a teacher.[24] In a study of academic librarians who have been in the profession for 10 or more years, Laura Sare and Stephen Edward Bales found that learning to accept the constant change, including an evolving professional identity, that characterizes the profession was important to academic librarians' job satisfaction.[25] Scott Walter, in interviews with six librarians, found that teaching was central to the work of these librarians, yet there were multiple demands on their time that made it difficult for them to devote as much time to teaching as they wanted. Additionally, many noted that they did not have adequate training in pedagogy while they were in library school. Finally, others noted that librarian stereotypes are still prevalent, leaving no room for the idea of the librarian as a teacher.[26] Emily Wheeler and Pamela McKinney, who interviewed six librarians, articulated four conceptions that their participants had of their identity: "teacher librarian," "learning support," "librarian who teaches," and "trainer." These were not mutually exclusive conceptions, as participants articulated multiple identities during their interviews.[27] A few studies have taken a quantitative approach. Erin L. Davis, Kacy Lundstrom, and Pamela N. Martin examined the relationship between librarians' views on two information literacy instruction models and self-identifying as teachers,[28] and Lauren Hays and Bethani Studebaker examined how librarians' teacher identity is developed through participating in the scholarship of teaching and learning.[29] In contrast to asking librarians about their teacher identities, Mark Aaron Polger and Karen Okamoto asked students whether or not librarians are teachers, finding that a majority (66%) of respondents viewed librarians as teachers.[30]

This study fills a gap in the literature because few large-scale, quantitative studies investigating the potential teacher identity of instruction librarians have been published before, and no existing studies have addressed the specific research questions of this study. While the small-scale, qualitative studies described above examine instruction librarians' teacher identity, they have been limited by a small sample size and did not fully examine the factors that may contribute to a librarian's teacher identity.

Methodology

The goal of this research project was to understand instruction librarians' perceptions of their potential teacher identity and identify any factors that might contribute to their self-perception. For the purposes of this research, an "instruction librarian" is anyone who holds a master of library science or equivalent (such as a master of information science or master of library and information science) and currently teaches as part of their work in an academic library. While "teacher identity" is a complex concept, as noted above, it is understood in this study to mean seeing oneself as a teacher, a definition based on descriptions by Coldron and Smith.[31]

Objective 1: To measure the extent, if any, to which instruction librarians self-identify as teachers

RQ1: To what extent, if any, do instruction librarians view themselves as teachers?

Objective 2: Identify factors that contribute to instruction librarians' self-identity as teachers

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the amount of teaching someone does and how they perceive their teacher identity?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between the length of time someone has been teaching and how they perceive their teacher identity?

RQ4: Is there a relationship between someone's training in pedagogy and how they perceive their teacher identity?

The population of this study was academic librarians (holding an MLS or equivalent) in the United States who teach as part of their current work in libraries. Participants were recruited to take the survey via a posting to ALA's Information Literacy Instruction Discussion List (ili-l). This is a purposive sample in that instruction librarians are likely to subscribe to this listserv. Prior to distribution, the survey was pretested with librarians who fit the requirements of the survey, and their feedback helped to develop the final version of the survey. This paper focuses on the research questions stated above; future publications will focus on other research questions addressed by data not included in this article.

Data was collected over 2.5 weeks in October and November 2019 via an anonymous Qualtrics survey using predominantly multiple-choice questions, with one optional free-response question (see survey in appendix A). A second email invitation was sent out 12 days after the initial email. In total, 209 responses were gathered; because display logic within Qualtrics was used to display some questions only in response to answers given on others, not every participant was shown every question. Jamovi, an open-source statistical software, was used to develop descriptive statistics and to determine potential correlations between respondents' self-perception of their teacher identity and the factors that contribute to these perceptions.

The survey was designed to take around 15 minutes, collecting information about the work of librarians who teach and also gauging their views of themselves as teachers and how they work with teaching faculty at their institutions. After two questions designed to filter out respondents who did not fit the criteria for the survey, the next 11 questions asked participants about their current teaching context, including the type and amount of instruction they currently do. Following these questions, participants were asked to drag a slider bar to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements designed to assess their perception of their teacher identity. References for each of the statements can be found in appendix B.

Limitations

Because the sample of this survey was not a random sample, inferences to instruction librarians in general cannot be made. Potential downsides to using a purposive sample include the fact that survey respondents were self-selected, so those who responded may already have had a strong interest in their professional identity. In addition, because the focus of the listserv is on information literacy, librarians who teach but who do not consider their focus to be information literacy may not have had the opportunity to take this survey. Finally, some potential participants may have overlooked the survey invitation in their email due to the number of emails often received via listservs. Because a common educational background for participants was desired, this study was limited only to those holding an MLS or equivalent; however, because of this restriction, this study does not reflect the experiences of those with different educational backgrounds who teach as part of their work in libraries. Finally, the study was limited to those working in the United States, so the results do not reflect the experiences of those currently working in other parts of the world.
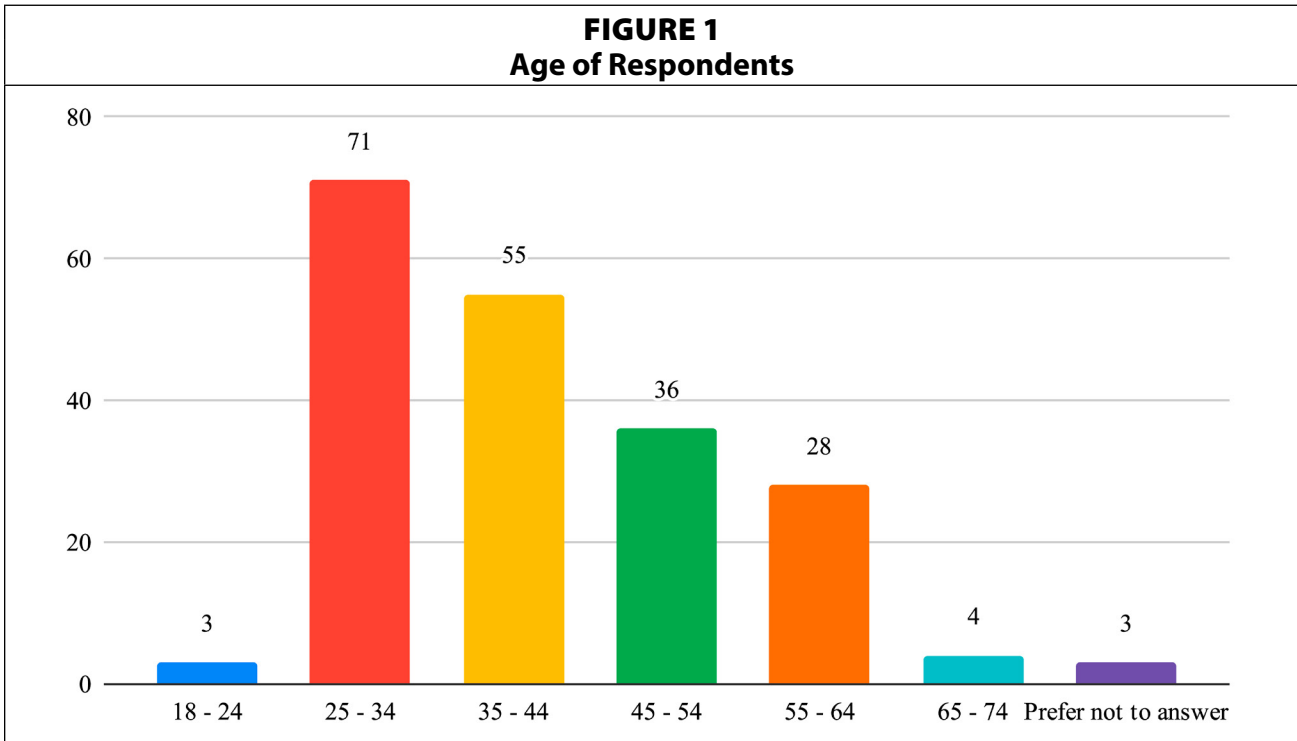
Results

Demographics of Participants

While the survey was limited to those employed at an institute of higher education in the United States who held an MLS or equivalent and who taught as part of their current work in libraries, respondents varied in other details. Of the 200 who responded to the question about the nature of their employment at their institution, the majority (68%, n = 136) were faculty of some sort, with 43 percent (n = 86) of those respondents tenured, tenure track, or equivalent; 24.5 percent (n = 49) non–tenure track or equivalent; and .5 percent (n = 1) limited-term faculty. Of those who did not identify themselves as faculty, 27.5 percent (n = 55) were staff, while 4.5 percent (n = 9) chose "Other." Of those who selected "Other," 3 respondents indicated that they were administrators, and 3 indicated that they were considered staff in some contexts and faculty in others. Two hundred responded to the question about gender identity, with 83.5 percent (n = 167) choosing female/feminine, 13 percent (n = 26) choosing male/masculine, 1.5 percent (n = 3) preferring to self-describe, and 2 percent (n = 4) preferring not to answer. This gender distribution is fairly close to 2017 survey data from the American Librarian Association that found that 81 percent of ALA members identify as female and 19 percent identify as male.[32] A variety of ages (see figure 1) was represented by the 200 who answered the question about their age range, with 25–34 years represented most frequently (35.5%, n = 71).

Finally, participants' length of time teaching professionally in libraries varied, though a majority of respondents could be considered early-career librarians. Of the 208 who responded to the question, 56.73 percent (n = 118) had 0–7 years of experience. A full breakdown can be seen in figure 2.
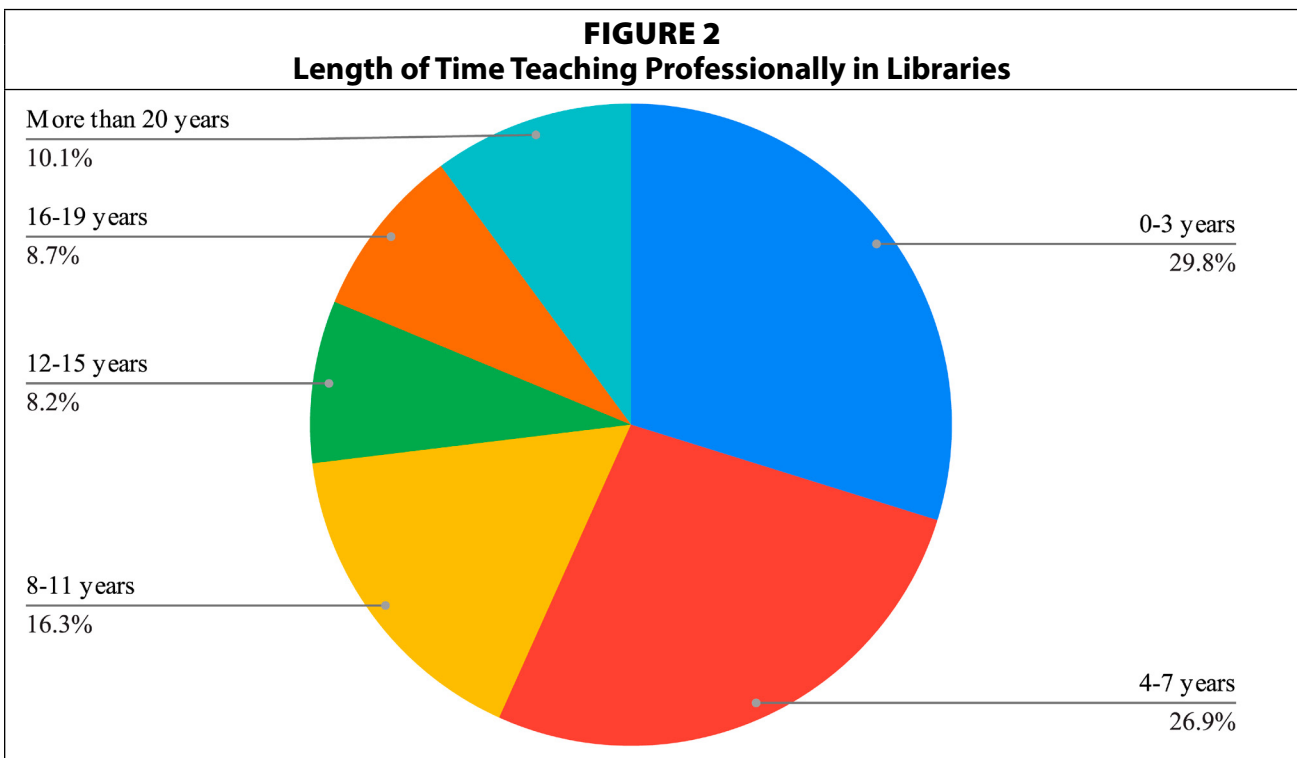
A range of institution types was represented as well. Of the 200 respondents who indicated an institution type, the majority (69%, n = 138) were at public institutions, with 31 percent (n = 62) at private, not-for-profit institutions.

Participants' Work in Library Instruction

While all participants confirmed that they did teach as part of their current work in libraries, their responses indicated a variety of different contexts and responsibilities, beginning with their job titles. Of the 208 who responded to the question "Does your current job title contain

FIGURE 1
Age of Respondents

any of the words or phrases below? Select all that apply," 42.03 percent (n = 88) said that their title contained the words "instruction or instructional," 12.5 percent (n = 26) said that their title included "learning," 5.76 percent (n = 26) had the word "teaching" in their title, and 11.05 percent (n = 23) had the words "information literacy" in their title. However, 39.9 percent (n = 83) had none of these teaching- or instruction-related terms in their title. (The total number equals more than 208 because participants could select more than one response.)

FIGURE 2
Length of Time Teaching Professionally in Libraries

Participants also taught a variety of session types. Of the 208 who responded to the question about the type of library teaching they had done in the last academic year, 98.07 percent (n = 204) reported teaching one-shot sessions, 67.30 percent (n = 140) reported teaching multiple sessions for the same class, 23.55 percent (n = 49) reported teaching credit-bearing courses as the instructor of record, 55.76 percent (n = 116) reported teaching a session not connected to a class, and 3.84 percent (n = 8) reported "other," such as online tutorial creation (percentages exceed 100 because respondents could select multiple responses). Those respondents who indicated that they taught more than one type of session in the last year were shown a question asking which type of teaching they did most frequently. Of the 177 who responded, 83.05 percent (n = 147) taught one-shots most frequently, with 5.64 percent (n = 10) teaching multiple sessions for the same class most frequently, 6.21 percent (n = 11) teaching a credit-bearing course most frequently, and 4.51 percent (n = 8) most frequently teaching sessions not connected to a class.

Participants also reported teaching in a variety of modes. Of the 207 who responded to the question "In which modes do you deliver instruction? Select all that apply," 100 percent (n = 207) teach in person, 43.96 percent (n = 91) teach online, and 25.12 percent (n = 52) teach in hybrid (a combination of in-person and online instruction for a single session) modes. Participants who indicated teaching one-shots, multiple sessions for a course, or standalone sessions were also asked how many sessions they taught in the last academic year. Of the 85 respondents who answered the question, 3.52 percent (n = 3) taught 1–15 classes, 28.23 percent (n = 24) taught 16–30, 25.88 percent (n = 22) taught 31–45, and 42.35 percent (n = 36) taught 46 or more classes. Some participants also indicated that they taught credit-bearing courses; of the 49 who answered the question about how many sections they taught in the last academic year, 38.77 percent (n = 19) taught 1, 42.85 percent (n = 21) taught 2, 0 percent (n = 0) taught 3, 6.12 percent (n = 3) taught 4, and 12.24 percent (n = 6) taught 5 or more.

Participants were also asked about their formal training in pedagogy. Of the 207 who answered the question, 22.7 percent (n = 47) reported no formal training in pedagogy, including professional development, coursework, or a degree. The remainder (77.3 percent, n = 160) reported a variety of types of training, as shown in table 1 (participants could select more than one option; percentage is of total respondents to question).

TABLE 1
Type of Training in Pedagogy

Type of Training	Count	Percentage
Professional development in pedagogy	125	60.38%
Graduate coursework in education, but not a graduate degree	57	27.53%
Graduate degree in education	23	11.11%
Undergraduate coursework in education, but not an undergraduate degree	17	8.21%
Undergraduate degree in education	15	7.24%

Librarians' lack of training in pedagogy has been brought up in many discussions of librarians' teacher identity. Smalley[33] cited lack of pedagogy knowledge as a reason that librarians are not teachers, Kenneth Kister[34] viewed pedagogy as something outside the librarian's purview, and Davis[35] found that lack of pedagogy knowledge was a source of teacher anxiety among instruction librarians. Yet the results of this survey indicate that instruction

librarians do have training in pedagogy, whether they gained it through formal coursework or professional development opportunities. Indeed, participants (n = 206; percentage below is of respondents, not total responses) reported a variety of teaching-related professional development activities (see table 2).

TABLE 2
Type of Professional Development

Type of Professional Development	Counts	Percentage
Reading journal articles or books related to teaching	197	95.63%
A workshop related to library instruction	158	76.70%
A webinar related to library instruction	158	76.70%
Teaching observations	155	75.24%
Library conference related to instruction (such as LOEX)	112	54.37%
Facilitated discussions about pedagogy	109	52.91%
A workshop related to teaching but not specific to library instruction	96	46.60%
A webinar related to teaching but not specific to library instruction	58	28.15%
Conference related to teaching but not specific to library instruction	57	27.67%
An ACRL Immersion program related to instruction	47	22.81%
Other (please specify)	10	4.85%

Participants were also asked about their prior teaching experience. Of the 206 who answered this question, 56.31 percent (n = 116) reported no prior teaching experience, while the remainder reported experience in other contexts (responses exceed 100 percent because participants could select more than one option for yes). See table 3 for more details.

TABLE 3
Prior Teaching Experience

Prior Teaching Experience	Count	Percentage
Yes, in K–12 setting	37	17.96%
Yes, in higher education	49	23.78%
Yes, in a corporate setting	9	4.36%
Yes, in another setting (please specify)	15	7.28%
No	116	56.31%

Of those who indicated another setting, 8 named some sort of community setting.

RQ1: To what extent, if any, do instruction librarians view themselves as teachers?

Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements asking about their perceptions of themselves as teachers, where 0 indicated strong disagreement and 100 indicated strong agreement. Results from this question can be seen in table 4.

This study was not designed to create a measure of teacher identity. Rather, these results help create a picture of respondents' responses to various facets of teacher identity. Overall, respondents tended to agree that teaching is central to their work, yet slightly fewer also agreed that their roles as both teacher and librarian are in harmony with each other. Respondents

tended to agree somewhat with the idea that their teaching was equivalent to that of others at their institution yet seemed to neither agree nor disagree that they became librarians because they wanted to teach. However, most agreed that they seek opportunities to develop as teachers, though it is difficult for them to devote enough time to developing as teachers. Considering the centrality of teaching to these librarians' current jobs, the fact that respondents tended to strongly disagree that they received sufficient training for their teaching role during library school and do not have enough time to pursue it now is concerning and underscores the need for institutions to support librarians' professional development in pedagogy. Finally, the fact that respondents tended to agree that they enjoyed teaching is remarkable in light of this lack of preparation, since insufficient preparation is likely to make teaching more challenging.

To answer the research questions posed above, additional statistical analyses were conducted to find relationships between participants' perceptions of themselves and other factors that might relate to their self-perception.

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the amount of teaching someone does and how they perceive their teacher identity?

Number of instruction sessions taught

Spearman's rho, which measures the relationship between two ordinal variables,[36] was used to explore the relationship between the number of instruction sessions taught and teacher identity. Of the statements listed in table 4, a relationship was found for one statement, "My roles as a librarian and as a teacher are in harmony with each other," with p significant at the $p < .05$ level, indicating that, as the number of instruction sessions taught increased, so did the likelihood of agreeing with this statement. This relationship may indicate that, the more someone teaches, the more likely it is that their job is focused on instruction. A librarian who is expected to focus on instruction may find less of a conflict between their dual roles as teacher and librarian.

TABLE 4 Level of Agreement with Statements Related to Teacher Identity		
Statements Related to Teacher Identity	**Mean**	**n**
Teaching is central to my work as a librarian.	88.08	202
I view my teaching as equivalent to that of other teachers at my institution.	64.22	199
The training I received in library school prepared me sufficiently for my teaching role.	28.46	178
My roles as a librarian and as a teacher are in harmony with each other.	76.58	201
I became a librarian because I wanted to teach.	45.57	171
I seek opportunities to develop as a teacher.	85.33	202
I am able to devote sufficient time to developing as a teacher.	54.23	195
I enjoy teaching.	80.21	199

Credit-bearing courses taught

Spearman's rho was also used to find the relationship between the number of credit-bearing courses taught and teacher identity. Of the statements listed in table 4, a relationship was found for the statement "I enjoy teaching," with p significant at the $p < .05$ level, indicating that those who taught more credit-bearing classes were more likely to agree with this state-

ment. While many instruction librarians may teach a combination of one-shot sessions and credit-bearing courses, it's likely that teaching multiple credit-bearing courses would result in a decrease in one-shot sessions taught. One-shot instruction sessions, particularly for first-year students, are often similar in content; this repetitiveness could lead to dissatisfaction in teaching.[37] While credit-bearing courses are not immune to repetition, being in charge of one's own class, rather than serving as a guest in another's, as well as teaching more complex content than is usually possible in a one-shot, may result in more enjoyment of teaching, and working with the same students across a credit-bearing class can help librarians get to know students in a way that they often cannot during one-shot sessions.[38]

RQ3: Is there a relationship between the length of time someone has been teaching and how they perceive their teacher identity?

Spearman's rho was also used to explore the relationship between the length of time teaching in academic libraries and teacher identity. Of the statements listed in table 4, a relationship was found for two. For the statement "I view my teaching as equivalent to that of other teachers at my institution," p was significant at the $p < .001$ level. A longer time teaching may result in increased confidence in teaching skills and an understanding of how library instruction fits within the larger institutional context.

A relationship was also found between the length of time teaching in academic libraries and the statement "The training I received in library school prepared me sufficiently for my teaching role," with p significant at the $p < .05$ level. However, rho was –0.202, indicating an inverse relationship: the longer that someone has been teaching in academic libraries, the less they tended to agree that they received sufficient training in library school. Since those who have been teaching in academic libraries for longer are likely to have gone to library school a longer time ago, it is likely that their library school curriculum did not offer a pedagogy course or training in teaching.[39]

RQ4: Is there a relationship between someone's training in pedagogy and how they perceive their teacher identity?

To determine if there was a relationship between training in pedagogy and teacher identity, Student's t-test was used. This test is used to find the statistical significance of the difference between the means of two groups; while it typically is used with data that is distributed normally, it can be used with data with a nonnormal distribution if the sample size is sufficiently large.[40] While the data for this question was not distributed normally, the t-test was used because of the large sample size. Responses to the question "Do you have any formal training in pedagogy?" were consolidated so that responses were sorted into two groups: those who reported having any formal training and those who did not. Student's t-test found relationships between training in pedagogy and teacher identity for many of the statements described above, as shown in table 5.

Overall, those respondents who had formal training in pedagogy were more likely than those without pedagogy training to feel that their library school training prepared them sufficiently for their instruction role, to report enjoying teaching, to being able to devote sufficient time to developing teaching skills, to seek opportunities to develop as a teacher, and to enjoy teaching. Instruction librarians with pedagogy training are even more likely to report becoming a librarian because they wanted to teach, although it's difficult to know the nature of the relationship between those two characteristics.

TABLE 5 Relationship between Pedagogy Training and Teacher Identity	
Statements	***p* value**
Teaching is central to my work as a librarian.	0.125
I view my teaching as equivalent to that of other teachers at my institution.	0.063
The training I received in library school prepared me sufficiently for my teaching role.	0.008*
My roles as a librarian and as a teacher are in harmony with each other.	0.781
I became a librarian because I wanted to teach.	<.001**
I seek opportunities to develop as a teacher.	0.025*
I am able to devote sufficient time to developing as a teacher.	0.008*
I enjoy teaching.	0.017*
*Significant at *p*<.05; **Significant at *p*<.001	

Discussion

While the results cannot be generalized to all instruction librarians because of the method of sampling, they do shed light both on the work of respondents and on their perceptions of their teacher identity. First of all, the instruction librarians who responded to this survey teach a lot, particularly in-person one-shot sessions, and they are also teaching credit-bearing courses and online sessions. Despite this focus on teaching, nearly 40 percent reported that their job titles did not include a reference to instruction, which may make it difficult for colleagues both inside and outside the library to understand the role that teaching plays in these librarians' professional lives. While more descriptive job titles alone will not be sufficient to make instruction librarians' teaching role clear to others, they could be a way to demonstrate teaching's centrality to the work of many librarians. The instruction librarians represented in this survey generally do have training in pedagogy, whether through formal coursework or professional development opportunities, though not from training in library school. However, having formal training in pedagogy does not necessarily mean that they had formal teaching experience prior to becoming a librarian, with approximately 56 percent reporting no such experience.

This combination of a lot of teaching, a job title that may not reflect the educational role, and a lack of sufficient preparation in library school is troubling. While this study did not focus on burnout, library instruction in general, and one-shot instruction sessions in particular, has been identified as a potential source of burnout for nearly 30 years,[41] with instruction librarians' role conflict between librarian and teacher a potential burnout risk factor.[42] Additionally, the repetitive nature of much library instruction has been cited as a cause of burnout.[43] This potential relationship between instruction librarians' professional identities and burnout is one that deserves future study.

When looking at the relationship between these facets of teacher identity and other characteristics related to work as an instruction librarian, it becomes clear that there is no magic formula for developing a teacher identity in instruction librarians. Simply teaching more or teaching for longer doesn't seem to make a difference, although teaching more did seem to suggest a greater sense of harmony in the dual librarian-teaching role and teaching longer suggests a likelihood of viewing one's teaching as equal to that of others. What does seem to have an impact is training in pedagogy, whether that's through undergraduate/graduate courses or degrees or professional development. This finding challenges decades-old arguments that

librarians cannot be teachers because they do not have training in pedagogy. However, this survey supports previous research that shows that instruction librarians are not likely to get much of this training in their graduate library education,[44] and the prevalence of learning about pedagogy through professional development suggests that instruction librarians are gaining pedagogical knowledge after they finish library school. However, respondents to this survey also indicated that they lack as much time as they would like to developing as teachers. This professional development in pedagogy is key not just for teacher identity development and the associated increase in agency[45] and professional satisfaction,[46] but also for the effectiveness of instruction librarians in the classroom. Therefore, it's important that instruction librarians receive support from their institutions and departments to engage in professional development, such as pedagogy-focused workshops, classes, conferences, and webinars. Because such professional development requires time and often additional funding, librarians should not be the only ones advocating for themselves; they need the support of both library administrators and university administrators.

Conclusion

This study fills a gap in the research by taking a quantitative approach to studying instruction librarians' teacher identity as well as the factors that may contribute to teacher identity development. The results of this study directly benefit librarians who teach; better understanding of other librarians' teacher identities may empower them to examine their own and advocate for the time and resources to gain training in pedagogy. With a firmer grasp of their own teacher identities, instruction librarians may also be better able to navigate their own professional paths and their collaborations with others outside the profession.

There are many future directions for this research. Because identity is constructed in part through our interactions with others, further research could look into how interactions with others shape teacher identities. Because academic librarians are not the only librarians who teach, other types of librarians, such as K–12 and public librarians, could be studied. Additionally, because pedagogical knowledge seems to be a key factor in contributing to the teacher identity of instruction librarians, further research on how and when instruction librarians gain pedagogical knowledge is needed, as well as research on what pedagogical approaches instruction librarians are encountering. Another potential area of research is a range of other factors that were not explored in this study, such as gender and race, that may contribute to instruction librarians' professional identity.

One of the goals of this research was to discover the extent to which instruction librarians identify as teachers. When viewed in its entirety, the research presented here suggests that many instruction librarians do see themselves as teachers, devote a significant portion of their time to teaching, and actively seek to become better teachers. While much of the early conversation about the educational role of librarians was focused on whether or not academic librarians could even be considered teachers, it seems now the question is more of delving into the complexities of what it means to be both a librarian and a teacher. The development of the role of instruction librarian means that instruction librarians do not have to choose between identifying as teachers and identifying as librarians. Rather, the librarian identity needs to have room within it for teacher identity, setting the stage for instruction librarians and library administrators to advocate for their instructional roles on campus and for support from their institutions to gain pedagogical knowledge and develop further as teachers.

Acknowledgments

APPENDIX A. Survey Instrument

Thank you for your interest in the following survey, which examines instruction librarians' self-perceptions of their teacher identity and the factors that may contribute to their views. For the purposes of this study, **teaching includes** leading instruction for a class (either in-person or online), teaching a credit-bearing class (either in-person or online), or leading a standalone workshop (either in-person or online). It **excludes** one-on-one instruction at the reference desk or in a consultation.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may exit the survey at any time. All responses will be kept anonymous. Data generated from the information you provide in this survey may be shared with the research community (most likely in digital form via the internet) to advance scholarly knowledge and may also be used in presentations and research papers.

This study is reviewed by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board. You may communicate with them at [redacted] or [redacted] if: You have questions about your rights as a research subject. Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team. You cannot reach the research team. You want to talk to someone besides the research team to provide feedback about this research. You may also contact Lisa Becksford, Principal Investigator, at lisab5@vt.edu.

Completing the survey should take approximately 10–15 minutes.

After you complete the survey, you will have the opportunity to provide your email address if you wish to receive a report of the survey's findings. This step is entirely optional, and your email address will not be connected to survey results.

The target population for this survey is librarians currently employed at an institute of higher education in the United States who have completed their MLIS or equivalent and teach as part of their current work in libraries.

By agreeing to participate in this survey, you acknowledge that you are 18 years of age or older.

1) I confirm that I meet the criteria for the target population of this survey: I am currently employed at an institute of higher education in the United States, I have completed my MLIS or equivalent, I teach as part of my current work in libraries.

  □   Yes
  □   No

Skip To: End of Survey If I confirm that I meet the criteria for the target population of this survey: I am currently employ… = No

2) I agree to participate in this survey.

  □   Yes
  □   No

Skip To: End of Survey If I agree to participate in this survey. = No

3) Is teaching part of your primary job responsibilities?

  □   Yes
  □   No
  □   I'm not sure.

4) Does your current job title contain any of the words or phrases below? Select all that apply.

  □   Instruction or instructional
  □   Teaching
  □   Learning

      ☐ Information literacy
      ☐ None of the above

5) In total, how long have you worked professionally **in instruction** in academic libraries? Include part-time professional work but not internships, graduate assistantships, or student worker positions.

      ☐ 0–3 years
      ☐ 4–7 years
      ☐ 8–11 years
      ☐ 12–15 years
      ☐ 16–19 years
      ☐ More than 20 years

The following questions ask about your teaching work.

6) In the academic year that just ended (include fall, spring, and summer, as applicable), what kinds of library teaching did you do? Select all that apply.

      ☐ One-time session for individual class ("one-shot")
      ☐ Multiple sessions for the same class
      ☐ Credit-bearing course for which you are the instructor of record
      ☐ Session not connected to a class
      ☐ Other (please specify)

Display Question 7:

If "In the academic year that just ended (include fall, spring, and summer, as applicable), what kinds of library teaching did you do?" Select all that apply Choices Count Is Greater Than or Equal to 2
Carry Forward Selected Choices from "In the academic year that just ended (include fall, spring, and summer, as applicable), what kinds of library teaching did you do? Select all that apply."

7) Considering your overall teaching work during the course of the last academic year, what one type of teaching would you say that you did most frequently?

      ☐ One-time session for individual class ("one-shot")
      ☐ Multiple sessions for the same class
      ☐ Credit-bearing course for which you are the instructor of record
      ☐ Session not connected to a class
      ☐ Other (please specify)

8) In which modes do you deliver instruction? Select all that apply.

      ☐ In person
      ☐ Online
      ☐ Hybrid (a combination of in-person and online instruction for a single session or course)

Display Question 9:

If In the academic year that just ended (include fall, spring, and summer, as applicable), what kind…
= One-time session for individual class ("one-shot")
And In the academic year that just ended (include fall, spring, and summer, as applicable), what kind…
= Multiple sessions for the same class
And In the academic year that just ended (include fall, spring, and summer, as applicable), what kind…
= Session not connected to a class

9) Think back to the academic year that most recently ended (include fall, spring, and summer, as applicable). **Approximately** how many sessions, both in-person and online, did you

teach? Include one-shots, multiple sessions for the same class, and sessions not connected to a class, but **exclude** any credit-bearing courses for which you were the instructor of record.

- □   1–15
- □   16–30
- □   31–45
- □   46 or more
- □   I'm not sure.

Display Question 10:
If In the academic year that just ended (include fall, spring, and summer, as applicable), what kind…
= Credit-bearing course for which you are the instructor of record

10) In the academic year that most recently ended, how many **sections** of a credit-bearing course did you teach, either online or in person?

- □   1
- □   2
- □   3
- □   4
- □   5 or more

The following questions ask about your training in pedagogy and other teaching experience you may have had. For the purposes of this survey, pedagogy refers to the methods and principles of teaching.

11) Do you have any formal training in pedagogy? Please select all that apply.

- □   Yes, undergraduate coursework in education, but not an undergraduate degree
- □   Yes, undergraduate degree in education
- □   Yes, graduate coursework in education, but not a graduate degree
- □   Yes, graduate degree in education
- □   Yes, professional development in pedagogy
- □   No

12) During the course of your time teaching in academic libraries, what kinds of **teaching-related** professional development opportunities have you participated in? Select all that apply.

- □   An ACRL Immersion program related to instruction
- □   A workshop related to library instruction
- □   A workshop related to teaching but not specific to library instruction
- □   A webinar related to library instruction
- □   A webinar related to teaching but not specific to library instruction
- □   Library conference related to instruction (such as LOEX)
- □   Conference related to teaching but not specific to library instruction
- □   Reading journal articles or books related to teaching
- □   Teaching observations
- □   Facilitated discussions about pedagogy
- □   Other (please specify)

13) Did you have formal, nonlibrary teaching experience before you became a librarian? Select all that apply. Formal teaching experience **includes** both paid and unpaid instructional work but **excludes** one-on-one instruction such as tutoring.

- □   Yes, in K–12 setting
- □   Yes, in higher education

□   Yes, in a corporate setting
□   Yes, in another setting (please specify)
□   No

14) The questions below ask about your perceptions of yourself as a teacher. Drag the slider bar to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree	
	0	50		100
Teaching is central to my work as a librarian.				
I view my teaching as equivalent to that of other teachers at my institution.				
The training I received in library school prepared me sufficiently for my teaching role.				
My roles as a librarian and as a teacher are in harmony with each other.				
I became a librarian because I wanted to teach.				
I seek opportunities to develop as a teacher.				
I am able to devote sufficient time to developing as a teacher.				
I enjoy teaching.				

The questions below ask about your interactions with others as part of your teaching role. "Teaching faculty" refers to instructors within a discipline with whom you work, such as a first-year writing instructor for whose class you teach an information literacy session.

15) Drag the slider bar to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree	
	0	50		100
When I work with teaching faculty at my institution, I have autonomy in what I teach.				
I work with teaching faculty to create lesson plans and curriculum.				
Others at my institution value my teaching.				
When I teach one-shot sessions, my status as a guest limits my effectiveness as a teacher.				
Other teachers at my institution view my teaching as equivalent to theirs.				
Teaching faculty understand the role that teaching plays in my job.				
The teaching faculty that I work with view me as a fellow teacher.				

16) Have you ever experienced a conflict between your understanding of your professional identity and how others see you?

    □   Yes

    □   No

Display Question 17: If Have you ever experienced a conflict between your understanding of your professional identity and… = Yes

17) Please describe an experience that demonstrates this conflict.

The questions below ask about your institution and your status within it.

18) What is the nature of your employment at your institution?

    □   Faculty (tenured, tenure track, or equivalent)

    □   Faculty (nontenure track)

    □   Faculty, limited-term (such as library fellow or resident)

    □   Staff

    □   Other (please specify)

19) At what type of academic institution do you work?

    □   Private, not-for-profit

    □   Public

    □   For-profit

    □   Other (please specify)

20) What is the highest degree granted at your institution?

    □   Associate (AA, AS, etc.)

    □   Bachelor (BA, BS, etc.)

    □   Master (MA, MS, etc.)

    □   Doctoral (PhD, EdD, etc.)

    □   Professional (JD, MD, PharmD, etc.)

    □   Other (please specify)

The final questions collect demographic information.

21) What is your gender identity?

    □   Female/Feminine

    □   Male/Masculine

    □   Prefer to self-describe

    □   Prefer not to answer

22) What is your age?

    □   18–24

    □   25–34

    □   35–44

    □   45–54

    □   55–64

    □   65–74

    □   75 years or older

    □   Prefer not to answer

APPENDIX B. References for Statements of Teacher Identity

The statements in question 14 are based on previous studies of instruction librarians' teacher identity and studies of teacher identity in general. Below are the references for each item in the question.

- Teaching is central to my work as a librarian.[47]
- I view my teaching as equivalent to that of other teachers at my institution.[48]
- The training I received in library school prepared me sufficiently for my teaching role.[49]
- My roles as a librarian and as a teacher are in harmony with each other.[50]
- I became a librarian because I wanted to teach.[51]
- I seek opportunities to develop as a teacher.[52]
- I am able to devote sufficient time to developing as a teacher.[53]
- I enjoy teaching.[54]

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