

**Department of Library and Information Studies
Graduate School of Education
University at Buffalo**

Employer Survey

Administered November/December 2016

**Respectfully Submitted
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Employers Survey: Fall 2016 Executive Summary

The survey was sent out on November 18, 2016 via a link included in an email (see Appendix for a copy of the email) either directly or via listserv to potential employers of graduates of the University at Buffalo Department of Library and Information Studies programs. The survey comprised 14 questions, many of which were multiple-choice or open ended when appropriate, asking for the respondents' feedback on certain issues. The survey closed on December 9, 2016.

Of these potential respondents (although several emails were sent directly to employers, some were sent out via listservs making it impossible to know how many they reached) 195 people at least opened the survey, but the largest number of respondents who answered the first question was 130. Of these, 53% (69) indicated that they had not hired a UB LIS graduate within the past three years. As a result, they were immediately presented with a closing screen thanking them for their participation. The other 47% (61) who had hired a graduate within the specified time frame were presented with 13 questions. Of those questions, a maximum of 40 was reached for one question, with the rest of the questions receiving answers from fewer than this number as indicated in the detailed information included below. This report includes the number of different responses to all of the questions, shown in pie charts, tables or lists of comments as appropriate. Following is a brief summary of the major findings:

Questions 2 through 4 sought information about the employers themselves. Of the 40 respondents, 21 provided contact information and all 40 provided information about the institutions/organizations where they work: The majority work in either public libraries (40% or 16 respondents) or academic libraries (30% or 12 respondents), followed by school libraries at 15% (6), 6% (2) in a school library system, 6% (2) in a public library system, and 3% (1) each in a law library and archive.

Questions 5 through 13 asked about the UB DLIS students hired by the employer with the last question (Q14) providing an opportunity for additional comments. Responses were lower for these questions, especially for those open-ended questions that asked about the graduates' skill sets (Q7, Q10, Q11, Q13) with the average response rate in the mid-twenties. Of 35 respondents, 73% (27) indicated that the graduate was hired for an entry-level position, 24% (9) at middle, 3% (1) for a senior position and 11% (4) chose "other", specifying that in two cases the graduates were hired as school librarians, one was hired as a full-time pre-tenured academic librarian and one was hired part-time at a public library. When asked if the employees had the knowledge and skills to perform successfully in the positions for which they were hired, fully 86% (30) responded in the affirmative and only 14% (5) in the negative. When asked to provide comments, 27 responded and most were positive, especially in technological skills and enthusiasm for the work, although some mentioned particular areas such as instructional and managerial skills where there could be improvement. In terms of hiring UB DLIS graduates in non-professional positions, 68% (23) of the 34 respondents indicated that they had not. Of the 32% (11) who did hire for non-professional positions, 6 (17.5%) were public libraries, 4 (11.5%) were academic libraries and 1 (3%) was a law library.

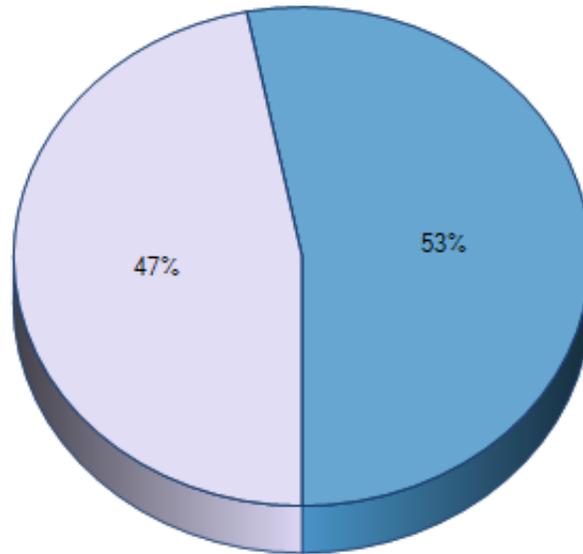
Question 9 asked respondents to rate via a Likert scale qualities related to the Program's fourth goal (although the goal itself was not explicitly mentioned) such as communication, leadership, and professional skills. Of the 35 responses, the results were quite positive with the vast majority indicated for "*always demonstrated this quality*"

or “*sometimes demonstrated this quality*”. For the qualities of domain knowledge, inquiry or intellectual curiosity, collaboration, ethical practice, responsibility, and modeling of professional values and behaviors, a majority indicated a level of “*always demonstrated this quality*” with the next most popular response “*sometimes demonstrated this quality*”. For the qualities of leadership, critical thinking, communication, and engaging in reflective practice a majority indicated that the recent hires “*sometimes demonstrated this quality*” with the next most popular response “*always demonstrated this quality*”. Of the few responses that indicated the employee “*did not demonstrate this quality*”, leadership, reflective practice, communication skills and critical thinking garnered the most responses (4, 3, 2, 2) with domain knowledge, intellectual curiosity, reflective practice, and responsibility each only representing 3% or 1 respondent.

Question 12, which asked if the recent hire had sufficient practical experience gained by a practicum, internship, or other work experience during the LIS program was the only remaining question that solicited a “yes” or “no” answer. Of the 28 respondents, 57% (16) responded in the affirmative and 43% (12) in the negative. The comments regarding this question emphasized the importance of providing students with the opportunity to gain practical experience during their program of study.

Questions 7, 10, 11, 13, and 14 were all open-ended with varying responses so are not summarized here. Please see the full report for the response rate and full responses.

1. Have you hired a graduate of the UB LIS program in the past three years? *



Total Respondents 130

YES
61
47%

NO
69
53%

2. Role/Position/Title of person completing survey:

Total Respondents: 39

Role Responses (Normalized)	No. of Responses
Library Director (1 Interim)	15
Director, School Library System (1 BOCES)	6
School Librarian	3
Archivist	2
Director of Library Services (Academic)	1
Library System Director	1
Executive Director	1
Assistant Deputy Director (HR)	1
Assistant Deputy Director of Public Services	1
Assistant Director & IL Coordinator	1
College Librarian	1
Librarian (not designated)	1
Public Librarian	1
Professor/Department Chair	1
School Library System Coordinator	1
Systems Librarian and Appointment Committee Member	1
Vice Provost	1

3. You may provide your name, company or organization name, and contact information below. (This response is optional)

Name

Company / Organization

Address: [Street, City, State, Zip Code, Country, Email address, Phone number]

Total Respondents: 20

Q3. Affiliation provided by Contact	
Institution Type	No. of Respondents
University	4
Public	10
School	3
Community College	2
Archive	1
Special	
N/A	

4. What type of organization do you work in? Please select the option that best fits your organization

Total Respondents: 40

Type of Library	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Public library	16	40%
Academic library	12	30%
School library	6	15%
Archives	1	2%
Law library	1	2%
Other (please specify)	School library system dep't Public library system Library system School library system	

Other Options (not chosen)

- Computer industry
- Corporate library / information center
- Health library
- Information industry (e.g., information processing)
- Library or information vendor
- Museum library
- Non-profit organization
- Technology company

5. At what position levels were the UB LIS graduates hired? (Check all that apply)

Total Respondents: 37 + 4 = 41

Position Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Entry	27	73%
Middle	9	24%
Senior	1	3%
Other (please specify) Elementary Library 3 years before tenure is given FT librarian (pre-tenured) Teacher librarian Part time	4	11%

6. Did the recent UB LIS graduates you hired have the knowledge and skills to perform successfully in the positions for which they were hired?

Total Respondents: 35

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	86%
No	5	14%

7. Comments on knowledge and skills

Total Respondents: 27

1. We hired the candidate as a Librarian Assistant and she was really over qualified but we are thankful that her skills and knowledge have enhanced our team.
2. Yes, for the majority. However, some of our entry level Librarian I positions have supervisory and management roles, which skills tend to be lacking unless obtained from prior work experience.
3. The positions were for Reference and Information Literacy Librarians. They both had teaching skills from previous employment coupled with the MLS to be qualified for the role.
4. They candidates were able to articulate clear and proper responses to the questions asked
5. I was given a position as archivist that was created for me. I was in no way realistically prepared to enter the professional work force as a recent graduate from UB. On my own self initiative I had to continue to volunteer and learn on my own outside of working a full time job unrelated to the field for years to get where I am now. Pumping out MLIS grads into a workforce in which only %25 of them will find relevant work (and most underemployed with no benefits) is somewhat negligent and criminal. Job placement and mentorship should be a mandatory part of the graduate program.
6. Adequate experience with technology and sufficient experience with requirements of the position gained through internships, part-time positions while UB student.
7. Needed help with classroom management.
8. These were skills they had from other positions - they were not learned at UB.
9. My department teaches technology training classes and we get very few qualified applicants. Most graduates seem to have little or no teaching experience.
10. Of two, entry had practicum here and middle had experience.
11. This is really yes & no. Classroom management skills were lacking, yet lesson prep has been good. Technology skills also behind grads of other programs.
12. The student hired was very well qualified for the job. He worked elsewhere for 2 years before we hired him.
13. Weak in areas of staff supervision/management and budget development/implementation.

14. Our librarian came in with the technology skills, needed, in addition to a variety of practical skills needed to do the job.

Most of them seem unprepared for working independently and fail to exhibit critical thinking skills. They need constant reminders to do the work assigned to them, or pay attention to detail. they lack any preparation for teaching library instruction classes or credit bearing courses. These are not issues we have had with previous graduates.
- 15.
16. THEY HAD PREVIOUS JOBS IN PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS.
17. The person was well qualified in all areas of librarianship.

Our new LMS is extremely knowledgeable and has the skills to effectively run a successfully HS library program. She is a self-starter, multi-tasker, and quite collaborative. The LMS has been building relationships with her colleagues and the students alike.
- 18.
19. With what they learned at UB we were able to further train them in our operations.

Middle level managers were UB graduates with some years under their belt
20. This is a BOCES level position where I hired an experienced school librarian.
21. I would describe our new Librarian I as both enthusiastic and competent.

Our new librarians have come to us with wonderful skills in technology, particularly interactive, an eagerness to put their ideas to work in our library, the professionalism to be able to work within a team, and the initiative to see how they can make out libraries better for our student population.
- 22.
23. They have the basic knowledge of the field and they will only be able to master the work with experience and dedication.
24. LIS graduate had previous experience within the B&ECPL System, training for the necessary skills required in a branch environment.

My staffer finished her degree while employed here. Responding truthfully to the first question would not gain you any useful data- responding "NO" ends the survey. So, you can discard this response, but I think you might find it useful.
- 25.
26. Comfort and skills with technology
27. She didn't pass her probationary period

8. Have UB LIS graduates been hired into non-professional positions at your company or organization?

Total Respondents: 34

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	11	32%
No	23	68%

By Organizational Type

Organization Type	No	Yes
Academic Library	6	4
Public Library	9	6
School Library	3	--
School Library System	2	--
Archives	1	--
Law Library	--	1
Library System	1	--
Public Library System	1	--
TOTAL	23	11

9. Our objective is to foster the development of professionals with professional and personal qualities conducive to success. Please assess how UB LIS graduates have demonstrated in their roles in your company/organization an understanding of the importance of the qualities listed below.

	Always Demonstrated This Quality	Sometimes Demonstrated This Quality	Did Not Demonstrate This Quality	Not Applicable to Position	Totals
Ability to apply domain knowledge and skills required for the position PERCENTAGE	19 54%	15 43%	1 3%		35 100%
Leadership PERCENTAGE	9 26%	21 60%	4 11%	1 3%	35 100%
Critical Thinking PERCENTAGE	16 46%	17 48%	2 6%		35 100%
Inquiry/Intellectual Curiosity PERCENTAGE	20 57%	14 40%	1 3%		35 100%
Communication Skills PERCENTAGE	16 46%	17 48%	2 6%		35 100%
Willing to Collaborate – Team Player PERCENTAGE	24 68.5%	10 28.5%	1 3%		35 100%
Engages in Reflective Practice PERCENTAGE	15 42.5%	16 45.5%	3 9%	1 3%	35 100%
Adheres to Ethical Practice PERCENTAGE	23 65.5%	10 28.5%	0	2 6%	35 100%
Assumes Responsibility PERCENTAGE	20 57%	14 40%	0	1 3%	35 100%
Models Professional Values & Behaviors PERCENTAGE	21 62%	13 38%	0	0	34

10. What did you feel were the most relevant skills/theory/knowledge that UB LIS graduates brought to your company/organization?

Total Respondents: 25

1. Knowledge of cataloging, customer service, and library science in general. The initiative and passion for the impact of libraries on education is evident all that she does.

2. reader advisory, reference, research

3. Teaching skills and the skills to juggle a large number of disparate tasks.

4. The ability to adjust and learn on the job in a hurry

5. The experience they had outside of the classroom. What they learned in the classroom was rarely a consideration in our interviews.

6. Hard to say. The skill spectrum is as broad as the graduates themselves and often what they bring to the table is outside of librarianship-- a second masters degree or a passion of some sort. What librarians should have in common is a love of learning, a voracious appetite for reading, and an understanding of community.

7. Lesson planning and preparation. Core/traditional librarian skills.

8. reference skills, legal background, collaborative spirit

9. New technology skills. Willingness to experiment -- offer activities of the new millennium.

10. Communication skills, pedagogy, assessment, research-based practice

11. Prior to the recent hires, I would say the librarians had a good background knowledge and understanding of libraries, and cataloging, collection development, circulation, management, and the ability to think for themselves.

12. The most relevant skills that the UB LIS gradutes brought to the organization were computer skills.

13. LIBRARY SCIENCE SKILLS

14. A vision for how school libraries fit into the overall school program; teaching ability and knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy; solid knowledge of library practice (management, collection development).

15. Collaborative/team-player. Able to motivate others. Truly interested in supporting and enhancing the already robust curricula.
16. Lifelong learning skills.
17. Good communication skills
18. Ability to help other librarians improve their profession. Note- this was not an entry level school librarian position- if it were, my responses under characteristics would be different
19. Well versed in technology.

knowledge of new technologies, and enthusiasm. Some of our long time librarians have a fear of what they do not understand, or are unfamiliar with,
20. particularly new technologies. We have had newer librarians with such enthusiasm, and a desire to share what they know in such a way that one cannot help but get caught up in it and want to learn more.
21. The love of the field and the dedication to be successful.
22. Theoretical knowledge of children's literature and strong computer and communication skills.
23. computer skills
24. tech skills
25. good communication skills, empathy

11. Are there particular skills, knowledge, qualities, or attitudes that you expected from UB LIS graduates that they apparently lacked, based on their performance at your company/organization?

Total Respondents: 26

1. Initiative, evaluation/analysis, problem solving, willingness to have a growth mindset and learn new things.
2. management, supervisory
3. no
4. Focus curriculum heavily on technological knowledge as most employees are looking for this. Theory mostly goes out the window as most workplaces have their respective work cultures and do things differently.
5. They need to learn how to perform instruction effectively. They need to learn collection development skills. They need to learn computing skills.
how to teach a technology class
6. familiarity with makerspace technology
how to develop a makerspace program
7. Writing skills can no longer be presupposed at the graduate level. Larger forces at work. BUT should memorize Booth's Craft of Research

I have had practicum teachers completely unprepared to deal with a library full of children. One even locked herself for 2 hours in my office and cried because a kindergartener wouldn't give her his box of crayons.
Technology - new and emerging. Skills beyond Powerpoint and Prezi. Let's see something different.
8. Working knowledge of the Information Fluency COntinuum. Every district in the state has adopted it, please teach it well.
Leadership - ready and willing to give professional development to their building staff.
Communicators - able to stand up and speak in front of a group of adults.
Understand the necessity to respond to emails in a timely manner.
9. no
10. Supervisory skills, management skills, budget development/implementation, creativity (to some degree), marketing (today's necessary evil for ALL levels of staff) and customer service skills.
We have also found, although this is not necessarily a UB LIS situation that newer graduates want to work 9-5 and are not fully understanding as to what it means to work in public service - we are here for the public, not for ourselves. Libraries need to evolve to meet the needs, including the availability for those wishing to use our services.

11. Web formatting and content creation, metadata standards including MARC
12. Definitely a lack of teaching ability.
13. Some lacked social skills, leadership skills and judgement skills.
14. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

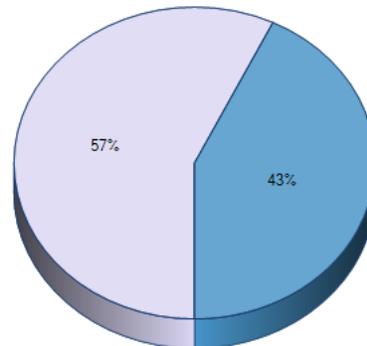
The individual I hired had several years of experience as a school librarian before he worked for me. So, some of the skills he brought to the position he learned on the job. One area in which he needed more training (which he himself recognized) is subject area curriculum knowledge, classroom management, and how to successfully integrate information literacy skills into the larger school program.
- 15.
16. No.
17. An ability to adapt and work with partners and staff
18. With newer graduates, they need more experience with teacher skills and knowledge

Communication skills (written)
19. Data management skills
Knowledge of scholarly communications environment
20. no

A sensitivity to other the multi-culti environment that is the makeup of many of our institutions of higher ed, as well as our public libraries, and school libraries.
- 21.
22. None that I am aware of yet.

Practical ability to plan and execute programs. The LIS student hired by the Orchard Park Library interviewed with programming experience on her resume from her previous position within the B&ECPL. However, many of the other candidates who applied for the position lacked a practical skill set. Knowledge of outreach/community involvement is also weak.
- 23.
24. no
25. insufficient data/time to answer with
26. grasp of basic reference skills

12. Do you feel that UB LIS graduates had sufficient practical experience that may have been gained by a practicum, internship, or other work experience to prepare them for their role in your company/organization?



Total Respondents: 34

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	16	57%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	12	43%

13. Comments: Do you feel that UB LIS graduates had sufficient practical experience that may have been gained by a practicum, internship, or other work experience to prepare them for their role in your company/organization?

Total Respondents: 24

1. Previous work in a public library has been extremely helpful. A little more background in education (school media) would be a big benefit.
2. Yes, for basic Librarian roles. As mentioned previously, largely depend on prior work experience for supervisory and management skills.
3. I think practicums should be required. The most useful skills the graduates had were from their real-world experience in libraries or teaching in the classroom.
4. Practicums are key. Nothing beats the real experience from the classroom.
5. Practicums should be mandatory for all LIS students. Would like to see a similar structure to student teaching for public library (majors). In many cases, both here at the B&ECPL and beyond, recent graduates will be put "in-charge" and must have the confidence to hit the ground running.
6. A LIS graduate that is coming straight from undergrad without already having a career or years of experience will not be considered for any reasonable full time job with benefits. They will most likely become a Librarian I part time if that. Most will have to work whatever jobs they can find in the vain hope one day they will make it in the field. Employers will not take a graduate seriously if all they have is senior page and practicum experience.
7. You learn more on the job than you do with just classroom theory. This job requires a high level of social skills to work effectively with users.
8. Hired UB'ers came to us as practicum students, so obviously yes.

9. This is really yes and no. Some were great, some not so much. We have removed 2 people from positions in the past 2 years and both were UB grads. They were unprepared for the work that was required.
10. Most students graduate having participated in a practicum that relates to law libraries. This is valuable experience to bring to the organization.
11. Practicums should be mandatory for all LIS students. Would like to see a similar structure to student teaching for public library (majors). In many cases, both here at the B&ECPL and beyond, recent graduates will be put "in-charge" and must have the confidence to hit the ground running.
12. Both hirees engaged in multiple work experiences while attending UB.
13. It should be required to work in the real world of the library as a way of evaluating a student's abilities, growth, and knowledge. The UB LIS graduates did not do an internship or practicum and had little or no experience working in a public library.
14. WORKING IN THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY ENVIRONMENT IS VERY VALUABLE.
15. It is very difficult to adequately prepare school librarians for their work in schools, because the teaching piece is so critical. However, LIS programs already require more hours than many other Masters level programs. Given this problem, I will say that it is critical for the profession that school librarians get as much instruction and practice as possible in teaching and managing students in a school setting. They really need to be solid teachers as well as strong librarians.
16. Our LMS was in a previous LMS position for two years. One of these two years served as her "practicum". There is not better training than actually "doing".
17. I know of another graduate working in an elementary school library; her superintendent got her excused from having to do any internships. I think this is not a good practice. I think it is ok to give permission to use current work experience to excuse a candidate from one practicum but I think it should be required that they do at least one formal practicum. They need the experience of spending extended dedicated time working with a practicing school librarian.
18. At Central we offer practicums in our maker space and computer training labs. Exposure to the 18. next generation technology and how to teach and create programs sets apart the general studies grad from someone who has set up and executed outreach to the public.
19. I marked yes but firmly believe they need more skills about being a teacher. The pedagogy class should be expanded into a part 1 and part 2.
20. Internship experience is always helpful.
21. I think that UB LIS students should be encouraged to do practicums, internships, and anything else that will give them practical experience. Theory is all well and good when studied within the confines of the class room, but I have seen some new hires a little taken aback when working with actual people, particularly the immigrant population that makes up a good percentage of our student body. Even Hogwarts students gained practical experience! ;-)
22. I honestly feel that no practicum, or internship truly provides sufficient experience in the field. While it is great, I believe a person doesn't full grasp the concept of the position until they are immersed in the field. Learning truly happens on a daily basis throughout the entirety of a career .

23. See answer 11. The variety of users (age, ethnicity, education, etc.) who frequent the public library requires a broad practical skill set. LIS students should be required to complete a practicum or internship in a public library environment in order to obtain a clear understanding of public library expectations.
24. Practical experience has been gained from elsewhere, would like to see practicums as part of all student required credits. I would consistently bring a student in for practical work experience (this helps both the student and a budget strapped library)

14. Please provide any other comments or suggestions that you have about the curriculum of the UB LIS program that may help us better prepare graduates for professional employment at your organization.

Total Respondents: 15

1. A focus on leadership, management, supervisory skills could help in any future position.
2. Faculty and staff should mentor students and actively seek to place them into jobs following graduation. This should be required as students shell out vast sums of money for their educations with apparently little gain. Intro to library science class should have mandatory modules on how to find a job, which job banks to use, how to get published, how to correctly apply for job, what to do in an interview, etc. I had such bad luck finding employment following school I participated in clinical medical trials where I was given medicine for conditions I did not have (as a control subject) to see how a healthy body would metabolize cancer drugs and other awful things simply to make money to get by because I was so destitute. Because of this I developed health problems and lost my hair for a year. I have never forgiven UB for how little assistance I received entering the real world and how little the school seemed to care for the welfare of its graduates but simply to pump them out as quickly as possible to stay accredited. Most jobs in the field do not even pay a living wage if graduates can even get them. It is an issue that needs to be taken seriously if the profession is to continue...
3. Scholarly production, authoring environments, JSON and metadata, information architecture, abstracting, indexing, principles of design, personality and leadership, online learning, copyright, economics of attention, public speaking.
4. The curriculum needs to change and so do your professors. Expectations need to be CLEAR for students. I have several teachers in your program now and have heard horror stories from them. Some have dropped out due to unrealistic assignments (for example that assignment from an intro course about RAM and processor speeds. NO SCHOOL LIBRARIAN WILL EVER NEED TO KNOW OR DO THAT). One of your professors graded a class very, very hard, yet provided absolutely NO TIMELY feedback to students. In this class the student submitted a paper, was graded very unfairly (I read the assignment and the student's final paper and thought it was very good) as the requirements and expectations of the assignment were not thoroughly explained. The professor allowed the student to re-write their paper based on feedback. The student turned it back in on time, received a grade of 98 with the comment Great job but now it's late so I am only giving you a 68. SERIOUSLY? That is ridiculous and unprofessional. Learning and writing is a process which involves re-writes. The student received high grades on all the other assignments yet got a B- in the class and now has to take it over with the same person? That just isn't right or fair. I could go on with other examples of professors that never once checked in with their online classes, or the one that never provided grades or feedback so that students had no idea how they were doing (the teacher also didn't respond to emails requesting feedback). I really, really hope the program turns around as you are the only affordable option in western NY. I think you need to fire everyone and start from the ground up.
5. The program at UB has advanced trifold in recent years. Your leadership, I believe, understands the need to move beyond theory and into practical experience. I (we) are grateful for this change.

6. Knowledge of metadata standards including MARC is still of pivotal importance to academic library work in many ways. Theoretical organization of information classes should continue to provide these basic skills. Engagement in professional conferences and research is also highly valued.
7. There seems to be a lack of focus on providing student's with the skills they need in work settings. they are learning theory, but have no idea how to apply it.
8. I recommend encouraging students to do an internship or practicum to have a better understanding of the profession.
9. MAYBE MORE INTERNSHIPS WOULD BE GOOD.
10. Be sure that students have a solid understanding of the NYS standards and curriculum in all subject areas. Be sure they understand best teaching practices as well. This will allow them to better collaborate with classroom teachers in delivering instruction and will help to keep their library programs vital and effective in their individual buildings.
11. How the public uses mobile technologies and practical download experience are a must as patrons are asking questions via these avenues and generally how to work them.
12. An assessment of those you are hiring to teach your courses (the adjuncts in particular) Need to think about the changing role of the liaison librarian in the academic library
13. Practical experience. I cannot express that enough. We need librarians that can hit the ground running!
14. The graduates seem well prepared for work in the public library
15. Marketing skills, creative writing skills, problem solving skills, program creation skills, team /customer service/ de-escalation communication skills